

OpenConnect

An Open-Source, Profit-Free Communication Platform for Correctional Facilities

OpenConnect is a free, open-source communication platform designed to provide cost-free voice, video, and messaging services for correctional facilities. By eliminating financial barriers, OpenConnect strengthens family connections, supports rehabilitation, improves reentry, reduces recidivism, and increases public safety, while offering corrections agencies a scalable, agency-controlled alternative to traditional prison telecom providers.

Problem

Incarcerated individuals and their loved ones often face prohibitive costs for basic communication services thanks to the predatory prison telecom industry. In fact, a 2015 study revealed that 1 in 3 families with an incarcerated family member went into debt over the cost of staying connected. Many are left making impossible decisions between paying for basic needs, like groceries, utilities, and even rent, and speaking to their incarcerated loved one.

And this has serious consequences for the public. Studies have routinely shown that when incarcerated people are in regular contact with their support system, they are more hopeful, more engaged in rehabilitative programming, less likely to have disciplinary infractions, more likely to have housing and employment upon release, and less likely to recidivate. In other words, we all win when incarcerated people can freely pick up the phone or send a message.

However, correctional agencies, impacted people, and families are reliant on these predatory providers for communication services. What if we were no longer dependent on regulation or legislation to keep these providers in check? What if we simply didn't need them anymore because there was another solution?

Solution

OpenConnect is an open-source, customizable communications platform designed to allow corrections agencies to run their own communication services independently and without charging incarcerated populations and their loved ones.

Key Differentiators

- **Completely Free for Users:** OpenConnect's open-source license prohibits any entity using the platform code from charging incarcerated people and their loved ones for any service. No per-minute charges, no paid subscriptions, no hidden fees.
- **Open-Source and Agency-Run:** Corrections agencies can host, customize, and run OpenConnect independently, without a traditional prison telecom provider.

- Supports Voice, Video, and Messaging: OpenConnect includes a full communication suite, unlike other new free or low-cost solutions that are limited.
- Secure and Compliant: OpenConnect includes base level security features that the FCC has determined necessary to correctional communication services and supports other security features corrections agencies otherwise contract, like call recording.
- Cloud Provider Agnostic: Corrections agencies can host OpenConnect on any cloud provider or private infrastructure for full control over communication services.
- Low-cost Implementation of Free Communication: As states move toward providing free prison and jail calls, OpenConnect provides a very low-cost solution for states.

Team

OpenConnect is being developed by Nucleos in a limited collaboration with Worth Rises. At a high level, Nucleos is developing the platform while Worth Rises is providing mission-driven guidance and developing the open-source license.

[Nucleos](#) is a public benefit corporation that unlocks human potential through its AchieveDXP platform, connecting fragmented learning systems into unified, data-driven educational experiences. As an existing correctional partner, Nucleos is uniquely positioned to develop and implement OpenConnect in a scalable and sustainable manner. Notably, several developers on the Nucleos team involved in the project are formerly incarcerated.

[Worth Rises](#) is a national advocacy organization working to dismantle the prison industry and end the exploitation of those it touches. Worth Rises is best known for its groundbreaking campaigns to make correctional communication free, which have generated two billion new call minutes for incarcerated people and their loved ones and saved families over \$500 million to date.