
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6021

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Senate Human Services (originally sponsored by Senators Hansen, Hasegawa, Nguyen, Nobles, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

1 AN ACT Relating to reducing fees and expenses for services for
2 people confined to correctional facilities; amending RCW 72.09.765;
3 adding a new section to chapter 72.09 RCW; creating a new section;
4 and providing an effective date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 72.09
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The department shall provide persons in its custody and
9 confined in a correctional facility with voice communication
10 services. The department may supplement voice communication service
11 with other communication services including, but not limited to,
12 video communication and electronic mail or messaging services. To the
13 extent such voice communication service or any other communication
14 service is provided, which shall not be limited beyond program
15 participation and routine facility procedures, each such service
16 shall be provided free of charge to the person initiating and the
17 person receiving the communication. The department shall at least
18 maintain the same access to voice communication services and other
19 communication services in each correctional facility as the
20 department offered as of January 1, 2024.

21 (2) The department shall:

1 (a) Provide tablets to all persons in its custody at no cost; and
2 (b) Maintain the same number of voice communication devices,
3 specifically wall phones, in each housing unit as it had on January
4 1, 2024.

5 (3) The department shall not receive revenue, including any
6 commission or fee, from the provision of voice communication services
7 or any other communication services to any person confined in a
8 correctional facility.

9 (4) The department shall not use the provision of voice
10 communication services or any other communication services to persons
11 in its custody and confined in a correctional facility to supplant
12 in-person contact visits that any such person may be eligible to
13 receive. Communication services shall not be used to replace the in-
14 person visitation program.

15 (5) For the purposes of this section:

16 (a) "Voice communication services" means real-time, audio-only
17 communication services, namely phone calls.

18 (b) "Other communication services" means communication services
19 other than voice communications including, but not limited to, video
20 communication and electronic mail or messaging services.

21 **Sec. 2.** RCW 72.09.765 and 2020 c 319 s 4 are each amended to
22 read as follows:

23 (1) Any contract to provide (~~inmates~~) incarcerated individuals
24 with (~~access to~~) telecommunication services and electronic media
25 services in state correctional facilities shall be made publicly
26 available and posted on the department's website.

27 (2) The information in this subsection from the contract shall be
28 prominently displayed on the department's public website, posted
29 prominently in housing units, and made available on tablets:

30 (a) Rates for (~~facilitating telecommunication services~~
31 ~~including, but not limited to, phone calls, video visitation,~~
32 ~~videograms and video clips, emails, and accessing music and~~
33 ~~entertainment~~) all products and services covered by the contract,
34 with a detailed breakdown that includes taxes, surcharges, fees, and
35 any other fees;

36 (b) Fees charged for money transfers and transactions,
37 maintenance of financial accounts, and any other fee charged to the
38 user to facilitate the money transfer or online deposit account; and

1 (c) All fees or costs charged to the (~~inmate~~) incarcerated
2 individual or customer in exchange for use of (~~telecommunication~~
3 ~~or~~) electronic media services through the contract.

4 (3) By July 1st of each year, the contractor that provides
5 (~~inmates~~) incarcerated individuals with (~~access to~~)
6 telecommunication services and electronic media services under
7 subsection (1) of this section shall report to the department the
8 following information:

9 (a) A summary of services offered at each correctional facility;

10 (b) Rates charged for, or associated with, providing each type of
11 service including, but not limited to, monthly financial account
12 maintenance fees, transaction fees associated with money transfers,
13 (~~per call and connection surcharges,~~) bill statement fees, and
14 refund fees;

15 (~~(c) (A total accounting of commissions provided to the~~
16 ~~department or correctional facility;~~

17 ~~(d))~~ A detailed summary and accounting of services used by
18 (~~inmates~~) incarcerated individuals categorized as indigent;

19 (d) Data on usage of all telecommunication and electronic media
20 services under the contract, including monthly call and message
21 volume;

22 (e) One-time and ongoing costs incurred for installing and
23 maintaining hardware;

24 (f) Average customer service response time rates per facility and
25 the average time taken to resolve an issue or provide a refund for
26 defective services; and

27 (g) An accounting of all revenues or losses incurred by the
28 contractor by quarter.

29 (4) By November 1st of each year, and in compliance with RCW
30 43.01.036, the department shall report to the governor and
31 legislature on contracts for telecommunication services and
32 electronic media services under this section and the contractor's
33 annual compliance with this section.

34 (5) This section applies to any contract in effect on June 11,
35 2020, and to any renegotiation, renewal, or extension of such
36 contract.

37 (6) For the purposes of this section:

38 (a) "Telecommunications services" include, but are not limited
39 to, voice communication services, video communication services,
40 videograms, and electronic mail or messaging services.

1 (b) "Electronic media services" include, but are not limited to,
2 video clips, music, and entertainment.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act may be known and cited as the
4 connecting families act.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act takes effect December 1, 2024.

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