



# State of Connecticut Department of Correction

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## For Immediate Release **Department of Correction Initiates Video Visitation Program**

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As part of its ongoing efforts to maintain family ties while continuing its efforts to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus, the Connecticut Department of Correction is unveiling a new video visitation program effective Monday, November 16, 2020.

The video visits will initially be rolled out at the Manson Youth, Brooklyn, and Carl Robinson facilities utilizing the Microsoft Teams software application. Following the initial startup period, the department will begin rolling out the video visits to the remaining facilities.

The video visitation program - provided at no cost to the offenders or their loved ones – will allow participants to visit without having to drive to a correctional facility. Saving both time and money while allowing those who live too far away; have no form of transportation; or have mobility issues to see their loved ones. In order to participate, a video visitor must have the Microsoft Teams software application on a smart phone, laptop, or tablet that has video and audio capabilities.

The video visits will be the second form of visitation available to those wishing to visit those who are incarcerated. The Agency reinstated non-contact visitation in October after having suspending all visits back in March as part of its efforts to mitigate the spread of the Covid-19 virus. More than 1,700 noncontact visits have successfully been facilitated since mid-October.

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For the video visits, eligible offenders will be allowed one 30-minute video visit per week. A maximum of three authorized adult visitors may participate

in a video visit. Minors may participate if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, and will not count as one of the three individuals allowed per visit. In order to be eligible, potential visitors must be on the offender's approved visiting list.

To get to the point of offering video visitations was no simple task. The Agency's IT and Engineering Units collaborated with external contractors to provide the necessary wiring and infrastructure for the "video visits" to take place. Also, the Agency's Reentry Unit was instrumental in developing the video visitation policies and coordinating the overall project.

"I had two stipulations regarding video visits - they had to be free, and the pilot had to be available in time for the holidays," said Commissioner Designate Angel Quiros. "Not surprisingly the incredible professionals of this Agency rose to the challenge."

Fees at other state correctional agencies (with services provided by vendors) range from \$2.50 to as much as \$7.95 for a single 30-minute video visit.

The Agency's website has been updated to include a new "Visitation Request Form" which needs to be completed in order to schedule either a non-contact visit or the new video visit option. Although the rules for video visitation are essentially the same as those for in person visits, those hoping to participate in a video visit are encouraged to review the rules. Both the visiting rules as well as the Visitation Request Form can be accessed by clicking on the following link:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/DOC/Miscellaneous/Visiting>

"I realize there is no substitute for in person social visits, but as long as we remain challenged by the pandemic, we will strategize on creative alternatives to keep people connected," Commissioner Quiros added.

Depending on the success of the video visits, the agency will evaluate continuing to offering them even after the pandemic subsides.