

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Discharge Gratuities

Policy Number: 201.03

Effective Date: 5/31/2023

Page Number: 1 of 4

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

- A. Under the laws of Georgia, the Department of Corrections (GDC) is required to provide certain gratuities to eligible offenders at release.
- B. The department will provide gratuities to eligible offenders at release as required by statute. This policy is applicable to all private, state, county prisons, and transitional centers.

II. Authority:

- A. O.C.G.A. §42-5-61.
- B. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R.: 125-2-4-.19.
- C. GDC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 406.19, Offender Financial Transactions and Business Activities; and
- D. ACA Standards: 5-ACI-1B-07.

III. Definitions: None.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

- A. Gratuity payments are made to State offenders who are lawfully released from any facility under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Department of Corrections. Offenders released from county jails may also receive gratuity payments, if, through normal procedures, they would have become State offenders in GDC custody. Payments are set by statute and may be periodically amended. These payments are made upon discharge or completion of sentence or by clemency action by the State Board of Pardons and Paroles.
- B. Gratuity is not paid:
 - 1. To an offender who has participated in a work release program unless it is determined that he/she has extraordinary financial needs as established to the

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satisfaction of the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Corrections.

2. To a felony offender who is released to a Sheriff or a United States Marshall on a detainer to serve a sentence already imposed or to stand trial on pending charges or who is released to county authorities on a detainer to serve a county sentence unless the offender qualifies for such payment under Georgia law.
- C. Offenders released from custody may request gratuity in the form of a JPay release card or check. Offenders will receive the funds in their trust accounts along with the discharge gratuity as a single payment, JPay release cards are limited to a five hundred dollar (\$500.00) maximum amount. If the amount of the discharge gratuity plus the trust account balance is over five hundred dollars (\$500.00), the offender will receive a check for the balance.
1. Gratuity and trust account checks are produced by the Consolidated Banking Unit (CBU) per SOP 406.19. These checks, produced on an as needed basis, are mailed directly to the offender using the address provided by the facility at the time of release. (Per Attachment 6 of SOP 406.19.) Should a release be cancelled after gratuity is issued, the check will be voided, and the funds returned to the offender's Inmate Trust Account.
 2. JPay Release Card: Offenders released from custody may request a pre-loaded JPay release card for the balance remaining on his or her Inmate Trust Account, after all obligations are satisfied, subject to the following procedures:
 - a. At least 48 (forty-eight) hours prior to release, the facility shall send CBU an accurate and complete Attachment 5, JPay release card Request Form (SOP 406.19), by email or fax. If an offender has a balance over five hundred dollars (\$500.00), the facility must include the offender's address on the JPay release cards Request Form. CBU will then pay any remaining obligations, add gratuity pursuant to this SOP, close the offender's account, and load the remaining funds on the JPay release card by the RPID# listed on the Release Card Request Form.

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- b. After CBU loads the funds, the facility will issue the JPay release cards and prepare JPay release cards Receipt Confirmation Forms, Attachment 6 (SOP 406.19), for pick-up by the ID Officer. The ID Officer will pick up JPay release cards and Receipt Confirmation Forms for offenders who are releasing each day. As part of the release procedure, the ID Officer will give each offender their JPay release card and have the offender sign the Receipt Confirmation Form, Attachment 6, which must be returned to the facility's business office. A copy of Attachment 6 will be forwarded to CBU by email or fax for the purpose of providing the correct release address information for any funds over the maximum amount loaded on a JPay release card and/or any funds that are deposited after the offender is released.
- c. Because JPay release cards are not issued to offenders in county facilities, CBU will issue a check for offenders transferred to county facilities.
- d. If funds are added to an offender's account after the offender is released from a GDC facility, CBU will send the funds by check to the offender's address on file or load the funds on a JPay release card that is still in the offender's possession.
- e. Offenders released to the Department of Homeland Security on ICE detainers will not have access to use a JPay release card. Therefore, facilities must notify CBU seven (7) days prior to an ICE release to ensure a check is mailed to the releasing facility before the release date.

Note: A stop payment will not be issued on a check until it has been outstanding for 30 days.

- E. The releasing facility is responsible for providing the remainder of release gratuities, i.e., transportation and clothing.

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1. These costs are documented in a Field Purchase Order and are submitted to the Facilities Division Business office along with copies of invoices and receiving reports.
2. The Business Office manager approves and signs the Field Purchase Order, maintains a file copy, posts data in ledgers (BOLTS) and forwards package to the Accounting Section for payment.

V. Attachments: None.

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy: None.