



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary

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Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Overview - Q00
Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

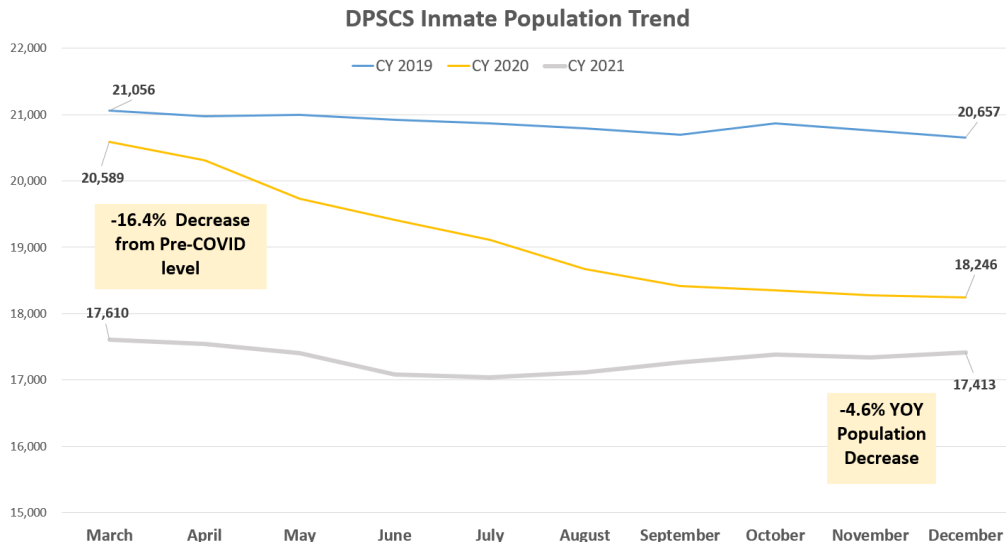
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Public Safety, Transportation and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Cory McCray, Chair
January 28, 2022

Appropriations Committee
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee
Delegate Tony Bridges, Chair
February 3, 2022

Vacancy and Hiring Analysis

Issue: Considering the increasing inmate population and decreasing employment, DPSCS should detail its strategic hiring plan for community supervision, correctional, and administrative officers.

Response: From July 2021 to December 2021, the Department has seen a slight increase in the sentenced population; however, it still remains 16% lower than pre-COVID-19 levels as indicated by the graph below. While the inmate population has slightly increased in the first half of FY 2022, the year end population still fell by nearly 4x the normal rate prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department cannot predict future trends in an environment of shifting court operations, but absent a sustained increase in intakes of over 130%, the Department would not reach an inmate population level above that which was previously staffed with the existing number of correctional officers.



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Regardless, the Department will continue every effort to recruit, hire, and retain employees across the entire agency. The Department has submitted two quarterly hiring reports as required by language contained in the fiscal year 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report that highlights the improvements in the hiring progress made by this Department.

Correctional Officers

Under the current administration, the State of Maryland has significantly enhanced the salaries of its correctional officer positions. Effective July 1, 2021, over 3,800 employees received increases after the entry salary for COIs was increased by 7.4% (from a step 3 to a step 5), and the COII-Lateral entry salary was set at a step 7. Current CO I, received a 3 steps increase and CO IIs were advanced to step 8 (an increase of up to 5 steps). Also, Correctional Officer Sergeants, Correctional Maintenance Officers, Correctional Laundry Officers, Correctional Dietary Officers, Correctional Supply Officers and Maryland Correctional Enterprise Officers under bargaining unit H received one step, as well. Including the aforementioned increase, since July 2018, the starting salary of a correctional officer I has increased by over 20%.

The Department initiated a strategic marketing campaign, participated in community events and local job fairs to advertise for entry-level correctional positions. When restrictions were lifted in the summer of 2021, the Department transitioned back to in person one-day hiring events and focused its efforts in the regions with the most critical need, Western and Eastern Maryland. Moreover, an incentive of \$2,500 was created for newly hired COI and COII laterals that accepted positions to those regions; this was in addition to the new salary effective July 1, 2021 and the standard new hire bonus of \$5,000.

