



The meeting will begin at 6:35 pm Mountain Time to allow attendees time to be admitted and join the Zoom meeting from our virtual waiting room.



## Meeting Agenda

UPAN Monthly Meeting | 120 Minutes | Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - Times are MST

**6:35 PM** Welcome & Introductions (15 Minutes)  
*Shane Severson*

**6:50 PM** How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones in Utah Prisons - (70 Minutes)  
*UPAN Cofounder Molly Prince and UPAN Director of Programming Issues Amanda Bixman*

**8:00 PM** Open Community Discussion (30 Minutes)  
*Share Your Experiences / UPAN Directors Available to Answer Questions*

**8:30 PM** Save-the-Date for Next UPAN Meeting and Adjourn  
*Next UPAN Meeting Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup> 2025*  
*Topic: Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP)*



Perform Sound Check – Display Agenda Slide at 6:30 pm

“Here is tonight's agenda. We'll start in 5 minutes with a warm welcome and introductions, then move into the main presentation, 'How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones in Utah Prisons,' led by Molly Prince and Amanda Bixman. Afterward, we'll open the floor for discussion, giving you the opportunity to ask questions or share your experiences. We'll conclude with a save-the-date announcement for our February meeting. Please feel free to use the Zoom chat to post questions or thoughts throughout the meeting, and we'll address as many as we can. We're admitting attendees from the Zoom waiting room, and we'll begin at 6:35 pm.”



## Monthly Zoom Meeting

How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones in Utah's Prison System

Monday, January 13th, 2025

### **This session will be recorded**

- Use Zoom's "[raise hand](#)" button and the host will unmute you
- Please [mute](#) yourself when not speaking to help keep background noise to a minimum
- Feel free to [post a question](#) using the Zoom chat
- Video recording will be available on our Facebook Live page at <https://www.facebook.com/utahprisoner/videos>
- Or on our website at <https://utahprisoneradvocate.org>

6:35 PM – Start Recording and Begin (1 Minute)

"Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the Utah Prisoner Advocate Network's January meeting. We're grateful to have you here tonight as we come together to learn, share, and advocate for our incarcerated loved ones. For those who are joining us for the first time, thank you for taking the step to be here. My name is [Name], and I'll be helping facilitate tonight's discussion.

Before we dive into today's agenda, let's take a moment to acknowledge a few housekeeping matters. Firstly, please note that this session will be recorded and will be available on our Facebook page and website shortly after the meeting concludes. This ensures that those who couldn't join us today can catch up later.

To make this meeting as interactive as possible, we encourage those on the Zoom call with us to participate by asking respectful questions or commenting at the appropriate times. Just use the 'raise hand' button, and we'll unmute you accordingly. You may also post any questions for our guest speaker or UPAN Directors using the Zoom chat, and we'll address them during the appropriate times. Also, for the courtesy of all participants, kindly remember to mute yourself when you're not speaking to minimize any background noise.

For those unable to attend the live session, the entire meeting will be available for viewing later on our Facebook Live page at [facebook.com/utahprisoner/videos](https://www.facebook.com/utahprisoner/videos) or on our website at <https://utahprisoneradvocate.org>. With that said, let's get started!"



## Welcome & Introductions

(<1 Minute, 6:37)



6:36 PM (<1 Minute)

"We'll begin with introductions and then dive into tonight's agenda, which is packed with valuable information to help you navigate the prison system and advocate effectively. Let's get started with some introductions."


# Introducing the UPAN Linktree

One simple URL to remember for all our important links:

<https://linktr.ee/utahprisoner>



(1 Minute, 6:37)

 UPAN Monthly Meeting | January 13th, 2025 | How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones 5

6:36 PM (1 Minute)

"We know it can be hard to keep track of all the resources and links we've shared over time. That's why we've created a single, easy-to-remember URL: our UPAN Linktree. By visiting this link, you'll find all of our important resources in one place—our website, social media pages, newsletters, and more. Think of it as your advocacy toolkit, all in one convenient location. If you haven't already, please take a moment to bookmark it or jot it down."

## What is UPAN?

### Advocates for Criminal Justice Reform in Utah

Founded in July 2013, the **Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN)** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and **entirely volunteer-run** grassroots organization. Our mission is to support the families and loved ones of incarcerated individuals while advocating for improved conditions in Utah's jails and prisons. We achieve this by educating the public through monthly support meetings, newsletters, and open dialogue with the Utah Department of Corrections and county jail administrations. Our efforts also extend to legislative advocacy, hosting guest speakers, forming coalitions, and providing a shared network of valuable resources. Rather than a formal membership, UPAN is made up of a diverse group of volunteers, criminal justice advocates, industry professionals, expert advisors, coalition organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, and more than **2,000 Utah families** affected by incarceration—and our network continues to grow.

Please visit us:

- UPAN Website - <https://utahprisoneradvocate.org>
- Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/utahprisoner>
- UPAN Family Support Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/upanfamilysupport>
- UPAN Volunteers / Committees Working Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/upanvolunteers>

(2 Minutes, 6:39)



6:37 PM (2 Minutes)

"For the benefit of those of you who are new or unfamiliar with UPAN, here's a little bit about who we are. UPAN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all-volunteer grassroots organization dedicated to advocating for meaningful change within Utah's criminal justice system. Our mission is to promote reform, provide support to incarcerated individuals and their families, and work toward a more just and humane prison system. Founded in 2013 by individuals deeply passionate about justice, many of whom have personal experiences with the criminal justice system, UPAN is committed to amplifying the voices of those often marginalized and overlooked. We believe in the dignity and worth of every person, including those who are incarcerated, and we work tirelessly to advocate for their rights and well-being. Through education, outreach, and collaboration with community partners, we address issues like prison conditions, access to healthcare and mental health services, rehabilitation and reentry programs, and the impact of mass incarceration on families and communities.

Here's how we make a difference:

- **Education:** We host monthly support meetings and send out newsletters to keep the public informed about important issues.
- **Dialogue:** We engage in open discussions with the Utah Department of Corrections and county jail administrations to advocate for change and address concerns.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** We work with lawmakers to push for policies that promote fairness and accountability in the criminal justice system.
- **Community Engagement:** We host guest speakers, form coalitions with like-minded organizations, and maintain a network of helpful resources.

Our network is made up of volunteers, criminal justice advocates, industry professionals, expert advisors, coalition organizations, formerly incarcerated individuals, and over 2,000 Utah families of the incarcerated—and we continue to grow. At the core of our work are the stories and experiences of incarcerated individuals and their families. By listening to their voices and working together, we believe we can create meaningful change and build a more equitable and compassionate society. Whether you're a longtime supporter or new to our cause, we invite you to join us in making a difference.

If you'd like to learn more or get involved, please visit us online:

- **UPAN Website:** <https://utahprisoneradvocate.org>
- **Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/utahprisoner>
- **UPAN Family Support Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/upanfamilysupport>
- **UPAN Volunteers / Committees Working Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/upanvolunteers>

# Introductions

## UPAN Directors

### Our Organizers | [contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org)

- Molly Prince | *Co-Founder & Treasurer*
- Chris Moon | *Co-Founder & Secretary*
- Shane Severson | *Director of Communications*
- Faye Jenkins | *Director of Sex Offense Policy Issues*
- An Bradshaw | *Director of IPP Issues / Event Planning*
- Susan Sundstrom | *Director of Educational Opportunities*
- Karen Thompson | *Director of Special Projects*
- Warren Rosenbaum | *Newsletter Editor*
- Deon Corkins | *Inmate Newsletter Volunteer Coordinator*
- Heidi Kubbe | *Director of Board of Pardons & Parole / Commissary Issues*
- Amanda Bixman | *Director of Programming Issues / CUCF*
- Carrie May | *Director of Re-Entry Resources*

### Med Team | [medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org)

- Virginia (Ginny) Robertson | *Director of Medical / Mental Health Policy*
- Maureen Parker | *Nurse Practitioner*
- Marsha Leen-Mitchell | *Health Educator*

UPAN is 100% Volunteer | Join Us!  
[volunteer@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:volunteer@utahprisoneradvocate.org)



(2 Minutes, 6:41)



6:39 PM (2 Minutes)

"Now, let me introduce our dedicated team of UPAN Directors and volunteers. Each person here plays a critical role in making UPAN a reliable and effective resource for families like yours. From addressing medical and mental health concerns to policy advocacy, programming, reentry resources, and more, our team brings expertise and passion to everything we do. All their names are listed on this slide, so feel free to reach out if you have questions or need support in a specific area. We're all here to help. Our contact emails are [contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org) for general inquiries, or [medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org) for medical inquiries. Our UPAN Directors also have direct emails from which they'll respond from when replying to your questions.

As I mentioned earlier, UPAN is entirely volunteer-run, and our work wouldn't be possible without the support of volunteers. If you're interested in volunteering, please reach out by sending an introduction to our volunteer coordinator at [volunteer@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:volunteer@utahprisoneradvocate.org). No prior experience is necessary. Additionally, we are always looking for honest, reliable, self-motivated individuals to join our board of directors. If you're passionate about becoming a local subject matter expert or exploring new areas of advocacy, we invite you to email us at the same address so we can discuss your interests and find the right fit."



## How to Advocate For Our Incarcerated Loved Ones in Utah's Prison System

January 13, 2025 UPAN Meeting

Presentation Contributors:

Molly Prince, LCSW – *UPAN Co-founder*

Amanda Bixman – *Director of Programming Issues, CUCF*

Karen Thompson – *Director of Special Projects*

Shane Severson – *Director of Communications*

(1 Minute, 6:42)



6:41 PM (1 Minute)

"Tonight's presentation, 'How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones,' will guide you through the key principles, tools, and strategies you can use to make a difference. Whether you're advocating for improved medical care, better living conditions, or fair treatment, we'll cover actionable steps that empower you to navigate the system effectively. Throughout the presentation, we'll draw on real examples and share tips based on our collective experiences."



## Part 1: Basics of Prison Advocacy



Monthly Meeting Jan. 13th @ 6:30 pm MST

*How to Advocate for Your Incarcerated Loved Ones*

**Molly Prince**

*UPAN Cofounder*

(<1 Minute, 6:42)



UPAN Monthly Meeting | January 13th, 2025 | How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones

9

6:42 PM (<1 Minute)

"Welcome to the first section of our presentation: 'Basics of Prison Advocacy.' This portion is focused on laying the foundation for effective advocacy efforts, providing you with tools, strategies, and knowledge to help you navigate the complexities of advocating for your incarcerated loved ones. Our presenter for this section is Molly Prince, UPAN's Co-founder. Molly has dedicated years to supporting families like yours and working toward meaningful reform in the prison system. She brings a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of the challenges families face when advocating for incarcerated individuals. During this segment, Molly will cover fundamental principles of advocacy, including understanding prison policies, building effective communication skills, and navigating systemic barriers. The goal is to empower you with the confidence and knowledge needed to make your voice heard and to drive positive change for your loved one. Let's give our full attention to Molly as she shares her insights and guidance on this critical topic."

## Definition of Prison Advocacy



UPAN and PAG touring the Bear 2 S.O.L.I.D. Program at USCF.

### What is Advocacy?

- Advocacy focused on ensuring the rights, safety, and well-being of incarcerated individuals.
- Works toward systemic changes in the prison system for humane treatment, rehabilitation, and successful reintegration of inmates.



UPAN Directors touring the Currant facility at USCF.

(1 Minutes, 6:43)



6:42 PM (1 Minute)

"Prison advocacy is about ensuring the rights, safety, and well-being of incarcerated individuals, as well as working toward systemic change for rehabilitation and reintegration. It's a way of standing up for those who often don't have a voice within a complex and sometimes inaccessible system. For instance, advocating might involve writing to the Department of Corrections to address poor conditions or pushing for new legislation that improves educational programs for inmates. The goal is always to foster humane treatment and provide pathways for incarcerated individuals to succeed upon release."

