

Sponsorship Behind the Walls (SBTW) / Inmate Letter Handling

Issue Statement

The Greater New York Region (GNYP) receives letters from incarcerated individuals from all over the country (not just the GNYP boundaries) through the Regional Service Office (RSO). These letters may request literature, meeting information, sponsorship behind the walls, or other forms of assistance.

While these letters have historically been routed to the H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) Subcommittee, there is currently no formally documented responsibility in GNYP policy assigning ownership for receiving, reviewing, and responding to inmate correspondence. This has created ongoing uncertainty regarding accountability, decision-making, and handling procedures.

Research conducted by members of the RD Team and the GNYP H&I Subcommittee found that other regions handle inmate correspondence differently and there is no single NA-approved model. Some areas and/or regions manage the function through H&I, while others have dedicated Sponsorship Behind the Walls (SBTW) committees or don't have any process at all and are seeking help as well.

Executive Summary for GNYPSC

The GNYPSC Administrative Committee met to discuss the issue above. They agreed on the following steps:

1. The RSC Administrative Body will formalize the process for the receipt and logging of the inmate letters as a responsibility of the RSC Chair and RSC Treasurer. They will codify into the GNYPSC Policy, the edits which will be in the Policy Markup sent to the body for approval in the coming months.
2. The RD Team
 - a. summarize the results of the research conducted to-date in a document to the GNYP for review and consideration in September.
 - b. bring the issue to the Northeast Zonal Forum (NEZF) in October to raise as service need that is far beyond the boundaries of the Greater New York Region to gauge interest for their support to form a SBTW Subcommittee.
3. The GNYPSC, in November:
 - a. The RD Team will provide an update at the November RSC meeting on the information learned and
 - b. Feedback/input, if any, from the GNYPSC will be voiced.

Addendum 1 to the September 2026 RD Team Report
 Greater New York Regional Delegate Team: Sponsorship Behind the Walls (SBTW)

THE ISSUE	DECISION NEEDED
GNYR receives inmate letters through the Regional Service Office requesting literature, meeting information, Sponsorship Behind the Walls, or other assistance. Letters have often been routed to H&I, but current GNYR H&I and GNYRSC Policies do not assign responsibility for receiving, reviewing, and directing this correspondence. As a result, ownership is unclear and external referrals may not be accepted when an inmate falls outside another committee's service boundaries. Four potential solutions sought and discussed with the GNYRSC Administrative Body and GNYR H&I Subcommittee are summarized herein.	Seek a solution for how the GNYR handles SBTW requests so they can be done in a consistent, documented way.

1. Create a GNYR SBTW Subcommittee <i>Establish a dedicated regional body; the Admin Body would facilitate formation.</i> PROS • Clear, specialized ownership • Reduces reliance on outside regions • Can establish a documented regional process CONS • Requires trusted servants and ongoing administration • New policy, procedures, and oversight would be needed • May not resolve requests outside GNYR boundaries	2. Assign Responsibility to Regional H&I <i>Formally expand H&I responsibility, subject to regional approval and a policy update.</i> PROS • Uses an existing service structure • H&I already works with correctional facilities • Could be simpler than forming a new committee CONS • Responsibility is not in current H&I policy • Adds workload and may require specialized processes • Could broaden H&I beyond its stated role
3. Ask NEZF to Explore a Zonal Solution <i>Have the RD Team request a broader solution because some inmates are outside GNYR.</i> PROS • Broader geographic reach • Potential to share resources across regions • Could improve consistency for cross-boundary requests CONS • Requires cooperation beyond GNYR • GNYR would have less direct control • Does not immediately close GNYR's ownership gap	4. Continue the Current Informal Practice <i>Forward SBTW requests to active outside committees when possible; handle literature through existing channels.</i> PROS • No new structure or policy change • Uses a familiar approach • No immediate recruitment requirement CONS • Ownership remains unclear • Outside committees may decline referrals • Continues an undocumented and potentially inconsistent process

