

**Q00B**  
**Corrections**  
**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services**

***Executive Summary***

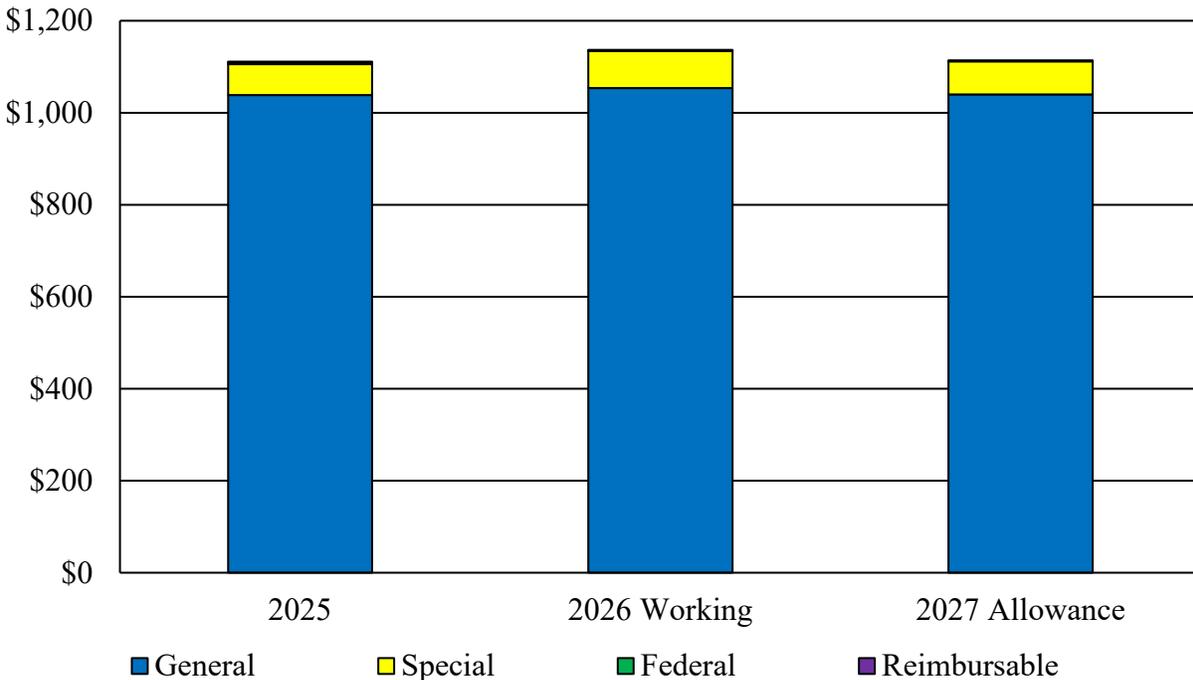
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Corrections is the primary charge of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). This functional unit is comprised of three divisions: the Division of Correction (DOC) and the Patuxent Institution (PATX), which had a combined average daily population (ADP) of approximately 16,397 offenders in fiscal 2025; and Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE), which is the prison industry arm of the department. These agencies receive approximately 57.9% of departmental resources and are allowed 4,899 regular positions (53.3% of the department’s regular personnel) in the fiscal 2027 allowance.

***Operating Budget Summary***

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**Fiscal 2027 Budget Decreases \$22.9 Million, or 2.0%, to \$1.1 Billion  
(\$ in Millions)**



Note: The fiscal 2026 working appropriation accounts for deficiencies. The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

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## *Q00B – DPSCS – Corrections*

- The fiscal 2027 allowance decreases by \$22.9 million from the fiscal 2026 working appropriation after accounting for deficiency appropriations. General funds decrease by \$14.3 million, largely driven by personnel costs. Special funds decrease by \$8.5 million, driven by a decrease in supplies and materials for MCE. Additionally, \$5.0 million of special funds for the treatment of opioid use disorder for inmates at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) and Eastern Correctional Institution (ECI) were replaced by general funds due to the end of the use of the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF) to supplant general funds.

## ***Key Observations***

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- ***ADP Growth Rate Slows:*** In fiscal 2025, the incarcerated population grew by approximately 2% from the year before. In the first two quarters of fiscal 2026, the growth in population slowed to less than 1%. Overall, the population declined by a total of 17% from fiscal 2017 to the first two quarters of fiscal 2026.
- ***Treatment of Transgender Individuals:*** Transgender incarcerated individuals face higher rates of housing moves and restrictive housing than the overall incarcerated population. Still, the overall population had a nearly 50% increase in the use of disciplinary housing over the past five years, while the use of administrative housing declined by 21%.
- ***Reentry Passport Program Rollout:*** The Reentry Passport Program, aimed at providing prerelease inmates with online access to their identifying documents, has faced delays since its pilot program in fiscal 2023.

## **Operating Budget Recommended Actions**

1. Adopt committee narrative requesting a report on the implementation of the reentry passport program.
2. Adopt committee narrative requesting a report on women’s prerelease programming.

## **Updates**

- ***MCE Delinquent Payments:*** A 2024 audit by the Office of Legislative Audits (OLA) found that MCE did not adequately pursue the collection of millions of dollars of delinquent accounts receivable. The audit found that as of June 2023, MCE was owed \$12.9 million. By June 2025, accounts receivable reduced to \$6.1 million and past due accounts reduced to \$2 million.

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***Operating Budget Analysis***

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**Program Description**

The DPSCS Corrections function includes the operations of State correctional facilities under DOC and PATX as well as MCE. DOC operated 12 correctional facilities in fiscal 2025, including the Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup (MCI-J), which is planned to close at the end of fiscal 2026. The Baltimore City Correctional Center falls under the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS) due to its location. However, the population measures reported in the Managing for Results section of this analysis consider all incarcerated offenders regardless of facility. The Corrections function, in accordance with applicable State and federal law, works to protect the public, its employees, and offenders under its supervision. The function also works to return offenders to society with the necessary tools for success by offering job skills improvement, educational programming, mental health therapy, and drug treatment.

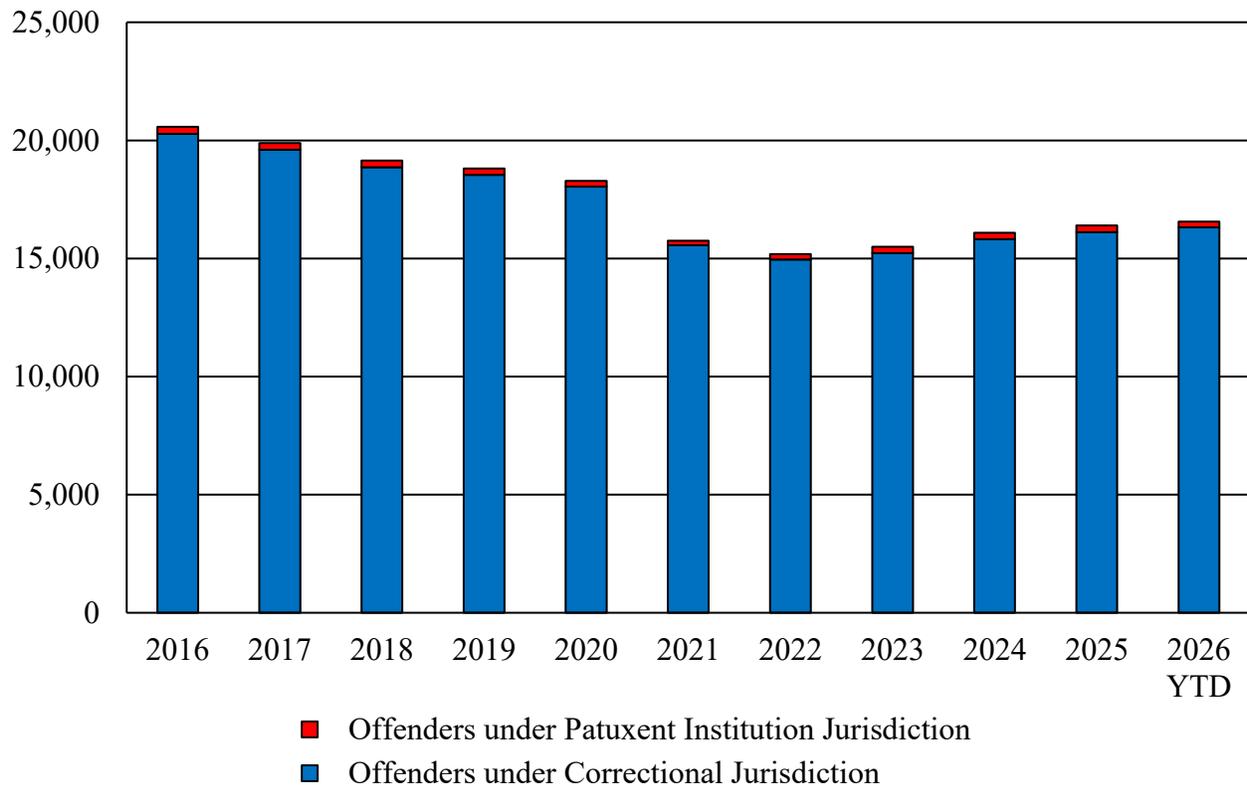
***Performance Analysis: Managing for Results***

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**1. Incarcerated Population Continues to Grow**

From fiscal 2020 to 2021, the incarcerated population under correctional and Patuxent jurisdictions saw a significant decline from 18,281 offenders to 15,726, a decrease of 14%, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The change in fiscal 2022 was more modest at a 3% decline. As shown in **Exhibit 1**, the ADP of sentenced offenders in DPSCS custody has increased annually since then, with the largest increase in fiscal 2024, growing by approximately 4% to 16,085 offenders. In fiscal 2025, the incarcerated population growth slowed to approximately 2% from the year before. Through the first two quarters of fiscal 2026, the growth in population continues to slow, with less than 1% growth compared to fiscal 2025. Overall, the population declined by a total of 19.5% from fiscal 2016 to the first two quarters of fiscal 2026.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Average Daily Population of State-sentenced Offenders**  
**Fiscal 2016-2026**



YTD: year to date

Note: 2026 YTD includes the first two quarters of fiscal 2026.

