

STARVING FOR JUSTICE:

The Denial of Proper Nutrition in Immigration Detention

April, 2022



**A REPORT ON FOOD CONDITIONS IN TWO
DETENTION CENTERS IN CALIFORNIA.**

About CCIJ

CCIJ is a non-profit organization that moves beyond traditional legal services and supports innovative approaches that lead to the liberation and empowerment of detained immigrants and their communities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is possible thanks to the courage of individuals inside detention, who have shared their experiences around food issues despite possible retaliation.

A special thanks to Miguel Velasco, who led the advocacy around food conditions inside the Golden State Annex and Mesa Verde Detention Facility.

Cover illustration corresponds to an image taken by John Moore (Getty Images) of several detained individuals eating lunch at the Adelanto Detention Facility, CA in 2013.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 4	Introduction
PAGE 5	Food in Detention Centers: A Human Rights Issue
PAGE 6	Mesa Verde Detention Facility and Golden State Annex: A Case Study
PAGE 7	Food Conditions Survey
PAGE 10	Advocacy from Inside the Facilities
PAGE 11	Testimonies
PAGE 14	Recommendations and Next Steps
PAGE 15	Appendix Section
PAGE 22	End Notes



INTRODUCTION

The immigrant detention industry is worth billions of dollars. The federal government has spent an estimated \$333 billion on the agencies that carry out immigration enforcement since the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created in 2003.¹ A big part of DHS' budget for immigrant detention ends in the hands of corporations that run for-profit prisons and detention centers. Over 70% of people detained by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the United States are held in privately-run detention facilities. In California, private detention facilities are responsible for 97% of the total bed capacity.²

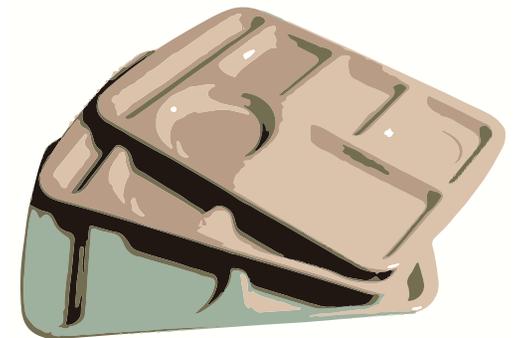
Private prison companies have a long history of cutting costs in order to increase profit while putting detained people in precarious and unsanitary conditions. Although ICE's Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) provide detention centers with guidelines meant to maintain "a safe and secure detention environment for staff and detainees"³, there is no accountability when these guidelines are not followed. The result is that human rights violations occur inside detention unchecked, while corporations profit from the suffering of detained immigrants and their communities. In the meantime, individuals in detention suffer conditions that have immediate and long-term effects on their bodies and minds, even after they are deported or, in the best case scenario, released.

One of the challenges that immigrants face inside detention that is often overlooked but no less critical is lack of access to nutritious and properly prepared food. Having healthy, balanced and filling meals is crucial to the physical and emotional well being of any person. Being denied nutritious and palatable food for weeks,

months and sometimes years can have permanent effects on a person's body and mind. The dismal food conditions are just one of many coercive tactics used by ICE to break people's will and push them to accept deportation.

This report focuses on the food conditions inside two detention centers owned by The GEO Group: Mesa Verde Detention Facility (MVDF) in Bakersfield, CA and Golden State Annex (GSA) in McFarland, CA. The GEO Group is the largest private for-profit contractor to detain immigrants in the United States. GEO runs five out of the seven privately-owned detention facilities in California.

Due to multiple complaints¹ from individuals detained at MVDF and GSA – ranging from lack of nutritious food to receiving spoiled milk, finding cockroaches in their trays, and special health and religious diets not being respected – the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ) began to monitor and document the food conditions inside these two facilities. This report is the result of those investigations.



1 See Appendix Section

FOOD IN DETENTION CENTERS: A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

According to the United Nations, the right to food “is not simply a right to a minimum ratio of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients. It is a right to all nutritional elements that a person needs to live a healthy and active life, and to the means to access them.”⁴ The United Nations says that when people cannot access food through their own means, like the case of immigrants in detention, the state must provide for it. Anecdotal evidence and survey results, as well as multiple articles regarding food conditions inside detention centers across the country, show that ICE and the private operators it contracts do little to ensure immigrants in detention are being provided nutritious and sufficient meals.

Depriving people of healthy meals not only has immediate effects on the body such as hunger and lack of energy; it can also result in long term health effects such as diabetes, high blood pressure and being overweight. Evidence shows that traumatic food experiences can also result in eating disorders.⁵

The PBNDS recognizes that food is an important aspect of people’s emotional well being: “The food service program significantly influences morale and attitudes of detainees and staff, and creates a climate for good public relations between the facility and the community.” However, the deplorable food served to detained immigrants does the exact opposite. In her article “Border Meals: Detention Center Feeding Practices, Migrant Subjectivity, and Questions on Trauma” Megan A. Carney, Director of the Center for Regional Food Studies at the University of Arizona, states that “In the short term, food deprivation induces physical discomfort and

psychological stress. However, as a recurring event that prolongs an individual’s sense of uncertainty, food deprivation is a powerful instrument of social control.”⁶ Food deprivation goes beyond the quality and quantity of the food. Imagine spending months, sometimes years without a single homemade meal. Imagine eating more than 400 meals out of a tray. Imagine having to eat in a dining hall that smells like dirty dishrags. Eating under these conditions can result in significant mental and physical harm.

