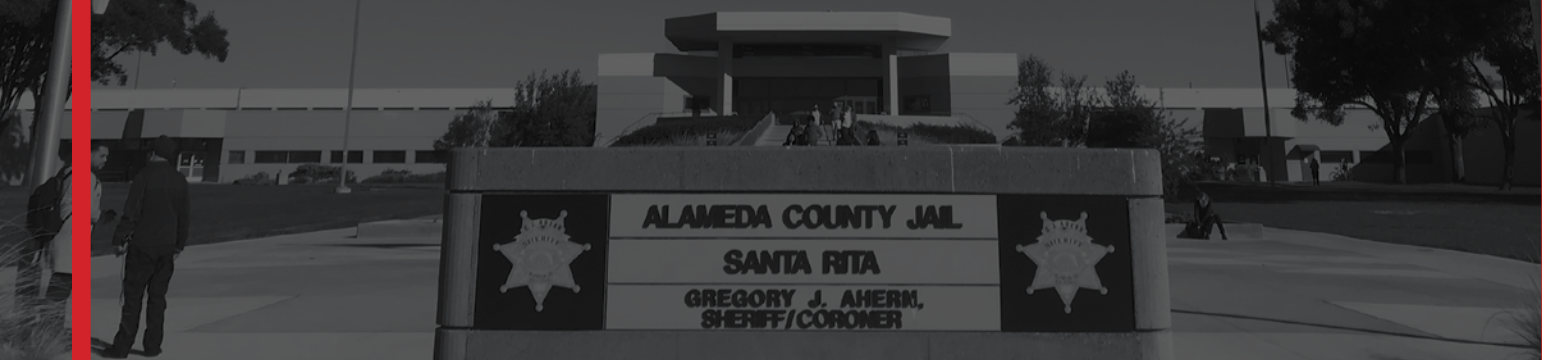


SANTA RITA JAIL WEEKLY UPDATE

JUNE 14–JUNE 20, 2021



STATISTICS AS OF JUNE 13, 2021.

NOTE: GIVEN THE LOW TESTING RATE, ALL COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED UNDERESTIMATIONS

2150

JAIL POPULATION

589

**TOTAL POSITIVE COVID-19
TESTS SINCE APRIL**

14%

**OF JAIL POPULATION
TESTED IN PAST WEEK***

1

**TOTAL NEW POSITIVE
COVID-19 TESTS IN PAST WEEK**

3

**HOUSING PODS UNDERGOING
SERIAL TESTING THIS WEEK***

26.3%

**PERCENTAGE OF JAIL FULLY
VACCINATED (AS OF JUNE 18, 2021)**

“THIS SYSTEM IS NOT SET UP FOR OUR HEALTH, IT IS SET UP FOR OUR DESTRUCTION.”

– A PRISONER IN HOUSING UNIT 1E

NOTES ON STATISTICS

* Santa Rita Jail's testing rates are currently much higher during previous outbreaks due to the implementation of serial testing. During previous outbreaks, an average of 7-10% of the jail population was tested within any given week. Serial testing means that some individuals will be tested multiple times, with instances occurring every seven days after mass testing. As a result, testing coverage per individual is likely lower than displayed.

For more complete statistics and COVID-19 quarantines, please visit bit.ly/SRJCOVID-19.

For information about the Santa Rita Jail Hotline, please contact srjhotline@nlgf.org.

For more information about the SRJ Solidarity Weekly Updates and testimony-gathering project, please contact info@srjsolidarity.org.



SUMMARY OF HOTLINE CALLS, JUNE 14-JUNE 18

- **On Monday, June 14, a prisoner in Housing Unit 24 called to report the violation of her due process rights.**

