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## VIDEO VISITING IN CORRECTIONS: BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS, AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS



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# Video Visiting in Corrections: Benefits, Limitations, and Implementation Considerations



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## FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR

Visits from family members, children and other sources of support can be a lifeline in the lives of incarcerated men and women. Visits provide an opportunity to maintain connection, re-build relationships and actively begin to form links to the community both for support and to assist in the reentry process. Yet, visiting takes on added dimensions with the challenges imposed by geographical distance between facilities and visitors, cost implications for transportation, lodging, childcare, lost wages and the roadblocks often presented from institutional security procedures. Emerging research speaks to the importance of building and maintaining healthy family and community connections for men and women, during their period of incarceration as well as for planning and implementing the reentry process. Traditional methods of communication such as phone calls, mail and on-site visiting have their limitations, some of which are noted above. The advent of video visiting has enhanced traditional methods of building and sustaining those critical connections for incarcerated individual, it is also an industry which is expanding exponentially. Little replaces the opportunities for families to see one another in person, but in those situations where that is not possible, video visiting is a viable option. This guide will address the importance of visitation, introduce video visiting as a resource, ideally in concert with in-person visitation, discuss implementation of video visiting, address the importance of setting up a process and outcome evaluation of visiting programs and provide a set of resources for agencies interested in introducing or enhancing their current visiting capacity.



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# FOREWORD

The impetus for this document came from stakeholders who are keenly aware of the importance of visiting for incarcerated men and women. The benefits of visiting with family and other supportive individuals are well-documented throughout the literature, research, and in the voices of the incarcerated and their families. Visiting policies vary among the over 1,000 prisons and 3,300 plus jail systems across the country. What should be consistent is the acknowledgement by correctional leadership, via policy, that visiting can build and strengthen family connections and provide hope and encouragement for incarcerated men and women. Visiting creates bridges to community supports that promote productive reentry and contributes to improved outcomes, in particular, community safety and reduced recidivism rates.

Virtual events are now commonplace in today's environment and this modality has extended to criminal justice practice through web-based events, telemedicine, and video court hearings, to provide just a few examples. Video visiting software and equipment for jails and prisons are prominent in the exhibit halls at national correctional conferences. There are a wide variety of models emerging and as the technology continues to become more commonplace, affordable, and accessible, an increasing number of correctional systems will be using video visiting. It must be noted that video visiting should not be deemed as an invitation to discontinue in-person visiting. With video visiting come great opportunities as well as cautions and challenges. Creating the capacity to incorporate both visiting approaches in policy and practice provides a resource that captures the advantages that both in-person and video provide to incarcerated populations, families, and other support systems. Well-designed visiting practice can provide advantages to correctional systems through increased engagement in programmatic activities and reductions in negative behavior. With that in mind, the National Institute of Corrections awarded a cooperative agreement through a competitive process to the Osborne Association in New York, a well-established agency that has on-the-ground experience with both in-person and video visiting and a long history of working to strengthen families affected by incarceration. Through the cooperative agreement, the Osborne Association has written a well-researched document that provides 1) an overview of the importance of visiting to include the use of video visiting; 2) considerations for implementing video visiting; 3) an overview for evaluating a video visiting program; and 4) appendices that provide examples, resources, checklists and evaluation tools.

Each chapter of the guide is valuable to assist correctional administrators and staff, as well as potential external partners and stakeholders, to enhance current visiting policy and practice or design a system that incorporates video visiting into overall practice. Taken together, each chapter builds upon the preceding chapter, and the research, practical examples, and tools that are provided throughout the guide will benefit correctional leadership in enhancing current visiting practices.



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## PREFACE

The purpose of this guide is to inform the development of video visiting programs within a correctional setting. “Video visiting” is real-time interactive video communication which uses video conferencing technology or virtual software programs, such as Skype. It is an increasingly popular form of communication between separated family members in settings outside of corrections. The rapid expansion of video visiting in jails and prisons over the past few years suggests that video visiting may become very common in corrections in the near future.

This guide will help inform administrators about the benefits and challenges of using some common video visiting models across a variety of settings. Video visiting can be a positive enhancement to in-person visiting, and has the potential to promote positive outcomes for incarcerated individuals and their families and communities. In certain circumstances, video visiting may benefit corrections by reducing costs, improving safety and security, and allowing for more flexibility in designating visiting hours. The value of video visiting can be maximized when the goals of the facility are balanced with the needs of incarcerated individuals and their families.

The development of this guide was informed by current practice across the United States. Interviews were conducted with prison and jail administrators, IT personnel, technology companies, family members of incarcerated individuals, incarcerated individuals; community-based organizations that provide supportive video visiting programs, and advocates for the incarcerated and their families. A survey was administered to correctional administrators nationwide to learn about existing program models and implementation challenges and successes. A literature review was conducted to learn about the various uses of video conferencing in a correctional setting. Research on the use of video visiting in settings outside of corrections was also reviewed. And finally, articles published in the media about video visiting in corrections were reviewed from August 2012 through January 2014.

This guide is meant to assist correctional administrators, commissioners, sheriffs, and other key decision makers in the following activities:

- Determining whether video visiting is appropriate for a particular setting or jurisdiction;
- Preparing for and implementing video visiting; and
- Conducting a process evaluation and preparing for an outcome evaluation.



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We are grateful to our group of advisors who provided valuable insight and suggestions to inform the development of this guide. The advisors represent diverse perspectives including those of prison and jail administrators; information technology; community-based organizations offering programs for families involved with or affected by the criminal justice system; clinicians serving children and families affected by incarceration; parole and probation agencies; legal advocates and public defenders; and family-focused reentry services providers.

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- Kristina Toth, New Hampshire Department of Corrections; and
- Carl Wicklund, American Probation and Parole Association.

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# INTRODUCTION

Research confirms that incarcerated individuals, corrections, families, and communities all benefit when incarcerated individuals can communicate with and receive visits from family and supportive community members. Video visiting is an additional form of communication that can build and strengthen social support systems of the incarcerated. This relatively new form of communication builds upon the success of video conferencing used for court appearances, and attorney-client communication. It's also being used to bring professionals together with those incarcerated to address pressing legal and medical issues. Video visiting and conferencing may also offer added benefits in planning for reentry, supplementing healthcare delivery, and facilitating cross-systems collaborations.

Video visiting is rapidly expanding in correctional facilities across the nation. However, there is a scarcity of research about how effectively video visiting achieves, or builds upon, the benefits known to be associated with in-person visiting. Video visiting approaches are varied, using different technologies, partnerships, and models. Generally speaking, visitors usually video visit from a community-based visiting center, their home, or at the correctional facility itself.

In determining whether to use video visiting, and what model to select for a particular setting, it is best to be informed about the benefits and challenges, and to balance the needs of corrections, incarcerated individuals, families, and communities. The technology industry highlights the benefits, but video visiting has its limitations and it may be inaccessible for some families. Video visiting is in its infancy, and there is limited research about how effectively video visiting alone or in combination with in-person visiting leads to the positive outcomes known to be associated with in-person visiting. A hybrid visiting approach that offers both video and in-person visiting offers the most flexibility and ensures that the benefits of in-person visiting are preserved and possibly enhanced.

Chapter One provides a brief overview of the benefits known to be associated with in-person visiting and discusses the benefits and limitations of video visiting. Chapter Two focuses on how to assess whether video visiting is an appropriate fit for a particular setting and discusses issues that should be considered upon implementation. Chapter Three provides tools for conducting a process evaluation and preparing for an outcome evaluation. An implementation toolkit and sample evaluation tools are included in the appendices. The appendices also include information about other uses for video conferencing in a correctional setting, video visiting with children, and a listing of relevant resources.



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# CHAPTER 1: WHY CONSIDER VIDEO VISITING

## Traditional In-Person Visiting Benefits Corrections, Families, and Communities

It is helpful to consider what we know about traditional visiting to assess the value of video visiting. Studies confirm that incarcerated individuals have better outcomes when they receive in-person visits from family members and supportive community members. Specifically, traditional in-person visiting has been found to benefit both corrections and incarcerated individuals by:

- Improving institutional adjustment and psychological well-being among the incarcerated
- Reducing behavioral infractions and violent behavior among the incarcerated
- Increasing incarcerated individuals' motivation to participate in programming
- Increasing motivation to gain release from the facility
- Lowering recidivism and increasing public safety

Traditional visiting has been found to benefit incarcerated individuals, their families and communities by:

- Providing incentive to maintain visiting privileges
- Increasing the probability of discretionary parole
- Facilitating planning and support for community reentry
- Increasing the chance of obtaining gainful employment post-release
- Reducing the likelihood of using illegal substances post-release
- Maintaining and strengthening the parent-child relationship
- Reducing the trauma that children experience when they are separated from a parent

### **Traditional visiting is linked to lower behavior incidents in Ohio Prisons**

A recent study on traditional visiting's effect on incarcerated individuals' behavior in two Ohio prisons (male and female facilities) found that those receiving traditional visits, especially from a parental figure, had fewer behavior infractions compared to those who did not receive visits. This study found that even one visit reduced infractions.<sup>1</sup>

## Video Visiting in Corrections

Video visiting was first used in a correctional setting in the 1990's. And with technological advances resulting in more user-friendly and affordable equipment, it is expanding at a rapid pace. A review of video visiting practices in prisons and jails across the country revealed tremendous variation in the purpose, model, funding, prerequisites to participation, and technology.<sup>2</sup>

In August 2012, *The New York Times* estimated that correctional facilities in at least 20 states had video visiting capability or were planning to implement some form of video visiting.<sup>3</sup> Research conducted for this publication one year later reveals that jails in at least 28 states and Washington, D.C., offer video visiting and no fewer than 15 state corrections departments are considering or offering video visiting in select prisons.<sup>4</sup> Jails are rapidly adopting video visiting, whereas prison systems are slower to do so, partly because of the challenges of implementing video visiting in statewide systems. The rapid digitization of society and the proliferation of video visiting over the past few years suggest that video visiting will likely be the norm in the near future.

Video visiting is in its infancy, and there is still little empirical evidence about how effectively video visiting alone or in combination with in-person visiting leads to or builds on the positive outcomes linked to in-person visiting. Video visiting has benefits and limitations. Video visiting provides another way for families to communicate when distance, cost and other factors limit or prevent in-person visiting. Where it increases the frequency and consistency of communication, it has the potential to build on the benefits of traditional in-person visiting. To the degree that it reduces in-person visiting, it also has the potential to reduce staffing costs and increase safety and security at facilities. On the other hand, some find that video visiting cannot replicate seeing someone in person or is difficult to use.

Traditional, in-person visiting is a best practice that should continue in all correctional settings when possible.<sup>5</sup> Until more is known, implementing a hybrid model of in-person and video visiting is encouraged. In doing so, the benefits of traditional visiting are preserved and potentially strengthened with video visiting.

### Benefit: Connecting Families and Building Social Support Systems

#### ***Connecting family members and supportive friends***

Video visiting has the potential to bridge the gap for families with loved ones incarcerated out of state or in remote facilities and to foster an incarcerated individual's social connectedness. The Michigan Department of Corrections temporarily offered one of the earliest video visiting programs to incarcerated individuals housed outside of Michigan. Since then, other states such as Wisconsin and Alaska offer video visits to individuals incarcerated out of state, and at least 13 states use video visiting to connect families with individuals incarcerated in prisons within the state. Video visiting in jails may also bridge the gap for families residing in large counties or in counties that lack public transportation.

Video visiting can also keep families connected when travel conditions are poor. For example, the State of Oregon’s Department of Corrections experienced a voluntary decline of in-person visits at one prison during the winter months, suggesting that home-based video visiting is attractive when travel conditions are poor (see chart 1A).<sup>6</sup>

	Winter 2011	Winter 2012	Winter 2013
<b>SRCI</b>			
Video Visits (VIP calls)	0	1997	3188
Physical Visitations	6978	5597	4637
Combined (Overall Visits)	6978	7594	7825
<b>Statewide</b>			
Video Visits (VIP calls)	0	1977	15408
Physical Visitations	77202	74744	70498
Combined (Overall Visits)	77202	76721	85906

“Oregon DOC visiting during winter months in 2011, 2012, and 2013”<sup>7</sup>

Families may video visit more often than they visited before video was available. This is especially true when video visiting is convenient, affordable, and/or offered at a family friendly community-based site. For example, the year after the District of Columbia Department of Corrections (D.C. Jail) started video visiting they recorded approximately 20,000 more video visits as compared to the number of in-person visits that occurred the year prior to video visiting implementation.<sup>8</sup> D.C. jail administrators theorize that friends and family video visited more often than they visited in-person because the community-based video visiting center is family friendly and does not entail long waits and security checks.

Given the critical importance of in-person visits, a decrease of in-person visits, especially between incarcerated parents and their children, may not be a desirable trend. Infusing family- and child-friendly visiting practices at facilities is a response that may ensure that in-person visiting continues.



FIGURE 1-COMMUNITY BASED VIDEO VISITING CENTER AT DEANWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER

### **Video visiting supports relationships**

Preliminary evidence suggests that video visiting helps adult family members maintain a relationship with an incarcerated individual family member. Of the 40 families surveyed who participated in video visiting at the community-based Family Services of Western Pennsylvania's Families Outside Program, all reported that video visiting helped them maintain or nurture their relationships with incarcerated family members.<sup>9</sup>

### **Supporting the parent-child relationship**

Approximately 2.7 million children in America have a parent(s) in jail or prison on any given day.<sup>10</sup> For most children, visiting and communication mitigates the risks associated with having an incarcerated parent and reduces the trauma of separation, thereby improving their chances for a bright and healthy future.<sup>11</sup> Video visiting is an additional communication tool that facilitates the critical connection between children and their incarcerated parents. However, some children, especially very young or developmentally delayed children, may not understand the technology and may find the inability to touch their parents to be traumatic or frightening.

***“My son gets to see me and see that I’m o.k. It gives him peace of mind.” —Mother at Albion Correctional Facility, New York State<sup>12</sup>***

Facilitating parent-child communication also benefits incarcerated parents. Being separated from a child is a source of distress that impedes institutional adjustment for some incarcerated mothers, possibly leading to increased behavior infractions.<sup>13</sup> Research indicates that incarcerated parents need support and consistent contact with their children to alleviate this distress.<sup>14</sup> Incarcerated parents who have some form of contact with their children were found to have lower rates of depression, anxiety, and stress.<sup>15</sup>

As early as 2000, the Florida Department of Corrections offered video visiting in two women’s prisons in response to the limited number of visits women were receiving from their children due to distance.<sup>17</sup> Participating incarcerated mothers indicated that their self-esteem and relationships with their children improved, and that video visiting enabled contact that was previously not possible because of distance.

Video visiting programs designed for incarcerated parents and their children may be offered in conjunction with a parenting class. These video visiting programs may involve a community-based partner that hosts a video visiting center for children and provides supportive services to children, caregivers, and the incarcerated parent. (See appendix 1B for more information about video visiting programs for children of incarcerated parents.)

**“[It’s] the best thing that has ever happened to me and my family while being incarcerated. It gives me a great view on what they are going through in the house at home.”—Father participating in the video visiting program at the New Hampshire Department of Corrections<sup>18</sup>**

### **Video visiting helps children maintain relationships with their parents**

According to a Sentencing Project report on video visiting, research suggests that children of divorce and military families using video conferencing to communicate with their absent parent experienced reduced stress from being separated from a parent. This report also found that video visiting has the greatest benefits for children of incarcerated parents when:

- “It is used as an adjunct to rather than a replacement for other modes of communication, particularly contact visits;
- children can visit from their homes or nearby sites;
- facility policies allow for frequent visits; and
- fees are not cost prohibitive.<sup>16</sup>

## ***Child welfare involved families***

In 2009, an estimated 14,000 children entered foster care, in part related to parental incarceration.<sup>21</sup> Even more children in foster care experienced the incarceration of a parent after entering foster care.<sup>22</sup> Child welfare policy and social services law generally establish that children and parents have the right to visit. However, in most correctional systems, visiting is considered a privilege not a right.<sup>23</sup> This inconsistency between the rights of children and those accorded to incarcerated individuals may be detrimental for children who need parental contact and for incarcerated parents who risk losing their parental rights.

Video visiting expands communication options for child welfare-involved families and promotes parent-child connections that potentially lead to the following outcomes:

- Increased visiting opportunities, which may prevent termination of an incarcerated parent’s parental rights.
- Opportunity for a child welfare agency to observe parenting skills, and to engage the parent in planning for the child and assess the progress towards the permanency plan.
- Facilitation of reconciliation and reunification upon release, reducing costs associated with parental rights termination proceedings and lengthy stays in foster care.
- Reduction of costs to public agencies that provide health, mental health, special education and juvenile justice services to children and families.
- Promotion of cross-systems collaboration between agencies (corrections and child welfare).

