



Contracted Telecommunication and Electronic Media Services for Inmates in State Correctional Facilities

2020 Report to the Governor and the Legislature

As required by Substitute Senate Bill 6476 (2020)

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This Department of Corrections report to the Legislature was directed by SSB 6476 (2020) and contains information on contracts to provide inmates with access to telecommunication and electronic media services in state correctional facilities.

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2020 Report to the Legislature

Legislative Directive

“By July 1st of each year, the contractor that provides inmates with access to telecommunication services and electronic media services under subsection (1) of this section shall report to the department the following information:

- (a) A summary of services offered at each correctional facility;*
- (b) Rates charged for, or associated with, providing each type of service including, but not limited to, monthly financial account maintenance fees, transaction fees associated with money transfers, per call and connection surcharges, bill statement fees, and refund fees;*
- (c) A total accounting of commissions provided to the department or correctional facility;*
- (d) A summary and accounting of services used by inmates categorized as indigent;*
- (e) One-time and ongoing costs incurred for installing and maintaining hardware;*
- (f) Average customer service response time rates per facility and the average time taken to resolve an issue or provide a refund for defective services; and*
- (g) An accounting of all revenues or losses incurred by the contractor by quarter.*

By November 1st of each year, and in compliance with RCW [43.01.036](#), the department shall report to the governor and legislature on contracts for telecommunication services and electronic media services under this section and the contractor's annual compliance with this section.

This section applies to any contract in effect on the effective date of this section, and to any renegotiation, renewal, or extension of such contract.”

Substitute Senate Bill [6476](#) (2020)

Executive Summary

Background

The Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) is a public safety organization responsible for the confinement and supervision of convicted law violators within the State of Washington. Per [RCW 72.09.010](#), the correctional system should positively impact the incarcerated, discourage recidivism, reduce idleness, and link the receipt or denial of privileges to responsible behavior and accomplishments. Corrections recognizes the importance of acquiring and providing appropriate technology to the incarcerated to achieve these statutory mandates and the department's mission of improving public safety by positively changing lives.

The DOC's Incarcerated Individual Technology Services (IITS) includes a wide variety of services, such as telecommunication technology to enable phone calls and electronic media services like e-messaging, video visitation, movie rentals, music downloads and digital games. These services enable individuals to maintain ties with family, friends, and the community which positively impacts those incarcerated. Further, these services reduce recidivism and idleness as well as promote responsible behavior as the use of these services is an earned privilege.

In contracting for these services, the DOC seeks to provide the highest level of services to incarcerated individuals, their families, and friends at the lowest cost.

Contracted commission rates from the sale of certain telecommunication and electronic media services to incarcerated individuals goes to the Incarcerated Individual Betterment Fund (IIBF). According to [DOC 200.200](#), assets of the betterment fund are used solely for incarcerated individual betterment activities that enhance the security and orderly operation of a facility by reducing idleness and encouraging positive development of family and community ties.

Report Overview

In this report to the Governor and the Legislature, the department is required to report on the contracts for telecommunication and electronic media services, and the contractor's annual compliance with reporting requirements.

Report on Contracts

The Department of Corrections currently contracts with Value Added Communications (VAC) (a subsidiary of Global Tel Link (GTL)) for incarcerated individual telephone services within state correctional facilities and with JPAY for electronic media services which include e-messaging, video visitation, video grams, digital music, games, movies, audiobooks, etc.

Current Contracts

Copies of the current telecommunication and electronic media service contracts and amendments can be found on the [department's website](#).

