


<h1>IMPACT OF VACANCIES ON THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS OPERATIONS</h1> 	<p>Health, Human Services and Public Safety Committee</p> <p>October 19, 2023</p>
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<h1>GOALS</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deepen the understanding of the Department of Corrections' staffing issues and recruitment efforts</li><li>• Understand the impact of staffing shortages on Correctional Officers, detainees, and Department's operations</li><li>• Instigate a discussion on what can be done to address the existing staffing challenges</li></ul>
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# INTRODUCTION

The Department of Corrections provides a safe, secure and humane environment for pre-trial and sentenced offenders. The Department also provides rehabilitative programs to inmates such as:

- *Education*
- *Domestic violence*
- *Women's empowerment*
- *Juvenile services*
- *Barber styling school*
- *Substance abuse drug treatment*
- *Religious services*
- *Nail technician*
- *Community re-entry*

With FY 2024 Approved Budget of \$106.8 million (99.8% funded through the General Fund), the Department of Corrections is the third largest public safety agency after the Police Department (\$390M) and Fire/EMS Department (\$261M).

The Department's General Fund budget represents 2.4% of the County's total General Fund budget in FY 2024.

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# INTRODUCTION CONT.

- The Department is authorized to have 651 full-time employees composed of 487 sworn and 164 civilians
- The Department has the highest vacancy rate out of all public safety agencies *(Attachment 1)*
- In CY 2023 the Department, on average, had 977 detainees at the Detention Center and, on average, 317 participants in Alternative-to-Incarceration Programs
- The Detention Center is composed of 18 housing units (detainees are assigned a housing unit based on classification protocols), medical unit, and a processing center.

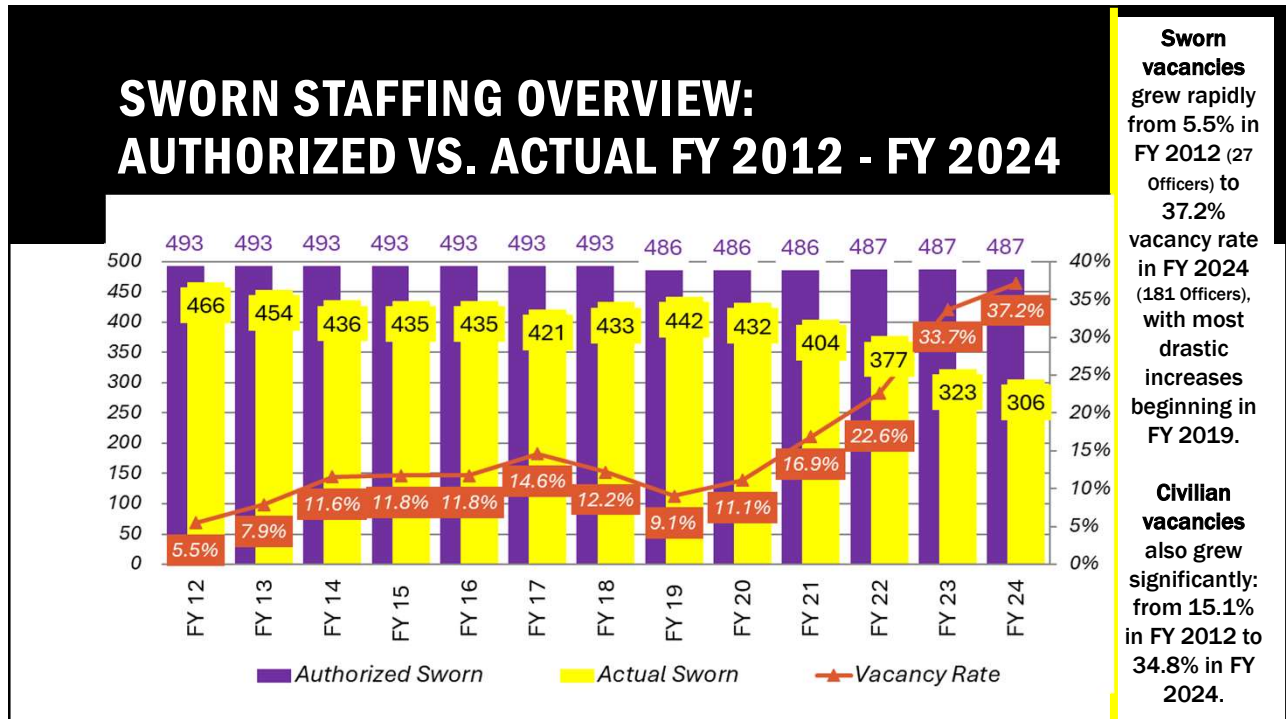
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# PART I

## DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS STAFFING

- Authorized vs. actual sworn staffing level
- Department of Corrections staffing requirements
- Staffing shortages coping mechanism: overtime
- Staffing shortages coping mechanism: collapsing posts
- Workplace diversity: profile of sworn employees
- Detainee profile
- Impact of staff shortages on Correctional Officers, detainees, and the Department's ability to meet its operational goals and objectives

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# STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

The Department has 45 sworn employees assigned outside of the Security Operations Division. With high civilian vacancies, some positions which could be filled by qualified civilians are being filled by sworn officers.

