



UPAN

UTAH PRISONER
ADVOCATE NETWORK

www.utahprisoneradvocate.org

The meeting will begin at 6:35 pm MST

Meeting Agenda

UPAN Monthly Meeting | 120 Minutes | Monday, January 13th, 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 10th 2025

Topic: Utah Prison Education Project (UPEP)





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>



Welcome & Introductions

(<1 Minute, 6:37)



Introducing the UPAN Linktree

One simple URL to remember for all our important links:

<https://linktr.ee/utahprisoner>



(1 Minute, 6:37)



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)



Introductions

UPAN Directors



Our Organizers | 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

- 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



(2 Minutes, 6:41)





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

January 13, 2025 UPAN Meeting

Presentation Contributors:

Molly Prince, LCSW – *UPAN Cofounder*

Amanda Bixman – *Director of Programming Issues, CUCF*

Karen Thompson – *Director of Special Projects*

Shane Severson – *Director of Communications*

(1 Minute, 6:42)



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)



Definition of Prison Advocacy



UPAN and PAG touring the Bear 2 S.O.L.I.D. Program as 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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)

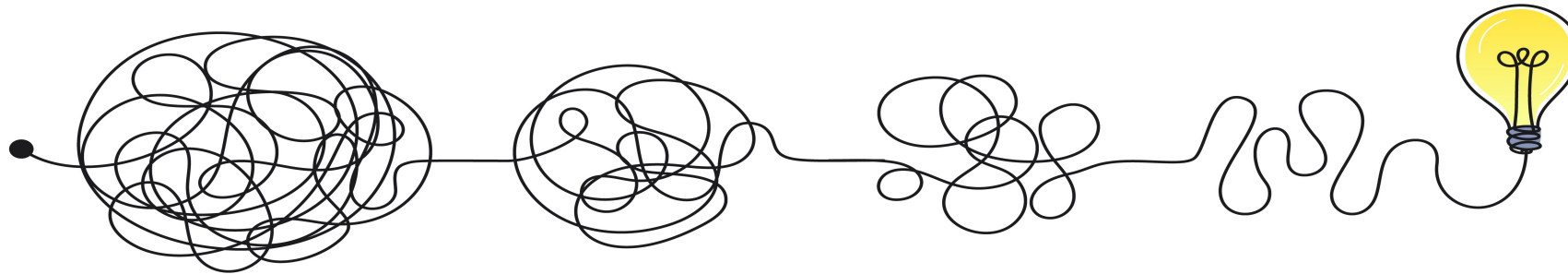


The Basics of Individual Advocacy

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)



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.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Utah Department of Corrections website. On the left is a navigation menu with a tree structure under 'Utah Department of Corrections (UT)'. The 'F Manual - DPO' folder is expanded, and 'FC05 - Inmate Housing As...' is selected. The main content area shows the title 'FC05 - Inmate Housing Assignments - Policy' and a document preview. The document header includes the Utah Department of Corrections logo and 'Department Manual'. A table of contents is visible, listing sections like '01.00 POLICY & RATIONALE', '02.00 HOUSING ASSIGNMENTS', and '03.00 ASSIGNMENT MOVES'. The '01.01 Policy' section is partially visible, stating that offender bed assignments are based on relevant factors for proper functioning and safety.

(2 Minutes, 7:06)

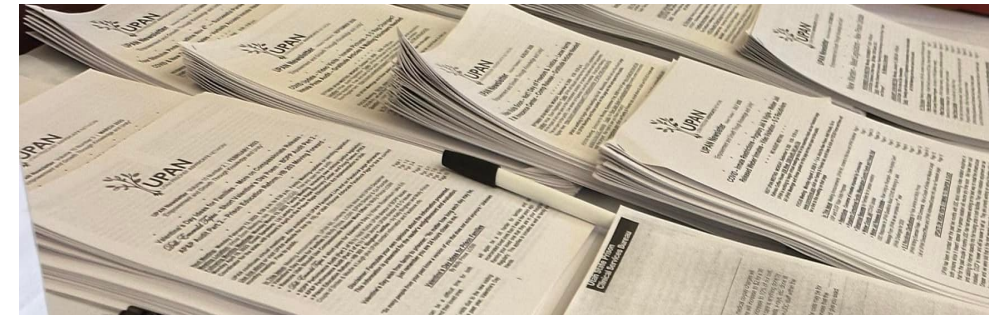


The Basics of Individual Advocacy

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 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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)

