



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

October 29, 2021

TO: Robert J. Williams, Jr.
Council Administrator

William M. Hunt
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THRU: Josh Hamlin
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FROM: Kassandra Fields
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RE: Department of Corrections FY22 YTD Programmatic/Operations Briefing

At the request of Chair Hawkins, Council staff has arranged for representatives from the Department of Corrections to provide an operational update on various issues facing the Office. In this memorandum, many of these issues are reviewed and potential questions identified.

Key Issues:

- Recruitment and retention issues – both sworn and civilian
- Continual maintenance issues (major) (OCS)
- Recidivism and Reentry

In addition to the aforementioned key issues, identified through the review of prior years' budget discussions, the agency was asked to update the top concerns as outlined in the Department of Corrections Oversight Briefing: Top Issues, Concerns, and Priorities as presented to the Health Human Services and Public Safety Committee on February 5, 2020. At that time the issues included:

1. Condition of the Detention Center
2. Filling Sworn Vacancies
3. Service Contracts Administration
4. Space Issues: especially for Community Corrections and Central Control

Recruitment and Retention Issues:

In review of the past three (3) fiscal years, the Department noted the following, in regard to sworn vacancies:

- In FY 2019, as of February 1st, the Department reported having 44 sworn vacancies, which represented an effective sworn vacancy rate of 9%. In the same time period, the Department had 46 civilian vacancies. This represents a full-time civilian vacancy rate of 28%.¹
- In FY 2019, at the time of the budget memo, the Department was unable to attain its authorized sworn level in any month, and was not expected to attain its authorized level in the remainder of FY 2019. As a result, the Department had to rely on overtime to meet its operational needs.²
- During FY 2019, the Department was not able to fill their two (2) recruitment classes to the desired capacity. The Department averaged only 7-14 recruits per class, for a total of 21 recruits. During the previous year's budget review process, it was reported that FY 2019 recruit classes should have had a total of 60 recruits. During FY 2020's discussion, that target was reduced to 34. The Department has persistent recruitment challenges, which impede its efforts to fill authorized funded sworn positions. Furthermore, the FY 2019 classes were not sufficient to keep up with the Department's attrition.³
- In FY 2020, the Department proposed to graduate four (4) recruit classes of 20-30 recruits each. Recruits were expected to graduate in July 2019, September 2019, February 2020, June 2020. Based on A&I analysis, FY 2020 proposed recruitment classes would have been sufficient to keep up with the anticipated sworn attrition. Taking into consideration current attrition levels and planned recruitment classes (during that time), it was noted that in the best-case scenario, the Department's sworn complement was expected to increase by 24 sworn officers from the February 2019 staffing level of 442. That would have been achieved only if the Department had been able to fill their recruit classes to a desired capacity. The A&I committee report noted that if the classes were not filled to their maximum capacity, which they have not been in years, the Department's sworn staff reductions would be more dire, which in turn would necessitate increased use of overtime (which had not been proposed to increase in FY 2020).⁴

In FY 2020, the Department identified key challenges it faced to include: staff shortages; the inability to achieve the authorized staffing level (both sworn and civilian); and the inability to fulfill the

¹ Memorandum to Chair of the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee from Audits and Investigations' Staff, Dated April 25, 2019, regarding the Department of Corrections-Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Review.

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Memorandum to Chair of the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee from Audits and Investigations' Staff, Dated April 25, 2019, regarding the Department of Corrections-Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Review.

minimum staffing plan requirements. All of which contributed to the agency’s inability to reduce overtime expenditures within the proposed budget.⁵