### **Courts are less likely to terminate parental rights when parents maintain consistent contact with their children**

The federal 1997 Adoptions and Safe Family Act (ASFA), designed to reduce the length of time children spend in foster care, requires that termination of parental rights proceedings begin when children are in foster care for 15 out of the past 22 months, with some exceptions.<sup>19</sup>

This timeframe is particularly challenging for incarcerated parents whose average sentence length is 80 to 100 months.<sup>20</sup> A positive and consistent bond must be demonstrated by the parent to retain their parental rights, but distance makes it challenging for families and caseworkers to regularly take children to the facility. Video visiting is another way for incarcerated parents to maintain a bond with their children. Virtual conferencing can also increase opportunities for parents to participate in meetings about their children and virtually “parent from the inside.”

## ***Visiting alternative for no contact populations***

Video visiting may be a viable alternative for incarcerated individuals who are not allowed in-person visits due to policy or medical status. Nebraska, Indiana, and Wisconsin use video visiting for individuals who are not permitted contact for reasons such as segregated housing.<sup>25</sup> The Federal Bureau of Prisons uses closed-circuit video visiting for incarcerated individuals in segregated housing and is planning to expand video visiting to connect individuals in general population with their families.<sup>26</sup>

## **Benefit: Video Visiting Can Help Corrections Meet Objectives**

Visiting policies in state prisons became more restrictive between 1991 and 2005, in part due to fiscal, staffing and security constraints.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, many jails have also experienced budget cuts that may make it challenging to enhance or even maintain in-person visiting hours. Video visiting can help alleviate these challenges by potentially reducing labor costs and increasing security while maintaining or even expanding visiting opportunities.

Early video visiting programs were often pilots implemented with the goal of connecting incarcerated individuals with family members. Now video visiting is being used to achieve additional correctional objectives, including the following:

- Reducing costs
- Improving safety and security
- Flexibility in scheduling visiting hours and expanding visiting opportunities
- Supporting the mental health and institutional adjustment of the incarcerated
- Facilitating reentry planning
- Reducing recidivism and increasing public safety

“Video visitation is the wave of the future for correctional facility communication. . . . The new system presents tremendous advantages in time and cost savings, as well as contributing to increased safety and security for Clare County, Michigan our facility.”—Sheriff John Wilson, Clare County, Michigan<sup>28</sup>

### **Video visits facilitate court ordered visits**

“All visits have been successful . . . one visit working with the caseworker bringing the children who were court ordered for monthly visits, and one family getting visits ordered through divorce court. Such court ordered visits may have taken much longer to happen or may not have happened at all without the [video visiting] program.”—Video visiting coordinator, Florida Department of Corrections<sup>24</sup>

## Reducing costs

In many cases, video visiting is less labor intensive than traditional visiting, allowing for correctional staff to be reassigned to other duties. If system efficiencies lead to staff reductions or attrition, then legacy costs may also be reduced (benefits and pensions). However, employees and labor unions may oppose actions that may lead to staff reductions. There are costs associated with video visiting, and it is important to recognize that the amount of savings that may be realized can vary considerably.

Depending on the video visiting model used, the labor hours dedicated to visiting may be reduced in the following ways:

- Reduces movement
- Fewer staff needed to monitor in-person visits<sup>30</sup>
- Reduces or eliminates contraband searches
- Reduces on-site visitor processing and visitor searches
- Some systems automate visitor background checks and scheduling

It is unclear how video visiting will affect the frequency of in-person visiting at facilities that use video visiting as a supplement to in-person visiting. Early reports suggest that these facilities are experiencing a voluntary decline of in-person visits (see chart 1B).<sup>31</sup> As a result, labor previously dedicated to in-person visiting can be dedicated to other critical functions. On the other hand, some correctional administrators predict that in-person visiting will increase because video visiting will improve communication with family and friends and facilitate reconnections.

"Through use of this system, the Department of Correction has operated a safer and more efficient facility. In 2011, DOC had 3,500 fewer visitors to the facility. With each averted visit, our staff members are able to devote their time and attention to other work-related tasks." —Commissioner of Correction Kevin Cheverko, Westchester County Jail, New York<sup>29</sup>

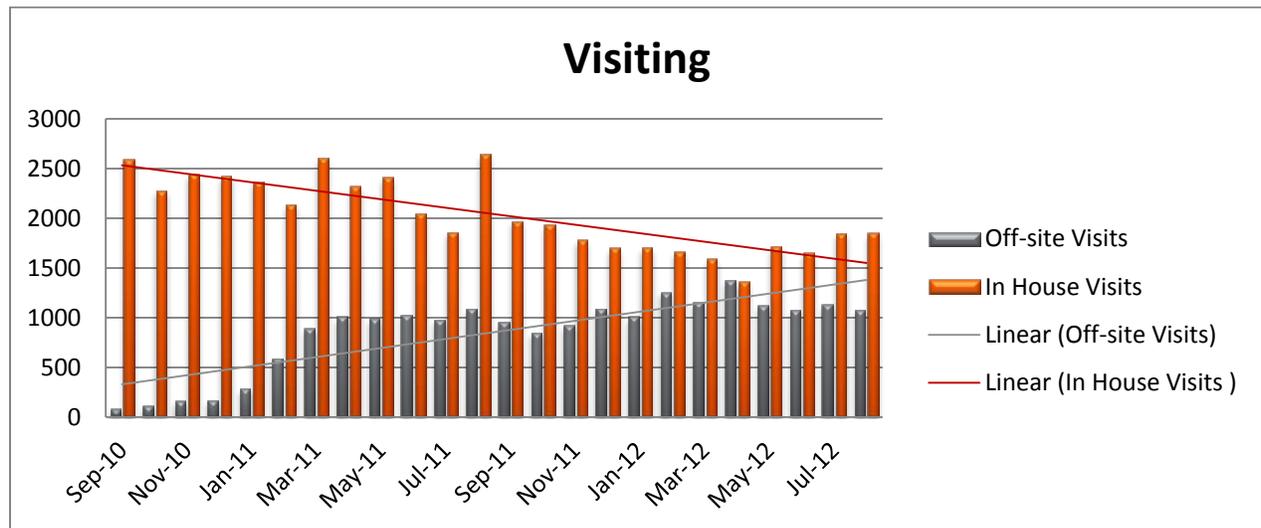


Chart 1B: Trends in Web-Based and In-House Visiting, Washoe County Detention Center, September 2010–August 2012<sup>32</sup>

## ***Improving safety and security***

Video visiting is often used to enhance safety and security, especially at jails. A reduction in contact visits (the result of a voluntary decrease of in-person visits mentioned above) may reduce the flow of contraband in traditional visiting rooms. Reduced traffic and congestion in waiting and visiting areas potentially improves the safety of visitors, staff, and incarcerated individuals. Safety and security may also improve when movement is reduced. Staff are potentially freed to dedicate more time to duties that manage safety and security at a facility when in-person visiting declines.

These security benefits should be weighed against the possibility that reducing or eliminating in-person visiting may remove the incentive for incarcerated individuals to exhibit good behavior, thereby increasing security concerns rather than reducing them.<sup>35</sup> At this early stage of video visiting, it is unclear how

“Web visits increase the safety of our inmates and our staff. Safety is our highest priority, and every time we move inmates through the jail for visits, a potential safety concern exists. Web-based visits reduce those concerns and greatly reduce opportunities for introducing contraband into the jail.”—Debi Campbell, Detention Operations Manager, Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Reno, Nevada<sup>34</sup>

morale, well-being, and rehabilitation among those incarcerated will be affected when in-person visiting is reduced or eliminated, particularly in prisons where individuals are likely to be housed for long periods of time.

Early reports from the field indicate that inappropriate behavior is not a common problem that arises during video visits. For example, Oregon DOC has only had 40 major misconduct reports out of 26,596 video visits, a .15% incidence rate.<sup>36</sup> Software is available to monitor video visits for inappropriate behavior and language and will terminate visits as needed.

### **Lubbock County Jail Reduces Costs with Video Visiting**

“In July 2010 Lubbock County completed a new 400,000 square foot detention center. . . . A key functional concept for this new detention facility was the use of video visitation . . . to minimize or eliminate inmate movements. Standard face-to-face visitation cost in the jail design was projected to be over \$5.5 [million] and have heavy ongoing operational costs. Video visitation costs were estimated at less than half of that with less operational costs and greater flexibility.

When Lubbock County issued an RFP, the responses were for older analog systems with a tremendous initial cost. Lubbock County chose to perform the video visitation engineering and implementation in-house.

There are currently 100 public visitation booths, 140 booths in the cell pods, 6 secure attorney booths at the jail, 10 secure attorney booths at the Courthouse, and a portable booth. There have been over 100,000 video visits made from August 2010 through April 2011.”<sup>33</sup>

## ***Flexibility in scheduling visiting hours and expanding visiting opportunities***

Correctional agencies across the nation state that a major benefit of video visiting is that it allows for more flexibility in designating visiting hours and allows facilities to offer additional visiting hours via video. Video visiting may also expand the number of visits an incarcerated individual has in one day. For example, Boulder County jail offers home-based video visiting during evenings and weekends as a supplement to their in-person visiting hours.<sup>38</sup> At some jails, if an incarcerated individual has met his or her weekly in-person visiting limit, then visitors can access an additional video visit instead of waiting until the following week.

## ***Supporting the mental health and institutional adjustment of the incarcerated***

Video visiting has the potential to build on the benefits of traditional visiting, which has been shown to have a positive impact on an incarcerated individual's psychological well-being, behavior, and overall institutional adjustment. Specifically, incarcerated individuals receiving traditional visits have been found to exhibit less violent behavior, fewer rule infractions, and an increased motivation to participate in treatment during incarceration.<sup>39 40 41</sup>

### **Video visits may prevent a reduction in visiting opportunities**

"When the idea first came, we were in a place that a lot of jails are familiar with," said Sheriff Raney [Ada County Jail, Portland Oregon] during a presentation on the new system at the 2010 American Jail Association conference in Portland, Oregon. "Our inmate visitations were very labor intensive and we were forced down to offering visits only three times per week." Ada County now offers video visits seven days a week.<sup>37</sup>

### **Reports indicate video visiting can improve institutional adjustment**

"[Inmates] are very happy with it, and we've seen a boost in their morale because of [video visitation]."—Marty Brazell, Warden of Jefferson County Jail, Arkansas<sup>42</sup>

"My boys mean everything to me and to maintain a positive influence in their lives through video visits has helped me deal with the emotional roller coaster of prison life."—incarcerated father<sup>43</sup>

Pennsylvania DOC's original video visiting goal was to "improve and enhance any mechanism that helps to foster family relationships." One year after implementation, the program was also viewed as an effective behavior management tool for participating parents (Crabbe 2002).<sup>44</sup>

## Reentry planning

Individuals returning home from jail and prison face challenges in reconnecting to their families and loved ones, finding and maintaining employment, maintaining sobriety, locating steady and safe housing, accessing healthcare, and adhering to conditions of probation or parole. People going home from prison rely primarily on their families for money, employment, and housing.<sup>46</sup> Family involvement increases the probability of being paroled and successfully reintegrating into the community.<sup>47</sup> For this reason, it is valuable to explore the use of video visiting to connect incarcerated individuals with supportive family and friends, and with community-based organizations, community supervision agencies (probation and parole), child welfare and other city and state agencies, and faith-based and other supportive services.

Some agencies are using video conferencing technology to support reentry. For example, The Osborne Association partnered with the New York City Department of Correction in 2013 to offer video visiting to incarcerated individuals identified as being at high risk for recidivating, with the goal of strengthening family connections to improve reentry outcomes. Incarcerated

***Video conferencing can bring the reentry team together “virtually” when travel to the facility is not possible or places an undue burden on team member.***

individuals can also video conference with community-based support specialists and providers to plan for reentry. While this increases operational efficiency for reentry specialists and providers, at this stage it is unclear how incarcerated individuals respond to this form of communication. It is also unclear how video conferencing in a correctional setting affects an individual’s ability to build rapport or develop a relationship.

Video visiting and conferencing facilitates reentry in the following ways:

- Maintains and builds social support network
- Allows for visits with clergy and other supportive community members
- Facilitates connections in community for those who have no support system
- Enables reentry team meetings
- Allows for job, housing, and program interviews
- Provides opportunities to participate in Medicaid and Social Security Administration hearings
- Allows for family involvement in reentry planning
- Facilitates linkages with community-based providers prior to release

### **Video visiting can help long-termers remain connected**

Facilitating social connections for incarcerated **individuals** with long-term or life sentences potentially improves their emotional and behavioral stability. Pennsylvania Prison Society, a community-based partner that once offered video visiting at prisons in Pennsylvania, recognizes video visiting’s potential with this population:

“Pennsylvania has the largest population of life-sentenced prisoners in the country. Though [video visiting] was not targeted for this population. . . [it] can provide stabilizing assistance in terms of helping people serving time.”—William DiMascio, [Former] Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society<sup>45</sup>

Video conferencing also facilitates a continuum of care by connecting individuals to supportive community services before they return to the community. For example, individuals struggling with substance abuse can video visit with sponsors and interview for substance abuse treatment programs, allowing for rapid referrals to treatment and thereby reducing their risk of relapse upon returning to the community. Video visiting can also link incarcerated individuals with community-based medical providers to establish relationships and develop treatment plans, ensuring a continuum of care. Project START, which connects HIV+ individuals with medical services in the community, is based on research showing that incarcerated individuals working with the same medical case manager on the inside and in the community are more likely to engage in treatment upon release.<sup>49</sup>

**Video conferencing facilitates reentry planning**

“Westchester Drug Courts had a zero budget to perform housing interviews. With video visitation, the Drug Courts can interview inmates for placement into community-supervised housing. It is important that the community housing can address the issues brought with the offender to the home.”—Captain J. Mark Reimer, Westchester County Jail, New York<sup>50</sup>

***Reducing recidivism and increasing public safety***

Given the public safety benefits of reducing recidivism and promoting successful reentry, correctional agencies can play a role in improving public safety by expanding visiting opportunities. Social support has been *shown to reduce the stress associated* with reintegration, thereby reducing recidivism rates. For example, a survey of previously incarcerated men in Maryland concluded that individuals with strong family support during incarceration were more likely to gain employment and less likely to use drugs after release.<sup>51</sup>

**Key finding from Minnesota Prisons:  
Visiting reduces recidivism rates**

A recent study tracking over 16,000 individuals released from Minnesota prisons found that those receiving even one visit were 13 percent less likely to receive another felony conviction and 25 percent less likely to be incarcerated for violating parole. Receiving visits throughout one’s incarceration, not just in the months prior to release, is associated with positive outcomes.

The study found that “prison visiting can improve recidivism outcomes by helping offenders not only maintain social ties with both nuclear and extended family members (especially fathers, siblings, and in-laws) while incarcerated, but also by developing new bonds such as those with clergy or mentors.”<sup>48</sup> Visits from siblings, in-laws, fathers and clergy were the most beneficial in lowering recidivism. Video visiting provides for additional opportunities to connect these supportive community members with incarcerated individuals.

## Benefit: Video Visiting Can Help Families Overcome Visiting Barriers

The costs associated with travel, lost earnings, and overpriced on-site food from vending machines are financially burdensome for low-income families, making it challenging to visit frequently, if at all.<sup>52</sup> Distance is a major barrier for families. Given the benefits of in-person visiting, correctional systems would benefit from considering proximity to families in their custody and program placement decisions. Video visiting located in or near families' residences can supplement or make contact possible when proximal placement is not feasible due to security levels, programming requirements, location of facilities, and other correctional policies.

Video visiting has the potential to overcome common visiting barriers for families such as:

- Distance and travel costs
- Lost earnings and missed school
- Facility is not accessible by public transportation
- Narrowly defined visiting policy (e.g. immediate family only, no children)
- Limited availability of visiting hours
- Long wait to enter visiting room
- Friends and families with conviction records are not eligible to visit at the facility
- Visiting process is not child-friendly
- Visiting hours are cancelled due to security issues at the facility
- Families are turned away (e.g., too many in party, improperly dressed, overcrowding, etc.)

### Video visiting overcomes some visiting barriers

"In the previous building, people coming in for a visitation had to be approved through a background check. Now we don't deny as many applications to visit inmates because they just come into the public lobby area [so background checks are no longer required]." —Sgt. Jana Abens, Polk County Sheriff.<sup>53</sup>

Video visiting can accommodate families who cannot visit at the facility during traditional visiting hours. It eliminates the difficult decision caregivers of school-age children are often forced to make—choosing between their children visiting their incarcerated parent at the facility or attending school when only weekday/daytime visiting hours are offered. Allowing for visits (video and in-person visits) to be scheduled in advance decreases the likelihood that visitors will be turned away from visiting centers due to overcrowding.

