

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



**Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of  
**Thomas Faust**  
Director

**Before the**  
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Brooke Pinto, Chairperson

April 10, 2024  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 120

Good Afternoon Chairperson Pinto and members of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety. I am Tom Faust, Director of the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC). Joining me this afternoon are Deputy Director for Administration, Michelle Wilson, along with Agency Fiscal Officer, Anthony Norman and Special Assistant, Gizele Ponder.

I want to begin by thanking Mayor Bowser and the Council for their recent commitment to the passage of Secure DC, a comprehensive legislative package that will positively impact public safety in the District of Columbia. DOC will continue to work with MPD and our other criminal justice partners to ensure the city's neighborhoods and communities stay safe for residents and visitors to our great city. The Mayor's commitment to Secure DC and the mission of DOC is reflected in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget, which supports our secure facility population increase and the critical needs of our residents, including healthcare, nourishment, and continued educational support for some of the District's most vulnerable students. It also supports our workforce through hiring and retention incentives, and funding for continued hiring in critical areas. And within the Mayor's capital budget, there is forward movement on the new jail annex construction, which will be a facility focused on resident programming.

As always, I acknowledge with gratitude the continued hard work and commitment of the DOC workforce. Their work, while challenging, must each day be carried out with a laser focus on optimizing safety and security. Our team serves with passion, pride, and professionalism to ensure those in our custody have safe and secure housing, access to robust healthcare, mental health and substance abuse services, education, workforce development, and reentry programming.

DOC operates our facility with an average daily population of nearly 1,900 inmates. This total includes pre-trial detainees, sentenced misdemeanants, sentenced felons, and parole violators. Our operation is supported by two primary correctional facilities, the Central Detention Facility (CDF) and the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF). DOC also operates and maintains the District's Central Cellblock (CCB) and contracts with Fairview, a privately-operated halfway house serving women.



Mayor Bowser has allocated a FY25 total gross operating budget of \$222,434,789 for DOC, which is a 12.5 percent increase from the FY24 budget. This budget supports 1,231 FTEs, consisting of 948 uniformed correctional officer positions and 283 non-uniformed positions. The budget is composed of \$204.2 million in local funds, \$17.7 million in special purpose revenue funds, and \$0.5 million in Federal funds. Mayor Bowser's FY25 budget continued the investment of \$29 million in Capital Funds in FY25 and \$474M in the six-year plan, that will be used to address the new jail annex's design planning and construction, general renovations for CDF and CTF, and also emergency power projects.

DOC is made up of six divisions that include Agency Fiscal Operations, Agency Management, CCB/DC Jail Operations, Inmate Services, Investigation Operations, and Post Release Services. The proposed budget distribution within these divisions is as follows:

- Agency Fiscal Operations: \$2.1 million or less than 1% of the total budget
- Agency Management: \$28.8 million or approximately 13% of the total budget
- CCB/DC Jail Operations: \$101.7 million or approximately 46% of the total budget
- Inmate Services: \$85.7 million or approximately 39% of the total budget
- Investigative Operations: \$1.5 million or less than 1% of the total budget
- Post Release Services: \$2.6 million or approximately 1% of the total budget

In direct response to District legislation aimed at curbing crime, DOC continues its commitment to public safety by providing safe and secure housing and services to the increased number of individuals being held pretrial. Since July 2023, we have seen steady population growth within our facilities. Operationally, this means greater staff responsibility as they manage, not only larger numbers of inmates, but also those who present with more serious and violent offenses and behaviors. These factors result in DOC having to operate additional housing units, manage additional inmate separations, oversee increases in internal and external movements, and focus on the safe and secure housing of a diverse and more challenging population.



As our secure facility population continues to grow, it is difficult to determine when the numbers will plateau. However, the Mayor remains committed to addressing the multifaceted needs of those in our custody and has added \$1.8M in funding to address basic needs and services of the residents and the facilities. We are also aware that our current population has an increased need for behavioral and mental health services. Therefore, DOC has increased support for the inmate healthcare contract by \$21M, which provides comprehensive healthcare, as well as the behavioral and mental healthcare services referenced above. The budget also provides increased funding levels for consumables, including security supplies, resident clothing, grooming needs, and other necessary supplies.

Our commitment to the DOC workforce is a critical component of our ability to provide a safe and secure environment. The Mayor's budget has provided \$400,000 to support retention and hiring efforts for correctional officer positions at the Department of Corrections. DOC also recognizes that retention of staff is critical, and retention is what allows the agency to keep our uniformed staff numbers stable. Our newly hired Wellness Coordinator is interacting with employees at all levels, developing programming, and creating committees to execute wellness programming throughout the agency.

In conjunction with the activities described above, the Mayor's budget allows us to offer increased signing bonuses and referral incentives to current employees invested in growing our workforce. To remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions, the Mayor's budget will allow us to offer a \$3,000 hiring incentive for newly hired correctional officers upon completion of the basic correctional training program and an additional \$3,000 upon the completion of their probationary period. Our current employees understand what is required to work, prosper and grow within our agency – and often are some of the best resources for identifying new talent. DOC will incentivize them to bring in talent by offering current employees \$2,000 for every referred recruit that completes basic training and an additional \$1,000 for every referred recruit that makes it through the probationary period. Lastly, DOC understands the need to be very intentional in stabilizing our vacancy rate, which is why we intend to find and fund within our current budget opportunities for targeted civilianization.



Regarding resident support, we continue to offer a range of program opportunities including mandated and advanced educational opportunities, workforce development, and pre and post release re-entry support. For example, from October 1, 2023, to present, DOC's READY Center has serviced over 3,100 individuals. Additionally, our tablet programs remain popular with residents, as we expand programming and educational options, and work to make more of the facility available for wireless connectivity.

Our commitment to providing educational services remains unwavering even with financial resource challenges. DOC is committed to providing services to our entering resident students with IEPs through the assistance of a third party in FY25. The educational team continues to offer in-person learning opportunities and we have hosted several graduation ceremonies. Student success speaks directly to personal perseverance and the willingness of our staff and partners to prepare students for release and successful reintegration. We will continue to build on that success.

DOC remains engaged and excited about our ability to plan, construct, and deliver a new annex building on the DOC campus within the Mayor's capital plan. This project is in active development with the architectural/planning contractor. A plan for a multi-phased approach for the facility has been presented to senior leadership officials, and the Mayor stands ready to support it in FY25 with \$24M. With the six-year funding plan of \$463M, DOC remains on track for ground-breaking for phase one of the new facility in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2027. DOC recognizes the importance of housing our residents safely, humanely, and with respect in a rehabilitative focused facility – and we appreciate the Mayor's shared commitment to these foundational standards. This commitment provides a transformational investment for the District in corrections rehabilitation.

The Mayor's budget also addresses the emergency power project, which will support a new generator. The \$3M commitment will ensure DOC can continue to support critical infrastructure needs within CTF, including healthcare, food service, elevators, and secure door controls during times of emergency power outages. This new generator will also provide emergency support in times of commercial power disruption for the new steam plant, which is currently in development.



Mayor Bowser's FY25 budget supports the agency's mission and priorities as we continue our work toward becoming a benchmark corrections agency, elevating our workforce, and expanding programming and treatment supports for residents.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify and look forward to answering any questions you may have.