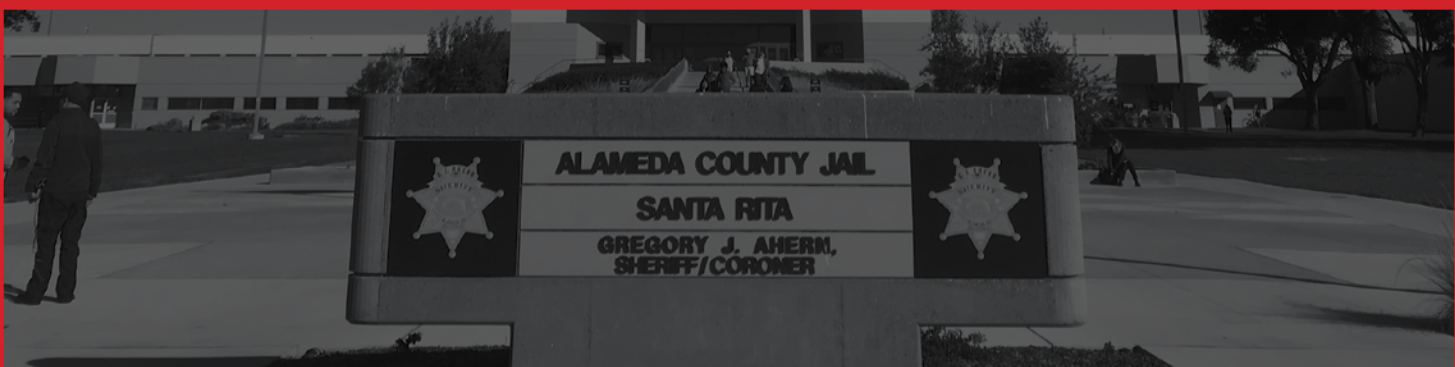
Placed on suicide watch and then sent to a maximum-security pod, she was labeled as a “threat to herself or others” after telling a deputy, “you better watch out – I’m going to write you up [in a grievance].” The prisoner was never provided with any formal disciplinary paperwork.

- **On Tuesday, June 15, a prisoner in Housing Unit 2E reported weeks of sleep deprivation** due to deputies knocking on his door while conducting wellness checks.

- **On Wednesday, June 16,** a prisoner in Housing Unit 4E experiencing serious dental issues reported that although the Santa Rita Jail dentist recommended a root canal, the jail is attempting to simply remove his tooth.

- **On Thursday, June 17,** a prisoner in Housing Unit 8D, a mental health pod, reported that he was moved to a new cell filled with dirt, hair, and old food. The prisoner, who suffers from severe OCD, was never provided with any cleaning supplies and was forced to clean using his own shampoo and some toilet paper.

PLACED ON SUICIDE WATCH AND THEN SENT TO A MAXIMUM-SECURITY POD, SHE WAS LABELED AS A “THREAT TO HERSELF OR OTHERS” AFTER TELLING A DEPUTY, “YOU BETTER WATCH OUT – I’M GOING TO WRITE YOU UP [IN A GRIEVANCE].” THE PRISONER WAS NEVER PROVIDED WITH ANY FORMAL DISCIPLINARY PAPERWORK.



LABOR DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN PRISONERS

Until recently, many women in Housing Unit 24-East were employed in the Santa Rita Jail kitchen. While most people choose to do this demanding, unpaid labor as a way to pass the time, many women also took great pride in the work, earned Food Handler's certificates, and went on to train new workers. Beginning in Fall 2020, the women's work crew has been increasingly shut out of kitchen work. First, women were taken off food production and dispatch and assigned to an evening sanitation shift. Then their hours were cut, although the cleaning and sanitation workload remained similar.

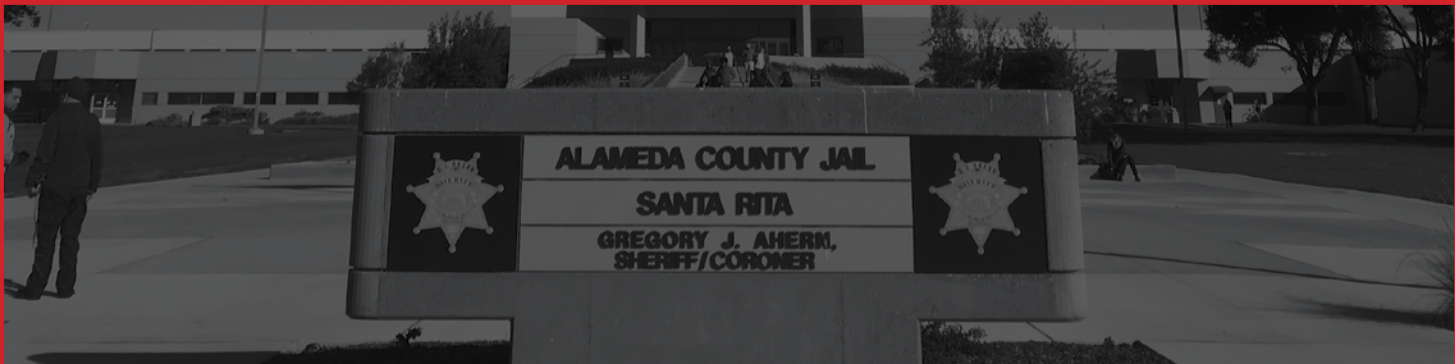
The restriction of women's access to labor opportunities closely coincides with a scheduled kitchen inspection on April 29 as well as an amended complaint filed against ACSO by civil rights attorney Yolanda Huang. This complaint featured declarations by the women's work crew regarding poor sanitation, food contamination, and vermin infestation.