Additional benefits for families may include the following:

- Connects incarcerated youth and their incarcerated parents confined at separate facilities
- Allows for visits from elderly or disabled family members who cannot travel
- Increases frequency of contact between traditional visits
- May be less traumatizing for children as compared to non-contact visits through glass
- Empowering for children to schedule and initiate visits with their parents

## Limitations and Other Considerations

It is important to be informed about the limitations and challenges that corrections agencies and the incarcerated and their families may encounter when using this form of communication. Some video visiting models present more challenges than others depending on the correctional setting, the geography of the jurisdiction, and the unique circumstances of each visitor. Due to the limitations and challenges that video visiting may present, families may choose not to video visit.

### ***Video visiting is not for all families***

For some families, video visiting may be present the following challenges:

- Families may not be able to travel to a video visiting site in their communities or at a facility.
- Families may lack the resources to own a computer and/or to have an Internet connection.
- Families are dissatisfied with systems that have technical problems, poor video and audio quality, and poor camera angles.
- The technology may be confusing for the incarcerated and visitors, especially those with developmental delays and individuals that lack computer skills.
- Video visiting may be confusing for very young children.
- Video visiting is difficult for individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments.
- Illiteracy may be a barrier to setting up a video visiting account.
- Families dislike facility-based video visiting because once they have expended the time and expense to travel to the facility, they would rather see their loved one in-person
- Fees charged for video visiting may be unaffordable.
- The video visiting company's website may not provide scheduling instructions and/or customer service in multiple languages.

#### **Visitor speaks out against video visiting fees**

"I want to be there to give him that support but with this new [video visiting] system it makes it really hard to support your loved one. Whether it's money-wise, communication-wise. Because they nickel and dime you on everything, every little aspect. And it's supposed to make things simpler, but it doesn't."—Jennifer, mentor for an incarcerated friend<sup>54</sup>

Visitors and advocates for families and the incarcerated argue that charging for visits is an unjust practice that may reduce the frequency of visits received by incarcerated individuals. Video visiting fees and convenience and services charges may be unaffordable for some families. Moreover, families may not have a credit card to set up an

account and pay for visits. Conversely, some visitors prefer to pay for convenient home-based video visits rather than travel to the facility for a free video visit or an in-person visit.

## ***Families express dissatisfaction when in-person visits are discontinued***

More and more jails are replacing in-person visiting with video visits, alarming families and the agencies that serve them. Administrators discontinuing in-person visiting will more than likely experience pushback from community and faith-based organizations, families, incarcerated individuals, legislators, and legal advocates who argue it is unjust to eliminate in-person visiting. For example, some American Civil Liberties Union chapters are exploring how best to build cases against facilities that replace in-person visiting with video visiting. Legislators are also getting involved. Washington, D.C., Council Member Muriel Bowser (supported by The American Bar Association) introduced a bill in 2013 requiring the D.C. Department of Corrections to reinstate face-to-face visits at D.C. Central Detention Facility.<sup>58</sup>

### **Families say they need in-person visits with their incarcerated loved ones**

“Being in the same room is something you can’t replace.”<sup>56</sup>

“We want to see him for real. We want to touch our hands through the window. It makes him feel better. Even just to kiss the window, it makes us feel better.”<sup>57</sup>

In determining whether video visiting should supplement or replace in-person visiting, stakeholders should consider the proven benefits of traditional visiting, the limitations of video visiting, the needs of each facility, the goals of the correctional

administration, and the laws, regulations, and political realities of the region. Visiting cannot replicate seeing someone in-person, and it is critical for a young child to visit his or her incarcerated parent in person to establish a secure attachment.<sup>59</sup> Administrators needing to balance the differing opinions of multiple stakeholders may find a hybrid visiting (in-person and video) approach a viable solution.

## ***Home-based video visiting has benefits and limitations***

Home-based video visiting is becoming more common, and some correctional agencies are planning to phase in home-based video visiting to augment facility-based video visiting. This model is especially conducive to increasing visiting opportunities because it may not require as much staffing at a facility or community-based visiting center. At Washoe County jail in Nevada, home-based video visitors are more likely to be repeat visitors as compared to in-person visitors, suggesting that for some family members, video visiting is convenient and can overcome visiting barriers.<sup>60</sup> However, charging a fee for home-based video visiting is the norm. Families may not have access to a computer or mobile device with an internet connection, so visits could also be offered at a community-based site or at the facility to ensure access for all.

### **Undersheriff responds to a petition calling for the reinstatement of traditional visiting**

“I’ve read the petition and understand there’s some concern about the system and [that] the quality of visitation will be diminished,” Honea said. “That’s something we looked at very closely when we decided to invest in this technology.

Clearly, inmates being able to visit with friends and family is important. That issue is not lost on me, but we have to continually weigh our various options and approaches. The benefit we’ll gain from this was ultimately worth it.”—  
Undersheriff Kory Honea, Butte County Jail, California<sup>55</sup>

## ***Video visiting benefits the technology industry***

The rapid expansion of video visiting is partly driven by the technology industry whose presence at correctional conferences is overwhelming. In fact, a 2012 Sentencing Project Report refers to the technology industry as “the newest player in the prison-industrial complex.”<sup>61</sup> Technology companies are quick to emphasize potential revenue streams, but some correctional administrators and technology companies caution that revenue generated by fees is nominal compared to a department’s overall budget. They claim that the real cost benefit of this technology is derived from the reallocation of labor resources.

Technology companies stand to profit from equipment and software sales, ongoing IT support, and revenue sharing contracts from video visiting fees. In fact, some video visiting contracts require that the agency discontinue in-person visiting.<sup>64</sup> Technology companies ultimately gain from this stipulation as visitors then must use and potentially pay for some or all video visits. Correctional administrators should be fully informed and advised before entering contracts and consider how stipulations ultimately affect correctional objectives and families.

## ***Potential drawbacks for corrections***

Video visiting may not be an appropriate fit for every correctional setting. Challenges that may arise include the following:

- Start up and maintenance costs
- High financial risk for corrections’ owned and managed systems
- New technology is still evolving and rapidly changing
- A culture change may be required to obtain buy-in from correctional personnel
- Pushback from families, the incarcerated, and the agencies that serve them when video visiting replaces in-person visits
- Unions and employees may dispute potential staff reductions
- It may reduce the income generated from phone calls

### **External stakeholders question if video visiting fees are fair**

“. . . [W]e see clear evidence that the video communications market is currently driven by the same perverse incentives that caused market failure in the correctional telephone industry.”—Prison Policy Initiative<sup>62</sup>

“The outcry of a gouging of prisoners is what caused [telephone calls] to be regulated. They shouldn’t see visitation and communication with people’s families as a potential moneymaking operation.”—Claire G. Gastañaga, executive director of the ACLU of Virginia.<sup>63</sup>

## Additional Uses of Video Conferencing in Corrections

Leveraging technology for multiple purposes increases operational efficiency and return on investment so it is helpful to consider the multiple ways video conferencing can be used in a correctional setting. It is also helpful to glean lessons about the benefits and challenges of using video conferencing to meet correctional goals outside of visiting. While some research finds that video conferencing is as effective as in-person communication, other studies find that video conferencing is less effective than in-person communication. For example, research comparing the use of video conferencing for legal matters, such as bail and immigration hearings, as compared to in-person appearances suggests that credibility is questioned more often when an incarcerated individual appears via video conference. (For more information see Appendix 1A: Additional Uses for Video Conferencing in Corrections).

Departments across the nation are using video conferencing to increase operational efficiencies and strengthen programming in the following areas:

- Legal and Parole Board hearings
- Medical
- Mental health
- Education: video based instruction or tutoring for incarcerated individuals
- Interagency communication, oversight, and staff development

## Concluding Summary: Benefits and Limitations

**Table 1A: Potential Benefits for Corrections**

- **Increases social connections for incarcerated individuals, potentially improving institutional adjustment and reducing recidivism**
- **Visiting alternative for no contact populations**
- **Potentially leads to a voluntary decrease in in-person visiting at the facility**
- **May generate cost savings by reducing labor costs associated with in-person visits**
- **May decrease movement and visitor processing and scheduling**
- **May improve security by reducing movement and the flow of contraband**
- **Potentially reduces traffic and congestion in waiting and visiting areas**
- **More flexibility in scheduling video visiting hours**
- **May improve institutional adjustment of the incarcerated by supporting social connectedness**
- **May facilitate reentry planning with social support network**
- **Innovative practice**
- **Cross-systems collaboration (child welfare, family court, probation, etc.)**
- **Allows for beneficial relationships with sustainable community-based partners**

**Table 1B: Potential Benefits for Incarcerated Individuals and Families**

- **Removes some visiting barriers for families (e.g. distance, travel costs, etc.)**
- **Increases frequency of communication with family and community members**
- **Strengthens social support network**
- **May be less traumatizing for children as compared to no-contact visits**
- **Empowering for children to schedule and initiate visits with their parents**
- **Expands communication options for child welfare-involved families**
- **Increased visiting opportunities may prevent termination of parental rights**
- **Comply with court-ordered visiting**
- **Allows for family members with conviction records to virtually visit**
- **Potentially allows children to visit when a facility has a “no children” visiting policy**
- **Family involvement in reentry planning promotes positive outcomes**
- **Builds connections in community for those who have no support system**
- **Facilitates linkages with community-based providers prior to release**

**Table 1C: Video Visiting Challenges and Limitations**

**Financial and Logistical Challenges for Corrections**

- Start-up and maintenance costs
- New technology is still evolving and may become outdated
- Culture change may be required to obtain buy-in from correctional personnel
- Pushback from families, the incarcerated, and the agencies that support them when video visiting replaces in-person visits
- May reduce income generated from phone calls
- Unions and employees may dispute associated staff reductions or reassignments

**Financial and Logistical Challenges for Families**

- Users are dissatisfied with technological glitches and poor visual and audio quality
- Families may lack the resources to own a computer and/or access the Internet
- Families may not be able to travel to a video visiting site in their communities or at a facility
- Video visit fees and service charges may be a barrier
- Fee-based video visits may not be accessible to those who do not have a credit card
- Technology may be confusing for visitors: especially young children, those with developmental delays, or individuals lacking computer or literacy skills
- Illiteracy may be a barrier to setting up a video visiting account
- Scheduling instructions and customer service may not be available in multiple languages
- Video visiting may not be appropriate for individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments

**Barriers to Meaningful Visiting**

- Video visiting cannot replicate in-person visiting
- It is unknown how effectively relationships are established and maintained as compared to in-person visiting
- Young children need contact visiting with their incarcerated parent to establish a secure attachment
- Families and the incarcerated are dissatisfied when in-person visits are discontinued
- Families dislike facility-based video visiting because they rather see their loved one in person when they spend time and money to travel to the facility
- Families may not video visit, preferring to visit in-person



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## CHAPTER 2: IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter, along with the accompanying toolkit in the appendix is designed to assist with the implementation of video visiting in a correctional setting. Informed implementation will leverage operational efficiencies within an agency and provide a solid return on the investment. Thoughtful implementation will also benefit incarcerated individuals and their families. Video visiting can be a positive enhancement to in-person visiting when implemented in a way that balances the goals of the facility and the needs of incarcerated individuals and their families.

### Video Visiting Models

The variety and evolving nature of video visiting technology make it challenging to define the numerous approaches to video visiting. Regardless of the technology selected, there are basically three models that have emerged in terms of the locations where visitors may access video visits.

Community-Based	Corrections partners with a community, faith-based, or public agency (child welfare, parole, public library, etc.) which hosts video visits in the communities where visitors reside.
Home-Based	Visitors video visit from a home-based computer or mobile device.
Facility-Based	Visitors travel to a correctional facility to video visit.

Partnering with a community-based agency may make it easier for families to access the technology. Choosing a community-based agency that provides supportive services for the incarcerated, the formerly incarcerated, and their families ensures that video visits will occur in a supportive environment close to home. A home-based model is convenient for families, but families may not have the required technology or may not be able to afford the fees that are charged for home-based visiting. The facility-based model has not been well received by family and friends because it does little to make visiting any easier—the time and expense of travel is the same as it is for an in-person visit, with none of the benefits of an in-person visit.

Video visiting technology is still evolving, so it is best to examine current practices to learn whether new models, trends, or lessons learned have emerged since this publication.

## A Hybrid Approach to Visiting

Some facilities use a hybrid model, which combines in-person visiting with one or more of the video visiting models to meet the varying needs of corrections and families. For example, family and friends can enjoy the convenience of video visiting from home while still having the option of going to the facility for an in-person visit. Given what is known about the value of in-person visiting, a hybrid visiting approach is ideal because it ensures that the benefits of in-person visiting are preserved. It also ensures that a family's ability to visit is not limited by the barriers that video visiting may present.

### Contact visiting is best practice

American Correctional Association, Standard 4-4499-1:

“Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that inmate visiting facilities permit informal communication, including opportunity for physical contact. Devices that preclude physical contact are not used except in instances of substantiated security risk.”<sup>65</sup>

Listed below are some considerations for determining the best model for video visiting in a particular system or jurisdiction:

- What impact do the proposed video visiting models have on incarcerated individuals and their rehabilitation, and their families and networks of support (positive and negative)?
- How does the location of the facility or facilities affect visitors' ability to visit in-person?
- Can visitors access video visits?
- What model meets the needs and goals of the administration or agency?
  
- What are the perspectives and priorities of the correctional administrators and staff at each facility?
- Can the existing infrastructure (number of buildings, space, layout, etc.) accommodate the model? If not, what changes are needed?
- Do you have the IT capacity to manage the proposed model(s)?
- What are the external stakeholders' attitudes towards the proposed model(s)?
- Are there legal regulations and statutes on visiting in your city or state?
  
- How would video visiting impact current visiting policies in terms of frequency, type of visits (contact/no contact), visitor eligibility requirements, etc.?
- How should the security level of the facility affect decisions?
- What are the other potential uses for the video visiting technology within the facility or system?

## Assessing the Setting: Prisons and Jails

The goals of an administration and the needs of the incarcerated will be influenced by the setting. The average length of stay is shorter for jail populations and turnover is high as compared to prison populations. Jail administrators may often prioritize safety, security and staffing needs over programming and reentry considerations because populations are generally short-term. On the other hand, prisons are more likely to use video visiting to enhance in-person visiting to promote family connections and to facilitate reentry. In-person visiting can be particularly labor intensive for small facilities, particularly small jails, that often have a limited number of staff on a single shift to dedicate to numerous tasks.

The needs of the incarcerated differ depending on the setting. Consider the following:

- Pre-trial vs. sentenced population
- Length of stay
- Population size
- Programming needs, such as mental health, medical, substance abuse treatment, reentry, etc.
- Variations by age, gender, and legal status
- Number of incarcerated parents with minor children

Logistical challenges will also differ across settings. As an early step, conduct a site survey at each facility to assess the building's structure, layout, and space availability. Older buildings may present logistical challenges because the wiring and infrastructure may need to be updated to accommodate the technology. These modification costs may far exceed the potential cost savings associated with video visiting.

The location of a facility will also influence which model is determined to be the best fit. Installing video visiting in prisons often present different challenges than jails, because state prison systems are often comprised of multiple facilities that are scattered throughout a state. If distance is a barrier for families, administrations may partner with community-based agencies to create video visiting centers throughout the jurisdiction, and/or offer home-based video visiting to increase visitor access.

### What are the legal implications of denying in-person visits for detainees?

The majority of the population at many jails are pre-trial detainees, who are constitutionally presumed innocent and are often thought to be entitled to less punitive conditions than those convicted of crimes.

Some argue that discontinuing in-person visits impinges on the rights of those who have not been adjudicated.

For example, York County, Maine's proposal to replace in-person visits drew opposition: "Faunce, who was a member of the state Board of Corrections until May 2011, said in his mind, the negative consequences of the proposal outweigh perceived benefits. He said underfunded courts have led to extended wait times for criminal trials and questioned whether removal of human contact for loved ones who haven't been convicted of a crime can be justified."<sup>66</sup>

## Creating an Advisory Group

An advisory group of key stakeholders can assist a correctional administration in exploring whether to implement and how best to implement video visiting. The group may include the following stakeholders: correctional administrators, officers, civilian staff, public affairs, and IT personnel; incarcerated individuals; family member of an incarcerated individual; adult child of an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parent; community-based partners; union representatives; advocates for the incarcerated and their families; Department of Child Welfare; and representatives from criminal justice system agencies (court, probation, parole, etc.). Collaboration garners respect and buy-in from correctional staff, ensures that multiple perspectives and needs are considered, leverages efficiency, and improves implementation. Advisors should be respected individuals who understand the organizational culture of the correctional agency and its population. Inclusion of incarcerated individuals and their family members also increases credibility for the “consumers” of video visiting.

