

Connecting Families is a coalition of directly impacted families and advocates in New York fighting to end the predatory cost of prison and jail communication and ensure that incarcerated people and their loved ones can communicate routinely and without barriers to access.

Incarceration in New York's Prisons & Jails

40k

There are approximately 40,000 people incarcerated in New York prisons and 11,000 in local jails on any given day



Over 75% of people incarcerated in New York prisons are Black and Latinx, despite Black and Latinx people making up less than 37% of the state population



Half of all New Yorkers have had an immediate family member incarcerated



1 in 28 children has an incarcerated parent

Access to Prison & Jail Phone Communication

- Incarcerated people are given limited opportunities and very short windows to use phones and email kiosks, sometimes as little as once a week for 15 minutes
- Because there are not enough phones, they may have to wait in long lines, often outside in inclement weather and without social distancing options, and have their calls shortened to just 15 minutes to

Cost of Prison & Jail Communication

- Prison telecom corporations charge people incarcerated in New York state prisons and their families 65 cents for a 15-minute phone call
- The exploitation is even worse in New York's jails, where counties take an average 47 percent commission on calls, and a 15-minute call can cost as much as \$9.95
- A simple email message to or from someone in a state prison costs 23 to 30 cents

The Consequences for Families

- New York families face enormous stress wondering when their incarcerated loved ones will next be able to call and how they will pay for those calls
- More than half of families with an incarcerated loved one struggle to meet basic household needs (e.g. housing, food security), and 1 in 3 families goes into debt trying to stay connected
- Incarcerated people are forced to make impossible choices between using their limited out-of-cell time to attend programs, exercise, shower, or wait in line to call home
- 87% of the costs associated with staying in touch with incarcerated loved ones are borne by women, disproportionately Black and Latinx women

Connecting Families Legislation



Ensures that people incarcerated in New York prisons and jails have better access to phones and email kiosks to maintain communication with their loved ones



Makes communication free between people incarcerated in New York prisons and jails and their loved ones