Contract Procurement: In-Process

The Department of Corrections is currently performing its due diligence to select a contracted vendor to provide telecommunications and media services. This has been an ongoing effort spanning multiple years. Multiple vendors have provided hundreds of pages of documents detailing their offerings and ability to meet our requirements and participated in demonstrations. Our efforts are currently focused on two vendors - Securus Technologies and ICS Solutions. The objectives of the project are to:

- *Conduct a Client Services Procurement allowing maximum flexibility and agility in identifying the best overall solution while managing procurement risk.*
- *Award a consolidated contract for technology services offered to the incarcerated population.*
- *Fully integrate external stakeholder involvement. External stakeholders include the Corrections Ombuds, Friends/Family Representative, and a procurement expert from the Department of Enterprise Services.*
- *Improve the services and quality of technology products.*

State of Current Services

There have been reported issues with downloads and video visitation primarily due to decreased bandwidth and increased volume nationwide as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these errors can be attributed to:

- *Additional strain on the system due to in-person visitation being cancelled.*
- *Large increase in the number of simultaneous users and active downloads.*
- *Aging infrastructure that needs updating to increase quality and resiliency;*
- *Available bandwidth the local telecommunications company is willing to provide; and*
- *Outdated technology in need of upgrades. Although JPAY has invested in equipment and infrastructure upgrades throughout the contract period, there is a need for a complete upgrade. Vendors have submitted proposals that include investing in equipment and infrastructure upgrades.*

Both VAC/GTL (phones) and JPay (electronic media) have taken steps to resolve issues and improve systems to handle the increased volume and number of users. These steps include but are not limited to:

- *Adding new servers to distribute load and augment capacity;*
- *Adding additional engineers with expertise in real time communication protocols;*
- *Performing server tuning to improve performance;*
- *Making code changes to further stabilize the platform in order to handle the peak load and to optimize bandwidth utilization;*
- *Updating the Video Visitation platform to address video and audio stability;*
- *Restructuring how the system determines the bandwidth status for optimal network behavior, to allow more calls to connect longer with both video and audio; and*

Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both VAC/GTL and JPay offered incarcerated individuals complimentary services primarily in response to visitation being cancelled. Complimentary services offered include:

- *VAC/GTL provided two (2) free phone calls per week beginning in March 2020. In August 2020, VAC/GTL continued to provide one (1) free call with DOC picking up the cost of the second free call.*
- *In March, JPay began providing two (2) free video visits per week, two (2) free 'stamps' (cost to send an email) per week, and 'free reply Wednesdays' where individuals could reply to an email for free. In addition, JPay introduced movie downloads for purchase.*

Although any technology can and will have equipment and performance issues over time, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic straining these systems, by and large individuals were able to use these services to stay in contact with their family and friends. In 2020, individuals and their friends and family members:

- *Talked for nearly 90 million minutes,*
- *Sent over 16 million e-mails,*
- *Conducted over 15 thousand video visits, and/or*
- *Exchanged over 1 million pictures.*

Contractor's Annual Compliance

Value Added Communications/Global Tel Link: In Compliance

VAC/GTL is in compliance with current contract terms.

JPAY: In Compliance

JPay is in compliance with current contract terms.

Attachments

Value Added Communications/Global Tel Link Vendor Report
JPay Vendor Report

JPAY

Product / Service	Rate	Amount	Applicable Individual
Communication			
Stamp Packages	\$2.00	6 stamps (one time)	Inmate / Customer
	\$5.00	20 stamps	Inmate / Customer
	\$7.50	35 stamps	Inmate / Customer
	\$10.00	60 stamps	Inmate / Customer
eMail	1 stamp	per email	Inmate / Customer
Photo Attachment	1 stamp	per attachment	Customer
eCard	1 stamp	per attachment	Inmate / Customer
Snap N' Send	1 stamp	per photo	Customer
Inbound VideoGram	5 stamps	per 30 second video clip	Customer
Video Visitation	\$7.95	per 30 minute visit	Customer
Media			
Songs	\$0.99 - \$2.00 + tax	per song	Inmate
Albums	\$9.99 - \$22.00 + tax	per album	Inmate
Movies	\$0.99 - \$7.99 + tax	per movie rental	Inmate
eBooks	Free	per book	Inmate
Games	\$0.99 - \$12.99	per game	Inmate
JP5mini (4.3 inch)	69.99 + tax	per tablet	Inmate / Customer
Replacement JP5mini Power Adapter	15.99 + tax	per adapter	Inmate
Replacement JP5mini Screen Protector	\$5.99 + tax	per protector	Inmate
Replacement JP5mini USB Cable	\$3.99 + tax	per cable	Inmate
JP5s (7 inch)	129.99 + tax	per tablet	Inmate / Customer
Replacement JP5s (7 inch) Power Adapter	\$15.99 + tax	per adapter	Inmate
Replacement JP5s (7 inch) Screen Protector	\$5.99 + tax	per protector	Inmate
Replacement Earbuds	14.99 + tax	per set of two earbuds	Inmate
Media Credits	\$3.50	\$0.01 - \$300.00	Customer