Staffing for the Security Operations is mandated by the **Minimum Staffing Plan**, which identifies how many officers need to be assigned to each post on every shift to maintain safety and security.


**The Department is not able to meet the Minimum Staffing Plan requirements.**

Minimum Staffing Plan prescribes inmates to Officer ratios. Officer – to – inmate ratio may be reduced by 1 during lockdowns (i.e. inmates being confined to their cells).

Minimum Staffing Plan requires the following inmate to officer ratio:

1 to 64 inmates – 1 Officer  
65 to 118 inmates – 2 Officers  
119 to 143 inmates – 3 Officers

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Prince George's County  
Department Of Corrections

**NOW HIRING**

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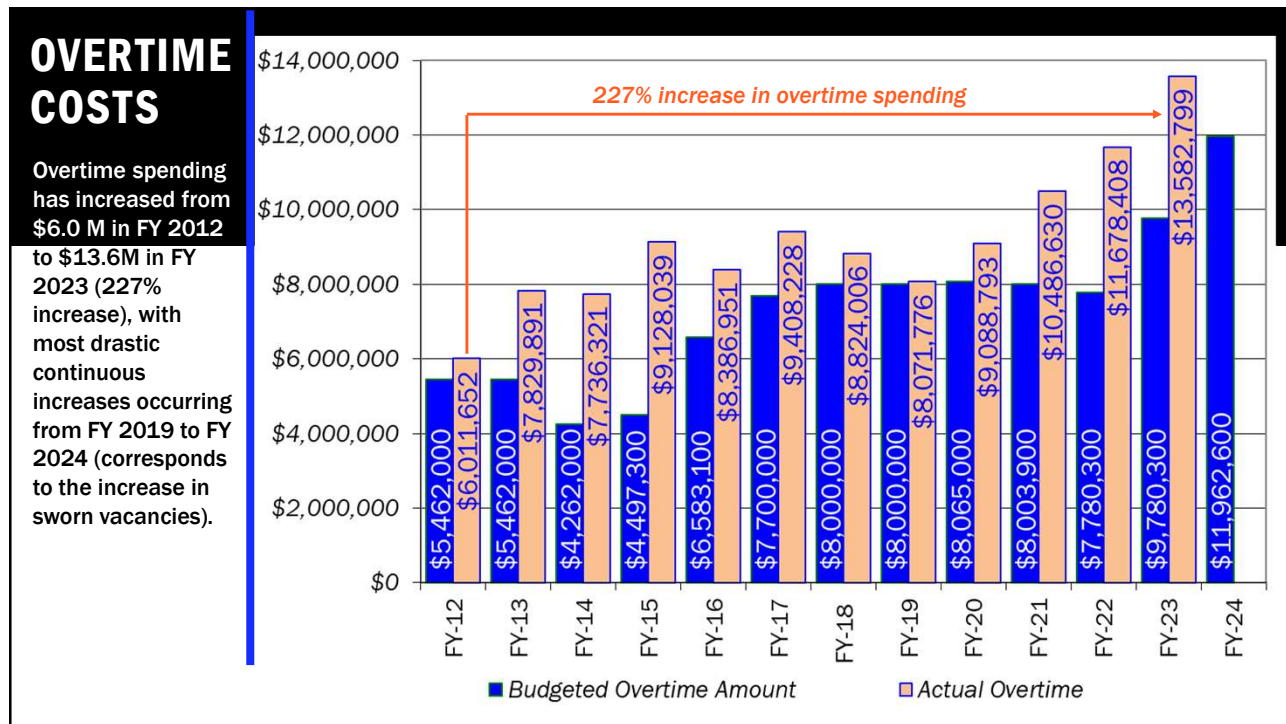
The Department's staffing requirements are not being met.

As a result,

- Minimum Staffing Plan is not being adhered to
- Prescribed detainees to Correctional Officer ratios are challenging to follow and detainees are being confined to their cells, which allows to reduce the Officer-to-detainee ratio
- On some shifts as many as 50% of Minimum Staffing Positions are being collapsed
- The Correctional Officers experience fatigue, stress and burnout
- Safety, security and well-being of Officers and detainees are compromised
- Every shift requires overtime, which continues to grow

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**\$13.6 million dollars in FY 2023 overtime expenditures is equivalent of 323 Correctional Officers working for additional 150 Officers (nearly 234,000 hours) all year long.**

**That is equivalent of having two people work for three all year long.**

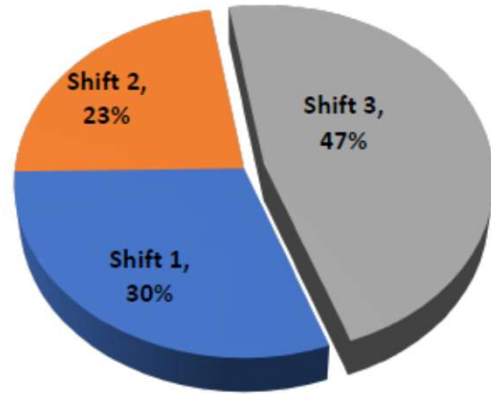
(Attachment 3)

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# MANDATORY HOLD

While most overtime assignments are voluntary and based on seniority, when mandatory overtime is required then a Correctional Officer coming to work Shift I (11pm-7am) has a 30% chance of being held over to work mandatory overtime, 23% chance for an Officer working Shift II (7am-3pm), and a 47% chance for an Officer working on Shift III (3pm-11pm). As of August 2023, 52% of mandatory assignments were to cover housing posts.