## Goals and Pathways of UPAN's Prison Advocacy in Utah

### Key Areas of Focus

1. **Protect Inmate Rights:** Advocating for the rights of prisoners, including due process and humane conditions.
2. **Promote Rehabilitation:** Supporting programs for education, mental health, substance abuse treatment, risk reduction courses, self-improvement programs, vocational programs, and job training.
3. **Improve Conditions:** Addressing issues such as problems in housing assignments, understaffing of our prisons, inadequate healthcare, inadequate mental health care, lack of therapists and treatment providers, nutritional issues, safety and security issues, access to communication and visitation with family and support systems, and lack of access to legal resources within the prison system, and basically anything that becomes a problem.
4. **Support Reentry:** Encourage UDC / AP&P to continue to improve programs to assist incarcerated individuals in their transition back into the community upon release. Support and partner with community organizations who focus on offering resources and support to individuals returning to society.



(2 Minutes, 6:45)



6:43 PM (2 Minutes)

"UPAN's advocacy focuses on over a dozen key areas. First, we work to protect inmate rights—ensuring they have due process and humane living conditions. Second, we advocate for rehabilitation through programs that address mental health, education, and job training. Third, we aim to improve prison conditions, including access to medical care and family connections. Fourth, we support reentry by collaborating with organizations that provide housing, job placement, and other essential resources for individuals transitioning back into the community."

## Goals and Pathways of UPAN's Prison Advocacy in Utah



### Key Areas of Focus

- 5. Healthcare:** Access to adequate medical, mental health, and dental care, including timely access to care, improved mental health staffing to address the mental health needs of the majority of Utah's 6,800 state inmates; advocacy against excessive medical copays that were implemented by Utah's legislature in 2009. Advocate for increased treatment in specialty areas that are underserved such as Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder (MAT / MOUD) and treatment for Hep C.



(1 Minutes, 6:46)



6:45 PM (1 Minute)

"Healthcare is a cornerstone of UPAN's advocacy efforts. We recognize that access to adequate medical, mental health, and dental care is essential for the well-being of incarcerated individuals. This includes ensuring timely access to care and addressing the chronic understaffing of mental health professionals to meet the needs of Utah's 6,800 state inmates. Mental health is especially critical, as many incarcerated individuals suffer from conditions that are exacerbated by the prison environment. We also advocate against excessive medical copays, a burden implemented by Utah's legislature in 2009, which often prevents inmates from seeking the care they need. In addition, we push for increased treatment options in underserved specialty areas, such as Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) or Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) and comprehensive care for diseases like Hepatitis C. For example, we've seen firsthand how delays in medical treatment, whether due to logistical challenges or policy limitations, can result in unnecessary suffering. By advocating for better healthcare policies and practices, we aim to improve not just the quality of care but also the overall rehabilitation potential for those incarcerated. We strive to ensure that healthcare in Utah's prisons meets humane and professional standards."

## Goals and Pathways of UPAN's Prison Advocacy in Utah

### Key Areas of Focus - Continued

- **Programming and Education:** Ensuring the incarcerated have access to educational and vocational training, including college courses; supporting literacy programs and higher education.
- **Treatment Programs:** Working to ensure that there are enough treatment programs available throughout the system to accommodate the waiting list for those needing to get into substance use treatment and sex offense treatment.
- **Advocating for expansion of Risk Reduction Courses**, as well as self-awareness and self-improvement programs offered by volunteer organizations from the community such as:
  - **NewPath Foundation - Transition Discovery**
  - **Captain My Story**
  - **Defy Ventures**
  - **7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, etc.
- **Identifying and providing information to inmates and families** about all of the educational, therapeutic and risk reduction offerings available within Utah's 2 prisons and 20 IPP jails.

(2 Minutes, 6:48)



6:46 PM (2 Minutes)

“Another critical focus of UPAN’s advocacy is programming and education. We believe that access to education and vocational training is essential to rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Programs like literacy support, college courses, and higher education opportunities can significantly improve the futures of incarcerated individuals. For example, earning a GED or completing a vocational certification can open doors for meaningful employment after release. Equally important are treatment programs. Many incarcerated individuals face challenges such as substance use disorders or offenses that require specialized therapy. Unfortunately, there are often long waiting lists for these programs. UPAN works to ensure there are enough resources to meet the demand so that individuals can begin their rehabilitation without unnecessary delays. We also advocate for expanding risk reduction courses, self-awareness programs, and other self-improvement opportunities. These programs, often run by volunteer organizations, provide practical skills and personal development tools. Examples include the NewPath Foundation’s Transition Discovery program, Captain My Story, Defy Ventures, and courses like 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Each of these programs empowers individuals to grow and prepare for reintegration into their communities. Finally, UPAN is dedicated to identifying and providing information about these opportunities to both inmates and their families. We compile details about the educational, therapeutic, and risk reduction programs available within Utah’s two state prisons and 20 Inmate Placement Program (IPP) jails. By connecting families with this information, we can help ensure their loved ones take full advantage of these resources to build better futures.”

## Goals and Pathways of UPAN's Prison Advocacy in Utah

### Key Areas of Focus - Continued

- **Conditions of Confinement:** Monitoring facility conditions for safety, hygiene, access to vaccinations each year; and understaffing that leads to safety problems; advocacy for improved programs and access to them in maximum security housing.
- **R & O:** Working to help Administration understand how harmful it is to those coming into prison through R & O to be so severely restricted from contact with families and attorneys during their first several weeks. Current goal is to increase the number of phone time minutes inmates are allowed in R & O from 135 per month to a minimum of least 480 (which is four 30 minute calls per week x 4 weeks) in order to talk with family about how to handle their business on the outside, to have that vital connection to their support system, to provide families with a way to connect with their loved one when they cannot visit during this critical time early in the prison journey, and get help from family to handle legal issues if necessary.

(2 Minutes, 6:50)



6:48 PM (2 Minutes)

"Conditions of confinement are one of the most pressing concerns we address at UPAN. We monitor reports from families and incarcerated loved ones about facility conditions to ensure they meet basic standards of safety and hygiene, and we advocate for consistent access to annual vaccinations. Understaffing remains a significant issue, particularly in maximum-security housing, where it can lead to safety risks for both inmates and staff. Improving access to programs and resources in these facilities is an ongoing priority. Another critical focus is the R&O process, or Receiving and Orientation, where new inmates begin their time in the prison system. During this initial phase, individuals are often severely restricted in their ability to contact family members or attorneys. This isolation can have serious emotional and practical consequences, especially during such a critical period. Our current goal is to increase phone time allowances from 135 minutes per month to at least 480 minutes—equivalent to four 30-minute calls per week. This increase would allow inmates to maintain vital connections with their support systems, coordinate with family members to handle personal and legal matters on the outside, and establish a sense of stability during a very uncertain time. By fostering these connections early, we can help inmates and their families navigate the challenges of incarceration with greater resilience and support."

## Goals and Pathways of UPAN's Prison Advocacy in Utah

### Key Areas of Focus - Continued

- **Legal Resources:** Advocating for access to legal materials and fair grievance procedures.
- **Family and Community Connections:** Promoting communication with families through phone, mail, and visitation throughout the entire incarceration process, including in IPP Jails in Utah which severely limit visiting through extreme costs of video visits and lack of in person visits.



(1 Minutes, 6:51)



6:50 PM (1 Minute)

"Legal resources and family connections are critical aspects of UPAN's advocacy efforts. First, we work to ensure inmates have access to legal materials and fair grievance procedures. Navigating the prison system can be daunting, especially when legal support is limited. Advocacy in this area is essential to empower incarcerated individuals to protect their rights and seek fair treatment. Another vital focus is fostering family and community connections. Research consistently shows that maintaining communication with family during incarceration reduces recidivism and improves outcomes after release. We promote access to communication through phone calls, mail, and visitation. Unfortunately, in many cases, Utah's Inmate Placement Program (IPP) jails impose significant barriers, such as exorbitant costs for video visits and the absence of in-person visitation options. For example, a single video call can cost families far more than they can afford, limiting the frequency of contact. This creates emotional strain for inmates and their loved ones. UPAN advocates for more affordable and accessible visitation options so that families can remain connected throughout the incarceration process, supporting emotional well-being and rehabilitation. By addressing these barriers, we aim to strengthen the critical support networks that incarcerated individuals need."

## Advocacy Organizations and Roles

### Several Types of Organizations in Criminal Justice Advocacy

- **Specific Prison Advocacy Nonprofit Organizations:** Groups like the [Utah Prisoner Advocate Network \(UPAN\)](#) and [Prisoner Advocate Group \(PAG\)](#) work on individual and systemic issues within Utah's 2 prisons.
- **Other Nonprofit Organizations:** Groups like [Justice by Objectives](#) provides peer support to incarcerated individuals in jails and family peer support to families of those incarcerated in Utah's prisons and jails. The list continues to grow, in 2025 UPAN will be adding a new directory to our website including Ally nonprofits engaged in the same space.
- **Providers of Services:** A variety of other nonprofit community organizations provide classes and programs within Utah's prisons and jails.



(1 Minutes, 6:52)



6:51 PM (1 Minute)

"Criminal justice advocacy in Utah involves several types of organizations, each playing a unique and important role. Let's take a closer look at these groups and how they contribute to supporting incarcerated individuals and their families. First, there are specific prison advocacy nonprofit organizations, such as ourselves the Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN), and the Prisoner Advocate Group (PAG). We work on both individual and systemic issues within Utah's two state prisons. For example, we assist families in navigating the prison system while pushing for reforms that improve inmate conditions and access to resources. Next, we have other nonprofit organizations, like Justice by Objectives, which provide peer support to incarcerated individuals and their families. This peer support is invaluable for families navigating the complex and often overwhelming challenges of having a loved one in the prison system. UPAN is also expanding its collaboration efforts; in 2025, we plan to add a new directory to our website featuring ally nonprofits that share our goals and engage in similar advocacy work. This will make it easier for families to find the support they need. Finally, there are providers of specific services, a broad category that includes nonprofit organizations offering classes and programs within Utah's prisons and jails. These programs often focus on education, rehabilitation, or life skills, helping inmates build a foundation for success after their release. Each of these groups plays a vital role in creating a more compassionate and effective criminal justice system, and together, they form a network of support for incarcerated individuals and their families."



## Advocacy Organizations and Roles

### Several Types of Organizations in Criminal Justice Advocacy

- **Legal Advocates:** Offers assistance with appeals, clemency petitions, and ensuring legal rights are upheld.
- **These could include:**
  - For profit, paid attorneys and law firms such as those in the [Utah State Bar](#) and [The Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers \(UACDL\)](#), and [Rocky Mountain Innocence Center \(RMIC\)](#).
  - Governmental agencies such as [Postconviction Division of the Utah Indigent Appellate Defense Division \(IADD\)](#).
  - Not-for-profit organizations such as the [American Civil Liberties Union of Utah \(ACLU\)](#) work tirelessly to defend and preserve individual rights and liberties guaranteed to everyone in this country by the Constitution and the laws of the United States.
  - The [Disability Law Center](#) in Salt Lake City can advocate for reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities in prison.
  - Criminal Justice Reform minded organizations such as [Utah Justice Coalition](#) and [Utah Defense Attorney Association](#).



