



RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT NOTE

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
MARYLAND ▪ GENERAL ▪ ASSEMBLY

2026 Session
SB0815

Correctional Services – Maryland Correctional Enterprises – Report

Bill Summary

This bill requires the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), in collaboration with an institution of higher education in the State, to prepare a report on correctional industry programs in certain states and recommend ways to improve Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) to achieve successful reentry outcomes. DPSCS is required to submit a final report with its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2027.

Racial Equity Impact Statement

The report on correctional industry programs required by the bill may be beneficial to incarcerated individuals in their preparations for reentry into the community to the extent that the recommendations result in policies that make measurable improvements to the State's prison industry program. Any improvements will likely benefit Black inmates to the greatest extent, as they are overrepresented in the incarcerated population and are also the majority of participants in MCE.

Analysis

The bill requires DPSCS to collaborate with an institution of higher education in the State to research correctional industry programs in California, Kansas, Maine, and Ohio and provide a comprehensive report and final recommendations for improving MCE.

Maryland Correctional Enterprises

MCE is the self-funded vocational training arm within DPSCS and provides structured training and work programming designed to improve participants' employability upon release, enhance safety and security, and produce quality goods and services while remaining financially self-supporting. In fiscal 2025, 1,074 participants worked in 26 MCE-operated business units across 10 State correctional facilities, which offered training through production activities such as furniture manufacturing and restoration, printing and graphics, textiles and sewing, license plate production, computer-aided design, warehousing, and distribution. These operations allow participants to develop both technical trade skills and workplace "soft skills" while producing goods primarily for government and nonprofit customers.

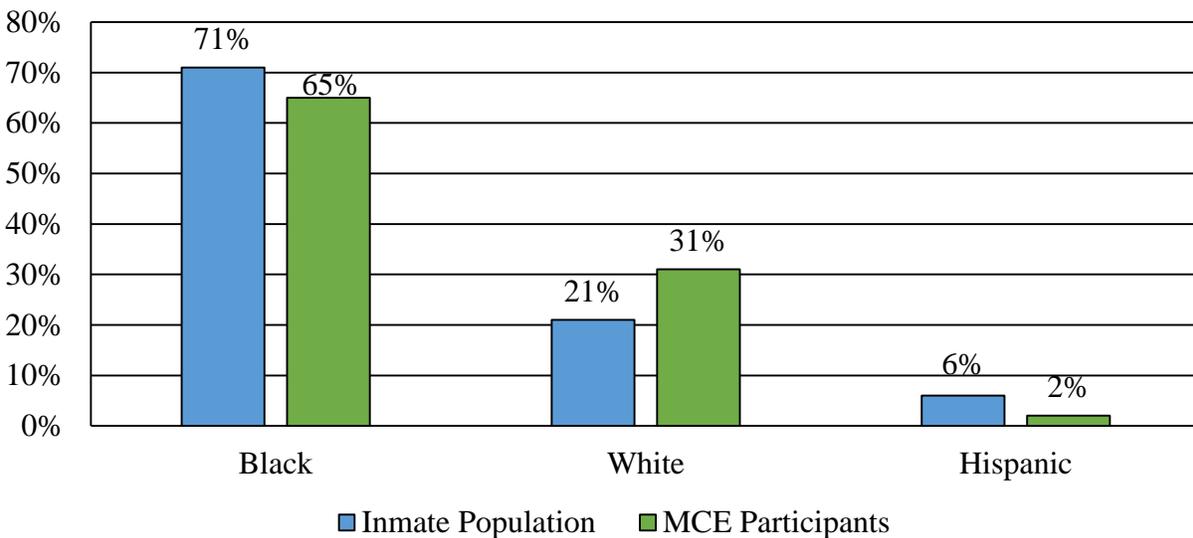
Impacts of the Bill

DPSCS defines recidivism as one's return to either the Division of Correction or the Division of Parole and Probation following sentencing for a new criminal offense or return to the physical custody of DPSCS from parole or mandatory supervision due to violation of the conditions of release. There is limited data on recidivism and how various skills and workforce training affect recidivism rates. A fiscal 2022 recidivism analysis by the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board found that 24% of incarcerated individuals returned to custody for either a new offense or for violating conditions for probation. While data linking specific reentry services to recidivism rates are not currently available for Maryland, a 2025 report from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation found that individuals who participated in community reentry programs were significantly less likely to reoffend.