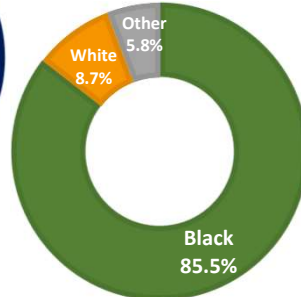
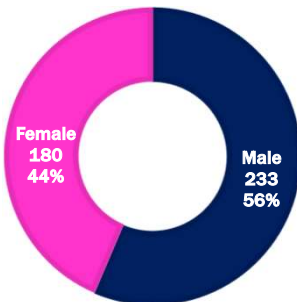
2023 MANDATORY HOLD BY SHIFT



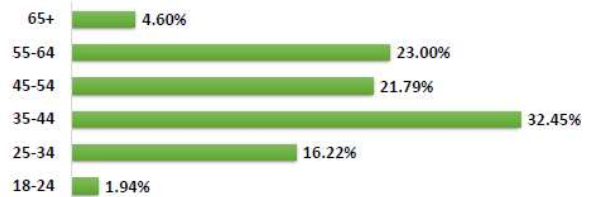
August 2023 snapshot

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# PROFILE OF SWORN EMPLOYEES



STAFF BY AGE GROUP



Over 56% of the Department's employees are County residents.

August 2023 snapshot

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Increase in staff injuries

Increase in extended sick leave usage

Surge in requests for mental health services with 85% reporting work related stress and anxiety

Inability to maintain a healthy work/life balance

Concerns about falling asleep behind the wheel driving home

Increase in motor vehicle accidents

Increase in relationship strain and family discord

**“The negative impact of the increased amount of overtime currently required of corrections personnel due to staffing shortages cannot be overstated. Officers are frequently working 16-hour days two days in a row and returning to work another 8 hours on the third day. That is a 40-hour work week in three days with two workdays remaining, one of which is almost guaranteed to be another double shift. Following a 16-hour shift, staff have just 8 hours to drive home, eat, connect with family, sleep a few hours, before getting up to return to work with the threat of being held for an additional 16 hours.”**

~ Ainisha Persaud  
Employee Support Unit Chief and Staff Counselor

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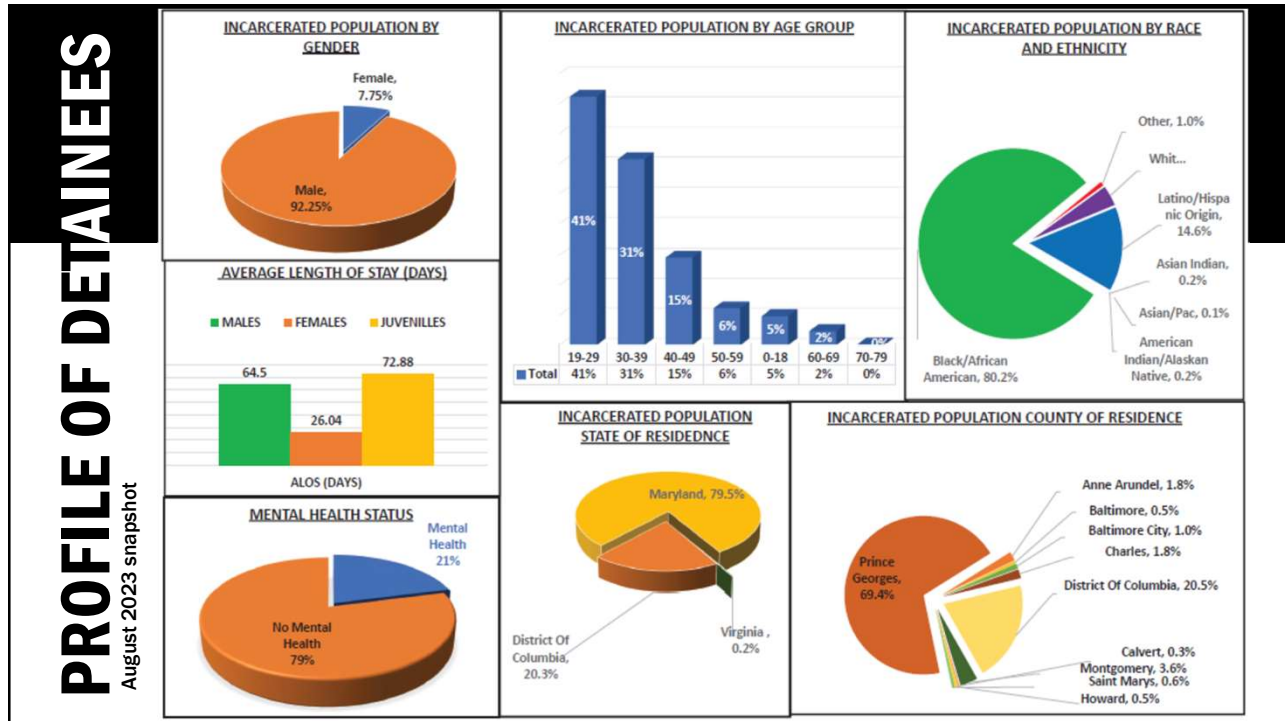
# COLLAPSING POSTS AND ITS IMPACT