Source: Department of Budget and Management; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

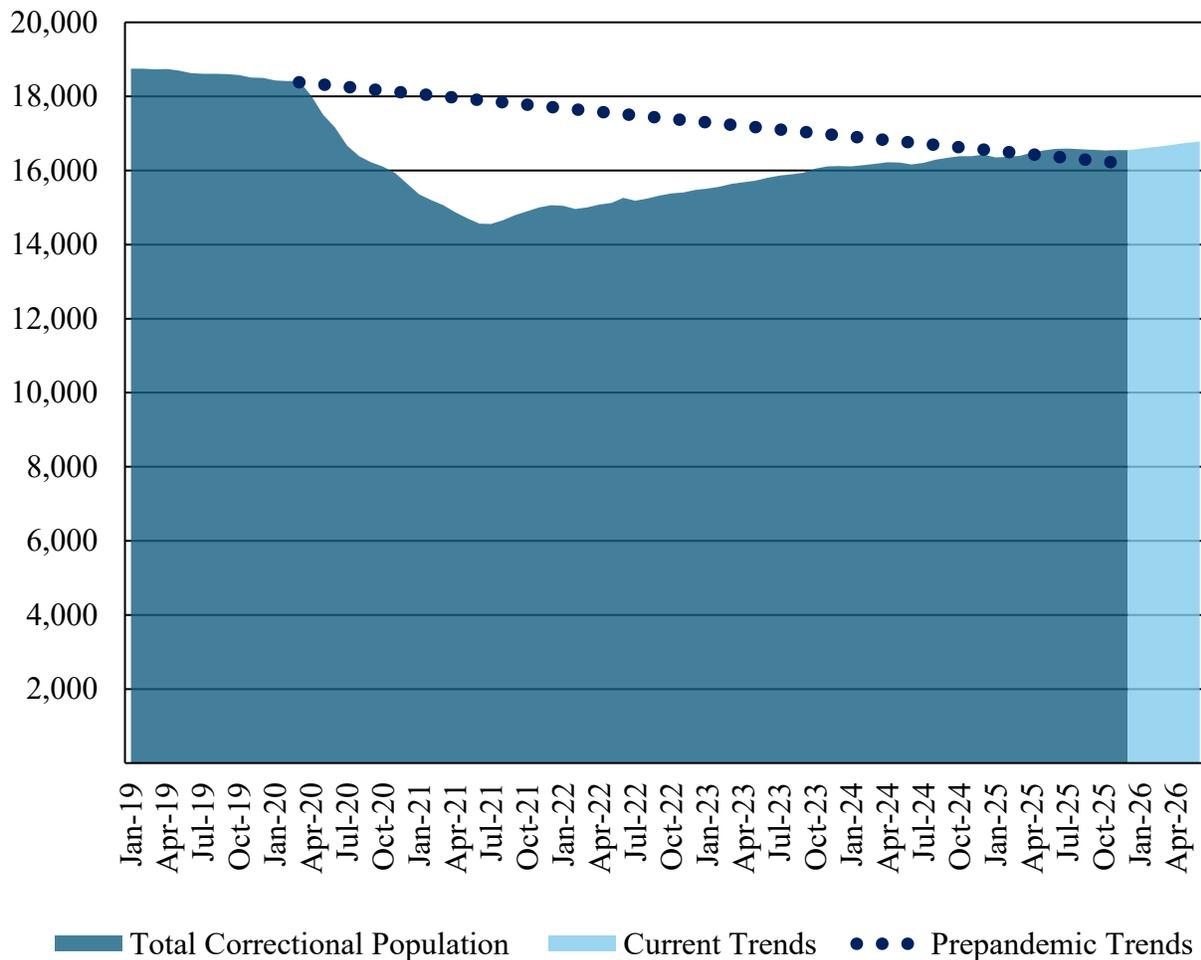
Exhibit 1 shows the ADP of all State-sentenced offenders rather than the ADP of DOC facilities only. This includes an average of 399 sentenced offenders who were kept each day at the Central Home Detention Unit, State hospitals, or in the custody of other jurisdictions in fiscal 2025. An average of 338 sentenced offenders were kept in DPDS facilities.

**Prison Population Exceeds Prepandemic Trends**

Pandemic-related court closures during fiscal 2020 and 2021 caused significant reductions in the incarcerated population. Beginning in July 2021, the correctional population began

increasing as court processing speeds increased, and the backlog of pretrial individuals was addressed. **Exhibit 2** shows the monthly ADP for offenders in the Maryland correctional system since calendar 2019. The dotted line represents the population if pre-pandemic trends had continued, while the light shaded area represents the population if current trends continue. In April 2025, the incarcerated population exceeded the projected level if the pre-pandemic population trend had continued. By December 2025, the incarcerated population was 366 individuals higher than the estimated pre-pandemic trend line.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Incarcerated Population Trends and Projections**  
**Calendar 2019-2026**  
**Average Daily Population**

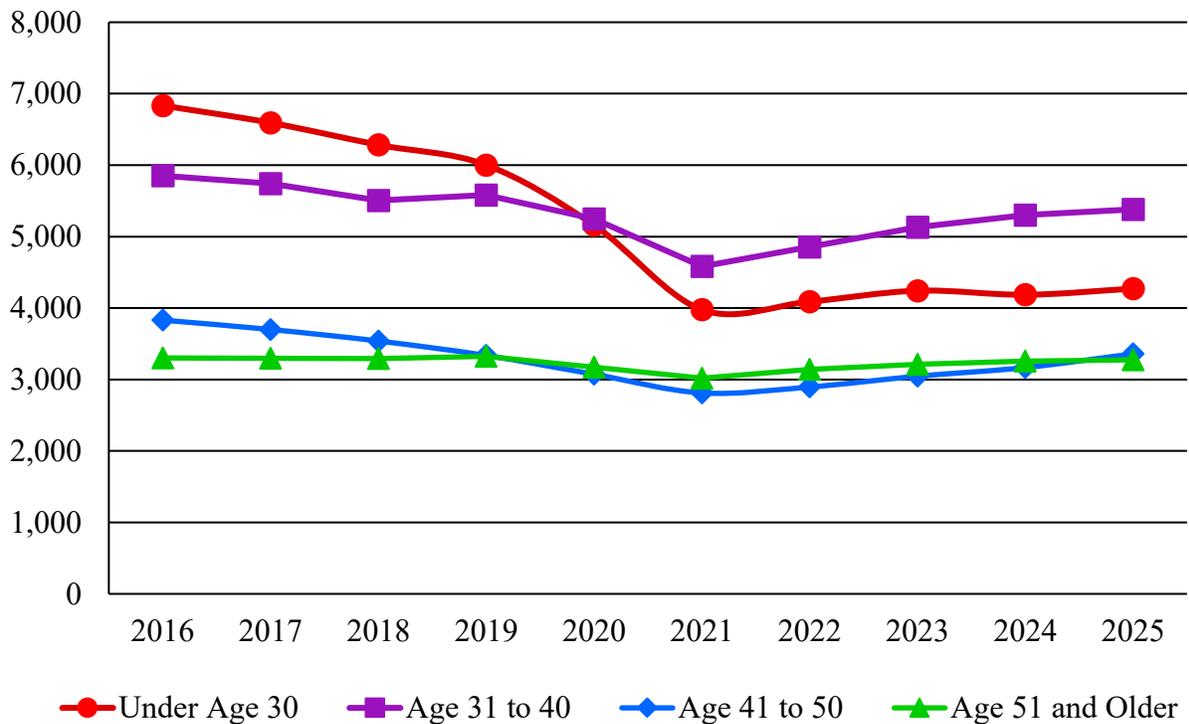


Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

## 2. Average Age of Incarcerated Individuals Remains the Same

Exhibit 3 shows incarcerated individual age group totals since fiscal 2016. The under 30 age group made up 34% of the incarcerated population in fiscal 2016, which shrank to 26% in fiscal 2025, becoming the second largest cohort. The total number of individuals under 30 decreased by 2,563 over that timeframe. In fiscal 2025, the average age of an individual in DPSCS custody was 39.6, which has stayed relatively constant over the past five years.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Incarcerated Population by Age Group**  
**July 2016 to July 2025**



