

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 14, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Denita R. Ball, Sheriff, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

Subject: From the Sheriff, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, requesting approval of amendment # 4 to the Inmate Calling Solutions LLC (ICSolutions) agreement for correctional communication services to act in accordance with Waiver order DA 25-565: 2025 IPCS (Incarcerated People 's Communications Services) which temporarily extends the deadlines to comply with the rate cap, site commission and per minute pricing rules to April 1, 2027.

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

From the Sheriff, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, requesting approval of amendment # 4 to the Inmate Calling Solutions LLC (ICSolutions) agreement for correctional communication services to act in accordance with Waiver order DA 25-565: 2025 IPCS (Incarcerated People 's Communications Services) which temporarily extends the deadlines to comply with the rate cap, site commission and per minute pricing rules to April 1, 2027.

BACKGROUND

On July 28, 2024, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to implement several new regulations on phone and video call services in prisons and jails. As required by the 2022 Martha Wright-Reed Fair and Just Communications Act, the FCC laid out new price caps that prisons, jails and their telecom providers must abide by, lowering the existing caps set in 2021. The new FCC ruling FCC 24-75 set the cap for phone calls at \$.06 per minute and also set the first-rate cap for video calling at \$.11 per minute for jails and prisons the size of the Milwaukee County Jail (MCJ) and the Community Reintegration Center (CRC).

Per the agreement with ICSolutions and Milwaukee County, the implementation of these

new rate caps would constitute a material change to comply with the FCC ruling and would allow for a good-faith negotiation of an amendment to the agreement.

6c(iii) FCC or Other Regulatory Body Rules or Policies

Should an additional material change in the rules or policies of the FCC or other regulatory body applicable to resident communication services occur following the execution of the Agreement, which such change negatively affects (a) the calling rates and/or fees permitted to be charged by the Contractor to residents under the Agreement; (b) the right of the County to recover its costs; or (c) the ability for Contractor to pay to the County a revenue share, fees (including but not limited to the Cost Recoupment Payment) or other cost recovery mechanisms, then the Contractor and the County will negotiate in good faith an amendment to this Agreement that enables both parties to recover costs in a manner compliant with the change in the FCC's (or other regulatory body's) rules or policies.

In the 2024 adopted budget, the County Executive proposed a program that would provide up to 390 minutes of free phone calls and 60 minutes of video visitation minutes per month at both the Milwaukee County Jail (MCJ) and the Community Reintegration Center (CRC). All phone revenue had been eliminated to offer residents free minutes for both phone and video visits. This program intended to make phone calls more accessible and allow residents to reach loved ones without the financial burden placed on those closest to them.

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office convened a cross-departmental workgroup to implement free calling in both correctional facilities. This group includes members from the Sheriff's Office, the Community Reintegration Center, Procurement, IMSD, and a project manager from the Office of Strategy Budget and Performance. This workgroup met weekly beginning in early 2024 to implement free calling and address any technology or equity issues that have arisen. This group has also partnered with the Budget Office and County leadership to review proposals from the vendor and the impact of the FCC ruling on the County's ability to maintain free calling.

Milwaukee County and ICSolutions were in a trial period of implementing free phone call and video visitation minutes when the FCC ruling was adopted. Initially the proceeds from phone calls and video visits that the county received would fund the free minutes. The new FCC ruling eliminated this funding with only commissions on tablet usage remaining.

FCC-24-75 prohibits Incarcerated People's Communications Services ("IPCS") providers from charging facilities, incarcerated persons, and the loved ones of incarcerated persons additional charges such as ancillary fees and special fees added to the base cost of calls.

FCC-24-75 restricts IPCS providers from providing "Site Commissions", including in-kind payments, infrastructure investments, or other valuable goods and services to correctional facilities. IPCS providers may reimburse correctional facilities for actual expenses related to the provision of communications services, provided those expenses meet the order's definition of "used and useful".

Funding fees when friends and family members would deposit funds into their loved one's prepaid communications account are also eliminated with the FCC ruling. Deposits made online or through the IVR (Interactive Voice Response) the fee is \$3.00, if made through a live agent, the fee is \$5.95.