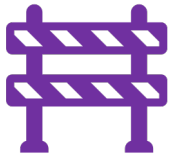


Overview of Effective Communication

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)



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)



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)



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)



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 | Karen Tapahe - 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. 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.

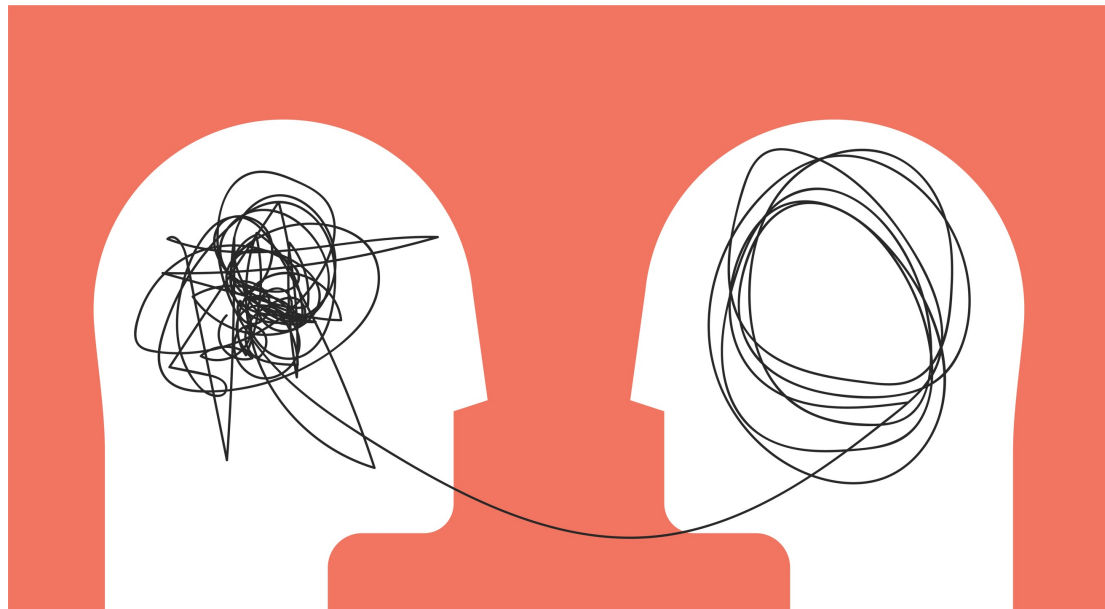
(2 Minutes, 7:26)



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**.