### **An advisory board was key for the Oregon Department of Corrections**

“We believe a key part of successful implementation is a project team with representatives from all the work areas affected.”—Kelley Morton, Operations Division Policy Manager, Oregon Department of Corrections<sup>67</sup>

## Identifying Goals and Determining Feasibility

By identifying and prioritizing short- and long-term goals, sound assessments can be made about whether video visiting meets the needs of an agency and ensures that an appropriate video visiting system is chosen. (See Appendix 2A-1: Identifying Goals, for a checklist of considerations.) This is the time to be creative and forward-thinking in considering the ways that technology can meet current and future programming needs. If the “big picture” is not considered, an agency may be left with an outdated system in a few years. An advisory group offers multiple perspectives and could be tasked with identifying needs and goals.

A feasibility study of each facility/location will help an agency determine whether video visiting is a good fit. A study may include the following:

- Goals and potential uses (e.g., visiting, court appearances, reentry planning, etc.)
- Potential benefits
- Potential challenges and areas of concern
- Analysis of IT capacity and infrastructure
- Cost considerations (e.g., video visiting units, contracted services, IT infrastructure upgrade)
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Funding sources
- Site survey (e.g., facility layout, identification of areas to place units, movement pathways, etc.)
- Approaches to acquiring and servicing equipment
- Model type (e.g., community-based partner, home-based, facility-based, or hybrid)

## Case Example: Idaho Department of Correction Feasibility Study

Idaho DOC conducted a feasibility study in 2011 to determine whether video visiting was a good fit for their prisons. They determined that it would be costly to upgrade the IT infrastructure and that the facilities lacked satisfactory space. They predicted that a request to the legislature for a budgetary appropriation to upgrade the facility infrastructure, solely for this purpose, would likely be denied. Additional staff would be needed to escort incarcerated individuals to the video visiting area and to supervise the video visits. As a result of their thorough study, they decided not to proceed with video visiting. Here is an excerpt from their study:

### Issues / Areas of Concern

#### Security:

- Background checks, screening of visitors
- Verification of visitor identity
- Monitoring of [video visits] (staffing resources)
- Policy/code of conduct standards (managed as a phone call or as a visitor?)

#### Facility challenges (space/location):

- Design/layout issues (current facilities not designed to accommodate this service; noise factors)
- Offender movement and staffing impacts reduced if located in living areas

#### Staffing impacts:

- Security and visiting staff (escorting offenders to/from [video visitation] locations, visit monitoring)
- Background checks (same as contact visitors; charge a fee?)
- Ongoing impacts to IT, investigation, fiscal, and maintenance staff workloads

#### Customer Service:

- Sound and service quality, interruptions, interference
- Dependability may vary by facility and may be limited by available service providers
- Customer service/satisfaction (refund requests if service is not consistent)
- Visitor perceptions (impersonal; lack of physical contact)
- Viable option for family who otherwise could not visit (children, elderly, chronic or terminally ill, out-of-state); reduces family travel costs

### System Options and Variations

#### Types/Service Options:

- Analog system (old technology)
- Digital/IP-based web (newest technology)
- Satellite point-to-point (additional usage charges)

#### Configuration options:

- Facility-to-Facility (on-premise stations within incarceration facilities only; possibility of one shared visiting facility for S. Boise complex)
- Home-to-Facility (from any PC with a webcam and internet service to a facility)
- Station-to-Facility (visitors go to designated remote convenience station)
  - Church, probation/parole office, county jail, nonprofit, police sub-station, etc.

#### Facility terminal options: (includes viewing monitor, phone receiver or headphones, microphone/camera)

- Fixed/permanent stations (phone/video unit or kiosk); cost: \$3,000-\$10,000 per unit
  - Kiosks can also be used for grievances, commissary orders, inmate banking account view, sick calls, offender surveys, etc.)
  - Proprietary and neutral hardware options
- Laptops (least cost and durability; replacement/maintenance issues); cost: \$400 per unit
- Mobile units (for medical and close custody cells); cost: \$4,000-\$6,000 per unit

In January 2014, IDOC began revisiting the possibility of offering video visiting and kiosk-based communication services for the incarcerated through a contracted company. The outcome of their analysis is expected to be known in the fall of 2014.<sup>68</sup>

## Costs and Funding Considerations

An agency must weigh the potential cost savings against the costs of acquiring, maintaining, managing, and operating the video visiting system. Any system under consideration should integrate into existing operations and have a minimal net increase in labor costs. Be sure to differentiate between one-time costs (e.g. internet cabling) and ongoing costs (e.g. Internet data plans). (For more information see Appendix 2A-3: Identifying Potential Costs.) The long-term savings derived through the re-allocation of labor resources and improvements in the incarcerated individuals' behavior may ultimately offset the installation and maintenance costs.

Some video visiting systems can be used for multiple purposes (e.g., sick call, commissary ordering, e-mail, bail lookup, etc.), which potentially increases the return on investment. (See Appendix 1A: Other Video Conferencing Uses in Corrections for more information.)

### Costs can vary widely depending on the level of responsibility that is assumed for servicing and maintaining the system

#### Common approaches include the following:

- **Self-owned and operated systems:** DOC purchases the video visiting system and is fully responsible for maintaining and managing the system (ongoing repairs, upgrades, and maintenance). This approach may have high upfront costs (equipment costs, installation, and infrastructure upgrade). This approach poses the highest financial risk to DOC because the agency is responsible for fully servicing the system. On the other hand, if the system generates revenue, then DOC retains 100% of the profits.
- **Web hosting contract:** DOC owns the video visiting system and contracts out certain aspects of operation and maintenance. This option should only be selected if DOC has the capacity to maintain and repair the hardware and manage the system. DOC will be dependent on the ability of the video visiting company to provide the contracted services. The company might not provide scheduling services or other software. DOC and the company will likely share the financial risk of maintaining the system. DOC may be required to enter a revenue sharing agreement if revenue is generated.
- **Full-service contract:** A video visiting company installs, maintains, manages, and hosts the entire system. DOC may buy or rent the video visiting system, or a company may donate the video visiting system units. This approach may have significant revenue sharing caveats and/or ongoing fees for service, especially if the system is donated. This approach requires less labor input from DOC as compared to the other approaches, but DOC is dependent on the company's ability to deliver quality services. Ensure that the company can respond quickly to service calls because costs can increase when the system is out of order. DOC may be able to package video visiting with other services into an existing RFP process (phone, commissary, e-mail, etc.).

The following funding sources could be considered:

- Government funding streams, contracts, or grants
- Corrections budget
- Foundation or private funding
- Financing (offered by some technology companies)
- Inmate general welfare fund
- Community-based agency partnership

## Developing a Request for Proposal

Numerous video visiting companies have emerged over the past decade and are routinely present at correctional trade fairs and conferences. The for-profit video visiting companies will emphasize the benefits of video visiting. Therefore, it is important to be informed about the potential challenges for corrections and the potential barriers for families. The intent of this guide is to provide an overview of basic considerations and questions to ask companies. (See Appendix 2A-4: Identifying a Company, for a checklist of considerations.)

The technology industry is constantly changing. Video visiting companies are being bought by larger communications companies that offer multiple services. Some telephone companies are now including video visiting as part of their service package as an incentive for correctional agencies to enter a contract for phone service. Overall costs may be lower if bundled services are offered (phone, e-mail, video, etc.).

To avoid committing to services that may not be a good fit, it is prudent to issue a request for proposal (RFP) only when a decision has been made to implement video visiting. Be clear on what services are needed, based on the identified goals and agency capacity, prior to meeting with a company. Becoming informed will help an agency understand the variety of service packages and be in a position to negotiate terms. For example, companies may provide video visiting systems and installation free of charge, but know that this is often in exchange for a revenue sharing agreement and may include conditions.

Part of being informed is seeing the video visiting system in action, which provides the best sense of a system's video and audio quality and software capabilities. Companies should be able to provide client references and to arrange a visit to another facility where the technology is being used.

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### **It is important to explore whether the company is reputable, stable, and knowledgeable**

#### **Consider the following:**

- **Is the company financially stable?**
- **How many years of experience does the company have?**
- **Does the company have industry partners?**
- **Does the company have a proven track record?**
- **Do they charge fees to video visiting customers? Are there service fees?**
- **Do they require the elimination of in-person visiting?**
- **Is the company sensitive to the needs of correctional agencies and the incarcerated and their families?**
- **Has the company worked with a facility/system similar to yours?**

## Video Visiting Fees

Charging for video visits creates a barrier for many families and, as a result, potentially reduces visiting frequency. When a fee is necessary, it is best to offer some free visits. The price point should reflect the savings and convenience that the department of corrections enjoys, as well as the limited means of most families. Fees should be some portion of a visitor's savings in travel costs, but remain well within the means of families.<sup>69</sup> Consider surveying visitors to determine if and how much they are willing to pay for video visits. The system may be underutilized if the video visits are unaffordable.

Revenue generated by video visiting fees will likely be small compared to a department's overall budget, and they may not be a reliable income generator. Assuming video is widely used, agencies will need to determine how this revenue will be distributed: inmate welfare fund, video visiting company, community-based partner, returned to administration's budget, etc.

### **Revenue generated by video visiting fees is often nominal**

Minnehaha County Jail, South Dakota, collected approximately \$109,400 in video visiting fees over a two year period. But, "Sheriff Mike Milstead cautioned that the visitation money doesn't amount to much. . . The overall jail budget is approximately \$11 million."<sup>70</sup>

Determining whether a fee will be instituted and identifying a price point can be a part of the RFP process. Facilities usually set a price point in conjunction with the video visiting company that often provides a platform (i.e., website and/or kiosk) to collect video visiting fees. Video visiting contracts often include a revenue sharing agreement. In calculating a price point, determine whether visitors will be charged additional service fees by the video visiting company for scheduling and other services (registration fees, background checks, customer service, etc.). What looks like a good per-minute cost model can look less favorable once additional user fees are factored in. Be mindful that visitors may be required to pay with a credit card, which is a barrier for those who do not or cannot own a credit card. Offering a short-term introductory rate may encourage

visitors to begin video visiting. This rate should be clearly stated in the agreement with the video visiting company. A cancellation policy should be developed to determine whether and how visitors will be refunded when pre-paid visits do not occur, or when the video or audio quality is poor.

In August 2013, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) capped the interstate long-distance prison phone rates, reducing the revenue some correctional agencies receive from phone contracts.<sup>71</sup> Some phone companies are now offering fee-based video visiting services to replace lost phone revenue. Correctional administrators may also be tempted to turn to fee-based video visiting to replace lost phone revenue. Relying on the nominal video visiting revenue is not a long-term solution. Furthermore, existing phone contract benchmarks may not be met if community members begin using video visiting instead of phone calls, and video visiting fees may also be regulated in the future.

Companies may suggest that correctional agencies can generate revenue by selling advertising space to promote goods and services (bail bondsmen, lawyers, etc.) on the video visiting monitors. Some video visiting systems have the capability to sell pre-approved digital media to incarcerated individuals. Carefully explore whether these options are appropriate. At this time it is unclear how much revenue can actually be generated from this new area of commerce.

## Video Visiting System

The section provides a basic overview of commonly used video visiting systems. A video visiting system consists of the video units (equipment/hardware) and software, and requires an Internet connection. This connection may or may not need to be secure depending on the agency's policy. The longevity of any system should be considered because technology is rapidly changing. For example, some technology companies believe that a video visiting unit will be in every cell in the future, suggesting that some systems will become obsolete. Also note that a "state of the art" video visiting system will not be useful if it does not help an agency meet its identified goals.

### **VIDEO VISITING UNITS**

A standards-based system is the most versatile and connects to any other standards-based video conferencing system. A non-standards-based system that only connects to identical systems is limiting. For example, cell phones that only connect with the same cell phone brand are not as useful as cell phones that can call all other cell phone brands. A standards-based system allows for connections to other state, local, and community-based agencies with standards-based systems. If the video conferencing system is connecting to multiple sites, explore if licensing fees (for equipment and/or software) will be charged for each site.



**FIGURE 2: VIDEO VISITING KIOSK**

Some video visiting systems on the market today include:

- Video Conferencing Unit (+ monitor, camera, microphone)
- Kiosk (often provides multiple services such as court date schedule, bail, sick call, etc.)
- Self-Contained Video Unit
- Computer-Based Desktop Unit (+ monitor, camera, microphone)
- Laptop or Netbook (+ camera and microphone; may be included or purchased separately)
- Mobile Device, such as a smart phone or tablet
- Voice Over Internet Protocol (i.e., phone with video screen)<sup>1</sup>

Know what operating system is installed on the unit, and determine how often the operating system requires updating. Identify how the updates will be performed and who is responsible (correctional IT or contracted company). This is important because operating systems that require constant updates (e.g., Windows-based operating systems) may increase costs. Some operating systems have inhibitors to block updates, and some operating systems update automatically. (See Appendix 2A-4: Choosing a Video Visiting System, for a checklist of considerations)



**FIGURE 3: VIDEO VISITING AREA FOR VISITORS AT THE D.C. JAIL**

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<sup>1</sup> Phone and video calls are transmitted over an IP network.

## Software

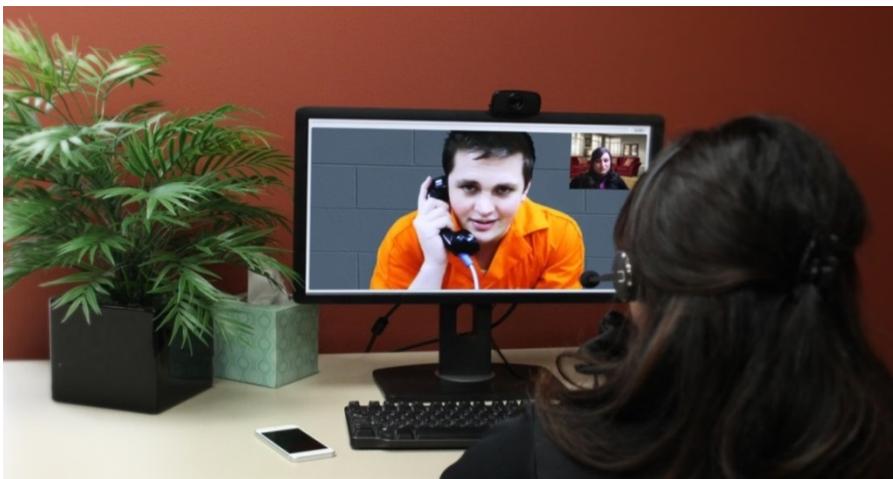
Software applications are another consideration. For example, scheduling, facial recognition, encryption, monitoring, and tracking software are available. Determine whether the software is compatible with or built into the video visiting system being considered. An agency's IT department should be consulted to determine whether it has the resources and infrastructure to fully utilize the software. Make sure that the software is truly needed. For example, scheduling software may not be useful if only a small number of video visits are conducted per month. Software should be flexible and scalable.

Companies should be able to demonstrate software applications in use and provide a guarantee that the software can perform as advertised. For example, some correctional administrators interviewed for this publication stated that scheduling software was helpful, while others stated that some scheduling software is fraught with technical difficulties. Some families also report dissatisfaction with scheduling software.<sup>72</sup>

Determine whether or not software costs are included in the overall video visiting system costs. For example, video conferencing software will likely need to be purchased and installed on computer-based systems (laptop or personal computer). Determine whether the agency or the company will be responsible for the purchase and installation of ongoing updates. (See Appendix 2A-5: Software, for a checklist of considerations.)

### Improving data collection and analysis

Software applications which integrate with existing applications, such as case records and/or management systems, are ideal. Data entered into the video visiting application (e.g., number of visits received, names of approved visitors, etc.) can be automatically synchronized with existing applications. This reduces data entry tasks and allows for efficient data collection and analysis.



**FIGURE 4: HOME-BASED VIDEO VISITING**

## Internet Access

An Internet connection is required for the video visiting units (i.e., endpoints) to communicate with each other. It is ideal to use a high speed broadband connection to ensure high quality video and audio. Be mindful that the audio and video quality of a state of the art system will be compromised if it connects to the Internet using a low bandwidth or an antiquated connection, such as telephone dial-up or an ISDN connection. An agency's Internet service provider (ISP) can help determine what infrastructure is currently in place and what modifications may be needed. New cable may need to be installed if security concerns prohibit connecting the video visiting system to the facility's existing network.

Determine what the minimum recommended broadband width is for the system being considered, and be sure to have the required download and upload speeds. Broadband plans often have a higher download speed than upload speed because people primarily use the Internet to download data. However, video conferencing systems send (upload) and receive (download) data simultaneously. If an endpoint is a mobile device, choose video conferencing software that adapts to changing bandwidths, since mobile devices will be used in multiple environments. (See Appendix 2A-6: Internet Access, for a checklist of considerations.)

When the visitor's endpoint is based in the community, determine whether the visitor (home-based model) or community-based partner has the appropriate Internet access required to connect to the visiting system. It is best if home-based video visitors can test their system requirements before scheduling a visit. Consider providing a link on a DOC or contracted company's website for potential visitors to test their home computer and Internet connections to be sure they are compatible with the video visiting system.

