

The For-Profit Video Visitation Industry in Prisons and Jails

Securus Dallas County Additional BAFO Responses



## **Additional Questions: Step 3 Best and Final Offer for Dallas County, Texas**

The Dallas County Purchasing Department has compiled questions for the top ranked firms to provide answers to the Dallas County RFP Evaluation Committee. These questions address Step Three - BAFO process of the RFP as outlined on Page 9 of the RFP document under the heading; Selection Process. The BAFO offer will allow the Evaluation Committee to rank the firm most susceptible for contract negotiations and contract award.

<u>NOTE: ALL BAFO OFFERS MUST INCLUDE ANY AND ALL TAXES, FEES, PROMOTIONAL CHARGES OR SERVICE</u> <u>CHARGES, AS NO ADDITIONAL COST ADD-ON'S WILL BE ACCEPTED DURING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS.</u>

DALLAS COUNTY PROHIBITS ANY <u>PROMOTIONAL CALLING</u> OF CONSTITUENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES LINKED TO INMATE PHONE / VIDEO VISITATION SERVICE.

QUESTION 1: What fees are charged for account set-up, account funding, or closing accounts?

**RESPONSE:** Securus does not charge a fee for account set up or for the closing or refunding of an account. Securus always provides no-fee options for account funding when friends and family members choose to fund through online banking or by mail.

Securus offers the convenience of immediate account funding through credit/debit card payments by phone or on our Website. Should friends and family members decide to take advantage of this convenience option, there is a funding fee of \$4.95.

#### QUESTION 2: What other fees are charged per-call or per-month?

**RESPONSE:** Securus' proposal is designed to either mirror or lower the current fees charged to Dallas County constituents. We have waived the majority of fees associated with per-call or per-month charges. The only fee Securus may charge is a State Cost Recovery Fee of up to 5% of the cost of a call, for phone calls only. In our BAFO step 3 response, we made every effort to clearly disclose any fee that may be charged to a Dallas County constituent. No other fees are charged per call or per month. Securus has provided Dallas County with a transparent offer without the use of hidden fees.

QUESTION 3: Are commissions to be paid on any of these fees? If not, why not?

**RESPONSE:** These fees are meant to recover the cost of providing the services, such as the fees charged to Securus by credit card processors. Securus does not pay commissions on these fees. For all fees charged, end users have the option of an alternative plan for a similar service that would not carry a fee. For example, account set up can be accomplished via US Mail or online banking at no cost in place of the credit card option.



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QUESTION 4: Are any of these fees truly cost-recovery in nature or are they a revenue source for the video company? If fees are only for cost-recovery, please describe your efforts to control those costs and the resulting fees. If any of these charges are taxes to federal, state or local authorities, please describe how the amount is calculated and paid. If any of these charges are taxes, would you be willing to provide an annual statement showing the amount collected and paid out to each taxing authority.

**RESPONSE:** Securus makes every effort to control costs to constituents. Securus' State Cost Recovery Fee is meant to partially recover expenses incurred with regard to operating as a regulated entity within the state. Costs include, but are not limited to, such items as expenses associated with billing, collecting and remitting state USF as applicable, complying with mandatory state filings and reporting obligations, state regulatory fees, expenses for state regulatory proceedings and compliance, portions of local and state property taxes associated with intrastate calling and other non-income-tax related tax costs associated with intrastate calling and compensating other carriers for terminating calls within the state using their facilities.

The State Cost Recovery Fee is calculated at up to 5% of the cost of an intrastate call and remitted to authorities monthly, or as required by jurisdiction. The State Cost Recovery Fee does not apply to video visitation sessions. All of the fees for video visitation are included in the \$10 cost of the visitation, There are no other costs associated with our proposed video visitation solution.

Securus will make every effort to provide an annual statement showing the amount collected and paid out to each taxing authority.

QUESTION 5: When customers do not request refunds, how are unused customer funds handled? Are funds turned over to the state unclaimed funds program? And if no, are commissions to be paid on any unused customer funds retained by the vendor? Would you be will to provide monthly reports on the disposition of unclaimed funds?

**RESPONSE:** Securus complies with all applicable unclaimed property/dormant funds laws in the state of Texas.

Prepaid accounts that have a remaining credit balance will expire 180 days from the date of the last call placed using the account. Prior to expiration, full or partial refunds may be obtained. To obtain a refund on an unexpired account, end users may contact customer service by phone at 1 (800) 844-6591, by email at <u>customer service@securustech.net</u> or by chat at <u>www.securustech.net</u>. For all credit card transactions made by phone or Web-site, full and partial refund amounts will be applied to the payment source last used. For full refunds on accounts where the last payment was made via Western Union, those funds will be refunded to the customer through Western Union. For partial refunds on accounts that were paid via Western Union and for both full and partial refunds on payments mailed to our lockbox, a check will be mailed via regular U.S. Postal Service delivery.

