

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Voices of Connection: No-Cost Communication Pilot Program

FAQ*

Q: What is the 'Voices of Connection' pilot program?

A: Beginning **November 3**, IDOC will implement 'Voices of Connection', a pilot program of no-cost phone calls. Under this pilot, IDOC will provide each individual in custody an allotted number of credits each month to make phone calls to loved ones.

IDOC recognizes the vital role communication plays in the lives of individuals in custody, helping them maintain connections and supporting their rehabilitation. This pilot program is part of a broader strategy to use technology to provide reliable, affordable, and effective communication channels that promote connection, learning, and personal growth.

Q: Are all individuals in custody eligible for the pilot?

A: Yes, all individuals in custody at all correctional facilities will receive a monthly allocation of free phone call minutes. This benefit is extended to all individuals regardless of classification, housing status, disciplinary status, or other facility-related designations. However, usage of this benefit is not guaranteed. For example, an individual who is on a court writ or under phone privilege restrictions will not be able to place phone calls.

Q: Can the free phone minutes be used on messaging or entertainment content?

A: No, these funds will be deposited into accounts that can only be used for phone call minutes, not messaging or entertainment content.

Q: When are the minutes distributed?

A: These minutes are credited to individual in custody phone accounts on the first day of each month.

Q: Will unused minutes roll over?

A: No, if an individual in custody does not use all their free phone call credits in one month, they will not carry over to the next month. The next month, they will receive only the number of credits that will get them back to the monthly allocation. For example, an individual who uses all their free phone call credits will receive the full allocation the next month, and an individual who uses half of their phone call credits will receive half the allocation the next month.

Q: Can minutes be transferred between individuals?

A: No, free minutes cannot be transferred between individuals.

Q: Can minutes be used on the tablets and the wall phones at facilities?

A: Yes, individuals in custody may utilize their free minutes on the wall phones or tablets. Beginning in September 2025, IDOC enabled a phone dialer application on all tablets that allows individuals to place calls from their tablet while connected to Wi-Fi.

Q. Is there a limit on how many phone calls an individual can place each day?

A: Since this is the first time IDOC has expanded personal phone access to every individual, the Department has imposed an **initial** daily limit of 15 total calls (tablets/ wall phones) to ensure the system is not overloaded. IDOC selected this initial number based on current usage data, which shows most individuals make fewer than 15 calls per day.

Q. Is there a time limit on the length of calls?

A: Each call is limited to 20 minutes with a 10-minute lockout period between calls. This time limit applies to calls made on wall phones and tablets.

Q: Can the phone minutes be used at any time?

A: Individuals can use phone minutes at any time the wall phones and tablet phone dialer application are available. Please note that the tablet phone dialer application is disabled every day from 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and may be temporarily shut down when necessary for emergencies.

Q: If an individual in custody is released, what happens to their funds for the free phone minutes?

A: When an individual in custody is released, any remaining funds in their phone account from the free phone call fund shall be returned to the Department. The individual may request a refund from ICSolutions for any remaining funds in their phone account that were purchased through Commissary.

Q: How many minutes will be provided? Will that amount change?

A: The pilot will start with approximately 775 minutes (almost 13 hours) per individual per month. For individuals who make international calls, the number of minutes will depend on rates. Because this is a pilot program, IDOC will reassess and may adjust the monthly allotment as needed based on usage or other factors.

Q: What do I do if my loved one did not receive my minutes, doesn't agree with the number of minutes used in their account, or did not receive the correct number of minutes?

A: Please direct your loved one to utilize the grievance process to address any concerns relative to the disbursement, allotment, depletion, or any other matter related to believed discrepancies regarding their free phone minutes.

Q: How long will the pilot last?

A: The pilot will run **through June 2026**, with a possibility to continue, subject to appropriation. If the pilot is extended, the number of minutes per month may change **after June 2026**.

Q: How much does the pilot cost IDOC per month? How is it funded?

A: IDOC has allocated approximately \$150,000 per month on this pilot from its General Revenue Fund operating budget.

Q: What about the Adult Transition Centers (ATC)?

A: In the coming months, Fox Valley and Peoria ATCs will transition to ICSolutions for phone services. At that time, residents at those locations will receive free phone minutes. The Safer Foundation operates Crossroads and North Lawndale ATCs. Those two facilities will not transition to ICSolutions for phone services and will not be eligible to participate in the pilot program.

*Document updated on October 31, 2025.