Despite a 32% decrease in applications from 2020 to 2021, the Department closed calendar year 2021 with 461 new Correctional Officers hired. For January 2022, the Department expects a class of 38 new correctional officers and 22 candidates are already committed for February.

Year	Applications	CO Hired
2016	9,581	63
2017	5,688	102
2018	4,286	160
2019	4,578	267
2020	3,806	491
2021	2,570	463

In order to increase the pool of qualified applicants the Department introduced Senate Bill 212, which was heard in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on January 13, 2022. The bill alters the age by which an individual can apply to become a correctional officer to 19 years of age, as opposed to the current 21 years of age. This

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is consistent with minimum ages for correctional officers in 37 other states and all Maryland counties that have opportunities to hire candidates who are younger than 21.

The Department also held promotional and specialty teams recruitments resulting in advancement opportunities for 160 correctional officers during calendar year (CY) 2021.

Community Supervision

The Department is actively recruiting for community supervision positions. During CY2021, there were 50 new entry level Parole and Probation Agents, and 7 new Drinking Driving Monitors I hired. For CY2022, the Department has already hired 10 additional Parole and Probation Agents and 2 more Drinking Driving Monitor I. An additional 19 agents are waiting for their start date and 61 are in the background process. Similarly, 11 candidates for Drinking Driving Monitor I are completing the background process.

Administrative Positions

During CY2021 the Department filled 171 administrative positions in 89 different classifications. So far this calendar year, there have been 29 active recruitments for administrative positions, 12 new positions filled, 8 candidates waiting for their start date, and 55 completing their background process.

Recruitment Strategy

The Department is confident that the announced salary increases for all state employees, opportunities for teleworking and the elimination of the hiring freeze process will yield a larger pool of qualified candidates, but also allow us to retain our current employees. In addition, the Department recognizes the need to expand focused recruitment and advertisement efforts for all positions.

The Department has adopted a strategic recruitment plan with emphasis on the targeted advertisement, community partnerships, and a more streamlined applicant selection and hiring process. In 2019, the Department utilized a contractual marketing and advertising group who had unique experience with assisting correctional systems in improving branding and advertising. The group provided incredible feedback that enabled the Department to rebrand and improve upon its messaging and narrative. Further, the group's insight and analysis enabled the Department to strategically target its messaging and advertisements in the most valuable markets and locations through various media outlets, including billboards, print and social media. In December 2021, the Department entered into an agreement with the Maryland State Ad Agency for their assistance with a new advertisement and media campaign in order to continue with its success in messaging and narrative.

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In September 2021, the Department hired two Regional Field Recruiters to augment existing correctional officer recruitment efforts and to focus on job classifications with high vacancy rates or hard-to-fill positions, such as mental health, social worker, case management, procurement and information technology. The Department has engaged with community partners, institutions of higher education, professional and trade organizations, local chambers of commerce, and other state agencies to enhance job advertisement and marketing for these positions. Moreover, the Department continues to improve the recruitment process by increasing communication with all stakeholders and making better use of technology during the hiring process.

With a robust recruitment process and advertisement campaign in place, the Department is expecting to see improved hiring across all positions in 2022.

