



# Non-Designated Programming Facility Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) May 2018

## Introduction

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has undergone historic changes in recent years, and the department is placing a greater emphasis on rehabilitation and successful reintegration of offenders back into the community. In the past, CDCR was faced with escalating violence in prisons, and there was concern over housing certain inmates in General Population. As a result, Sensitive Needs Yards (SNY) were created back in the 1990s.

Currently, about one-third of our over 129,000 inmates are housed in a Sensitive Needs Yard, which means California prisons have the largest protective-custody population in the nation. It also means new SNY gangs have emerged, while violence in prisons continues to be a challenge. This well-intended policy simply has not worked.

In this period of significant criminal justice reform, CDCR is creating a system where inmates are responsible for their own conduct. It is our belief that inmates should live up to behavioral standards in prison, just like they will out in communities once they are released. That is the reason for the creation and phasing-in of the Non-Designated Programming Facilities.

## What are Non-Designated Programming Facilities?

Non-Designated Programming Facilities are facilities that house inmates together regardless of their designation (Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) or General Population (GP)) in order to provide greater access to self-help, educational, vocational and rehabilitative programs. The department is doing this as one of the efforts to focus on an inmate's rehabilitation, while safely housing them in the least-restrictive facilities possible. These facilities are intended to provide an environment focused on positive rehabilitative programming for inmates who abstain from violence.

No program shall segregate inmates based on prior SNY or GP housing status, and inmates are expected to participate in the recreation yard, job assignments, education/vocation assignments, inmate activity groups, religious services, and other programs and activities.

## When is this transition happening?

As of May 2018, multiple facilities and health care programs have already converted to Non-Designated Programming Facilities status. CDCR's Level I and Level II housing facilities, as well as some higher-level facilities with primarily health care or mental health missions, will be slowly transitioned. All firehouses, Minimum-Support Facilities, and Camps will transition by October 2018.

## Why did CDCR implement Non-Designated Programming?

Because CDCR is committed to expanding rehabilitative opportunities for inmates in order to prepare returning citizens for greater personal success once they are released. Many of these



opportunities are more accessible in lower level facilities. The focus of Non-Designated Programming Facilities is to provide an environment for inmates demonstrating positive programming and a desire to not get involved in the destructive cycles of violence and criminal activity/thinking.

**Can an inmate volunteer for transfer and placement at a higher security level because they do not want to house in an NDFP?**

Pursuant to state law, CDCR places inmates in the least-restrictive security level appropriate based on their individual case factors. Allowing inmates to transfer to more restrictive, higher-security levels based solely on the inmate volunteering for such placement is not appropriate.

**How will the inmate population be advised of this change?**

The administration at each transitioning prison has developed a multidisciplinary team to oversee the transition to a Non-Designated Programming Facility, including conducting rounds and town halls to meet with staff, inmates, Inmate Advisory Councils and Inmate Family Councils in order to accommodate questions and support the transition. Institutions will also closely coordinate with Health Care staff relative to these efforts. Additionally, Non-Designated Programming Facilities shall be discussed with the inmate during classification committee reviews.

**How will institutions handle inmates who engage in violent or threatening behavior towards other inmates in a Non-Designated Programming Facility?**

The safety and security of the inmates in our custody is our first priority, and our staff is well trained to ensure that continues to be the priority. Furthermore, any inmate who engages in violent or threatening behavior toward other inmates housed in a Non-Designated Programming Facility shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Potential transfer of inmates due to enemy concerns, or transfer to a higher security level based on classification committee review, continue to be appropriate per current policy.