



*State of New Jersey
Department of Corrections*

Commissioner's Testimony

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APRIL, 2010

Good Afternoon, Chairman Sarlo, and Members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. The budget proposed by the New Jersey Department of Corrections is one that reflects Governor Christie's pledge to reduce the size of state government, without sacrificing the safety and security of our prisons, and by extension, the communities that surround them.

Through reductions in administrative and central office staff, operational efficiencies, overtime reductions and facility staffing adjustments, we have been able to reduce our expenditures and produce a FY 11 budget of \$1.0 billion, \$74.6 million less than FY 10. Indeed, realizing these savings has been nothing short of challenging, as we have mandates that must be met with regard to inmate healthcare, education and re-entry. Of necessity, layoffs and attrition must occur within the civilian ranks, while greater efficiencies and overtime reductions are realized by our uniformed staff.

Perhaps the most difficult reductions will come in the areas of programming and education, as we have increased mandated responsibilities due to re-entry legislation, combined with staff reductions which must comply with union agreements. In light of these reductions, volunteers will assume an even greater importance in our prisons. From teaching assistants, to literacy volunteers, to counselors and religious

coordinators, the 1,200 volunteers in our institutions provided more than 1,900 hours of service to more than 21,000 inmates in the month of March. Indeed, it is hoped that their ranks will swell in the months ahead.

A significant percentage of the reductions in overtime will be realized by eliminating most shift overlap among custody staff. It should be noted that in no instance have we violated existing contracts and the critical functions of shift commanders and gun posts will continue to utilize shift overlap. While painful, these reductions will enable us to achieve the necessary savings without impacting on re-entry programs.

An estimated twenty-eight percent of the required savings, \$20.9 million, will come about through the most efficient possible management of the offender population that traditionally has been housed in county jails while awaiting transport to the NJDOC. To facilitate the steady and speedy transfers of State-sentenced inmates from the counties to our prisons, I have asked staff to moderately increase double bunking of adult male beds. Historically, we housed 74% of this population in double bunks, and I am seeking to increase this percentage to 77% (600 beds). This double bunking process ensures the most expeditious—and therefore the most cost-effective—placement of inmates.

In that same vein, conversions of different units within the prisons—Special Sentencing Unit and the Security Threat Group Management Unit--has preserved those custody units that require a higher degree of security, while allowing the department to place appropriately classified inmates in General Population.

In May, 2009, the State Commission of Investigation (SCI) issued a final report and recommendations stemming from an investigation of “organized criminal street gangs” in New Jersey’s prisons. We have developed a series of policies and internal management procedures, as well as expanding and revising existing policies which address all areas of the SCI Report. Included in these revisions are the specific areas of inmate financials, entrance security, inmate contraband, cell phones as well as many other subject areas. A complete matrix of policies and procedures has been constructed, updated and maintained. Among them:

- With the InfoShare intelligence system, the NJDOC will instantly share gang intelligence information with other law enforcement agencies such as the Attorney General’s Office, New Jersey State Police, Office of Homeland Security and the County Prosecutor’s Offices.
- All inmates entering/exiting our facilities are strip-searched and placed in BOSS (Body Orifice Security Scanner) Chair.
- All visitors are pat searched.
- Removal of all metal accessories from custody uniforms, enabling entry point walk through metal detectors to be set at highest settings and calibrated routinely to help eliminate the introduction of contraband.
- NJDOC has installed software that will enable investigators to identify suspicious financial activity within the inmate account system, and has developed several operations that will identify when two or more offenders send money to a single source, and has the ability to identify large transactions, addresses, and names of individuals receiving money.

- The NJDOC is one of the first corrections departments in the country to train its own canines in cell phone detection. Currently, the department has nine (9) such trained dogs.
- The Attorney General's Office, at the behest of the NJDOC, indicted various inmate gang members and a suspended correction officer under the new gang criminality laws, and makes a third degree crime the possession certain electronic devices, including cell phones, by persons confined to a state correctional facility.
- Separation of Special Investigation Division and Internal Affairs Unit.
- Potential recruit candidates are subject to investigative home visits, intensive screening process and enhanced 28-page application.
- Custody staff assigned to the recruitment unit receive 180 hours of training in investigative interviews and gang identification from FBI, DEA, ATF, etc.
- Formation of Threat Suppression Teams (TST) and the Threat Suppression Teams-Council (TST-C), working as teams to gather, identify, vet and ultimately disseminate gang information.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

