



Jail and Reentry Services

Rachel Kinnon, Manager
Jail and Reentry Services (JARS)
Community Programs & Partnerships

Jeanie Austin, JARS Lead Librarian
Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People

July 16, 2026
San Francisco Library Commission



SFPL Services to Incarcerated People

- Weekly library service at two county jails and at Juvenile Justice Center (JJC)
- Reference by Mail
- Reentry support and outreach
- Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People Mellon-funded grant project

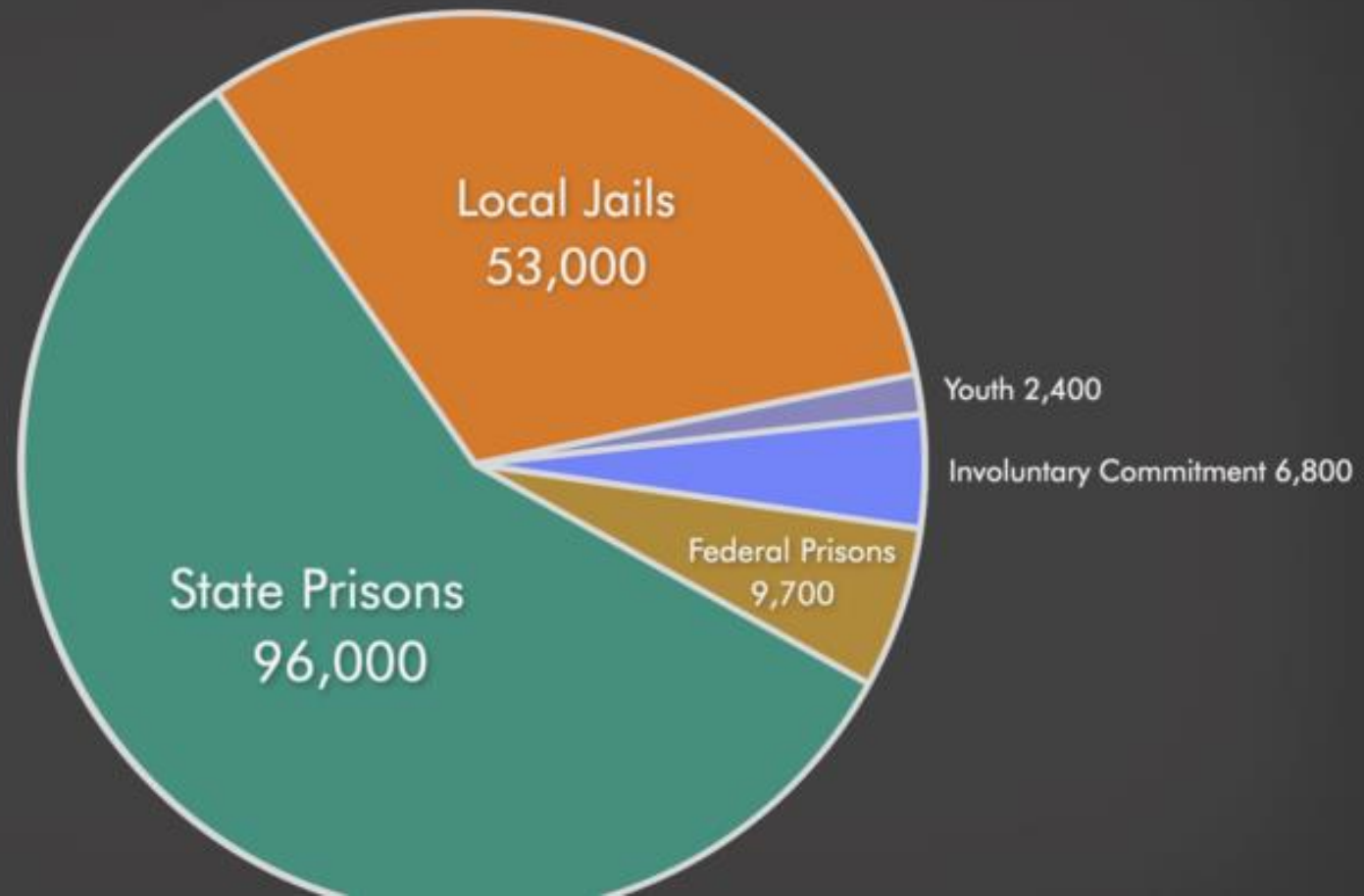
Is that the new James Patterson? American jails and prisons are taking a page from S.F.'s behind-bars library

By **Joshua Sharpe**, Criminal Justice Reporter
Updated March 21, 2022 7:08 p.m.

