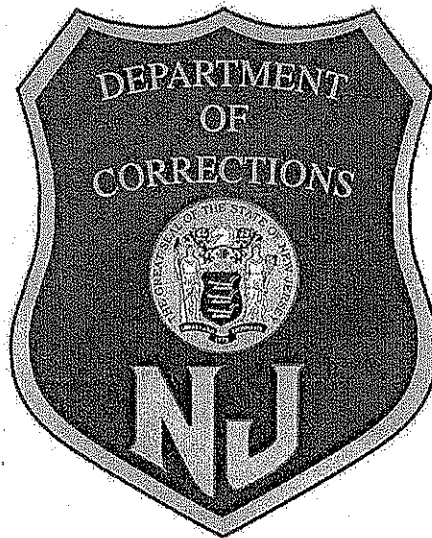


George W. Hayman
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Corrections



Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Louis D. Greenwald, Chairman
April 15, 2008

Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee
Honorable Barbara Buono, Chairwoman
April 16, 2008

At this time, I would like to thank you and the members of the committee for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Corrections fiscal year 2009 recommended budget. Seated with me are Deputy Commissioner Roselli and Assistant Commissioner Elmer. Our 2009 request seeks to balance the challenging fiscal circumstances of our state with the need for sufficient resources to operate with the level of custody necessary to protect the public, and provide services to prepare offenders for reintegration into the community. And while my comments today reference custody overtime, re-entry programs, inmate healthcare and education individually, all of these factors must work in concert if we are to contribute to safer streets while maximizing the use of every dollar in our budget.

We have identified reductions to include consolidation of minimum security inmate housing, elimination of un-reimbursed inmate work details, funded positions, and in cooperation with the State Parole Board and the Judiciary, the diversion of non-violent offenders and technical parole violators to

alternate placements, including Drug Court and the Intensive Supervision Program. We have also reduced custody overlap overtime by more than \$4 million as a cost-saving measure, recommended by the State Auditor. The budget we propose strikes the appropriate balance between fiscal prudence and the safe, secure and orderly operation of our correctional system.

In accordance with Governor Corzine's three-part strategy to tackle crime - enforcement, prevention and re-entry - very clearly our efforts most directly impact re-entry, as 14,000 offenders are released from state prisons yearly. But we are not alone in this process, for it is only through the collaboration of public and private agencies impacting the entire reintegration process, from admission through completion of a term of parole, that the former offender can become a useful member of society, as opposed to returning to prison at an average institutional cost of more than \$37,000 per year. The incalculable price to be paid, however, is the cost in lives lost or destroyed, and the victims created, when an offender recidivates.

RE-ENTRY INITIATIVES

The Corrections professional recognizes that an offender's successful transition into society post incarceration commences on admission to prison.

Educational, vocational, mental and physical health needs, as well as detection of substance abuse, are assessed within days of an inmate's confinement, so that proper facility placement and programmatic assignments can be made.

As an example, we are utilizing federal Department of Health and Human Services funds under the grant entitled "Engaging the Family in the Recovery Process – an Innovative Approach for the Max-out Offender" to involve the offender's family in support of post release success by addressing re-entry failure risks through family and marriage support,

substance abuse education and post incarceration case management and service linkages.

Additionally, the department has:

- Secured \$1.5 million in federal and private foundation grants to implement comprehensive discharge planning;
- Implemented policies and procedures for initial and discharge risk needs assessments, resulting in 4,271 assessments being conducted as of February 1, 2007;
- Implemented an agreement with Social Security Administration, resulting in 2,395 inmates receiving assistance in obtaining a duplicate social security card;
- Implemented an agreement with the Motor Vehicle Commission to accept the department's inmate temporary release identification card in the six-point ID process required for a driver's license or state identification;

- Implemented the Successful Transition and Reentry Series (STARS) program. Since July 1, 2007, this re-entry program has expanded from 4 pilot facilities to all 14 of our correctional facilities, resulting in 1,147 inmates enrolled. By the end of this fiscal year, we anticipate that enrollments will have reached 1,720.
- Implemented the PREPARE initiative, to assist offenders returning to specific counties to pre-qualify for food stamps and general assistance through county Boards of Social Services.

Other re-entry efforts include the distribution of 2,359 voter registration packets for those offenders completing their sentence at maximum term, and 7,757 offenders offered discount New Jersey Transit ticket assistance. In addition to the 5,000 Essex County Smartbooks, which were developed as a county specific resource guide for offenders, the department has also developed and published 5,000 Camden and Passaic County Smartbooks. These resource guides are invaluable references for the departing offender.

The value of education in an inmate's efforts at self improvement cannot be overstated from a re-entry perspective. It is important to note that while the department tests inmates during the reception process, the education level is strictly self reported. We have neither the financial means nor the manpower to independently seek the educational histories of more than 27,000 offenders in our custody, virtually all of whom are adults. Education for the adult learner is voluntary in our facilities, as in the community. However, in accordance with federal and state requirements, the department does provide constitutionally-mandated educational services in its facilities housing inmates under the age of 21 who have been identified as not having previously earned a high school diploma or GED. In fiscal year 2007, 163 high school diplomas were awarded to this school-age population, while 807 GED tests were administered to adult students, with 621 passing, a 77% pass rate. Additionally, career and technical education courses are offered to include such varied areas as auto body, horticulture, electrical, cosmetology,

and culinary arts among many others. Unfortunately, due to fiscal restraints, our teaching staff is limited as is our classroom space and inevitably, waiting lists exist for nearly every class we offer.

The Office of Chaplaincy Services has developed a network program designed to match inmates with trained, faith-based mentors. Mentors serve as guides and role models while providing direction and assistance to inmates and their families to foster a successful return to society. The faith-based mentor process is offered to inmates eight to twelve months prior to their maximum or parole date. The Chaplaincy Network Program trained over 350 volunteers as mentors in 2007, and successfully matched 118 inmates with an appropriate mentor.

As Governor Corzine has noted, it is essential that public agencies work together to assist ex-offenders overcome barriers to successful community reintegration. Many offenders have child support issues. They often

mistakenly assume that incarceration halts the payment requirements and the ever accumulating child support payments due. In collaboration with the Department of Human Services, the department is assisting offenders through the child support modification process by helping them work with the courts. This encourages willingness on the part of offenders to fulfill obligations and establish legitimate employment upon release. The Responsible Parenting program is supported by federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funds. With help from the Department of Community Affairs and the State Parole Board, ex-offenders are provided temporary housing while they work with assigned job coaches to gain employment with assistance from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

CRIME /GANG PREVENTION

Young people must be provided positive alternatives, information and intervention to prevent juvenile delinquency and gang involvement. To that end, the department's Gang Awareness and Prevention Program (GAPP) and Project P.R.I.D.E. (Promoting Responsibility in Drug Education) were established. Both employ the same method: youthful, incarcerated offenders are brought to schools, churches and other civic organizations to speak candidly about the actions that led to their imprisonment, followed by a discussion with the audience.

Both programs have become mainstays at schools throughout the state, with presentations offered at both middle and high schools in all 21 counties. In 2007, PRIDE visited 188 schools and community agencies, and over 53,000 youth heard the PRIDE message. Equally impressive are the GAPP figures - 251 presentations last year. Graduates of the Security Threat Group

Management Unit at Northern State Prison, former gang members, talk to young people as equals and articulate the sad truth that the lure of the gangs is one that can only lead to prison - or death.

CONTRACTED SERVICES

The department contracts medical and mental health services for more than 27,000 inmates and civilly committed sex offenders at an estimated cost of \$161 million in fiscal year 2009. An additional \$5.3 million is budgeted for substance abuse treatment. Since 1996, these healthcare services have been delivered by third-party providers.

With regard to contract monitoring, it should be noted that while the State Auditor found payments to providers were made using the framework of the contract and overall costs were reasonable, issues were raised as to the

department's procedures to monitor and verify services delivered and billings. It became necessary to file a formal complaint with the Division of Purchase and Property against a software company unable to install an upgraded version of its automated timekeeping system now in use. Our own Internal Audit team, however, independently reviewed healthcare provider timekeeping records, and found that the medical and mental health provider hours worked and hours reported agreed with the providers' payroll records in all material respects. Additionally, the Office of the Inspector General recommended enhancements to our system of automated exception reports used to monitor contractual compliance of our medical provider's dental subcontractor, and we have done so to include inmates previously released in an effort to comply with the recommendations, given limited funds and personnel available.

At a combined cost of \$61.5 million, the department contracts for 2,744 Residential Community Release Program beds for inmates returning to the

community. UMDNJ clinical staff and staff of one of our halfway house providers collaborate to deliver specialized services for 115 of these inmates with mental health needs.

An ongoing issue in need of resolution is the relocation of civilly committed sex offenders from their current locations in Kearny and Avenel, both of which are almost fully occupied. With steady growth of 1-2 residents per month and litigation contesting the continued housing of this population in Kearny, some action must be taken to relocate the civilly committed.

Recently, the Treasury, Division of Purchase and Property issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking interest and feedback from vendors for contracting this residential program in-state to a community provider. Whether internally relocated or assigned to a suitable privately operated residential facility, this population must be moved to a site consistent with

legislative intent for the treatment of these individuals in a secure residential setting.

THE FUTURE

It is a bitter fact of life that crime and criminals are forever with us.

However, it should be noted that Governor Corzine's Government

Efficiency and Reform (GEAR) Corrections/Sentencing Task Force supports

the Drug Court and Intensive Supervision alternative placement

recommendations previously noted, which if implemented, could produce

very meaningful and substantial changes in the number and type of offenders

who are incarcerated. As I have done for the past three years, I strongly

endorse the GEAR Commission's recommendations to expand the diversion

of non-violent, drug-involved offenders. From a fiscal standpoint, saving

annually on the cost of incarcerating a drug-addicted offender and

redirecting resources to less costly, more effective, alternative dispositions,

provides a welcome reprieve for overburdened taxpayers in more ways than

one – less crime, less recidivism, and, therefore, less expense. From a law enforcement perspective, the graduate of Drug Court who has received drug treatment is much less likely to recidivate than a “graduate” of a New Jersey prison or jail who has not received treatment.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.