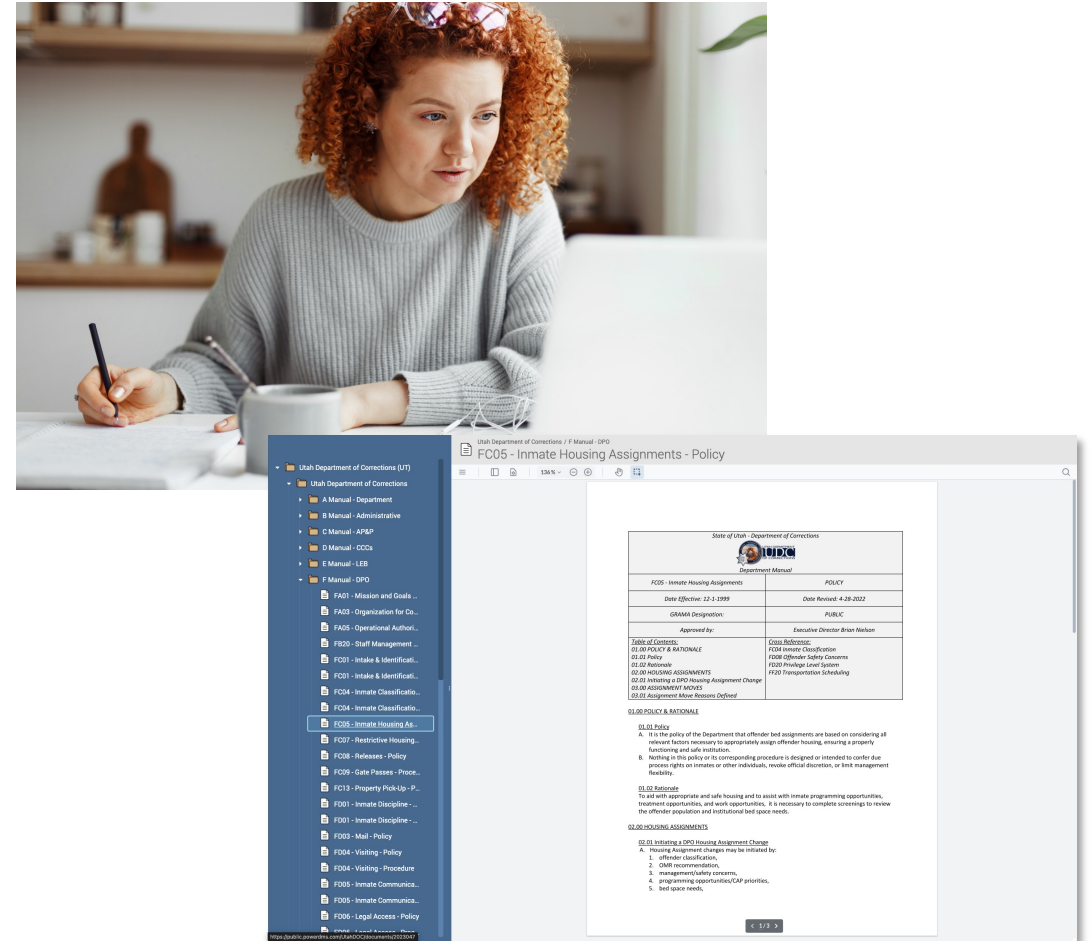
(1 Minutes, 7:27)



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)



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)



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)



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)



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)

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)



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)

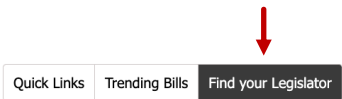


Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

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:



Quick Links Trending Bills **Find your Legislator**

Enter your home address to view your legislators.

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.

1480 N 8000 W, Salt Lake City, UT

84116

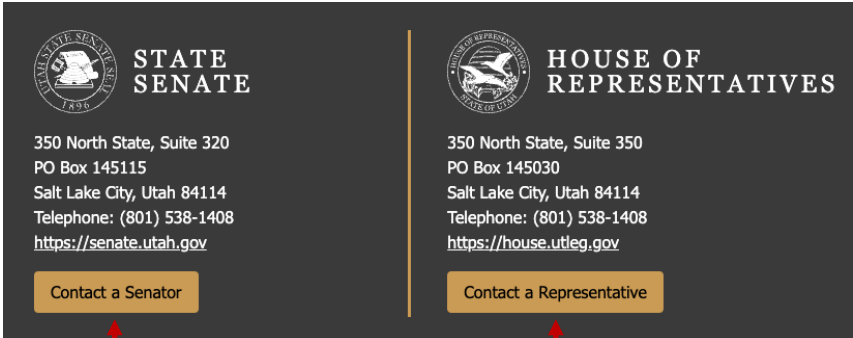
Set Use My Location View Map

[More Legislator Information](#)



Use map location Use physical location

Representative	Senator
 Sandra Hollins (D) House District 21	 Luz Escamilla (D) Senate District 10



STATE SENATE	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
350 North State, Suite 320 PO Box 145115 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114 Telephone: (801) 538-1408 https://senate.utah.gov Contact a Senator	350 North State, Suite 350 PO Box 145030 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114 Telephone: (801) 538-1408 https://house.utah.gov Contact a Representative

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.