(2 Minutes, 6:54)



6:52 PM (2 Minutes)

"Legal advocates play a crucial role in ensuring that the legal rights of incarcerated individuals are upheld, offering assistance with appeals, clemency petitions, and other legal matters. These advocates include a wide range of organizations and professionals, each contributing unique expertise. First, there are for-profit attorneys and law firms, such as those associated with the Utah State Bar, the Utah Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (UACDL), and the Rocky Mountain Innocence Center (RMIC). These groups provide critical services, including for individuals pursuing post-conviction remedies or claiming innocence. Second, governmental agencies like the Postconviction Division of the Utah Indigent Appellate Defense Division (IADD) provide services for those who cannot afford private counsel. Their work ensures that even individuals with limited resources can access legal representation. Next, nonprofit organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Utah focus on defending individual rights and liberties, ensuring constitutional protections are upheld. For example, the ACLU Smart Justice often intervenes in cases involving systemic issues, such as inadequate prison conditions or unfair sentencing practices. Additionally, groups like the Disability Law Center in Salt Lake City advocate for inmates with disabilities, ensuring they receive reasonable accommodations and fair treatment while incarcerated. Finally, there are criminal justice reform organizations, such as the Utah Justice Coalition and the Utah Defense Attorney Association, which work toward systemic changes in the criminal justice system. These organizations address broader issues, including sentencing reform, rehabilitation initiatives, and reentry support. By working together, these legal advocates form a vital network, ensuring justice is accessible and that incarcerated individuals have the support they need to navigate complex legal challenges."

## Advocacy Organizations and Roles

### Several Types of Organizations in Criminal Justice Advocacy

- **Family Support Groups:** Can support each other on the prison journey, sharing experiences and information on how things work in a specific facility. Families can learn how to advocate for loved ones. Others can write to their legislators and lobby for legislative change in how the criminal justice system works. Interested individuals may apply to join our UPAN Family Support Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/upanfamilysupport>.



(1 Minutes, 6:55)



UPAN Monthly Meeting | January 13th, 2025 | How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones

18

6:54 PM (1 Minute)

"Family support groups are an essential part of the advocacy ecosystem, providing a safe space for families to share their experiences and learn from one another. These groups are often the first place families turn to when navigating the complex and overwhelming journey of supporting an incarcerated loved one. By connecting with others who have faced similar challenges, families gain practical insights into how the prison system operates, including facility-specific processes and policies. For example, they might learn how to successfully advocate for improved medical care, address visitation issues, or navigate the grievance process. Support groups also empower families to take action by providing tools and guidance on how to engage with legislators and push for meaningful changes in the criminal justice system. Beyond the practical benefits, family support groups offer a sense of community and emotional support. They remind families that they are not alone in this journey and that there is strength in coming together. Interested individuals may apply to join our own UPAN Family Support Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/upanfamilysupport>. Whether through in-person meetings, online forums, or coordinated advocacy campaigns, these groups play a vital role in amplifying the voices of those affected by incarceration."

## Tools and Strategies

1. **Education and Awareness:** Hosting workshops, publishing newsletters, holding meetings, and public events to inform the community. This also includes use of social media to keep the public informed.
2. **Legislative Advocacy:** Engaging lawmakers to enact policies supporting prison reform
3. **Collaboration:** Working with other organizations as well as UDC Administration to develop fair and effective policies.



(1 Minutes, 6:56)



6:55 PM (1 Minute)

"Advocating for meaningful change requires a combination of tools and strategies. At UPAN, we focus on three main approaches to make our advocacy efforts as effective as possible.

1. **Education and Awareness:** This is the foundation of our work. By hosting workshops, publishing newsletters, holding meetings, and organizing public events, we keep the community informed about the issues facing incarcerated individuals and their families. Social media is also a powerful tool we use to reach a broader audience, ensuring timely updates and calls to action are widely shared.
2. **Legislative Advocacy:** Engaging lawmakers is essential to enacting policies that support prison reform. This includes advocating for changes that improve conditions, expand access to programs, and promote fair treatment. By presenting research, real stories, and solutions, we aim to build strong relationships with policymakers and encourage legislative changes that benefit incarcerated individuals and their families. As a 501c3 nonprofit, UPAN cannot participate in lobbying activities—but we can educate the public and raise awareness on important issues while empowering individual citizens on how to approach their legislators with concerns, or advocate for a specific cause.
3. **Collaboration:** Change doesn't happen in isolation. We work closely with other stakeholder organizations and the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) administration to develop fair and effective policies. These partnerships are key to addressing systemic issues and ensuring that a diverse range of perspectives contributes to the solutions.

Each of these strategies builds on the other, creating a holistic approach to advocacy that empowers families and drives meaningful reform."

## Challenges in Prison Advocacy



- **Lack of Transparency:** Difficulty accessing accurate information about inmate treatment and prison conditions.
- **Stigma:** Negative public perception of incarcerated individuals.
- **Resource Limitations:** Nonprofits and advocates often work with limited funds and volunteers.
- **UPAN is ALL VOLUNTEER**, without any significant funding. We pay for our own postage when we respond to prisoner letters, use our own laptops and cell phones to conduct UPAN business.
- Prison families are already stretched thin financially by having an incarcerated loved one, so resources are very limited.

(1 Minutes, 6:57)



6:56 PM (1 Minute)

"Prison advocacy comes with its own set of unique challenges that make our work both necessary and difficult. The first major challenge is lack of transparency. It's often hard to access accurate and timely information about inmate treatment, certain prison policies, and facility conditions. This creates significant barriers when trying to advocate for better practices and accountability. Next is stigma. There is a widespread negative perception of incarcerated individuals, which can make it difficult to gain public support for reforms or funding for programs. Changing this narrative requires persistent education and storytelling to highlight the humanity of those affected. Resource limitations are another significant obstacle. Advocacy groups like UPAN are often volunteer-led and operate entirely on donations, with little to no funding. For example, UPAN is entirely volunteer-run. We pay out-of-pocket for postage to respond to prisoner letters and use our personal laptops and cell phones to conduct UPAN business. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to our mission. It's important to note that prison families are also stretched thin financially. The costs associated with having an incarcerated loved one—such as phone calls, commissary deposits, and travel for visitation—are already overwhelming. This leaves little room for families to contribute to advocacy efforts, making external support even more critical. Despite these barriers, we continue to push forward, knowing that the work we do is vital to improving conditions and outcomes for incarcerated individuals and their families. As we grow, UPAN is becoming eligible for grants and other fundraising sources, but it requires a sustained effort by knowledgeable staff."

## Challenges in Prison Advocacy / Continued

- Systemic Resistance:** Pushback from institutions resistant to change. This changed in May 2023 when the current UDC Director Brian Redd was appointed by Governor Cox. The current executive administration has proven to be much less resistant to change now and are engaged in making changes that improve the prison experience for both inmates, families, and staff.



UDC Director Brian Redd

(1 Minutes, 6:58)



6:57 PM (1 Minute)

"One of the significant challenges we face in prison advocacy is systemic resistance—the pushback from institutions that are reluctant to implement changes. For years, this resistance has made it difficult to achieve meaningful reforms, as institutional inertia often prioritizes maintaining the status quo over addressing critical issues. However, a pivotal shift occurred in May 2023 when Brian Redd was appointed as the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) Director by Governor Cox. Under his leadership, the current administration has shown a more open attitude toward change. Director Redd and his team have been actively engaging in discussions and initiatives aimed at improving the prison experience for inmates, their families, and the staff who work within the system. This progress demonstrates that advocacy efforts, while challenging, can lead to real improvements when there is collaboration and a willingness to address systemic issues. The ongoing changes under Director Redd's leadership offer hope for a more humane and effective correctional system. It's essential that we continue to build on this momentum and work together to push for reforms that benefit all stakeholders."

## Impact of Advocacy in Utah

### Changes Over Time

- **Policy Changes:** Over the lifetime of UPAN our constituents have managed to get several legislative audits performed.
  - We have seen meaningful corrections system reforms in the following areas:
    - Healthcare access and oversight.
    - Programming availability.
    - Improvement in the processes that the **Utah Board of Pardons & Parole** currently uses, such as their new **Electronic Record System** and more transparency between the BOPP Administration and Advocates and Incarcerated persons.
- **Prisoner Empowerment:** Gives incarcerated persons a voice and provides avenues for self-improvement.
- **New UDC Administration:** The current administration listens to our suggestions and concerns more than ever before.
  - Incarcerated Individual Advisory Council started in 2024.
  - Stakeholder Experience Coordinator who interfaces with UDC administration and inmates, and with advocacy groups and other outside resources was hired in 2024.

(2 Minutes, 7:00)



6:58 PM (2 Minutes)

"The impact of advocacy efforts in Utah, led by UPAN and other organizations, can be seen in several meaningful changes over time. These changes highlight the power of collective voices pushing for reform. First, let's discuss policy changes. Over the years, our constituents have successfully prompted several legislative audits and corrections system reforms in key areas. This includes improved healthcare access and oversight, expanded programming availability, and advancements in processes used by the Utah Board of Pardons & Parole. For example, the adoption of a new Electronic Record System has brought greater transparency between the Board, advocates, and incarcerated individuals, helping to ensure fairer and more efficient processes. Next, we've worked to foster prisoner empowerment, giving incarcerated individuals a voice in their own rehabilitation and providing avenues for self-improvement. This empowerment is critical to creating a prison environment focused on growth and positive change. Under the new UDC administration, which has been more open to listening to our concerns and suggestions, we've seen tangible steps toward improvement. In 2024, the Incarcerated Individual Advisory Council was established, providing a direct line of communication between inmates and decision-makers. Additionally, the hiring of a Stakeholder Experience Coordinator has helped bridge the gap between UDC administration, inmates, advocacy groups, and outside resources. These changes demonstrate the potential for real progress when advocates, families, and incarcerated individuals work together with officials to improve the system. There is still much to be done, but these steps forward are a testament to the power of persistence and collaboration."

## Impact of Advocacy in Utah

### Changes Over Time Continued

- **Improved Conditions:** We have had some improvement in the conditions inside both the women's prison and men's prisons in Utah in terms of working toward improved processes that UDC reviews grievances.
  - In the past year, UDC implemented one video visit in R & O.
  - We have successfully proposed and received the ability to have photographs taken in visits with inmate and family. Families of those in maximum security housing can submit a request for a photo of their loved one by himself.
  - The quarterly gift packages have been implemented in the past couple of years, which were not even considered a few years ago.
  - Improved oversight of Correctional Health Services in both of Utah's prisons by DHHS has resulted in reduced number of problems reported of not getting serious illnesses addressed by outside facilities (U of U, etc), and UPAN has received a reduced number of complaints about not being able to get prescriptions refilled in a timely manner.
  - We now have a task force that is working on developing a plan for a true Prison Hospice and Long-Term Care Program, which has been ignored until now.

(2 Minutes, 7:02)



7:00 PM (2 Minutes)

"Advocacy has led to notable improvements in conditions inside both the women's and men's prisons in Utah. These changes reflect ongoing efforts to improve processes and enhance the quality of life for incarcerated individuals and their families. First, in the past year, the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) implemented one video visit in Receiving and Orientation (R&O). This marks an important step forward, as previously, communication during R&O was extremely limited, isolating individuals during a critical adjustment period. Another success is the ability for families to have photographs taken during visits. This has been especially impactful for those in maximum security housing, where families can now request a photo of their loved one. These photographs serve as a cherished connection between families and their incarcerated loved ones. Additionally, quarterly gift packages are now available, which were not even considered a few years ago. These packages provide inmates with basic items or small comforts that improve their daily lives and demonstrate that they have not been forgotten by their families and communities. Improved oversight of Correctional Health Services, led by the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has resulted in better healthcare outcomes. Issues such as delayed treatment for serious illnesses and untimely prescription refills have decreased, thanks to partnerships with external facilities like the University of Utah. This oversight has addressed critical healthcare concerns that previously caused significant suffering. Finally, a task force has been formed to develop a plan for a true Prison Hospice and Long-Term Care Program, which has long been overlooked. This initiative represents an essential step in providing dignity and care for inmates with terminal illnesses or those requiring long-term support. These changes, while incremental, show that advocacy efforts are making a difference. By focusing on both immediate improvements and long-term reforms, we are working toward a more humane and effective corrections system."

