

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
FY 2019 INMATE GRIEVANCE OFFICE**

Grievance Hearings

Issue: IGO should comment on the decline in hearings and the reduction in the number of grievances scheduled for hearings.

Response: The Inmate Grievance Office (IGO) attributes the reduction in the number of hearings advanced to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) primarily to the following two factors, including the IGO's diligence to resolve and mitigate inmate grievances prior to the advancement to OAH; and, thoroughly reviewing each grievance to ensure they contain requisite documentation prior to the advancement to OAH.

The IGO has amended policies to promote and exhaust all internal efforts available to resolve and mitigate inmate grievances prior to the advancement of grievances to OAH. A review of cases indicated that many of the grievances initiated by inmates were for answers or explanations as to a particular decision/denial regarding a specific issue. IGO has been working with the Commissioner's Office, Wardens and inmates to provide the necessary clarification, which has provided the relief sought by inmates, thus reducing the need to advance the grievance externally to OAH.

Additionally, IGO is carefully reviewing all required documentation and not simply advancing matters base on allegations absent required documentation. IGO will instruct inmates regarding any deficiencies in the documentation and provide an opportunity for the inmate to supplement their appeals, which has in many cases resulted in the inmate's inaction, and dismissal over time.

The IGO believes these efforts have been positive by promoting greater efficiency in the use of resources and exhausting all internal remedies available prior to requiring OAH's involvement.

Personnel

Issue: IGO should comment on administrative vacancies and the effect on operations.

Response: The Department is actively recruiting to fulfill these support positions. The Office has realigned duties to accommodate the change in workload and has promoted existing employees to temporary acting capacity until the full recruitments have been completed. In addition, the Office has hired an additional contractual worker and is utilizing temporary workers to provide general support and clerical duties until the permanent positions are filled.

Recommended Actions

1. Concur with Governor's Allowance

Response: The Department concurs with the recommended action.