



GOVERNORS' BUDGETS FOR FY2020: CORRECTIONS AND JUVENILE JUSTICE PRIORITIES

March 6, 2019

Overview

As of March 6, all but two states have released their budget recommendations for fiscal 2020. Corrections is one of the larger areas of state spending and is unusual in that most of its funding is derived from the general fund, unlike other program areas like Medicaid or higher education, which receive significant federal funding or other state funding. According to NASBO's 2018 *State Expenditure Report*, corrections spending comprised 6.8 percent of total general fund expenditures, while deriving 89.2 percent of its funding from general funds. This issue brief highlights some of the key themes in this program area across governors' proposed budgets for fiscal 2020. The state examples provided are meant to be illustrative but not exhaustive.

Compensation and Staffing

State corrections agencies are struggling to recruit and retain employees, and a focus on this issue was common in fiscal 2020 budget proposals. At least eight states included additional funds for correctional officer salary increases, citing the need to recruit and retain these vital security positions. **Idaho** included \$2.4 million to increase the starting salary of correctional officers, adjust the set annual security retention plan increases and address compression in order to retain experienced personnel. **Maryland's** governor proposed \$13.1 million to institute a new pay plan for correctional officers and to improve recruitment and retention. Beyond security positions, at least nine states increased funds to aid retention, add positions or fill vacancies in other hard-to-fill correctional jobs, including health care staff, case managers and program coordinators. **Hawaii** proposed adding 10 permanent positions (funded with internal savings)

to support health care programs at several correctional centers, while Nevada proposed \$5.2 million to hire 27 new probation and parole staffers and **Kansas** included \$3 million to fill vacant positions at correctional facilities. With a strong economy in most areas of the country, states are having to compete to attract qualified applicants for these difficult to fill positions, and in many cases are increasing pay to boost their competitiveness.

Health Care

Correctional populations on average have an increased incidence of health problems compared to the rest of the population and health care is a major component of state spending for corrections. The average age of inmates is also increasing; according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2011 the percentage of sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of states and the federal government aged 55 or older was 7.9 percent, rising to 11.3 percent by 2016. At least seven states highlighted spending increases for correctional health care in their fiscal 2020 proposed budgets. **Delaware** proposed \$1.1 million for inmate medical services and **Florida** proposed an additional \$13.9 million to cover the increased costs of inmate medications. Providing mental health care is also a priority for state corrections agencies, as seen in the proposed budgets for **New Mexico**, which added \$300,000 for an increase in the behavioral health contract for inmate healthcare, and **South Dakota**, which proposed \$490,000 in additional funds.

Within health care spending, some states added specific funding for treating certain diseases or substance use disorders. At least three states, **Florida**, **Rhode Island**, and



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South Carolina, specifically proposed additional funding to treat Hepatitis C in inmates. Several states also proposed more funding to treat substance use disorders, including opioid addiction, among the correctional population. **Connecticut** and **New York** would expand medication-assisted treatment in correctional facilities, while **Washington** proposed establishing a substance abuse recovery community for incarcerated women.

Re-Entry & Reducing Recidivism

At least 18 governors so far proposed initiatives under the broad topic of “re-entry.” As most offenders in correctional institutions will be released at some point, ensuring a safe and successful transition to the community is important. States like **New Hampshire** increased their support for housing, by proposing to build new community-based transitional housing that will provide 40 new individual placements around the state. **Maryland’s** governor proposed reinvesting \$3.8 million in evidence-based strategies to decrease crime and reduce recidivism while **Missouri** proposed \$1 million for the state’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative to expand community behavioral health treatment and help reduce recidivism. Several states bolstered workforce training for their correctional populations. **Oklahoma** proposed \$1.5 million to complete the Pay for Success contract to reduce the incarceration rate of women by providing supervision, treatment, and workforce readiness training. **Mississippi’s** governor proposed \$1 million in order to give the Department of Corrections the ability to offer forklift and OSHA workplace safety and health training, and **Colorado** proposed a new work release program. Education was another priority for many states: **California** included a package of programs aimed at improving literacy rates among the offender population and **Iowa** proposed partnering with a community college for a Second Chance Pell Grant program.