Other instruments of social control inside detention centers include having to wear uniforms, sleep under cold air conditioning in uncomfortable beds, and retaliation. All of these aspects, including abysmal food conditions, are meant to break people’s will and often lead individuals in detention to give up on their cases without having access to due process.

Imagine spending months, sometimes years without a single homemade meal. Imagine eating more than 400 meals out of a tray. Imagine having to eat in a dining hall that smells like dirty dishrags.

MESA VERDE AND GOLDEN STATE ANNEX: A CASE STUDY

Mesa Verde Detention Facility has been under scrutiny for abysmal food conditions for several years and its annex, Golden State Annex, is following the same blueprint.

On July 3, 2020, leaders inside Mesa Verde launched a hunger strike due to the lack of safety measures taken by the facility during COVID-19 and the inhumane conditions immigrants faced in detention. One of the demands was: “Serve us fresh, nutritious food—including fruit, real meat, and larger portions.”⁷ Although food conditions have always been an issue in immigration detention, COVID-19 highlighted the importance of access to balanced meals in order to count with the nutrition and energy needed to fight against the virus. As the report *Eating Behind Bars: Ending the Hidden Punishment of Food in Prison* shows, an unhealthy diet suppresses the immune system, making incarcerated people more vulnerable to viruses, including COVID-19.⁸

New facility, same abysmal food conditions: Golden State Annex

Although it has been in operation for a year and a half, Golden State Annex has made headlines in the media as a facility that fails to follow ICE’s own standards⁹ and retaliates against leaders who protest against conditions.¹⁰

Despite detained leaders looking for opportunities for improvement,¹ the facility administrators have dismissed their concerns and failed to improve the food conditions inside the facility.

1 See Appendix E



A picture of a food tray served at Mesa Verde Detention Facility.

An unhealthy diet suppresses the immune system, making incarcerated people more vulnerable to viruses, including COVID-19.

FOOD CONDITIONS SURVEY

In an effort to gather quantitative data that captured the concerns of detained individuals, CCIJ created a food survey that was sent to individuals detained at Golden State Annex and Mesa Verde Detention Facility in October, 2021. In addition to analyzing the surveys, this report presents anecdotal evidence, grievances and letters submitted and sent by detained individuals regarding food conditions.

Method

Surveys were administered to individuals detained at Golden State Annex (GSA) and Mesa Verde Detention Facility (MVDF). 88 participants consented to the survey and submitted their responses. In total, 72 surveys from GSA and 16 surveys from MVDF were analyzed for this report. Participants answered 11 multiple choice and free response questions on but not limited to:

- Food taste, nutritional value and appeal.
- Whether special dietary needs were being met.
- Instances when the food was inedible.
- Cleanliness of the dining space.

Responses to open-ended questions were designated into specific categories as a way to aggregate results. Multiple choice answers and open-ended questions were analyzed using exploratory data analysis¹. Select responses to open ended questions and grievances were interpreted qualitatively. Multiple choice and free answer questions left blank were excluded from quantitative analysis.

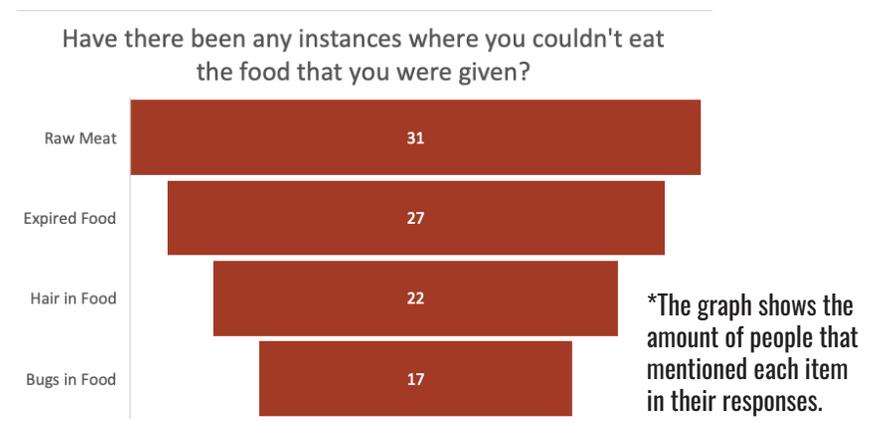
¹ An approach of analyzing data sets to summarize their main characteristics, often using data visualization methods. (Wikipedia definition)

Survey Results

1) Inedible food

Results demonstrated that there is a critical issue around inedible food in both detention facilities:

- When asked *Have there been any instances where you couldn't eat the food that you were given? For example, bugs inside food, hair inside food, expired food, poorly cooked food*, 76% of GSA respondents and 94% of MVDF responses said yes.
- 80% of MV responses reported receiving expired food. Responses specified receiving on multiple occasions expired milk, lettuce, and beef patties.
- Over half of GSA responses reported receiving insects, hair and/or other foreign objects in their meals. Those who found insects in their food specified cockroaches, flies and spiders.

