



For Immediate Release
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New York City Department of Correction

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Martin F. Horn, Commissioner

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“Long Trips to Rikers Island No Longer Needed to Replenish Inmate Accounts”

Families and Friends Are Spared Long Trip to Rikers; Credit/Debit Card Bail Capability to Follow

Family members and friends of people held in New York City jails can now deposit money in inmate accounts without making the long trip to Rikers Island or to the city's other jails. As a result, it is easier and faster for inmates to replenish their jail spending accounts and even to “self-bail” themselves out of jail.

The New York City Department of Correction has engaged three companies that accept deposits online and from remote locations and make transfers to the accounts from which inmates pay for their commissary purchases, telephone calls and other expenses. Transfers can be made to accounts for inmates in all of the city's jails, including those on Rikers Island, the Manhattan Detention Center and the Vernon C. Bain Center in the Bronx. The city's jails receive about \$18 million in cash annually for deposit in inmate accounts.

Deposits can be made with cash, money order or credit/debit cards, by telephone, over the Internet or at kiosks located at storefront locations and at Department of Correction jails. The three companies thus far enrolled as DOC transfer agents—J-Pay, Western Union and ICSolutions-- guarantee the transfers, usually make the transfers in a matter of hours, and charge a fee to be paid by the person making the deposit. The fees vary according to the amount of money transferred and the vehicle for the transaction, i.e., telephone, kiosk, Internet or walk-in.

All three current vendors—J-Pay, Western Union and ICSolutions-- will accept deposits and make transfers online by credit or debit card, by phone with credit or debit card, at walk-in locations by credit or debit card or cash, and at the jail Cashier office kiosks with cash, credit or debit cards, depending on the chosen vendor.

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The Department of Correction accepts NO commission and plans to work with as many vendors as possible so that competition will keep the fees as low as possible.

For safety and security reasons, inmates in city jails are not permitted to possess cash and visitors are not allowed to give money directly to them. Until now, family or friends had to go to Rikers Island or one of the city's other jails in Manhattan or the Bronx to deposit monies to inmates' accounts. The new system allows them to avoid the inconvenience and cost of travel to get to the jails.

" Remote money transfers are making it faster, much more easy and even cheaper for families and friends to make deposits in inmate accounts, particularly when they otherwise face a long trip to Rikers Island," Commissioner of Correction Martin F. Horn said. "No longer will it be necessary for parents and family members to take a half day or more from work for a drive or public transit trip to Rikers. And the new system is one more way we are making the operation of our jails more efficient despite their remote location on Rikers Island. With a sufficient account balance, inmates can use monies deposited to their commissary accounts to pay their own bail." In the longer term, Commissioner Horn said, the Department's goal is to allow family and friends to post bail directly via credit or debit cards. The Department expects to add that capability by mid-2008.

Commissioner Horn noted that cash deposits to inmate accounts will still be accepted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on-site at the city's jails, either with the cashier window or through electronic kiosks in the jail visit areas.

Those wishing to use the vendor services to make an inmate account deposit can reach J-Pay via 800-574-JPAY and www.jpays.com; Western Union via 800-634-3422 and www.westernunion.com and ICSolutions toll free via 888-888-8413 and www.icsdeposits.com. Depositors who use the Department's on-line Inmate Lookup System on its website—www.nyc.gov/boldest—to locate an inmate can also contact the vendors by then clicking on the "Send Money" icon. Contact information for new vendors will be added to the Department of Correction website as their services are introduced.