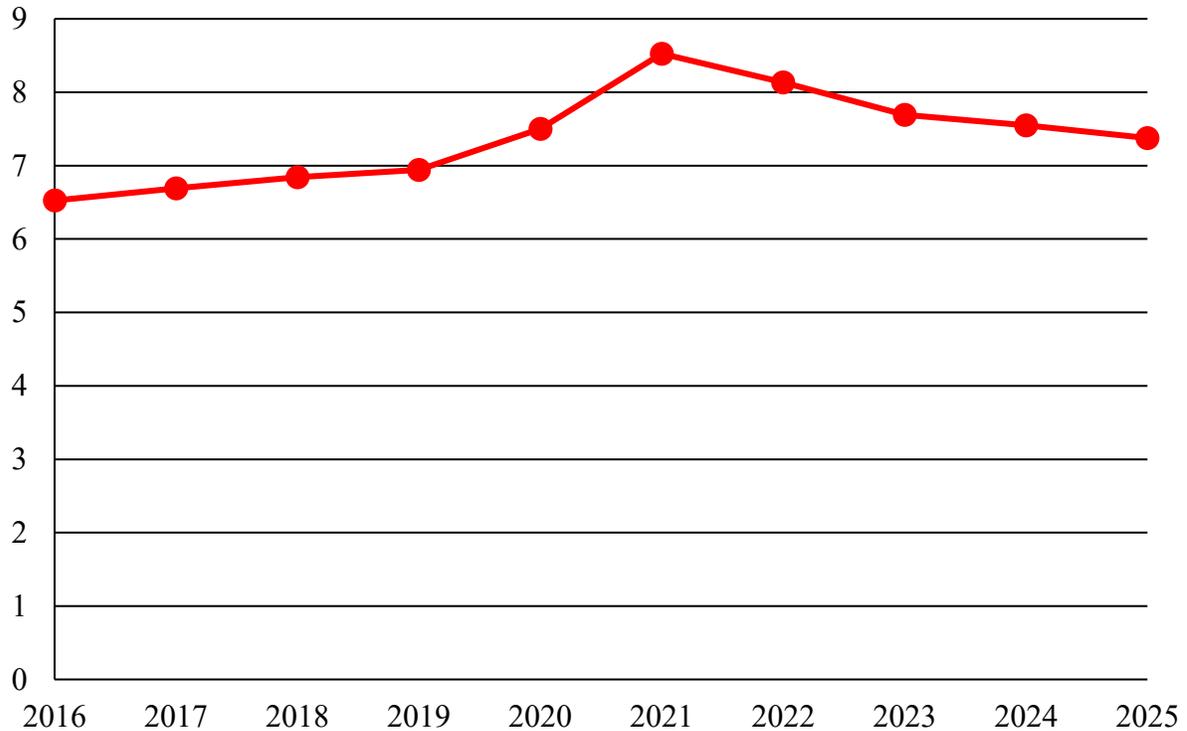
Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

## 3. Average Length of Stay Decreasing

The average length of stay (ALOS) peaked in fiscal 2021 at 8.5 years due to the pandemic court closures and decreased intakes to DOC. Intakes in fiscal 2021 were low, resulting in fewer

individuals with shorter sentences. In fiscal 2022, these trends were reversed as court processing speeds increased, and the backlog of pretrial individuals was addressed. As shown in **Exhibit 4**, ALOS was 7.4 years in fiscal 2025, a decrease of 13.5% from fiscal 2021.

**Exhibit 4**  
**Average Length of Stay in Years**  
**Fiscal 2016-2025**



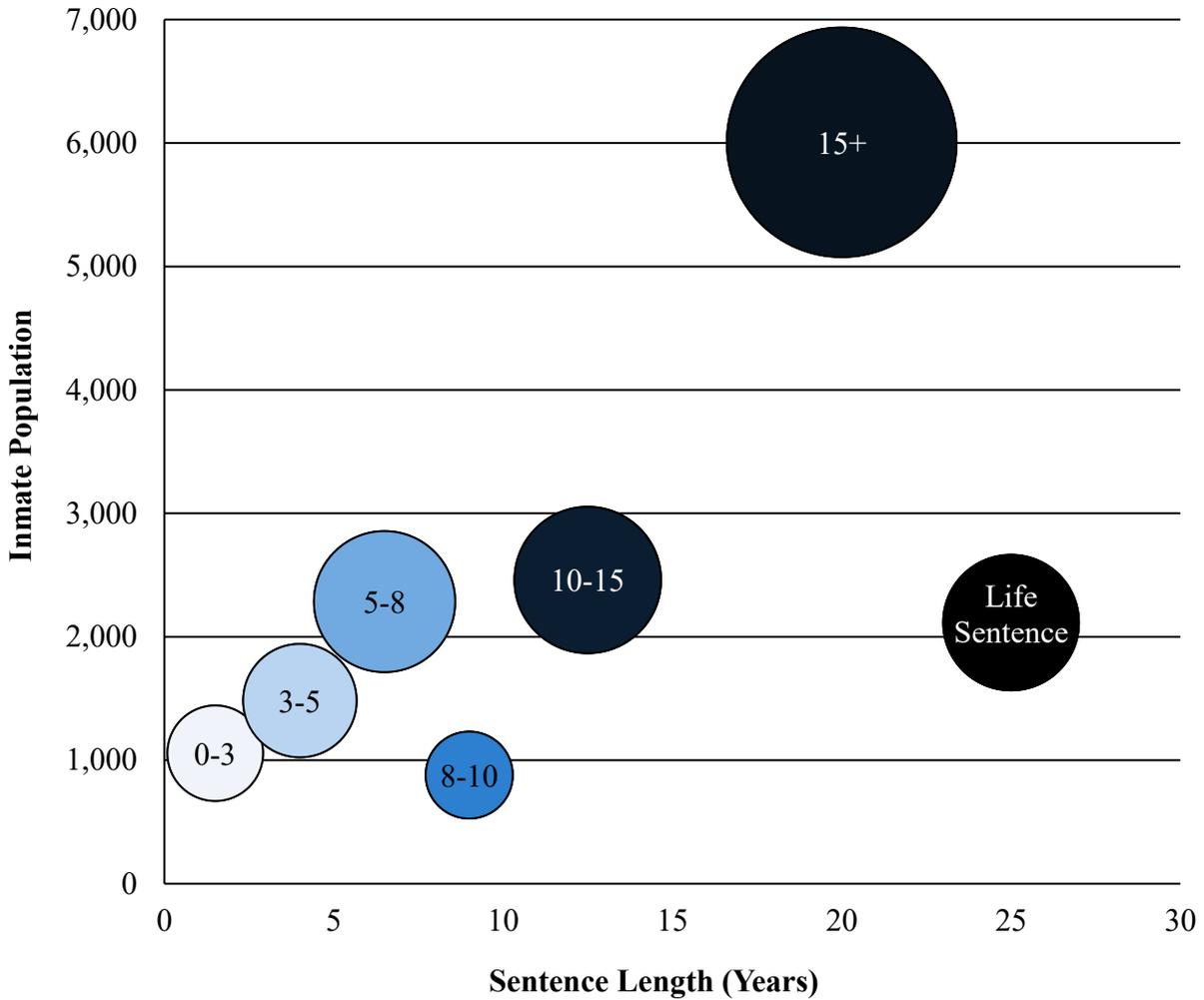
Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Most sentenced individuals in DPSCS custody (72.9%) were incarcerated for violent crimes as their most serious offense, including homicide (29%), assault (17%), robbery (15%), sexual assault (10%), domestic violence (1%) and kidnapping (0.9%). Property-related crimes accounted for roughly 5.3% of incarcerated individuals' offenses, including burglary (3.6%), theft (1%), traffic-related crimes (0.5%) and arson (0.2%). Other notable sources of incarceration included weapons violations (9%), drug offenses (4.3%), and nonassault sexual crimes (4%).

**Exhibit 5** groups the incarcerated population by sentence length, showing that roughly half of individuals in DPSCS custody are serving sentences that are 15 years or longer. In fiscal 2025, there were 6,006 individuals serving sentences 15 years or longer and 2,115 individuals serving

life sentences out of a total of 16,286 individuals. By comparison, there were 2,540 individuals serving sentences for 5 years or less.

**Exhibit 5  
Incarcerated Population by Sentence Length  
Fiscal 2025**



Note: Each bubble represents a group of incarcerated individuals with similar sentence lengths as indicated in each label. The size of each bubble and placement on the y-axis corresponds to the size of each group.

Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

## **Fiscal 2026**

### **Proposed Deficiency**

The fiscal 2027 budget includes proposed deficiency appropriations that increase the fiscal 2026 working appropriation by a total of \$57.3 million (\$56.8 million in general funds and \$469,111 in special funds) across the following uses:

- \$28.1 million to cover shortfalls related to lower than expected vacancy savings, driven by personnel costs at MCI-J and DOC Headquarters;
- \$17.2 million to cover fiscal 2025 shortfalls in inmate health costs, including \$3.2 million from ECI, \$2.6 million from the Maryland Correctional Training Center (MCTC), and \$2.3 million from JCI;
- \$9.1 million, including \$8.6 million in general funds and \$469,111 in special funds, to bring budgeted turnover in line with fewer than expected vacancies. The majority of the deficiency is spread across 12 correctional facilities, including \$1.2 million from ECI and \$1.1 million from MCTC; and
- \$2.9 million to fund a housing unit renovation at PATX.