It is proposed that the monthly tablet commissions support the funding to provide the occupants/residents with up to 90 free minutes of phone calls and up to 15 free minutes of video visitation per week and the funding for 1.0 FTE Deputy Sheriff position that provides onsite administration for the Resident Telephone System (RTS), Video Visitation Solution (VVS) and Tablets.

The FCC ruling required new rates and other changes become effective November 19, 2024. The FCC permitted contracts currently in-force to continue until either the term of the contract expired, or the contract was amended, in which event the new rates and other changes were to come into effect immediately. The Parties mutually agreed that the requirements of FCC 24-75 would become effective March 30, 2025, and impact any future contract(s) between the Parties.

On June 30, 2025, the Wireline Competition Bureau ("WCB") released the 2025 IPCS Waiver Order which temporarily extended the deadlines by which IPCS Providers, including the Contractor, must comply with the rate cap, site commission, and per-minute pricing rules adopted in the 2024 IPCS order until April 1, 2027, "...or any alternative date the Commission sets as part of further action in the IPCS proceeding in order to "preserve correctional officials' ability to provide safe and secure access to IPCS while the Commission considers reevaluating aspects of the *2024 IPCS Order*.

Per the new DA 25-656 order the county can now collect commissions on phone calls and video visitation. The new rates for phone calls went from \$0.06 per minute to \$.16 per minute and the new rate for video calling went from \$0.11 per minute to \$.25 per minute for jails and prisons the size of the Milwaukee County Jail (MCJ) and the Community Reintegration Center (CRC).

The Parties wish to:

- 1.1.1 continue to provide free calling and free video visitation to all PIOC at the MCJ and CRC;
- 1.1.2 continue all existing IPCS, Tablet Services, and investigative functionality currently in place;
- 1.1.3 collect revenue to fund PIOC programming and services by increasing the per-minute rates for IPCS and collecting site commissions as permitted through DA 25-565; and

1.1.4 comply with FCC 24-75 as modified by DA 25-565.

Rates and Fees

IPCS and Tablet Services Rates & Fees			
Service	# of Free Minutes	FCC 24-75 Rate	DA 25-565 Rate
Local, Long-Distance, and International Telephone Calls	Up to 90 per week	\$0.06 per minute	\$0.16 per minute
Video Visitation Services (Video Calls)	Up to 15 per week	\$0.11 per minute	\$0.25 per minute
ITS/VVS/Tablet Services Administrator Reimbursement	-	\$8,333 per month	\$8,333 per month
Phone, Video, Tablet, and Investigative Functionality	-	Included	Included
Optional Argus Echo Voice Biometric Intelligence	-	\$0.01 per minute	\$0.01 per minute
TextBehind Mail Scanning	-	\$4.95 per PIOC, per month	\$4.95 per PIOC, per month
Funding Fees	-	Eliminated	Eliminated
ITS and VVS Commission (Revenue Share)	-	Eliminated	
Tablet Services Commission	-	Eliminated	

RECOMMENDATION

From the Sheriff, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, requesting approval of amendment # 4 to the Inmate Calling Solutions LLC (ICSolutions) agreement for correctional communication services to act in accordance with Waiver order DA 25-565: 2025 IPCS (Incarcerated People 's Communications Services) which temporarily extends the deadlines to comply with the rate cap, site commission and per minute pricing rules to April 1, 2027; or any alternative date the commission sets.

FISCAL EFFECT

In the 2026 Recommended/Adopted budget revenue is estimated to increase for the MCJ \$250,000 and for the CRC \$600,000.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Denita Ball, Sheriff, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office
Brian Barkow, Chief Deputy, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office
Joshua Briggs, Jail Commander (Director), Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office
David Rugaber, Deputy Director, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office
Pat Carravetta, Fiscal Administrator, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

PREPARED BY:

Pat Carravetta, Fiscal Administrator

PAC

APPROVED BY:

Brian Barkow, Chief Deputy

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk