

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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March 1, 2021

Dear all CDCR and CCHCS Staff:

As we enter 2021, we are excited to share some departmental news that will have a positive impact on the way our incarcerated population is able to communicate with their families and friends. Maintaining communication with loved ones on the outside is important not only to remain connected as a family, but also to prepare for reentry and stay motivated to follow a positive path.

The Department has contracted with Global Tel*Link Corporation (GTL) to greatly reduce the cost of telephone calls, to begin on March 19, 2021. The new six-year contract will do the following:

- Reduce the cost of all nationwide calls to 2.5 cents per minute. Previously, the cost was 7.6 cents per minute for calls in California and 21 cents for calls to the remainder of the United States.
- The cost for international calls will be reduced from 75 cents per minute to 7 cents per minute.
- The fee to establish a GTL account has been eliminated. This charge was previously \$3.
- For those who do not wish to establish an account, there will be a 99 cent transaction fee added to the cost of the call.
- Calls for Division of Juvenile Justice youth will remain free of charge.

Each incarcerated person will receive 15 minutes of free phone calls and 15 minutes of free video calls every two weeks. To support implementation of the free calls, incarcerated people will be given a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to make calls. Incarcerated individuals began setting up their PINs at Valley State Prison starting Feb. 25, and PINs will be activated at all institutions by March 18. Until PINs are implemented, GTL and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) will continue to offer two free calling days per month.

Now more than ever, communication with family and friends is paramount. Ensuring that the cost is not prohibitive for anyone is, and has always been, a top priority for CDCR.

In addition to improved telephone service, the new GTL contract provides incarcerated people the opportunity to connect with families in new ways. Department staff are working with GTL to plan the implementation of a kiosk and tablet program very similar to the program that has been piloted at five institutions since 2018. The tablets will provide access to secure email, the ability to receive (but not send) Department-approved photos and short videos, and access a variety of

informational, vocational and rehabilitative content. There will be safety guardrails in place to closely monitor all messages and content for any inappropriate activity or illegal content.

CDCR staff are currently creating the policies and procedures that outline who will qualify for the program and its implementation. We will keep you informed as the rollout schedule for these services is developed. As institutions prepare for activation, training will be conducted to include recorded demonstrations, training videos, reference guides, and virtual meetings.

The new tablets will launch in mid-May at Valley State Prison. The rollout timeline for remaining institutions is in development. CDCR will implement staff training 30 days prior to the go-live date at each institution. It is expected that every adult institution will have tablets by the end of 2021, and all fire camps will have tablets by the end of March 2022.

Video calls are also available on the tablets. Scheduling and eligibility criteria for using the tablets for video calls are in development and will be updated as more information is available. At this time, the free Webex video visiting system remains in place. However, the tablets will be available for those who would like to make video calls in a different location, or to offset limited video visiting station availability in visiting rooms. Video calls will cost 20 cents per minute.

This new contract with GTL is the result of hard work and true vision for the future of our system. It significantly moves us into the future with the expansion and availability of technology and communications services for the incarcerated population, and more importantly, will make calls affordable, so that people can remain connected.

Thank you, and continue the good work you are all doing for the Department and the people of our great State.

With gratitude,



KATHLEEN ALLISON
Secretary

www.gtl.?

Perhaps someone will comment here and explain the process for contacting gtl and establishing a prepaid phone account.

Thank You