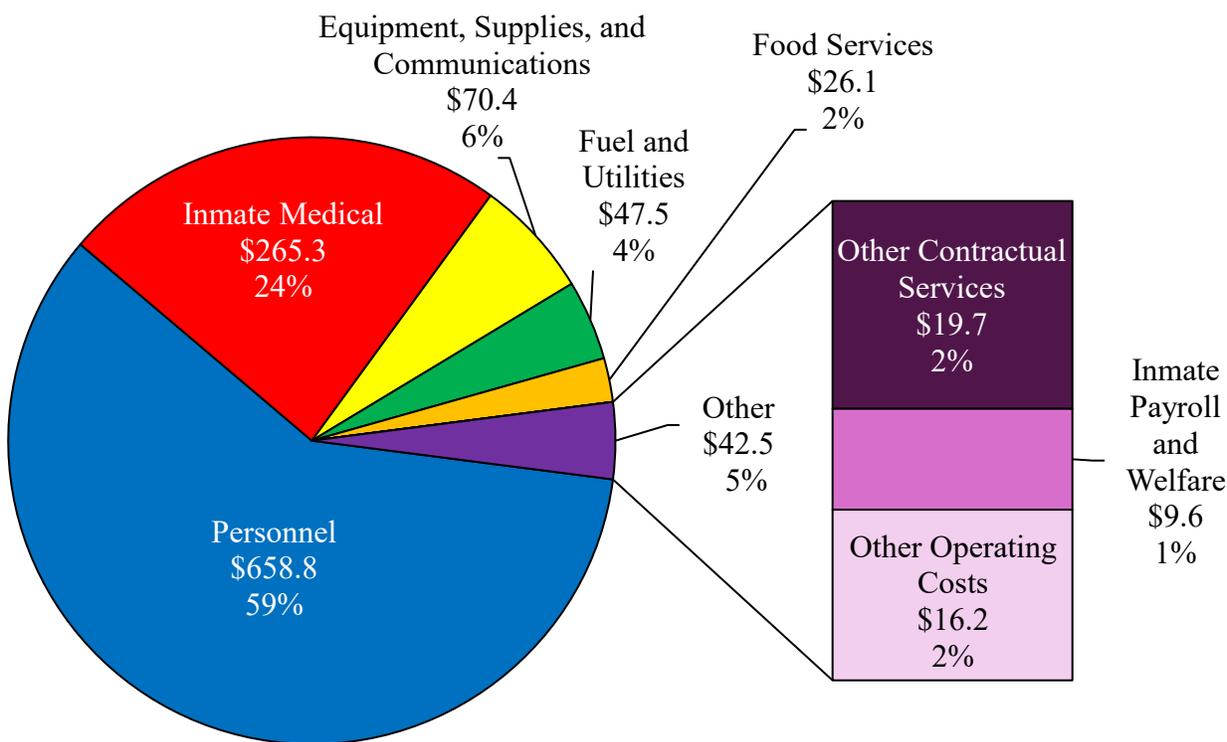
### **Use of ORF for Treatment in JCI and ECI**

A provision in the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025 waived, in fiscal 2025 and 2026 only, the requirement that the ORF be supplemental to and not supplant funds otherwise provided for programs and services. As a result, a total of \$5.0 million in special funds from the ORF was budgeted in DPSCS each year in fiscal 2025 and 2026 to support opioid use disorder treatment for inmates, resulting in equivalent general fund savings. Of this funding, \$2.5 million was budgeted for JCI, and \$2.5 million was budgeted for ECI. The fiscal 2027 allowance backfills the \$5.0 million in ORF support with general funds.

## **Fiscal 2027 Overview of Agency Spending**

**Exhibit 6** shows the fiscal 2027 allowance for DPSCS Corrections, which totals \$1.1 billion. The majority of the allowance is used for personnel costs (\$658.8 million), mostly for salaries and wages of correctional officers (CO). Overtime earnings, which are part of the personnel costs, total \$140.8 million or 12.6% of the allowance. Other costs include inmate medical care (\$265.3 million); equipment, supplies, and communications (\$70.4 million); fuel and utilities (\$47.5 million); and food costs (\$26.1 million).

**Exhibit 6  
Overview of Agency Spending  
Fiscal 2027 Allowance  
(\$ in Millions)**



Note: The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2027 Budget Books

**Proposed Budget Change**

The fiscal 2027 allowance decreases by \$22.9 million from the fiscal 2026 working appropriation after accounting for proposed deficiencies. **Exhibit 7** shows the major proposed budget changes. Major decreases include \$22.5 million in salary adjustments and associated fringe benefits, \$14.9 million for overtime expenses, and \$6 million in special funds to purchase materials for MCE production. Additionally, there are \$18.3 million in total cost savings related to the closure of MCI-J that are partially offset due to transfers to JCI, ECI, Maryland Correctional

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Institution – Hagerstown (MCI-H), and MCTC (discussed in further detail in the Q00 – DPSCS – Overview analysis). The medical and mental health care contract increases by \$24.4 million when excluding a proposed fiscal 2026 deficiency of \$16.4 million to cover fiscal 2025 shortfalls. Other proposed increases include \$25.2 million in employee and retiree health insurance, \$1.7 million in utilities, \$1.1 million in land improvements, and \$1.1 million in special funds for installation services for MCE.

**Exhibit 7  
Proposed Budget  
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Corrections  
(\$ in Thousands)**

<b>How Much It Grows:</b>	<b><u>General Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Special Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Federal Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Reimb. Fund</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Fiscal 2025 Actual	\$1,038,476	\$66,970	\$4,324	\$1,083	\$1,110,854
Fiscal 2026 Working	1,053,929	80,612	228	1,611	1,136,381
Fiscal 2027 Allowance	1,039,638	72,075	228	1,577	1,113,519
Fiscal 2026-2027 \$ Change	-\$14,291	-\$8,538	\$0	-\$34	-\$22,862
Fiscal 2026-2027 % Change	-1.4%	-10.6%	0.0%	-2.1%	-2.0%

**Where It Goes:** **Change**

**Personnel Expenses**

Employee and retiree health insurance .....	\$25,228
Workers' compensation premium assessment.....	2,534
Turnover decreases from 9.4% to 9.0% .....	1,641
Deferred compensation match due to change in statewide budgeting .....	73
Overtime earnings .....	-14,870
Salary adjustments and associated fringe benefits .....	-22,507

**Closure of Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup**

Contractual education services for incarcerated individuals.....	-90
Employee and incarcerated individual uniforms.....	-266
Inmate wages and welfare .....	-359
Other contracts including equipment rental and repairs, extermination, trash and building exterior .....	-400
Maintenance contracts.....	-450
Maintenance, office, janitorial and other equipment and supplies.....	-799
Utilities including oil, natural gas, electricity, and water.....	-1,289
Food services and related costs .....	-1,882
Health care, dental, and pharmaceutical services contract.....	-12,565

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<b>Where It Goes:</b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>
Other various cost savings including postage, telephone, motor vehicles .....	-186
<b>Health Care Contract</b>	
Cost of medical, mental health, dental, and pharmaceutical services .....	24,387
Fiscal 2026 proposed deficiency to cover fiscal 2025 shortfalls related to inmate medical costs .....	-16,419
<b>Contracts</b>	
MCE installation services for customers, including installing panels, desks, and cubicles (special funds) .....	1,073
Freight and delivery .....	206
System software maintenance .....	100
Maintenance contracts, including for building interior and exterior .....	-63
Contractual education services for incarcerated individuals .....	-1,430
<b>Supplies and Materials</b>	
Replacement of motor vehicles .....	550
Security services and equipment .....	393
Production equipment .....	140
Office, maintenance, janitorial and other supplies and equipment .....	-144
Employee and incarcerated individual uniforms .....	-437
Supplies and materials from MCE to align with actual spending (special funds) .....	-6,000
<b>Other Costs</b>	
Utilities including oil, natural gas, electricity, and water .....	1,726
Land improvements driven by costs at ECI and Jessup Correctional Institution ....	1,105
Equipment rental and repairs .....	396
Inmate wages .....	298
Insurance paid to the State Treasurer .....	-138
Food services and related equipment .....	-324
Maryland Environmental Service charges, mostly for ECI .....	-1,868
Other .....	-225
<b>Total</b>	<b>-\$22,862</b>

ECI: Eastern Correctional Institution  
MCE: Maryland Correctional Enterprise

Note: The fiscal 2026 working appropriation accounts for deficiencies. The fiscal 2027 statewide salary adjustments are centrally budgeted in the Department of Budget and Management and are not included in this agency’s budget.