## The Basics of Individual Advocacy

### Managing Our Own Emotions



#### 2 Parts to Any Problem

- **The Emotional Part:** How we feel about the situation including others, ourselves, and the actual issue.
- **The Practical Part:** The actual factors that contributed to the problem.

(1 Minutes, 7:03)



7:02 PM (1 Minute)

"Advocating for a loved one who is incarcerated can be an emotional journey. It's important to recognize and manage our own emotions as we work through challenges. Every problem we encounter has two parts that need to be addressed: the emotional part and the practical part. The emotional part involves how we feel about the situation, others involved, ourselves, and the issue itself. Advocacy often comes with frustration, anger, or sadness, and these emotions are valid. However, understanding and processing these feelings is crucial for clear communication and effective action. For example, taking a moment to breathe and reflect before writing an email or making a call can help ensure our message is received as intended. The practical part refers to the tangible factors contributing to the problem. This includes the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the issue. Breaking down the problem into these components helps us identify actionable steps. For instance, if your loved one has a medical issue that's not being addressed, gathering details like dates, interactions, and specific policies can make your case stronger. By separating these two parts, we can address both the emotional and practical aspects of advocacy effectively. Remember, managing our emotions doesn't mean ignoring them—it means acknowledging them and using them constructively to drive change."

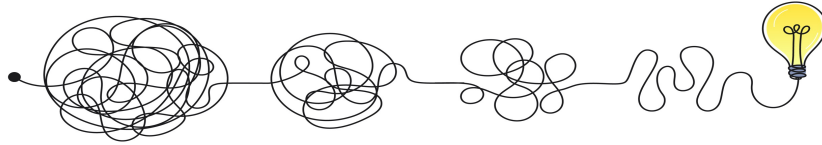


## The Basics of Individual Advocacy

### Basic Steps Toward Resolving A Problem Reasonably and Effectively

#### Work through our strong emotions:

1. We first must work through our feelings about the overall situation, the people involved in it, and what the actual issue is.
2. Our minds will then be more clear and calm to research, gather information, and identify possible solutions to the problem.
3. With our emotions in check, we are able to more clearly and effectively communicate to the appropriate staff, administrators in a manner that welcomes discussion and collaboration.



(1 Minutes, 7:04)



7:03 PM (1 Minute)

"When advocating for a loved one, emotions can often run high. It's important to take a step-by-step approach to resolve problems effectively and reasonably. Let's break it down into three essential steps:

1. **Work through our feelings:** The first step is to process our emotions about the situation. This includes reflecting on how we feel about the issue, the people involved, and the overall circumstances. Advocacy can be emotionally charged, but taking the time to acknowledge and work through these feelings helps us approach the situation with a clear mind.
2. **Gain clarity and calm:** Once we've processed our emotions, we can focus on gathering information, researching the issue, and identifying possible solutions. With a calm and clear mindset, we are better equipped to assess the situation objectively and determine the most effective path forward.
3. **Communicate effectively:** Finally, with our emotions in check and the necessary information in hand, we can present our concerns to the appropriate staff or administrators. Clear, respectful, and solution-oriented communication invites collaboration and ensures our message is taken seriously. This approach fosters constructive discussions and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes.

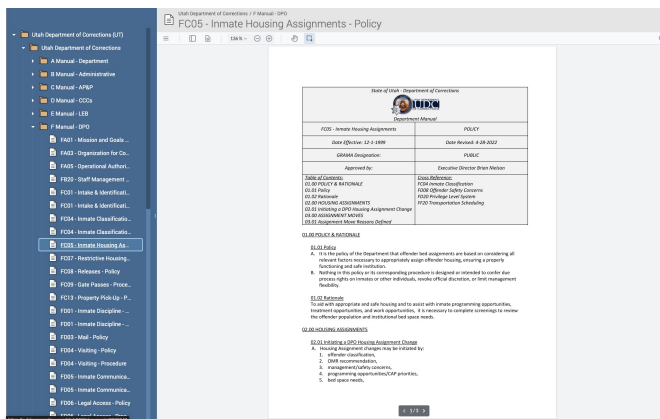
Remember, advocacy is as much about how we approach the process as it is about the issues we raise. By following these steps, we can navigate challenges more effectively while maintaining our emotional well-being and strengthening our advocacy efforts."

# The Basics of Individual Advocacy

## Preparing to Send a Concern / Complaint to UDC

Educate ourselves on the policies and processes of the prison system and stay up to date on what is happening:

1. Go through the UDC website at <https://corrections.utah.gov> and read everything in the Family / Friends tab. This is also where you can find [policies](#) about various aspects of how UDC manages things.
2. Then read everything else on the website even if it feels like it does not apply right now. It might one day.
3. Go back to the UDC website periodically to see what they are posting that seems important. You may have to scroll down their homepage to find the most recent posts.



(2 Minutes, 7:06)

7:04 PM (2 Minutes)

"When preparing to send a concern or complaint to the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC), it's essential to educate ourselves on the policies and processes of the prison system. Staying informed ensures that our concerns are well-grounded and more likely to be taken seriously. Here are six important steps to follow:

1. Start with the UDC website: Visit <https://corrections.utah.gov> and review everything listed under the 'Family/Friends' tab. This section provides valuable information about how UDC operates and includes links to policies governing various aspects of inmate management. Familiarizing yourself with these policies can help you craft a more specific and effective concern.
2. Explore other sections of the website: Even if some content doesn't seem directly relevant right now, it may apply in the future. For example, knowing UDC's policies on inmate housing assignments, communication rules, or grievance procedures can prepare you for unforeseen situations.
3. Revisit the website regularly: UDC periodically updates its homepage with new posts and announcements. Make it a habit to check for recent updates, as these can include policy changes or other important information that might impact your loved one's circumstances.

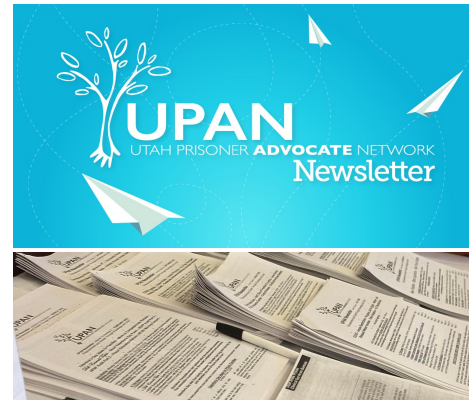
Being well-informed not only helps us address concerns effectively but also builds credibility when communicating with administrators. Taking the time to research and reference relevant policies demonstrates that you've done your homework and ensures your concerns are presented in a professional and constructive manner."

## The Basics of Individual Advocacy

### Preparing to Send a Concern / Complaint to UDC Continued

Educate ourselves on the policies and processes of the prison system and stay up to date on what is happening:

4. **We must educate ourselves.** Do not make assumptions about what the rules are or what the reasons for the policies are. We cannot advocate if we are not aware of what the policies are.
5. We recommend that you subscribe to the UPAN Monthly Newsletter by going to [www.utahprisoneradvocate.org](http://www.utahprisoneradvocate.org) and signing up. The past year of newsletters is also on the website. We try to include important information about everything from what programs are available in the prison, to updates on medical concerns, and accomplishments that incarcerated people are making.
6. Attend the UPAN Monthly Meetings the 2nd Monday of every month 6:30 – 8:30 pm (except July and December). We have guest speakers from various agencies and resources in the community and have UDC administrators and BOPP speakers once per year.



(3 Minutes, 7:09)



UPAN Monthly Meeting | January 13th, 2025 | How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones

27

7:06 PM (3 Minutes)

"4. Educate ourselves: It's crucial that we fully understand the rules and reasons behind the policies we're advocating around. Making assumptions about policies or procedures can undermine our credibility and hinder our efforts. Advocacy starts with knowledge, so taking the time to familiarize ourselves with these details is essential.

5. Subscribe to the UPAN Monthly Newsletter: By signing up at [www.utahprisoneradvocate.org](http://www.utahprisoneradvocate.org), you'll receive valuable updates and insights. The newsletter covers a wide range of topics, from available prison programs to medical concerns and accomplishments of incarcerated individuals. Past editions are also available on the website for additional context and learning.

6. Attend UPAN Monthly Meetings: These meetings, held on the second Monday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm (excluding July and December), are a great opportunity to stay informed and connected. We frequently host guest speakers from community agencies, and once a year, UDC administrators and Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) representatives join us to provide updates and answer questions. These meetings are a valuable space to learn, share, and advocate together.

By taking these steps, you can stay up-to-date and approach your advocacy with confidence, knowing that your concerns are well-founded and your efforts are part of a larger, informed community."

# Overview of Effective Communication

## Define the Purpose

1. **Identify Why You Are Communicating:**  
e.g., to inform, persuade, inquire, or resolve.
2. **Know Your Audience:**  
Understand the needs, expectations, and communication styles of the person you are communicating with.



(1 Minutes, 7:10)



7:09 PM (1 Minute)

"Effective communication is a cornerstone of advocacy, and it begins with clearly defining the purpose of your message. There are eight (8) critical steps to keep in mind:

1. **Identify Why You Are Communicating:** Before crafting your message, determine the goal of your communication. Are you trying to inform someone about a situation, persuade them to take a specific action, inquire about a policy or procedure, or resolve a problem? For instance, if you're writing to the UDC about a delay in medical care, your goal might be to resolve the issue by requesting an update or action plan. Having a clear purpose ensures your communication stays focused and achieves its intended outcome.

2. **Know Your Audience:** Understanding who you are communicating with is just as important as knowing your message. Consider the needs, expectations, and communication style of the person or group you're addressing. For example, when speaking to UDC administrators, a professional and solution-oriented tone is essential. They are more likely to respond positively when the communication is respectful, concise, and backed by relevant facts.

By defining your purpose and tailoring your message to your audience, you increase the likelihood of a productive dialogue and successful advocacy. Clear and purposeful communication fosters understanding, collaboration, and meaningful change."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued

**3. Message Creation:** For emails, letters, including what you might want to say on the phone.

- **Clarity:** Use simple, concise, and clear language. And the structure should be clean and not confusing issues. Discuss one issue at a time.
- **Structure:** Organize information logically including an introduction, your main points or questions, and a concise conclusion. If you have a lot of history / information you need to share to give context, like in a safety or security threat concern, try to do it in lists or bullet points rather than one long paragraph.
  - Even when typing on your phone, use punctuation so it clarifies what you are trying to say.
- **Tone:** Choose an appropriate tone based on the context. Using the right words while having a non-combative tone can get your serious concerns across without coming off as aggressive, threatening, or criticizing.



*Remember: All of us as humans have a tendency to shut-down and not listen to someone coming at us as critical or combative. This applies to our written emails and communications.*

(2 Minutes, 7:12)



7:10 PM (2 Minutes)

"3. Creating an effective message is critical for clear and productive communication. Whether you're writing an email, sending a letter, or preparing to speak on the phone, keep the following key principles in mind:

- **Clarity:** Use simple, concise, and straightforward language. Avoid jargon or overly complex sentences that could confuse your audience. Focus on one issue at a time to ensure your message remains clear and actionable.
- **Structure:** Organize your message logically, starting with an introduction that outlines the purpose, followed by your main points or questions, and concluding with a clear and concise summary. If you need to provide a lot of background or context—such as in situations involving safety or security concerns—use lists or bullet points instead of a long paragraph. This format makes it easier for the recipient to follow your points and act accordingly. Even when typing on your phone, take the time to use proper punctuation to clarify your intent.
- **Tone:** Choose a tone that is respectful and appropriate for the situation. Avoid combative or overly critical language, as it can lead to defensiveness and hinder progress. Instead, use a non-confrontational tone that conveys the seriousness of your concerns while encouraging collaboration and problem-solving.

