

COVID-19 and Drug Courts

Using Technology to Operate Remotely



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Who am I?

- Chronic problem solver with background in software engineering and cybersecurity.
- 11 years experience in building technology to address problems in criminal justice.
- Ran a division at the largest fully-remote company in the world, Automattic.



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Our goal is to fight recidivism by using software, hardware and data to improve outcomes in partnership with supervision agencies.

What is Reconnect?

- Public Benefit Company, founded in 2009
- Tools to connect case managers with their clients.
- Used by 250+ jurisdictions in 35 states.
- Employees in 10 states and three countries.





On to the topic at hand...

The world has changed.

We also have an opportunity.

“This disaster, this pandemic is going to change the way the courts do business from now on. **We're going to have to completely rethink how much has to be done in person, how much can be done using technology—that whole issue that we've just never paid much attention to, is going to be front and center going forward.** Our operations will never be the same.”

Nathan Hecht

Texas Supreme Court Justice

As [quoted on ABC News](#)

Specialty courts have been wasting...

TIME

Officer time, participant time, and admin time: traveling for curfew verifications and unneeded office visits, filing and processing regular self reports, extra office visits, scheduling drug testing, etc.

MONEY

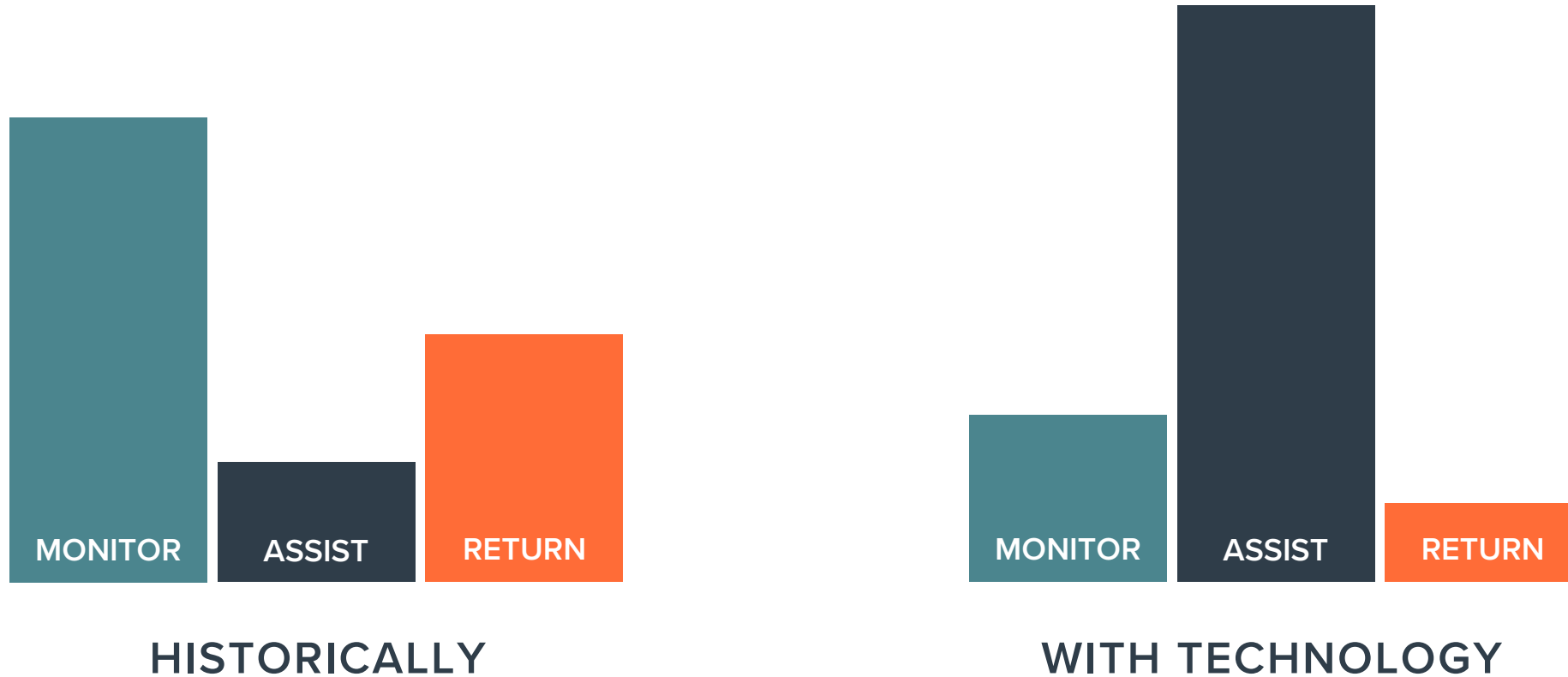
Legacy electronic monitoring systems are expensive, difficult to use, and stigmatizing.