With regard to operational improvements, we anticipate a savings of \$8.0 million simply by using existing units in the most efficient way possible. Conversion of the Special Sentencing Unit, which had been the former Capital Sentencing Unit in New Jersey State Prison, has allowed that facility to use the entire 48 beds as a much-needed Administrative Segregation wing. The Security Threat Group Management Unit (STGMU) at Northern State Prison, which includes special housing and programming for certain gang-affiliated inmates, will be dismantled and the inmates gradually

reassigned throughout the system to the appropriate institutions and levels of custody. With a habitual vacancy of between 80-100 beds in this unit, it makes fiduciary and operational sense to fill that unit with appropriately-classified inmates, and a special classification committee has been convened to effectuate the assignments to preserve the security of our institutions. In addition, the Special Treatment Unit in Kearny, Hudson County, which houses civilly committed sex offenders, must be vacated in May, per a court ruling. Therefore, those 162 residents will be moved to a stand-alone secure structure on the grounds of East Jersey State prison which will have a total of 324 beds. Furthermore, in order to ease overcrowding at the Special Treatment Unit Annex in Avenel, a percentage of that population will be moved to this new facility as well. It is important to note that the civilly committed population must, by law, be completely separated from the inmate population, and the move to the new facility not only will save money but will ensure that the NJDOC is in compliance with both the courts and the civil commitment legislation. Indeed, these operational efficiencies translate into real dollar savings and better treatment facilities without compromising public safety.

Administrative Reductions

With regard to other savings initiatives totaling \$7 million, we are aggressively reviewing staffing to achieve the greatest efficiencies and reduce overall the number of unclassified employees. In addition, through elimination of funded vacancies and attrition of staff, we are committed to shrinking our budget without impacting public safety.

Community Provider Programs

Residential Community Release Programs play an integral role in the corrections community. The New Jersey Department of Corrections contracts with private non-profit agencies for the provision of residential community release services to eligible inmates. Contracts are awarded through the competitive bid process and monitored for contract compliance by the Office of Community Programs. The Department contracts for 24 Residential Community Release Programs throughout the State of New Jersey, including two assessment and treatment centers. Assignment to a community program provides the opportunity for eligible inmates to reintegrate to the community, through a structured, supervised residential program. Research has shown that inmates who are afforded the opportunity to participate in community programs are less likely to commit additional crimes and/or be returned to prison.

- The fiscal 2011 budget recommendation provides for a total of 2,720 Residential Community Release Program beds. This is 91 more than were funded in fiscal 2010.
- In fiscal 2010, the appropriation for Community Programs was \$61.5 million. The fiscal 2011 recommended funding for this effort is \$64.6 million.

On June 30, 2010 a total of 2,605 contracted beds will expire. The DOC is currently in the process of re-bidding them.

Transitional Services, Drug Programs and Inmate Education

Preparing inmates for successful re-entry is a vital component of our department's mission. Governor Christie has made it clear that New Jersey must continue the downward trend of crime, and as such, inmate recidivism is a key component. An inmate who returns to society without the tools he or she needs to be a sober, law-abiding, tax-paying citizen greatly enhances their chances of returning to prison. Accordingly, the department provides comprehensive services to the offender from the time they enter prison through their reintegration back into society. In the interest of brevity, we have attached a list of the eight programs offered to our inmates, male and female, addressing a myriad of issues, to include anger management, effective parenting and acquiring and retaining employment.

In addition, during FY 09, 2,128 Social Security Card applications were processed, 3,239 inmates accepted voter registration kits, and 6,558 offenders received discounted NJ Rail/Transit tickets upon re-entry into the community.

Office of Drug Programs

Addiction is a corrections issue. Nearly 60% of incoming offenders are assessed to have a moderate to severe alcohol and/or drug issue with an additional 20% having some substance involvement. Research has confirmed the link between addiction and criminal behavior. The NJDOC utilizes the research supported Addiction Severity Index alcohol/drug screening instrument to identify the level of substance involvement of the incoming population. During 2009, 10,232 male and female inmates were assessed by the Department. Approximately 57% were found to have a moderate to severe

alcohol/drug issue. The NJDOC implements those programs that have been shown by research to have positive outcomes for the correctional offender. The main NJDOC drug/alcohol treatment strategy is the 'continuum of care' - - in-prison primary treatment followed by step-down through community corrections. This budget maintains the Department's efforts in this area.