 Gift Article



Incarceration in California (March 2026)



Juvenile Hall and Jail Library Services



Reference by Mail

2018

- Modeled on NYPL's 30-year program
- SFPL was the only comparable service provider in CA
- 1400 responses in first year of service

2026

- Distributed RbM service for CA jails and prisons with
 - Alameda Free Library
 - Sacramento Public Library
 - San Diego County Library
 - Los Angeles Public Library
- MLIS interns
- 16,941 total responses between 2018 and 2025



Reentry Support and Outreach

Collaborations within SFPL

- The Bridge at Main: reentry support and resources
- Talking Books and Braille Center: talking books for visually impaired patrons
- Librarians respond to Reference by Mail

Partnerships outside of SFPL

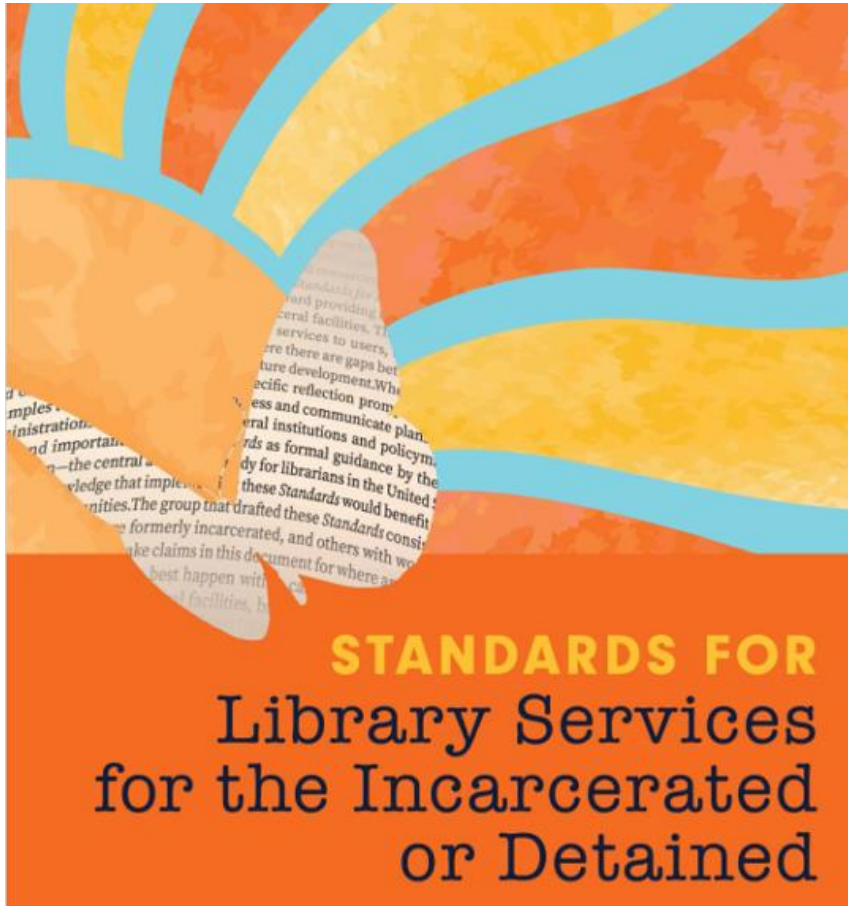
- CDCR Parole Department monthly PACT meetings at the Main
- Reentry Council (upcoming presentation)
- SFPL outreach, eg., reentry events, Recovery Day, San Quentin programs

Upcoming events

- August 6, 2026, Reentry Employment Fair and Information Sessions
- August Juvenile Hall program featuring subject of *26.2 to Life* documentary



Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People



Mellon Foundation funded grant work to:

- Identify existing services
- Provide guidance for librarians nationwide
- Strengthen connections across library types
- Support professionals in the field
- Build from the knowledge of people most impacted

\$4,341,000 total funds awarded

- American Library Association (ALA) is subgrantee



Resources



Main grant
webpage



Subscribe to the
grant newsletter



T.E.C.H. for
Reentry



Interactive map



*Standards
for Library Services
for the Incarcerated
or Detained*



Training series

Recent updates

5th Expanding Information Access for Incarcerated People convening – June 25, 2026, in Chicago, IL

- Approx. 130 attendees and almost 30 speakers
- Formerly incarcerated advocates, creatives, and practitioners
- Theme: Reflection as Direction

2026 Expanding Services Together Cohort

- Begins in September
- 22 members from across the country
- 136 interested applicants





Thank you!