Remember: People tend to shut down or stop listening when they feel attacked or criticized. This applies not only to verbal communication but also to emails and written correspondence. By approaching your message with clarity, structure, and a respectful tone, you increase the likelihood of your concerns being heard and addressed constructively."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued

#### 4. Delivery Method

- Will it be verbal in a **phone call**, written in an **email**, or in a **virtual online meeting**?
  - An **email** provides a record of the communication for both the sender and receiver.
    - Emails are generally the best so that we can step back and think about what we have written, review it, and be sure it is what we want to say before hitting send.
  - A **phone call** can be interpreted through the perception of the listener and our words cannot be changed. Make notes that you can stick to if making a phone call.
    - Be considerate of the person answering the phone. They are not likely the person that can resolve your problem.
  - Sometimes we are able to bring up issues in **online meetings** with Corrections. Be prepared with notes for that in the same way as you would a phone call. Remain as calm and respectful as possible, even though some of these issues bring up strong emotion.



(2 Minutes, 7:14)



7:12 PM (2 Minutes)

"4. The method you choose to deliver your message plays a significant role in how it is received and acted upon:

- **Email:** Emails are often the best method for communication as they provide a written record for both the sender and receiver. They allow you to carefully craft your message, review it, and ensure it conveys exactly what you intend before sending. This method is ideal for detailed concerns or situations where you want to maintain documentation of your interactions.
- **Phone Call:** A phone call offers a more personal way to communicate but comes with challenges. The tone and phrasing of your words are subject to the listener's perception, and once spoken, your words cannot be taken back. To ensure clarity and effectiveness, prepare notes beforehand and stick to them during the call. Remember to remain considerate of the person answering the phone—they may not be the one who can resolve your issue directly but can help guide your concern to the appropriate party.
- **Online Meetings:** Sometimes, you may have the opportunity to bring up issues during virtual meetings with corrections officials or advocacy groups. Just like a phone call, preparation is key. Have your notes ready, and approach the discussion calmly and respectfully, even if the topic brings up strong emotions. A composed demeanor fosters collaboration and increases the likelihood of a productive outcome.

Choosing the right method depends on your situation, but the principles of preparation, clarity, and respect apply to all forms of communication. Each method has its strengths, so consider what will work best to achieve your specific purpose."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued

#### 5. Non-Verbal Communication

- On phone calls, use the *tone of voice that aligns with your message*.
- Remember that the person on the other end of the phone does not really know you well, so *be careful of being too stern or demanding*.
- Often the people who answer the phones at either UDC Administration or the Prison are **NOT** people who can resolve your problem, *they will be relaying the concern to the appropriate division or service*.



(1 Minutes, 7:15)



7:14 PM (1 Minute)

"5. Non-verbal communication plays a key role, even in settings where we're not face-to-face. On phone calls, your tone of voice can have a significant impact on how your message is received. Here are some points to keep in mind:

- **Align your tone with your message:** If you are advocating for help or clarification, use a calm and respectful tone. A tone that matches the seriousness of your concern without coming across as overly stern or demanding increases the likelihood of a productive response.
- **Be mindful of how the person on the other end perceives you:** They don't know you personally, so the way you communicate will shape their impression. A sharp or overly frustrated tone might make them less willing to assist, even if your concern is valid.
- **Remember their role:** Often, the person answering the phone is not the decision-maker or someone with the authority to resolve your problem. They are simply there to gather information and relay your concern to the appropriate department or individual. Showing understanding and respect for their role helps build rapport and ensures your message is passed along effectively.

Approaching these conversations with patience and professionalism will leave a positive impression and increase the likelihood of your concerns being addressed constructively."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued

#### 6. Active Listening During Phone Calls and in Meetings

- **Focus:** Give your full attention to the speaker and avoid distractions. This is especially important in active meetings!
- **Ask Questions:** Clarify and confirm understanding of the message. This can be done in calls and meetings, and also in email threads. Make sure you understand exactly what you are being told.
- **Acknowledge:** Use verbal (e.g., "I see") and non-verbal cues (e.g., nodding) to show understanding.



(1 Minutes, 7:16)



7:15 PM (1 Minute)

"6. Active listening is a vital part of effective communication, particularly during phone calls and meetings. It ensures that you understand the message being conveyed and demonstrates respect and engagement. Here's how to practice active listening effectively:

- **Focus:** Give your undivided attention to the speaker. Avoid multitasking or letting your mind wander, especially during meetings or calls where important information is being shared. Active listening requires full presence, so eliminate distractions as much as possible.
- **Ask Questions:** Clarify and confirm your understanding of what is being said. For example, if something is unclear, you might ask, 'Could you explain that part again?' or 'Just to confirm, are you saying that...?' This is helpful in avoiding misunderstandings and ensures you fully grasp the details of the conversation. This principle applies not just to live discussions but also to email threads.
- **Acknowledge:** Use verbal and non-verbal cues to show that you are listening and understanding. Phrases like 'I see' or 'That makes sense' provide affirmation. Non-verbal gestures like nodding during in-person or video meetings also convey attentiveness and engagement.

Active listening is a two-way street—it not only helps you absorb information effectively but also shows the other person that you value their input. This creates a foundation for meaningful dialogue and collaboration."



## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued



#### 7. Feedback

- **Encourage Responses:** Invite questions, opinions, or reactions to your message.
- **Check for Understanding:** Paraphrase or summarize to confirm the message was understood correctly.

(1 Minutes, 7:17)



7:16 PM (1 Minute)

"7. Feedback is a critical component of effective communication, helping to ensure that the message has been both delivered and received as intended. Here's how to incorporate feedback into your communication effectively:

- **Encourage Responses:** Invite the person you're speaking with to share their questions, opinions, or reactions to your message. For example, you could say, 'Does this make sense to you?' or 'Do you have any questions about what I've shared?' Encouraging feedback not only opens up dialogue but also helps identify areas where further clarification may be needed.
- **Check for Understanding:** After sharing your message, paraphrase or summarize the key points to confirm mutual understanding. Similarly, ask the other person to summarize their understanding of your message. For instance, you might say, 'Just to make sure we're on the same page, can you tell me what you understood about this issue?' This step ensures alignment and prevents potential miscommunications.

By fostering an environment that values input and clarification, you create a two-way communication process that is more effective and collaborative. Feedback helps to ensure that your message resonates and leads to the desired outcome."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued

#### 8. Adaptation

- **Be Flexible:** Adjust your approach based on the person you are talking to (their position, their openness to discuss what you are discussing, their responses or feedback, or changes in context of what you are discussing).
  - This includes both phone, in person and written communications.



(1 Minutes, 7:18)



7:17 PM (1 Minute)

"8. Adaptation is a crucial element of effective communication, allowing you to tailor your approach based on the context and the person you're engaging with. Here's how to practice adaptability:

- **Be Flexible:** Adjust your communication style to fit the position, openness, and responsiveness of the person you're talking to. For example, if you're speaking with someone in a decision-making role, focus on clear and concise messaging that highlights key facts and solutions. On the other hand, if you're communicating with someone who is gathering information to pass along, ensure your message is detailed and easy to relay.
- **Consider the Context:** Adapt to changes in the discussion as they occur. This might mean shifting your tone, rephrasing points for clarity, or responding to unexpected feedback. Whether you're communicating over the phone, in person, or through written correspondence, the ability to pivot while staying on message is critical for maintaining effectiveness.

Flexibility in communication demonstrates professionalism and an ability to collaborate, which can help foster positive outcomes even in challenging discussions."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Define the Purpose - Continued

#### 8. Adaptation (Continued)

- **Solve Barriers:** Be aware of your emotions that could become a barrier to effective communication. If so, take a breath and step back during in person, meetings, or phone communications.
  - If the UDC staff seems to be becoming frustrated or impatient, use empathy and understand how challenging it might be to be hearing nothing but complaints all day.
  - You can clarify that you understand that they are not likely the person who caused the problem or cannot fix it. Reassure them you appreciate their efforts to understand what your concerns are and their efforts to find solutions and forward the information and concern to the appropriate division or staff person for attention and resolution.
  - If the barrier is a non-response to an email, review the email and see how the tone of it comes across. If it was harsh or critical, demanding or threatening a lawsuit, you might not get a response.
  - You can try again in another email and that can even include an apology for the tone of your previous email., explaining you hit send while you were still processing your feelings / fears about the situation.



(2 Minutes, 7:20)



7:18 PM (2 Minutes)

"8. [Continued] Adaptation also involves solving barriers to effective communication. These barriers can arise from emotions, misunderstandings, or other challenges during conversations or correspondence. Here's how to address them effectively:

- **Be Aware of Emotions:** If you feel your emotions are becoming a barrier to effective communication, pause and take a breath. Whether you're on a call, in a meeting, or writing an email, stepping back can help you refocus and avoid escalation.
- **Empathize with UDC Staff:** If staff members seem frustrated or impatient, consider how challenging their role might be—they may deal with complaints all day. Show empathy by acknowledging their efforts and clarifying that you understand they didn't cause the problem and may not be able to fix it directly. Reassure them that their efforts to listen and forward your concern to the right person are appreciated.
- **Address Non-Responses:** If an email goes unanswered, revisit its tone. A harsh, critical, or overly demanding tone, especially if it includes threats of legal action, might discourage a response. Reassess how the message may have been perceived.
- **Follow Up Thoughtfully:** If necessary, send a follow-up email with a different tone. For example, you can include an apology, acknowledging that your previous email may have been sent while you were processing strong emotions about the situation. This shows self-awareness and a willingness to work collaboratively toward a solution.

Overcoming barriers requires patience, self-reflection, and adaptability. By staying calm and constructive, you can turn challenging situations into opportunities for resolution and progress."

## Overview of Effective Communication

### Key Principles to Remember



#### Research and Know All Aspects of the Problem

- Try to make sure you have all the information, or as much as possible before reaching out to UDC on any concern.



#### Empathy

- Understand the perspective and feelings of those you are reaching out to for help.
- Believe it or not, UDC Administrative Staff want to reduce problems and issues.



#### Consistency

- Ensure your verbal, written, and nonverbal communication align.



#### Patience

- Remember that change in the correctional system is very slow.
- You can follow up in a week or two if something that was said to be changed has not been changed.
- Allow time for feedback and adjustments.

(2 Minutes, 7:22)



7:20 PM (2 Minutes)

"When advocating for an incarcerated loved one, there are several key principles to keep in mind to ensure your communication is effective and constructive:

- **Research and Know All Aspects of the Problem:** Before reaching out to UDC, gather as much information as possible about the issue. Being informed allows you to present a clear and comprehensive concern, increasing the likelihood of a constructive response.
- **Empathy:** Understand the perspective and challenges faced by UDC administrative staff. They are often dealing with a high volume of issues and, believe it or not, they want to reduce problems and resolve concerns where possible. Showing empathy can foster better communication and collaboration.
- **Consistency:** Ensure that your verbal, written, and nonverbal communication aligns. For example, if your tone in an email is professional and composed, make sure your tone during a follow-up call reflects the same level of respect and professionalism.
- **Patience:** Remember that change within the correctional system is often slow. If you've been promised a resolution or follow-up, allow at least a week or two before checking back. Providing time for feedback and adjustments demonstrates understanding of the complexities they face.

By following these principles—being informed, empathetic, consistent, and patient—you can navigate advocacy more effectively while fostering constructive dialogue and progress."