**Insufficient staffing -> modified or maximum security mode**

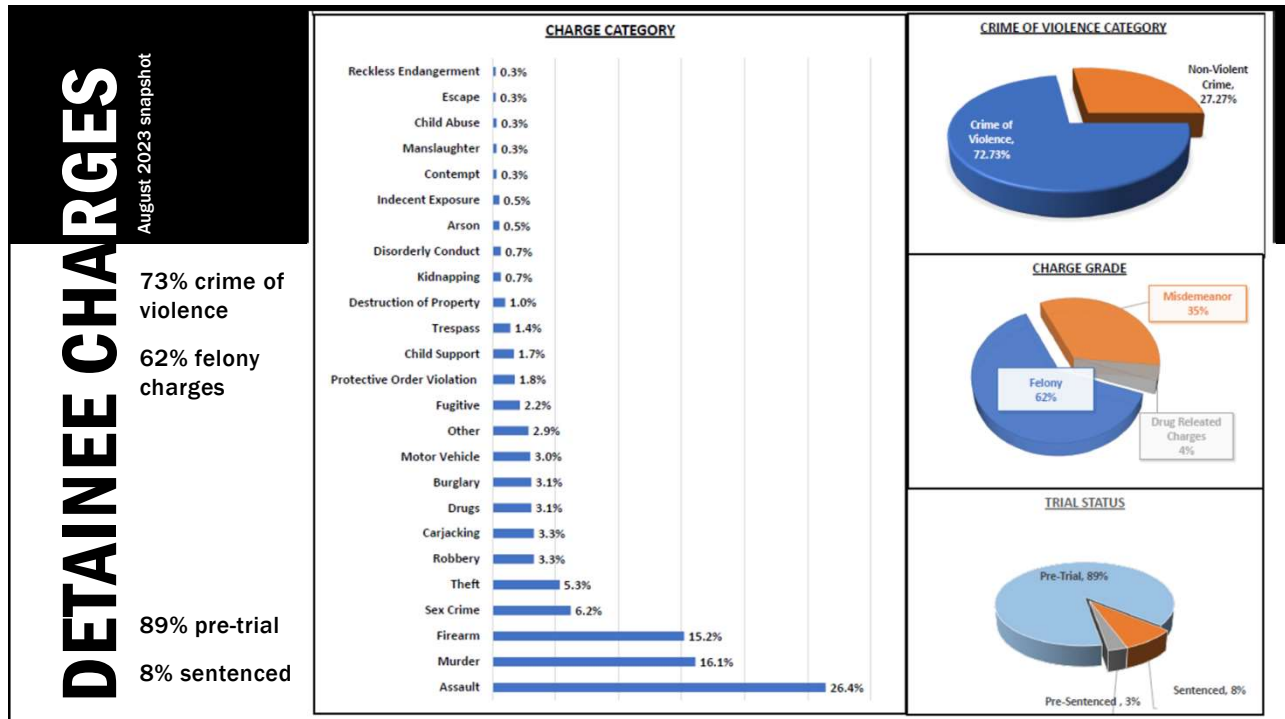
- Rehabilitative services can be discontinued (for example, substance abuse therapy, education, etc.), hindering growth of the incarcerated individuals and negatively impacting recidivism.
- Inmate movement is limited; most of the day detainees remain in their cells.
- Emergency Response Teams not available to respond to emergencies
- “Idleness of time and inability for recreation creates a hotbed for increase contraband and safety risks.”
- Allowed limited movement: limited recreation time allows to shower, make calls, watch television, or read; medical visits and court hearings.
- “Insufficient staffing to supervise these incarcerated individuals [those with behavioral health concerns] and allow for sufficient recreation generates a safety issue for both the individual and the officer.”
- In addition to impacting Correctional Officers, staffing shortages have a tremendous impact on the Department’s overall ability to meet its goals and objectives, and on the detainees under the Department’s custody.
- Lockdowns diminish physical and mental health, increase feelings of hopelessness, increase deviant and negative behavior and raises the risks of suicide ideation.
- Staffing shortages cause delays in healthcare and medical emergencies responses.
- Visitations may be cancelled; detainees unable to have contact with loved ones potentially creating a hostile environment and resentment towards officers.
- Limiting and prohibiting inmate recreation may be problematic as the Constitution affords rights to recreation in prisons through the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

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# IMPACT OF INSUFFICIENT STAFFING

- Staff injuries/extended sick leave usage has increased and mandatory overtime is becoming a norm in the Department.
- Staff burnout while trying to provide minimal supervision of the inmate population while simultaneously trying to avoid other stressors that can impede performance.
- Jail supervision is at its minimum. Providing security staff to supervise inmates and fulfill other duties is a challenge.
- Increase in incidents.
- Reduced quality of life for the inmates: limited movement, limited recreational time, cancelled visitations, interruptions and suspensions of rehabilitative programs, delays in responding to medical requests for service, etc.