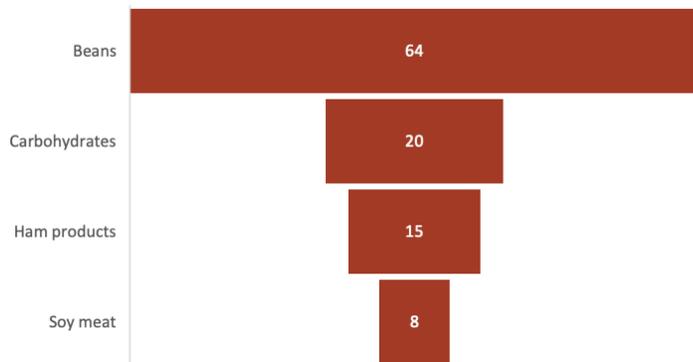


2) Nutrition & Food Quality

Respondents were asked what was lacking and overly provided in their meals.

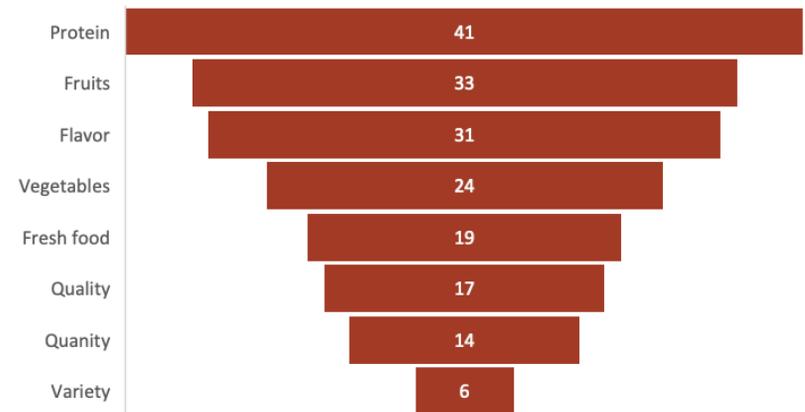
- 82% of respondents mentioned quality was lacking. Their responses included lack of fresh and unprocessed food, nutritious food, and variety.
- 78% of the respondents complained about being served an excessive amount of beans.
- 46% of the respondents complained about lack of animal protein, while 18% of the respondents complained about an excessive amount of processed meats such as bologna and ham.

What do you have too much of in your food tray?



*The graph shows the amount of people that mentioned each item in their responses.

What is missing in your food tray?



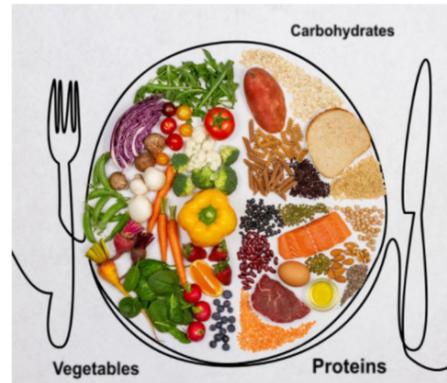
*The graph shows the amount of people that mentioned each item in their responses.

“Too much beans, almost everyday, too much potatoes almost every day and too much bologna”

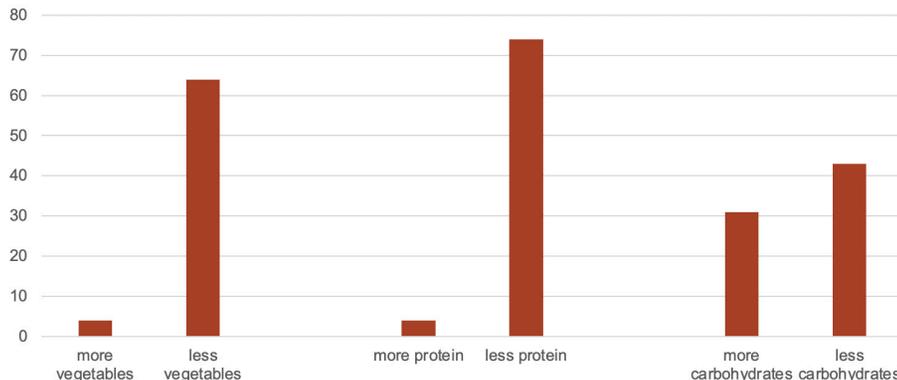
- Response when asked “what do you have too much of in your food tray?”

3) Food quantity

Respondents were provided with the image to the right and asked if their plate had more or less of the items pictured. The image depicts what a balanced meal should look like according to nutrition experts.¹¹



My plate has compared to the image. (GSA + MV)



- 78% of the respondents said that their plates had less vegetables than the image.
- 90% of the respondents said that their plates had less proteins than the image.
- Besides the lack of vegetables and proteins, respondents complained of the size of portions, with 87% reporting feeling hungry after meals.