## Part 2: Conveying Thoughts Through Written Communication



Monthly Meeting Jan. 13th @ 6:30 pm MST

*How to Advocate for Your Incarcerated Loved Ones*

**Amanda Bixman**

*UPAN Director of Programming Issues*

(<1 Minute, 7:23)



7:22 PM (<1 Minute)

"We are now transitioning into the second part of our presentation: 'Conveying Thoughts Through Written Communication.' This segment focuses on how to effectively communicate your concerns, questions, or requests through written mediums such as letters and emails. Written communication is particularly important because it provides a clear record of your advocacy efforts and allows you to present your message thoughtfully and thoroughly. Our presenter for this section is Amanda Bixman, UPAN's Director of Programming Issues. Amanda brings extensive experience and a deep understanding of how to effectively convey messages that drive meaningful dialogue and action. Amanda will guide us through best practices for crafting impactful written communications, including how to structure your message, maintain a professional tone, and ensure that your concerns are heard and understood. Whether you're reaching out to UDC administrators, lawmakers, or community partners, these skills are invaluable in advocating for your incarcerated loved ones. Let's give Amanda our full attention as she takes us through this important topic."

## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email

### Gather Information

It is important to gather as much information as you can such as details of the incident:

- Specifically, what happened?
- Names of people involved (officers, medical providers, other staff)
- Date and time(s)
- Who else was around? etc.



(1 Minutes, 7:24)



7:23 PM (1 Minute)

"Before composing an email, it's important to gather as much relevant information as possible. This ensures your message is clear, factual, and actionable. Here's what to include:

1. What Happened? Be specific about the incident. Describe the events as clearly and objectively as possible. For example, detail what occurred, where it happened, and any sequence of events.
2. Names of People Involved: Identify anyone directly or indirectly involved, such as officers, medical providers, or other staff. Including names helps establish context and accountability.
3. Date and Time: Note when the incident took place. Providing accurate dates and times ensures there's no confusion about the timeline.
4. Who Else Was Present? Consider who else may have been a witness or involved, such as other inmates, staff, or visitors. Their perspective or presence could be relevant.

Having this information ready before writing your email helps ensure your message is thorough and reduces the likelihood of follow-up requests for clarification. It also shows that you've done your homework and are serious about resolving the issue."

## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email Go Through the Proper Chain-of-Command

- UDC asks families to email **Jade Watkin** in *Constituent Services* of the UDC Public Information Office who tracks the concerns and forwards to the appropriate Division Director, Warden, etc.
- Karen Tapahe the *Public Information Officer* also assists. Their email addresses are:
  - Jade Watkin - [jwatkin@utah.gov](mailto:jwatkin@utah.gov) | Karen Tapahe - [ktapahe@utah.gov](mailto:ktapahe@utah.gov)
- If you know who is over the area of your concern, you can email them as well. For example, in CUCF I address the issues with the **Deputy Warden** of the housing building. But if it is an issue related to anything within that building (housing, classes being held, property being handed out, etc.), then I also copy the **Warden** and UPAN.
- If it is for **Medical**, reach out to **Jade Watkin** and / or **Karen Tapahe** by email. You can copy the **UPAN Med Team** at [medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org). If it is during working hours M-F, you may also call:
  - USCF Family Medical Line at (801) 522-7293 | CUCF Family Medical Line at (435) 528-6082
- They can only talk to you if your loved one has listed you on their **Medical Release of Information Form**. It must be on file in their medical record.

(2 Minutes, 7:26)



7:24 PM (2 Minutes)

"When preparing to send an email about your concerns, it's important to follow the proper chain of command. This helps ensure that your message reaches the appropriate people who can address the issue effectively.

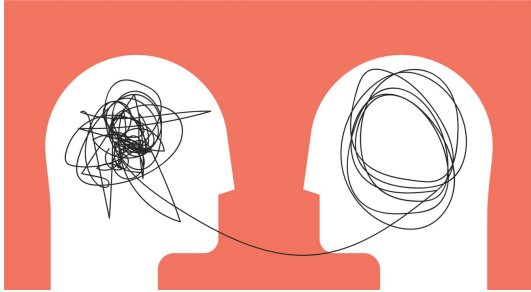
- **Start with Constituent Services:** UDC recommends emailing **Jade Watkin** in *Constituent Services* at the UDC Public Information Office. Jade's role involves tracking concerns and forwarding them to the relevant Division Director, Warden, or other appropriate individuals. Jade's email is [jwatkin@utah.gov](mailto:jwatkin@utah.gov). Additionally, you may reach out to **Karen Tapahe**, the *Public Information Officer*, at [ktapahe@utah.gov](mailto:ktapahe@utah.gov).
- **Escalate if Necessary:** If you know who oversees the area of your concern, such as a **Deputy Warden**, you can contact them directly. For example, at CUCF, issues related to housing, classes, or property may be addressed to the **Deputy Warden**, and you can also copy the **Warden** and UPAN to ensure accountability.
- **For Medical Concerns:** If the issue involves medical care, you can email **Jade Watkin** and **Karen Tapahe**. You may also copy the **UPAN Med Team** at [medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org). During working hours, you can call:
  - USCF Family Medical Line: (801) 522-7293
  - CUCF Family Medical Line: (435) 528-6082

Keep in mind that they can only speak with you if your loved one has included you on their **Medical Release of Information Form**, which must be on file in their medical record. Following these steps ensures your concerns are directed to the right people, minimizing delays and maximizing the likelihood of a timely resolution."

## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email

### Understand the Complaint from Both Sides if Possible

- Always try to see the problem from both perspectives.
- It's important to be able to identify both sides when writing the complaint. Take accountability for what your loved one violated, and state how it will be corrected on their behalf. Also express in your complaint about what went wrong.



(1 Minutes, 7:27)



7:26 PM (1 Minute)

"When preparing a complaint, it's critical to approach the situation with an open mind and consider both sides of the issue. This perspective helps ensure the complaint is balanced, constructive, and more likely to be received positively by those addressing it.

- **Seeing Both Perspectives:** Always try to put yourself in the shoes of the person on the receiving end. What might their perspective be? Are there operational challenges, misunderstandings, or gaps in communication that could explain the issue? Acknowledging these possibilities can strengthen your argument.
- **Taking Accountability:** If your loved one made a mistake or violated a rule, it's important to acknowledge it in your complaint. State the facts clearly and take responsibility for any infractions while emphasizing a desire to resolve the issue and move forward constructively.
- **Clearly Outline What Went Wrong:** Be specific about the issue or problem—what happened, why it's a concern, and the impact on your loved one. Providing clear, factual details helps the recipient understand the issue and work toward a resolution.

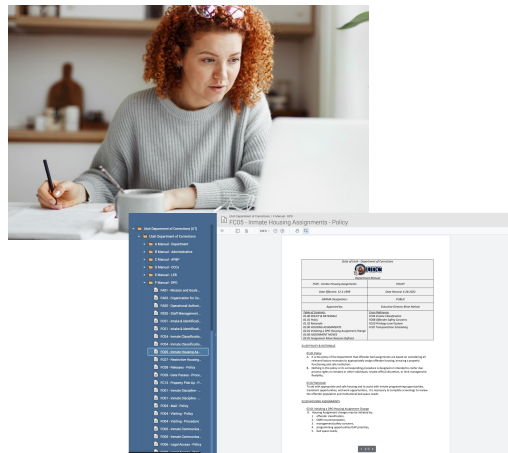
This approach not only improves communication but also demonstrates respect and willingness to collaborate, which can go a long way in achieving a positive outcome."



## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email

### Do Your Homework

- Never send complaints immediately after writing them, even if the matter seems urgent (unless it is life or death).
- Replay the scenario and make sure you know the rules and policies, and what is expected by prison officials.
- Look up policy information on the UDC website under [Family/Friends - Policies](#).
  - A link on the policy page will open a document repository page with folders containing PDFs.
  - There are 8 manuals labeled A - H. Each one represents a different corrections area such as Department, Administrative, AP&P, CCCs, LEB, DPO, UCI, or Facilities.
  - Browse and read the documents to familiarize yourself with various UDC policies relevant to your situation. This will help you understand both perspectives.



(2 Minutes, 7:29)



7:27 PM (2 Minutes)

“Before sending any complaint or email, it’s important to prepare thoroughly to ensure your message is factual, respectful, and actionable. Let’s go over these key steps:

- **Pause Before Sending:** Never send complaints immediately after writing them, especially when emotions are high. Give yourself time to reflect on the content and tone. The only exception is in urgent life-or-death situations.
- **Replay the Scenario:** Think through the situation carefully. Make sure you understand the rules, policies, and expectations from prison officials. This helps ensure your email is framed within the right context.
- **Utilize the UDC Website for Policies:**
  - Visit the Family/Friends - Policies section on the UDC website. This section contains a repository of key documents and manuals that outline the rules and regulations governing various corrections areas.
  - There are 8 manuals labeled A through H, each covering specific topics like Administration, AP&P, or UCI. Take the time to browse these documents to find the policies relevant to your issue.
  - **Familiarize Yourself with the Details:** Reading these documents helps you anticipate responses from the prison administration and ensures your complaint is well-informed and credible.

Doing your homework equips you with the information needed to craft a strong, respectful, and effective email. By showing that you’ve taken the time to understand the policies, you also build trust with those receiving your complaint.”

## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email

### Compose the Email

It's important to understand that the people you are emailing weren't involved in the issue, and they should be addressed respectfully. They are the ones that will possibly be helping to solve the problem.

- Explain the issue while **taking accountability** on behalf of your loved one.
- Explain any **corrective actions** that your loved one has already initiated themselves.
- Ask them to help control what we can't control.



(1 Minutes, 7:30)



7:29 PM (1 Minute)

“When composing your email, it’s essential to keep the tone respectful and constructive, as the recipient likely wasn’t directly involved in the issue. Here’s how to approach it effectively:

1. **Explain the Issue Clearly and Take Accountability:** Describe the situation with as much detail as possible while acknowledging any actions your loved one may have taken that contributed to the issue. Taking accountability builds trust and encourages cooperation.
2. **Highlight Corrective Actions Already Taken:** If your loved one has taken steps to resolve or address the issue, be sure to mention them. This shows initiative and demonstrates that you’re not solely relying on others for resolution.
3. **Request Assistance to Control What You Can’t:** Ask for their help in areas that are beyond your control. Frame your request positively, emphasizing collaboration to achieve a resolution.

Remember, the goal is to work together with the recipient to find a solution, not to assign blame. By composing your email in this way, you maximize the chances of a constructive and timely response.”

## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email

### Take Another “Time Out” Step Away for a Few Minutes

Make sure your emotions are under control before proceeding.



(1 Minutes, 7:31)



7:30 PM (1 Minute)

“Before finalizing and sending the email, it’s important to take a moment to step away and ensure you’re approaching the communication with a clear and composed mindset.

1. **Pause and Breathe:** Taking a brief timeout helps regulate emotions. Whether it’s frustration, anger, or anxiety, ensure those feelings don’t influence the tone of your email.
2. **Reflect on the Content:** Review the draft after stepping away to ensure it is clear, respectful, and focused on the issue without any emotional bias. It’s a good idea to have someone read your draft to help you spot things you may have missed.
3. **Maintain Professionalism:** A calm and rational approach strengthens your position and invites collaboration from the recipient.

By stepping away, you give yourself time to reflect and ensure that the email you send represents your concerns thoughtfully and professionally.”

## Check List And Steps for Preparing an Email

### Review Your Email

- ✓ Make sure it doesn't come off as attacking or threatening.
- ✓ Read your email to your husband, sister, friend , etc. to see how they perceive it.
- ✓ Revise it if it is attacking or has language that would be perceived as inflammatory or attacking.
- ✓ If all is well..... Send it!



**Caution:** UDC will stop all communication if a family member becomes aggressive in their emails or phone calls, uses foul language, or says they are going to sue the prison.

