

# INTERFAITH COALITION FOR JUSTICE IN OUR JAILS (ICJJ)

ICJJ

INTERFAITH COALITION  
FOR JUSTICE IN OUR JAILS

a committee of [Faith in Action East Bay](#)

Visit our website at

[www.icjjalamedacounty.org](http://www.icjjalamedacounty.org)

## NEWSLETTER

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### Who We Are: Mission Statement

The ICJJ seeks to reduce incarceration as a response to social problems in Alameda County, California, and to decrease harmful conditions in the jail.

We advocate to decrease the number of those imprisoned and close the revolving door to jail -- especially for those with mental health or housing needs. The jail must be safe, humane, and supportive of successful reentry into our communities.

### Contents

December 2021

**Voices from the Inside**  
**Medi-Cal Restoration**  
**Mental Health Working**  
**Group**  
**Sheriff Oversight**  
**2022 Election Cycle**  
**Community Education**  
**and Engagement**

#### Contact:

Meg Bowerman, Outreach  
Chair, Email:  
[megbowerman@gmail.com](mailto:megbowerman@gmail.com)



### Meet Our Congregations!

**Congregation Netivot Shalom**  
**First Unitarian Church of Oakland**  
**Kehilla Community Synagogue**  
**Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church**  
**Montclair Presbyterian Church**  
**Plymouth United Church of Christ**  
**Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**St. Columba Catholic Church**  
**Skyline Community Church**

# Working Group Updates

## Voices from the Inside



**Lead:** Micky Duxbury, [mickydux612@gmail.com](mailto:mickydux612@gmail.com)

Voices from the Inside is a new working group of the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails (ICJJ). We are reaching out to people who have been on the inside of Santa Rita Jail within the last two+ years.

**What is needed:** We look forward to listening to the experiences of individuals and family members who have been directly impacted by our county jail. We hope to share your experience with our members, affiliated congregations, and with others who are concerned about conditions in Santa Rita Jail.

Please contact Micky. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Medi-Cal Restoration

**Leads:** Nancy Taylor, [ngtaylor94619@yahoo.com](mailto:ngtaylor94619@yahoo.com), and Jean Moses, [jeanhmoses@gmail.com](mailto:jeanhmoses@gmail.com)

The goal of the Medi-Cal Restoration Working Group is to ensure that every eligible person leaving our jail has the opportunity to leave with health insurance. This includes those who entered with no insurance, as well as those whose Medi-Cal was suspended after 30 days or terminated after a year. The Health Committee of the Board of Supervisors has not agreed to consider our proposal for restoring Medi-Cal.

We have successfully engaged with the division of the Social Services Agency (SSA) that is tasked with facilitating Medi-Cal enrollments. They are moving forward with plans to begin the enrollment process in the jail, either face-to-face or virtually. SSA will need data from the Sheriff's Office and the working group is reaching out to a contact in State Senator Nancy Skinner's office to learn how this data sharing may be accomplished.



**What is needed:** Our next meeting with SSA is **Thursday, December 2, at 9:00 am**. If you wish to learn more or to get involved, reach out to Nancy or Jean.

# Mental Health Working Group

**Lead:** Myrna Schwartz, [myrna.schwartz@gmail.com](mailto:myrna.schwartz@gmail.com)

The Mental Health Working Group (MHWG) advocates on behalf of Alameda County residents made vulnerable to incarceration by behavioral health issues, including mental illness and substance use disorder.

For the past 2 months, our efforts have focused on the proposed settlement of the class action suit in federal court against Alameda County, the Sheriff, and the Director of County Behavioral Health Care Services for egregious conditions in our county jail and woefully inadequate treatment of people with behavioral health issues. The Judge in *Babu v. Alameda Co.* has invited comments on the proposed settlement, and MHWG has been gathering input from legal scholars, community advocates, and faith leaders for a forthcoming letter from FIAEB-ICJJ, representing the Alameda County faith community.



Our letter will propose changes to the Settlement that would align it better with the county's "Care First, Jails Last" policy. This policy prioritizes preventative, rehabilitative, health-focused programs in order to reduce the number of people with behavioral health conditions detained at Santa Rita Jail. "Care First, Jails Last" was adopted with strong community backing and a unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors in May, 2021.

The Babu settlement calls for necessary improvements in jail conditions but ignores conditions outside the jail that foster over-incarceration of our most vulnerable residents. It mandates a large and costly increase in jail staff to accommodate current and higher numbers of detainees with behavioral health needs.

A key ask of our letter is that those staffing targets and financial commitments undergo regular review and adjustment downward in tandem with anticipated reductions in the number of our community members forced into jail by inadequate community-based care.

## What is needed:

Over the next few weeks, you'll be receiving emails detailing how you can help with the campaign to gather clergy sign-on to this letter from all 5 county supervisorial districts. In the meantime, send questions, suggestions, and offers of help to MHWG chair, Myrna Schwartz.

**We need more allies and congregations, especially in District 1 of Alameda County: Livermore, Dublin, Fremont areas. If you would like to have a zoom meeting with your congregations/clergy/councils to learn more on how to advocate for prisoners and former prisoners, please contact Meg Bowerman: [megbowerman@gmail.com](mailto:megbowerman@gmail.com).**

## Sheriff Oversight

**The campaign for effective implementation of AB1185 Oversight of the Sheriff and Santa Rita Jail is gaining momentum.**

**Lead:** Bruce Schmiechen, [brucds@pacbell.net](mailto:brucds@pacbell.net)



There will be 10 county Supervisor District town halls coming up, one in each Board of Supervisors' district in December and a second round in each district in January: to ensure community engagement in support of effective implementation of community-based oversight with subpoena power and maximum independence and diverse representation.

### **What is needed:**

You can attend these virtual meetings and make a public comment in support of our proposals: Times, dates and registration information for each District Town Hall as well as suggestions for public comment will be at this link as we get additional information: <https://bit.ly/3F8Hr4J>

The advocacy letter for effective oversight initiated by Faith In Action East Bay, Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails and Coalition for Police Accountability is here: <https://bit.ly/3qsslTo>

**More to come as we get additional information on times and dates for community engagement.**

## 2022 Election Cycle Community Education and Engagement



**Lead:** Jean Moses, [jeanhmoses@gmail.com](mailto:jeanhmoses@gmail.com)

ICJJ members have formed a new working group intended to bring together different parts of Faith In Action East Bay (FIAEB) and to collaborate with our allies in order to educate community members in all parts of Alameda County about the importance of the Sheriff and District Attorney races next year.

The primaries are on June 7, 2022: any candidate who wins over 50% of the vote that day will win the election without running again in November.

Because our mission is to reduce incarceration and to improve conditions in the jail, it is of huge importance to us that individuals elected Sheriff and District Attorney bring to their offices strategies that reflect progressive community values.

**What is needed:** To learn more or support our efforts, contact Jean Moses.