4) Other factors mentioned

The last survey question was open-ended, asking individuals to list any other concern they had regarding food conditions. A total of 71 individuals answered this question.

- 20% of responses had a complaint about the dining room environment in general. Half of those brought up a concern around cleanliness/sanitation and another 29% specified a bad smell in the dining room.
- 18% of respondents complained that nothing improved despite their grievances regarding foreign objects in their food and requests for more nutritious food and cleaner dining spaces.

“The dining room smell makes you lose your appetite.”

“We get no fruit. We get no meat. We get no cheese.”

“They are killing me with their tasteless beans!”

“If I eat it’s because I’m starving, not because the food is tasty.”

ADVOCACY FROM INSIDE THE FACILITIES

After receiving multiple complaints regarding food conditions, CCIJ partnered with Miguel Ángel Velasco Salcedo, who has worked for 15 years as a general manager in the restaurant industry. Miguel has specialized in food safety, OSHA compliance, team building, and the development of people. In his own words, Miguel describes his experience trying to advocate for better food:

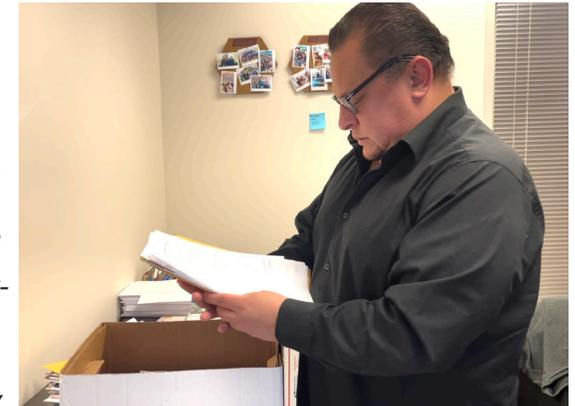
I was detained at Golden State Annex for almost 4 months and then transferred to Mesa Verde Detention Facility where I remained for more than 2 months before my liberation. While suffering from the shock of being detained, I noticed the food program at GSA lacked fresh food, quality, diversity, and most importantly, a food safety program. I also saw the effect that food insecurity and lack of food diversity had on the detained population. When the food was particularly bad, or when portions were little, I noticed people seemed more upset and prone to arguments. The food conditions were affecting us mentally, emotionally and physically.

Because of my experience in the food industry I considered I could be of assistance in order to improve the food conditions inside the facility. I wrote letters with recommendations and requested meetings to share how to implement my ideas. GEO always responded in a diplomatic manner and assured they were going to work with me, but this was just a stall tactic.

After very upsetting incidents, which included finding a cockroach on someone's tray, I started to educate myself on the PBNDS standards set by ICE for GEO to follow. I figured once we brought violations to ICE's attention, ICE would force GEO to comply with PBNDS standards. This could not have been further from the truth.

I wrote grievances to correct urgent health issues, such as receiving rotten and expired milk in the mornings. I tried to work with GEO administration with meetings and giving them a plan of action to improve the food program. I tried to work with ICE supervisors only to get answers like 'GSA has only been open for a year, you have to give them a chance to get it right' or 'Have you been in other detention facilities? Until you have you can't judge the system as a whole.' These corporations are making millions of dollars at the expense of our physical and mental health. It was infuriating to see they justified the abysmal food conditions by saying we needed to give GSA a chance to get things right.

"If any other restaurant operating in the United States ran a food program like the ones GEO runs, there would be a public outcry, investigations would be open by the health department, OSHA,¹ and even the AG [Attorney General] office. Lawsuits would happen at a large scale. GEO is given a large sum of money by taxpayers to run a high quality, transparent, and diverse food program. Instead they are used for profits on the backs of detained individuals and taxpayers.



Miguel going through grievances he submitted while detained by ICE

¹ Occupational Safety and Health Administration

TESTIMONIES

Unmet Special Dietary Needs

The following testimony illustrates the concerns of an individual who feels his religious beliefs and practices are not being respected at Mesa Verde Detention Facility. The second and third testimonies illustrate the experiences of two individuals who were served food items that they were allergic to while detained at Golden State Annex.

Case 1: Mohammad

When I came to Mesa Verde, they told me the food I was being served under what they call the 'regular diet' was halal. GEO says that they don't serve pork so the food they serve is halal. However, this is not what halal food means. My beliefs say the way in which an animal's life ends and the way in which its meat is prepared must be according to the Islamic law and the Quran. This includes that the meat/animal must be blessed by God's word and it cannot be contaminated by forbidden foods or chemicals.

I do not trust the food we get under the regular diet is halal because the meat we are served is often processed and we are not told where it comes from. After I questioned whether the food I was being served was halal, they put me on the vegetarian diet which has very small portions. The food they gave me was not enough food. I lost a lot of weight and started having stomach issues and had to start taking Omeprazole for my stomach pain. Even my wounds and muscles were hurting. I felt very weak. I am not a vegetarian, I want my right to have halal meat.