It is UDC policy that once someone says they are going to sue the prison that all communication with that person must go through the **Attorney General's Office Prison Liaison** rather than UDC staff respond.

(1 Minutes, 7:32)



7:31 PM (1 Minute)

"Before sending your email, take the time to carefully review it to ensure it aligns with the guidelines for effective communication:

1. **Tone Check:** Make sure the email doesn't come off as attacking, threatening, or overly emotional. Maintaining professionalism is key to being taken seriously.
2. **Second Opinion:** Read your email to someone you trust—such as a family member or friend. Their feedback can help you identify areas where the tone or content might need improvement.
3. **Edit for Inflammatory Language:** Revise the email if it includes any inflammatory or confrontational language that could be misinterpreted or escalate the situation.
4. **Send Confidently:** Once you've confirmed that the email is clear, respectful, and constructive, go ahead and send it.

**Caution:** Avoid using foul language, aggressive tones, or threats of legal action. According to UDC policy, such behavior will result in the termination of direct communication, requiring future correspondence to go through the Attorney General's Office Prison Liaison.

By following these steps, you can ensure that your communication is effective, professional, and focused on resolving the issue constructively."

## Part 3: Contacting Your Legislators



Monthly Meeting Jan. 13th @ 6:30 pm MST

*How to Advocate for Your Incarcerated Loved Ones*

*Molly Prince*

*UPAN Cofounder*

(<1 Minute, 7:32)

UPAN Monthly Meeting | January 13th, 2025 | How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones

45

7:32 PM (<1 Minute)

“This section focuses on how to effectively contact your legislators to advocate for meaningful changes in the criminal justice system.

- Why Legislators? Legislators have the power to influence policies and pass laws that can bring about systemic change within the correctional system.

- Key Goals When Contacting Legislators: Raise awareness of specific issues impacting incarcerated individuals and their families. Advocate for legislative actions or reforms that align with the needs of those affected by the criminal justice system.

- Presenter Introduction: Molly Prince, UPAN Cofounder, will guide us through best practices, effective communication strategies, and essential tools for successfully engaging with your representatives.

In the next few slides, we'll explore the steps involved, including research, crafting your message, and following up after your initial communication.”

# Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

## Overview



- What affects one most often can or will affect us all!
- Letter writing and emails to those in policy making positions are powerful tools.

(1 Minutes, 7:33)



UPAN Monthly Meeting | January 13th, 2025 | How to Advocate for Our Incarcerated Loved Ones

46

7:32 PM (1 Minute)

“Let’s start by talking about the significance of writing to legislators and elected officials:

- What affects one most often can or will affect us all: Highlighting how individual issues can have broader societal impacts, making it critical to advocate for changes that benefit the community.
- The power of letter writing: Letters and emails serve as effective tools to raise awareness, provide insights, and push for action on important issues. Personalized letters and emails can make legislators more aware of issues that might otherwise go unnoticed. They also demonstrate public interest and urgency around specific reforms.

Next, we’ll cover how to structure these communications and maximize their impact.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### When to Write Elected Officials – Last Resort

- *When all attempts at working on an issue for change that is reasonable and in the best interest of the incarcerated individuals and community in general with UDC are exhausted.*
- Writing to the Governor has historically not been effective. The Governor's Office has aides that read the emails and letters. Then those involving the UDC are sent to UDC for answers. Writing the Governor is valuable in that it keeps his office informed of concerns but will not necessarily result in change.
- It is suggested you should write to your legislator.
- The state legislators are the ones who will fund and oversee the prison. **NOT** our Congress people in Washington, DC. Utah's prisons are funded with Utah taxpayer funds, not federal funds.



(1 Minutes, 7:34)



7:33 PM (1 Minute)

“Writing to elected officials should be a final step in advocacy efforts.

- Make sure to exhaust all other avenues: Writing to legislators should only happen after reasonable attempts to resolve issues with UDC directly have failed.
- Writing to the Governor's Office has limited effectiveness as aides often redirect concerns back to UDC for responses. However, it can still inform the Governor's Office of systemic issues, even if it doesn't result in direct change.

Focus on state legislators:

- State legislators are the most impactful because they oversee prison funding and policies. Federal legislators (Congress) are generally not involved in state prison matters as Utah's prisons are funded through state taxpayer funds. While contacting officials can be powerful, understanding the right level of government to address and timing your efforts appropriately ensures your advocacy has the greatest impact.”

# Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

## Find Your Legislators

1. Go to <https://le.utah.gov>

- About half-way down the home page is a box that has three buttons: Quick Links, Trending Bills, and Find Your Legislator. Choose **Find Your Legislator** to bring up a tool that allows you to enter your home address and it will tell you who your elected State Representative or State Senator are:

The screenshot shows the Utah Legislature website interface. At the top, there are three buttons: 'Quick Links', 'Trending Bills', and 'Find your Legislator'. A red arrow points to the 'Find your Legislator' button. Below this is a form with the text 'Enter your home address to view your legislators.' and 'To find the legislators that represent you in the Utah Legislature, enter your permanent home address or the address at which you are registered to vote.' The address entered is '1480 N 8000 W, Salt Lake City, UT 84116'. Below the address field are buttons for 'Set', 'Use My Location', and 'View Map'. To the right of the form is a map showing the location of the address. Below the map are two cards: 'Representative Sandra Hollins (D) House District 21' and 'Senator Luz Escamilla (D) Senate District 10'. At the bottom of the page, there are two columns of contact information for the 'STATE SENATE' and 'HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES'. Each column includes the address, phone number, and a 'Contact a Senator' or 'Contact a Representative' button. Red arrows point to these buttons.

2. On the bottom of the home page are options to contact your State Senator or Representative. Click on the contact button and it will take you to another page to navigate over and find your representative or senator.

(2 Minutes, 7:36)



7:34 PM (2 Minutes)

“Next, let’s walk through the steps for finding your state legislators to address your concerns effectively:

1. Access the Utah Legislature Website:

- Navigate to [le.utah.gov](https://le.utah.gov).
- On the homepage, look for the ‘Find Your Legislator’ section about halfway down the page.
- Use your permanent home address or the address where you are registered to vote.
- Once entered, the tool will display your State Representative and State Senator with their contact details.

2. Enter Your Address:

- Scroll to the bottom of the homepage for direct links to contact your State Senator or Representative.
- Clicking on ‘Contact a Senator’ or ‘Contact a Representative’ will guide you to the appropriate contact page for initiating communication.

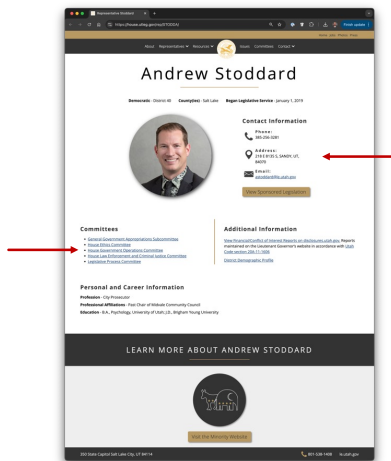
This process empowers you to advocate effectively by engaging the correct officials responsible for addressing state-level concerns.”



# Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

## Find Your Legislators - Continued

- 3. Once you know who your State Representative and Senator are, write them down.
- 4. Go to their page and it will have their contact information. You can also navigate their page to see what committees and subcommittees they sit on.



(1 Minutes, 7:37)

7:36 PM (1 Minute)

“3. Document Your Legislators: After using the ‘Find Your Legislator’ tool, write down the names and contact details of your State Representative and Senator for easy reference.

4. Access Their Profiles: Click on the legislator’s name or profile link on the website. This will take you to their individual profile page. On their profile page, you’ll find their Email address, office phone number, and office address. And a list of committees and subcommittees they are part of, which can indicate the areas of policy they focus on.

Use this information strategically to address your concerns to the appropriate committee, if applicable. Understanding their areas of focus will help you tailor your message to resonate with their responsibilities. This step ensures that you have all the necessary details to initiate an effective conversation or correspondence with your elected officials. Always keep this information organized for future advocacy efforts.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Steps to Write a Letter or Email to Your State Senator and Representative

- Begin with a greeting and stating who you are.
- You might be a constituent, or a concerned affected citizen, or a subject matter expert on what you are writing about.
  - **Example:** *I am Jane Marie Doe and I live in your district.* You can include a **short introduction** that includes your experience or profession if it is relevant to the issue you are writing about. That is not required, however.
- If you are using an email, **give your full address** in the body of the email or after your signature at the end of the email. If you are writing a paper letter, have your letterhead at the top of the letter with your full name, address and phone number.
- If you have contacted your legislator previously about another matter, you could remind them of that, but that is not necessary. If you have contacted them about this matter, it is wise to state that as well.
- Next, provide a short and concise **statement of concern**.



(2 Minutes, 7:39)



7:37 PM (2 Minutes)

“Next, here’s guidance on how to structure a letter or email effectively when reaching out to your State Senator or Representative:

1. **Begin with a Greeting and Introduction:** Clearly state who you are and your purpose for writing. If relevant, mention that you are a constituent in their district or provide context like your expertise or connection to the issue. Example: ‘I am Jane Marie Doe, and I live in your district. I am writing to bring attention to [specific issue] and its impact on our community.’
2. **Include Your Contact Information:** For emails, add your full address in the body of the email or as part of your signature. For physical letters, include your name, address, and phone number at the top (letterhead style).
3. **Mention Any Prior Contact:** If you’ve contacted them on a related or different issue, briefly remind them of it. If it’s your first time addressing this matter, indicate that too.
4. **State Your Concern Clearly:** Provide a concise statement of the issue you are addressing. Avoid being vague; focus on the main point you want them to understand.

This approach ensures clarity, professionalism, and respect, increasing the likelihood of a productive response from your legislator.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Reasons You Might Be Writing

- To bring up an issue that has not been addressed by the legislature in the past.
- To bring to their attention a concern about an existing law that you believe needs to be amended / changed / repealed.
- To share your support or opposition to a particular bill or legislation that is being discussed in the upcoming or current legislative session.



(1 Minutes, 7:40)



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51

7:39 PM (1 Minute)

“Here’s some key reasons for reaching out to legislators and elected officials:

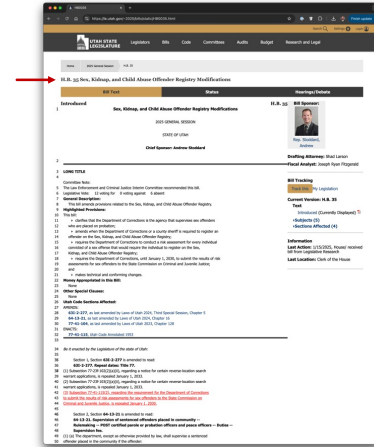
1. Addressing New Issues: You might be raising awareness about a topic that has not been addressed by the legislature before. Highlight why it is important and how it impacts the community.
2. Concerns About Existing Laws: If you feel an existing law needs amendments, changes, or even repeal, writing to your representative is a powerful step. Provide clear reasoning and, if possible, include examples of how the current law is problematic.
3. Support or Opposition to Legislation: Communicate your stance on proposed bills or legislation in the current or upcoming session. Be specific about whether you support or oppose it and include reasons why.

These reasons help legislators understand the issues affecting their constituents and guide their decision-making during legislative sessions.”

# Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

## The Focus of the Letter

- Choose one issue or piece of legislation to discuss.
  - If there is already a bill introduced, use the bill number (ex. SB001, HB002).
  - If a bill hasn't been introduced yet, clearly explain the issue.
- Choose the three most important pieces of information to share about that issue or the bill. Be clear and specific about the information you are sharing.
  - Be clear about what you are asking your legislator to do.
  - Be informative and factual.
  - Stay focused on the issue you are concerned with.
- If you have more than one issue, and they are not directly related to each other, write a separate letter for each of them.