- The Department of Corrections currently contracts for 1,376 Therapeutic Community beds in seven (7) different programs, located in six (6) different correctional facilities, one of which is a 60 bed program for females incarcerated at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. The program resident is provided with the tools to assist him/her with successfully reintegrating into society and remaining drug/alcohol and crime free.
- Approximately 3,300 offenders participated in the Therapeutic Community program in calendar 2009. In addition, another 1,162 either completed or successfully participated in the Therapeutic Community phase prior to discharge in the same time period.
- The New Jersey Department of Corrections continues to utilize the placement of addicted offenders in licensed residential drug treatment facilities under the Mutual Agreement Program (MAP) via cooperative agreement with the Division of Addiction Services, Department of Human Services. MAP facilities are State licensed residential substance use disorder treatment programs that represent an option for those most in need of treatment services, and who have been assessed and identified as in need of further intense substance use disorder treatment.

The NJDOC is mandated to educate inmates 21 years old and younger who do not have a high school diploma. In 2009, 1,046 GED tests were administered, with 677 passing. In addition, 131 high school diplomas were awarded to school age population. As required by newly-enacted legislation, the department within the FY 2011 budget, is developing a five-year, phased in education plan.

In conclusion, I would ask you, our legislators, for your assistance. Senate Bill 251, the Safe Prisons Communications Act of 2009, passed the US Senate in October, and currently awaits action in the House. The provisions of the bill call for cell phone jamming in prisons by allowing the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons or a Governor to petition the FCC with a request to operate a wireless jamming device in a particular correctional facility. The FCC will test and approve devices for use by correctional facilities. Considering his extensive law enforcement background, I am confident Governor Christie would petition the FCC to allow cell phone jamming in New Jersey's prisons. I ask you, members of the Legislature, to lobby our Congressional delegation for passage of this very worthwhile legislation, which will go a long way towards improving safety and security of our prisons. I thank you for your support, and will now be delighted to answer any questions you may have.

Office of Transitional Services CORE Programs

Thinking for a Change (T4C)

In June 2005, the Office of Transitional Services implemented Thinking for a Change (T4C). T4C is a 12-week cognitive behavioral program, endorsed by the National Institute of Corrections as a best practice approach for reducing recidivism. T4C is the cognitive behavioral change program adopted by the department for cognitive behavioral change. Participants attend T4C twice a week for two hours per group session for twelve weeks. The goal of the program is to effect change in offender thinking so offenders can change their behavior. It assists offenders in breaking the cycle of incarceration by changing their way of thinking, teaching them how to think before they react, how to build positive relationships, and teaches skills to help offenders think about things in a positive way. This program helps participants change how they think about situations which might normally lead to trouble. Changing how the participants think results in changing their outlook as well as their behavior. Enthusiasm for this program is steadily increasing and enrollment has double. Participants who complete this program unilaterally express gratitude for having acquired tools which help them to think before acting. Participants also cite developing the ability to seek and consider alternatives before acting as another important outcome.

Successful Transition and Reentry Series (STARS)

In December 2006, Office of Transitional Services developed and implemented the Successful Transition and Reentry Series (STARS) program. STARS is a 13-week release preparatory program designed to address each major reentry barrier faced by the returning offender. Participants attend STARS twice a week for two hours per group session for twelve weeks. Chapters include employment, housing, transportation, education, family reunification, finances, and others. The STARS curriculum also includes an inmate workbook titled Living on the Outside. STARS course provides offenders nearing their release, a structured and detailed approach to addressing each major re-entry barrier that ex-offenders face when returning to community life. STARS assists offenders in breaking the cycle of reincarceration, preparing for and addressing possible barriers associated with the reentry process, teaches offenders how to build positive family relationships, prepare for the workforce, and how to develop effective problem solving, communication, and life skills. It also provides offenders with vital resource information for services in the community. The program has had 4,567 participants enroll with a current cycle completion rate of 80.42%. Offender feedback remains extremely positive for this program and it continues to be the most sought after program by the inmates.

Cage Your Rage (CYR)

In January 2007, Office of Transitional Services implemented Cage Your Rage (CYR) anger management program to the offender population. Cage Your Rage is endorsed by the American Corrections Association as a best practice program designed to help offenders recognize their angry feelings, learn their cause, and deal with them in a responsible way. Participants attend CYR once a week for ninety minutes per group session for ten weeks. Participants learn that anger has good and bad points; how to stop their angry feelings from becoming a problem, the connection between thoughts and anger and, more importantly, techniques to help them manage their anger such as self talk, signposting, relaxation and anger logs. Cage Your Rage for Men is an interactive, process oriented group that meets once a week for ten weeks. Interest in the program has always been great. Most institutions run at least two groups per program cycle. Enrollment and completions have steadily increased. Offender feedback has been positive and improves each cycle with frequent requests for a PART 2 from the inmates.