Multi-Year Sworn Staffing Overview

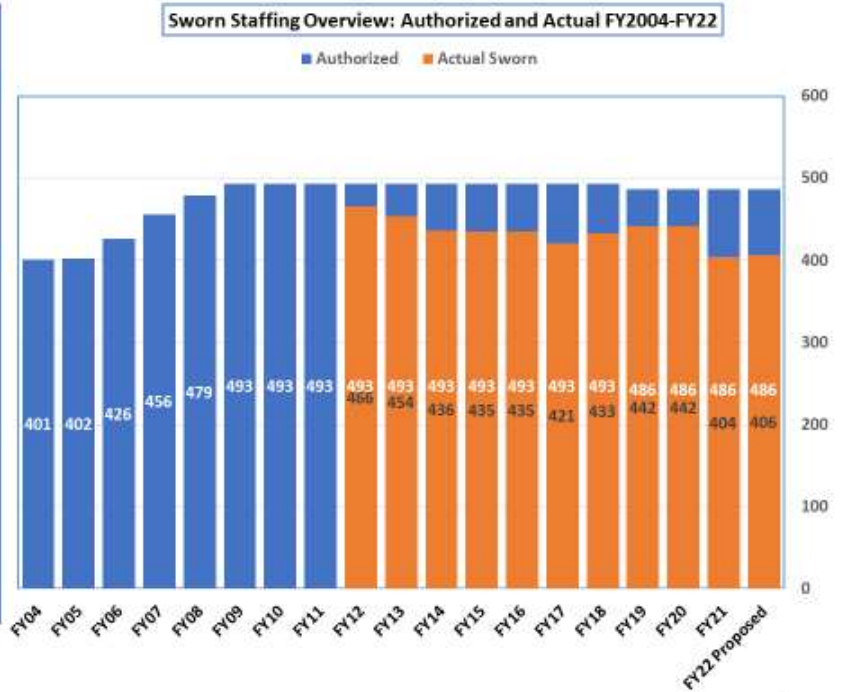
- As of October 20, 2021, the Department of Corrections has 386 sworn staff with 104 vacancies, or nearly 27% vacancy rate.

CIVILIAN

- FY 2020 24 vacancies or nearly 14.45% vacancy rate
- FY 2021 36 vacancies or nearly 28% vacancy rate

SWORN

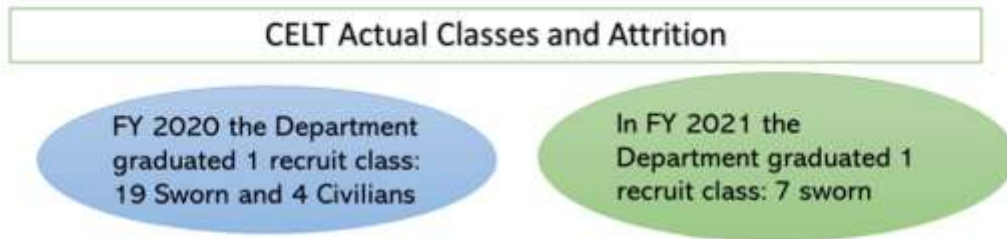
- FY 2020 44 vacancies or nearly 10% vacancy rate
- FY 2021 82 vacancies or nearly 20%



⁵ Memorandum to Chair of the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee from Audits and Investigations’ Staff, Dated April 25, 2019, regarding the Department of Corrections-Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Review.

⁶ Provided by Statistics Section Chief of Department of Corrections on October 22, 2021.

In FY 2020, recruitment challenges continued, and the Department was not able to fill its authorized recruit classes to desired capacity.⁷



Reasons	FY 2019		FY 2020 YTD		FY 2021 YTD	
	Sworn	Civilian	Sworn	Civilian	Sworn	Civilian
<i>Recruit Attrition</i>			1			
Resignations	12	5	10	3	5	6
Regular Retirement	17	2	6	4	10	6
Disability Retirement	2	0	0	0	0	0
Termination	1	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	32	8	17	8	15	12

