

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DIVISION OF PURCHASE AND PROPERTY
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
INMATE CHECKING ACCOUNTS**

PURPOSE

The New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Division of Purchase and Property (Division), on behalf of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC), has issued this Request for Information (RFI) to identify options available to the State in connection with the requirement of the DOC to assist inmates nearing release in establishing consumer checking accounts.

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit potential options, approaches, and strategies from vendors and other interested, relevant parties, for the establishment of individual checking accounts for inmates of State Correctional facilities as they approach release from confinement. The State also welcomes information from interested parties that identify qualified vendors who can provide the services described herein.

Please note that this is an RFI, not a Request for Proposal. As such, responses to this RFI shall not lead to a contractual relationship between respondents and the State. It is anticipated that information received in response to this RFI may be used to develop a future procurement for these services. While it is anticipated that many of the respondents to this RFI will be vendors, the State solicits information from any interested, relevant party on the topic.

BACKGROUND

Currently, an account is maintained internally by DOC for the personal funds of each inmate confined to a State correctional facility. Confined inmates may utilize funds during incarceration but do not have direct access to cash, checks or other negotiable instruments for these assets. At the time of an inmate's release from confinement, the balance of personal funds is provided to the inmate in the form of cash, or a combination of cash and a check drawn upon a State account.

Under N.J.S.A. 30:4-91.16, at least 30 days prior to an inmate's release from confinement, DOC is required to assist the inmate in establishing a consumer checking account pursuant to the provisions of P.L. 1991, c.210 (*C.17:16N-1 et seq.*). A basic debit card may be issued to the inmate by the bank. Establishment of such an account is to be at the discretion of the inmate; inmates are not required to establish consumer checking accounts. Accounts must be established in a manner that is consistent with State and federal laws and regulations.

Upon an inmate's release from confinement, the balance remaining in the inmate account maintained internally by the correctional facility shall be transferred into the inmate's consumer checking account, if the inmate has established such an account.

Upon the inmate's release from confinement, the consumer checking account shall be under the direction and control of the inmate; the State shall have no responsibility for the account, the balance, or any activities or transactions related to the account.

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The following information is provided to inform potential respondents of opportunities, limitations and details that may impact the provision of services:

- DOC operates 13 major correctional facilities, located geographically throughout the state. Facility locations, overviews and populations may be reviewed at: <http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/index.shtml>
- Approximately 14,000 inmates are released from confinement in DOC facilities each year.
- Approximately 6,000 of the released inmates are released to Halfway Houses, where bank accounts are the responsibility of the Halfway House, and are not part of this program.
- Approximately 8,000 released inmates may therefore, at their discretion, be interested in having the DOC assist in establishing a consumer checking account/debit card.
- Approximately 2,000 – 3,000 of the inmates released “max out”, with no parole supervision and no requirement to remain within the State.
- During the period when the account is to be established, which is 30 days or more prior to release, inmates subject to this program will be confined at the correctional facility.
- Upon release, parolees are expected to reside at the address registered with the Parole Bureau in release documentation.

Respondents should also be aware of the following:

- At the time of account establishment (30 days prior to release from confinement) the inmate will not be available to personally visit the bank.
- At the time of account establishment, the address of the inmate will be the facility at which the inmate is confined. Upon release, parolees will have a registered address; inmates that serve complete sentences are not required to register addresses.
- Upon release, the inmate may (or may not) be in possession of the following:
 - An original Social Security Card
 - An original birth certificate
 - An original Non-Driver Identification Card issued by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle CommissionThese documents may be available for review by the bank prior to the inmate’s release.
- Upon release, the inmate will be provided with a DOC Temporary Offender Release ID, with picture. This document may be available for bank review prior to the inmate’s release.
- The location of the facility from which the inmate is released may not be in geographic proximity to the inmate’s address after release.
- DOC shall not be responsible for the account and makes no promise or guarantee as to the amount of funds that will remain in the account or of the duration for which a balance will remain in the account.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Consistent with N.J.S.A. 30:4-91.16, DOC shall assist inmates in establishing consumer checking accounts for personal use. Consumer checking accounts are to be established pursuant to the provisions of P.L. 1991, c.210 (C.17:16N-1 et seq.)

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The State welcomes information from vendors and other interested, relevant parties on the areas listed below. As envisioned by the State, the comprehensive program shall include, but not be limited to, the five (5) following minimum requirements:

1. The bank or financial institution shall provide information regarding locations, requirements and account offerings to DOC, and update as appropriate. The charges to the account holder for maintaining an account must be clearly specified.
2. The bank or financial institution must provide applications, forms and documentation necessary to apply for an account.
3. The bank or financial institution shall process the inmate's application and, subject to approval, establish an account.
4. The bank or financial institution shall issue appropriate financial instruments; i.e., checks, debit cards, etc., in the name of the inmate.
5. When an application is accepted and an account established, the bank or financial institution shall forward account documentation to DOC on behalf of the inmate. When an application is rejected, the bank or financial institution must forward a written denial and reason(s) for rejection to DOC on behalf of the inmate.

In addition to the five (5) items above, respondents are requested to describe other program elements which might apply to and/or enhance the provision of consumer checking account services to inmates.

RFI RESPONSES

Respondents to this RFI are requested to supply the following information:

1. Introduction to the respondent's organization, and if the respondent is a vendor, information such as parent company, history of experience, size, number of customers, offices, number of employees, etc.). Please include ownership structure.
2. Contact name(s) and information for questions the State may have concerning this information and, if respondent is a vendor, the products and services offered.
3. List of relevant web sites for the respondent and its offerings, including, if respondent is a vendor, URL references for similar projects the company has successfully completed and a list of government entities for which the vendor completed such projects.

The State is only accepting electronic responses to this RFI. Please email responses to kelly.kerns@doc.state.nj.us. Responses to this RFI are requested by **Friday, March 11, 2011**. All responses shall be acknowledged electronically by return e-mail.

All information submitted by respondents to this RFI shall be considered public information. At this time, the State does not intend to publish any input received in response to this RFI.