(2 Minutes, 7:42)



7:40 PM (2 Minutes)

“When writing to legislators or elected officials, focus is critical to ensure your message is clear and impactful. Here are the key points:

- Choose One Issue or Legislation:** If a bill has been introduced, include the bill number (e.g., SB001, HB002). If no bill exists, clearly explain the issue you are bringing to their attention.
- Prioritize Information:** Identify and emphasize the three most important pieces of information about the issue or legislation. Be clear about what you are asking your legislator to do (e.g., support, oppose, amend).
- Clarity and Factual Basis:** Stay informative and factual, providing relevant evidence or context to support your request. Avoid overwhelming your audience with too much detail; keep the letter focused on a single issue.
- Write Separate Letters for Multiple Issues:** If you have multiple unrelated concerns, write separate letters for each topic to maintain clarity and impact.

By structuring your letter with these principles, you maximize the chances of your message being understood and acted upon.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Length of the Letter

- Letters should be no more than **one page** and emails should be about **500 words**.
- The **better informed** the more powerful advocate you become.
- Your **continued involvement** shows deeper concern when your words are followed by action.
- **Show up** to hearings (or online) and be prepared to **contribute**.



(1 Minutes, 7:43)



7:42 PM (1 Minute)

“When writing to legislators or elected officials, the length and clarity of your letter are crucial. Here’s how to structure it effectively:

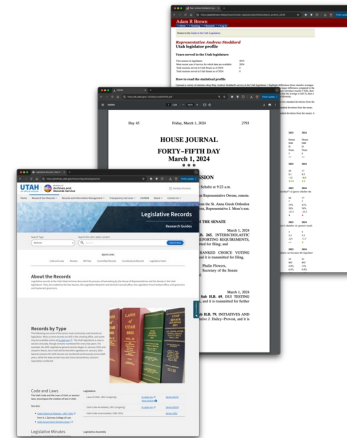
1. **Keep It Concise:** Limit letters to one page and emails to approximately 500 words. This ensures the recipient can quickly grasp your points without being overwhelmed.
2. **Be Well-Informed:** The more you understand about the issue, the stronger and more credible your advocacy becomes. Research thoroughly and present accurate information.
3. **Show Commitment:** Advocacy is more impactful when accompanied by consistent action. Following up on your letters by attending hearings (in-person or online) and contributing to discussions demonstrates your dedication to the cause.
4. **Action-Oriented Advocacy:** Encourage officials to take action by being prepared to support your recommendations with evidence and follow-up contributions.

By following these guidelines, your letters and involvement will create a lasting impression and effectively convey your message.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Ways to Stay Informed of What the Utah Legislature is Doing

- Track the voting records of how your legislators vote on issues you care about.
  - Adam R. Brown, BYU Professor of Political Science – Utah Legislator Voting Profiles
    - [https://adambrown.info/p/research/utah\\_legislature/profile](https://adambrown.info/p/research/utah_legislature/profile)
  - Utah State Legislature > Legislators > Journals – see votes on specific sessions and bills
    - <https://le.utah.gov/asp/schedule/journal.asp>
  - Utah Division of Archives and Records Service – all historical records of every legislative session
    - <https://archives.utah.gov/research/guides/legislative/>



(2 Minutes, 7:45)



7:43 PM (2 Minutes)

“Staying informed about the activities of the Utah Legislature is crucial for effective advocacy. Here are some ways to track their work and voting records:

#### 1. Track Voting Records of Legislators:

- Use resources like Adam R. Brown, a BYU Professor of Political Science, who offers detailed Utah legislator voting profiles:
- Website: [Adam R. Brown Voting Profiles](https://adambrown.info/p/research/utah_legislature/profile)

#### 2. Access Legislative Journals:

- Visit the Utah State Legislature website to explore journals that detail votes on specific sessions and bills:
- Website: [Utah State Legislature Journals](https://le.utah.gov/asp/schedule/journal.asp)

#### 3. Explore Historical Legislative Records:

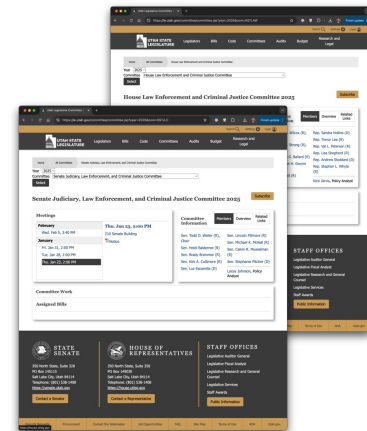
- The Utah Division of Archives and Records Service provides access to all historical records of every legislative session:
- Website: [Utah Legislative Archives](https://archives.utah.gov/research/guides/legislative/)

By leveraging these tools, you can gain insights into your legislators’ actions and make informed decisions when advocating for change. Remember, being informed strengthens your voice as an advocate.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Ways to Stay Informed of What the Utah Legislature is Doing - Continued

- Follow committee work. All legislators are assigned to various committees and subcommittees.
- Pay attention to the 2025 House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee showing members:
  - <https://le.utah.gov/committee/committee.jsp?year=2025&com=HSTLAW>
- Pay attention to the 2025 Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee:
  - <https://le.utah.gov/committee/committee.jsp?year=2025&com=SSTJLC>
- You can find the bills they are working on at these links as well.
- The 45-day 2025 Utah Legislative General Session starts on January 21<sup>st</sup> and ends on March 7<sup>th</sup>.



(2 Minutes, 7:47)



7:453 PM (2 Minutes)

“Here’s how to stay informed about the legislature’s ongoing work:

#### 1. Follow Committee Work:

- Every legislator is assigned to committees and subcommittees. Their work often reflects the primary focus areas of legislation.

#### • Pay attention to:

- 2025 House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee:

- Link: [House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee](#)

- 2025 Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice Committee:

- Link: [Senate Judiciary and Criminal Justice Committee](#)

#### 2. Find Bills Being Worked On:

- These links will allow you to see the bills under discussion and review committee member activities.

#### 3. 2025 Legislative General Session:

- The session spans 45 days, beginning on January 21<sup>st</sup> and concluding on March 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Engage early in the session to ensure your voice and advocacy efforts are heard during discussions.

By focusing on these committees and timelines, you’ll be better prepared to engage in legislative advocacy and track progress on issues important to you.”

## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Acknowledging Efforts and Things to Avoid

#### Do This

- Acknowledge any support you see as well as progress even if it is small. An email recognizing effort is valuable.

#### Avoid This

- Avoid using the following in your communications:
  - Anger, Threats, or Bully Attitude
  - Jargon, Unfamiliar Terms, or Slang
  - Misspelling and Bad Grammar
  - Information based on half-truths or emotions, not facts
  - Generalizations that are not supported by data.



(1 Minutes, 7:48)



7:47 PM (1 Minute)

“When writing to legislators and elected officials:

Do This:

- **Acknowledge Support:** Highlight and recognize any progress or effort made, even if it seems minor. Sending an email to acknowledge efforts builds a positive rapport.

Avoid This:

- **Avoid expressing:**
  - **Anger, Threats, or a Bully Attitude:** These can shut down constructive dialogue.
  - **Jargon, Unfamiliar Terms, or Slang:** Keep language simple and accessible.
  - **Misspellings and Poor Grammar:** This can reduce the credibility of your message.
  - **Half-Truths or Emotion-Based Statements:** Stick to verifiable facts for stronger advocacy.
  - **Unsupported Generalizations:** Provide evidence to back up your points.

Maintaining a respectful tone and focusing on factual, clear communication ensures your message is received constructively.”



## Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

### Conclusion

You **CAN** make a difference by being honest and vulnerable in your writing, being persistent and consistent, open to feedback and criticism, and using writing as a tool for advocacy and social change!

**REMEMBER THE GOAL:** Learning how to harness your passion and energy and channel it into advocating and its potential to make a positive difference in the lives of others who need our representation.

If you have attempted to advocate for your loved one by emailing Jade Watkin or Karen Tapahe; or by calling the Family Medical Line or reaching out to various staff or administrators and not felt like you made progress, you can ask UPAN for help.

Provide all of the information, history, including any communications with UDC to:

- [contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org), for general inquiries
- [medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org), for medical inquires



(2 Minutes, 7:50)



7:48 PM (2 Minutes)

“As we conclude our presentation and open things up for your questions, keep the following key points in mind:

- Your Impact Matters: Advocacy is powerful. By being honest, vulnerable, and consistent in your communication, you can inspire change.
- Stay Persistent: Advocacy often requires multiple attempts and continuous effort. Be open to feedback and keep refining your message.
- Remember the Goal: Harness your passion and energy to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need representation.

If your attempts to advocate for your loved one through official channels like Jade Watkin, Karen Tapahe, or the Family Medical Line have not yielded results, UPAN is here to help.

- How to Reach UPAN:
- For general inquiries: [contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org)
- For medical concerns: [medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org](mailto:medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org)

When reaching out, provide all relevant information, history, and details about your previous communications with UDC. Advocacy is a team effort, and by working together, we can amplify our collective voice.”

## Questions?



(10 Minutes, 8:00)

7:50 PM (10 Minutes)

Now that we've had the privilege of hearing from [Guest Speaker's Name], it's time to open the floor for questions.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding [Guest Speaker's Name] presentation, their work, or related topics. To ask a question, simply use the Zoom chat feature or utilize the 'raise hand' button, and we'll unmute you accordingly.



## Updates on Various Issues Molly Prince & UPAN Directors

(10 Minutes, 8:10)



8:00 PM (10 Minutes)

Next, I'd like to invite Molly Prince and the other UPAN Directors to share any updates they have for us today. This is a great opportunity for us to stay informed about the latest developments within UPAN and our ongoing initiatives. Molly, perhaps you could start us off, and then we'll hear from each of our directors in turn.

## Open Discussion

### Any Topic and Q&A



#### Popular Topics:

- COVID-19 / Vaccines
- Inmate Medical
- In-Person, Barrier, and Video Visitation
- Programming / Treatment
- Inmate Placement Program (IPP)
- Phone System / Mail
- Property and Commissary
- Release / Re-Entry
- Board of Pardons, Probation / Parole
- Jobs and Housing
- STG, Gang Units, Max, Death Row
- Food and Recreation

(20 Minutes, 8:30)



8:10 PM (20 Minutes)

Now, let's open the floor to an open discussion where we can delve into any topic of interest and address your questions. Feel free to bring up any concerns or queries you may have regarding the following popular topics or any other relevant matters:

Your participation is crucial in shaping our discussions and guiding our advocacy efforts. So, please don't hesitate to share your thoughts or ask questions. Who would like to start the discussion? Please raise your hand or type your question in the chat, and we'll make sure to address it.

thank you!

Save-the-Date: Next UPAN Meeting Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Special Guest: Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP)

6:30 PM to 8:30 PM MST – Adjust for your time zone | 120 Minutes

Via Zoom / Recordings will be available on Facebook and our website:

<https://utahprisoneradvocate.org>

(End)

8:30 PM (1 Minute)

As we come to the end of our Monthly Zoom Meeting, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you our special guest and all of you for your active participation and valuable contributions today.

Before we conclude, I'd like to remind everyone to mark your calendars for our next UPAN Meeting, scheduled for [Read the Slide].

The meeting will take place from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM MST. Please adjust the timing according to your time zone to ensure you don't miss out.

Just like today, the meeting will be conducted via Zoom and live-streamed, with recordings available on our social media platforms, including Facebook Live. Be sure to visit our Facebook page for tonight's recording and the latest updates.

Once again, thank you all for your participation and support. We look forward to seeing you again next month. Take care and have a wonderful evening!