

Extended Family Visits

Maintaining Strong Family Ties For Inmates



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

755

Number of inmates who received at least one extended family visit in 2015

—

2,835

Total number of visit days in 2015 in which inmates received one or more visitors

—

4,376

Total number of daily visitors admitted during 2015

FAST FACTS

- The majority of visitors who qualify for extended family visits are parents of children, not spouses.
- Washington is one of only four states in the nation that allows extended family visits.
- Inmates may not have an extended family visit more frequently than once every 30 days.

About

The Department of Corrections (DOC) recognizes the importance of maintaining strong family ties and provides opportunities for Extended Family Visits.

An Extended Family Visit is a visit between inmates and his or her immediate family member(s) that occurs in a private housing unit. The visits may last for up to 48 hours.

Eligibility Requirements

The DOC has a thoroughly screens inmates and family members in order to maintain a safe environment for extended family visits. A complete list of eligibility requirements is outlined in [DOC Policy 590.100 Extended Family Visiting](#), and must be met prior to an inmate's approval for an extended family visit.

Examples of Eligibility Requirements for Inmates

- Staff considers factors such as custody level, program participation and infraction history when determining whether an inmate is eligible for an extended family visit.
- All visits must have prior approval by the facility superintendent.
- Any violation of visiting rules by an offender or family member may result in termination of the visit.

Examples of Eligibility Requirements for Family Members

The DOC also has a set of requirements for family members specifying who may participate in extended family visits. Examples include:

- Visitors must be immediate family members and be able to show legal verification of the relationship and be on the inmate's approved visitor list.
- Victims of the inmate's current crime of conviction are not eligible visitors. Visitors who share certain characteristics of the inmate's crime may not be eligible. For example, if the victim was a known minor, then an inmate's minor child may not be eligible.

What the Research Says

A 2011 [study](#) by the Minnesota Department of Corrections found regular visits from family members **reduced recidivism** rates by **13%**.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for extended family visits?

The DOC carefully reviews all inmates for the program and considers their crime, recent behavior and their participation in various programs, among other factors.

How long has the DOC allowed extended family visits?

The DOC has had extended family visits since the early 1980s.

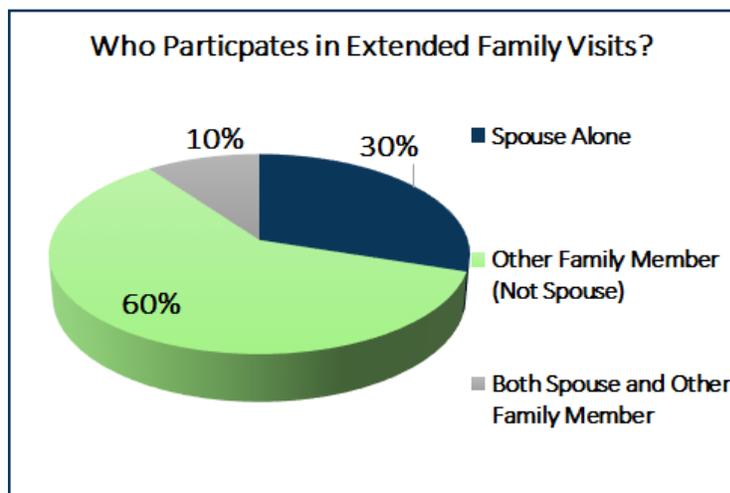
Why is Washington one of only four states in the nation that allows extended family visits?

The DOC has made extended family visits part of the strategy to increase staff and public safety.

Research shows inmates who have visitors are less likely to commit a serious infraction and are more likely to have family support once they complete their prison sentence. An inmate who is isolated and abandoned is more dangerous than one who is not.

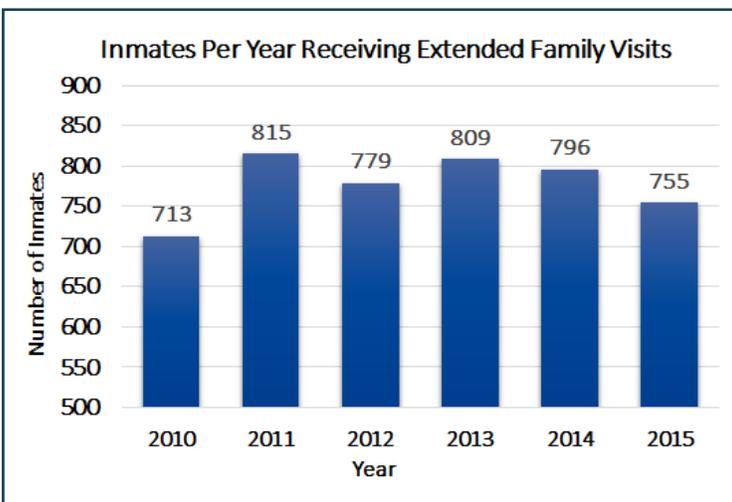
Are taxpayer dollars used to pay for extended family visits?

No. The Offender Betterment fund, which is money collected from inmates when they make phone calls or purchase certain commissary items, pays for the program. Visiting families also pay a small fee of \$10 per night.

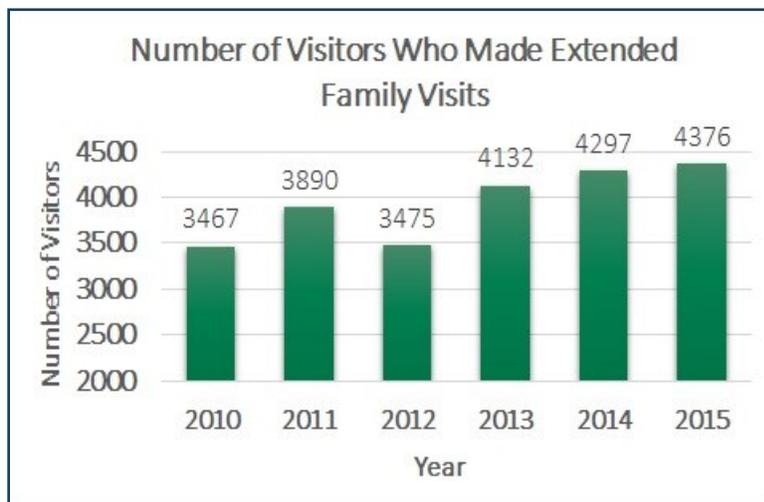


DOC Policy 590.100 on Extended Family Visits

"The department recognizes the positive impact contact between offenders and their families can have on re-entry. The department may provide an Extended Family Visit Program for eligible inmates to support building sustainable relationships important to offender re-entry and provide an incentive for those serving long-term sentences to engage in positive behavioral choices, therefore reducing violent infractions."



The number of inmates receiving at least one visit is a measure of offender participation in the extended family visit program.



Total number of visitors is a sum of daily visitors admitted during a year. In a sense, it measures the workload of prison visitation programs' service level provided.

— For More Information —

Liz Hainline | Corrections Specialist
Prisons Division, Washington State Department of Corrections
(360) 725-8803 | elizabeth.hainline@doc.wa.gov