## Security

A firewall protects a computer or an agency's network by controlling the flow of incoming and outgoing data, and it can also be configured to prevent certain types of data from being transmitted. The firewalls at each endpoint (the correctional facility, the community-based visiting site, or a personal computer's security software) may need to be configured to allow for information to flow between the endpoints. Generally, if a system is connected to a network, the agency's IT department can configure it as needed. In some circumstances, the ISP must configure the firewall to permit the transmission of video data.

### ***Automated scheduling may reduce staffing demands***

"The result is a system that places the burden on the inmate instead of the officer. Inmates first enter e-mail addresses into the system for the people they'd like to visit with online. These e-mail addresses pass through a jail filter system and, if approved, a generic "visitation request" message is sent to the recipients. If the recipients agree to an online visit, the inmate is notified and the burden is again placed on them to schedule all their own visits using a calendar of available dates provided (online) by the jail . . . one deputy is able to watch over the whole process from a single location."—Sheriff Gary Raney, Ada County Jail, Idaho<sup>73</sup>

A correctional agency's Information Security Officer or IT security staff can be consulted to determine how the security requirements set forth by the agency may influence the type of video visiting system and Internet connection that is needed. Agencies requiring a secure connection may need authorization from their state's chief information officer or Office of Homeland Security. Consult with the video visiting company and the Internet service provider to learn about data encryption options.

Video visits can be recorded and monitored live or retroactively. Some monitoring software can terminate live visits. For example, a visit can be ended when too much skin is exposed or specific words are communicated. A policy will need to be developed to address how privileged communication, such as visits with a lawyer or clergy, will be kept confidential. Software can flag privileged communication so that it is not recorded.

If a recording of a video visit is used in a court proceeding, the defense attorney will likely ask whether the recording was edited or manipulated in any way. Inquire whether the video visiting provider can offer witness testimony about the recording's authenticity. A company may offer a proprietary format that eliminates the possibility of tampering or editing; however, this may become problematic if the correctional agency switches systems or works with a different company in the future.

### ***Policies and Procedures***

New policies and procedures may be created, or an existing visiting policy or procedure can be amended. The advisory group may be tasked with developing new or revised policy and procedure. If you partner with a community-based agency it can be helpful to collaborate with them, especially when they are providing supportive services such as parent coaching or reentry planning. (See Appendix 2A-7: Policies and Procedures, for a checklist of considerations.)

#### **Key issues outlined in Oregon DOC video visiting policy**

"Oregon DOC treats Video Interactive Phone (VIP) calls as phone calls. Oregon has a point system for managing the number of visits each inmate is allowed per month. By treating VIP calls as phone calls, ODOC did not directly impact the visiting system. VIP calls add to the number of ways inmates can make personal contact with friends and family, which is a department goal.

One of the more controversial issues when we first considered the VIP call service was the concern for protecting victims. Because the call recipient must positively accept a call from the [telephone] or VIP system, and can contact [the company] or ODOC at any time to block future calls, our executive leadership elected to allow contact as long as we have access to the audio and video recordings and each and every caller is positively identified. Acceptance of this decision required communication with parole and probation staff, district attorneys, and victims' advocates groups, as well as ODOC staff."— Kelley Morton, Operations Division Policy Manager, Oregon Department of Corrections<sup>74</sup>

## ***Where to Place the Video Visiting Units***

Where the video visiting units are located (endpoints) can affect labor costs, flexibility of visiting hours, safety, privacy, visitor access, and utilization. For example, placing video visiting units in the housing dorm reduces movement, potentially allowing for staff to be dedicated to other tasks. When this option is not possible or desirable, consider placing the video units in a common area that reduces movement as much as possible. A site survey will help an agency assess where best to place the video units at the facility. A visitor survey can help assess where best to place the video units that are used by visitors. For example, a survey can reveal whether visitors may choose not to video visit when they have to travel to the facility or an inconveniently located visiting center.

It is very important to test the camera angles and room lighting upon installation, especially if video conferencing is going to be used for legal purposes, probation interviews, parole board appearances, and video visits with children. Poor audio and video quality may lead to negative perceptions about an individual's credibility, which may negatively influence legal outcomes for those appearing via video conference. (See Appendix 1A: Other Video Conferencing Uses in Corrections). Children may be scared or confused when the picture quality and audio is poor, or when they can only see part of their parent's face on the screen.

Children are most comfortable when video visiting is child-friendly. Consider placing the video visiting unit for visitors in an area that can accommodate toys and books. Consider providing identical toys and books at both video endpoints so incarcerated parents can read to and play with their children. A child-friendly backdrop behind the incarcerated parent is helpful for children who may become distracted or upset by seeing a correctional setting or unpleasant surroundings on the video screen. A community-based partner and/or civilian staff can provide children, the incarcerated parent, and the family with supportive services. (See Appendix 1B: Video Visiting with Children, for more information.)

Privacy is another important consideration at both endpoints. Visitors may see staff and other incarcerated individuals in the background if the video visiting units are located in the housing dorm. Visiting units could be placed in a secure area or partitioned off with a divider to improve privacy. The desire for privacy should not be assumed to indicate inappropriate communications; many incarcerated individuals fear having images of their family members seen by others.

### **Privacy is a concern for families**

“...[J]ail officials installed them right in the housing units. That means all the other inmates can hear the visits and see the screen. Tracey said when she was talking to her son, she could see other inmates leaning over him to listen in. “Where is the privacy?” Tracey asked. “Everybody is listening. Everybody can see.”<sup>75</sup>

## ***Working with a Community-Based Partner***

When partnering with a community-based agency to host video visits in the community, look for an agency that can provide some or all of the following characteristics:

- Is located in communities where large percentages of the incarcerated and their families live
- Is reputable
- Has the technical knowledge and infrastructure needed to access the Internet
- Provides services to incarcerated individuals returning to the community
- Offers supportive services for families and friends of the incarcerated
- Can provide safe and non-judgmental space
- Can provide a child-friendly environment
- Can prepare children and caregivers to video visit, and provide ongoing support
- Has the ability to process visitors and verify identification
- Provides hours of operation which are compatible with families schedules
- Has trained staff to monitor visits when it is required by DOC

A memorandum of understanding or contract is advised to ensure that both parties understand their financial responsibilities for the video visiting system, staffing, and other services provided. For example, who is responsible for upfront video visiting system costs and maintenance at the community-based site? A revenue sharing agreement can be included if fees are collected. (See Appendix 2A-8: Community-Based Partners, for a checklist of considerations when working with a community-based partner.)

### **Community-based partners can provide support to families**

Organizations that provide supportive services and offer safe spaces for families, who are often stigmatized, are ideal partners for video visiting. Hope House in Washington, DC hosts video visiting as well as provides a summer camp for children of incarcerated parents and a reading program in which children receive a recording of their incarcerated fathers reading a book.

The Osborne Association in New York provides supportive services to children before, during, and after each video visit. The Osborne Association also sponsors monthly peer activities for children, runs a youth advocacy program, and transports video visiting children to the facility to watch their mothers graduate from a parenting class. The Osborne Association also provides parenting programs in prisons and reentry services in the community, allowing for a continuum of care for video visiting families once their loved one comes home. Also consider partnering with local community centers, child welfare and human services offices, and communities of faith.



**FIGURE 5: CHILD-FRIENDLY VIDEO VISITING ROOM AT THE OSBORNE ASSOCIATION IN NEW YORK CITY**

### ***Develop a Communications Plan***

A communications plan can be developed to inform and educate correctional personnel, incarcerated individuals, visitors, and the community about video visiting. Information should be individualized for specific facilities. According to correctional personnel interviewed for this guide, engaging these stakeholders prior to launching video visiting was a key ingredient to successful implementation. Consider developing tip sheets to help visitors prepare for video visits. Preparation is especially critical for children and their parent or caregiver in the community. A community-based partner that has experience working with family members of the incarcerated can help create tip sheets and convey information about video visiting to families. Information about the video visiting launch, rules and regulations, and scheduling instructions can be distributed in the following formats:

- Newsletters
- Department of corrections' website
- Community-based partner website
- Visiting room flyers
- Family handbook
- Frequently asked questions
- Brochures
- Media coverage

Advisory board members can promote video visiting by sharing information in staff meetings and during interactions with visitors, public agencies, and community-based agencies. "Inmate council" meetings are a good forum for sharing information with the incarcerated. Consider creating materials in multiple languages to meet the community's needs.

### ***Determining a Launch Schedule***

Consider beginning with a pilot site if there are multiple facilities or dorms. Consider phasing in one model at a time when implementing multiple models (facility-based, community-based, home-based). Working out problems prior to large scale implementation may reduce pushback from staff, incarcerated individuals, and visitors. A pilot can help identify technological problems and unforeseen challenges. Implementing video visiting in phases may also counter resistance to large scale change.



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## CHAPTER 3: EVALUATING A VIDEO VISITING PROGRAM

Establishing a video visiting program includes planning for the data that will be collected as the program gets underway. Information about the program will be needed and used for different purposes, which may include conducting quality reviews, providing reports to funders or partners, and making adjustments to the program plan or design. It is best to have a clear plan in place before start-up, including what information will be collected, what tools or instruments will be used to collect it, and who is responsible for managing the data. This chapter is intended to provide some guidance about how to plan and implement the evaluation activities associated with a video visiting program.

### Developing an Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan is a summary of what will be evaluated, how the information will be collected, and how the information will be used to guide decision-making about the program. It serves as a guide for each step of the evaluation process and establishes a timeframe for when information will be collected. It is important to establish an evaluation plan before a program even begins providing services, so that the necessary information is collected from the start.

The launching point for an evaluation plan is a clear program description which articulates the target population, the purpose and goals of the program, and a service delivery plan. A logic model is one tool that can be helpful in defining a program's planned activities and goals. It provides a graphic representation of what an agency plans to do as part of a program as well as what it intends to achieve in terms of results or outcomes. It is useful as both a program design instrument and as a program evaluation tool. There are many online resources that describe the process of developing a logic model, along with samples of logic models (See appendix 1X: Resources).<sup>76</sup>



Questions that can be part of a process evaluation include:

- What services are being delivered?
- Are the services being utilized?
- How are services or program implementation different from what was planned?
- What barriers have been encountered in implementing the program?
- What is going well/not so well in the program?
- How are participants responding to the program? Are they satisfied with the services?

It makes sense for new programs to start with a process evaluation because it helps to determine whether or not the program is being implemented as expected and if there are any program quality issues that should be addressed. The information gathered through process evaluations can help to identify changes or improvements that should be made to the program before an outcome evaluation is conducted.

As the name implies, an outcome evaluation is designed to assess the results or outcomes of the program. It focuses on the last three components of the logic model—the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of the program. An outcome evaluation is appropriate for programs that are relatively well established and stable, once wrinkles in the process have been largely ironed out. If an outcome evaluation is conducted too early in the life of a program, the results may indicate that the program is having little impact and it will be difficult to know whether this is because the program is truly ineffective, or because services are not being delivered in the way that was intended, or because it is just too soon to expect the kind of impact desired.

Outcome evaluation questions for a video visiting program depend on the goals of the program and could include:

- Is the program reducing contraband in the facility?
- Are people who are incarcerated building stronger support networks through video visiting?
- Are children developing stronger relationships with their incarcerated parents through video visiting?

When conducting outcome evaluations, evaluators use specific, defined measures to investigate achievement of some or all outcomes defined in the logic model. For example, evaluators of a program that aims to improve parent-child relationships through video visiting could select a survey that asks respondents to report on the quality of their relationship. If administered over time, i.e., pre- and post-participation in video visiting, the results could demonstrate an improvement in connectedness. Samples of surveys and research instruments can often be found online, which can be useful as references when establishing outcome measures.

Throughout the process of developing the program framework and evaluation design, it is helpful to seek the input and suggestions of multiple stakeholders. If an advisory group assisted in developing a video visiting program, then they may be very useful in also providing guidance on deciding evaluation goals and approaches. Using a participatory process that involves correctional staff, incarcerated individuals, families, and community members ensures that different perspectives are included in the program and evaluation design.

## Developing Data Collection Tools

Once it has been decided what information is needed about a program, the next step is to develop the tools or instruments to collect it.

**Forms**—Intake and assessment forms can be used to collect information about the participants in a program, including demographic, contact, and family information.

**Service Logs**—Paper-based service logs can be used to capture information about services, such as when video visits are scheduled, when they take place, and the duration of visits. Software is also available to schedule and track video visits, which eliminates the need to collect information on paper and then enter it into a data system. A video visiting system used by Washoe County Jail in Nevada, for example, allows for visits to be scheduled, logged, and reported on automatically (Campbell 2012).<sup>77</sup>

**Surveys**—Information about participants' experiences with a program can be gathered through surveys of incarcerated people and visitors, including what they like and do not like about the program, what suggestions they have for program changes, and if/how they feel they have benefited from video visiting. Surveys can also be used to collect information about staff experiences with a program, particularly if there are a large number of staff involved in the program or there is a desire to collect feedback from staff anonymously.

**Interviews**—Interviews can include one-on-one interviews with participants, staff, or other stakeholders, as well as group interviews such as focus groups. Interviews can provide useful qualitative information about a program and provide the opportunity to probe a question or issue more deeply than a survey might allow.

**Administrative records**—Facilities may already be collecting information about their ongoing operations that is relevant to evaluation questions and useful to include in an evaluation plan. For example, reports on contraband seizures can be used to track whether there are significant changes in the amount of contraband found over time and to evaluate if a reduction in contraband might correlate with the introduction of a video visiting program. An evaluation of a program that has a goal of reducing personnel costs associated with visiting might include fiscal records as part of the data collection plan, in order to compare costs before and after the start of the program. If a goal is to increase the number of individuals who have visits (virtual or in-person), then these contacts can be measured before and after the introduction of video visiting.

**Observational Tools**—Some video visiting programs observe visits and collect information about the interactions between the incarcerated individual and the visitor using observer rating tools. This approach is particularly relevant for video visiting programs that are intended to help strengthen relationships among family members and between parents and children. Researchers from the University of New Hampshire, for example, use observational tools that were adapted from a child welfare home visit checklist to observe and rate a parent's affect and confidence level during video visits conducted from two New Hampshire prisons. Parents are given feedback about the observations, in order for parents to understand how they can improve the quality of their interactions with their children.

## Data Systems

Collecting data for evaluation purposes does not necessarily require expensive or sophisticated data systems. In many cases, a simple spreadsheet in Excel can track the necessary information. Microsoft Access is a relatively simple database system that many organizations already have as part of their software tools. Online tools can also be very helpful, and some are free or low cost. There are a number of online survey tools that can be used for tracking survey results (even if the survey is administered on paper and data entered online, tools such as SurveyMonkey or Zoomerang can allow for useful analysis and reporting). Integrated video visiting systems that collect data automatically can reduce the amount of labor dedicated to the physical entry of data.

## Making Use of Evaluation Results

Evaluations should be designed to inform administrators about a program's performance and to collect data that can be used in decision making about program operations and development. An evaluation is a futile effort if it produces information that is never used. Therefore, it is important for an evaluation plan to include specifics about how data will be analyzed, shared, and utilized, including who is responsible for each aspect of the work. This might include scheduling monthly reviews of how service levels compare to targets or planning for how survey results will be discussed during staff meetings, so that an action plan can be developed to address any identified issues or challenges. Evaluation results may also be useful to administrators of other video visiting programs, so you might include strategies for disseminating information or "lessons learned" to others in the field, as part of your evaluation plan.

## Preparing to Assess Impact and Outcome

Developing a good data collection system and conducting a process evaluation to examine how well the program is being implemented lay the groundwork for preparing to assess program impact. The data reviews and quality checks that are part of your initial evaluation efforts will help to determine if there are any data collection protocols that need to be adjusted or improved before launching an outcome evaluation. For example, if information is consistently incomplete on service tracking forms, then training and follow-up can be provided to improve data collection and quality. A data collection plan is a good way to prepare for an evaluation that will assess program impact; it includes the measures that will be used, the source of the data, the frequency that data will be collected, and the people responsible for collecting and reviewing the data. A sample data collection plan is included at the end of this chapter.

## Working with Researchers and Professionals in the Field

The research units within corrections departments can be a valuable resource for developing process and outcome evaluations. Many community-based video visiting programs do not have funding to support an evaluation specialist or researcher on staff. If the budget will allow, it may be worthwhile to engage an evaluation consultant to provide support on developing the evaluation plan and guiding its implementation. Evaluation consultants can be found through networks like the [American Evaluation Association](#), which maintains a list of professional evaluators throughout the United States. Local colleges and universities can also be great resources for interns, student consulting teams, and/or graduate students or faculty members who would be interested in collaborating on a small-scale program evaluation. There may also be opportunities for Technical Assistance (TA), training, or consultation through research organizations and professional networks like the Council on State Governments, the Corrections Technology Association, or the IJIS Institute.