## *Personnel Data*

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	<b>FY 25</b>	<b>FY 26</b>	<b>FY 27</b>	<b>FY 26-27</b>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Working</u>	<u>Allowance</u>	<u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	5,035.00	4,923.00	4,899.00	-24.00
Contractual FTEs	7.45	18.52	13.64	-4.88
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>5,042.45</b>	<b>4,941.52</b>	<b>4,912.64</b>	<b>-28.88</b>

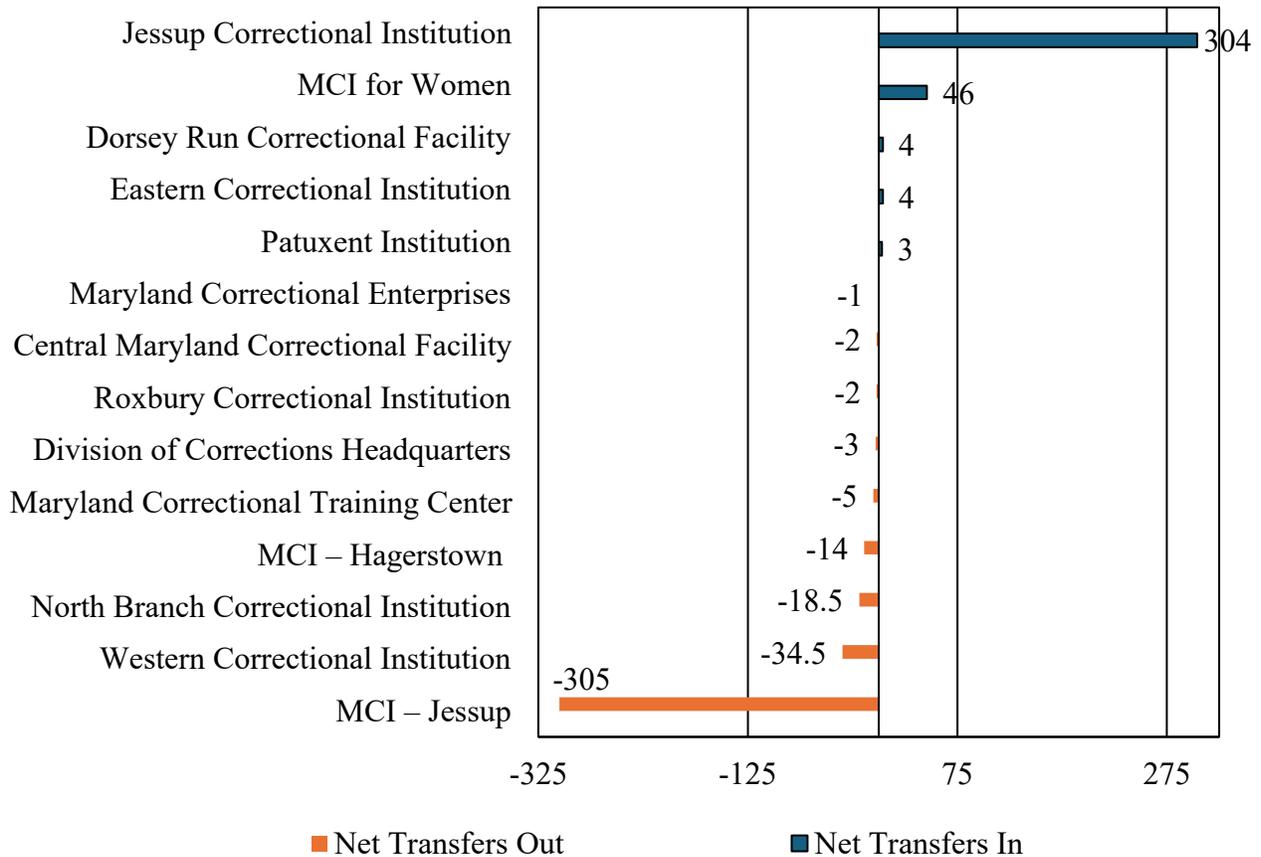
### *Vacancy Data: Regular Positions*

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	442.9	9.04%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/2025	435.5	8.85%

Vacancies Below Turnover 7.4

- In October 2025, the Board of Public Works (BPW) approved the abolition of 502.7 positions statewide, including 170.7 vacant positions and 332.0 positions associated with the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP). There were 7 positions abolished in DPSCS Corrections, all of which were due to the VSP. Of the 7 positions, 2 were administrative positions at DOC Headquarters, 1 was an administrative position at MCE, 1 was an administrative position at Western Correctional Institution (WCI), and 3 were at JCI (2 administrative positions and 1 chaplain position).
- The fiscal 2027 allowance reflects a net decrease of 24 positions in DPSCS Corrections. As shown in **Exhibit 8**, there is a proposed reduction of 305 positions due to the closure of MCI-J and a corresponding 304 position increase at JCI. Other notable changes include an increase of 46 positions at Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W) and decreases of 34.5 and 18.5 positions at WCI and MCI-H, respectively.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Net Change in Transferred Positions by Program**  
**Fiscal 2027**



MCI: Maryland Correctional Institution

Source: Department of Budget and Management; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of Legislative Services

- As of December 31, 2025, vacancy reports indicated that DPSCS had 435.5 vacant positions. However, this appears to be a data error as DPSCS reported 457.5 vacant positions in November 2025. DPSCS showed significant improvement in reducing vacancies as the November 2025 level of vacancies was 110.5 fewer vacancies than reported in October 2024. The budgeted turnover rate decreases from 9.4% in the fiscal 2026 working appropriation to 9.0% in the fiscal 2027 allowance. Based on November 2025 vacancy data, DPSCS has 14.6 vacancies above the 442.9 necessary vacancies to meet budgeted turnover in fiscal 2027.

## ***Issues***

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### **1. Housing Disparities for Transgender Individuals**

Transgender individuals in the prison system are subject to high rates of violence and sexual abuse from both COs and fellow inmates. There have been numerous settlements over the years following incidents of violence, sexual assault, harassment, and unwarranted use of solitary confinement. Between calendar 2022 and 2025, there were six settlements to transgender individuals totaling \$942,712. The largest of the settlements over that time period was approved by BPW in October 2024 for \$750,000 (\$350,000 in general funds and \$400,000 in special funds from the State Insurance Trust Fund) paid to Amber Canter, a transgender woman who accused 3 COs of assaulting her and placing her in an illegal chokehold in June 2019 while she was on pretrial hold at Baltimore City Booking and Intake Center.

According to DPSCS, in fiscal 2025 there were 119 transgender individuals incarcerated in its facilities, representing approximately 0.65% of the total incarcerated population. There were 26 transgender men, all of whom were located at MCI-W, and there was a total of 93 transgender women located across 14 facilities. Language in the fiscal 2026 Budget Bill withheld \$100,000 in general funds until DPSCS submitted a report with data comparing transgender and cisgender incarcerated individuals regarding restrictive housing, house transfers, complaints, and settlements paid to transgender individuals. DPSCS submitted the report on October 2, 2025.

#### **Restrictive Housing**

DPSCS has previously indicated that housing of transgender individuals is governed by Part 115 of Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, or the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which aims to reduce sexual violence in prisons. Part 115.21 mandates that housing be informed by a risk assessment of each incarcerated individual's likelihood of being sexually abused based on several factors, including their gender identity and their own perception of their vulnerability. Current DPSCS policy mandates that transgender inmates be housed based on their physical genitalia.

Disciplinary housing is when an incarcerated person is removed from the general population and placed in a restrictive housing unit. This occurs when the individual is found guilty at a hearing for violating departmental or institutional rules. The use of disciplinary housing increased significantly for both transgender individuals and the overall population over the last five years. In fiscal 2025, transgender individuals were placed in disciplinary housing 198 times, an increase from 70 placements in fiscal 2021. This followed similar trends from the overall population, which saw the total number of disciplinary placements increase from 6,058 in fiscal 2021 to 11,600 placements in fiscal 2025. The average time spent in disciplinary housing decreased for both groups over the same time period, from 34 days in fiscal 2021 to 28 days in fiscal 2025 for transgender individuals and from 35 days to 27 days for the overall population.

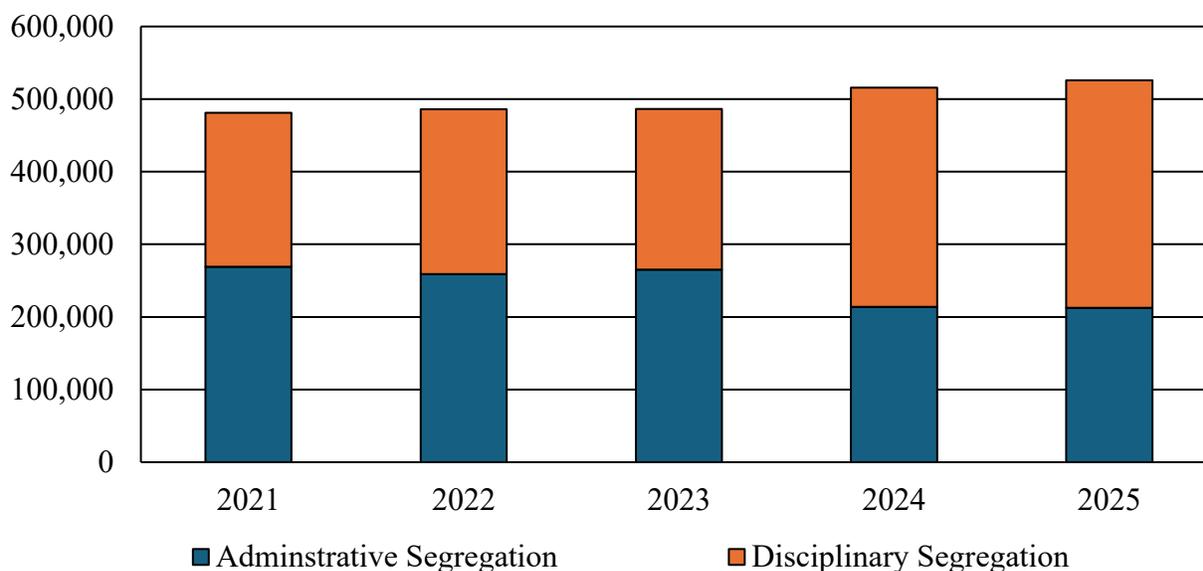
Administrative segregation is optional for those who cannot be housed with others of their gender identity, but it is illegal to require such housing due solely to transgender identity. Administrative segregation can be used for several reasons, such as for protection or for someone awaiting a disciplinary hearing. In fiscal 2025, there were 75 placements of transgender individuals in administrative segregation, an increase from only 26 placements in fiscal 2021. The average time a transgender individual spent in administrative segregation decreased from an average of 67 days in fiscal 2021 to 44 days in fiscal 2025.