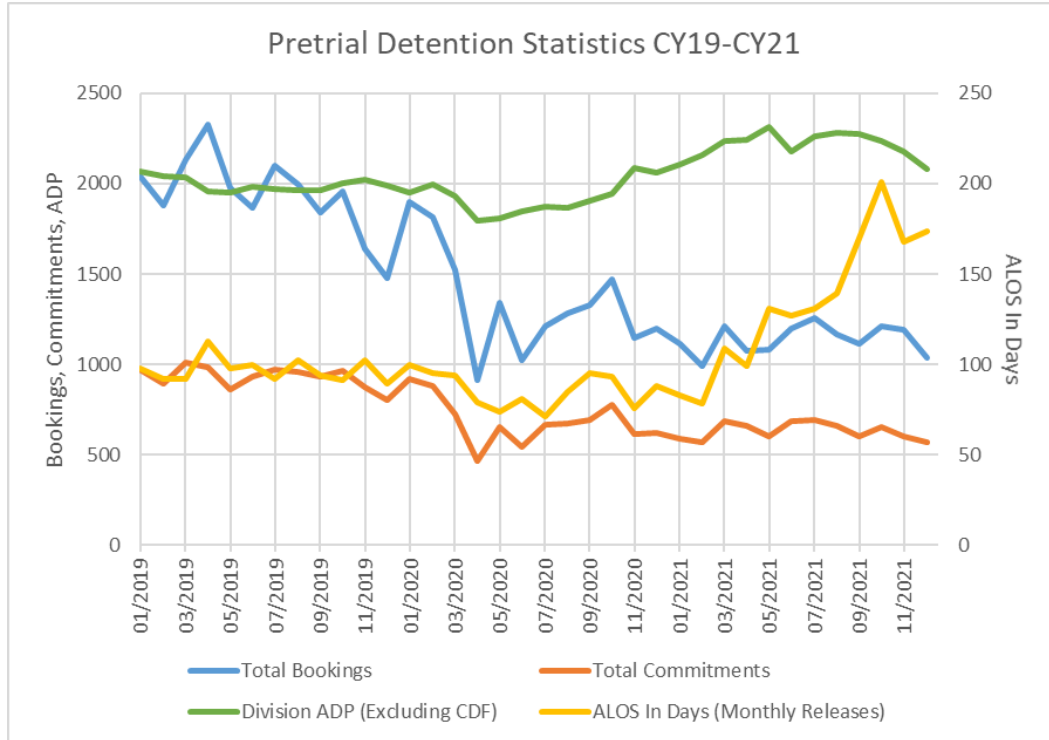
COVID-19 Response

Issue: DPSCS should comment on how recent arrest trends and judicial backlogs are anticipated to impact its detention and correctional populations.

Division of Pretrial, Detention and Services (DPDS)

During calendar year 2021, the number of bookings that resulted in an individual being committed to DPDS averaged 55 percent - meaning that 55% of all individuals booked at the Baltimore City Booking and Intake Center resulted in their actual commitment to pretrial incarceration. From Spring 2021 through Fall 2021, DPDS experienced an increase in the average length of stay, as illustrated by the graph below, likely due to the judicial backlog that had accumulated during the various phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. The delay in case adjudication is what contributes to an increase in pretrial ADP despite a decrease in monthly booking totals. The Department is hopeful that, as COVID-19 community transmission slows, court processing will increase, resulting in a decrease in average length of stay and continued decrease in average daily population.

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Division of Correction

The Department continues to collaborate and coordinate with the local jails and detention centers on individuals who have been sentenced to serve a period of incarceration that requires commitment to the Division of Correction. As of January 24, 2022, a total of 93 individuals are awaiting transfer to the Division of Correction (see chart below). It is important to note that the same court closures that have increased pretrial length of stay within DPDS custody, also impact local detention centers, which may have a mitigating impact on the outcome of those cases still pending adjudication within local detention centers, as time served for longer pretrial detention may offset the volume of post-sentencing transfer to DOC custody.

COUNTY	MALE	FEMALE
Allegany County	1	0
Anne Arundel County	9	0
Baltimore County	23	0
Calvert County	2	0
Carroll County	0	0
Caroline County	0	0
Cecil County	7	0

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Charles County	4	0
Dorchester County	0	0
Frederick County	2	0
Garrett County	0	0
Harford County	6	0
Howard County	0	0
Kent County	0	0
Montgomery County	8	0
Prince George's County	9	0
Queen Anne's County	0	0
Somerset County	0	0
St. Mary's County	5	1
Talbot County	0	0
Washington County	3	0
Wicomico County	11	0
Worcester County	2	0
TOTAL	92	1

The Department projects it will release 1,558 sentenced incarcerated individuals during fiscal year 2022. The Department has been closely monitoring its population trends. The inmate population under the Department's custody is first filtered by the direction of law enforcement and sentencing decisions beyond the Department's control.

Issue: DPSCS should brief the committees on the effects of the omicron COVID-19 variant, including the impact on activities, sick days used, overtime hours worked, and efforts to increase vaccination rates.

