

Milwaukee DSA: 74 people in Milwaukee County Jail receive \$3,200 in mutual aid funds

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In 2020, [Cooperation Milwaukee](#) and [Milwaukee DSA](#) started a mutual aid fundraising campaign in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to work with the [Brown Berets](#) and the [Milwaukee Turners](#) to distribute food, supplies and gift cards to people directly impacted by the pandemic on three separate occasions. Funds continued to grow after these food drives. We coordinated the distribution of funds to incarcerated people at Milwaukee County Jail with Milwaukee DSA's [Abolition Working Group](#).

As a result of the fundraising campaign, we have been able to equitably donate a total of \$3,200 into the accounts of 74 people who are incarcerated in the Milwaukee County Jail.

The pandemic has created an especially dire situation for people incarcerated in jails and prisons across the United States and the world. The close living quarters in carceral facilities inevitably created a challenge in a pandemic, but there are many steps that could have been taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. People in carceral facilities across the country have reported medical neglect and unsanitary conditions. Many staff have shown indifference to safety precautions, often refusing to get vaccinated or declining to wear masks.

To make matters worse, hygienic products, such as soap and hand sanitizer, have been sporadically provided and only consistently available through the commissary (store). People in the Milwaukee County Jail are not paid for labor they perform while incarcerated, so those with no outside source of funds often have no way to access these basic sanitary items.

While we realize this won't undo the damage that the inhumane conditions have imposed on Wisconsin families, we hope these funds will make life in custody a little more bearable for incarcerated people. We also hope that they will take solace in the fact that there are people on the outside who do care about them.

COVID-19 may be past its peak, but we are seeing a resurgence in cases and we must think of ways to help incarcerated people continue to navigate the pandemic. We certainly can't rely on current leadership to address this crisis. Mutual aid via funds generated and submitted to incarcerated workers is one way in which we can support those most marginalized by the current oppressive system.

We envision a world where mutual aid, equity, solidarity and cooperation flourish, and will ultimately replace the hierarchical capitalist system which thrives on predation, exploitation, racism, classism, endless war and mass incarceration. We will continue to promote mutual aid for incarcerated people until such a world is achieved.