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# APPENDIX 1A: ADDITIONAL USES FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING IN CORRECTIONS

## Legal, Probation and Parole

Correctional agencies are using video conferencing for the following purposes:

- Arraignments
- Bail hearings
- Court hearings (family and criminal)
- Immigration hearings
- Misconduct hearings
- Witness testimony and depositions
- Child support hearings
- Probation interviews
- Parole Board hearings
- Legal counsel visits

### **Video conferencing has the potential to increase efficiency**

“Westchester County Jail has a bail expeditor. This person uses video to interview all new admissions. If they qualify for the program, the interviewer will phone relatives and friends to help the inmate arrange bail. This process saves us anywhere from 200-300 jail days per month. Video has made this process exponentially more efficient.”—Captain Mark Reimer, Westchester County Jail, New York<sup>78</sup>

“It once took two weeks to arrive at a [parole] decision, and now it takes two days.”  
—Lynette J. Holloway, Michigan Department of Corrections<sup>79</sup>

Video conferencing is a potentially efficient and cost-saving alternative to in-person court and parole board appearances, probation interviews, and legal counsel visits. Video conferencing can reduce transportation costs and costly per diem rates that prisons pay to county jails to house individuals who must travel long distances to attend court hearings. The Michigan Parole board conducted 13,000 parole hearings in 2007 using video conferencing, reporting that video conferencing reduced decision making time, increased capacity to process cases, and reduced transportation costs.<sup>80</sup> Using video conferencing for attorney-client communication and probation interviews potentially increases efficiency and reduces congestion at facilities, especially jails. Note, however, that attorney-client video conferences should not be monitored or recorded because this privileged communication is confidential.

However, video conferencing may negatively affect one’s perception of an incarcerated individual’s credibility, questioning the fairness and due process of using video conferencing for legal and parole appearances. Research on the use of video conferencing in legal proceedings is scarce, but this credibility issue has been prominent in immigration hearings. One study found that individuals applying for asylum via video conferencing were half as likely to be granted asylum compared to those appearing in-person.<sup>81</sup> Some studies found that non-verbal cues may be harder to interpret or be over exaggerated when video conferencing is used to communicate.<sup>82</sup> Attorneys and observers that participated in another study said that judges in immigration proceedings were less likely to be empathetic due to the emotional disconnect that video conferencing creates.<sup>83</sup> An evaluation of bail hearings in Cook County, Illinois, found that bail was set higher for individuals appearing via video conference as compared to in-person hearings.<sup>84</sup>

An incarcerated individual’s credibility may also be questioned when the video and/or audio quality of the video conference is poor.<sup>85</sup> Even poor camera placement can give the impression that an interviewee is not looking the judge, jurors, parole board commissioners, or a probation officer in the eye. Therefore, video conference participants could be advised that the technology may lead to false impressions of visual and verbal communication. Consider providing opportunities for individuals to become comfortable with video conferencing before they appear via video conference for important legal matters.

## Medicine

Physicians and psychiatrists use video conferencing (“telemedicine”) with incarcerated individuals to meet many medical needs, including the following:

- Triage, assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and follow-up
- Prescribing and monitoring medication
- Managing infectious disease
- Delivering urgent care
- Post-release treatment planning
- Medical consulting with correctional medical staff
- Training for nurses and physicians based in a correctional facility

As early as 2004, “over 50% of state correctional institutions and 39% of federal institutions [were] using some form of telemedicine.”<sup>86</sup> Telemedicine has the potential to leverage efficiency in health delivery and reduce costs (doctors billing for mileage and travel time). “In 2007, MDOC [Michigan Department of Corrections] conducted more than 1,000 telemedicine visits, producing an estimated savings of \$125,000 in transportation costs alone.”<sup>87</sup> Telemedicine also has the potential to deliver quality and specialty medical services to incarcerated individuals in remote prisons who may not otherwise have access to these services. Facilities that are located close to a hospital or clinic are better positioned to transport incarcerated individuals for in-person medical care at a low cost.

In exploring whether telemedicine is an appropriate supplement for physical examinations, consider the following:

- Can telemedicine meet the medical needs of the incarcerated individuals in the facility?
- Is it appropriate to the severity and types of illness typically seen in the facility?
- Is it difficult for physicians and specialized providers to access the facility?
- Can you identify any doctors or companies who specialize in telemedicine?
- Can you provide adequate privacy and confidentiality to satisfy both patient concerns and HIPAA?

## Mental Health (TMH)

The American Telemedicine Association recommends using interactive video conferencing with individuals who cannot otherwise access quality in-person mental health services.<sup>88</sup> One study found that incarcerated individuals participating in telemental health sessions (TMH) reported that they were able to establish a therapeutic relationship with the clinician, suggesting that TMH is a viable way to deliver mental health services.<sup>89</sup> More research is needed to determine how effectively, and under what conditions TMH meets an individual's mental health needs. TMH has been successfully used in a correctional setting to provide the following services:<sup>90</sup>

- Psychological and psychiatric assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and follow-up care
- Therapeutic counseling
- Forensic evaluations<sup>91</sup>
- Consultation with correctional clinical staff

The American Telemedicine Association's (ATA) review of evidence-based practice found that TMH is frequently used in jails, specifically for pre-trial detainees with an elevated risk of suicide and substance withdrawal.<sup>92</sup> TMH reduces costs and safety concerns associated with inmate transfers and may increase the likelihood that individuals in crisis receive urgent care when an on-site mental health provider is not available. However, ATA warns that TMH should not be implemented solely as a cost saving measure due to the vulnerability of incarcerated individuals. With the recent increase in suicides in jails reported by the Department of Justice, an on-site clinician may prove especially critical during a crisis.<sup>93</sup>

## Education: video-based instruction for incarcerated individuals

Interactive video-based instruction and online learning has the potential to increase an incarcerated individual's access to educational programming, particularly for incarcerated individuals in remote locations. Education is a key ingredient for successful reentry. The Rand Corporation found that incarcerated individuals participating in educational programs had a 43 percent lower likelihood of recidivating and a 13 percent higher likelihood of obtaining employment post-release compared to incarcerated individuals who did not participate in educational programming.<sup>94</sup>

### **Communication, oversight, and staff development in corrections**

Interagency communication and operational efficiency can be improved with video conferencing. Prison systems stand to gain the most because of the necessity to oversee multiple sites from a central location. Staff meetings, supervision, and professional development trainings can be conducted from the central office and delivered to multiple sites without incurring travel costs. Video conferencing can facilitate communication between corrections and other city and state agencies, such as departments of health, mental health, social services, child welfare, and labor. For example, video conferencing has the potential to assist child welfare agencies in meeting mandates requiring communication with incarcerated parents and court-ordered visiting between incarcerated parents and their children.

# Appendix 1B: Video Visiting with Children

Visiting is crucial for most children and incarcerated parents, but only 42% of parents in state facilities and 55% of parents in federal facilities received in-person visits with their adult or minor children from 1997–2004.<sup>95</sup> In 2000, 60% of incarcerated parents were in prisons over 100 miles away from their last place of residence, with incarcerated mothers being housed in prisons an average of 160 miles away from their children.<sup>96</sup> Video visiting is an opportunity for incarcerated parents to remain connected to their children when children are not able to visit the facility on a regular basis.

Children of incarcerated parents are often exposed to a greater number of risks as compared to any other single group of children, and as a result, parental incarceration can have long-range economic, emotional, and social consequences that affect children’s well-being.<sup>97</sup> In most cases, these risk factors can be mitigated when children have opportunities to regularly communicate with their incarcerated parents. Children benefit the most when visits are frequent and consistent.<sup>98</sup> Children benefit from traditional visits with their incarcerated parents in many ways. A visit may:

- Provide opportunities for healing, and mitigate the trauma of separation
- Offer opportunities for discussions about a parent’s decision-making and law breaking
- Assure children that incarceration is not their fault
- Dispel children’s fears about the conditions at a facility
- Allow children to maintain a relationship with their incarcerated parents
- Support an incarcerated parent’s preparation for release, reentry, and family reunification

Supportive video visiting programs increase communication between children and their incarcerated parents while providing supportive services for the whole family. These programs may facilitate parenting classes in the facility. Video visiting provides incarcerated parents with an additional forum (in addition to phone calls, letters, and in-person visiting) to practice their parenting skills. Supportive services may also include visit coaching; case management or resource referrals; and visit preparation and debriefing for the child, incarcerated parent and caregiver. Counseling and support is important for incarcerated parents because visiting can be painful and emotional. Some examples of supportive video visiting programs include:

- Florida Department of Corrections and Abe Brown Ministries
- New Hampshire Department of Corrections
- New Mexico Corrections Department and Peanut Butter and Jelly Services
- New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, the New York City Department of Correction and The Osborne Association in New York
- Rivers Correctional Institution, North Carolina (contracted to house sentenced individuals from Washington, D.C.) and Hope House in Washington, D.C.



**Figure 6 NH DOC's Family Connections Center Video Visiting Program**

Video visiting is also an alternative for children who had a negative experience travelling to or visiting at the facility. Researchers theorize that correctional visiting environments that are not child-friendly may account for children's negative reactions to visiting, underscoring the necessity for child-friendly visiting policies.<sup>99</sup> As such, correctional agencies could explore how best to ensure that children are treated sensitively when they visit in-person, while also offering video visiting in a supportive setting as a child-friendly supplement to in-person visits.

Note that in-person contact is important for establishing the parent-child bond, especially for young children. Infants and children with developmental delays may not have the ability to understand that the face on the screen is their parent, or may be confused and frightened by the video visiting experience. When children are separated from their parent by circumstances other than incarceration, in-person visiting is recognized as necessary to sustain a meaningful relationship with a parent: "while virtual visitation offers many benefits, including expanding access between children and non-custodial parents, virtual access should not be used to replace physical visitation."<sup>100</sup> Contact visiting is so important that the Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents includes, "I have the right to speak with, see and touch my parent."<sup>101</sup>

### **New Hampshire DOC Family Connections Center: supportive home-based video visiting program**

In 2008 the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC) implemented home-based video visiting for incarcerated parents and their minor children as part of the Family Connections Center (FCC) programming, which is supported by NHDOC funds and a mix of grants.

Incarcerated parents participate in a parenting class, a play seminar, and weekly parenting support groups to be eligible for bimonthly video visits. FCC staff housed within the prisons provide supportive services and monitor the visits. An FCC staff member is in the room with the parent during the video visit to ensure the security and well-being of the child and the incarcerated parent, and provides parent coaching as needed.

The University of New Hampshire is evaluating FCC's video visiting program, examining its impact on the parent-child relationship and children and parents' reaction to the technology. A researcher based at the University of New Hampshire trains FCC staff to use an observational tool during the video visits to gather data for evaluation purposes.

Incarcerated parents use a designated corrections-owned computer that provides flexibility in designating a video visiting area. Children use Skype to video visit in their homes from any computer or mobile device with a camera and internet connection. FCC Director, Kristina Toth, states that cancellations are few and attributes the high participation rate to the convenience of the home-based video visiting model. (See Figure 6)

## *Preliminary findings on video visiting with children and incarcerated parents*

The most comprehensive research to date on video visiting was conducted on the Florida Department of Corrections' pioneering Face-to-Face program, which included a video visiting component.<sup>102</sup> Findings culled from interviews with 335 participating incarcerated mothers indicated that their self-esteem and relationships with their children improved. Families reported that video visiting enabled contact that was previously not possible because of distance. A community-based center coordinator stated that "as the result of this program we have been able to see reunions of families who have not seen their loved ones in months. There was one child who had not seen his mother in five years; and a mother who had not seen her family in four years."<sup>103</sup>

Children participating in the Osborne Association's video visiting program, which offers video visiting in two New York State prisons, consistently reported positive feelings after video visiting. They liked it because they could "see" their mothers and fathers, and many reported that it is better than phone calls. A New York City-based youth, who video visits with her mother who is incarcerated 10 hours away, states: "I love video visiting! I feel privileged to video visit. It allows me to see my mother who is in a prison so far away. It's a great addition to real visits, phone calls and letters. I think video visits should be in every prison."

Preliminary evidence suggests that children are more engaged with video visits as compared to phone calls. One study looked at how 22 families used video conferencing to communicate with family members.<sup>104</sup> Although this study did not look at communication between children and an incarcerated family member, it contributes to our knowledge about how children engage with family members using video conferencing. This study found that children were more engaged with video visiting because the visual component allowed them to make eye contact, engage in visually interactive play, and communicate non-verbally. These families reported that in-person visiting was more natural when it occurred because children recognized their family member from video visits. A grandmother for two young boys participating in NHDOC's video visiting program related that her grandsons "get bored and very distracted when there is no visual to engage the children. I always dread when the boys' daddy calls as I know it will be a struggle to keep them interested."<sup>105</sup> An incarcerated mother who participated in video visits at a Florida prison related that her son "loves to see me over the computer but he doesn't talk when I call on the phone. Maybe it's because he's so young."<sup>106</sup>



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## APPENDIX 2A: IDENTIFYING A VIDEO VISITING MODEL

These checklists include considerations that will help you determine the best video visiting model for a particular system or jurisdiction. Considerations for creating policies and procedures and working with community-based partners are also provided. For an overview of key implementation activities, please refer to Appendix 2B: Implementation Checklist.

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### **2A-1: Identifying Goals**

*First, explore which goals you wish to achieve by using video visiting:*

- Connect families and build social support systems**
- Visits for no-contact populations: medical quarantine, security restriction, etc.**
- Promote the maintenance and strengthening of the parent-child relationship**
- Support the mental health and institutional adjustment of the incarcerated**
- Cost savings**
- Increase flexibility and expansion of visiting opportunities**
- Reduce visiting room congestion**
- Improve security: reduce movement and contraband**
- Support reentry planning**
- Reduce recidivism and increase public safety**
- Legal purposes: court appearances, attorney-client meetings, depositions, etc.**
- Probation: pre-sentence interviews**
- Parole board hearings**
- Program needs: mental health, medical, psychiatric (suicide supervision, medication consults, etc.), and other specialized programming**
- Reduce transportation costs and the per diem rate paid to a county jail when an incarcerated individual must attend court**
- Communicate and share information with the incarcerated: court dates, bail, policies and procedures, etc.**
- Intra-agency communication**
- Cross-systems collaboration (child welfare, child support, probation, parole, etc.)**

**Notes:**

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## **2A-2: Identifying a Video Visiting Company**

*Ask the following to determine which video visiting company is a good fit:*

- Does the company help you fulfill your short- and long-term goals?
- What equipment and software does the company offer? What is the cost?
- Does the company install the equipment? Software?
- What services does the company provide? What are the costs?
- Can the company demonstrate how the equipment works?
- Can the company provide you with references and arrange a visit at a facility to observe an active system?
- Does the company install internet cables?
- Does the company service the equipment? Does company offer on-site services? If not, how quickly can they respond when there is a problem?
- Does the company provide ongoing technical support?
- Is there help desk support? Are there maximum use limits, and what are the fees when the maximum is reached?
- Does the company provide training to staff, visitors, and incarcerated individuals?
- Does the company require the video equipment to be broken down and shipped to a repair center? If so, this could be costly.
- Does the company provide a spare backup unit so that workflow is not interrupted when a unit is down?
- Does the company regularly update the equipment and software? Does the company charge for these updates?
- Does the company offer a variety of operating systems?
- Is the company able to modify the operating system to meet your evolving needs?
- Does the company offer equipment that is compatible with your existing infrastructure?
- Can the company test home-based systems for connectivity and other minimum system requirements before the video visit begins?
- Can the company store recordings of visits? If so, what is the charge?
- Does the company require that in-person visiting be eliminated?
- If revenue is generated, what are the company's revenue sharing requirements?
- Does the company set affordable fees and service charges for customers?

**Notes:**

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## **2A-3: Identifying Potential Costs**

*Consider these potential costs. Be sure to differentiate between one-time and ongoing costs:*

### **A. Equipment (e.g., computer, kiosk, VoIP, etc.):**

- Will the company charge for the equipment? If so, what is the cost per unit?
- Who pays for the video unit used by the visitor? (DOC likely absorbs the cost if the endpoint is at facility, but DOC may not absorb the cost if it is in the community.)
- Will you need application and recording servers and switches (self owned model)?
- What are the orientation training costs for correctional staff, incarcerated individuals, and families?
- Are there per-unit licensing fees at each endpoint?
- What are the installation costs?

### **B. Software:**

- Is software sold separately or is it included with the video visiting system?
- Are there initial programming and licensing costs?
- How often will the software need to be upgraded, and how much does this cost?
- Are there costs associated with installing and upgrading the operating system?
- Are there per unit licensing fees at each endpoint?

### **C. Infrastructure:**

- Does new cable need to be installed?
- Will the building need to be modified (room modifications, partitions, visiting center, etc.)?
- Are there any additional costs associated with retrofitting the building? (This may depend on the contractor and the video visiting system that is selected.)

