STAR application: DMV Connect, a program of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

Also included in this folder: DMV Connect video (on disc), DMV Connect brochure

Overview

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) portable ID processing program known as DMV Connect has been producing Virginia ID cards at Virginia correctional facilities since May 2012. The program has since expanded to include sheriff's offices, regional jails, federal correctional facilities, assisted living facilities and homeless shelters.

The DMV Connect program was developed in response to then-Governor Bob McDonnell's prisoner re-entry policy priority aimed at reducing the recidivism rate at Virginia's correctional institutions. DMV instituted the program in partnership with the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC).

DMV Connect was created to fill an important need for inmates nearing release: obtaining proper identification. A valid ID is a necessity in securing housing, employment, bank accounts and applying for benefits and services. DMV and DOC recognized that inmates would be well served to walk out of a correctional facility with Virginia IDs in hand rather than leaving it to chance on the outside. To ensure offenders exit correctional facilities with an ID card, DMV Connect teams go inside to provide services to inmates preparing for release.

As the program has matured, DMV Connect teams have begun providing the same service to other populations who are unable to visit a DMV office to get Virginia IDs. DMV Connect is now partnering with public and private assisted living facilities serving the elderly and disabled. In a recent visit to a state-run assisted living center for the intellectually disabled, the team processed IDs over a three-day period for 107 residents who needed to be relocated to private facilities because of the scheduled closure of the facility. DMV Connect has also provided assistance at a homeless shelter.

DMV Connect is a unique approach to the complex issue of inmate recidivism, addressing an immediate need in an efficient, common-sense way.

Activities & operations

Before a DMV Connect team goes to a correctional facility to process IDs, staff at the facility gathers necessary proof documents, such as birth certificates and correctional records, for each inmate. On the day of the visit, the team, usually consisting of two people, brings a portable case containing a camera, laptop, signature pad and a photo backdrop. The team takes pictures and collects all information and documentation necessary to produce Virginia IDs. They also bring driver compliance summaries, which tell each offender the steps that need to be taken to obtain a driver's license upon release. The IDs are mailed together to the facility within a few days and are placed in the offenders' files for them to receive upon leaving the facility.

The key piece of technology used by DMV Connect is a special portable case developed by CBN Secure Technologies, Inc., DMV's credential manufacturing partner. The compact case contains a camera, laptop, and signature pad, all of which fits into a wheeled compartment similar in size to a rolling suitcase. DMV Connect currently has two of these cases. Team members are able to securely link to DMV's system through a virtual private network (VPN) and process real-time transactions. Proof documents are transmitted from the facility to DMV via MoveIT, and can easily be accessed using a document scanning and storage system called OnBase. The laptops used in the portable cases run DMV's customer service

interface and a program called SIMS to capture photos and signatures. DMV Connect teams travel in one of two dedicated state vehicles and carry one state-issued cell phone.

Costs, benefits, and transferability

The DMV Connect Program is funded through the Motor Vehicle Special Fund, which derives its revenues from fees and taxes as specified in the Motor Vehicle *Code of Virginia*. The annual operating cost is $187,000.

Through DMV Connect, DMV has issued more than 4,500 Virginia state identification cards at DOC facilities, sheriff's offices, regional jails, and federal correctional facilities. Since expanding into assisted living facilities in March 2014, teams have processed approximately 200 IDs for the elderly and disabled.

The numbers show that DMV Connect has been very successful in addressing the immediate need for which it was created: connecting criminal offenders and vulnerable populations with needed Virginia IDs. The people served by the program face significant and often insurmountable obstacles to obtaining this service on their own. Once in possession of an ID, these individuals are better prepared to re-enter society and obtain important benefits and services.

The impact on recidivism rates is not immediately clear, but the work of DMV Connect and the volume of individuals served are positive indicators. DMV and DOC plan to partner on a study in the near future to assess the program's impact on recidivism rates in light of the wider array of state efforts addressing the issue.

DMV Connect originated and was implemented in Virginia by DMV and DOC. The Connect implementation team consisted of numerous individuals from both agencies. DMV's program manager for the project is Jonathan Butner. His contact information is:
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To DMV's knowledge, there are no programs in any other state that do what DMV Connect does. New York has a program that uses portable ID processing equipment, but we believe it is used only in public government buildings.

The DMV Connect model is one that could work in any other setting where there is cooperation between state agencies, social workers, and caretakers. The most significant challenge is the collection and transmission of acceptable proof documents, especially in cases where an individual's records are missing or incomplete. There are significant IT requirements to run the program, but at least in the case of Virginia DMV, talented IT professionals are available to make it work. Cost is always a concern in state government, but the benefits of DMV Connect more than justify its modest price tag.