I have been harmed religious-wise, emotionally, and physically. I feel I am being forced to choose between staying true to my faith or remaining as healthy as possible under these circumstances.

This is an impossible choice for me. It feels like I'm doing something wrong. I feel guilty and that I'm not following what I know I'm supposed to follow. I feel disappointed and sad that my religious beliefs are not being respected. It makes me feel like I and Islam don't have any value to them. I feel like my rights and religion are being disrespected. As a Muslim, I have the right to get halal food. If they can provide kosher food for Jewish people, why not halal food for me and other Muslim people?

“I have been harmed religious-wise, emotionally, and physically. I feel I am being forced to choose between staying true to my faith or remaining as healthy as possible under these circumstances.”

Case 2: Giovannie Morrison

I'm a Rastafarian, we don't eat beef, only fish and chicken. Aside from that I'm allergic to many products such as eggs, wheat, corn, peanuts and tomatoes. One time they gave me peanut cake in the facility [Golden State Annex] and my lip and tongue got numb. When I came to the detention center in late October [2020] I mentioned all of this, but I was nervous and scared and forgot to mention I was allergic to soy as well.

The first time they served me a soy product I told one of the guards that I was allergic to soy. They said they couldn't do anything about it and that I should talk to medical. Whenever I got a chance to see the nurses I would tell them that I was allergic to soy and they would say they would make a note of it. However, they kept serving me soy. I would have to give the soy product to other people and stay hungry, I would never get a replacement. After eight months I realized that the nurses were saying they were taking notes of my allergies but there was not one single note!

In April [2021] I was granted CAT¹ but ICE kept me detained for 77 more days before they released me. During that time they started listening to me a little more. A month later a staff nurse said that they could get the medical records from the county jail (where they had me do an allergy test) and was able to confirm that I was allergic to soy. I don't understand why they didn't look at my health records from county jail before if they had access to them during all those months that they kept serving me soy.

¹ Relief under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) is a form of relief in which an applicant bears the burden of demonstrating that it is more likely than not that they will be tortured if removed to their country of origin.

Case 3: Ernesto

Whenever I eat seafood my lips swell up, I get blisters in my mouth and start to feel that my throat is closing up. I was served seafood three times inside the facility [Golden State Annex] despite the fact that I told them multiple times that I was allergic.

The third time I got really sick. It took them over 2 weeks to take me to medical because there was no doctor available. When I did get a chance to see a doctor he yelled at me that he wasn't going to give me any medication. I left because I didn't feel safe or respected. A week later I was able to see another doctor that prescribed me ampicillin. Since then they serve me chicken patties whenever they give out tuna sandwiches.

“After eight months I realized that the nurses were saying they were taking notes of my allergies but there was not one single note!”

Expensive, Unnutritious & Expired Commissary Food - An Ongoing Issue

Individuals in detention have the right to purchase food items through a commissary system. These items tend to be overpriced and do not include fresh fruit or vegetable options. Since fresh options are not available on a daily basis in the meals provided by the detention facilities either, detained individuals have no way to access the nutrients they are lacking even if they are willing and/or have the means to pay for commissary food.

Besides commissary items being expensive and overwhelmingly processed, items are sometimes sold to detained individuals after the expiration date has passed, as described in the following testimony:

Mohamed

I bought two Honey Buns from commissary, opened the first one and realized there was mold in it. I looked at the expiration date and realized that it had already passed. I went back to the staff member that sold them to me and told him what had happened. I was shocked that not only were they serving us expired food at the dining hall, now they were also selling us expired products. I asked him why they weren't checking the expiration dates on the products. He told me it was not their fault, and that next time I was welcome to open and check the items in front of him to make sure they didn't have mold in them. That didn't make sense to me. The purpose of buying commissary is to save the items for the upcoming days, like you would if you bought groceries for your pantry at home. And he was telling me that the solution to getting expired products was having to open them as soon as I got them, even if I didn't want to eat them that very second.

“He was telling me that the solution to getting expired products was having to open them as soon as I got them, even if I didn't want to eat them that very second.”



RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

This report is the culmination of months of in-depth conversations and analysis of food surveys provided to CCIJ by individuals detained at MVDF and GSA . Sadly, based on conversations with individuals who have been held in other detention centers, as well as numerous legal advocates, we believe the food situation at MVDF and GSA is not an anomaly, but rather indicative of widespread abhorrent food practices throughout immigration detention in the United States. This is not an isolated issue, but rather one of many tactics used by ICE to push people to give up on their cases and accept deportation.

The State of California, a leader on immigrant rights, can and should take legal action to protect the health and safety of individuals in detention as it pertains to food conditions. **Without further increasing the budget for ICE or private prison operators,** we make the recommendations found on the right based on our survey findings, conversations with individuals in detention, and California state law.

Local and state public officials should treat detention centers as they would any other restaurant and conduct thorough health and safety inspections, including restroom cleanliness. Per AB263, any private detention facility operator shall comply with, and adhere to, all local or state public health orders and occupational health and safety regulations.