ALL IN ALL, AROUND 15 WORKERS LOST THEIR JOBS. INCARCERATED WOMEN FEEL THAT THEY WERE FIRED FOR SPEAKING OUT. THEIR SUSPICIONS WERE CONFIRMED WHEN ON JUNE 2, A KITCHEN DEPUTY ALLEGEDLY TOLD ONE WOMAN, "YOU GUYS WERE FIRED BECAUSE OF THE LAWSUITS."

- **On Wednesday, April 14**, women kitchen workers were released from a monthlong quarantine and returned to work the following week (April 19-23).
- **During the week of April 26**, women kitchen workers were not allowed to work at all until Thursday, April 29, the day of the kitchen inspection, because attorneys for ACSO and Aramark had already agreed that women must be allowed to work on that day. In the days prior to the inspection, men workers were incentivized to work double shifts to bring the kitchen into compliance.
- **In the week after the inspection (May 3-7)** women were allowed to return to work – but after the week ended, they were informed that the women's work crew had been canceled and that kitchen jobs were no longer available to them.

All in all, around 15 workers lost their jobs. Incarcerated women feel that they were fired for speaking out. Their suspicions were confirmed when on June 2, **a kitchen deputy allegedly told one woman, "you guys were fired because of the lawsuits."** Santa Rita is already the subject of a separate complaint, *Ruelas v. County of Alameda*, regarding forced labor and gender discrimination in its labor practices.

Since 2020, advocates and attorneys have consistently pushed for Alameda County Public Health to conduct an unannounced inspection of the Santa Rita Jail kitchen. The



kitchen was the site of a major COVID-19 outbreak last summer. Security protocol in the jail does not currently allow an unannounced inspection, providing the jail and contractor Aramark with time to cover up persistent cleanliness and sanitation issues in anticipation of a visit. Incarcerated women have sharply criticized these cover-ups and are now suffering the consequences of speaking out.

The only work opportunities now available to women are:

- **Podworking**, which employs a maximum of four people;
- **Sorting intake bags**, which employs three people twice per week for 45 minutes; and
- **Power-washing surfaces**, which employs only one person who knows how to use the device.

The only regular programming opportunity available to women is a 30-minute substance abuse class twice per week.

Women have reported that with the current

population, 30 minutes is not enough for everyone in attendance to speak – let alone confide in one another, build trust, or process any serious issues. **This enforced idleness has had devastating consequences for the physical and mental health of women incarcerated in Housing Unit 24, one of whom died suddenly from a suspected overdose on Sunday, May 16.**

A friend of the individual who died says:

“I see the correction – I can’t see the rehabilitation. Many people in here have addiction problems. Many people are also coming from foster care or domestic violence...A 30-minute class twice a week is not enough. Instead of getting people help, the jail just prescribes sleeping meds and has people sleep all day long.”

She noted that residents of Housing Unit 24 who witnessed the woman’s death or lived in close proximity to her were never offered any counseling or psychotherapy – not even a visit from the Chaplain.

THIS ENFORCED IDLENESS HAS HAD DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN INCARCERATED IN HOUSING UNIT 24, ONE OF WHOM DIED SUDDENLY FROM A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE ON SUNDAY, MAY 16 .