Response:

Impact on Activities

Effective December 23, 2021 the following operational changes were made. To mitigate the risk associated with the spread of Delta and Omicron COVID-19 variants the following changes were imposed:

- All staff were required to wear surgical masks while on duty as opposed to just cloth masks.
- In-person visitation was paused in all correctional facilities until February 4, 2022.
- Enhanced video visitation as well as 3 free 15 minute phone calls continues.
- Indoor volunteer-led programs have been temporarily suspended.

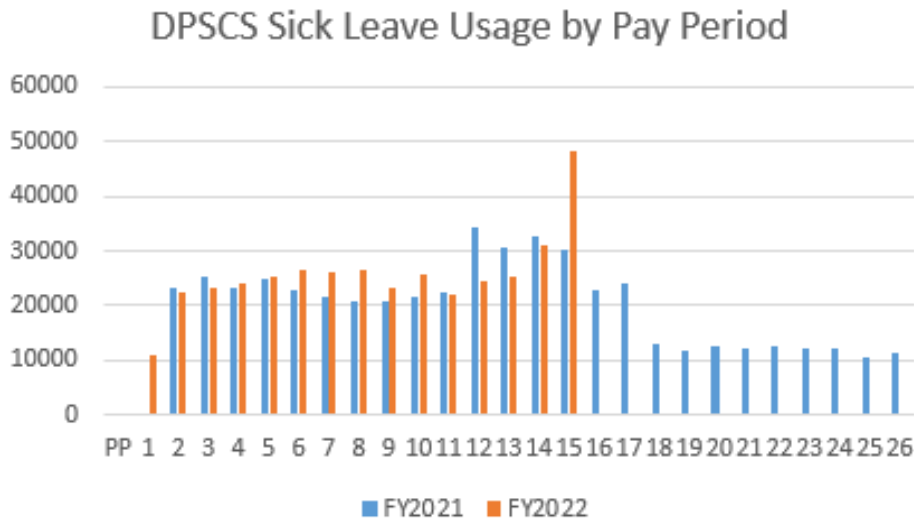
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- Maryland Correctional Enterprises staff and inmates continue operations and programs in accordance with COVID-19 protocols.
- Certain in-person congregate programming was paused. This includes certain educational programs and social work treatment cognitive behavioral therapy groups. However, certain individual therapy sessions and IEP education plans have continued. Education and group therapy have continued via correspondence packets.

Effective January 13, 2022 the incarcerated population received surgical masks and are required to wear them within the facilities. KN95 masks were provided to the incarcerated population and the transportation unit as both the incarcerated population and transporting officers are required to wear them during trips outside of the facilities.

Sick Days and Overtime

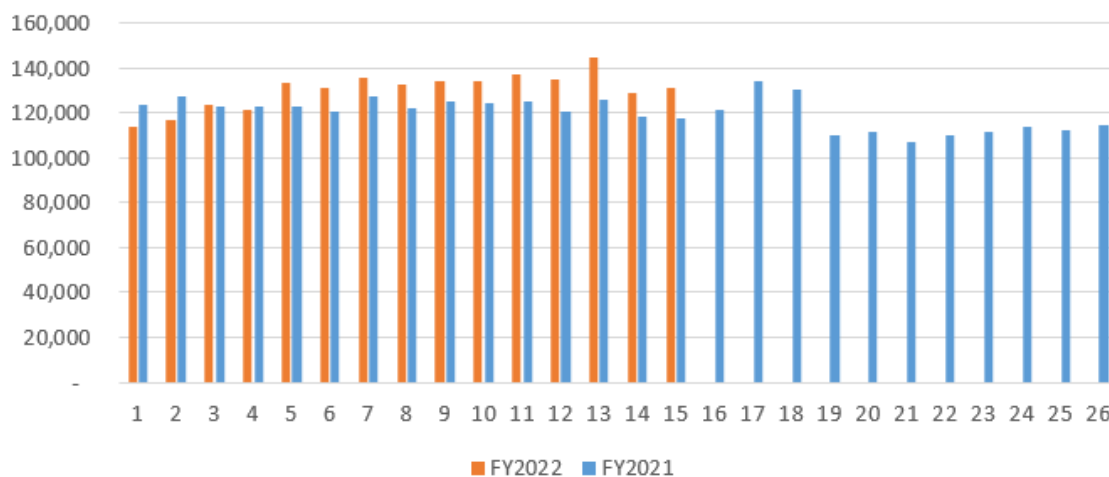
The new variant has had an effect in sick leave usage during the most recent pay period ending January 11, 2022. However, the facilities have been able to manage without a significant increase in overtime hours. The steep increase in sick leave usage reflects mostly staff affected by COVID-19 in the facilities located in Baltimore City and Jessup.



