

**Final FY 2020-21 Budget:**

**PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS**

July 2020

→ Current Landscape

Florida's Department of Corrections (DOC) is the third largest state prison system in the country. In fact, Florida's incarceration rate is higher than all of the 13 founding NATO countries: USA, Canada, and the 11 European countries. Since 1996, the number of people serving 10 or more years has tripled. As a result, the state has not been able to properly respond to the costs and needs associated with its incarcerated population. Inmates' health costs have significantly increased, which caused the department to experience a major budget deficit in FY 2018-19.

→ Budget

PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS BUDGET					
		FY 2020-21 Budget			
	FY 2019-20 Budget	House	Senate	GAA	Final Budget (Post-Vetoes)
Appropriation Amount	\$4,860,052,250	\$4,931,097,776	\$4,961,841,187	\$4,963,213,414	\$4,918,224,703
Difference from FY 2019-20 Budget		+ \$71,045,526	+ \$101,788,937	+ \$103,161,164	+ \$58,172,453

**Department of Corrections**

The budget allocates \$2.76 billion to the Department of Corrections (DOC), a roughly 2 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. While the slight bump in the department's budget is insufficient given the financial woes it has been experiencing, it is worthwhile to highlight that the governor's final allocations largely followed the recommendations of the House and Senate, and did not cut funds for critical programs in light of the state's revenue shortfalls due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget addresses a few of the most critical issues DOC facilities have been experiencing for the past decade, which are understaffing, health care, and a shortage of educational teachers. A significant portion of DOC's budget over the last two fiscal years has gone toward funding for treatment of Hepatitis C and mental health, as well as compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as ordered by a court mandate. As a result, key re-entry programs were underfunded.

### *Education*

The budget provides a total of \$37.8 million for basic education skills, which is \$4.8 million more than the previous fiscal year. This increase is important because hiring and retaining quality teachers has been a persistent issue for the department, and in the past few years, some facilities did not have even one teacher. Part of this funding will help to create 17 positions for academic education and 17 for wellness specialists. Further, \$750,000 was given to DOC to contract with the Florida Virtual School to offer an online education program. The budget includes \$1 million to CareerSource Florida to develop and implement a vocational curriculum for those who are incarcerated.

### *Maintenance and Repairs*

The budget includes \$189 million for maintenance and repair projects at correctional facilities, a small decrease from FY 2019-20 funding levels. Out the \$189 million, \$12.3 million is set aside for constructing and equipping Lake Correctional Institution Mental Health Facility for 600 beds, a priority the governor had emphasized in his budget recommendations. Moreover, \$6 million and \$5.9 million were allocated for much-needed renovations for correctional institutions and mental health facilities, respectively.

### *Health Care*

The budget includes \$567 million for inmate health care services, an increase of just \$153,000 over the previous fiscal year. The Legislature provided \$595 million; however, the governor vetoed \$28 million for Hepatitis C treatment for individuals who have been diagnosed and are at level F0-F1 or the early stage of their diagnosis. This is due to the state's ongoing court appeal that seeks to challenge an existing court mandate that requires treatment for all inmates who have been diagnosed with Hepatitis C, regardless of the stage of their diagnosis.

### *Operations*

The budget includes \$822 million for operations. Part of this funding will go toward implementing a new retention step plan proposed by DOC's Secretary for correctional officers, correctional probation officers, and inspectors. The budget appropriates \$587 million specifically to help launch a pilot project that would convert correctional officers' 12-hour shifts to 8.5-hour shifts.

### *Re-entry, Community Substance Abuse Prevention, and Supervision*

The budget includes \$12.6 million for transition and rehabilitation programs and \$26 million for community SUD programs. The budget also allows funding for DOC to develop a court liaison pilot program at two community drug treatment provider sites. Community supervision receives \$227 million, a \$13 million increase over FY 2019-20.

## Department of Juvenile Justice

The budget provides \$579 million for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), which is significantly less — a \$13 million reduction — from the previous fiscal year.

The budget allocates \$91.1 million to community supervision, a 3 percent decrease from the funding level in the previous fiscal year. This includes \$4 million specifically to provide alternative programs to youth who are at risk of commitment. The budget cut funding for detention centers by \$1.9 million, roughly 1.6 percent less than the FY 2019-20 budget.

Non-secured residential commitment programs received \$121.7 million, a \$4.6 million cut from this past fiscal year. To address the department's high turn-over rate, the Legislature allocated \$2 million for retention bonuses for employees, but this was ultimately vetoed by the governor.

The final budget slashed \$6.1 million from delinquency prevention and diversion programs, which yields a total allocation of \$86.7 million. Diversion programs have been effective as an alternative to juvenile arrests. They provide innovative and hands-on approaches to help divert at-risk kids from delinquent behavior. Additionally, diversion programs offer great fiscal benefits for the state in the long run. A funding cut to these programs would have a sizable impact on communities across the state.