### **D. Maintenance:**

- What are the ongoing system maintenance, repair, and upgrade costs?
- What are the ongoing monthly data line costs? Will these be paid by company, per the contract?
- What are the DOC IT support costs?
- What are the ongoing technical assistance/support costs?

### **E. Costs to families and community-based partner (CBP):**

- What are the video visiting fees and associated scheduling service fees?

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### **2A-3: Identifying Potential Costs**

- How much will families need to pay for the home-based video visiting equipment (computer, camera, microphone, internet connection, software)?
- How much will the CBP need to pay to obtain, install, and maintain a video visiting system?
- What are the CBP staffing needs and associated costs? Will the cost be absorbed by DOC and/or the CBP?

**Notes:**

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### **2A-4: Choosing a Video Visiting System**

*Consider the following in determining which system is a good fit:*

- Can the system meet both your short- and long-term goals?
- Do you have space for the video units?
- Is the system standards-based?
- If the system is not standards-based, can it communicate with your identified endpoints?
- Is the system compatible with any existing computer-based or conferencing systems at your facility?
- How often will the system need to be updated (operating system and software updates)?
- How easily can the system adapt to technological changes?
- Can the system provide additional services (e.g. e-mail, commissary, court dates, etc.)?
- Is the system user-friendly?
- What type of orientation and/or training is available?
- Can you see a demonstration of the system in use to examine the video and audio quality?
- Does the system offer scheduling instructions and menus in multiple languages?

**Notes:**

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## **2A-5: Identifying Software Needs**

*Consider the following to determine which software is required and which optional software applications are a good fit:*

- What software is required (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, Adobe Flash, scheduling software, monitoring software, etc.)?
- What operating system is required (Windows, Apple, Linux, etc.)? Is it compatible with your network?
- Is the software compatible with or built into the identified video visiting system?
- Does your IT department have the capacity to use the software?
- Is the software needed to achieve your goals? Can another approach be used?
- How often will software need to be updated?
- Who (corrections IT, company, automatic) will complete the software updates?
- Is the software user-friendly?
- Is the software scalable and flexible? Can it be adapted to meet your evolving needs?
- Can the software application share data and integrate with your existing case management system?
- Can the company provide a performance guarantee?

**Notes**

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## **2A-6: Accessing the Internet**

*Ask the following to ensure that you have the appropriate Internet connection for the video visiting system being considered:*

### **A. Connecting to the Internet:**

- What is the minimum broadband width needed?
- What are the required download and upload rates?
- What cable is needed to connect to the network and/or Internet? Does new wiring or cable need to be installed?
- What data plans are available to meet your video conferencing needs?

### **B. Security considerations:**

- Does the firewall need to be configured? If so, can the configuration be done internally or does the ISP provider need to configure the firewall?
- Does the Internet connection need to be secure per agency policy? Does the signal/data need to be encrypted?
- Are there security requirements that prohibit the video visiting system from connecting to the existing computer network (i.e., an exclusive Internet connection)?
- Does the Internet connection need to be approved by the Department of Homeland Security, the local department of information technology, or another agency?
- Will visits need to be monitored and if so, how will this be done?
- How will you ensure that privileged communication (lawyer, clergy) is confidential?
- Is the video visiting area private (dividers between video units, cannot see other incarcerated individuals in the background, etc.)?

**Notes:**

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## **2A-7: Developing Policies and Procedures**

*Consider including the following areas in developing policies and procedures:*

- Definition of video visit
- Location of the video visiting endpoints
- Visitor identification and verification protocol
- Visitor background check protocol
- Participant eligibility requirements:
  - Incarcerated individual: disciplinary reports, programming, order of protection, solitary confinement
  - Visitor: age, relation, background, etc.
- Specialized programming eligibility:
  - Target Population (parents, those preparing for reentry, quarantine, etc.)
  - Security Level
  - Case Management
  - Supervised? If so, by whom and for what purpose?
- Video visiting fees
  - Price point
  - Number of free video visits available
  - How visitors are charged
- How do incarcerated individuals and family members sign-up?
- What is the frequency (how many visits per week, month, etc.)?
- Do video visits supplement or replace in-person visits?
- What hours will video visiting be offered?
- What is the length of each video visit?
- What is the scheduling and cancellation policy?
- What is the connection protocol: How will endpoints connect? For example, will DOC contact the community-based provider or vice versa?
- What are the responsibilities of correctional staff (maintenance of video visiting area, monitoring video visits, etc.)?
- How will recorded video visits be accessed and reviewed?
- How will privileged communication be handled (attorney, judge, clergy)?
- What is the video visit termination policy?
  - Define inappropriate behavior and language
  - Explain how an inappropriate video visit will be terminated
- What are the security guidelines and rules for visitors and how will they be distributed?
  - Clothing, cell phones, language, identification
- What outcomes do you want to evaluate? How will you evaluate outcomes?
  - Pre-/post-visit surveys, visit observation, incident reports, etc.
- How will ongoing training for staff, incarcerated individuals, and family be provided?

**Notes:**

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## 2A-8: Video Visiting at Home or at a Community-Based Site

Consideration for video visiting from home or at a community-based site:

- Are the remote video visits accessible and affordable?
- Who is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of the video visiting system in the community?
- What are the minimum video conferencing system requirements for the community-based or home-based system?
- Can the visitor or community-based partner (CBP) test the connection before visits are scheduled?
- How will a home-based visitor or CBP obtain technical support?
- How will visits be scheduled (e.g., scheduling software, company website, CBP, etc.)?
- Does the company's website offer instructions and scheduling menus in multiple languages?
- If applicable, how will video visiting fees be collected? Will the CBP require revenue sharing?
- Who is responsible for the monthly Internet fees at the off-site location?
- Will the external firewall need to be configured? If so, how will this information be conveyed?
- Does the CBP connection need to be approved by Homeland Security, the local department of information technology, or another agency?
- Is visitor identification required? If so, how will this be verified?
- Do visits need to be monitored at the community-based site? If so, how and by whom?
- What CBP staff is needed to support visitors?
  - Supportive services staff (parent coaching, counseling, reentry planning)
  - Greeter and/or visitor processing (check identification, escort to video visiting area)

**Notes:**

## APPENDIX 2B: IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This is a checklist of key implementation and process evaluation activities.

Needs and Resources Assessment	Yes	No	Unsure
1. You created an advisory group to engage stakeholders in the planning process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You identified short-term goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You identified long-term goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You conducted a site survey of the building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. You surveyed visitors to determine whether there is a demand, and to determine which video visiting model is most appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. You surveyed the existing technological capacity at each facility (network, wiring, phone system, IT resources, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You identified existing organizational resources that can be used for video visiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. You identified the projected costs savings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Needs and Resources Assessment	Yes	No	Unsure
9. You determined your start up and ongoing operating costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. You identified a funding stream for the start up and operating costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. You identified the appropriate video visiting model based on your goals and resources: facility-based, home-based, and/or community-based	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. If applicable, you identified a community-based agency and have a memorandum of understanding or contract with this CBP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. If applicable, the CBP has the necessary technology, finances, and staffing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Technology</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
1. You decided what type of services you need to obtain from a technology company (web host, full service, or simply equipment acquisition)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You issued an RFP to technology companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You identified the software applications that meet your needs/goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You tested the video visiting system to assess the video and audio quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. You identified a video visiting system that meets your needs/goals and is appropriate for your facility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Needs and Resources Assessment	Yes	No	Unsure
6. You agreed upon the contract terms, including revenue sharing if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You identified the minimum broadband width required for quality video and audio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. You configured the firewall at each facility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. You decided if the Internet connection needs to be secure and if the signal needs to be encrypted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Installation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
1. You identified where the video units will be placed and you have addressed privacy issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You tested the camera angle, audio, and lighting at all endpoints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You conducted a connectivity pre-test at each endpoint	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You created a child-friendly environment at the endpoints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Launching Video Visiting</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
1. You created policies and procedures for video visiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You decided how video visiting will be phased in (pilot, staggered, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You created a communications plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Needs and Resources Assessment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
4. You decided whether you will use video visits as a supplement or a replacement for in-person visiting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If applicable, you identified a feasible price point for video visits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. You decided how many free visits will be offered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You identified your staffing needs (IT personnel, monitoring, escort, technical assistance, supportive services, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. You have a plan to train staff, incarcerated individuals, and visitors on how to use the technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. You have a plan to provide ongoing technical assistance to staff, incarcerated individuals, and visitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. You determined how video visits will be scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. You determined how visits are monitored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. You determined how visitors will be approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. You determined how visitors' identification will be verified	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Evaluation and Monitoring</u></b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
1. You determined how you will measure volume and utilization rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You identified ways to measure whether video visiting is meeting your goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You created a feedback mechanism to measure consumer satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Needs and Resources Assessment	Yes	No	Unsure
4. You identified outcomes that you want to monitor (e.g., institutional adjustment, strengthening parent-child relationships, engagement of family in reentry planning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. You identified how you will measure success in achieving your stated outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## APPENDIX 3: EVALUATION TOOLS

### SAMPLE VIDEO VISITING SERVICE LOG

(intended to plan video visits daily/weekly)

Date	Name of Incarcerated Person	Relationship of Visitor	Scheduled Start Time	Actual Start Time	End Time	Duration in minutes	Did incarcerated individual receive visit counseling?	If visit did not occur, who cancelled	If visit did not occur, reason for cancellation
1/1/14	John Doe	Daughter	1:00pm	1:10pm	2:10pm	60	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> NA		
1/1/14	Test Rodriguez	Wife	1:30pm	NA	NA	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	Visitor	Transportation issue
1/1/14	Joseph Sample	Son	2:00pm	2:30	3:00	30	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> NA		
1/1/14	Gary Example	Friend	3:00	NA	NA	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	Facility	Lock down

## SAMPLE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CHART

(intended to track program activity against targets)

Activity for Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Activity	Annual Target	Activity for Current Month	Total Year to Date	% of Annual Target Achieved
Scheduled video visits	1,200	110	650	50%
Completed video visits	960	80	480	50%
Cancelled video visits	NA	30	170	NA
By visitor	NA	15	100	NA
By facility	NA	8	40	NA
By community partner	NA	7	30	NA
Visits cut short	NA	10	50	NA
Unduplicated incarcerated individuals participating in visit	1,000	75	450	45%
Visit counseling sessions with incarcerated individual	775	60	360	47%

## SAMPLE DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Outcome	Indicator	Data Source	Collected by	Frequency	Results reviewed by	Frequency
Increased frequency of visits	# of visits	Video visiting service logs	Correctional Officers	Daily	Video visiting team	Monthly
(same as above)	# of visits	Participant survey	Evaluation intern	Daily	Video visiting team	Quarterly
Improved quality of visits	Self-report by incarcerated participants	Participant survey	Evaluation intern	Daily	Video visiting team	Quarterly
(same as above)	Observation of visits	Observation check-list	Evaluation consultant	One day per month	Video visiting team	Quarterly
Reduction in contraband	# of seizures of contraband	Administrative report	Correctional Officers	Weekly	Superintendent & Video visiting team	Monthly
Reduction in staff time for visits	# of hours of staff time	Payroll reports	HR Department	Bi-monthly	Superintendent & Video visiting team	Quarterly

## SAMPLE FEASIBILITY SURVEY FROM THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

(intended to be used with adults who make in-person visits to correctional facilities)

Source: Florida Department of Corrections

	<h1>Inmate Video Visitation Survey</h1>	Office of Institutions
<b>PURPOSE</b>		
<p>The Florida Department of Corrections is researching the feasibility of using home-based video visitation to <u>supplement</u> contact visitation. The Department is <b>NOT</b> planning to eliminate or reduce contact visitation but actually increase the opportunities for inmates to maintain positive contact with their friends and loved ones.</p>		
1. How many days a month do you visit? <input type="radio"/> 1-2 days <input type="radio"/> 3-4 days <input type="radio"/> 5-6 days <input type="radio"/> 7-8 days	6. Do you have access to a computer with a high-speed internet connection? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
2. How far did you travel <u>one way</u> for this visit? <input type="radio"/> Less than 50 miles <input type="radio"/> 50-100 miles <input type="radio"/> 100-150 miles <input type="radio"/> 150-200 miles <input type="radio"/> Over 200 miles	7. Would you be interested, in addition to contact visits, to being able to visit via video visitation from a computer with a high-speed internet connection? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
3. Did you have to rent a hotel room? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	8. Would you be willing to pay \$15 for a 10-minute video visitation – \$1.50 per minute? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
4. Do you own a computer? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	9. Would you be willing to pay \$20 for a 15-minute video visitation – \$1.33 per minute? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
5. Do you have a high-speed internet connection at home? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	10. Would you be willing to pay \$25 for a 20-minute video visitation – \$1.25 per minute? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<p>Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your answers will provide the Department a better idea of the interest in such a service and its value to inmates and their families. You can also find a link to complete this survey online at <a href="http://www.dc.state.fl.us/">http://www.dc.state.fl.us/</a> and <a href="http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VideoVisitation">http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VideoVisitation</a>, however please only complete either this hard copy survey or the online survey and not both.</p>		
1		

## SAMPLE VIDEO VISITING SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR INCARCERATED ADULTS

- Thank you for taking the time to give us some feedback about the video visiting program.
- There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please be honest and open in your responses.
- We are collecting these answers anonymously; staff will not know your responses.

Date of your video visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Was this the first time you participated in a video visit?  Yes  No

### 1. Please indicate the extent you are satisfied with the following items:

Please check only one box in each row.	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Did not use service
a. Ease of scheduling a video visit					
b. Quality of sound and video connection					
c. Comfort of video visit location					
d. Privacy of video visit location					
e. Satisfaction with video visit as compared to in-person visit					
f. Support provided in visit counseling					
g. OVERALL, how satisfied were you with your video visit?					

### 2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Please check only one box in each row.	Disagree a lot	Disagree a little	Agree a little	Agree a lot
a. I would recommend video visiting to other people who are incarcerated.				
b. I plan to do another video visit in the future.				

### **SAMPLE VIDEO VISITING SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR INCARCERATED ADULTS (CONTINUED)**

3. Do you feel that your relationship with your visitors can be maintained through video visits, without in-person visits?  Yes  No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please tell us what you liked **BEST** about your video visiting experience.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Please tell us what you would change about video visiting at this facility that would make it **BETTER**.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Is there anything else about your video visiting experience that you would like to say?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU! Your feedback is very important to us.**

## SAMPLE SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY

(For use with adults in the community who participated in a video visit)

- Thank you for taking the time to give us some feedback about the video visiting program.
- There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please be honest and open in your responses.
- We are collecting these answers anonymously.

Date of your video visit: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Was this the first time you participated in a video visit? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

2. Where were you for this video visit?

- At the correctional facility
- At home
- At a community organization
- Somewhere else: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the following items:

Please check only one box in each row.	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	Did not use service
a) Ease of scheduling a video visit					
b) Instructions on how to use the video visiting equipment					
c) Quality of sound and video connection					
d) Comfort of video visit location					
e) Privacy of video visit location					
f) Convenience of video visit location					
g) Satisfaction with video visit as compared to in-person visit					
h) Support provided through visit counseling					
i) Experience with online payment system					
j) OVERALL, how satisfied were you with your video visit?					

## SAMPLE SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

4. Did any children participate in the video visit with you?      Yes      No  
 If yes, did you find the video visits to be child friendly?      Yes      No

Why or why not: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please indicate to the extent in which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Please check only one box in each row.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a) I would recommend video visiting to other people who want to visit with someone who is incarcerated.				
b) I plan to do another video visit in the future.				

6. What would make you more likely to participate in more video visits? (check all that apply)

- Lower cost per video visit
- More convenient location
- More flexible scheduling
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please tell us what you liked **BEST** about your video visiting experience.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please tell us what you would change about video visiting that would make it **BETTER**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Is there anything else about your video visiting experience that you would like to say?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU! Your feedback is very important to us.**

## SAMPLE SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR STAFF

(For use with correctional staff)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the facility where you work: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please indicated to the extend in which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Please check only one box in each row.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>a. The video visiting equipment is operating well.</b>				
<b>b. The video visit location is adequate for the services being provided.</b>				
<b>c. Video visiting has been a valuable service for inmates and their visitors.</b>				
<b>d. I am satisfied with the training provided to staff on how to use the equipment.</b>				
<b>e. I would recommend video visiting to other facilities that are considering implementing it.</b>				

2. What impact do you think video visiting has had on security at the facility?

- Improved security
- Weakened security
- No Impact

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What impact do you think video visiting has had on program participation by inmates?

- Increased participation
- Decreased participation
- No change

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR STAFF (CONTINUED)

4. What impact do you think video visiting has had on the number of events resulting in disciplinary actions?

- Increased disciplinary actions
- Decreased disciplinary actions
- No change

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What impact do you think video visiting has had on the time you dedicate to visiting tasks?

