

## Prison Population Dropping, but Need for Services Remains High

After peaking in 2006, the prisoner population in Michigan has been declining, dropping below 40,000 for the first time in over 20 years. Despite the decline, the Department of Corrections has seen a need for higher investment in services and programs in part because more prisoners are aging and require additional health care treatment. The Department of Corrections budget is almost entirely funded with state General Fund dollars, and total spending is expected to remain at approximately \$2 billion in 2019. Approximately \$1.6 billion or roughly 80% of the Corrections budget is allocated to prisoner housing, physical and mental healthcare, food, transportation and treatment programs, and vocational programs for prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND

Mass incarceration has been proven to disproportionately affect the well-being of families of color.<sup>2</sup> The impact is two-generational: Black and brown individuals, especially cisgender men and transgender men and women, are often targeted in community policing practices, and are more likely to receive harsher sentences and spend more time in prison than their white counterparts. Their arrests and subsequent imprisonment can mean long-term separation from family members and harmful consequences for their children's health and mental well-being.

Children of incarcerated parents are more likely to experience poverty, drop out of school, have anxiety, be diagnosed with depression or ADHD and have behavioral issues, among other outcomes.<sup>3</sup> A vision to end mass incarceration in Michigan must therefore also be a vision to undo systemic racism in the criminal justice system. In the Department of Corrections, appropriate investments

### League Priorities: 2019 Corrections Budget

- ▶ State lawmakers should incorporate an analysis of the racial, ethnic and social justice impact of budget options and recommendations in their budget deliberations.
- ▶ While working to reduce the length of sentences for nonviolent criminals, prisons must have sufficient funding to continue services for prisoners who remain incarcerated.
- ▶ Basic skills and occupational training programs for prisoners must be adequately funded and preserved.
- ▶ Adequate healthcare for prisoners must be sufficiently funded and preserved.

in rehabilitation programs, mental health services and alternatives to prison for individuals are some of the ways policymakers can help move us toward progress.

### PRISON OPERATIONS

- **Governor:** The governor funded prison operations at a total of approximately \$1.08 billion spread across the state's 28 prison facilities and including regional support systems for those facilities.
- **Senate:** The Senate proposed \$1.06 billion in funding for prison operations.
- **House:** The House proposed approximately \$1.07 billion in funding for prison operations.

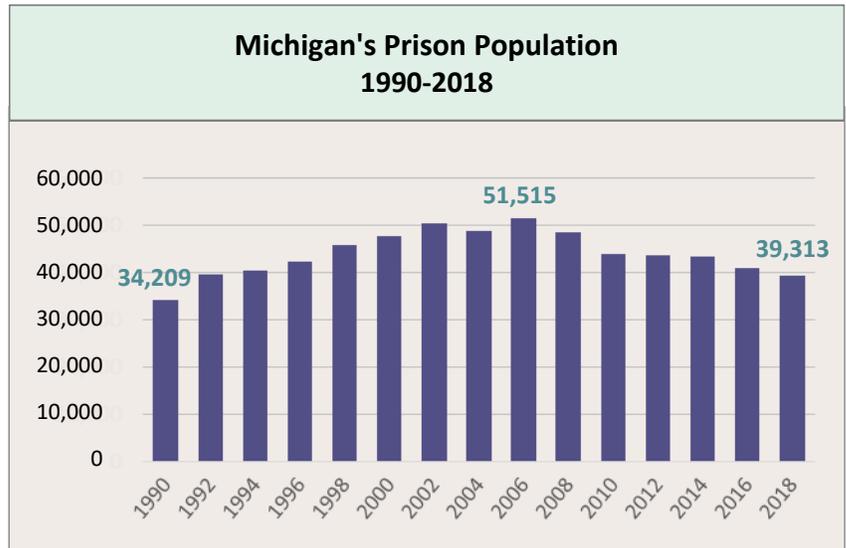
## Prison Food Services

- **Governor:** The governor retained current year funding for prison food services, and recommended an additional \$13.7 million General Fund dollars as well as the authorization of 352 state employee positions to move food service operations in-house. This would end the privatization of the services following a range of highly publicized failures by contractors.
- **Senate:** Though the Senate concurred with the governor's decision to move prison food services in-house, the Senate disagreed with the governor's one-time funding recommendation and did not recommend funding for the transition. However, the Senate did recommend authorizing 352 state employee positions. In addition, the Senate recommended \$50,000 in new funding for prison kitchen inspections. The Senate also recommended \$2 million in new funding for an enhanced food technology program, among other things, would provide on-site training in kitchen prisons for up to 1,000 prisoners annually.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor's funding recommendation to move food service operations back under the control of state employees.