OCASE MANAGER RTUNITY

Because of the inefficiencies in time and money, most community corrections program miss out on the opportunity to operate a well-structured program with data-driven, positive outcomes.

We firmly believe that the role of community corrections is to improve public safety and reduce recidivism, not to be punitive and burdensome.

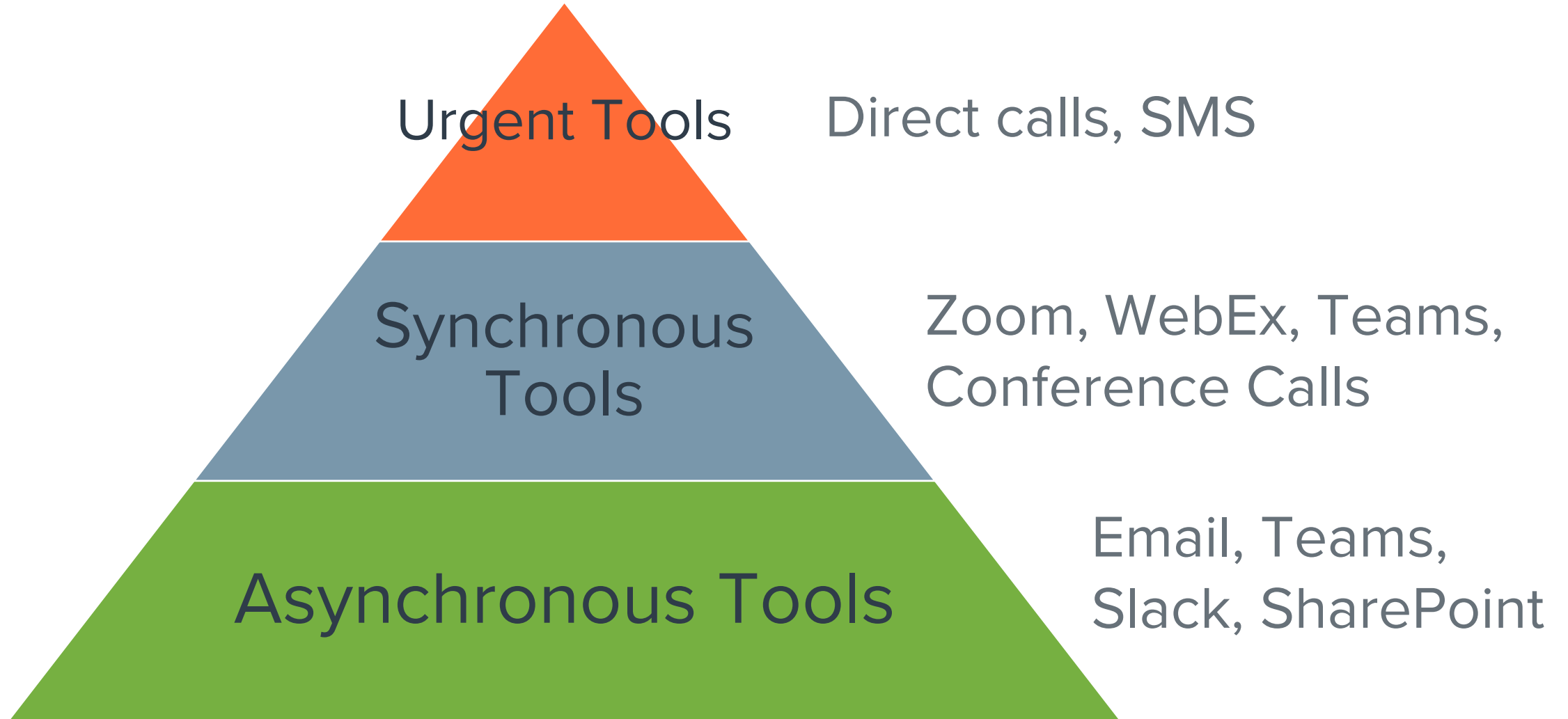
Time Usage





How do you run a remote team?

You need a toolbox.



Asynchronous Communication Examples

A Bad Message

“Hey Bob, do you have a minute?”

(Then waiting for Bob’s response)

A Good Message

“Hey Bob, when you have a minute, can you let me know if you’ve had any contact on case 19CR1023 that isn’t in the system yet? I’m working up a recommendation for the judge.”

Default to transparency and searchability

- Email isn't preferable, because it's a closed loop
- Make a plan as a team
- Document all synchronous communication in a searchable way
- There's a high likelihood that a significant percentage of your staff will be out sick over the coming weeks
- Using tools like SharePoint + Teams can make it much easier for staff to cover for one another and understand the status of things
- Overcommunicate: when there's an urgent situation, communicate status back to the team with high frequency

Use Video Calls over Phone Calls

- Implement a “cameras on” policy
- Increases engagement and attention
- Allows staff to share their screens to help one another
- Allows staff to maintain relationships and a connection at a time when we’re isolated

Vendor Selection

- Make sure you're working with vendors who understand the security and privacy needs of government.
- Consider the “lowest common denominator” when selecting a vendor, this will typically mean:
 - HIPAA Compliance
 - FISMA Compliance
 - FedRAMP Compliance
- Different plan tiers often support different levels of security.



How do you run remote supervision?

We'll cover these core areas:

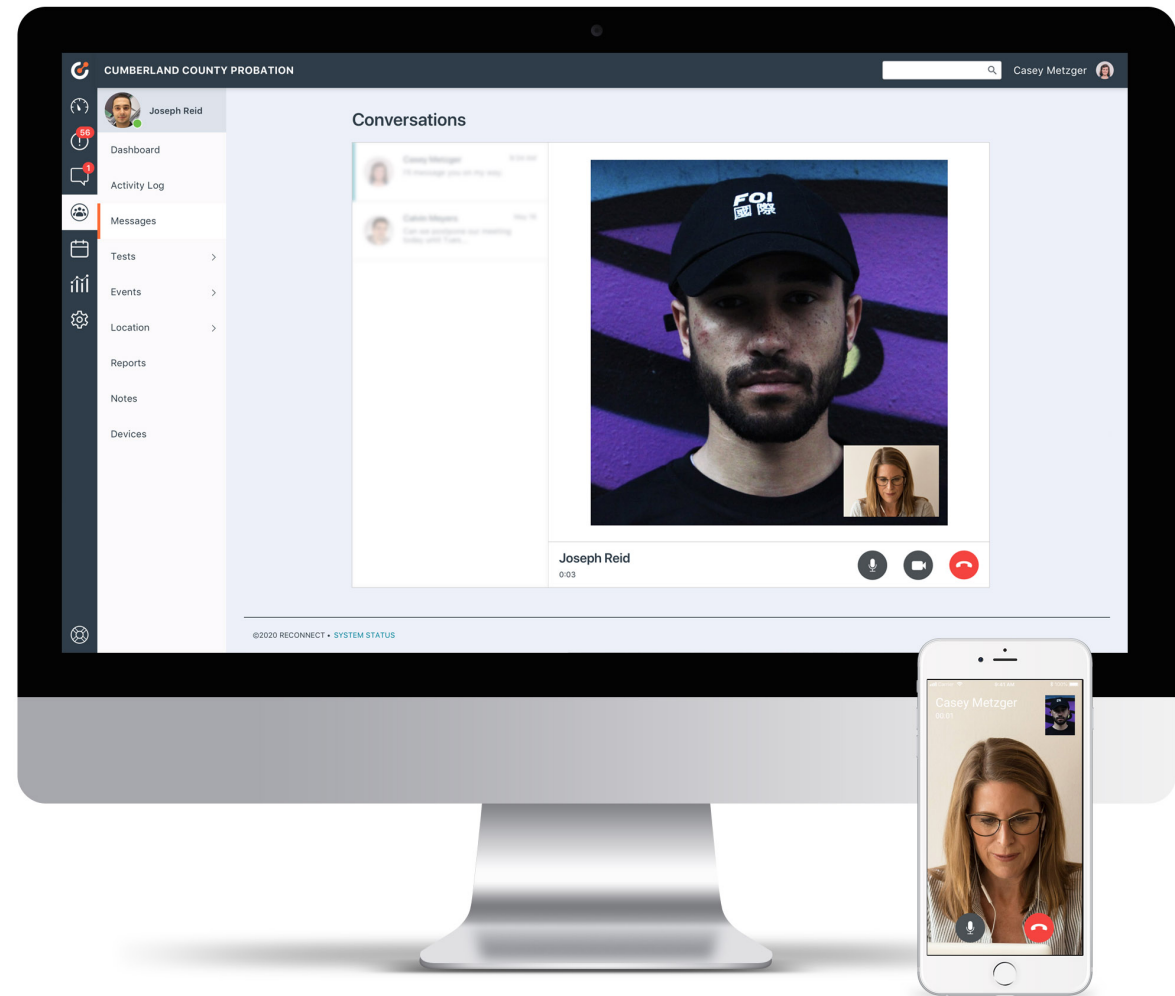
- Regular Meetings
- Home Visits and Wellness Checks
- Curfew and Location Compliance Checks
- Location Tracking
- Self-reporting
- Communication
- Payments

Regular Meetings

- Develop a rapport between Case Manager and Client
- Allow the Case Manager to satisfy statutory monitoring requirements
- Reminds the Client of their conditions of supervision
- Keeps the Case Manager up-to-date on the Client's situation

Secure Video Calls

- Satisfy these requirements
- Eliminates travel time, works within both party's schedules
- Prevents physical contact