Parole: Facilitating release from incarceration to the community in many states is the Parole Board, and at least three states increased resources for their boards. **Connecticut** would establish a pilot program to provide appointed counsel at parole violation hearings and **Georgia** proposed adding funding and positions for criminal investigations to help address case backlogs. **Massachusetts’** governor proposed overall funding increases to implement various criminal

justice reforms, including \$2.3 million to the parole board to support a higher caseload expected to be released into community supervision.

Community Supervision: After inmates are released into the community, many are under a form of community supervision and at least five states added resources in this area. **Arkansas’** governor proposed funding for 30 new probation and parole agents, while **Colorado** provided a larger increase for the parole services division. **Nevada** also funded new parole and probation staffers and **Utah** proposed \$1.8 million to hire 22 investigators to prepare presentence reports to free up agents to supervise offenders in the community.

Institutional Capacity Changes & Facility Improvements

At least nine states have proposed making changes to the capacities of their correctional facilities, with some closing units, adding units, adding specialized treatment units, or moving inmates out of state. **Connecticut** would realize savings through the closure of five housing units and **New York** proposes closing up to three prisons to reduce excess capacity due to a declining prison population. **North Dakota’s** governor proposes relocating women’s prison services to allow for consolidation of facilities and more efficient operations and **Maine** proposes creating a pre-release center at a closed facility. **Nebraska’s** governor would address overcapacity by adding two high-security housing units with capacity up to 384 beds and **Alaska** proposes transferring 500 long-term prisoners out of state and closing a portion of a correctional center.

In addition to changing the capacity of correctional facilities, the fiscal 2020 budgets in several states address facility improvements and deferred maintenance. **California** proposes \$8.4 million over two years to fund accessibility improvements for inmates with disabilities while **Florida** would support maintenance and repair for correctional facilities to meet compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, improve security systems, and improve mental health facilities. **Mississippi** proposed funds to repair a unit while **South Carolina** would fund equipment and facility upgrades including fire alarm and cell door systems. Other states like **Oklahoma** are paying debt service on



previously issued bonds to address deferred maintenance. **Oregon** would support capital investments to address the ongoing health, life, safety and security concerns across multiple juvenile facilities.

Correctional Technology Systems

In addition to addressing the physical plant of correctional facilities, at least six states proposed budget items to improve IT systems. **Illinois**, **South Carolina** and **Virginia** propose development and implementation of electronic medical records systems for their correctional populations. **Idaho's** budget includes \$6.3 million in one-time dedicated fund spending authority for the second year of a three-year project to replace the Offender Management System and **Nevada** proposes \$11.5 million in one-time funding to upgrade the state's criminal justice information system.

Juvenile Justice

States vary in how they administer their juvenile justice systems, with some states placing the responsibility in the Department of Corrections, while others locate it in another agency, such as the Department of Health or the department responsible for the child welfare system. NASBO's annual *State Expenditure Report*, which highlights state spending on corrections, includes a table of which states exclude juvenile justice functions from their corrections spending totals, lending insight into how states organize their juvenile justice systems. In governors' fiscal 2020 budgets, at least nine states included funding increases for their juvenile justice systems. **Arizona**, **Florida**, **Georgia**, and **South Carolina** included funds for salary increases for staff in juvenile facilities or community supervision. Two states, **California** and **Montana**, are proposing or implementing reorganizations of their juvenile justice systems; California would move youth correctional facilities to a new department under the Health and Human Services Agency. **Florida** also proposed several initiatives aimed at expanding prevention services for at-risk youth and adding non-secure residential beds for youth with intensive mental health needs. **Colorado** proposed \$500,000 for juvenile justice initiatives under the state's Improving Outcomes for Youth Taskforce.

Closing

Although many states implemented criminal and juvenile justice reforms over the last decade, states are still working to address long-term concerns such as aging facilities and stubborn recidivism rates. The initiatives proposed in fiscal 2020 budgets highlight the continued importance of these policy concerns to governors. NASBO will continue to monitor, analyze and report on governors' budget recommendations as they are released.

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