## INCARCERATION ALTERNATIVES

### Residential Alternative to Prison Program

- **Governor:** The governor maintained \$1.5 million for the Residential Alternative to Prison program, which expanded to counties in west Michigan last year. The program provides vocational, educational and cognitive programming for probation violators who might otherwise be sentenced to prison.
- **Senate:** The Senate concurred with the governor's spending on the program.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor's spending on the program.



Sources: Michigan Department of Corrections and House Fiscal Agency

## EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING FOR PRISONERS

### Vocational Village

- **Governor:** The governor maintained \$3.3 million in funding for the Vocational Village program in Jackson and Ionia. The program trains prisoners in the skilled trades. A third Vocational Village program set to open in Huron Valley is still in the planning and development stages.
- **Senate:** The Senate did not make a specific recommendation for the program.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor's spending on the program.

### Online High School Equivalency Pilot Program

- **Governor:** The governor proposed eliminating the Online High School Equivalency program (\$1 million in funding) which offers career-based online high school diplomas. The funding was first included in the 2018 budget with the intention of serving up to 400 inmates.
- **Senate:** The Senate disagreed with the governor's recommendation and retains current year funding as well as an additional \$1 million to expand the program.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor's spending on the program.

## Goodwill Flip the Script

- **Governor:** The governor eliminated funding for the Flip the Script program (\$1.5 million) operated by Goodwill industries in Wayne County. The program has been funded since the 2015 budget year and provides education, job training and mentoring to 16- to 39-year-olds who have entered the criminal justice system, with the goal of keeping them out of the prison system.
- **Senate:** The Senate disagreed with the governor and recommends retaining the program with an additional \$1 million in funding.
- **House:** The House disagreed with the governor and recommends retaining current year funding for the program.

## Education Programs for Higher Security Prisoners

- **Governor:** The governor recommended \$4 million (\$2.4 million one-time and \$1.6 million ongoing) to expand education programs to higher-security level prisoners with the intention of ensuring that more inmates are able to gain job readiness skills and prepare for reentry into communities.
- **Senate:** The Senate disagreed with the governor and does not include funding for the program.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor's proposed one-time and ongoing spending on educational programs for high-security prisoners.

## HEALTH-RELATED SERVICES

### Prisoner Healthcare

Between 2002 and 2016, Corrections spending increased by an average of 1.3% annually. During this period, per-prisoner costs for healthcare increased by an average of 3.7% annually (between the 2003 and 2017 budget years).<sup>4</sup> The aging prison population is a major factor in the rise in per-prisoner health care costs.

- **Governor:** The governor recommended an additional \$2.5 million in funding to the primary contractor for healthcare services to Michigan prisoners. The governor recommended inflationary increases plus an increase in the cost per prisoner for physical and mental healthcare services.<sup>5</sup>

- **Senate:** The Senate proposed a reduction of \$932,400 from current year funding for the contract.
- **House:** The House disagreed with the governor's funding level and proposed a \$1.5 million reduction from current year funding in the contract.

## Hepatitis C Treatment

- **Governor:** The governor maintained \$6.7 million in funding for drug treatment of prisoners with hepatitis C.
- **Senate:** The Senate concurred with the governor's funding level.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor's funding level.

## Federally Qualified Health Center Pilot Program

- **Governor:** The governor proposed eliminating the pilot program (\$75,000 in funding) that helps ensure that behavioral and physical health needs of parolees and probationers are met.
- **Senate:** The Senate disagreed with the governor's recommendation and maintained current year funding for the program and recommended \$675,000 in funding to expand the program.
- **House:** The House concurred with the governor and eliminated funding for the program.

## Substance Abuse Parole Certain Sanction Program

- **Governor:** The governor proposed eliminating the program (\$1.4 million in funding) for accredited rehabilitation organizations offering services to parole violators with a history of heroin and methamphetamine abuse. Funding for this program was first included in the 2016 budget.
- **Senate:** The Senate retained current year funding and recommended an additional \$1 million to expand the program.
- **House:** The House disagreed with the governor and retained current year funding for the program.

## ENDNOTES

1. R. Risko, Budget Briefing: Corrections, House Fiscal Agency (January 2017).
2. M. Mitchell and M. Leachman, *Changing Priorities: State Criminal Justice Reforms and Investments in Education*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (October 2014).
3. L. Morsy and R. Rothstein, *Mass Incarceration and Children's Outcomes*, Economic Policy Institute (December 2016).
4. R. Risko, Budget Briefing: Corrections, House Fiscal Agency (January 2017).
5. R. Risko, Summary: House Subcommittee Chair's Recommendations, House Bill 5562 (H-1) Draft 1 (April 2018).