Home Visits and Wellness Checks

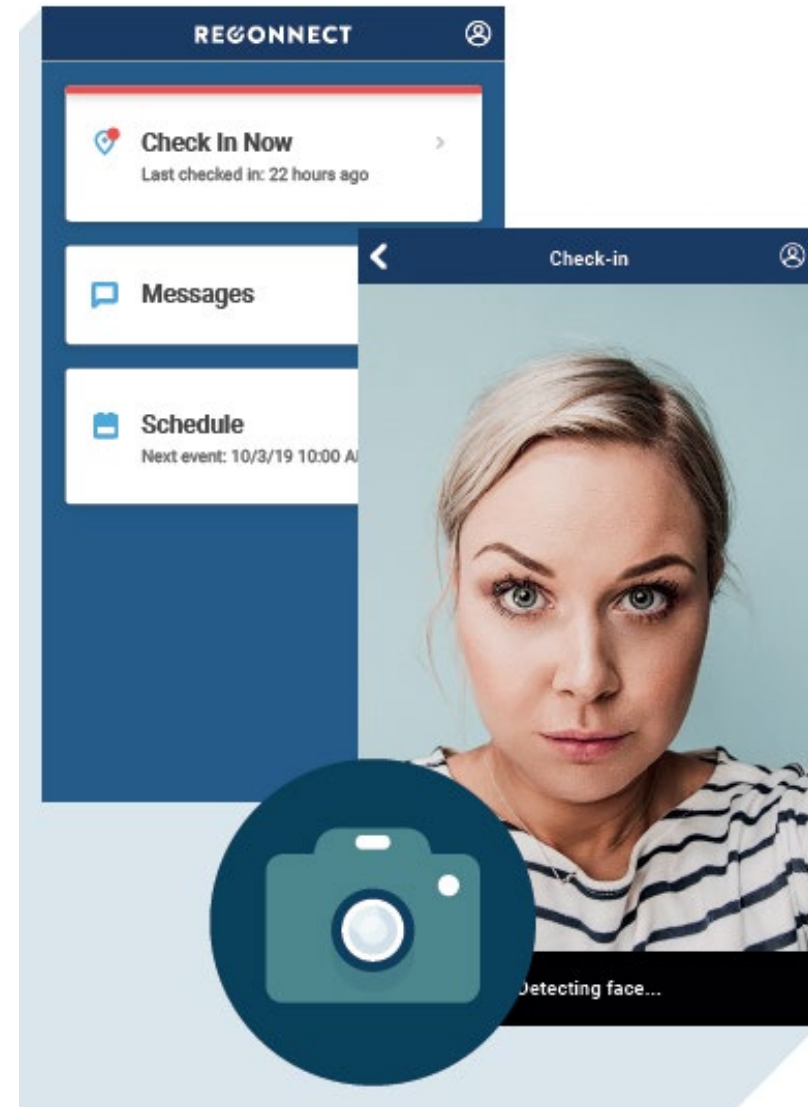
- Allow Case Manager to ensure that the client has a safe home environment
- Allows the Case Manager to ensure that the client is following their conditions, ie: no drugs/alcohol.
- Can also be completed via video calls, using a purpose-built accountability platform.
- Especially crucial now, as we're all in an environment that stresses our mental health.

Curfew and Location Compliance Checks

- Make sure that clients are home during the evening hours (as dictated by their conditions)
- Ensure that clients are attending work and/or treatment as ordered
- Requires significant time to verify manually

GPS-enabled Check-ins

- Allow location checks to be completed automatically
- Can be scheduled or random
- An alarm sounds on the client's phone, and they have a set period to submit a selfie which is stamped with their GPS location and biometrically verified



Location Tracking

- Traditionally completed via ankle monitor
- Expensive
- Cumbersome
- Requires contact to install



Mobile Location Tracking

- Can be completed using just the client's phone
- Multiple biometric check-ins throughout the day verify that the phone is with the client at all times
- Significantly less expensive than physical monitors
- No contact required