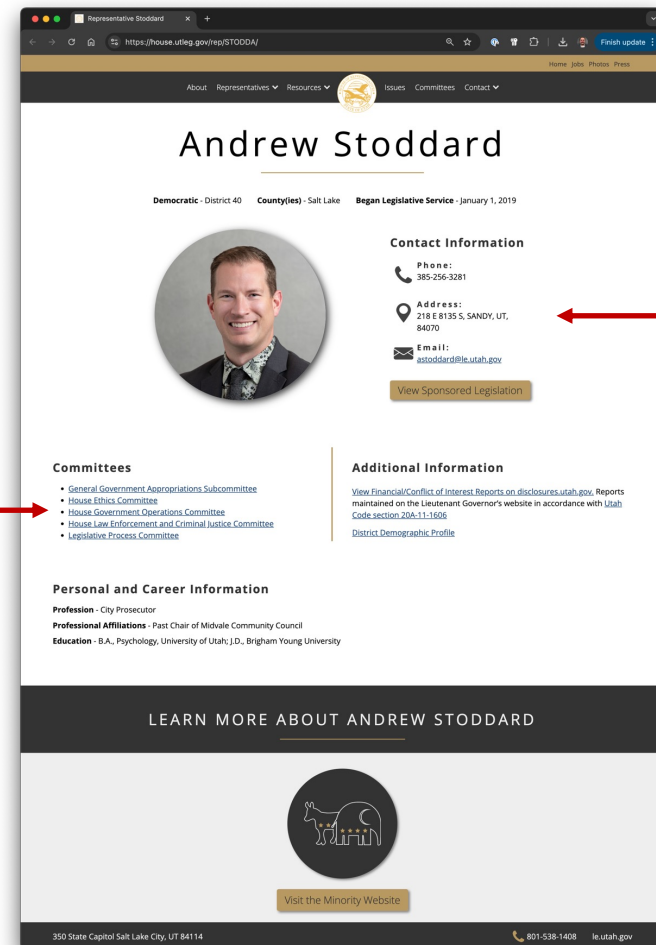
(2 Minutes, 7:36)



Writing Letters to Legislators and Elected Officials

Find Your Legislators - Continued

- Once you know who your State Representative and Senator are, write them down.
- 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.



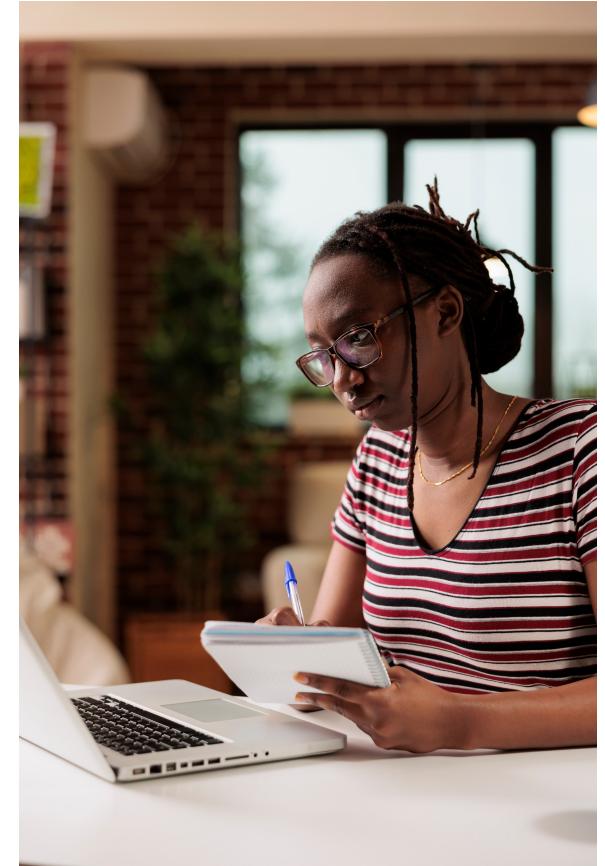
(1 Minutes, 7:37)



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)



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)



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.