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## PART II

# DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

- Where are we with recruitment efforts?
  - How successful has the Department been with filling vacant sworn positions over the past years?
  - How successful has the Department been with filling vacant civilian positions over the past years?
- How much funding is/has been dedicated to the Department's recruitment efforts?
- How many employees are dedicated to the Department's recruitment efforts and in what capacity?
- What recruitment strategies does the Department use? What practices seem to be most successful?

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	Up to 2015	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total 2015 through 2023	Total Force as of Oct 16, 2023
Civilians (Q and G) Hires*	73	1	2	4	10	8	3	2	3	5	38	111
Sworn (D and CO) Hires*	197	17	13	22	12	12	5	8	7	9	105	302
<i>*Hires who are still with the Department as of October 16, 2023</i>												
Civilians (Q and G) Attrition	n/a	6	13	7	5	8	11	15	11	17	93	n/a
Sworn (D and CO) Attrition	n/a	22	30	59	31	32	38	38	54	50	354	n/a

*Data Source: Office of Audits and Investigations, Public Safety Hire Dates Report (October 16, 2023), Annual Budget Review Reports, August 2023 Department of Corrections C-STAT Report*

*Note: Hiring data is based on CY, while attrition data is based on FY*

## HOW SUCCESSFUL THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN WITH FILLING VACANT POSITIONS OVER THE PAST YEARS?

The data shows that:

- Between 2015 and 2023 a total of 38 civilian employees who are still working at the Department of Corrections were hired, while a total of 93 civilians left the agency.
- Between 2015 and 2023 a total of 105 sworn employees who are still working at the Department of Corrections were hired, while a total of 354 Officers left the agency.
- The Department has not been successful in keeping up with its employee attrition.

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**OVERALL, THE NUMBER OF NEW HIRES FOR BOTH SWORN AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES HAS NOT BEEN KEEPING UP WITH THE EMPLOYEE ATTRITION, RESULTING IN UNPRECEDENTLY HIGH VACANCY RATES IN FY 2024:**

**37.2% CORRECTIONAL OFFICER VACANCY RATE**

**34.8% CIVILIAN VACANCY RATE**

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**As of August, the Department had 68 civilian and 176 sworn vacancies, yet on October 2, 2023 there was only one (1) job advertisement for the Department (to fill sworn vacancies).**

Job Title	Job Type	Salary	Closing	Posted	Category	Department
CORRECTIONAL OFFICER PRIVATE	Fulltime/Permanent/Classified	\$49,344.00 - \$99,113.00 Annually	06/30/24	07/01/23	Corrections / Public Safety	Department of Corrections

- Board of Elections (3 Jobs)
- Department of Corrections (1 Jobs)
- Department of Family Services (2 Jobs)
- Department of Health (4 Jobs)
- Department of the Environment (3 Jobs)
- Fire-EMS Department (2 Jobs)
- Office of Central Services (3 Jobs)
- Office of Finance (2 Jobs)
- Office of Homeland Security (5 Jobs)
- Office of Human Resources Mgmt (7 Jobs)
- Office of the Sheriff (6 Jobs)
- Permitting Inspections Enforce (1 Jobs)
- Police Department (11 Jobs)

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## HOW MUCH FUNDING IS DEDICATED TO THE DEPARTMENT'S RECRUITMENT EFFORTS?

FY 2019: \$0

FY 2020: \$0

FY 2021: \$21,700

FY 2022: \$21,700

FY 2023: \$21,700

+ \$90,000 in hiring bonuses (\$23,000 was spent)

FY 2024: \$21,700 + \$180,000 in hiring bonuses

Recruitment funds are used for job fairs (cost), promotional items (give aways), travel (job fairs), and advertisement (recruitment) bulletin boards.

*It is worth noting that:*

- Public safety agencies have varying capacity to meet recruitment goals (*personnel dedicated to recruitment/hiring efforts, having an actual recruitment plan/strategy, expertise to develop, evaluate strategies, financial resources available to support recruitment endeavors, etc.*). Those with more pronounced recruitment needs may not be best equipped to address them.
- The division of responsibilities between the OHRM and public safety agencies is not uniform as some public safety agencies take on recruitment responsibilities to supplement OHRM efforts and some are unable to do so to the extent that others can.
- Currently, there is no methodology for measuring an agency's capacity to support recruitment efforts (*should include personnel, expertise/skills/credentials, technological tools and ability to utilize them, funding for certain recruitment-related expenses, etc.*).

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## HOW MANY EMPLOYEES ARE DEDICATED TO THE DEPARTMENT'S RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?

The Department has two sworn officers who are *temporarily* detailed to recruitment efforts.

Due to staffing shortages, these officers have a hybrid schedule where they split their work schedule between recruitment and security operations.

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## WHAT RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES DOES THE DEPARTMENT USE? WHAT PRACTICES SEEM TO BE MOST SUCCESSFUL?

**Recruitment strategies include:**

- Employee referrals (bonus offered to employees who recruit correctional officers)
- Job/career fairs and community events
- Digital and paper billboards
- Recruitment website, social media presence
- Sign up bonuses (began in FY 2023 at \$3,000 and in FY 2024 increased to \$5,000)
- Partnerships with Employ Prince George's and the Bowie State University
- Created a salary scale for experienced correctional officers

The Department does not have the expertise to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of different recruitment practices. However, word of mouth and job fairs seem to yield more applicants.