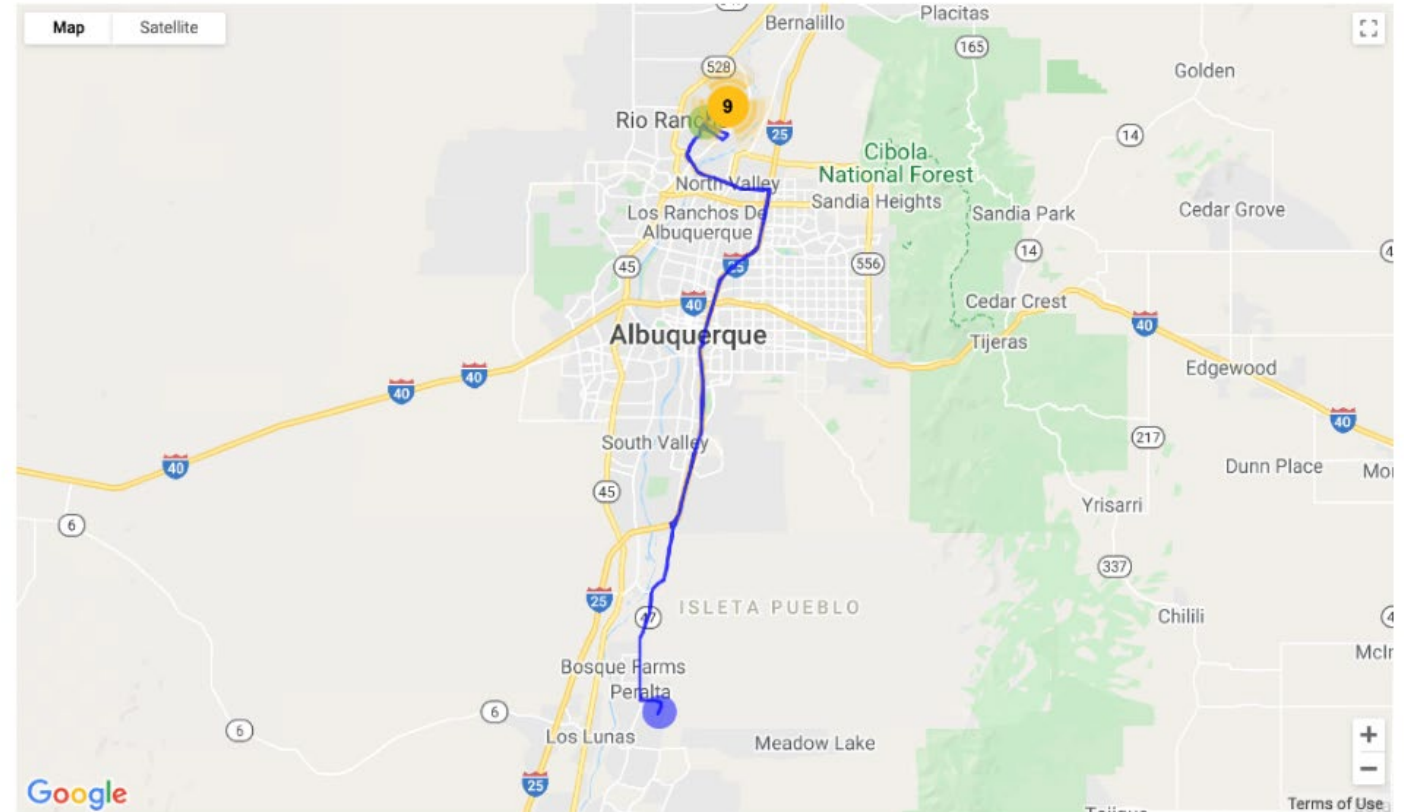
Location History

March 15 – 21, 2020

Late Ping: March 23, 2020 at 12:48 PM

DATE RANGE

March 15 – March 21



Self-reporting

- Standard forms/questionnaires:
 - Have you had contact with law enforcement?
 - Are you still working the same job?
 - Are you still at the same address?
- Typically collected on paper at regular appointments
- Lots of manual work involved

Mobile Self-Report

- Can be completed remotely
- All data is immediately available in a standardized format
- No paper to process
- Any anomalies can be flagged to Case Managers immediately



Communication

- Typically face-to-face

Secure Messaging Platforms

- Allow for both asynchronous and synchronous communication
- Better visibility and accountability— both parties can see and refer back to the same information
- Immutable records



Payments

- Typically collected in-person
- Require participants to report to the courthouse during business hours, which can cause issues with employment
- Require court staff to be on-hand to accept payments

Online Payment Collection

- Convenient, allowing clients to submit payments after hours
- Reduces court overhead, is typically less expensive than collecting payments in person
- Allows for remote payment



Challenges

- Connectivity
 - Do you and your clients have adequate internet?
- Device accessibility
 - Do your clients have smart phones?
- Drug testing
 - Difficult to do effectively while remote
- Roll-out
 - How do you communicate the new processes and procedures to your case load?



We're here for you.

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