Local and state public health authorities can and should conduct annual independent health and safety inspections pursuant to the CA Attorney General's facility inspection authority. Upon completion of the inspections, local and state public health authorities must publish their findings publicly and host stakeholder meetings to review said findings.

Local and state public health officials must ensure compliance with public health orders and issue additional public health guidance for private facilities, informed by the latest information on COVID-19 including CDC recommendations.

APPENDIX A - GRIEVANCES SECTION

Grievance submitted to Golden State Annex on April 27, 2021 regarding a cockroach in someone's eggs during breakfast.

Summary of Grievance:

I observed a cockroach coming out of one of the detainees scrambled eggs during breakfast.

Details of Grievance:

Statement of Grievance:

During breakfast I observed a cockroach coming out of one of the detainees [REDACTED] scrambled eggs during breakfast hours.

Relief Sought:

I'm requesting that the food and kitchen plates are properly inspected before serving all meals.furthermore that the kitchen is properly sanitized at all times.

DATE/TIME	USER	ACTION	DETAILS
04/27/21 09:12	Jacqueline Bullock	Staff Response	See your appeal was rejected due to the original grievance was Founded and no appeal necessary. Thank you
04/27/21 09:12	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Status	From 'Open' to 'Closed'
04/27/21 09:12	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Disposition	Changed the disposition value for level 2 from to Rejected
04/24/21 19:19	[REDACTED]	Appeal	According to PBNS 4.1 food service (2) all should be inspected and clean for detainees and staff. please follow the date of 4/19 /21.During breakfasts hours I observed a insect cockroach coming out of a detainee [REDACTED] food tray. According to the food service administration or equivalent (d) establishing standard of sanitation safety and security. According to the food service manager I,P Spagnudo the "kitchen has been cleaned sanitized and a pest control service sprays ones a month". In addition, I,P Spagnudo also states" the kitchen is sanitized and was recently inspected by Kern County environmental health and received a "A " rating."The food service was not inspected and sanitized well enough and that doe's violate the code of PBNS. Staff officer was notified of the Incident and well aware. [REDACTED] disposed of his food tray and was handed a second tray when in fact, all food on the line should have been discarded into the trash and remade the food for the rest of the population.
04/24/21 19:19		Changed Status	From Closed to Open due to Appeal
04/24/21 19:19		Changed Level	From 1 to 2 due to Appeal
04/22/21 12:04	Jacqueline Bullock	Staff Response	I, P. Spagnuolo, Food Service Manager am over-seeing the kitchen operations as of 4/19/21. The kitchen has been cleaned, sanitized and a Pest Control Service sprays once a month. Please be assured the kitchen is sanitary and was recently inspected by Kern County Environmental Health and received a "A" rating.
04/22/21 12:04	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Status	From 'Open' to 'Closed'
04/22/21 12:01	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Disposition	Changed the disposition value for level 1 from to Founded

APPENDIX B - GRIEVANCES SECTION

Grievance submitted to Golden State Annex on April 27, 2021 regarding a cockroach in someone's eggs during breakfast.

Summary of Grievance:

Food

Details of Grievance:

Statement of Grievance:

On the date of April 19 at around 7:00 am we went to eat breakfast and as a result of going to get our meal one of the detainees found a Roach in his plate and this is not the first time something like this has happen in the facility their have being other times that it happen, as the facility is aware their has being in the past when detainees were making complaints about roaches being inside of the kitchen....

Relief Sought:

For the the kitchen to be fully sanitize and inspected for any Roche's....

DATE/TIME	USER	ACTION	DETAILS
04/27/21 09:05	Jacqueline Bullock	Staff Response	Sir, your appeal was rejected due to the original grievance was Founded and no appeal necessary. Thank you
04/27/21 09:05	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Status	From 'Open' to 'Closed'
04/27/21 09:04	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Disposition	Changed the disposition value for level 2 from to Rejected
04/23/21 12:14	[REDACTED]	Appeal	According to PBND 4:1 food service (2) all should be inspected and clean for detainees and staff. And following the date of 4:19 their was a roach found on one of the trays. So according to food service administrator or equivalent (d) establishing standard of sanitation safety and security, the food wasnt inspected well enough and violated the codes of PBNDs, staff were aware of this incident and told the detainee to throw that tray away and to grab another one. When in fact all the food was to be put in the trash because and remake because the roach was inside of the container were the food was made for everybody. I would like to speak with the food service supervisor....
04/23/21 12:14		Changed Status	From Closed to Open due to Appeal
04/23/21 12:14		Changed Level	From 1 to 2 due to Appeal
04/22/21 12:05	Jacqueline Bullock	Staff Response	I, P. Spagnuolo, Food Service Manager am over-seeing the kitchen operations as of 4/19/21. The kitchen has been cleaned, sanitized and a Pest Control Service sprays once a month. Please be assured the kitchen is sanitary and was recently inspected by Kern County Environmental Health and received a "A" rating.
04/22/21 12:05	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Status	From 'Open' to 'Closed'
04/22/21 12:05	Jacqueline Bullock	Changed Disposition	Changed the disposition value for level 1 from to Founded
04/19/21 11:59	[REDACTED]	Submitted New	Food

APPENDIX C - GRIEVANCES SECTION

Grievance submitted to Golden State Annex on June 21, 2021 regarding expired milk.