Transgender individuals make up 0.65% of the overall incarcerated population but account for 1.7% of all restrictive housing placements. In other words, transgender individuals are 2.7 times more likely to be placed in restrictive housing than the overall population.

**Exhibit 9** shows the estimated days the overall population spent in restrictive housing. From fiscal 2021 to 2025, the overall population saw a 47.9% increase in the total number of days spent in disciplinary housing and a 21.1% decrease in the estimated days spent in administrative housing. During the same period, the correctional and pretrial population increased by 2.9%.

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**Exhibit 9**  
**Estimated Days in Restrictive Housing for the**  
**Overall Incarcerated Population**  
**Fiscal 2021-2025**



Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

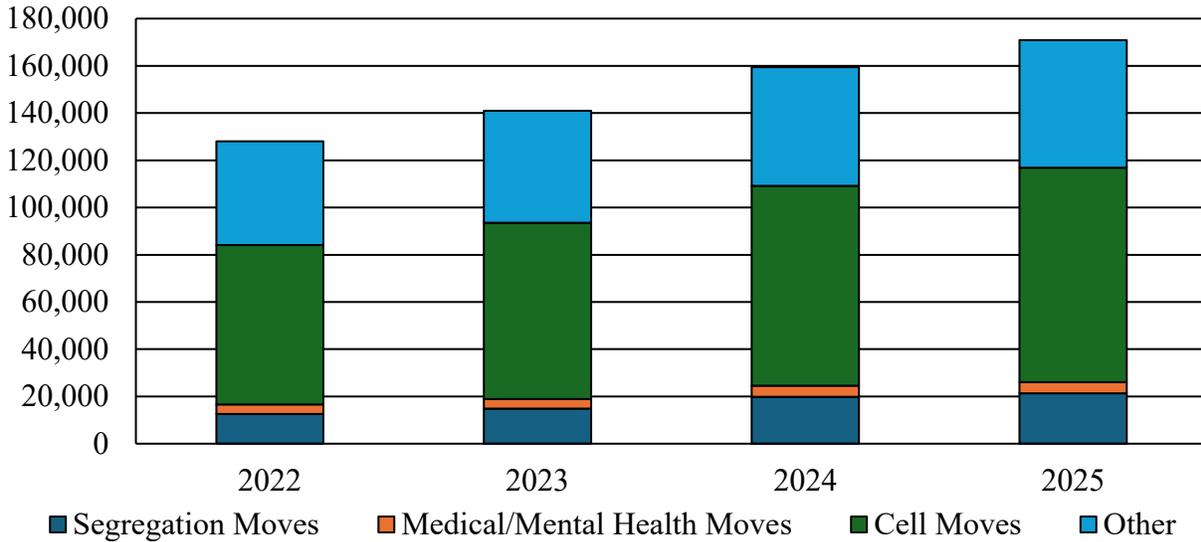
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## **Housing Moves**

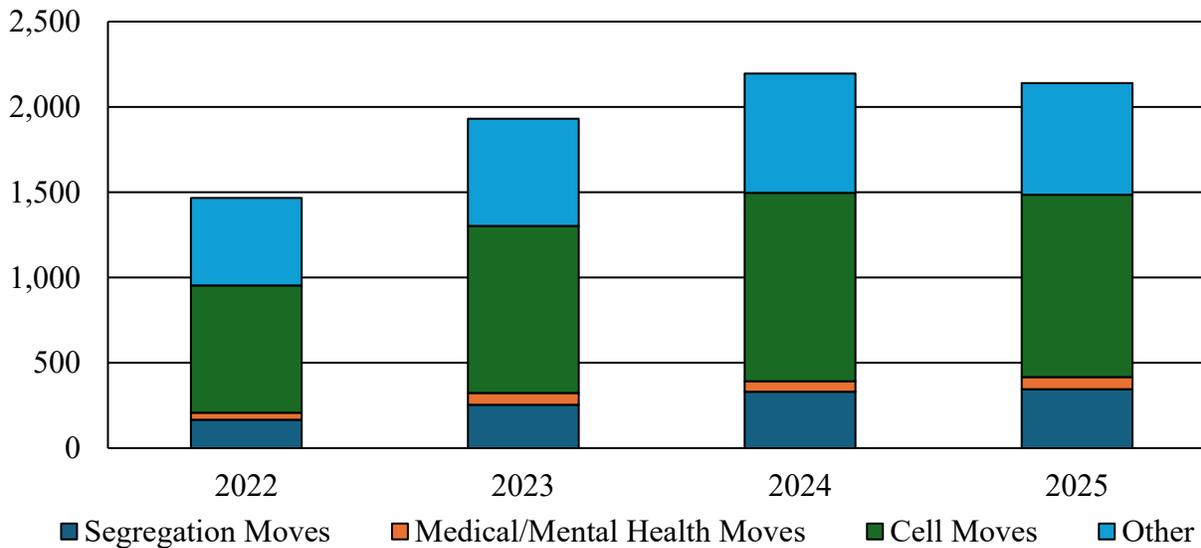
Incarcerated individuals may request transfers to other institutions for several reasons, including allowing them to access programs and services at other facilities and to be closer to loved ones. Individuals can also request transfers to another housing unit within an institution. The department does not track the submission of transfer requests; however, it does track the completion of the transfers, as shown in **Exhibit 10**. Transgender transfers remained relatively constant in fiscal 2025, after increasing over the past several years, while cisgender transfers increased in nearly every category in fiscal 2025. In fiscal 2025, transgender housing transfers made up 1.2% of the total housing moves.

**Exhibit 10  
Housing Transfers  
Fiscal 2022-2025**

**Cisgender**



**Transgender**



Note: Other includes categories such as in-house move; change in security level, program, work detail or reassigned; convenience; school; and special needs.

Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

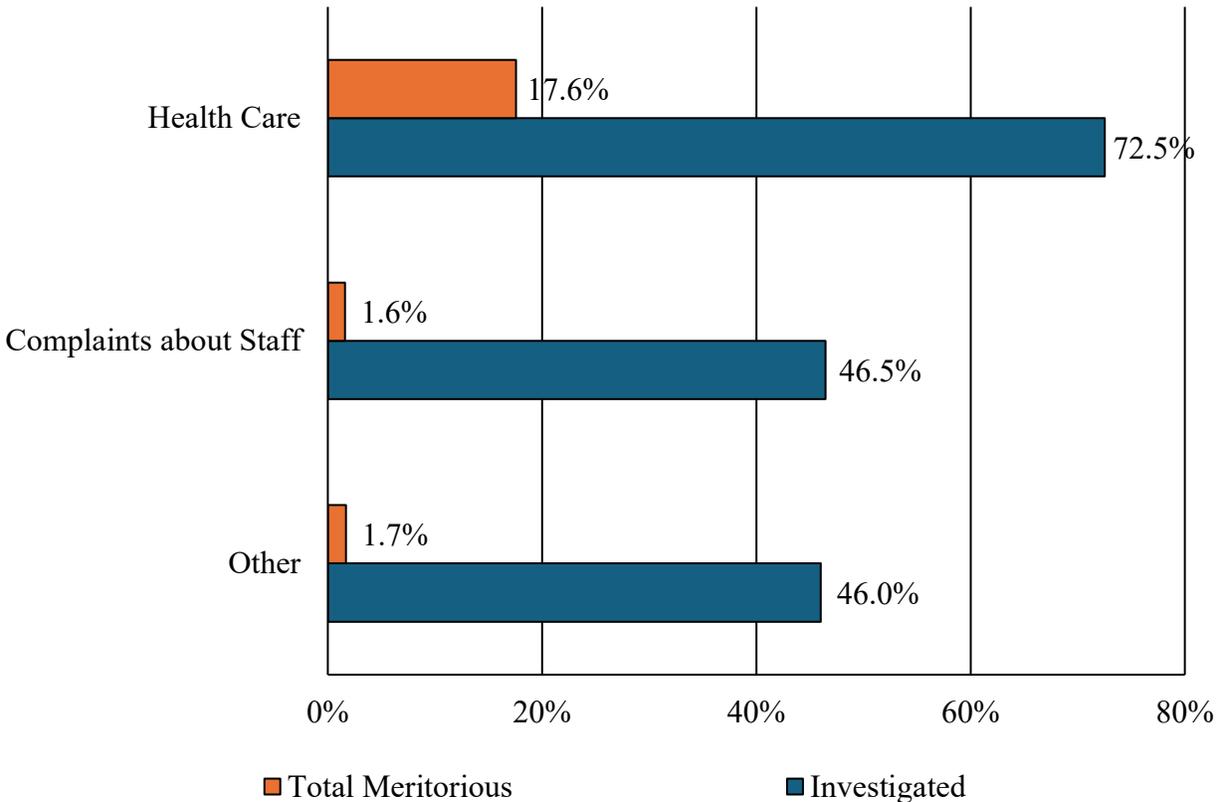
## **PREA and Administrative Complaints**

PREA aims to reduce sexual violence in prisons and is used by DPSCS to govern the housing of transgender individuals. According to PREA Part 115.41 and 115.42, within 72 hours of intake, an incarcerated individual must be screened for risk of being sexually assaulted and their risk of committing sexual assault. The screenings guide programming and housing decisions and are based on factors such as their gender identity, history, and perceived vulnerability. The department tracks 916 vulnerable individuals across 17 facilities, with the goal of preventing those individuals from being housed with those who pose a threat. The vulnerable population consists of individuals of different gender identities and both transgender and cisgender individuals.