Securus can handle all payments, relieving Dallas County from the cash handling business. As money is added to an Inmate Debit account, SCP recognizes the funding transaction and transfers the funds to Securus. Securus will then pay commission to Dallas County based on the monthly usage. Securus will send Dallas County a commission check each month that can be applied to the general fund or inmate welfare fund based on Dallas County's direction.

Securus does not have inmate-specific information, such as address, etc., when remitting inmate refunds. Therefore, we are unable to remit unclaimed funds to the state program. As such, when an inmate is released from the facility, the release information is transmitted to SCP. The Inmate Debit account is closed in SCP and the remaining unused balance is made available for refund to the inmate. Securus can remit the unused funds to Dallas County to be refunded to the inmate via the County's refund process. Or, to further relieve the County of cash-handling, Securus will make the refunds available to the inmates directly via Western Union's more than 470,000 worldwide retail locations.



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Unclaimed property is stored by consumer account and we are unable to tie the report out by facility for reporting purposes.

QUESTION 6: Do you accept payments via Western Union, MoneyGram or similar money transfer services? If so, please list the fees charged by those companies to send payments to your company.

**RESPONSE:** Yes, Securus accepts cash payments from traditional retail providers such as Western Union, MoneyGram, and other similar money transfer services. Western Union typically charges up to \$11.95 and MoneyGram up to \$9.95.

Securus has negotiated the Western Union and MoneyGram fees for Dallas County at \$5.95, and neither Securus nor the County will receive any commission on this fee.

# QUESTION 7: Please provide a statement as to whether or not you have attempted to encourage Western Union, MoneyGram and similar companies to lower their fees on payments sent to your company, and listing the results of that effort.

**RESPONSE:** Securus has and continues to negotiate and encourage Western Union and similar companies to reduce their fees on payments sent to Securus. We have been able to reduce fees for Dallas County from \$11.95 and \$9.95 down to \$5.95.

Securus will not receive any revenue from Western Union and MoneyGram for Dallas County.

QUESTION 8: What is your revenue sharing agreement with Western Union, MoneyGram or similar companies? Is this revenue subject to the commission?

**RESPONSE:** Securus negotiated a lower fee on behalf of Dallas County and does not have a revenue share agreement with these companies for Dallas County; therefore, these are non-commissionable.

QUESTION 9: Do you require any changes to our in-person visitation policies? If so, what changes do you require and why?

**RESPONSE:** Securus will work with Dallas County to determine what visitation policies would need to be adjusted in your operating environment. Any time you implement new technology such as video visitation, operational processes need to be adjusted to account for the change in environment. Securus will assist Dallas County to make changes in the current visitation policies to help migrate the current culture of waiting in line at the jail for visitation to visiting from home. Our Marketing and Account Management team will work closely with Dallas County to help educate the public in advance of turning up video visitation and throughout the adoption phase. Some examples of policies that are typically changed are the amount of hours onsite visitation is offered, methods for scheduling, marketing deployments and hours permitted for remote visitation. These changes help alter the existing behavior of having to wait in the crowded jail lobby to visit with an inmate.

The implementation of at home visitation assists us in recovering the costs associated with deploying video visitation initially and over the term of the agreement. The capital required upfront is significant and without a migration from current processes to remote visitation, the cost cannot be recouped nor can the cost of telecom be supported.

Video visitation policies are designed to help you automate and improve your existing visitation process. Through this, policies and processes change to gain the most efficiency from this technology. The adaptation



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to the change in processes works best when we work with both you and the community to implement these improvements so all are able to recognize the benefits.

The real benefit of video visitation is only seen by changing what is traditionally done with visitation to remove traffic from the facility lobby and provide greater convenience for the public, all at a cost that isn't much more than they pay for parking today. The personnel hours required to manage individuals coming to your facilities, inmate related movement to accommodate visits as well as the opportunity to introduce contraband are all removed when visitation takes place from home.

Further, at the cost proposed by Securus, most end users will save money over the costs associated with going to visit at the site. Between the cost of gas, parking and time missed from work, as well as removing children from waiting areas of jails, most will readily embrace the opportunity to visit from home.

QUESTION 10: How will you handle customer complaints? If you proposed rate structure includes a fixed price for a video call of a given length, how will you handle unintentional disconnection issues?

**RESPONSE:** Customer complaints for video visitation visits will follow the same process as we have followed with inmate calling for more than 25 years. Each incident will have a ticket number assigned and a full review of each issue will be included in the summary of the event. If there is an unintentional disconnection event, each event will be investigative on a case-by-case basis for a video refund or rescheduling as appropriate. Disconnections due to network failures can be immediately recognized and will be credited to the end user.