Payment Services

Money Transfer (Education, Funeral, Medical, Postage and Spendable)

Online	\$3.95	\$0.01 - \$20.00	Customer
	\$7.95	\$20.01 - \$100.00	Customer
	\$9.95	\$100.01 - \$200.00	Customer
	\$11.95	200.01 - \$300.00	Customer
Phone	\$4.95	\$0.01 - \$20.00	Customer
	\$8.95	\$20.01 - \$100.00	Customer
	\$10.95	\$100.01 - \$200.00	Customer
	\$12.95	200.01 - \$300.00	Customer
MoneyGram	\$8.95	\$0.01 - \$5000.00	Customer
Cost of Supervision			
Online	\$3.95	\$0.01 - \$20.00	Customer
	\$7.95	\$20.01 - \$100.00	Customer
	\$9.95	\$100.01 - \$200.00	Customer
	\$11.95	200.01 - \$300.00	Customer
	\$15.95	\$300.01 - \$500.00	Customer
Phone	\$4.95	\$0.01 - \$20.00	Customer
	\$8.95	\$20.01 - \$100.00	Customer
	\$10.95	\$100.01 - \$200.00	Customer
	\$12.95	200.01 - \$300.00	Customer
	\$16.95	\$300.01 - \$500.00	Customer
MoneyGram	\$8.95	\$0.01 - \$5000.00	Customer
Interstate Compact Payments			
Online	\$7.95	\$100	Customer
Phone	\$8.95	\$100	Customer
MoneyGram	\$8.95	\$100	Customer

Commissions Paid June 2019 - May 2020

Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Total
\$ 29,807.70	\$ 32,891.24	\$ 33,169.32	\$ 35,058.60	\$ 37,660.75	\$ 36,692.90	\$ 41,028.83	\$ 43,245.24	\$ 43,347.07	\$ 51,439.13	\$ 47,657.95	\$ 43,064.36	\$ 475,063.09

One-Time Costs for Installing and Maintaining Hardware June 2019 - May 2020

June 2019	July 2019	August 2019	September 2019	October 2019	November 2019	December 2019	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	Total
\$46,677.32	\$4,235.29	\$1,693.24	\$1,727.80	\$101,710.37	\$40,439.64	\$72,130.56	\$13,066.38	\$6,245.50	\$171,005.30	\$8,297.64	\$142,066.09	\$609,295.13

Ongoing Costs for Installing and Maintaining Hardware June 2019 - May 2020

June 2019	July 2019	August 2019	September 2019	October 2019	November 2019	December 2019	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	Total
\$36,159.79	\$28,677.44	\$30,291.85	\$25,130.95	\$29,699.62	\$29,556.82	\$26,412.36	\$24,773.93	\$26,622.01	\$29,735.30	\$26,904.07	\$27,917.80	\$341,882.00

Metrics for June 2019 through May 2020

Customer Service (Family / Friends Support)*

Average Response Time	3:51 minutes
Average Handle Time	5:05 minutes

**based on national average. Securus/JPay does not track data by state*

Customer Service (Incarcerated Individual Support)*

Average Days To Close a Ticket	10 days
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**based on tickets submitted by all facilities.*

Revenue June 2019 - May 2020

June - August 2019	September - November 2019	December 2019 - February 2020	March - May 2020	Total
\$1,968,512.76	\$2,228,399.94	\$2,558,053.24	\$2,888,724.97	\$9,643,690.91