



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Division of Correction - Q00B
Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Appropriations Committee
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee
Delegate Gabriel Acevero, Chair
February 19, 2026

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Public Safety, Transportation and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Shelly Hettleman, Chair
February 20, 2026

Reentry Passport Program Implementation Faces Challenges

Issue: The Department should provide the number of individuals that have gained access to documents through the Reentry Passport program by fiscal year.

Response: Vital documents are continuing to be requested and uploaded into the MDTHINK (Passport Portal) to enhance coordination, accountability, and continuity of services for the justice involved individuals who transition back to the community. The integration of these documents into MDTHINK supports the interagency State collaboration which aligns with the State's broader goal of improving data sharing and promoting successful support for reentry.

The Department's Case Management, Reentry Team, and Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) have collaborated with this initiative. It should be noted that case management is responsible for the application for and uploads of all vital documents received. The reentry team educates the incarcerated individual how to create email accounts and retrieve the uploaded documents, and DPP is focused on utilizing their internet cafes to support the supervised individuals in creating and linking accounts in MDTHINK via the passport portal.

Historically, incarcerated individuals have relied on labor-intensive, paper-based processes to obtain documents such as birth certificates and

Social Security cards. For those who were not able to secure their documents prior to release or lost track of the physical copies, the situation could result in difficulties in reentering society due to challenges gaining employment, renting an apartment, and gaining access to public benefits.

DPSCS policy dictates case managers offer individuals within 180 days of release the opportunity to apply for key documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, military discharge forms, and release paperwork. The Reentry Specialist team assists case management with applications for vital documents and educates incarcerated individuals on how to access the portal post-release. However, creating an email account is required for gaining access to an account, and incarcerated individuals do not have the ability to create email accounts while incarcerated.

Tracking mechanisms were implemented in the first quarter of 2024 to monitor progress of uploading and education efforts. These measures were established to ensure accountability and identify any operational barriers impacting implementation. Current data reflects progress:

To date, nearly 3,000 uploads have been completed by case management and over 1,300 incarcerated individuals received prerelease education on how to create email and link accounts. Current data reflects continued progress in document uploads and user education. DPSCS encourages, educates, and emphasizes the importance of obtaining vital documents. However, it is not mandatory for incarcerated individuals to apply. In addition, DPSCS case management can only apply for the vital documents but cannot fulfill the application, as it is the designated responsibility for State and federal agencies.

It is important to note that the functions of creating email accounts and linking existing accounts are not available while individuals are incarcerated. DPSCS has worked diligently to develop a solution in partnership with DPP to overcome this barrier, recognizing that approximately 71% of all releases fall under DPP. Each Parole and Probation Office is equipped with Internet Cafe's which houses computers that are available exclusively for supervised individuals. Its purpose is to help supervised individuals achieve their goals, which include, but are not limited to; job applications, applying for medical care coverage, performing online banking tasks, and applying for educational programs. With the support of DPP Agents, and the availability of Internet Cafes at each office, the supervised individuals have access to the Passport Portal, create an email account, and link important documents that have been uploaded. They may also access other State resources through the MDTHINK platform.

The DPP is taking steps to improve staff access and system utilization, including establishing required email accounts and linking essential case documents. A security monitor point of contact, designated previously, has now obtained the necessary access following resolution of a prior configuration issue within SailPoint and ECMS that limited password reset functions. The security monitor will begin enrolling Parole and Probation Agents in MDThink immediately to expand support and improve service delivery to supervised individuals. In parallel, DPP will develop an informational handout for inclusion in supervised individuals' intake packets and will update office waiting-area video messaging to provide clear, consistent guidance on use of the PassPort Portal.

These access issues have affected the volume of support provided to incarcerated individuals who are preparing for release, particularly with linking and retrieving copies of vital documents. Because accounts cannot be created or linked on an individual's behalf prior to release, current pre-release efforts are focused on education and readiness. Staff are providing clear instructions and resources to ensure individuals understand how to establish their accounts and link required documents promptly upon return to the community.

Women's Prerelease Programming Participation Fluctuates as Construction for the New Prerelease Unit Remains Stalled

Issue: DPSCS should comment on its long-term plans for the women's prerelease program, given the absence of funding for the New Life Skills and Reentry Center for Women in the fiscal 2027 capital budget.

Response: Project FRESH programming and the prerelease housing unit will remain in place and long-term plans are to continue to identify educational programming opportunities, engage with existing and new community partners, and support the Project FRESH Pre-release unit until the new pre-release center is constructed.

Dedicated staff assigned to the Project FRESH pre-release unit have enhanced the monitoring of the programming, improving oversight of attendance as well as participation and engagement. Their focused presence ensures consistent support, all programming is accurately tracked, and operational accountability is strengthened.

Standardized tracking of programs and attendance was initiated in August 2025 to systematically monitor participant engagement across all facility programming. This tracking provides reliable data to assess participation,

identify gaps and inform program improvements, and support reentry services. Data is collected by sign in sheets and community agency reports.

Since data collection began, a total of 193 women classified as prerelease engaged in Project FRESH programming. Project FRESH has 12 ongoing programs within the unit with four new programs being added this fiscal year. In addition, 123 women classified as prerelease participated in facility wide programming.

The majority of program participation occurs on-site within the Project FRESH prerelease unit. On-site participation allows staff to monitor attendance closely, provide individualized guidance for both the participant and the community partners. Many community partners will provide two program sessions; one onsite within the Project FRESH unit and another on the compound for the entire population within the facility. Efforts remain on ensuring all women preparing for release, regardless of security level, fully benefit from available programming and reentry services.

Recommended Actions

- **DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting a report from DPSCS on the continued Reentry Passport Program rollout. The report should document the implementation of the program including the number of accounts created and the number of accounts accessed by individuals who have been released for each fiscal year. It should also discuss the progress of expanding access to the Reentry Passport portal to DPP.**

Response: The Department concurs with the recommended action.

- **DLS recommends adopting a committee narrative requesting a report from DPSCS about Project FRESH participation rates and programming, with particular emphasis on work release opportunities. The report should compare participation and prerelease programming opportunities to men's prerelease centers.**

Response: The Department concurs with the recommended action.