PREA complaints are any allegation of sexual abuse, sexual harassment or threat of violence toward a vulnerable individual. From January 2022 to June 2025, the department received a total of 599 PREA complaints, 29 of which have been substantiated (about 4.8%). Among those complaints, 63 of them involved transgender individuals, 3 of which were substantiated (about 4.8%).

Administrative complaints consist of grievances by incarcerated individuals regarding housing, programs, commissary, and access to services, including medical care. Administrative complaints were not broken down by transgender and cisgender populations. In fiscal 2025, 43.6% of administrative complaints were investigated, a decrease from 54% in fiscal 2024. During the same period, the share of administrative complaints that were dismissed increased to 76.2% from 71.2% in the prior year. From fiscal 2022 to 2025, the department received 670 administrative complaints, of which 40 were determined to be meritorious or meritorious in part, representing 5.97%. Complaints involving staff allegations (including assault, harassment, discrimination, or excessive force), accounted for 312 of the total complaints during this period. Of those, 5 complaints (or 1.6%) were found to be meritorious or meritorious in part. **Exhibit 11** shows the breakdown of administrative complaints from fiscal 2022 to 2025.

**Exhibit 11**  
**Administrative Complaints by Type**  
**Fiscal 2022-2025**



Note: Complaints about staff include complaints related to assaults, discrimination, harassment and other issues. Health care complaints include problems with access or delay in medical care, issues with prescriptions and issues related to physicians’ orders. Other complaints include those related to personal property, complaints against a nonstaff person and issues related to the commissary. Complaints may be dismissed for several reasons including for being withdrawn at the incarcerated person’s request and dismissed for procedural reasons. Meritorious includes both complaints found to be meritorious and meritorious in part.

Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

**The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) determined the report on the treatment of transgender individuals to be in compliance with the budget language and recommends the release of \$100,000 in general funds. DLS will process a letter to this effect if no objections are raised by the committees during the hearings.**

## **2. Reentry Passport Program Implementation Faces Challenges**

In calendar 2022, DPSCS began working with Maryland Benefits (formerly the Maryland Total Human Services Integrated Network) to provide a new online service for easy access to vital records and documents such as Social Security cards, birth certificates, and proof of release. The program, called the Reentry Passport Program, is a cooperative project between DPSCS, the Department of Human Services, and the other agencies that use and contribute to Maryland Benefits.

Historically, incarcerated individuals have relied on labor-intensive, paper-based processes to obtain documents such as birth certificates and Social Security cards. For those who were not able to secure their documents prior to release or lost track of the physical copies, the situation could result in difficulties in reentering society due to challenges gaining employment, renting an apartment, and gaining access to public benefits.

Under DPSCS policy, case managers are responsible for offering individuals within 180 days of release the opportunity to apply for key documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, military discharge forms, and release paperwork. The Reentry Specialist team assists with applications for vital documents and educates incarcerated individuals on how to access the portal post-release. DPSCS reported that in calendar 2025, 1,282 document accounts had been created. However, creating an email account is required for gaining access to an account, and incarcerated individuals do not have the ability to create email accounts while incarcerated. The department did not indicate how many individuals had gained access to their accounts. In fiscal 2025, 3,676 individuals were released from DPSCS facilities. **The department should provide the number of individuals that have gained access to documents through the Reentry Passport program by fiscal year.**

Approximately 71% of individuals released from DPSCS are supervised by the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP). The department has reported that by the end of calendar 2025, it would allow its DPP agents and supervisors to have access to the Reentry Passport system to support those under supervision to obtain access to the portal.

**DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting a report from DPSCS on the continued Reentry Passport Program rollout. The report should document the implementation of the program including the number of accounts created and the number of accounts accessed by individuals who have been released for each fiscal year. It should also discuss the progress of expanding access to the Reentry Passport portal to DPP.**

## **3. Women’s Prerelease Programming Participation Fluctuates as Construction for the New Prerelease Unit Remains Stalled**

Chapter 16 of 2021 mandated that DPSCS build and begin operating a comprehensive rehabilitative prerelease unit for women by November 2023. The New Life Skills and Re-Entry

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Center for Women, managed by the Department of General Services (DGS), is significantly behind schedule for several reasons, including changes to site location and DGS and DPSCS not utilizing its appropriations in a timely manner. As a result, the women’s prerelease center remains in the planning and design phase. The fiscal 2027 proposed capital budget does not provide funding for the project. Further discussion of the project can be found in the Q00\* – Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – capital analysis. While the new facility has been delayed, DPSCS is still required to provide evidence-based and gender-responsive services to incarcerated women in its custody.

Project FRESH is the temporary prerelease program for women at MCI-W. The program provides a dedicated housing unit with privileges and programming aimed at preparing inmates for reentry into society. Participants have access to educational and vocational training, trauma-informed therapy, parenting workshops, and substance use treatment among other opportunities. Community partners also play a significant role in running the program through legal assistance, financial literacy training, and employment support. Project FRESH offers work release; however, opportunities and independence are more limited than in men’s prerelease complexes due to the operational challenges associated with running a prerelease program out of a high security facility.

Project FRESH has historically struggled with low participation rates. In fiscal 2025, participation in the programming out of the prerelease population varied between 38% (34 out of 90) in February 2025 to 81% (57 out of 70) in June 2025. All women in prerelease are housed in the same unit regardless of participation status, which may affect morale and engagement. Many incarcerated individuals choose work release over FRESH programming because work release provides compensation and diminution credits. Low participation may also be due to many of the incarcerated individuals serving short sentences and feeling there are limited incentives to engage with Project FRESH. Project FRESH does not receive dedicated funding for programming. Most of the programming is provided by community organizations and volunteers. Project FRESH has one program coordinator based on the unit and a volunteer coordinator, who provides services to the entire MCI-W population.

**DPSCS should comment on its long-term plans for the women’s prerelease program, given the absence of funding for the New Life Skills and Reentry Center for Women in the fiscal 2027 capital budget.**

**DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting a report from DPSCS about Project FRESH participation rates and programming, with particular emphasis on work release opportunities. The report should compare participation and prerelease programming opportunities to men’s prerelease centers.**

## ***Operating Budget Recommended Actions***

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1. Adopt the following narrative:

**Reentry Passport Program Rollout:** The Reentry Passport Program is expected to provide all previously incarcerated individuals with access to an online portal after release where they can store and retrieve critical documents like their Social Security card or their birth certificate. The program remains in the pilot phase, and more work is needed to be done by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) so that all returning citizens will have access to this service moving forward. The committees request that DPSCS submit a report by October 15, 2026, on the Reentry Passport Program rollout. The report should document the progress of expanding the program and future plans to fully implement the program, including:

- the number of reentry passport accounts that have been created by fiscal year;
- the number of individuals who have gained access to their Reentry Passport account by fiscal year;
- the list of functional passport functions;
- the list of nonfunctional/upcoming passport functions;
- the timeline by which all returning citizens will be able to access the passport;
- historic levels of returning citizens monthly;
- update on the rollout of the passport program to Division of Parole and Probation agents and supervisors;
- challenges to full rollout; and
- the potential impact on recidivism.

<b>Information Request</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Report on the reentry passport program.	DPSCS	October 15, 2026

*Q00B – DPSCS – Corrections*

2. **Women’s Prerelease Programming:** The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) was required by the Correctional Services Article §§ 3-301 through 3-305 to operate a comprehensive rehabilitative prerelease unit for women by November 1, 2023. The committees note that DPSCS has been consistently delayed in meeting the statutory requirement to build a new, standalone, prerelease facility. While design for the new facility has been delayed, DPSCS is still required to provide evidence-based and gender-responsive services to incarcerated women in its custody and has reportedly begun to do so. However, the amount of information on the new programming is limited, and the committees seek further details into the department’s plans to comply with the comprehensive and gender-responsive programming requirements of the statute. The committees ask that DPSCS provide a report on the following information on the women’s prerelease unit at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women no later than August 1, 2026:
- an overview of the current prerelease program for women;
  - goals and objectives;
  - curriculum and activities, including particular attention to work release and job-related services;
  - eligibility requirements;
  - the number of applicants, individuals approved, individuals denied, current population, and average daily population for each month in fiscal 2026 in Project FRESH and any other prerelease programming for women;
  - resources dedicated to the program, including staff, funding, and facility space;
  - a plan to measure program effectiveness, including any outcomes or performance data that will be measured and reported;
  - a summary of participant satisfaction and feedback on the program;
  - an evaluation of the inclusivity and accessibility of the program for women with various backgrounds and needs;
  - implementation challenges and future steps for improvement or expansion within the existing facility during the delay in constructing the new facility; and
  - a comparison to the opportunities, resources, and conditions provided in men’s prerelease facilities.

