



THE OREGON WAY HISTORY

INSPIRED BY THE NORWEGIAN SYSTEM -

In late September 2017, an Oregon delegation including state legislators, the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) and members of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) traveled to Norway as a part of the US-European Criminal Justice Innovation Program. Sponsored by the Prison Law Office of Berkley and the CJC and developed by the Criminal Justice & Health Program at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), the program aims to support select US states in improving policies and procedures in their criminal justice systems. The Oregon Department of Corrections was selected because of its low recidivism rate and history of innovative correctional and criminal justice systems approaches, with the goal of taking the state further in:

- Improving conditions of confinement.
- Humanizing adults in custody and staff interactions and normalizing prison operations; and
- Reducing the overall use of incarceration.

During their trip to Norway, the Oregon delegation visited six Norwegian prisons and the Norwegian Correctional Service Headquarters and Training Academy. The team also heard from correctional service leaders from Norway, Sweden, and Ireland about innovative and humane approaches in conditions of confinement, treatment, diversion, and community reentry. Drawing on these experiences, the team developed a common vision for DOC in continuing its efforts to reduce crime through the smart use of an individual's time in custody.

The team realized lasting change and adoption of the Norwegian principles, of normalcy and humanity, could only be made if frontline staff could see the Norwegian correctional system firsthand.

To gain further traction, ten DOC staff who work within Oregon's institutions and four corrections administrators had the opportunity to participate in the U.S.-Norway Correctional Culture Exchange Program in September 2018. This trip is historic, it gave frontline staff the opportunity to experience corrections in Norway with a focus on segregation. Staff had the opportunity to job shadow and immerse into the daily lives of their Norwegian counterparts currently working in special housing.

This innovative program aims to foster cross-cultural professional learning and development between frontline staff in the DOC and the Norwegian Correctional Service. The goal is to produce higher standards of professionalism and more healthy and productive working environments in each participating system.

Additionally, this program supports the Oregon DOC's focus on segregation reduction and reform, and the primary goal of keeping both staff and AICs safe.

The Oregon team looked to the Norwegian Correctional Service for innovative ways to reduce the number of AICs assigned to special housing units and the length of time AICs spend in these units. Additionally, the Oregon team aims to reduce AIC's sense of isolation and idleness while housed in such units by addressing behavior using progressive methods.