8

- FY 2021’s reporting was slightly different due to the complexities associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The approved budget included funding for two recruit classes of thirty recruits per class. However, some of the same detailed vacancy and attrition information was not included in the Audits and Investigations’ report to Council.⁹
- Three years ago, the Department of Corrections had no recruitment budget (unlike larger public safety agencies), and had no access to such recruitment tools as radio, public transportation, virtual jobsites, which are used by other correctional agencies. During this time, the County Executive allocated some funding for recruitment purposes. As such, the Department of Corrections currently has one Correctional Officer who serves as the agency Recruiter. The primary goal of this function is to attract a qualified and well diverse pool of applicants who can successfully complete the Public Safety Background Investigation for employment. The recruiter networks internally amongst other County Public Safety Agencies, as well as community, faith-based and national organizations, in an effort to establish partnerships that afford him/her the opportunity to consistently engage in recruitment activities and/or events on a larger scale. The Department continues to conduct outreach through its social media presence, using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Due to the nationwide pandemic, the Department has had to adapt to innovative recruiting methods while also bolstering existing ones. In FY 2021, the Department has allocated approximately \$28,500 for recruitment initiatives. The Recruiter has utilized a portion of these funds for advertising in the community. Through these

⁷ Memorandum to Chair of the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee from Audits and Investigations’ Staff, Dated April 25, 2019, regarding the Department of Corrections-Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Review

⁸ Provided by Statistics Section Chief of Department of Corrections on October 22, 2021.

⁹ <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/25088/Department-of-Corrections>

recruitment efforts, the Department has executed contracts with vendors for an electronic messaging board, highway billboards, WMATA bus posters, recruitment postcards via USPS mail service, digital campaign with Southern Maryland Digital Publishing Group, etc. The Department now has a custom wrapped vehicle dedicated to the Recruiter that is utilized as an additional mobile advertisement for the available positions. The Recruitment plan also includes consistent communication with both neighboring high schools and colleges/universities. In addition to Prince George’s County, the Recruiter has established relationships with high schools in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Calvert County. The Recruiter continues to visit Higher Education Institutions locally in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. The agency is represented at Career Fairs both in-person and virtually. Relationships have been established with Prince George’s, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Charles Counties’ Departments of Labor and Licensing, as well as the District of Columbia’s Workforce Exchange to maintain a pipeline of applicants. The Recruiter disseminates flyers and pamphlets to libraries and community centers in Baltimore, Anne Arundel County, Prince George’s County, and Charles County. The Department believes that with more resources at its disposal, it would be able to expand its marketing audience. Some ideas that have been proffered to this end include having long standing contracts for billboards, digital advertisement, as well as incentives to attract new hires, *i.e.*, tuition reimbursement, a larger sign on bonus, relocation assistance.¹⁰

- The following is the requested budget for recruitment programs within the Department:

