



Department of Corrections

H.294

Existing Communications Services



Communication Types

- Phone/voice calls
- Tablet messages
- Tablet video calls

Current Costs

- Calls: \$0.06/minute (additional for international)
- Tablet messages: \$0.25/message
- Tablet video calls: \$.25/minute

Volume

- Incarcerated Vermonters made approximately 80,000 phone calls and 3,100 video calls (video call total of 54,000 minutes) in December 2024
 - Estimated cost at current levels for Vermont to cover annual cost of phone calls: approx. \$1.3M+

Vendor

- Current vendor: Viapath (into June 2025)
- New vendor: IC Solutions (June 2025)
 - Phone, tablet message costs will remain the same under the new vendor
 - Tablet video calls will decrease to \$0.16/minute

Commissary



Commissary Contract:

- Keefe Commissary Network
- Contract dates: February 1, 2025 - January 31, 2033
- Services: Commissary, banking, and deposits
- Products:
 - Hygiene products, batteries, coffee, snack food (three meals provided by DOC each day at no cost)

Upcoming Changes to Commissary:

- Addition of vending machines with more nutritious options and over-the-counter products like Tylenol, Advil, etc
- Partnership with Chicago Beyond to provide more culturally expansive products
 - Working with Chicago Beyond and Women on the Rise to review commissary and standard-issue hygiene items to ensure correct products for people of color

Facility Work Programs



Fiscal Implications of paying federal minimum wage to facility workers:

- \$8-12M annually in pure wages
 - Worker's Comp: ~\$3M annually
 - Other Implications
 - Overtime
 - Benefits
 - Employer's taxes
 - Wage garnishments (child support)
 - W2s

Security Concerns:

- DOC does not have enough employment opportunities for the ~1,400 individuals in custody
 - Creating this many jobs would require major infrastructural upgrades to programming space, wi-fi, etc.
- Disparate employment opportunities/wages can result in security concerns, such as coercion and threats from other incarcerated individuals



Other States

Governor's budget proposal would eliminate free messaging for incarcerated people in CT

Connecticut Public Radio | By [Chris Polansky](#)

Published February 6, 2025 at 4:40 PM EST

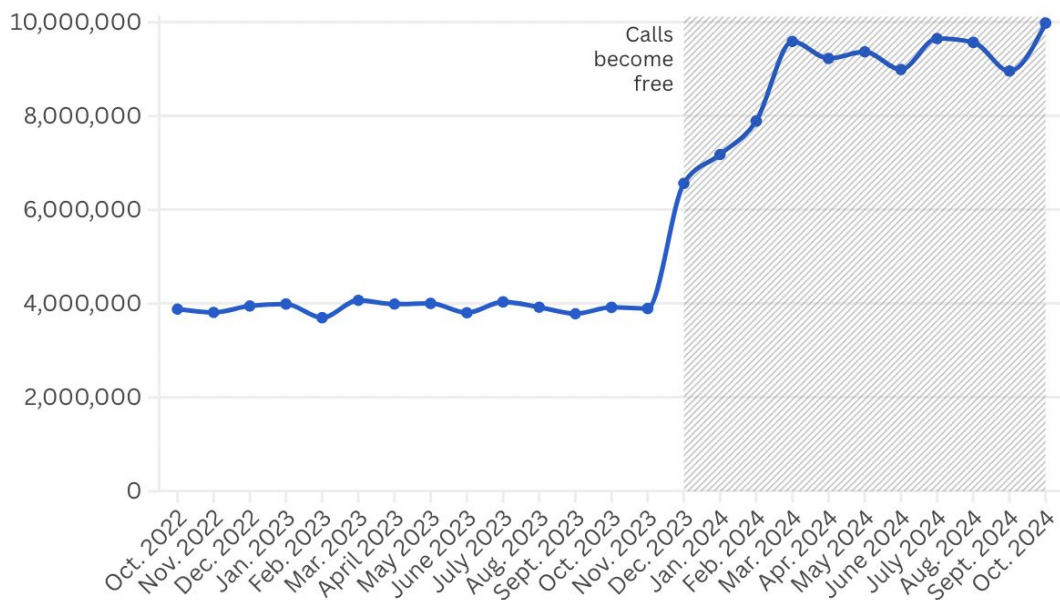


Source: Connecticut Public ([link](#))

Calls and minutes skyrocketed after calls were made free in Massachusetts prisons

In October, prisoners in Massachusetts state facilities spent nearly 10 million minutes on the phone.

Minutes on the phone



Source: WGBH ([link](#))

Massachusetts prison and jail calls doubled in first year of free calls



A woman in a Connecticut prison makes a phone call.

John Moore/Getty Images / Getty Images North America



By [Sarah Betancourt](#)

December 04, 2024

“Calls more than doubled in the state prison system over the prior year, according to [Mass.] DOC data from the first 11 months of the new program.

*In its first year, the **program has cost roughly \$20 million**, between \$8.1 million so far for state facilities, according to the Department of Correction, and more than \$12 million for counties.*

*For the current fiscal year, **just \$10 million was allocated** to cover the program’s costs. **Gov. Maura Healey had included \$35 million in her initial budget proposal.**”*

Source: WGBH ([link](#))



Questions?

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Appendix