



NEBRASKA Good Life. Great Mission. DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES	PROTOCOL	
	VIRTUAL VISITATION PROGRAM	
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EFFECTIVE: February 12, 2021
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APPROVED:



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Program Overview

The Virtual Visitation Program (VVP) is designed to strengthen community supports to improve quality of life during and after incarceration. The program supplements the in-person visitation opportunities, offering incarcerated individuals and their family members and/or friends a virtual visit using an online platform (e.g., Zoom, Webex, Skype) to encourage communication and support. Conversation prompts may be provided to assist in positive, pro-social communication. Program effectiveness will be measured by self-report using a post-visit-survey. Other measurable outcomes may include a decrease in negative behaviors and increased participation in recommended treatment/programming (i.e., accepting a recommendation previously refused). In addition, it is expected that participants will have improved interactions with their peers and staff members.

Visitor Participation

Individuals who are approved visitors, in accordance Policy 205.02, *Visiting*, are eligible to request a virtual visit. Virtual visits are in addition to in-person visiting opportunities. Visitors who are approved only for Special Visits may have one virtual visit in place of an in-person visit.


The approved virtual visitor must present a copy of their driver’s license/State ID as requested prior to the visit and upon entry to the virtual visiting room (this applies to adults and minors, age 16 and up).

All minors under age 16 must have a birth certificate on file at the time of the scheduled virtual visit.

All visits must be scheduled via the NDCS [website](#).

Minors may participate in virtual visits but must be approved per policy and accompanied by the authorized guardian for the duration of the visit. At no time shall a minor initiate a virtual visit.

Attorneys and clergy may virtually visit if they are on the approved visiting list. Where private communication is required, in-person visiting is recommended because all virtual visits are subject to being monitored and privacy rules do not apply.

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Visitors must provide their own equipment and the necessary internet connection to participate in virtual visiting.

Visitors may not record or take photos/screen shots of the virtual visit. Violation may lead to loss of virtual or in-person visiting privileges.

Approved visitors who allow non-approved individuals to participate in virtual visits will be subject to suspension/termination of virtual visits and/or all visits. Violations of the program protocol or NDCS policy may result in a suspension of the visitor's virtual visiting privileges and may affect in-person visits. The suspension may be temporary or permanent depending on the nature of the violation. The staff member supervising visits has the discretion to terminate the visit at any time.

Incarcerated Participation


Incarcerated individuals are eligible to participate in VVP unless specific restrictions have been issued. Virtual visits will be conducted in the same manner as in-person visits (i.e., dress code, behavior, language, etc.). Individuals are expected to comply with all NDCS policies and procedures. Violations could result in immediate termination of the visit, misconduct report, disciplinary sanctions and/or suspension or termination of visiting privileges.

Virtual visits are provided in the designated area and require use of headphones, which the incarcerated person must bring to the visit. Staff will connect the visitor and the individual and will adjust the volume of the device as requested. At no time should the incarcerated individual touch the device without express permission.

Scheduling

The VVP schedule will be determined by the space and operational limitations of each facility. Virtual visits will, generally, be permitted at least once per month and will typically be during the same days and hours of in-person visiting. Each facility will develop and publish their schedule, to include length and frequency of visits.

Individuals will be notified via email of the virtual visit once it has been approved. Instructions will be provided via email to the visitor at least three days in advance of the virtual visit.

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Each facility will identify a process for preference to be given when multiple requests are received for the same time slot.

Monitoring

Designated team members will closely monitor all virtual visits for compliance with policy and procedure. This includes checking IDs at the beginning of the visit, observing to ensure additional people are not in view, and that both the incarcerated individual and the virtual visitor(s) are being appropriate and following established rules. The supervising staff member has the discretion to terminate the virtual visit at any time for any violation of the rules or misconduct; such must be reported to the shift supervisor immediately.

Suspensions/Terminations

Visitors and incarcerated individuals will receive written notification of suspensions/terminations, which will include the reason and duration of the suspension/termination.

A visitor who has been suspended/terminated and is found to be participating in virtual visits during a period of suspension may be terminated or have the suspension extended.

A visitor who is suspended or terminated from virtual visiting privileges may be suspended/terminated from other visiting privileges.