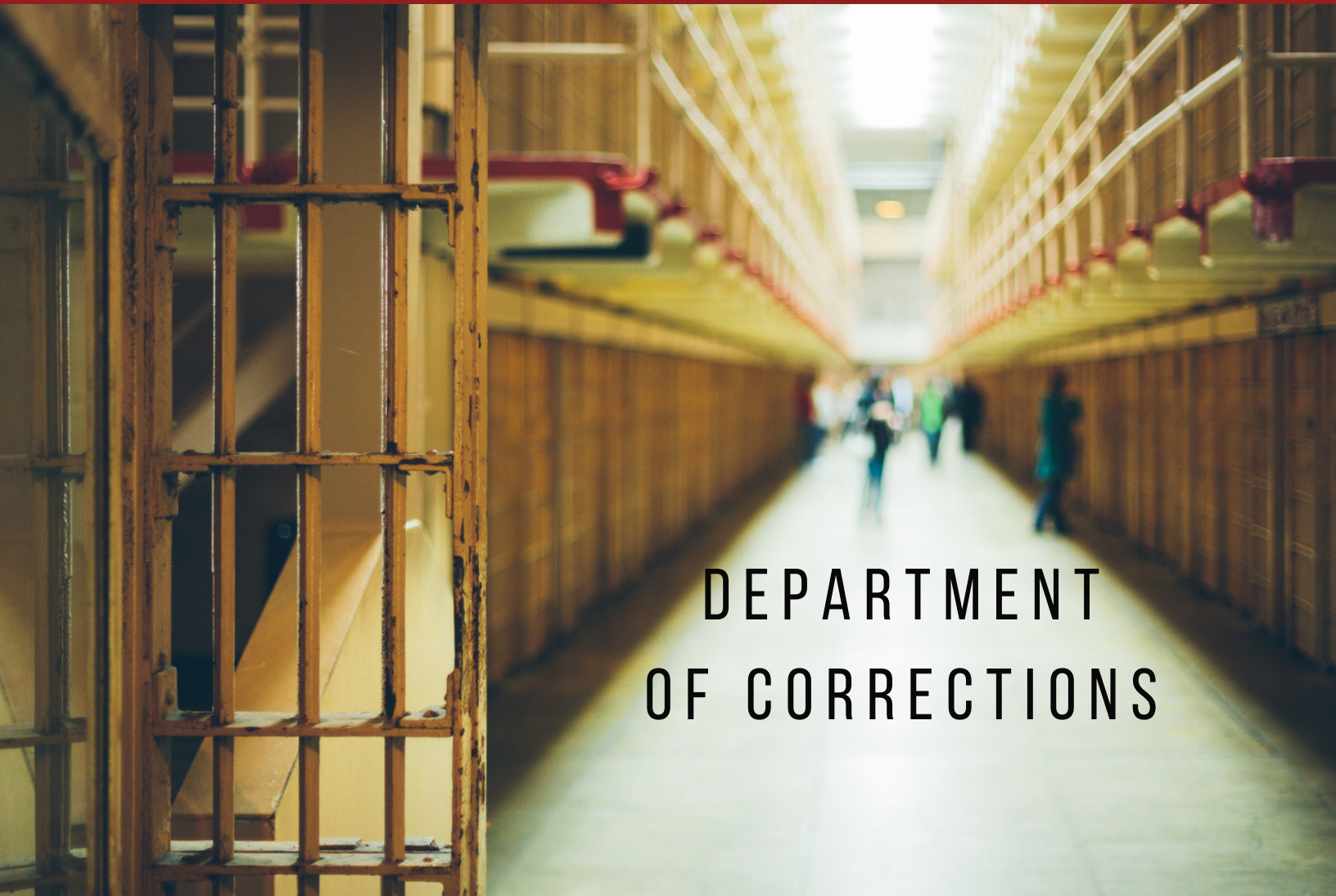


# PA

## 2016-17 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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Independent Fiscal Office