It takes approximately 4 months from the application to the final job offer, 5 weeks until the new hire completes the initial orientation and field training, and an additional 11 weeks of Academy until the applicant becomes a fully certified correctional officer.

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Awaiting job offer															
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
	Orientation & field training					Academy to become a fully certified correctional officer										

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## EMPLOYEE RETENTION

**What best describes your employment plans right now?**  
310 responses

Plan	Percentage
I plan to stay at DOC until I retire.	50%
I am thinking about looking for other career opportunities.	21%
I am actively looking for other employment.	17.4%
I have plans to leave.	11.6%

*August 2022 Staff Survey*

47 sworn officers, or 15.4%, are currently eligible to retire. By 2028 44.4% of current officers will be eligible to retire.

The majority of Correctional Officers resign (not retire), which is indicative of employee retention issues. For comparative purposes, note that most sworn employee separations for Police and Fire/EMS sworn personnel are driven by regular retirements.

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## PART III

# WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE DEPARTMENT'S STAFFING SITUATION?

- 🏛️ What can the Department do?
- 🏛️ What can the Office of Human Resources Management do?
- 🏛️ What can the Executive Leadership do?
- 🏛️ What can the Council do?

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# WHAT CAN THE DEPARTMENT DO?

- **Expedite hiring processes**

What has been done to date to expedite the hiring process? *For eligible applicants, the Department now offers immediate 2-week orientation, followed by a 3-week field/on-the-job training, which enables new hires to begin working prior to completing the Academy. Once orientation and field training are completed, when there is a reasonable number of new recruits, they will go through an 11-week Academy to complete their training. This allows to offer jobs in expedited away instead of making recruits wait for the start of the Academy class.*

- **Fill civilian vacancies**

What impediments does the Department face in filling civilian positions? *Impediments include non-competitive salaries for an array of positions, necessity to conduct salary analysis which lengthens the hiring process, civilian applicants must go through a lengthy background check process.*

- **Advocate for higher starting salaries (ongoing)**
- **Advocate for higher recruitment bonuses and any other incentives that would make Correctional Officer positions more attractive to a wider pool of applicants (ongoing)**
- **Advocate/request higher "recruitment budget"**
- **Advocate for fully staffing the Department's HR Division so there is personnel to support the Department's recruitment/hiring efforts**

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## WHAT CAN THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT DO?

### Expedite the background check process

- How long does it currently take to go through the background check process? *Approximately 4 months.*
- How many employees are dedicated to the background checks for prospective correctional officers? Please distinguish between OHRM personnel and DOC personnel assigned to assist with these duties. *The Department details two employees to OHRM who serve as Case Managers (no PSI Investigator). One out of two employees will retire in December of this year. OHRM has two merit full-time positions who perform investigative duties for the County agencies (who do not detail their own personnel to PSI). Filling upcoming case Manager vacancy and having a dedicated OHRM PSI Investigator to support the Department of Corrections would expedite the hiring process.*
- Are there any changes in the background check process? *There seems to be a two-tier approach: background screening done by OHRM through a contractor and background investigations expected to be done by public safety agencies (the Department of Corrections has no PSI Investigators).*

### Expedite the hiring processes

- Have there been any changes in the length of the hiring process over the past several years? *No.*

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## WHAT CAN THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP DO?

### Increase the starting salaries

- Are any changes being planned? *Yes, the management is in negotiations with the Correctional Officers' Union the entry-level salary was proposed to increase to \$55,000. These increases were to go into effect 10/1/23; however, the Union has stalled it because it is using it as a bargaining tool to increase the COLA adjustments.*

### Offer hazard pay or other incentives as a part of the job

- Please explain how this would aid the recruitment efforts and what is the anticipated cost of this measure? *It is important to make positions more attractive: competitive starting salaries and other benefits (specialty pay, on-site childcare, childcare stipend, access to 24-hr childcare, etc.)*

### Offer a retention bonus to those eligible to retire

- Please explain how this would aid the Department's retention efforts and what is the anticipated cost of this measure? *This would incentivize existing officers eligible to retire to continue working for the Department for a set period of time. This option is not being pursued for the Department of Corrections.*

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## WHAT CAN THE COUNCIL DO?

- Adding funding to the Department's budget outside of the OMB's recommendation.
- Work with the Governor's Office (the Maryland Police and Training Commission) and the Maryland General Assembly to review and the sworn officer requirements and revamp them to allow a wider applicant pool (for example, a returning citizen that has been living a productive life and has lived a crime-free life for 5-10 years).
- Monitor these issues and review the Department's vacancy reports on regular basis outside the budget review process.