Cage Your Rage for Women (CYR-W)

In November 2009, Office of Transitional Services implemented Cage Your Rage for Women (CYR-W) to the female offender population. . Cage Your Rage is endorsed by the American Corrections Association as a best practice program designed to help offenders recognize their angry feelings, learn their cause, and deal with them in a responsible way. CYW-W is a gender specific program designed to address anger issues specific to women. Participants learn to recognize their anger; some of the emotions anger is used to mask; the connection between thoughts and anger and, more importantly, techniques to help them manage their anger such as time outs, relaxation and anger logs, understanding the origin of their angry feelings, and how to develop a self-care plan. Cage Your Rage for Women is an interactive, process oriented group that meets once a week for eleven weeks at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. Interest in the program has been phenomenal. Enrollments and completions have increased from 44 participants in FY08 to 140 participants in FY09. FY10 is also off to a great start with 42 women enrolled. Offender feedback has been great with constant requests for a part 2.

Successful Employment through Lawful Living and Conflict Management (SEALL)

Implemented in September 2008 Office of Transitional Services implemented the Successful Employment and Lawful Living through Conflict Management (SEALL) program. Participants attend SEALL once a week for two hours per session for six weeks. SEALL is a continuation of the STARS program with a specific focus on maintaining employment and addressing on the job conflict. Participants learn how to maintain pro-social behavior at work when conflict occurs on the job. It assists offenders in breaking the cycle of unemployment by preparing them to handle on-the-job conflict, prepare for and address possible barriers to employment, how to build positive working relationships, prepare for the workforce, and how to develop effective problem solving and communication skills. SEALL is recommended to be taken after the inmate has

completed STARS. However, if the inmate does not fit the time criteria for STARS, the enrollment waiver may be applied.

Helping Offenders Parent Effectively for Men (HOPE-M)

In October 2007, the Office of Transitional Services implemented the Helping Offenders Parent Effectively (HOPE) program. Using the American Correctional Association endorsed curriculum Responsible Fatherhood, HOPE-M is a ten week program that encourages offenders to see the importance of accepting responsibility for their children and to become self sufficient by beginning to take control of their lives. It is the goal of the programs to help participants become responsible fathers, even while incarcerated, which will lead to a reduction in the rate of inmate recidivism and result in offenders learning to positively influence their own children to live law abiding lives. Offenders who learn to be better fathers can help reduce these risks and have positive effects on their children's lives. Research shows that inmates who learn to become better fathers are less likely to return to prison, and that their children adjust better when they are reunited. The goal of HOPE is to enable offenders to see the importance of accepting responsibility for their children and increase their ability to be self sufficient by beginning to take control of your life. Participants attend HOPE once a week for 90 minutes per session for 12 weeks.

Helping Offenders Parent Effectively (H.O.P.E.) for Women

In September 2009, Office of Transitional Services implemented the Helping Offenders Parent Effectively for Women (HOPE-W) program at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. Using the American Correctional Association endorsed curriculum Responsible Motherhood, HOPE-W is a gender specific program designed to help women see the importance of accepting responsibility for their children, becoming more self-sufficient and taking control of their lives. HOPE-W is a ten week program designed specifically for women, to help them become better mothers even while they are incarcerated. Research has shown that women who learn to become better mothers are less likely to return to prison. HOPE-W assists the incarcerated mothers with transitioning from being a mother in the community to now being a long distant parent. While the inaugural cycle will not end until the end of November 2009, 90% of those who started the program remain actively involved and 80% of those enrolled have achieved perfect attendance thus far. HOPE-W is a prerequisite for enrolling in EPIC.

Every Person Influences Children (EPIC)

In July 2006, Office of Transitional Services implemented Every Person Influences Children (EPIC). EPIC is a ten week, gender-specific program designed especially for women. For many female offenders, incarceration may last for a significant part of their child's formative years. Many of those women lack the foundational information and skill to effectively provide for, or parent, their children. The goal of EPIC is to empower female offenders to raise their children to become responsible adults. Participants attend

EPIC once a week for ninety minutes per group session for ten weeks. EPIC was developed to teach parenting skills to women, helping them become better mothers upon their release. The goal of this program is to reduce recidivism by improving the reunification process, enabling mothers to positively influence their children to lead law abiding lives. The mounting enthusiasm for the program among the women at EMCFW has been demonstrated by the fact that 85% of those enroll complete this program. Those who successfully complete EPIC consistently report that they have developed skills which they will continue to use, and are enthusiastic about having learned skills that will enable them to become better mothers.

http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/OTS/OTS_CORE_Programs.html