



**Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Office of the Secretary**

6776 Reisterstown Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21215
410-585-3346 – TOLL FREE 877-379-8636 • www.dpscs.maryland.gov

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Administration/Offices - Q00A
Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Public Safety, Transportation and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Michael Jackson Chair
February 27, 2025

Appropriations Committee
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee
Delegate Jazz Lewis, Chair
March 3, 2025

STATE OF MARYLAND

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

CAROLYN J. SCRUGGS
SECRETARY

ANTHONY A. GASKINS
CHIEF OF STAFF

JOSEPH SEDTAL
DEPUTY SECRETARY
ADMINISTRATION

ANNIE D. HARVEY
DEPUTY SECRETARY
OPERATIONS

ANGELINA GUARINO
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DATA, POLICY AND GRANTS

RENARD E. BROOKS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
PROGRAMS, TREATMENT &
RE-ENTRY SERVICES

ISSUE: DPSCS should comment on the reason for this increase and the steps being taken to reduce weapons contraband in its facilities.

Response:

Like many other correctional agencies, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) grapples with the introduction and manufacturing of various forms of contraband within its institutions. Contraband may enter the institution through external sources, such as smuggled in during visitation, sent through the mail, throwing contraband over the fence, or through the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, commonly referred to as drones. Contraband is also manufactured within the institutions in the form of incarcerated individual made weapons. The most common types of contraband are Suboxone (buprenorphine), synthetic drugs, tobacco, electronics, and weapons made by the incarcerated population. These weapons are typically pieces of metal or plastic that the incarcerated individual has broken or manipulated from a fixture within the institution and altered so that it can be used as a sharp, penetrating object. Cell phones and other types of electronic equipment (thumb drives, SIM cards, smart watches, etc.) are also frequently recovered.

To detect contraband, DPSCS uses technology such as X-ray machines and scanners, while also conducting physical searches/pat downs. Other methods employed to detect and recover contraband include drug detection K-9 units and metal detectors strategically placed in areas where there is heavy traffic. The Department's Contraband Interdiction Team (CIT) is used

to conduct intelligence based searches across all facilities. Furthermore, the maintenance department plays a critical role in helping to determine the origin of in-house manufactured weapons and works to eliminate access to such materials. DPSCS continues to explore new technology to better assist with discovery.

Weapon contraband recovery has increased due to a greater emphasis on conducting frequent routine and unannounced searches. Steps taken also include enhanced training from the Contraband Interdiction Team (CIT) and K9 units for front entry and cell searches.

The Intelligence Unit is responsible for gathering Intelligence within the facilities. Intelligence gathered is used to identify any threats to the security of the facilities, staff, incarcerated individuals, or the public. The information is analyzed for accuracy and credibility. This information is then passed on in a timely manner to DPSCS administration, institutional staff, or outside law enforcement to be used in efforts to interrupt planned assaults, intercept contraband from being introduced into the facilities, etc. Some of the information learned following an assault is used in an effort to quell any further assaults by retaliation between groups or individuals. When possible, efforts for communication between rival groups are established in an attempt to determine and resolve the matters that led up to the assault.

The CIT conducts intelligence-based searches within all facilities. These searches vary based on the intelligence gleaned and a plan of action is established and put into place. The results of the current process have proven to be very productive and proactive in recovering and intercepting contraband as well as interrupting assaults. Most of these searches are conducted in conjunction with our K-9 Unit and Special Operations Group units. Each academy class spends time assisting the CIT team on planned searches to instill the correct search methodology from the onset of their career with DPSCS.

Lastly, the Department's legislation (SB 273) passed last year that prohibits an individual from operating a drone over a correctional facility for the purpose of delivering contraband. Contraband delivered by drones is extremely dangerous for the incarcerated population and correctional officers, as it increases the risk of violence. This was an essential measure against the persistent and ongoing threat of drone intrusion over correctional facilities.

ISSUE: DPSCS should comment on the terms of the body worn camera pilot program and the plan to expand the program in fiscal year 2026.

Response:

Body worn cameras often serve as a deterrent, both for the officer and incarcerated individual. The below states have implemented body worn cameras in correctional facilities and have seen a reduction in assaults and PREA Complaints.