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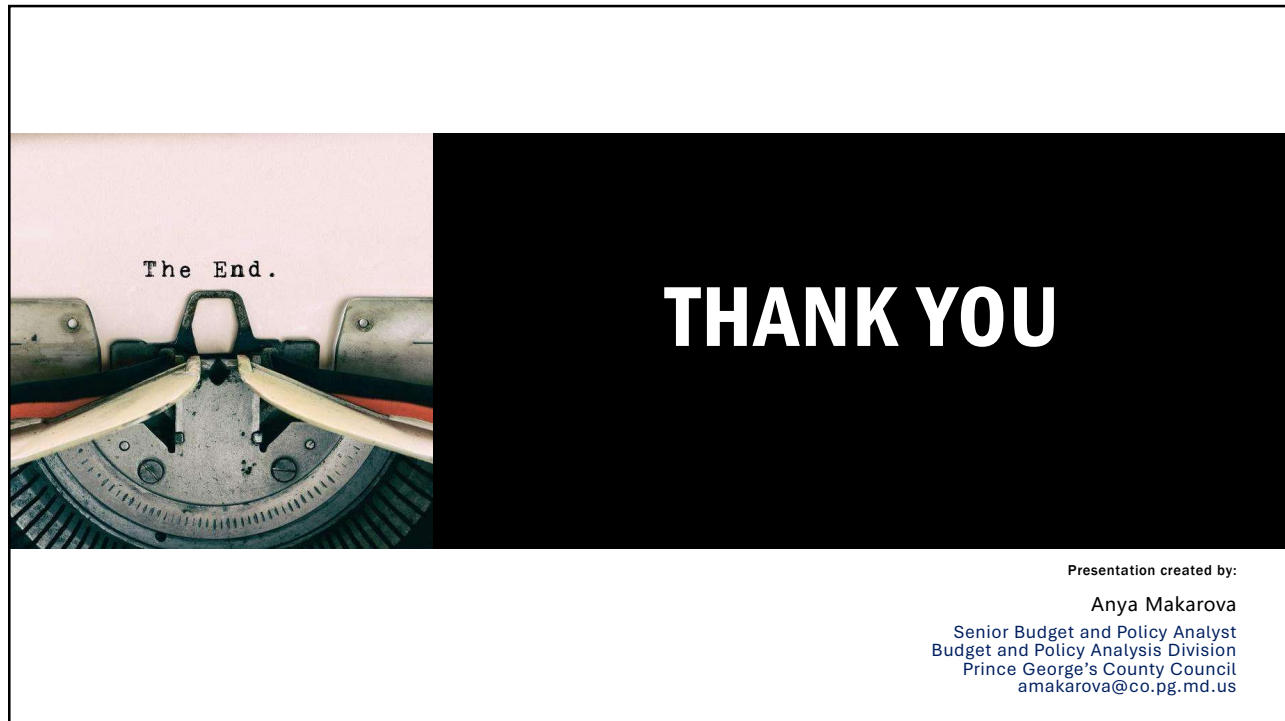
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Ainisha Persaud, Employee Support Unit Chief and Staff Counselor, Prince George's County Department of Corrections
- Myrna Petors, Statistical Analyst, Director's Office, Prince George's County Department of Corrections
- Camilla Mason, Risk Manager, Prince George's County Department of Corrections
- Brent Johnson, Operating Budget Officer, Prince George's County Office of Management and Budget
- Turkessa Green, County Auditor, Prince George's County Office of Audits and Investigations
- Rick Schnabele, Risk Manager, Prince George's County Office of Finance