DEPARTMENT  
OF CORRECTIONS



## INDEPENDENT FISCAL OFFICE

Second Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building  
400 Market Street  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

February 23, 2017

Dear Chairmen and Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees:

In September 2016, the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released a report entitled “Using Performance Measures in the State Budget.” In that report, the office described the systems and processes that certain states use to implement performance-based budgeting. The report also included a basic “prototype report” that compiled data from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) and other states for the purpose of soliciting feedback from policymakers regarding the form and content of a performance measures report that would be most useful for their deliberations. The office received positive feedback regarding the preliminary contents of that report.

Recently, Chairman Saylor requested that the IFO submit a completed version of the report for the purpose of the DOC budget hearings. Based on that request, the office submits the attached report. The department has reviewed the data contained in the report and has supplied comments on certain trends and tabulations. Those comments are appended to the end of this submission.

The IFO would like to thank the department for their assistance throughout the preparation of the report. The DOC staff were helpful and professional, and the final report benefited greatly from their comments and insights.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW J. KNITTEL  
Director

# Department of Corrections

- Mission** The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections reduces criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change.
- Objectives** Improve assessment and treatment of inmates by evaluating inmates appropriately and by giving them proven treatment.  
Operate all state prisons securely, safely and humanely by creating and efficiently managing inmate populations and facilities.  
Prepare inmates for successful reentry into the community.

## Share of Funding by Fiscal Year

	10-11 <sup>1</sup>	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
<b>Use of General Funds</b>							
Employee Wages <sup>2</sup>	53.9%	47.1%	48.0%	45.7%	43.3%	43.1%	43.5%
Overtime	2.9%	3.1%	3.8%	4.0%	4.9%	4.5%	3.9%
Pension Contributions	3.3%	4.6%	6.6%	8.4%	10.2%	11.8%	13.7%
All Other Benefits <sup>3</sup>	12.0%	9.6%	10.0%	9.7%	10.0%	10.2%	9.9%
Retiree Health Benefits	5.0%	5.2%	5.7%	6.1%	6.0%	7.1%	6.2%
Medical Expense (Inmates)	9.2%	7.7%	6.6%	6.8%	6.5%	6.4%	6.3%
Food	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%	3.3%	2.9%	2.6%	2.6%
Utilities	4.2%	3.8%	3.9%	3.5%	2.9%	2.5%	2.6%
All Other Non-Personnel	<u>5.7%</u>	<u>15.3%</u>	<u>11.7%</u>	<u>12.4%</u>	<u>13.3%</u>	<u>11.6%</u>	<u>11.2%</u>
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Staff <sup>4</sup>	15,935	15,727	15,518	15,243	15,147	15,164	15,317
Number of Inmates <sup>5</sup>	51,321	51,638	51,184	51,512	50,756	49,914	49,301

### Notes

- For FY 2010-11, General Fund expenditures were reduced by \$175 million due to ARRA funds received from the federal government.
- Includes wages, salaries, bonuses and payroll taxes (Medicare and Social Security).
- Includes all non-pension benefits such as health and life insurance.
- Value for FY 2016-17 is an estimate based on data through February 2017.
- Number of inmates under DOC jurisdiction in December. Does not include parolees in center.

# Department of Corrections - Inputs

	Dollar Amounts (millions)					Growth Rates					Growth 14-17 <sup>3</sup>	
	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17 <sup>1</sup>	17-18 <sup>2</sup>	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17 <sup>1</sup>	17-18 <sup>2</sup>	AAGR	Total
<b>General Fund by Category<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$1,999</b>	<b>\$2,153</b>	<b>\$2,247</b>	<b>\$2,387</b>	<b>\$2,344</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
Employee Wages <sup>5</sup>	914	931	969	1,039	-	1.9	1.9	4.1	7.2	-	4.4	13.7
Overtime	80	105	101	93	-	13.7	31.1	-4.0	-7.7	-	5.1	16.2
Pension Contributions	169	219	266	328	-	36.5	29.9	21.4	23.2	-	24.8	94.4
All Other Benefits <sup>6</sup>	194	216	229	237	-	4.2	10.9	6.3	3.2	-	6.8	21.7
Retiree Health Benefits	121	130	160	147	-	13.7	7.3	23.3	-8.1	-	6.7	21.5
Medical Expense (Inmates)	136	139	145	152	-	9.3	2.6	3.9	4.7	-	3.7	11.6
Food	67	62	59	61	-	-1.9	-7.3	-4.7	3.4	-	-3.0	-8.7
Utilities	71	63	57	63	-	-2.9	-10.6	-9.6	10.3	-	-3.8	-10.9
All Other Non-Personnel	247	287	261	268	-	12.5	16.3	-9.1	2.7	-	2.8	8.6
<b>General Fund by Program<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$1,999</b>	<b>\$2,153</b>	<b>\$2,247</b>	<b>\$2,387</b>	<b>\$2,344</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
General Government	32	33	34	36	36	7.5	3.9	1.5	7.0	0.0	4.1	12.8
Inmate Medical Care	235	248	259	257	254	8.1	5.1	4.6	-0.8	-1.2	2.9	9.1
Inmate Education	39	40	42	45	40	-2.8	2.9	6.3	5.6	-11.4	5.0	15.6
State Correctional Inst.	1,692	1,831	1,909	2,040	2,004	7.0	8.2	4.3	6.8	-1.8	6.4	20.5
Transfer to JRI <sup>7</sup>	0	1	3	10	10	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Other Funding Sources<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$72</b>	<b>\$76</b>	<b>\$74</b>	<b>\$88</b>	<b>\$93</b>	<b>-6.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>
Manufacturing Fund	68	72	69	80	84	-1.4	6.7	-4.6	16.8	4.4	6.0	19.0
Justice Reinvestment Fund	0	0	0	2	3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Federal Funds	5	4	5	6	6	-47.9	-11.3	16.3	23.4	-0.5	8.4	27.3
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$2,071</b>	<b>\$2,229</b>	<b>\$2,321</b>	<b>\$2,476</b>	<b>\$2,437</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>-1.6%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>

## Notes

- 1 Includes \$1.6 million in budgetary reserve.
- 2 Excludes amounts proposed in the FY 2017-18 Executive Budget from the consolidation of the Department of Corrections and the Board of Probation and Parole.
- 3 AAGR is average annual growth rate. Total is the cumulative growth rate.
- 4 Actual spent funds including appropriated, restricted, augmentations and supplemental funds.
- 5 Includes wages, salaries, bonuses and payroll taxes (Medicare and Social Security).
- 6 Includes all non-pension benefits such as health and life insurance and other miscellaneous benefits.
- 7 JRI is the Justice Reinvestment Initiative.



# Department of Corrections - Performance Metrics

	Calendar Year or Fiscal Year Beginning						Change: Level, Percent or Percentage Point					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Output: Workload</b>												
Number of Inmates <sup>1</sup>	51,638	51,184	51,512	50,756	49,914	49,301	317	-454	328	-756	-842	-613
Number of Receptions <sup>2</sup>	19,758	19,960	21,816	21,509	22,135	22,078	3,310	202	1,856	-307	626	-57
Number of Releases <sup>2</sup>	18,933	19,828	21,815	22,063	22,957	22,499	516	895	1,987	248	894	-458
Number in Treatment Program <sup>3</sup>	3,563	3,491	3,440	3,008	3,127	3,000	-140	-72	-51	-432	119	-127
Number in Academic Programs <sup>3</sup>	9,670	8,331	8,634	9,052	8,892	8,500	789	-1,339	303	418	-160	-392
<b>Efficiency: Productivity</b>												
Inmates per Total Staff <sup>4</sup>	3.28	3.30	3.38	3.35	3.29	3.22	0.06	0.01	0.08	-0.03	-0.06	-0.07
Inmates per Custody Staff <sup>4</sup>	5.55	5.59	5.72	5.65	5.53	5.36	0.11	0.04	0.13	-0.06	-0.12	-0.17
Avg. Total Cost per Inmate <sup>5</sup>	\$37,320	\$37,846	\$40,113	\$43,832	\$46,406	\$50,098	11.4%	1.4%	6.0%	9.3%	5.9%	8.0%
Exclude Pensions	\$35,681	\$35,429	\$36,836	\$39,513	\$41,073	\$43,445	10.1%	-0.7%	4.0%	7.3%	3.9%	5.8%
Avg. Healthcare Cost per Inmate <sup>5</sup>	\$4,574	\$4,256	\$4,570	\$4,877	\$5,186	\$5,210	-2.6%	-7.0%	7.4%	6.7%	6.3%	0.5%
<b>Outcome: Effectiveness</b>												
1-Year Re-incarceration Rate <sup>6</sup>	22.5%	24.1%	24.6%	25.5%	28.1%	30.1%	2.4%	1.6%	0.5%	0.9%	2.6%	2.0%
3-Year Recidivism Rate <sup>7</sup>	62.0%	61.1%	61.4%	59.9%	63.1%	60.9%	-0.2%	-1.0%	0.4%	-1.5%	3.2%	-2.2%
Employment Rate <sup>8</sup>	59.0%	59.0%	55.0%	54.0%	56.0%	58.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-4.0%	-1.0%	2.0%	2.0%

**Notes**

- 1 Number of Inmates under DOC jurisdiction in December. Does not include parolees in center.
- 2 Number of Receptions and Releases is total for calendar year.
- 3 Number participating in program during fiscal year. Value for 2015 corresponds to FY 2015-16.
- 4 Value for 2016 is an estimate based on data through February 2017.
- 5 Equal to cost from all state funding sources for entire fiscal year divided by number of inmates (December). Value for 2015 is average cost for FY 2015-16.
- 6 Share of inmates returned to DOC custody within 12 months of their release during the latest release year available for a full 1-year follow-up.
- 7 Share of inmates rearrested or re-incarcerated to DOC custody within 36 months of their release during the latest release year available for a full 3-year follow-up.
- 8 Employment rate of offenders who are able to work. Measure reported by Board of Probation and Parole.

# Department of Corrections - Cost Drivers

- The decomposition of the average cost per inmate facilitates the identification of agency cost drivers.
- The computation controls for the share of total spending that each category represents.
- For FY 2016-17, pensions contribute 2.8 percentage points of the total 7.5% growth in the average cost per inmate.
- A reduction in the number of inmates increases average costs if other costs do not change.

	Fiscal Years						AAGR <sup>4</sup>
	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	14-17
Number of Inmates <sup>1</sup>	51,638	51,184	51,512	50,756	49,914	49,301	
<b>Growth Rate</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>-1.5%</b>
Total General Fund (millions)	\$1,857	\$1,869	\$1,999	\$2,153	\$2,247	\$2,387	6.1%
Average Cost per Inmate	\$35,960	\$36,506	\$38,800	\$42,411	\$45,027	\$48,426	
<b>Growth Rate</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Contributions to Growth Rate</b>							<b>Average<sup>4</sup> Contribution</b>
Number of Inmates <sup>1</sup>	-0.6%	0.9%	-0.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.2%	1.5%
Employee Wages <sup>2</sup>	-0.5%	1.8%	1.4%	2.1%	1.6%	2.8%	2.1%
Pensions	1.8%	2.1%	2.4%	2.5%	2.2%	2.8%	2.8%
All Other Benefits <sup>3</sup>	-0.4%	1.0%	1.2%	1.5%	2.0%	-0.3%	1.1%
Medical Expense (Inmates)	-0.5%	-1.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
All Other	<u>11.7%</u>	<u>-3.3%</u>	<u>1.2%</u>	<u>1.5%</u>	<u>-1.6%</u>	<u>0.7%</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
<b>Growth Rate</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>

## Notes

- 1 Number of inmates under DOC jurisdiction in December. Does not include parolees in center.
- 2 Includes wages, salaries, overtime, bonuses and payroll taxes (Medicare and Social Security).
- 3 Includes all non-pension benefits such as health and life insurance. Also includes retiree health insurance.
- 4 AAGR is average annual growth rate. For contributions to growth, the figures represent the contribution to average annual growth rate during time period.

# Department of Corrections - State Comparisons

	Levels or Rates						Ratio to Pennsylvania Level					
	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
<b>Avg. Total Cost per Inmate<sup>1,2,3</sup></b>												
Pennsylvania	\$37,320	\$37,846	\$40,113	\$43,832	\$46,406	\$50,098	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Ohio	\$30,033	\$31,523	\$31,265	\$31,418	\$32,946	\$34,737	0.80	0.83	0.78	0.72	0.71	0.69
New York	\$49,010	\$54,160	\$52,651	\$54,576	\$57,148	\$57,314	1.31	1.43	1.31	1.25	1.23	1.14
New Jersey	\$43,176	\$44,703	\$46,179	\$47,254	\$50,192	\$50,376	1.16	1.18	1.15	1.08	1.08	1.01
Virginia	\$34,947	\$37,250	\$37,491	\$38,558	\$40,592	\$42,166	0.94	0.98	0.93	0.88	0.87	0.84
Maryland	\$51,596	\$55,323	\$58,432	\$60,838	\$62,705	\$64,508	1.38	1.46	1.46	1.39	1.35	1.29
Michigan	\$46,395	\$46,381	\$46,840	\$46,662	\$46,324	\$47,433	1.24	1.23	1.17	1.06	1.00	0.95
<b>Avg. Healthcare Cost per Inmate</b>												
Pennsylvania <sup>4</sup>	\$4,574	\$4,256	\$4,570	\$4,877	\$5,186	\$5,210	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Ohio	\$4,883	\$5,241	\$4,618	\$4,493	\$4,959	\$5,126	1.07	1.23	1.01	0.92	0.96	0.98
New Jersey <sup>5</sup>	\$5,875	\$6,543	\$6,963	\$7,052	\$7,738	\$8,028	1.28	1.54	1.52	1.45	1.49	1.54
Virginia <sup>6</sup>	\$4,745	\$5,654	\$5,053	\$5,361	\$5,602	\$6,610	1.04	1.33	1.11	1.10	1.08	1.27
Maryland <sup>7</sup>	\$7,402	\$7,290	\$7,636	\$8,082	\$8,213	\$8,073	1.62	1.71	1.67	1.66	1.58	1.55
Michigan	\$7,267	\$7,267	\$6,788	\$6,647	\$6,902	\$7,681	1.59	1.71	1.49	1.36	1.33	1.47
<b>Inmates per Staff</b>												
Pennsylvania	3.28	3.30	3.38	3.35	3.29	3.22	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
New York	1.92	1.88	1.87	1.87	1.81	1.78	0.58	0.57	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.55
New Jersey	3.09	3.02	2.98	2.91	2.89	2.77	0.94	0.92	0.88	0.87	0.88	0.86
Michigan	2.70	2.80	2.96	2.98	3.01	2.90	0.82	0.85	0.88	0.89	0.91	0.90
<b>Re-Incarceration Rates<sup>8</sup></b>												
Pennsylvania (1-Year)	22.5%	24.1%	24.6%	25.5%	28.1%	30.1%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Ohio (1-Year)	31.2%	28.7%	27.1%	27.5%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
New York (1-Year)	22.9%	23.1%	23.4%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
New Jersey (3-Year)	n.a.	n.a.	32.0%	31.3%	31.3%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

## Notes

- 1 For most states, computed as total state funds divided by number of inmates in December of fiscal year or the average number for fiscal year.
- 2 Estimates for number of inmates for FY 2016-17 based on latest monthly reports published by state or is an estimate. For PA, latest report is December 2016.
- 3 Historical values represent actual spending. Value for NJ for FY 2015-16 uses appropriated amount. All FY 2016-17 values based on appropriation.
- 4 For PA, includes medical, dental and some mental health. Some states may characterize certain healthcare costs as payments to service providers.
- 5 For NJ, inmate healthcare includes medical, dental, mental health and substance use disorder treatment costs.
- 6 For VA, healthcare costs use appropriated budget number.
- 7 For MD, healthcare costs represent the department's total costs including the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS - Baltimore City detention).
- 8 Share of inmates returned to DOC custody within 12 (or 36) months of their release during the latest release year available for a full 1-year follow-up.

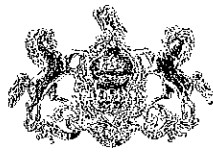
# Department of Corrections - Historical Data

	Calendar Year or Fiscal Year Beginning										AAGR <sup>6</sup>	
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	08-12	12-16	
Number of Inmates <sup>1</sup>	49,307	51,487	51,321	51,638	51,184	51,512	50,756	49,914	49,301	0.9%	-0.9%	
Number of FTE <sup>2</sup>	15,818	16,034	15,935	15,727	15,518	15,243	15,147	15,164	15,317	-0.5%	-0.3%	
General Fund (millions) <sup>3</sup>	\$1,598	\$1,592	\$1,657	\$1,857	\$1,869	\$1,999	\$2,153	\$2,247	\$2,387	4.0%	6.3%	
Exclude Pensions (millions) <sup>3</sup>	\$1,561	\$1,550	\$1,602	\$1,772	\$1,745	\$1,830	\$1,933	\$1,981	\$2,059	2.8%	4.2%	
Inmates per Staff	3.12	3.21	3.22	3.28	3.30	3.38	3.35	3.29	3.22	0.18	-0.08	
General Funds per Inmate	\$32,405	\$30,930	\$32,294	\$35,960	\$36,506	\$38,800	\$42,411	\$45,027	\$48,426	3.0%	7.3%	
Exclude Pensions	\$31,658	\$30,103	\$31,222	\$34,321	\$34,090	\$35,524	\$38,092	\$39,694	\$41,772	1.9%	5.2%	
Male Incarceration Rate <sup>4</sup>	1.21%	1.25%	1.23%	1.23%	1.22%	1.23%	1.21%	1.19%	1.18%	0.01%	-0.04%	
One-Year Re-incarceration Rate	23.4%	22.0%	20.1%	22.5%	24.1%	24.6%	25.5%	28.1%	30.1%	0.7%	6.0%	
PA Males Age 20-64 (000s) <sup>5</sup>	3,665	3,719	3,751	3,776	3,776	3,778	3,775	3,768	3,761	0.8%	-0.1%	
Philadelphia Metro CPI-U <sup>5</sup>	3.4%	-0.4%	2.0%	2.7%	1.8%	1.2%	1.3%	-0.1%	0.6%	1.5%	0.7%	
Nominal PA GDP Growth <sup>5</sup>	3.5%	-0.9%	4.0%	3.1%	3.7%	3.7%	3.6%	3.6%	1.7%	2.4%	3.1%	

## Notes

- 1 Number of inmates under DOC jurisdiction at end of calendar year. Source: DOC Annual Statistical Report.
- 2 Average number of actual filled positions. Equal to average of June value from current and prior fiscal year. Amount for 2016 is an estimate.
- 3 Includes all actual spent state funds from the General Fund including appropriated, restricted, augmentations and supplemental funds.
- 4 Equal to male inmate population age 20-64 divided by total male population age 20-64. Source: U.S. Census Bureau and PA DOC.
- 5 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Pennsylvania State Data Center. GDP for 2016 is an estimate.
- 6 AAGR is average annual growth rate. For inmates per staff and incarceration rates, the figures represent cumulative change.





COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

February 22, 2017

Matthew Knittel | Director  
Independent Fiscal Office  
400 Market Street  
Harrisburg PA 17105

Dear Director Knittel:

We commend the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) for this first of its kind report on key performance metrics for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC). We believe that this report presents an overall fair and accurate account of DOC performance.

In terms of information presented in this report on DOC cost drivers, we think the report highlights the large contribution that employee wage, pension, and other benefit costs are contributing to overall growth in the DOC budget. By our calculation from the numbers presented here, nearly 80% of the growth in DOC costs over the past six years can be attributed to increases in wages, pension costs, and other employee benefit costs. This report shows that the DOC has been able to mostly hold the line on operating costs in recent years. Based on more recent developments and trends not reflected in this report, we believe the DOC's food costs for FY 2016-17 will end up dropping to \$56 million, and utilities costs dropping to \$55 million. Also, the report highlights recent improvements that have been made in reducing overtime costs. DOC's overtime costs are on pace to drop for the second consecutive fiscal year, and also on pace to end the current fiscal year at nearly the lowest share of total DOC funding in the last five years.

In terms of the DOC inmate population, this report highlights results of corrections reform efforts such as the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI). Since June 2012, the DOC population has decreased by a total of 2,456 inmates. This is the largest sustained drop in the inmate population in the department's history. The DOC set a population reduction goal of 600 inmates during FY 2016-17. Just over halfway through the fiscal year, the department has already exceeded this goal.

In terms of the number of inmates in treatment or academic programs, these numbers show a decline simply because the overall inmate population is declining. It is important to keep in mind that the DOC has maintained consistent treatment and educational programming levels when measured as a rate of the total number of inmates. As the DOC makes gains in reducing treatment waitlists and preparing inmates earlier for parole hearings, the number of inmates in treatment or educational programming at any given point in time will also decrease.

In terms of recidivism rates, this report highlights some recent increases in recidivism. This should be held in context of several factors. First, for FY 2016-17, the tentative 3-year overall recidivism rate (which is the DOC's primary measure of recidivism) dropped by 3.5%. Second, a significant explanation for the increase in the re-incarceration rate is due to an increased return to DOC custody of technical parole violators who have

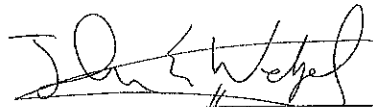
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not committed a new crime. Third, in light of the Commonwealth's heroin/opioid epidemic, a larger share of these technical parole violators are being returned to DOC custody after testing positive for heroin use. Fourth, the composition of the DOC population shows an increase in the number of inmates who are assessed at a high risk of recidivism. This may be a natural result of corrections reform, where lower risk offenders are handled outside of state prison, leaving higher risk offenders in DOC custody. Finally, it is worth noting that overall crime rates remain low in Pennsylvania. Violent crime in Pennsylvania is as low today as it was in 1980. At the same time that the DOC inmate population dropped 2.5% from 2013 to 2015, the statewide crime rate also dropped by 4%.

In terms of the state comparisons in this report, we believe that these comparisons show Pennsylvania operating in line with similar and neighboring states. Pennsylvania shows a consistently lower average total cost per inmate than four of the six comparison states, and the second lowest average inmate healthcare costs. Pennsylvania also shows similar inmate-to-staff ratios for all comparison states except for New York. In terms of recidivism, we join national corrections experts in recommending extreme caution when comparing state recidivism rates. So many factors differ between state correctional and criminal justice systems, as well as between state definitions of recidivism, which make recidivism comparisons very difficult.

We are encouraged by many of the positive measures of DOC performance reported here. We look forward to future year IFO reports on the DOC's progress towards these performance goals, and also suggest the addition of other performance metrics in the future, such as inmate-on-staff and inmate-on-inmate assault rates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. Wetzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

John E. Wetzel  
Secretary of Corrections