The screenshot shows the Utah State Legislature website for H.B. 35. The page is titled "H.B. 35 Sex, Kidnap, and Child Abuse Offender Registry Modifications". A red arrow points to the title. The page includes a table with columns for "Bill Text", "Status", and "Hearings/Debate". The "Bill Text" column shows the bill's title and sponsor information. The "Status" column shows the bill's progress through the legislative process. The "Hearings/Debate" column shows the bill's sponsor and other relevant information. The page also includes a "LONG TITLE" section, a "Committee Note", a "General Description", and "Highlighted Provisions".

(2 Minutes, 7:42)



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)



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
 - 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/>



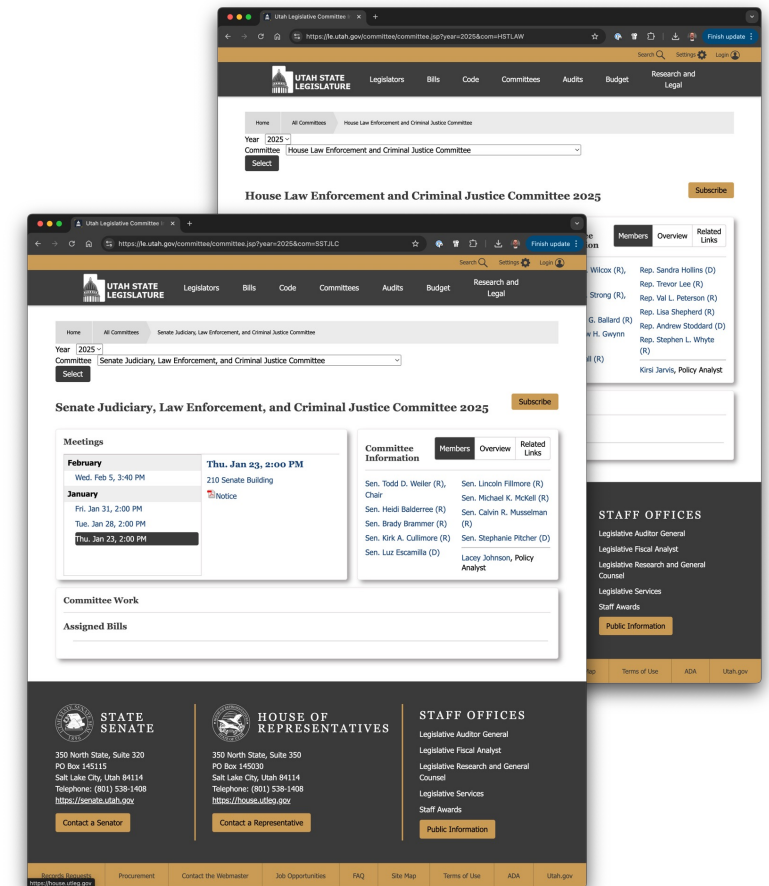
(2 Minutes, 7:45)



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 21st and ends on March 7th.



(2 Minutes, 7:47)



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)



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, for general inquiries
- medteam@utahprisoneradvocate.org, for medical inquires

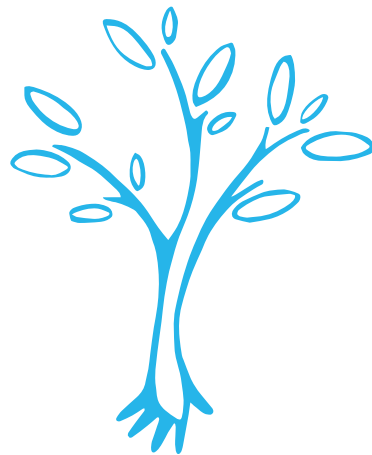


(2 Minutes, 7:50)



Questions?





Updates on Various Issues Molly Prince & UPAN Directors

(10 Minutes, 8:10)



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)



Thank you!

Save-the-Date: Next UPAN Meeting Monday, February 10th, 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>