**The Department of Corrections
 Proposed Recruitment Budget**

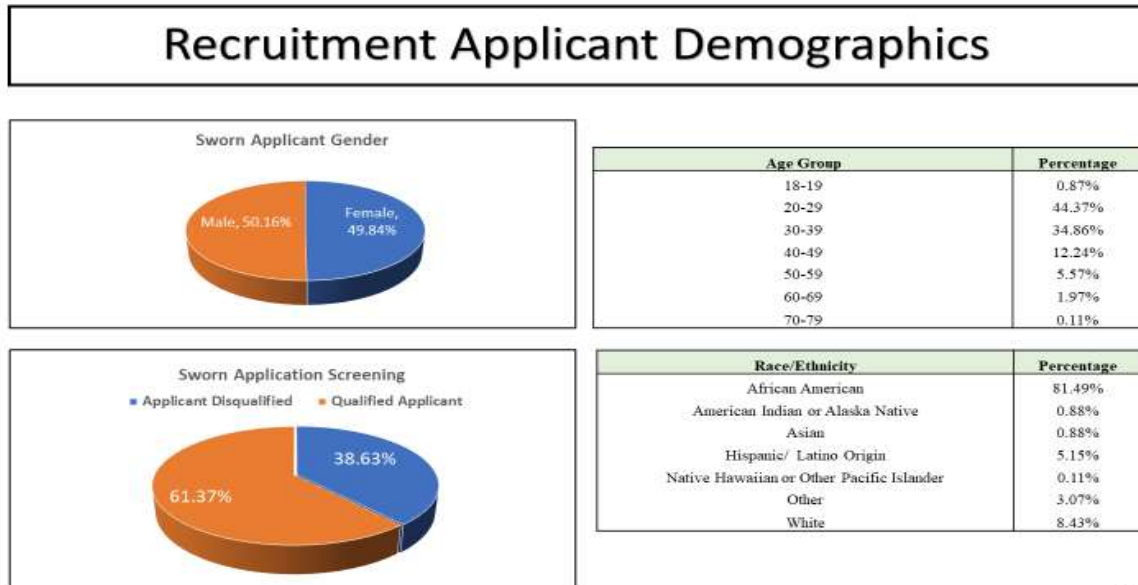
	FY2019 Request	FY2022 Approved
Advertisement: Radio, billboards, virtual jobsites	\$26,000.00	\$21,700
Job Fairs (vendor fees, travel expense)	\$5,000.00	\$300
Training for Recruitment Officers	\$3,000.00	\$0
1 SUV (the current vehicle has more than 175000 miles)	\$40,000.00	\$0
1 Sedan vehicle	\$30,000.00	\$0
Wrapping for vehicles	\$6,200.00	\$0
Printing Cost (brochures; flyers; business cards)	\$2,000.00	\$3,500
Recruitment Promotional Items (pens, cups, bags, etc.)	\$3,000.00	\$3,000
Total	\$115,200.00	\$28,500 ¹¹

On top of the specific recruitment difficulties the Department has experienced over the past three years, there is another national trend that poses a challenge: the law enforcement sector as a whole is facing unprecedented challenges in regard to recruitment. The applicant pool has changed and continues to change. Sociologists note that there is a major shift from the “live to work” philosophy in the professional realm to those professionals who have taken on the “work to live” thought process. As such, recruiting techniques that emphasize salary and benefits (long-term retirement, even) are not

¹⁰ Prince George’s County Department of Corrections Recruitment Plan-2022, as provided by the Director.

¹¹ Prince George’s County Department of Corrections-FY 22 Proposed Recruitment Budget, as provided by the Director.

successful with the generation that seemingly focuses on the here and now, and doesn't see a long-term commitment with a particular agency (through retirement) as personally advantageous.¹²



13

11

Correctional Officer Positions Pay Scales, FY 2021

	Baltimore (2019)	Anne Arundel	Howard	Montgomery (2019)	Prince Georges
Correctional Officer	\$42,507 – \$53,396	\$41,796 – \$75,487	\$46,925-\$75,171	\$45,412 – \$77,199*	\$43,558-\$88,744
Corporal	\$44,629 – 55,848	\$46,559 – \$79,260	\$49,899-\$82,451	\$52,452 – \$84,915	\$47,963-\$93,151
Sergeant	\$48,898 – \$60,906	\$55,628 – \$94,700	\$55,786-\$91,728	\$57,960 – \$97,114	\$52,817-\$107,724
Lieutenant	\$53,396 – \$66,671	\$59,459 – \$109,595	Not provided	\$62,507-\$104,733	\$58,172-\$113,076

	Harford	Frederick	Fairfax	Arlington	Alexandria (2019)
Correctional Officer	Recruit: \$45,781 \$47,195-\$75,462	\$46,255-\$75,396	\$48,874-\$83,122	\$54,038-\$91,270	\$48,134 – \$81,209
Corporal	\$54,662-\$87,360	\$55,970-\$91,230	\$57,384-\$95,640	Not provided	\$50,541 – \$94,004*
Sergeant	\$67,642-\$101,130	\$61,566-\$100,352	\$63,213-\$105,355	Not provided	\$58,500 – \$103,632
Lieutenant	\$76,939-\$111,509	\$67,722-\$110,388	\$69,407-\$121,255	Not provided	\$64,494 – \$114,252

Please note that this data represents pay scales. Officer actual pay may vary greatly based on overtime, shift differential and all sorts of other specialty pay. However, entry level pay scale data may be of critical importance for new recruits as they decide which agency and jurisdiction to apply to.