- Saved time
- Required more time
- No difference on time

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What impact do you think video visiting has had on inmates' behavior?

- Improved behavior
- Behavior is worse
- No change in behavior

7. Is there any additional training that you think would be helpful to staff implementing the program?

- No
- Yes (please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What has been the biggest challenge in implementing video visiting services?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR STAFF (CONTINUED)

9. Please tell us what you think is the **BEST** aspect of video visiting services:

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10. Please tell us what you think would make video visiting **BETTER** at the facility:

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11. Is there anything else about video visiting services that you would like to say?

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**THANK YOU! Your feedback is very important to us.**



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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Mohr, “An Overview of Research Findings in the Visitation, Offender Behavior Connection.”

<sup>2</sup> The Osborne Association, with the support of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), distributed a survey to correctional administrators to learn about video visiting. Interviews were conducted with prison and jail administrators to learn about implementation challenges. We also monitored video visiting press, using Google Alerts, from October 2012-January 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Adeshina Emmanuel, “In-Person Visits Fade as Jails Set up Video Units for Inmates and Families,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2012. Accessed August 8, 2012. [www.nytimes.com/2012/08/07/us/some-criticize-jails-as-they-move-to-video-visits.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/07/us/some-criticize-jails-as-they-move-to-video-visits.html?_r=0).

<sup>4</sup> As of January 2014, video visiting was being used (or piloted) in the following prisons: AK, IN (juvenile facilities), IL, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OR, PA, VA, WA, and WI. Other states, such as Montana, are in the process of implementing.

<sup>5</sup> Visiting is a best practice that is recognized by the American Correctional Association. For more information see the *Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions*, 4th ed. Lanham, MD: American Correctional Association, 2003, 155-57.

<sup>6</sup> The increase in overall visiting (video visit+ in-person) in 2012 and 2013, as compared to 2011 when video visiting was not available, also suggests that video visiting increased opportunities for connection. Information obtained from the Oregon Department of Corrections, e-mail message, March 11, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Oregon Department of Corrections, Face-to-Face ODM Update 2013

<sup>8</sup> Video visiting replaces in-person visiting for incarcerated men at the D.C. County Jail. Sylvia Lane and Lt. Armstrong, D.C. County Jail were interviewed on November 27, 2013 by this author.

<sup>9</sup> Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, *Families Outside*. FY 2007-2008 and FY2010 Outcomes Reports.

<sup>10</sup> The Pew Charitable Trusts, “Collateral Costs.”

<sup>11</sup> Gaynes et al., “Stronger Together: Volume II, Maintaining and Strengthening Family Ties for Children with Incarcerated Parents.”

<sup>12</sup> From a survey completed by parents participating in the Osborne Association’s televisiting program. This program is specifically for incarcerated parents and their children.

<sup>13</sup> Boudin, “Lessons from a mother’s program in prison.” and Casey-Acevedo et al, “Children visiting mothers in prison.”

<sup>14</sup> Contradictory research findings on how incarcerated parents respond to visits with their children suggest that some incarcerated parents need supportive services to help them manage their emotional responses to visiting. For more information, see Poehlman et al., “Children’s Contact with Their Incarcerated Parents: Research Findings and Recommendations.”

<sup>15</sup> Poehlmann et al, “Children’s Contact with Their Incarcerated Parents: Research Findings and Recommendations,” 581.

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<sup>16</sup> Phillips, "Video Visits for Children Whose Parents are Incarcerated: In Whose Best Interest?"

<sup>17</sup>The Face to Face program was funded by a two year grant and was discontinued. See Hilliman, "Assessing the Impact Of Virtual Visitation."

<sup>18</sup> New Hampshire Department of Corrections Family Connections Center, "Video Visit Quotes," 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Some states have enacted amendments to ASFA that consider the significant barriers incarcerated parents face in planning for their children's care while they are incarcerated.

<sup>20</sup> See Christian, "Children of Incarcerated Parents "for more information about the policy and practice barriers facing incarcerated parents involved in the child welfare system.

<sup>21</sup>"Child Welfare: More Information," Government Accountability Office.

<sup>22</sup>Moses, "Does Parental Incarceration Increase a Child's Risk for Foster Care Placement?"

<sup>23</sup> Boudin, "Children of Incarcerated Parents: The Child's Constitutional Right to the Family Relationship."

<sup>24</sup> Hilliman, "Assessing the Impact Of Virtual Visitation," 87.

<sup>25</sup> Boudin et al, "Visitation Policies: A Fifty State Survey."

<sup>26</sup>Information acquired from a survey on video visiting administered by the Osborne Association through the ASCA website.

<sup>27</sup>Hoffman et al., "Communication Policy Changes in State Adult Correctional Facilities From 1971 to 2005."

<sup>28</sup><sup>28</sup>Susan Field, "Clare sheriff launches online visiting system," *Morning Sun News*, July 16, 2013. Accessed September 13, 2013, [www.themorningsun.com/article/20130716/NEWS01/130719711/clare-sheriff-launches-online-visiting-system](http://www.themorningsun.com/article/20130716/NEWS01/130719711/clare-sheriff-launches-online-visiting-system).

<sup>29</sup> "County Department Wins Three Awards," [Westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com/news/4210-county-departments-win-three-awards), accessed September, 23 2013.

<sup>30</sup> This occurs when fewer visitors come to the facility to visit in-person or a facility eliminates in-person visiting.

<sup>31</sup>Debbie Campbell, "Web-Based Inmate Visitation Improves Security and Access in Washoe County, Nevada." Accessed March 12, 2013.

[http://community.nicic.gov/blogs/national\\_jail\\_exchange/archive/2012/11/01/web-based-inmate-visitation-improves-security-and-access-in-washoe-county-nevada.aspx](http://community.nicic.gov/blogs/national_jail_exchange/archive/2012/11/01/web-based-inmate-visitation-improves-security-and-access-in-washoe-county-nevada.aspx)

<sup>32</sup>Debbie Campbell, "Web-Based Inmate Visitation Improves Security and Access in Washoe County, Nevada." Accessed March 12, 2013.

[http://community.nicic.gov/blogs/national\\_jail\\_exchange/archive/2012/11/01/web-based-inmate-visitation-improves-security-and-access-in-washoe-county-nevada.aspx](http://community.nicic.gov/blogs/national_jail_exchange/archive/2012/11/01/web-based-inmate-visitation-improves-security-and-access-in-washoe-county-nevada.aspx)

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- <sup>33</sup> “Lubbock County and City of Paris Earn Annual Statewide Technology Awards,” Texas Association of Governmental Information Technology Managers, accessed January 30, 2014, [www.tagitm.org/?page=2011Awards](http://www.tagitm.org/?page=2011Awards).
- <sup>34</sup> Campbell, “Web-Based Inmate Visitation Improves Security and Access in Washoe County, Nevada.”
- <sup>35</sup> Boudin et al., “Visitation Policies: A Fifty State Survey.”
- <sup>36</sup> This low incidence rate includes major incidents such as the unauthorized use of equipment, and sexual solicitation, coercion, and activity. Data obtained from Kelley Morton and Brianna Elisara, Oregon Department of Corrections, e-mail message to author, March 11, 2014.
- <sup>37</sup> Luke Whyte, “Internet video visitation: Why and how to make the switch,” *CorrectionsOne.com*, June 1, 2010, accessed September 19, 2013, [www.correctionsone.com/products/facility-products/inmate-visitation/articles/2075432-Internet-video-visitation-Why-and-how-to-make-the-switch/](http://www.correctionsone.com/products/facility-products/inmate-visitation/articles/2075432-Internet-video-visitation-Why-and-how-to-make-the-switch/).
- <sup>38</sup> “Boulder County Jail Visitation.” Accessed January 28, 2014. [www.bouldercounty.org/safety/jail/pages/visitation.aspx](http://www.bouldercounty.org/safety/jail/pages/visitation.aspx).
- <sup>39</sup> Wooldredge, “Inmate Experiences and Psychological Well-Being.”
- <sup>40</sup> N. Holt, Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationships; and J. Wooldredge, “Inmate Experiences and Psychological Well-Being.”
- <sup>41</sup> Cochran, “The ties that bind or the ties that break: Examining the relationship between visitation and prisoner misconduct.” J.
- <sup>42</sup> “Jefferson County becomes 3rd in state to implement video-based visits for inmates,” *Therepublic.com*, November 18, 2013, accessed November 18, 2013, [www.therepublic.com/view/story/c7f8432dfe894eb599efdd3f9986602e/AR--County-Jails-Video-Visits](http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/c7f8432dfe894eb599efdd3f9986602e/AR--County-Jails-Video-Visits).
- <sup>43</sup> “Jefferson County becomes 3rd in state to implement video-based visits for inmates,” *Therepublic.com*, November 18, 2013, accessed November 18, 2013, [www.therepublic.com/view/story/c7f8432dfe894eb599efdd3f9986602e/AR--County-Jails-Video-Visits](http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/c7f8432dfe894eb599efdd3f9986602e/AR--County-Jails-Video-Visits).
- <sup>44</sup> Melissa Crabbe, “Virtual Visitation Program Uses Video Conferencing to Strengthen Prisoner Contacts with Families and Children.”
- <sup>45</sup> Dana Razzano, “Visits Debut in Pennsylvania Prisons,” *Corrections.com*, August 30, 2001, accessed August 12, 2013, [www.corrections.com/news/article/9322](http://www.corrections.com/news/article/9322).
- <sup>46</sup> La Vigne et al., “Examining the Effect of Incarceration and In-Prison Family Contact on Prisoners’ Family Relationships.”
- <sup>47</sup> Mills et al., “Prisoners’ Families and Offender Management.” and Holt et al., “Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationships.”
- <sup>48</sup> Minnesota Department of Corrections, “Key Findings: The Effects of Prison Visitation on Offender Recidivism,” 2.

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<sup>51</sup>Christy Visher et al., “Baltimore Prisoners’ Experiences Returning Home.”

<sup>52</sup>Johnna Christian, “Riding the Bus: Barriers to Prison Visitation and Family Management Strategies.”

<sup>53</sup>Vanessa Miller, “Some Iowa Jails Switching to Video Visits,” *The Gazette*, March 28, 2013, accessed April 3, 2013, <http://thegazette.com/2013/03/28/some-iowa-jails-switching-to-video-visits/#sthash.T5laiRHi.dpuf>.

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<sup>55</sup>Howard Hardee, “Fighting for face time, Butte County Jail to make the switch to a video visitation system,” *Chico News and Review*, June 27, 2013, accessed June 30, 2013, [www.newsreview.com/chico/fighting-for-face-time/content?oid=10378841](http://www.newsreview.com/chico/fighting-for-face-time/content?oid=10378841).

<sup>56</sup>John Kruzel, “Visitation Slight: How Two Policies Stack the Deck Against D.C. Inmates,” *Washington City Paper*, May 22, 2013, accessed March 9, 2013, [www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/citydesk/2013/05/22/visitation-slight-how-two-policies-stack-the-deck-against-d-c-inmates](http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/citydesk/2013/05/22/visitation-slight-how-two-policies-stack-the-deck-against-d-c-inmates).

<sup>57</sup>Michelle McManimon, “Jail Visits Go Video,” *azdailysun.com*, November 3, 2013, accessed January 2, 2014, [www.azdailysun.com/news/local/jail-visits-go-video/article\\_cb97c9ec-445d-11e3-9062-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.azdailysun.com/news/local/jail-visits-go-video/article_cb97c9ec-445d-11e3-9062-001a4bcf887a.html).

<sup>56</sup>Letter of Support for Bill 20-122, Video Visitation Modification Act was written by Thomas M. Susman, American Bar Association on June 19, 2013. This letter was addressed to Tommy Wells, Chairperson, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, Council of the District of Columbia. Accessed September 10, 2013, [www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/uncategorized/GAO/2013june19\\_dcvisitation\\_l.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/uncategorized/GAO/2013june19_dcvisitation_l.authcheckdam.pdf).

<sup>59</sup>Child development and attachment theories emphasize the importance of physical contact between young children and their parents to form secure attachments. For more information, see New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents fact sheet. “Proximity to Children: Why Being Close to Home Matters.” March 2013.

<sup>60</sup>Campbell, “Web-Based Inmate Visitation Improves Security and Access in Washoe County, Nevada.”

<sup>61</sup>Russia Today, Video Visits: The Latest Player in the Prison-Industrial Complex <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVNHRxPotSI>, cited in Susan Phillips, Video Visits for Children Whose Parents are Incarcerated: In Whose Best Interest, 3.

<sup>62</sup>FCC, “Prison Policy Initiative Filing to FCC.” December 20, 2013.

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<sup>65</sup> American Correctional Association. *2010 Standards Supplement*. Lanham, MD: American Correctional Association, 2010, 89.

<sup>66</sup> Tammy Wells, “Jail Wants to Eliminate In-Person Visits,” *York County Daily Tribune*, June 7, 2013, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.journaltribune.com/articles/2013/06/11/news/doc51b1f2f715fa4336029453.txt>.

<sup>67</sup> Kelley Morton, Operations Division Policy Manager, Oregon Department of Corrections, e-mail message to author, May 22, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Idaho Department of Correction video visiting feasibility study completed by Shari Davis, IDOC Project Manager, September 23, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> As noted in a March 6, 2014 Daily Legal News article, “Ohio Counties Add Video Visitation for Inmates,” video visits fees approximately range from 25 cents to \$1.29/minute. Accessed on March 6, 2014, [www.dlnnews.com/editorial/9503](http://www.dlnnews.com/editorial/9503).

<sup>70</sup> John Hult, “Jail to get new video visitation system, Minnehaha County installs upgraded kiosk, phone system,” *BrandonInfo.com*, August 23, 2013, accessed August 25, 2013, [www.brandoninfo.com/article/20130823/NEWS/130823004](http://www.brandoninfo.com/article/20130823/NEWS/130823004).

<sup>71</sup> “The FCC Vote On Prison Phone Rates: A Fact Sheet,” Phone Justice.org, <http://nationinside.org/images/pdf/FCC-Vote-FactSheet-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>72</sup> Robert McCoppin reported in a Chicago Tribune article on January 12, 2014 that a family in Illinois reported that there was no record of their pre-scheduled visit upon their arrival at the jail, and they were asked to reschedule for another day. See Robert McCoppin, “Video visits at Illinois jails praised as efficient, criticized as impersonal,” accessed January 12, 2014, [www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/suburbs/ct-jail-video-visits-met-20140112,0,799192.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/suburbs/ct-jail-video-visits-met-20140112,0,799192.story).

<sup>73</sup> Whyte, “Internet video visitation: Why and how to make the switch.”

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<sup>76</sup> Two sources of online information and tools related to logic models include the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide and the University of Wisconsin Extension’s Program Development and Evaluation website.

<sup>77</sup> Campbell, “Web-Based Inmate Visitation Improves Security and Access in Washoe County, Nevada.”

<sup>78</sup> Captain Reimer, email to author, December 6, 2013.

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<sup>79</sup> Polycom, "Telejustice At Work."

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<sup>82</sup> "Access to Courts and Videoconferencing in Immigration Court Proceedings," *Harvard Law Review*, 122 (2009): **1181-119**.

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<sup>88</sup> Grady et al., "Evidence-Based Practice for Telemental Health."

<sup>89</sup> Morgan et al., "Does The Use of Telemental Health Alter the Treatment Experience? Inmates' Perceptions of Telemental Health versus Face-To-Face Treatment Modalities."

<sup>90</sup> Grady et al., "Evidence-Based Practice for Telemental Health.,"; Lexcen et al., "Use of video conferencing for psychiatric and forensic evaluations." and Morgan et al., "Does the use of telemental health alter the treatment experience? Inmates' perceptions of telemental health versus face-to-face treatment modalities."

<sup>91</sup> Lexcen et al., "Use of video conferencing for psychiatric and forensic evaluations," found that forensic evaluations conducted through video conferencing obtained similar information as compared to face-to-face interviews.

<sup>92</sup> Grady et al., "Evidence-Based Practice for Telemental Health."

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<sup>94</sup> Davis et al., Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education.

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<sup>97</sup> Hairston, “Focus on Children with Incarcerated Parents.”

<sup>98</sup> Gaynes et al., Stronger Together Volume II.

<sup>99</sup> Arditti, “Child Trauma within the Context of Parental Incarceration.”

<sup>100</sup> Doucet, “See You On Skype!”

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<sup>102</sup> Hilliman, “Assessing the Impact of Virtual Visitation”

<sup>103</sup> Hilliman, “Assessing the Impact of Virtual Visitation,” 86.

<sup>104</sup> Ames et al., “Making Love In The Network Closet.”

<sup>105</sup> New Hampshire DOC Family Connections Center, “Video Visit Caregiver Testimony” 2013.

<sup>106</sup> Hilliman, “Assessing the Impact of Virtual Visitation,” 82.