*Q00B – DPSCS – Corrections*

<b>Information Request</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Report on women’s prerelease programming	DPSCS	August 1, 2026

## Updates

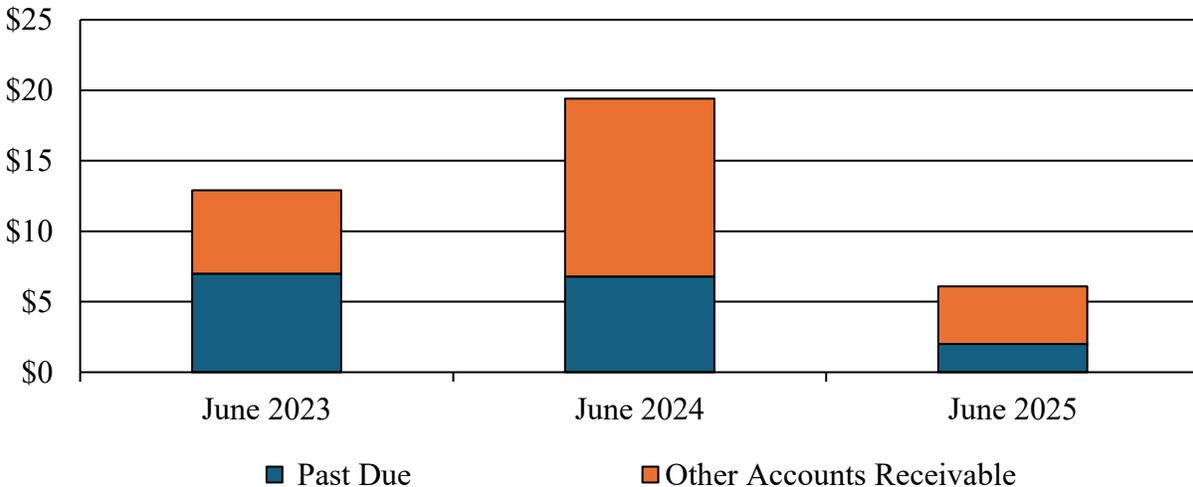
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### 1. MCE’s Collection of Late Payments

Provisions in the Correctional Services Article mandate that MCE develop programs that provide work experience or rehabilitation for eligible incarcerated individuals. The Correctional Services Article also provides that MCE is financially self-supporting. Thus, the services and goods offered by MCE – including furniture, metal products, mattresses, and printing – are available to State and federal agencies; political subdivisions; and any charitable, civic, educational, fraternal, or religious agency, association, or institution. In fiscal 2025, MCE’s actual spending totaled \$59.4 million, and its unaudited sales totaled \$56.8 million.

The fiscal compliance audit issued in June 2024 by OLA found that MCE did not adequately pursue the collection of millions of dollars of delinquent accounts receivable. **Exhibit 12** shows MCE accounts receivable over the last three fiscal years and the proportion that has been delinquent over 90 days. The audit found that as of June 2023, MCE was owed \$12.9 million, \$7 million of which was outstanding over 90 days. The year after the audit in June 2024, accounts receivable increased to \$19.4 million, while receivables past due stayed level at \$6.8 million. In June 2025, accounts receivable reduced to \$6.1 million and past due accounts reduced to \$2 million.

**Exhibit 12**  
**Maryland Correctional Enterprises Accounts Receivable**  
**Fiscal 2023-2025**  
**(\$ in Millions)**



Source: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

***Q00B – DPSCS – Corrections***

In June 2023, of the total amount owed to MCE, \$12.5 million, or 97%, was from State agencies. Of the total of the accounts receivable that were past due for 90 days, \$6.7 million, or 96%, were from State agencies. However, based on State regulations, State agencies cannot be referred to the Central Collection Unit for collection action. In June 2025, the entire \$2 million in delinquent balances was from other State agencies.

**Appendix 1**  
**2025 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency**

The 2025 Joint Chairmen’s Report (JCR) requested that DPSCS prepare four reports. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the DLS Library website.

- ***Treatment of Transgender Individuals:*** Transgender individuals make up 0.65% of the overall incarcerated population but are placed in restrictive housing at higher rates than the incarcerated population at large. Further discussion can be found in Issue 1 of this analysis.
- ***Reentry Passport Program Rollout:*** The Reentry Passport Program has faced delays since its pilot program in fiscal 2023. DPSCS reported that in calendar 2025, 1,282 document accounts had been created; however it is unclear how many individuals released from custody have access to those accounts. Further discussion appears in Issue 2 of this analysis.
- ***Women’s Prerelease Programming:*** Project FRESH offers prerelease programming required by statute for women while a designated women’s prerelease unit is constructed. Participation in the program varied between 38% of the women’s prerelease population in February 2025 to 81% (57 out of 70) in June 2025. Further discussion appears in Issue 3 of this analysis.
- ***Delinquent Payments to MCE:*** OLA found in a fiscal compliance audit in June 2024 that MCE did not adequately pursue the collection of millions of dollars of delinquent accounts receivable. In June 2023, MCE was owed \$12.9 million, including \$7 million that was outstanding over 90 days. DPSCS provided calendar 2025 data indicating \$6.1 million in accounts receivable and \$2 million in past due receivables. Further discussion appears in the Updates section of this analysis.

**Appendix 2**  
**Object/Fund Difference Report**  
**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Corrections**

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 25</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 26</u> <u>Working</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 27</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 26 - 27</u> <u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
<b>Positions</b>					
01 Regular	5,035.00	4,923.00	4,899.00	-24.00	-0.5%
02 Contractual	7.45	18.52	13.64	-4.88	-26.3%
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>5,042.45</b>	<b>4,941.52</b>	<b>4,912.64</b>	<b>-28.88</b>	<b>-0.6%</b>
<b>Objects</b>					
01 Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits	\$660,488,143	\$665,899,397	\$657,997,498	-\$7,901,899	-1.2%
02 Technical and Special Fees	615,633	775,786	752,709	-23,077	-3.0%
03 Communications	1,706,804	1,578,842	1,525,850	-52,992	-3.4%
04 Travel	75,027	134,887	93,924	-40,963	-30.4%
06 Fuel and Utilities	54,292,709	48,969,613	47,538,725	-1,430,888	-2.9%
07 Motor Vehicle Operation and Maintenance	3,837,948	3,912,088	4,389,026	476,938	12.2%
08 Contractual Services	306,645,203	318,259,893	311,107,615	-7,152,278	-2.2%
09 Supplies and Materials	52,204,242	64,905,714	57,305,709	-7,600,005	-11.7%
10 Equipment – Replacement	12,694,664	11,333,523	11,283,632	-49,891	-0.4%
11 Equipment – Additional	625,969	283,000	283,000	0	0.0%
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	7,902,605	9,617,276	9,556,275	-61,001	-0.6%
13 Fixed Charges	2,784,943	2,725,993	2,594,568	-131,425	-4.8%
14 Land and Structures	6,980,094	7,985,000	9,090,000	1,105,000	13.8%
<b>Total Objects</b>	<b>\$1,110,853,984</b>	<b>\$1,136,381,012</b>	<b>\$1,113,518,531</b>	<b>-\$22,862,481</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>
<b>Funds</b>					
01 General Funds	\$1,038,476,486	\$1,053,929,416	\$1,039,638,481	-\$14,290,935	-1.4%
03 Special Funds	66,970,270	80,612,220	72,074,719	-8,537,501	-10.6%
05 Federal Funds	4,323,981	228,220	228,220	0	0.0%
09 Reimbursable Funds	1,083,247	1,611,156	1,577,111	-34,045	-2.1%
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$1,110,853,984</b>	<b>\$1,136,381,012</b>	<b>\$1,113,518,531</b>	<b>-\$22,862,481</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>

Note: The fiscal 2026 appropriation includes proposed deficiency appropriations. The fiscal 2027 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.

**Appendix 3**  
**Fiscal Summary**  
**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Corrections**

<u>Program/Unit</u>	<u>FY 25</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 26</u> <u>Working</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 27</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 26 - 27</u>	
				<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
A03 Maryland Correctional Enterprises	\$59,357,954	\$71,907,420	\$68,537,619	-\$3,369,801	-4.7%
B01 Division of Correction – Headquarters	17,680,504	40,162,072	16,325,179	-23,836,893	-59.4%
D00 Patuxent Institution	82,707,051	84,963,363	87,751,235	2,787,872	3.3%
R02 Division of Correction – West Region	433,857,219	436,660,799	442,062,721	5,401,922	1.2%
S02 Division of Correction – East Region	517,251,256	502,687,358	498,841,777	-3,845,581	-0.8%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,110,853,984</b>	<b>\$1,136,381,012</b>	<b>\$1,113,518,531</b>	<b>-\$22,862,481</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>
General Funds	\$1,038,476,486	\$1,053,929,416	\$1,039,638,481	-\$14,290,935	-1.4%
Special Funds	66,970,270	80,612,220	72,074,719	-8,537,501	-10.6%
Federal Funds	4,323,981	228,220	228,220	0	0.0%
<b>Total Appropriations</b>	<b>\$1,109,770,737</b>	<b>\$1,134,769,856</b>	<b>\$1,111,941,420</b>	<b>-\$22,828,436</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>
Reimbursable Funds	\$1,083,247	\$1,611,156	\$1,577,111	-\$34,045	-2.1%
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$1,110,853,984</b>	<b>\$1,136,381,012</b>	<b>\$1,113,518,531</b>	<b>-\$22,862,481</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>

Note: The fiscal 2026 appropriation includes proposed deficiency appropriations. The fiscal 2027 allowance does not include statewide salary adjustments budgeted within the Department of Budget and Management.