11

14

¹² <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/a-crisis-facing-law-enforcement-recruiting-in-the-21st-century/>.

¹³ Provided by Statistics Section Chief of Department of Corrections on October 22, 2021

¹⁴ Provided by the various agencies' HR and Statistics Section Chief of DOC on October 22, 2021.

Continual Maintenance Issues (Major) (OCS):

The Prince George’s County Detention Center was built in 1987 and is now 34 years old. By all accounts, it is operating at capacity and an expansion of the facility is required. During the previous oversight briefing (February 5, 2020), it was noted that preventive maintenance was not being performed and there was a challenge addressing service repair needs in a timely manner. The majority of the requests for maintenance were plumbing related. There is also more wear and tear on this facility since it is in operation 24 hours a day/365 days a year, and in some cases used by guests who are not altogether pleased with their visit.¹⁵



5

¹⁵ Department of Corrections Oversight Briefing: Top Issues, Concerns and Priorities Audits and Investigations’ Presentation to the Health, Human Services and Public Safety Committee on February 5, 2020.

¹⁶ Provided by Statistics Section Chief of Department of Corrections on October 22, 2021.

OCS Maintenance Staff Assigned to the DOC

FY 2020 OCS

- 1 Facilities Supervisor
- 1 Plumber III
- 1 Plumber II
- 1 Building Engineer III
- 1 Building Engineer I
- 3 Maintenance Service Attendants II

TOTAL: 8 Employees

FY 2021 OCS

- 1 Facilities supervisor
- 1 Plumber III
- 1 Plumber II
- 1 Building Engineer I
- 3 Maintenance Service Attendants II

TOTAL: 7 Employees

5

17

Recidivism and Reentry:

As has been discussed in numerous meetings of the Reentry Advisory Board,¹⁷ successful reentry efforts seek to reconnect families, to provide inmates with necessary community resources available to them to assist with the reintegration process, to provide opportunities to build and maintain skills needed to assimilate quickly back into the community, and to provide candidates entering the workforce support which allows independence and, in turn, economic growth for those who hire these individuals.

The Department has an Inmate Services Division that serves to: provide quality inmate behavioral treatment, pre-release and post-release services to inmates and returning citizens; develop and maintain community partnerships; and provide opportunities for the returning citizen to attain knowledge that will assist them in becoming productive members of society. There are numerous programs to assist fully with rehabilitation. These include:

- CCoRT Substance Abuse Drug Treatment
- Women's Empowerment Program
- Domestic Violence Program

¹⁷ Provided by Statistics Section Chief of Department of Corrections on October 22, 2021.

¹⁸ <https://pgccouncil.us/747/Reentry-Advisory-Board>

- Religious Services and Counseling
- Jail Based Substance Abuse Treatment Program
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program
- Education Unit
- Inmate Work Programs
- Library Services
- Juvenile Program
- Recreation Unit
- Barber Styling School¹⁹

There were existing needs to enhance efficiencies in this regard that were exacerbated by the impact of a global pandemic. With the imposition of restrictions and space for programs and classes, the Department relied heavily technology with gaps in coverage throughout the facility. In addition, space constraints hindered effective rehabilitative operations. In addition, during the height of the pandemic, the Bridge Center and Community Release efforts were temporarily closed and halted for safety precautions. Individuals with mental health issues continue to be a great reentry and recidivism concern. Although the Department has a small, licensed staff providing therapy within the correctional center and one licensed clinician providing clinical reentry case management, expansion to these services either through an increase in resources directed to the department or through committed partnership from other county agencies is needed to adequately assess, treat, and case manage this population successfully. Additionally, without the existence of adequate shelter or transitional housing many detainees face homelessness upon release. The County's support for development of a walk-in crisis/diversion center and/or transitional housing beds for justice-involved individuals might save some high utilizers of the correctional center and emergency rooms from unnecessary intakes.