Details of Grievance:

Statement of Grievance:

This is to inform management expired food products(milk) and lack of proper food safety protocols are happening in the kitchen. On Saturday morning around 630am, A3 being the first to eat breakfast encountered spoiled milk being served to detainees. The milk in question has the June 22 expiration date. Some of us detainees, including myself complained to staff. Only response was shrugged off or offered to replace milk with the same expiration date. This morning at breakfast we encountered the same spoiled milk. This time the Milk was so spoiled we all complained even the ones who already drank the milk. This time a staff member brought out new milk with the expiration date of July 2nd. Several of us at A3 were sick yesterday including myself. A clear violation on PBNDS standards. This clearly shows how staff do not have any regard towards detainees. According to GSA facility every Thursday a delivery gets here so staff could had provide a milk to detainees on Saturday but they refused disregarding detainees concerns

Relief Sought:

1. To ensure milk or any other food product is being test for spoilage not just relying on expiration dates. This incident could have been avoided with a proper food safety program in place and actively being used.
2. For medical staff to ask each dorm if any detainee has or had any symptoms and provided proper medication.
3. A copy of current health department permit.
4. A copy of last county health department inspection.
5. A copy of servsafe food certification currently on file for this facility per health department requirement.
6. A copy of all kitchen staff and anyone else who comes in contact with food products or kitchen area food handlers card, which must be kept on file in the facility.
7. A copy of current food safety program and how its being actively being used everyday.
8. A detailed written notice on facility's current stock rotation program and how it's being actively used everyday.
9. Access to the Kern county health department phone number and ability to contact them when needed.
10. A copy of the temp logs for May and June.
11. A copy of this grievance sent to ICE Supervisor Ms.Maldonado and to ICE Supervisor Mo.
12. Item 11 is per the request of ICE Supervisor Mr. Mo who requested in my conversation I had with him face to face last week.

DATE/TIME	USER	ACTION	DETAILS
06/21/21 07:52		Submitted New	Serving unsafe and expired food products

APPENDIX D - GRIEVANCES SECTION

Grievance submitted to Mesa Verde Detention Facility on August 5, 2021 regarding smelly beef patties.

Summary of Grievance:

Beef patties and food in general

Details of Grievance:

Statement of Grievance:

The beef patty which was served today for lunch stinks it stank like a wet dog, that's not a joke I wish it was, and it's not even real meat, and the food service is getting worst everyday except when it's real chicken or chicken patty. I spoke to Lt Vasquez and asked him if he could smell the patty which he refused. I asked him if he was the person who sampled the tray today he stated no. I asked him to have whomever sample the trays in the future to smell it.

The meat isn't clean of the entire food menu.

The sides usually are coleslaw with too much of mayonnaise and vinegar that makes it so sour and uneatable.

Tuna instead of serving it out of the can you mix it with heavily mayonnaise and vinegar that makes it so sour and stings our mouths, it's like a punishment.

Why can't you serve us real chicken or chicken patties or real beef patties, and why would you serve us food that stinks.

Every single item in the menu from taco meat to pologne to spaghetti meat to scrambled eggs to tuna to cooked meat to coleslaw all of it stinks and doesn't taste or smell right.

Last Sunday served us pologne for lunch and next day on Monday was also pologne for dinner. Turkey ham, turkey pologne, salame, turkey, pologne all those items on the menu you used to serve us same exact item.

Monday was chicken patty then on Tuesday was supposedly fried steak, you gave us the same chicken patty but with gravy on top, same with Salisbury steak you give us the same stinking patty as today but with a gravy on top

Relief Sought:

The kitchen and its food and food system needs a closer look and amends to humane levels, the unclean food gives us stomachs pain and is unhealthy.

We need healthy food, real food, and a kitchen that doesn't play games serving us same items no matter what it was called on the menu or add gravy to it, or too much barbeque or mayo and vinegar

Or perhaps the food we get on holidays we could get it more often.

DATE/TIME	USER	ACTION	DETAILS
08/09/21 15:20	DAmos	Staff Response	Upon investigating this issue we have determined that the current beef patty that we are using does not meet the standard that we hold for this company. Moving forward we will be using a different brand of patty that we serve, and we believe that this should correct this issue.
08/09/21 15:20	DAmos	Changed Status	From 'Open' to 'Closed'
08/09/21 15:17	DAmos	Changed Disposition	Changed the disposition value for level 1 from to Founded
08/05/21 14:33		Submitted New	Beef patties and food in general

APPENDIX E - LETTERS SECTION

Dear ICE Supervisor

My name is Miguel Velasco. I'm writing you this letter for two reasons.

1, GEO's continues to not follow grievance procedures and more importantly not following the spirit for what the grievance procedures were intend for. Instead of foensing on working with detainees to findin solutions and/or educating us. We instead encounter a grievance process full of rejections due to technicalities and other "roadblocks."

