

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
FY 2017 BUDGET DIVISION OF CORRECTION**

Staffing

Issue: DPSCS should comment on the effect the high vacancy rate has had on its ability to carry out its mission, as well as the plan to fill vacant positions.

Response: As mentioned in previous budget hearings the Department is fully committed to filling vacant positions. Specifically, the Department has taken the following actions:

- In late September of 2015, the Department reorganized its Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) without losing any employees. The reorganization centralized recruitment and created uniformity in the recruitment processes. Since the reorganization, agency recruitments have increased from 23 to 90, representing an increase of almost 400 percent.
- The Department created a Recruitment Unit – staffed with three professional recruiters – that will be fully operational by the end of February 2016. The Department has established a recruitment plan to address all phases of recruitment within the organization. Specifically, the plan focuses on Correctional Officer and Parole and Probation positions and technical positions that are typically challenging to fill. The Department has also partnered with colleges that offer Criminal Justice and Correctional programs or other programs such as psychology, nursing, etc. In addition to partnering with higher education institutions, the Department has established a relationship with the military, veterans groups and retired military veterans associations in hopes of tapping into this great pool of talent.
- The Department is currently in the process of implementing a new, validated test for Correctional Officer recruitments that reduces the testing time from approximately five and a half (5.5) hours to two (2) hours.

A class of 23 Correctional Officer candidates enrolled in the Correctional Training academy in the beginning of February 2016 and the Department is working diligently to fill critical Correctional Officer vacancies.

On March 19th, the Department will be hosting a job fair in Western Maryland – marking the start of a robust recruitment effort.

Maryland Correctional Enterprises

Issue: MCE should comment on its strategy to meet this goal, including any expansion projects and whether increasing inmate employment will require additional regular positions.

Response: Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) has identified several means of meeting its 2,310 inmate employment goal for FY 17, including increasing inmate employment through the expansion of existing facilities, the identification of additional inmate job functions, and the creation of new business units. MCE will continue to aggressively pursue sales to maximize and increase inmate employment levels within existing plants/business units.

MCE has identified several significant projects in FY 17, which leads to increased inmate employment, including a significant signage project for the Maryland Transit Administration and various large furniture projects for universities and community colleges.

MCE will also have the opportunity to provide additional inmate employment opportunities in conjunction with the planned improvements of its 60,000 square foot Brockbridge Road Warehouse located in Jessup. Inmates, under the supervision of MCE, will assist in the improvements/renovations. Once the renovations have been completed, there will be the opportunity for increased inmate employment associated with the shipping and receiving of raw materials and finished goods.

Expansion projects that are under consideration for Fiscal Year 2017 include the establishment of new business units for the installation of systems furniture (currently being outsourced) and for the provision of optical/eyewear services (new industry).

The current number of authorized positions allotted to MCE for FY 17 is believed to be sufficient for MCE to achieve its inmate employment goal.

Facility Security

Issue: The department should comment on the status of apprehending inmates who escaped or walked off in fiscal 2015, as well as the number and status of inmates who have escaped or walked off in the current fiscal year

Response: The Department is tasked with the responsibility of protecting the public, our staff, and the incarcerated population. A key component of this task is to prepare the incarcerated population for reentry into society, in order to increase their chances of success and lessen the risk of reoffending. The Department maintains

ten (10) facilities where approximately 600 inmates are assigned to work detail outside of the institution, hold jobs through the Work Release Program, or are assigned to highway clean-up crews and public works projects. These inmates must be classified as minimum security, must demonstrate good behavior and possess positive work ethics. Although these inmates typically pose little threat to the community, the Department takes all walk offs and escapes very seriously and believes these instances warrant swift response.

For fiscal year 2015 the Department had a total of six (6) walk-offs and two (2) escapes. All of these inmates were taken into custody and returned.

For fiscal year 2016 to date, the Department has a total of two (2) escapes and one (1) walk off. All of these inmates were taken into custody and returned.

Pharmacy Contract

Issue: DPSCS should comment on the timeline for completing the new request for proposals and awarding a contract.

Response: The Department's Office of Inmate Health and Clinical Services Unit, along with the Procurement Services Unit are working toward the completion of the scope of work for the new Pharmacy contract. The Department's goal is to release the Pharmacy solicitation within the next several weeks and execute the new contract prior to June 30, 2016.

Facility Accreditation Schedule

Issue: DPSCS should comment on the prioritization for scheduling the remaining 11 facilities.

Response: The Department is still working on scheduling all remaining facilities for American Correctional Association (ACA) certification. The following facilities are in progress:

- North Branch Correctional Institution (NBCI) and the Maryland Correctional Transition Center (MCTC) submitted their applications to ACA in December 2015 in order to initiate the process. The applications were accepted, and both institutions are scheduled to be audited in the fall of 2016.
- Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown (MCIH) application is scheduled to be submitted to ACA by June 2016.
- Maryland Correctional Institution-Jessup (MCIJ) application is scheduled to be submitted to ACA by August 2016.

- Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCIW) application is scheduled to be submitted to ACA by October 2016.

The Department plans on continuing to seek ACA accreditation for the remaining facilities.

In-service Training

Issue: DPSCS should comment on the typical topic matter or type of training that has been increased for the in-service training requirement, as well as the process for evaluating the effectiveness of training.

Response: All DPSCS mandated staff is now receiving 40 hours of in-service training. The Police and Correctional Training Commission (PCTC) expended/added the following training topics:

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI);
- Defensive Tactics – update and review;
- Correctional Wellness – dealing with the stress of the job;
- Crime Scene Preservation;
- Responding to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Inmates;
- Report Writing (including Offender Case Management System (OCMS); and,
- Mental Illness, Chemical Dependency and Inmate Access to Health Care.

All attendees of DPSCS in-service training complete an Instructor/Course Evaluation at the end of the class. The evaluation contains a list of statements and asks the trainee to grade the statements based on a scale of one (1) to five (5) – one (1) being “Strongly Disagree” and five (5) being “Strongly Agree.” A majority of the evaluations have been very positive so far this year, with most trainees responding with ratings of 4 -5.

Inmate Welfare Funds

Issue: In light of the already declining telephone commission revenues, DPSCS should comment on the effect the new rates and associated rules will have on the IWF, and whether there will be a need in the future to shift costs from the IWF to general funds.

Response: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) denied a stay request on January 22, 2016. The decision has been appealed to the courts and at this time it is unclear whether the stay will be granted and a final ruling is unlikely to be provided prior to March 17, 2016. Currently, Virginia, Ohio, and New Jersey have moved to charging lower rates for inmate phone calls at their facilities, but do not charge commissions. Many states such as California, Florida, Ohio, Virginia, New Jersey and West Virginia have already moved to eliminate receiving commissions.

At this time the Department is exploring all available options, should the courts uphold or deny the FCC ruling, and until that time a final determination cannot be made.

Recommended Actions

1. Concur with Governor's allowance.

Response: The Department agrees with the recommended action.