The most recent increase in overtime hours happened during the fiscal year 2022 pay periods 11, 12 and 13 - representing November through December 2021. A rise of over 5,000 overtime hours was related to the increase in transportation of incarcerated individuals to community health providers to undergo in-patient medical procedures that were previously postponed due to limited capacity at medical facilities as a result of COVID-19. Moreover, the holidays typically generate higher leave usage than other pay periods.

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DPSCS OT Hours per Pay Period



Efforts to Increase Vaccination Rates

The Department's contractual medical treatment provider and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) are making every effort to offer first, second, and booster vaccinations to the individuals incarcerated in state correctional facilities. Beginning on November 11, 2021 inmate booster vaccinations began according to risk level, just three days after other state corrections authorities in Pennsylvania, and six days after North Dakota and Utah systems, the only other states to make start dates available. As booster eligibility was expanded by the CDC on November 19th, the Department began expanding availability to all inmates who were fully vaccinated. In December, the Department began providing an incentive package for inmate boosters, mirroring its successful previous vaccination incentives in response to vaccine hesitancy among the population. The rise of the omicron variant has coincided with a renewed willingness for all vaccination.

Since the end of November, MDH has held well over 20 separate booster clinics and the Department's contractual medical treatment provider also continues to administer boosters. As reported in the most current COVID-19 dashboard update, a total of 2,770 COVID booster vaccination shots have been administered (week ending January 22nd). MDH scheduled inmate vaccination clinics Monday through Friday through the entire month of January, where they are offering first, second, and booster shots. In order to remove any potential barriers, the Department's medical treatment provider submits lists of all inmates eligible for a booster. Departmental staff in partnership with MDH then utilize that list to solicit consent to administer a booster vaccine. This in person discussion allows the incarcerated person to discuss the benefits of receiving a booster dose with medical staff and hear about certain advantages of full vaccination such as the incentive kit program.

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The Prison Policy Initiative, a notable prison advocacy group, has said that the Department's COVID-19 Dashboard—which the public can see at any time (<https://dpscs.maryland.gov/covid-19/>) — is one of the most comprehensive at recording and updating specific data and information. Only two states — Maryland and South Carolina — are publishing the number of incarcerated people who have refused the vaccine. Maryland is the only system to track and publish both staff and inmate booster efforts. Keep in mind that the data reflects what is occurring in Maryland State correctional facilities and does not include local jails except for the Baltimore City Pretrial Complex as all other local jails and detention facilities are run by the counties.

The Department's COVID-19 dashboard is updated every Friday evening to reflect the prior week's information. Since vaccination clinics are held on a daily basis, the figures often lag behind and are lower than what is being captured in realtime – and for good reason. Vaccination information from MDH assisted clinics is first entered into the state Prep Mod system and then into the Electronic Patient Health Record System which tracks inmate medical records. This two-step process combined with the current volume of inmate vaccinations causes some delay in reporting. Again, since the COVID-19 dashboard is updated every Friday, next week's update will show the vaccination efforts from this past week and higher vaccination figures.

In addition to vaccination efforts, the Department conducts regular regional testing across its system of all facility staff to control COVID-19 spread into its system. As demonstrated on the dashboard, COVID-19 Population Testing, the Department's population has remained under community and Statewide spread throughout the majority of the pandemic. The Department is requiring weekly COVID-19 testing for staff at Baltimore City Booking and Intake Center as well as Chesapeake Detention Facility, regardless of vaccination status. Rapid tests are being administered to incoming detainees and PCRs are being administered to newly committed individuals, along with weekly serial testing of unvaccinated incarcerated individuals.