

# Recruiting visitors to close the visitor waitlist

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Where we are on recruitment, what we plan to do next, and two options for closing the visitor waitlist.

*Kindling hope for a brighter tomorrow, one visit at a time.*

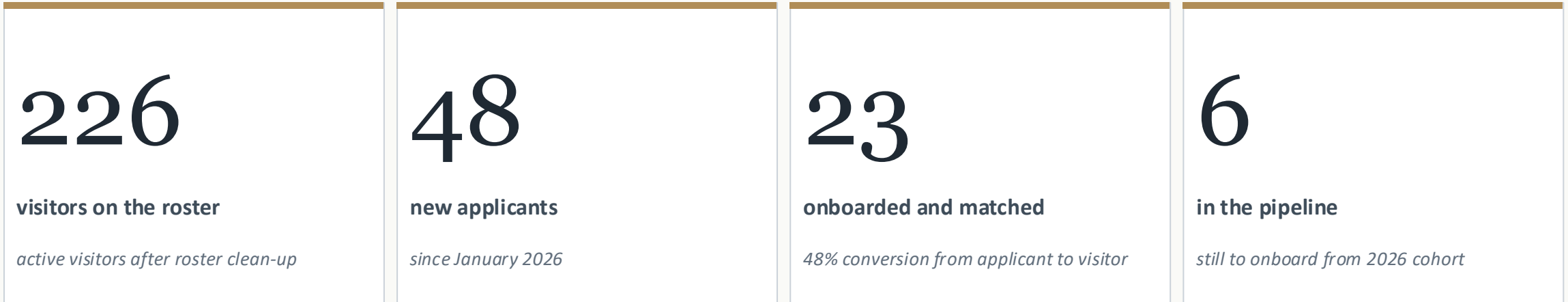
PRESENTED BY

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April 2026

# Onboarding is on pace; the roster is now cleaned up

2026 year-to-date intake is healthy. The roster review is complete: 37 inactive records were retired, leaving a verified active count of 226.



## What the clean-up changed

The roster previously listed 263 visitors. A review (call, email, status update) retired 37 records for visitors who had never started, had moved, or were no longer active. The verified active count is now 226, which is the figure we recruit against and the figure that frees up matches for waitlisted prisoners.

Source: PVS internal applicant tracker, January – April 2026; current visitor roster.

# Three levers to grow the visitor base

Build on what is working, add reach we don't have today, and go direct to communities near underserved facilities.

## 01

### Activate word of mouth

*Visitors and board members are our best recruiters.*

- Launch a referral program for current visitors and board members with simple recognition (thank-you notes, annual report mentions, small gift cards)
- Equip every board member with a one-page ask and a goal of two referrals per year
- Track referrals to know which channels actually convert to onboarded visitors

## 02

### Expand online posting

*Show up where mission-driven volunteers already look.*

- Standing posts on Idealist, VolunteerMatch, and AARP's volunteer site
- Geo-targeted listings on state and local volunteer hubs near uncovered facilities
- One owner refreshing listings quarterly with a clear call to action and source tagging

## 03

### Reach out cold

*Go directly to communities near the facilities we serve.*

- Cold outreach to congregations, interfaith councils, and seminaries within 60 miles of high-need facilities
- Partner with community groups, retiree clubs, and reentry organizations for joint info sessions
- A short call script and email template so coordinators and board members can run outreach without starting from scratch

# The waitlist concentrates where we have no visitors

The gap is geographic, not interest. Most waitlisted prisoners sit at facilities in places where we have few or no nearby visitors.

## WAITLIST AT A GLANCE

# 550

prisoners on the waitlist nationwide

**~70%** at facilities with no local coordinator

**71** facilities with zero on-site coverage

**9+ mo** typical wait in hard-to-reach regions

*Concentration in rural and military facilities. Detailed regional map in appendix.*

## HOW WE CLOSE THE GAP

### 1. Map waitlist concentration to recruitment plan

Overlay the waitlist by facility against the visitor map. Prioritize the top ten gap geographies and target every recruiting lever there first.

### 2. Run targeted local outreach in gap geographies

Cold-call congregations, community groups, retiree clubs, and reentry organizations within driving distance of high-waitlist facilities. One coordinator owns each region.

### 3. Keep prisoners informed and engaged

A standard letter acknowledging the request and naming a realistic timeline. Honesty preserves trust and keeps prisoners engaged while we recruit visitors in their region.

# Hire a Recruitment Director to close the gap

One full-time, in-house role focused on visitor recruitment, paid for by a campaign that starts with a walk-a-thon.

## THE ROLE

### Recruitment Director

*Full-time, remote, with travel to high-need regions.*

#### What they own

- Visitor recruitment end-to-end across all 122 facilities
- Local referral networks in the top ten gap geographies (faith communities, retiree groups, reentry orgs)
- Applicant tracker, onboarding pipeline, monthly conversion metrics
- Roster clean-up: re-engage inactive visitors, retire stale records

#### Who we are looking for

Relational and persistent. Comfortable cold-calling a parish on Tuesday and presenting at a board meeting on Thursday. Mission-driven, organized, willing to travel.

## HOW WE FUND IT

**\$60–80K**

**annual all-in cost**  
*salary plus ~\$10K travel*

#### The funding plan

- 1. Walk-a-thon as the kickoff**  
Visible, community-driven event to seed year-one funding and surface new donors and recruiters.
- 2. Layer in donors, grants, and board champions**  
Major-donor pitches naming the role; targeted foundation grants in criminal justice; two board-led mini-campaigns.

#### OUTCOME BY YEAR ONE

Waitlist down 25% in priority regions, visitor base up 20%, conversion rate above 60%.

# Revive the regional recruiter model

Short-term contract recruiters paid ~\$10K each, deployed to gap regions with clear visitor targets. PVS ran a version of this through 2015.

## THE MODEL

### Regional Recruiters

*Contracted, part-time, region-specific. One per priority gap area.*

#### What each recruiter owns

- Map target-rich environments: congregations, civic groups, reentry orgs
- Secure host congregations and deliver in-person presentations
- Run gentle, persistent follow-up through applications and interviews
- Build a self-sustaining local cluster, then hand off and exit

#### Who we are looking for

Experienced PVS visitors or skilled local organizers based in the target region, with existing church and civic networks.

## HOW IT WORKS

~\$10K (x4)

per recruiter, per region  
*contract fee tied to visitor targets*

#### How the model runs

1. **Contract for results, not hours**  
~\$10K stipend per region tied to a target (e.g., 8 to 12 onboarded visitors over 12 months). Recruiters exit once the target is met.
2. **Why we ended it in 2015**  
Recruits often lapsed once the paid recruiter left, so gains were not durable. A revival should pair each contract with a named handoff to a local volunteer cluster.

#### EXPECTED RETURN

Pilot in 3 to 5 priority regions for ~\$30K to \$50K. Targets 30 to 60 new visitors over 12 months at lower fixed cost than Option 1.