Exhibit 1 shows the inmate population and MCE participation rates by race and ethnicity for fiscal 2025. Black and Hispanic inmates participate in MCE at rates lower than their overall share of the inmate population, while white inmates participate at a rate higher than their share of the inmate population. Despite the disparity in participation rates by race and ethnicity, Black inmates do comprise the majority of leadership and regular positions in MCE due to their significant presence in the carceral system. MCE divides inmate workers into two categories: warehouse and logistics staff; and regular manufacturing or service staff within the various MCE business units at State correctional facilities. Black inmates were 100% of warehouse team leaders and 58% of regular team leader staff positions in fiscal 2025. Black inmates also comprised a large majority of regular warehouse and manufacturing/service employees at 78% and 65%, respectively.

Overall participation in MCE decreased by 7% in fiscal 2025 compared to fiscal 2024 and was approximately 30% lower than the fiscal 2019 pre-pandemic level.

Exhibit 1
Inmate Population and MCE Participants by Race and Ethnicity
Fiscal 2025



Source: Maryland Correctional Enterprises

Conclusion

The report and recommendations required by the bill may result in improved MCE programming in the future. MCE participants would benefit to the extent that reentry into the community is successful and sustained. Black inmates will likely benefit the most from any improvements to MCE, as they comprise the majority of prison industry employees. Improvements to MCE also have the potential to reduce recidivism rates. Any specific impacts will depend on the nature and implementation of the final recommendations in the report.

Information Sources: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

Analysis by: Dr. Mikaela Zimmerman

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Appendix – Maryland Demographics

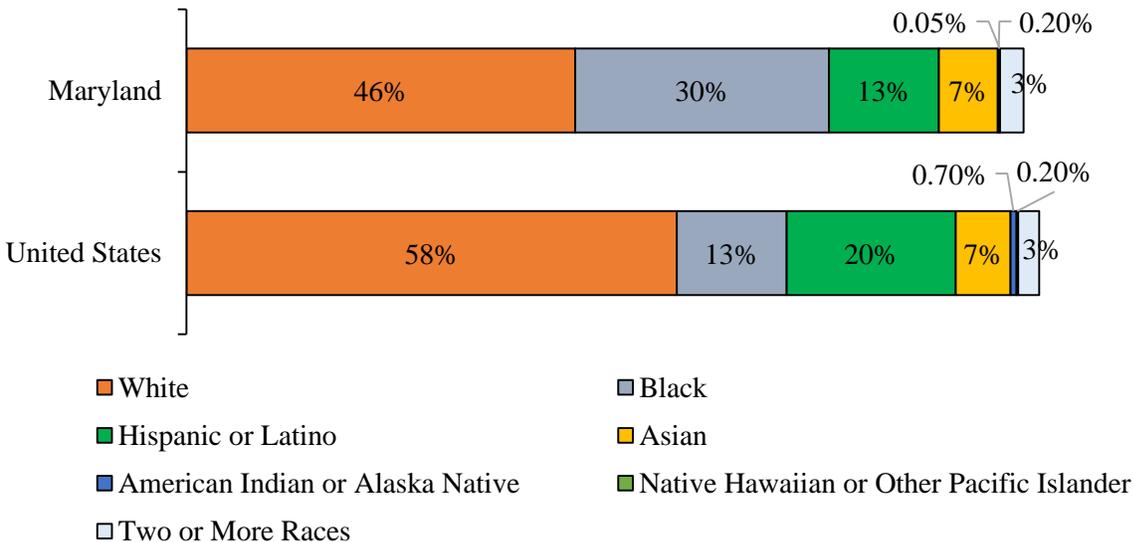
Race and Ethnicity of the Maryland Population

Maryland’s 2020 census population is 6,177,244, a 7% increase from the 2010 census count and approximately 2% higher than the 2019 census population estimates. Maryland remains one of the most racially and ethnically diverse states in the nation and is ranked as the fourth most diverse state by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Diversity Index](#). While no single racial or ethnic group constitutes a majority, racial minorities as a group constitute a majority of the State’s population. This diversity underpins the analytical framework used in racial equity impact notes (REIN), which seek to identify potential disparities that may be exacerbated or created by proposed criminal justice legislation.

Methodology Update

Beginning in 2025, REIN will use annual population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program (PEP) as the basis for disparity and disproportionality calculations. This methodological update reflects best practices in demographic analysis, as PEP data incorporate births, deaths, and migration to provide the most current population counts between censuses. Although the estimates are more temporally responsive, they do not materially change the proportionate racial and ethnic breakdown observed in the 2020 census. Instead, they conservatively reflect population changes since 2020 while preserving the overall demographic composition of the State.

**U.S. and Maryland Population by Race and Ethnicity
2024 Population Estimates**



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau