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State of New York
Department of Correctional Services



Brian Fischer
Commissioner

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Family Guide for Families of the Incarcerated Now Easily Accessible on State Web Site

The New York State Department of Correctional Services' Family Guide, which includes detailed information to help relatives and friends of the incarcerated maintain contact with their loved ones, is now available on the Department's internet web site.

The guide can be found at www.docs.state.ny.us by clicking on the new "Family Guide" tab on the left-hand column.

The English-language version of the guide is available, and a Spanish-language version is scheduled to be posted on the web site shortly.

The guide includes invaluable information to help family members and others navigate the rules for visiting, understanding the phone-home call system, and sending mail, packages and other items to inmates during their incarceration. The guide also provides information for locating inmates and outlines programs and services for those incarcerated.

About 60 percent of all inmates have children.

Department of Correctional Services Commissioner Brian Fischer said: "Family support is critical to helping inmates return to the community as productive, responsible, law-abiding citizens. Making the Family Guide easily available on the internet to inmates' families and friends as they negotiate the sometimes complicated rules regarding visiting and maintaining contact should go a long way toward achieving that goal."

Alison Coleman, director of Prison Families of New York Inc., said: "We applaud the NYS DOCS' creation of this new resource and for making it widely available to prison families and their advocates. We look forward to continued collaboration in making the prison system more easily negotiable for families and children."

Annette Warren Dickerson, education and outreach director for the Center for Constitutional Rights, said: "Having worked with families over the past three years who find it difficult to maintain contact with their loved ones in prison, the Center for Constitutional Rights is pleased to see the Department of Correctional Services take such a strong and positive step to educate and include families impacted by the state's correctional system."

Prison Families of New York Inc. is a statewide network of families and friends of New York State inmates, formerly incarcerated people and their families, people of conscience who desire to improve the quality of life for prison families, educators who want to work more effectively with children of prisoners, and agencies and communities of faith that want to become involved in progressive criminal justice change.

PFNY, which provides invaluable data to many state and county agencies, has also posted the Family Guide, in PDF form, on its own web site, www.prisonfamiliesofnewyork.org

The Center for Constitutional Rights, a non-profit legal and educational organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, works to mobilize and support families to improve the prison telephone system in New York State.

CCR uses litigation proactively to empower poor communities and communities of color, to guarantee the rights of those with the fewest protections and least access to legal resources, to train the next generation of constitutional and human rights attorneys, and to strengthen the broader movement for constitutional and human rights.

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