2, As my grievance #130483412 stated when milk is served spoil over a two day period there are real underlying problems in the kitchen area. This is why I was asking to see basic documents that any food facility should have and made available to the public (In this case detainees) upon request. I was hoping to spark a professional open dialog between GEO and detainees but with the focus on the technicality in a grievance I can see this is not the case. I have now turn my

detainees and staff and create a climate for good public relations between the facility and the community". This can only happen if detainees are part of the food service program equation.

Excerpts from a letter written by by Miguel Ángel Velasco Salcedo and sent to an ICE supervisor regarding grievances and food conditions at the Golden State Annex while he was detained (between May and August 2021).

APPENDIX F - LETTERS SECTION

TO: Geo GROUP and ICE
FROM: People detained in Dorms A, C, D

WHY WE STRIKE

We have been kidnapped by ICE and detained in three dorms of the Mesa Verde Detention Facility in Bakersfield, California. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, we have been sounding the alarm about the dangerous conditions inside this facility. We have written letters, recorded videos, and even gone on hunger strike. Unfortunately, nothing has changed. **We are still in danger and still afraid for our lives.**

We know that will not be safe until we are freed. But ICE wants to keep us locked up, and GEO Group wants to make money off us. **We have no choice but to go on hunger strike once again.** We will forego cafeteria meals to protest our continued detention and the horrifying conditions at Mesa Verde:

- A Mesa Verde nurse tested positive for COVID last week. Only a handful of people that she came into contact with on her last day of work have been tested for the virus. COVID is now in every detention center in California, and only recently killed our brother Carlos Mejia. Our jailers come in and out of the facility and move between dorms every day, and most of them still don't wear masks or gloves.
- People from state prisons where there are confirmed COVID cases continue to be transferred into our dorms, without being quarantined or tested for the virus.
- At a time when we need strong immune systems more than ever, we are served spoiled, non-nutritious food. Our meals mostly consist of beans and fake meat, and we rarely get any fruit. They use the same ingredients over and over, until they are rotting and foul smelling. The portions are tiny, and we are constantly hungry. Only some of us are lucky enough to have families who can afford to buy us expensive (and usually unhealthy) snacks from the commissary.
- Many of our toilets don't work, and some of us are forced to share just 2 toilets and 1 urinal with dozens of people. Our bathroom floors are covered in disgusting standing water, filled with mosquitos and crickets. We are forced to live with the constant smell of dead animals.

We have voiced these concerns to staff of GEO Group, the for-profit company that ICE pays to run our facility. But they don't care about us -- they value their bottom line more than our lives. Every dollar they don't spend on our food, sanitation, and medical care, is another dollar in their pockets.

We are angry, we are tired, we are scared. We demand our freedom, and in the meantime, we demand that ICE and GEO immediately:

1. **Stop transferring people from criminal custody** into ICE detention;
2. **Serve us fresh, nutritious food**--including fruit, real meat, and larger portions;
3. **Repair our bathrooms**, and clean and sanitize our dorms regularly; and
4. **Require that all staff wear masks and gloves at all times.**

We will continue our strike until we are free and until these basic demands are met. It's time that GEO Group and ICE recognize our humanity and stop putting our lives at risk.

A collective letter sent by individuals detained at Dorms A, C and D in Mesa Verde Detention Facility to Geo Group and ICE regarding a hunger strike due to abysmal food conditions and lack of safety measures against COVID-19. The letter was sent on July, 2020.

APPENDIX G - LETTERS SECTION

Dear ICE Officer,

We are writing to inform you of the unacceptable food we are being served in Mesa Verde.

In July 2020, we protested about conditions in detention, including a lack of COVID-19 testing, and the poor quality of the food. We were promised that changes would come. Lieutenant Garza and Chief Andrews were at Mesa Verde at the time, and they also assured us that the food would improve, which is why we stopped our protest. We have since been vaccinated against COVID-19, which is good; however, no changes with the food have been made.

The meal portions are still insufficient, unhealthy, and monotonous, lacking any variety whatsoever. In fact, mostly the food is brown or beige, lacking the color that nutritionists say is so important for a healthy diet. Much of the food is so processed that it is difficult to identify. We are given fake eggs; maybe we get a real boiled egg once every month or two. We are never given juice or fresh fruit. We also don't get real meat. We are also served chicken about once a month. Otherwise, we get fake meat patties. They don't even taste like meat. We don't get much in the way of vegetables, either; we only get lettuce or occasionally three bean salad or disgusting potato salad. Nothing fresh. This food is unhealthy and insufficient; we are all still hungry after eating a meal.

Everyone inside agrees that we ate better in prison than in detention in Mesa Verde. Why is that the case? We were able to maintain our health, and we didn't feel hungry all the time like we do here. We expect to be treated with respect and given appropriate healthy food while in detention.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dorm C, Mesa Verde

A collective letter sent by individuals detained at Dorm C at Mesa Verde Detention Facility to an ICE officer regarding the unchanging abysmal food conditions at the detention center in July, 2021.

END NOTES

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