

Improve Public Safety by Positively Changing Lives

Prison Safety

2021-2023 Biennial Budget Request



The mission of the Department of Corrections (DOC) is to improve public safety by positively changing lives. The DOC is committed to operating a safe and humane corrections system and maximizing opportunities to collaborate with others to transform lives for a better Washington. However, a combination of chronic underfunding and steadily rising costs is eroding our ability to meet this vital public expectation.

Individuals experiencing incarceration and serving community supervision sentences come from overwhelmingly poor communities, disproportionately communities of color, lacking education and employment opportunities. They face higher levels of homelessness, struggle with substance abuse disorders, and live with physical and mental health disorders that are often undiagnosed or untreated. More than 96 percent of those who are incarcerated will return to those same communities, where barriers will be further exacerbated by their criminal histories.

Responsible Budgeting for Prison Safety

Stabilizing Staffing Levels	Increasing Staff and Incarcerated Individual Safety	Current Provider Costs True-Up
Custody Staff: Health Care Delivery (97.3 FTEs, \$18.7M)	Contraband Management (10.1 FTEs, \$2.4M)	Laundry Service Provider Costs (\$610k)
Custody Relief Factor (64.2 FTEs, \$12.6M)	PREA Coordinators (5.7 FTEs, \$1.3M)	Food Provider Costs (\$6M)

Stabilizing Staffing Levels

DOC requests additional staffing to address unfunded costs of custody staffing related to non-discretionary relief costs and the growing medical and mental health needs of the incarcerated population. These costs are non-discretionary and are already occurring. DOC routinely incurs unfunded overtime costs to fill mandatory posts. In FY2020 alone, custody staff worked over 1.1 million hours of overtime. Each custody staff works an average of 21 hours of mandatory overtime per month with some staff working on average 60+ hours per week. Ongoing and mandatory overtime causes real, tangible, and quantifiable harm to the people who do the work.

Funding additional custody positions will mitigate unfunded overtime costs and reduce the need for mandatory overtime. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 over-expenditure in custody overtime salaries and benefits totaled nearly \$14.3 million, resulting in deferral of critical repairs and maintenance, hiring delays in non-custody positions, and the need to create savings within other areas of DOC to avoid overspending at the agency-level. Excessive mandatory overtime contributes to correctional staff fatigue, jeopardizes staff safety and security and decreases morale, leading to increased turnover. These requests align with the recommendations outlined in the legislatively mandated staffing report produced by CGL Management Group.

Custody Staff: Health Care Delivery.

The DOC's prisons have been impacted by aging populations, hospital closures and reductions in services, an increased need for specialty care providers, and an increased need for on-site mental health observation and supervision. Additional staff are needed to provide non-discretionary off-site medical transportation, community hospital watches, and one-on-one watches. These critical security positions are essential to providing incarcerated individuals with the medical and mental health care they require. (97.3 FTEs, \$18.7M).

Custody Relief Factor.

Custody staff require relief for regular days off, vacations, sick time, and mandatory training days. Shift relief factors identify the number of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) required to fill a single custody post. The Custody Staffing Model's relief factor of 1.67 for authorized leave, sick leave, and training does not provide adequate FTEs and funds necessary to meet the demands created by mandatory leave and training requirements of staff. DOC requests an increase from 1.67 to 1.83 to fund current costs. (64.2 FTEs, \$12.6M).

Increasing Staff and Incarcerated Individual Safety

To address the safety and security of staff and incarcerated individuals within our prison facilities, DOC requests additional resources to meet identified safety and security needs for contraband management and Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) coordination.

Contraband Management.

The DOC requests funding to continue operating the body scanner at the Washington State Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), mitigating the introduction of contraband to the facility and reducing the need for invasive strip searches. The DOC experiences a high volume of drug-related violence, and WCCW has a large number of incarcerated individuals presenting with contraband hidden in body cavities. In 2018, prior to use of the body scanner, contraband discoveries averaged two per month. In 2019, with the use of the body scanner, this number increased to an average of ten per month (a 500% increase) with narcotics being the most commonly discovered contraband.

When a person with contraband is identified, DOC must place the incarcerated individual under a dry cell watch to monitor the health of the person, to safely recover the contraband as it is released from the person's body, and to prevent contraband from reaching the incarcerated population. A dry cell watch requires 24/7 one-on-one custody supervision and an hourly check by nursing staff. WCCW does not have adequate custody or nursing staff to perform the excessive number of dry cell watches necessary to ensure contraband is not introduced into the general population of WCCW. The additional funding will fund staff increased dry cell watch posts that have resulted from the pilot. (10.1 FTEs, \$2.4M).

PREA Coordinators.

The DOC requests funding to meet critical custody staffing requirements related to the PREA and the safety of incarcerated individuals. These positions are essential to providing standards to manage zero tolerance of the incidence of rape and to make prevention of prison rape a top priority in each prison system. Currently, five prison facilities do not have dedicated staffing for PREA. These positions also monitor victims and reporters of rape and sexual misconduct for retaliation, work with medical and mental health professionals to ensure victim services are accessible, monitor PREA risk assessments, ensure all audit documentation is gathered and stored, and coordinate corrective action plans. Without these positions DOC is at risk for litigation for failure to meet federal standards, and prison rape and sexual misconduct will have a negative effect on incarcerated individual and the care DOC provides. (5.7 FTEs, \$1.3M).

Current Provider Costs True-up

Food Provider Costs.

The DOC requests funding to cover the current cost per meal (CPM) rates for the Correctional Industries (CI) Food Service program that are not funded in the Prison Division base budget. CPM rates have continued to increase due to inflation of raw food costs, gratuity costs for incarcerated Class II workers, and CI administrative expenses. Funding this request will allow the successful food service program to continue at a cost that is comparable to or less than traditional food service and avoid unfunded costs related to food disturbances and strikes from incarcerated individuals. (0.0 FTEs, \$6M).

Laundry Service Provider Costs.

The DOC requests funding to support the Correctional Industries (CI) Laundry service provider cost for the 2021-23 biennium. The cost to operate the CI Laundry program exceeds the current rates paid for the service and without additional funding, DOC will not have the resources necessary to provide uninterrupted laundry service at our Prison facilities. (0.0 FTEs, \$610K).