- 42% reduction in staff assaults (Florida DOC)
- 52% reduction in Prison Rape Allegation Act Complaints (NY DOC)
- 69% reduction in correctional officer injuries (Lexington County, SC)

The Department's DOC body worn camera pilot program involves 100 cameras and associated digital and physical infrastructure deployed across five designated facilities at no cost to the State. The pilot will run for a minimum of 90 days, but will continue until the Department has determined the operation viability of an effective agency wide roll out of the body worn camera program.

Correctional systems that employ body worn cameras have seen a decrease in litigation as well due to the introduction of video evidence that can now add proper context to incidents.

In addition, members of the Board of Public Works have repeatedly questioned the Department about the number and amount of settlements. One of the major weaknesses in our ability to defend these cases has been the lack of any video evidence concerning the incident. The Department has learned that correctional systems implementing body-worn cameras have seen significant reductions in both litigation and violence, demonstrating the effectiveness of this technology in enhancing safety and accountability. The failure to fund the body worn camera initiative would hamper our ability to defend cases and continue the need to settle cases.

ISSUE: DPSCS should explain its current approach to the CCH project, the extent to which DoIT is involved, and the reasons for the multiple cancellations and reissuances of the request for proposal.

Response:

The project is progressing as planned with its updated strategy, which centers on refactoring the legacy application to a modern programming language in preparation for future cloud migration. After the initial solicitation was canceled, the agency received approval to work with IBM and AWS to conduct an in-depth analysis and clarification of the CCH codebase. This aligns with the FY26 Information Technology Project Request schedule, with the goal of completing the analysis of the legacy code base by Q4 2025. Once the refactoring phase is finished, the agency will release a new solicitation for replatforming the CCH application.

ISSUE: DPSCs should provide an update on the progress of the EPHR project and discuss *Duvall v. Moore* compliance in relation to the services provided by the legacy contractor

Response:

The Department remains focused on securing a new implementation vendor. In order to expedite the vendor selection process and meet the Major Information Technology Development project requirements, the Department is actively pursuing an Interagency Cooperative Purchasing Agreement through the National Association of State Procurement Officials, aiming to partner with a vendor experienced in correctional EPHR systems. Procurement efforts are expected to conclude by Q4 FY25, in line with the FY26 Information Technology Project Request. DPSCS continues to collaborate with its legacy vendor under an approved contract extension to ensure uninterrupted support, licensing, and enhancements, while maintaining compliance with *Duvall vs. Moore* mandates while ensuring business continuity throughout the transition.

ISSUE: DPSCS should provide information to the committees on efforts to increase transparency, train records custodians to correctly identify PIA exemptions, and avoid complaints being brought to the PIACB.

Response:

The Office of Constituent Services (OCS) continues to make great strides to ensure transparent, timely, and compliant responses to PIA requests which has led to a sharp decrease in complaints brought to the PIACB. All DPSCS PIA requests are funneled to OCS and tracked via a sharepoint tracking system that was launched in January 2024. As of today, OCS has reviewed and responded to all outstanding PIA requests and remains up to date with processing new PIA requests within the required 30-day time frame.

After onboarding the new management team, a 2.5 hour PIA training was given by the MPIA Ombudsman and the Office of the Attorney General for the Department. This recorded training was shared, along with PIA resources, with all record custodians and new staff members. This recorded training session and the provided resources, are still used to train new staff and record custodians. OCS conducted its first annual refresher training last month facilitated by the Office of the Attorney General and will continue to provide training refreshers to both staff and PIA liaisons on an annual basis.

DPSCS is committed to enhancing transparency and timeliness in responding to Public Information Act requests.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (9)

Add language restricting funds pending a report on feedback from the Office of Legislative Audits about the medical and mental health contract.

Response: The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Add language restricting funds pending a report describing the procurement strategy for completing the Computerized Criminal History and Electronic Patient Health Record major information technology projects.

Response: The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Add language restricting funds pending a report on Recidivism.

Response: The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Adopt language requesting the Department submit a report on the Justice Reinvestment Act.

Response: The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Adopt language requesting the Department add correctional participating measures to the Managing for Results submission.

Response: The Department concurs this recommended action.

Adopt language requesting the Department submit a report on Public Information Act Compliance.

Response: The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Add language restricting funds pending a report on a strategic plan to eliminate the use of mandatory overtime.

Response: The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Add language restricting funds pending the second of four quarterly hiring and attrition reports.

Response:The Department concurs with this recommended action.

Delete \$4.1M funding for the new Correctional Officer body-worn camera program in correctional facilities.

Response: The Department disagrees with this recommended action.