Covid Operations:

The COVID-19 virus has not only radically changed the daily lives of Americans, it has affected the entire manner in which the United States Justice System conducted business, from law enforcement engagement and calls for service, to jails, prisons and courts alike.

The pandemic has created new restrictions on the management of the inmate population, thereby causing additional inmate and employee stress. The Department has noticed increases in disturbances amongst the inmate population and attacks on officers. The pandemic has also caused manpower shortages, imposed mandatory overtime, attributed to familial and childcare concerns which are on top of the normal daily demands of living. As a result, the Department reports that the instances of stress-related incidents have been exacerbated. Employees are having difficulty focusing on their ability to competently perform their job duties.

To combat some of these issues, the Department applied for a grant, requesting \$83,128 to support and enhance the Employee Wellness and Critical Incident Stress programs. If successful, the grant would

¹⁹<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/30276/Annual-Report-FY-2019>.

enable the Department to provide vital and critical services to its employees making them healthier for themselves, their families, the inmates and the residents of Prince George's County.

It is reported that the staff is also experiencing "burn out", as a result of the shortages which require mandatory overtime. It has taken its toll mentally and physically. The Director anticipates requesting a supplemental budget adjustment in the amount of \$2.7 million to cover the actual overtime expenditures within the current fiscal year.²⁰

As has become increasingly evident, the COVID-19 pandemic had far reaching implications on supply chains, which resulted in soaring freight bills and delivery delays. Faced with confinement at home, Americans purchased products at a much higher rate than prior years. For these products to reach American addresses from overseas, it involves oceangoing vessels, shipping containers, cargo terminals, truckers, chassis providers and railroads all working seamlessly together. If there is a delay at any point along the way, the impact is felt throughout the entire chain.²¹ Every industry has been impacted by this effect. The Department reports that in some instances, they have been unable to attain quantities needed, and as such, many items were placed on backorder. These items include inmate supplies, such blankets and uniforms.²²

Another effect of COVID-19 required imposition of spacing requirements and virtual instruction for inmates to be provided rehabilitation programming. However, there are not wireless capabilities throughout the facility. In an attempt to combat some of these obstacles, staff applied for and received a grant to allow for the cabling for the housing units' multipurpose rooms. This will enable the Department to install Wi-Fi and conduct virtual training and educational courses. The funding came from Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services, formerly known as the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, under its Emergency Coronavirus Supplement Grant. It was a partnership grant between the Health Department, Office of Emergency Management, and DOC. The County was awarded \$500K. DOC's portion was \$243,072.²³

Other Issues:

During our discussion, the Department identified additional issues impacting the effective operations of the agency. One of which was enhancement and expansion of technology throughout the Department's facilities. This was in addition to the two issues previously identified under COVID-19 impacts.

- Staff is manually handling the scheduling of shifts and overtime, with pen and paper. This is extremely labor intensive and diminishes the productivity of the officer assigned the task. In addition, it has the potential for more human error. The acquisition of the Kronos Telestaff (automated overtime scheduling system) will allow the redeployment of this staff to other areas needing attention. This was included as part of the

²⁰ Email from Director dated October 25, 2021.

²¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/supply-chain-issues/>.

²² As reported by Director Labbe.

²³ Id.

aforementioned grant through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services, under its Emergency Coronavirus Supplement Grant. It was a partnership grant between the Health Department, Office of Emergency Management, and DOC. The County was awarded \$500K. DOC's portion was \$243,072.²⁴

- Staff emphasized the importance of upgrading the Offender Management System (OMS). This system is used for tracking each inmate throughout the facility from intake to release and accuracy is essential. It includes initial intake information, charges, sentencing, property, housing, medical, meal planning, scheduling, and temporary release, to name a few. It increases staff efficiency, effectiveness and data accuracy by providing access to real time information in a single centralized database. In addition to the software being updated, staff discussed the benefits of a dedicated staff resource to handle all the IT needs associated with this system.

²⁴ As reported by Director Labbe.