

**The American Prison Writing Archive**  
**c/o Hamilton College: 198 College Hill Road; Clinton, NY 13323-1218**  
<https://www.dhinitiative.org/projects/apwa/>

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thanks for your query. These pages will explain what the APWA is, why it's being built, and how you can contribute.

The United States incarcerates more of its people and employs more prison staff than any other nation on earth. Yet there is no central location where the public, policy makers, students or researchers can benefit from the first-hand experience of incarcerated people and prison workers. *The American Prison Writing Archive* is an internet-based, digital archive of non-fiction essays offering first-hand testimony to the conditions experienced by incarcerated people, prison employees, and prison volunteers. *Anyone* who lives, works, or volunteers inside American jails or prisons can contribute to the APWA. We seek authors who write with the authority of first-person experience.

We are open to many styles, but *all submitted essays must draw on first-hand experience.*

All topics are of interest, including descriptions of sources of stress, ways of coping, health care, causes of violence and ways to reduce violence, material conditions, education, employment conditions, the environment for volunteers, the aging prison population, visions of a better way to operate (personally, politically, institutionally, etc.), reflections on the work of dealing with time inside (for workers as well as imprisoned people), the challenges of physical and psychological survival, the politics and economics of mass incarceration, what works and why it works, and what doesn't work and why it doesn't work (i.e. practical views on reform). We are open to any testimony about the issues that matter to incarcerated people, prison staff, administrators, corrections officers, teachers, and volunteers.

We value writing that takes thoughtful positions even on passionately felt ideas.

The APWA is intended for researchers and for the general public, to help them understand prison conditions and the prison's practical effects and place in society. *All work in the APWA will be accessible to anyone with access to the Internet. The information asked for in the questionnaire is **voluntary**. The APWA will grow into a massive archive and every added piece of information you offer will help readers to locate essays relevant to their specific interests. This is the **only** purpose that the APWA intends your questionnaire answers to serve—to connect your writing with readers interested in the topics you write about and the perspectives you bring to your writing. Essays will be included in the APWA even if you choose to reveal little or no personal information.* Please note, the APWA does not offer editing or legal services. If your aim is only to get your work before agents and publishers, seek other outlets. The APWA will post previously published work. The APWA is not currently accepting poetry or fiction. We do not post material addressed to third parties, such as legal documents or grievances. Again, we do not offer editing, promotion, or legal services. All content should be formed into first-person essays addressed to a broad readership.

Once included in the APWA, work will be featured indefinitely unless we receive a written request to remove that work. Contributors can write under pen names (not nicknames) or anonymously, to protect their safety. (If using a pen name, the author's legal name and address should *not appear anywhere* on the essay itself.) We reserve the right to edit or reject work that advocates violence, names names in ongoing legal cases, or libels named individuals. *Writers should avoid using the full names of other incarcerated people.* **A signed permission sheet must be included in order to post work on the APWA.** By signing on the signature line below, you are granting us permission to include your work in the APWA. Again, all other information offered is voluntary. Leaving blank lines in the questionnaire will not exclude your work from the APWA; it will only limit the reference points by which readers can access your work. *Contributors retain full and unconditional copyright to their work. Please be aware, the APWA is a work in progress; we are backlogged and constantly seeking funding to support our work. We acknowledge receipt of all essays but this can take a few months; it can be longer before essays are posted. Writers need to be patient and should send their work elsewhere if they desire more immediate publication. The APWA will post work that has been previously published as long as writers retain copyright.*

**Please pass the APWA address and questionnaire to other incarcerated people and prison workers. (Photocopied, handwritten, or re-typed copies of the questionnaire are acceptable.)** We seek the widest possible gathering of American prison writing, and we will read, scan, and transcribe essays into the APWA on a continuing basis. If previously published, please let us know where and when your essay first appeared, in print or on-line. **Authors can submit multiple essays. Only one permissions-questionnaire is required from each author.** Please do not send postage stamps or a SASE; we will cover postage costs for any reply we send.

Non-fiction essays, based on first-hand experience, should be limited to 5,000 words (15 double-spaced pages). Clearly hand-written pages are welcome. We charge no fees. We read *all* writing submitted.

For more information, write to: APWA, c/o Hamilton College, 198 College Hill Road, Clinton, NY 13323-1218. Parties outside can download the questionnaire at: <https://www.dhinitiative.org/projects/apwa/>

Sincerely—The APWA Editors

# Permissions

The American Prison Writing Archive (APWA)

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Legal Name (please print clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Identification Number (for incarcerated writers) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address (current and/or most reliable; will not be included in the APWA): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of crime of which you were convicted.  Drugs  Property  Violent  Other (please clarify)  
(This information **will not** be posted on the APWA website.) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (granting permission to include your work in the American Prison Writing Archive): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date Today \_\_\_\_\_

## Questionnaire

Answers are voluntary. All information provided below this point will be publicly available in connection with your essay(s). Leave blank any information you do not want included in the APWA.

(Optional) Pen Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Name under which you want your essay to appear, if different than above.) This is not a place for nicknames. Use a pen name if you feel this is necessary to protect your safety, and do not include your legal name or prison ID number on the essay itself.

Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Gender check one:  Female  Male  Trans

and/or other information: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual Orientation check one:  Bisexual  Heterosexual  
 Homosexual  Other

and/or other information: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have children?  Yes  No

Are you a veteran?  Yes  No

Race/Ethnicity check one or more:  African American  Asian American  
 Latina/o / Hispanic  Pacific Islander  
 Native American  White (non-Hispanic)

and/or other information: \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Identification check one:  Buddhist  Christian  
 Hindu  Islamic  
 Jewish  Native

and/or other information:  None

Relationship to Prison check one:  CO  Incarcerated  
 Staff  Teacher  
 Volunteer  Formerly incarcerated  
 Other (please clarify)

Work you perform inside: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have relatives who are, or have been, incarcerated?  Yes  No

Do you have relatives who are, or have been, in prison employment?  Yes  No

Facility Type check one:  Federal Facility  Public  Security Level check one:  
 State Facility  Private (for-profit)  Minimum  
 Jail Facility  Supermax  Death Row

Full name of Facility where you reside or are employed (include City and State) \_\_\_\_\_

Age at current conviction or start of prison employment \_\_\_\_\_

Is this your first incarceration?  Yes  No  N/A