

Video Teleconferencing Program Overview

Facing an ever-rising inmate population, the New Jersey Department of Corrections actively seeks ways to reduce operational costs while maintaining the integrity and security of its institutions and services. Through a joint partnership between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Office of the Public Defender, Office of the Prosecutor, the State Parole Board, the Department (DOC) and private vendors, a successful system-wide approach to expediting criminal justice proceedings in New Jersey has been implemented.

Videoconferencing technology enables criminal justice proceedings to be conducted, inclusive of preliminary court activities, parole hearings and deportation hearings, without the transportation of inmates from the secure confines of the correctional institutions. As a result of this technology, the New Jersey Department of Corrections has reduced costs, enhanced public safety, and expedited the carriage of justice.

The State of New Jersey is committed to using technology effectively to improve the way we deliver government services to the public. To this end, significant strides have been taken combining technology with the criminal justice system. The New Jersey Department of Corrections has been nominated for Harvard's prestigious Innovations in American Government award as a result of this unique program and received a special recognition award from the Public Employees' Roundtable for "Exemplifying Excellence in Public Service" in 1999.

Mission Statement

The New Jersey Department of Corrections encourages the use and expansion of videoconferencing technology in order to initiate a paradigm shift in the way the State Criminal Justice System conducts its business, from on-site, in person activities to videoconferencing from distant sites at much reduced costs and enhanced public safety.

Major Objectives

- To provide system-wide access to the NJDOC inmate population for criminal justice systems at all levels – State, County, Local and Federal – enabling them to conduct their business in a more efficient manner.
- To realize significant cost avoidance through increased efficiencies in agencies impacting on inmate's release and/or custody level status, particularly the New Jersey State Parole Board.
- Enhance public safety and community protection by restricting offenders to a secure institutional setting while conducting official business with outside agencies.
- Criminal cases pending against state inmates are now processed more quickly and efficiently, parole hearings and interviews of inmate candidates for early release programs are likewise streamlined along with civil proceedings and illegal deportation reviews.

In 1999, the Department of Correction's Statewide Criminal Justice Videoconferencing Program was selected as one of only 100 semifinalists in the prestigious Harvard University, JFK School of Government's Innovations in America Government Awards Program. The Video Teleconferencing Program was selected from over 1600 applications submitted nationwide. This selection was made possible through inter-agency cooperation among New Jersey's Criminal Justice System. The New Jersey Department of Corrections would like to take this opportunity to thank the following agencies and their dedicated staffs for their ongoing contribution:

Administrative Office of the Courts
County Correctional Facilities
Department of Children & Families
Department of Human Services
Executive Office of Immigration Review
Federal District Courts
Intensive Supervision Programs
Immigration & Customs Enforcement
Juvenile Justice Commission

New Jersey Family Courts
New Jersey Municipal Courts
New Jersey State Correctional Facilities
New Jersey State Parole Board
New Jersey Superior Courts
Office of the Prosecutor
Office of the Public Defender
Social Security Administration
Veteran's Administration