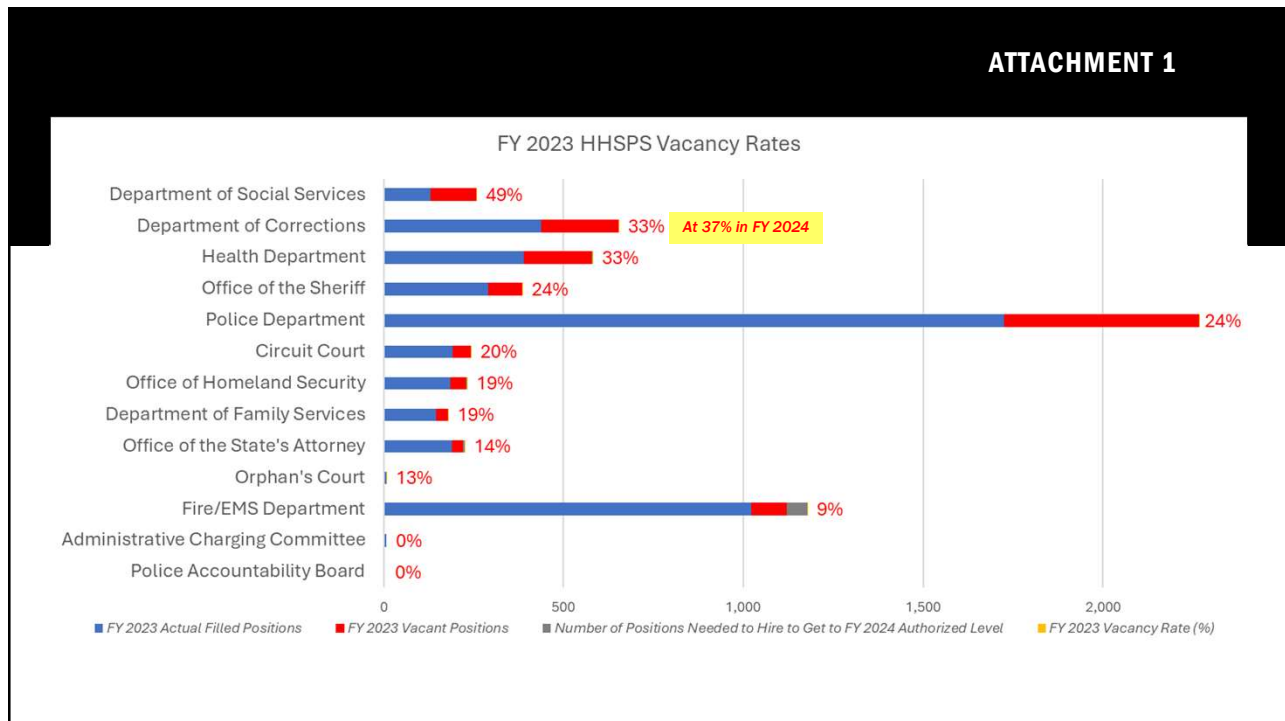
## DATA SOURCES

- Approved Operating Budget Books (<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/565/Operating-Budgets>)
- Annual Budget Review Reports (<https://pgccouncil.us/868/County-Agency-Budget-Reports>)
- The Department of Corrections C-STAT Report as of August 2023
- The Department of Corrections Shift Commanders Report samples
- The Department of Corrections Website <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/151/Corrections>
- Prince George's County Department of Corrections Recruitment Website <https://recruit.pgcorrections.com/>
- Prince George's County Career Page <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/pgc>

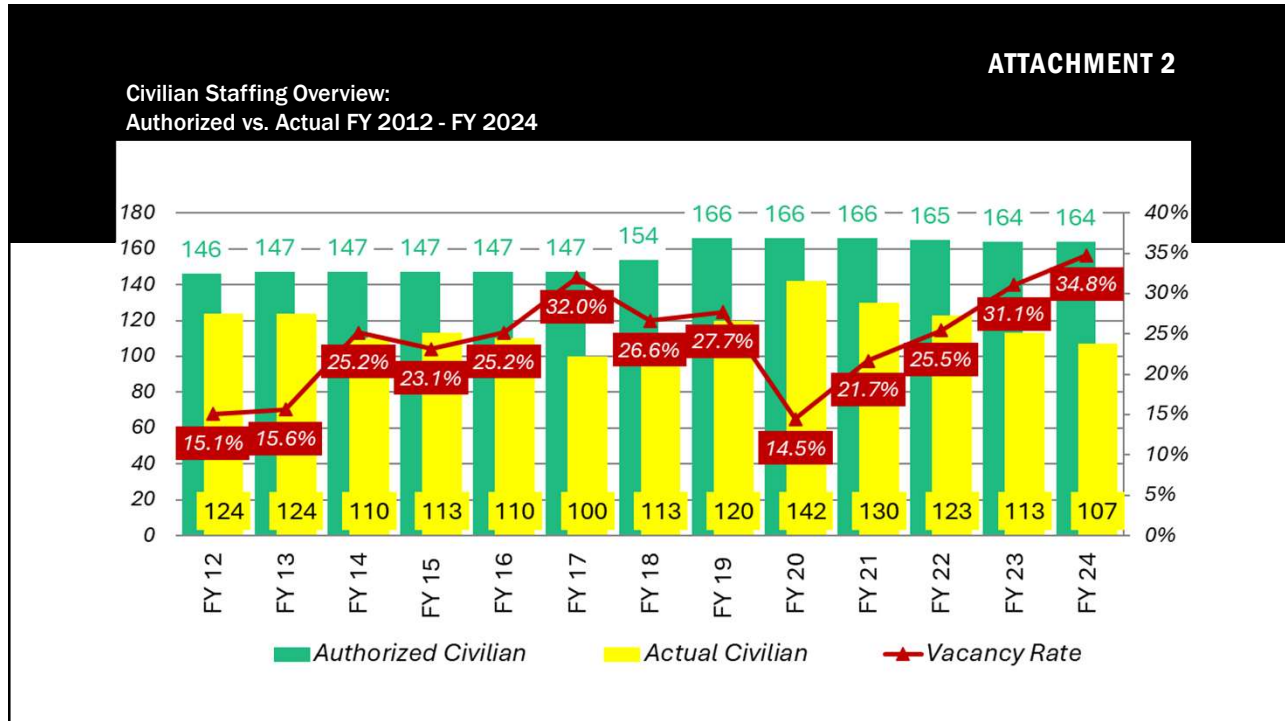
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### ATTACHMENT 3

Correctional Officers (Salary Schedule D) Regular Work Hours vs Overtime (OT), CY 2022	
Regular Pay	244,406.00
OT TOTAL	132,933.95
Overtime Pay	327.50
Overtime 1.5	104,616.00
FLSA OT Pay	26,295.00
Double Overtime	1,663.45
1.5 Holiday OT	32.00
<b>Total Regular Pay and OT</b>	<b>377,339.95</b>
<b>Productive Work Hours</b>	
OT as % of Total Productive Hours	35.2%

*This data also shows that overtime accounts for over a third of Salary Schedule D (covers Correctional Officers up to Lieutenants) productive work hours.*

Data Source: Office of Audits and Investigations, SAP Hours by Wage Type CY 2022 Report for the Department of Corrections

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