FISCAL SNAPSHOT

COST OF CARING FOR PRISONERS

Date: January 2026 **Analyst: Robin R. Risko**

Summary

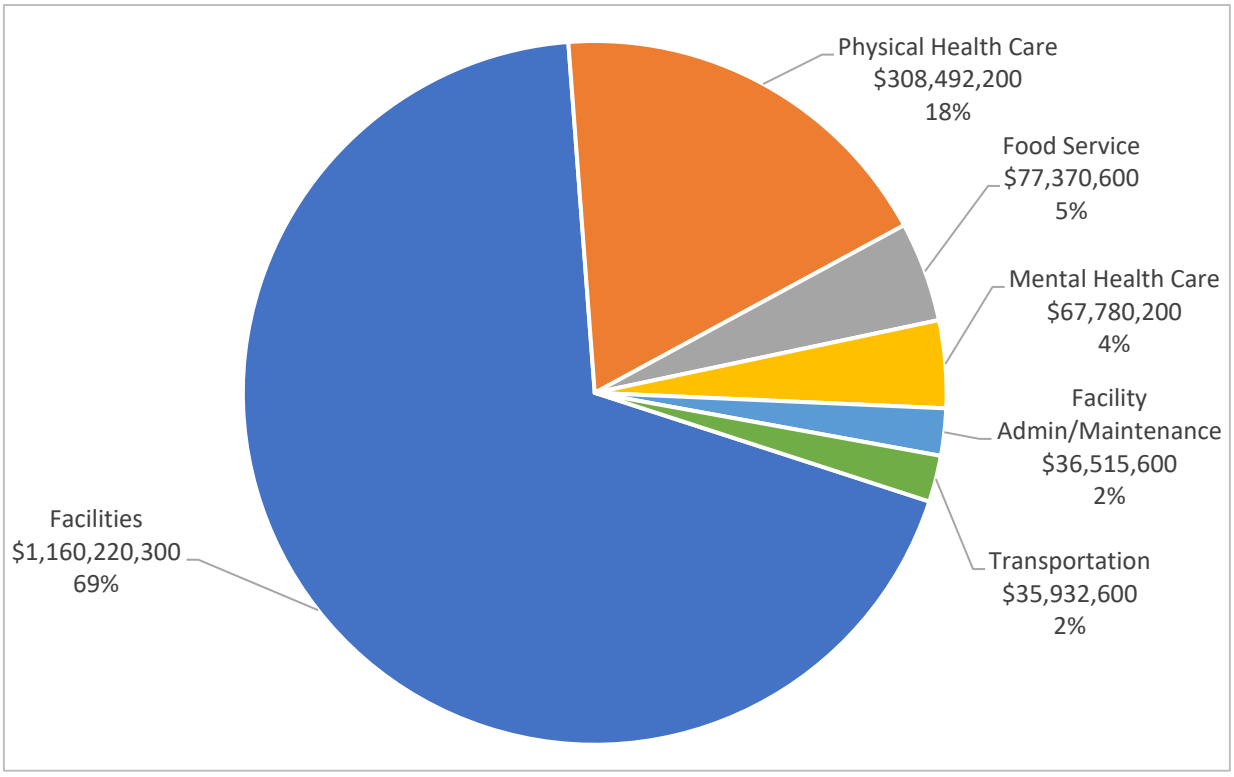
The FY 2025-26 Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) budget totals $2.2 billion. Of that, roughly $1.7 billion, or about 78%, is allocated to prisoner custody, care, and programming. Caring for prisoners includes employment and training costs for staff who operate the state's correctional facilities, facility administration and maintenance, physical and mental health care for prisoners, behavioral treatment programming for prisoners, prisoner food service, and prisoner transportation.

Background

All people convicted of offenses for which the statutory maximum sentence is more than one year can be sentenced to the state's correctional facilities. MDOC operates 26 correctional facilities located in 18 counties across the state. Under the United States Constitution and federal court orders, the department is obligated to provide care to prisoners in a manner that is not "deliberately indifferent."

Recent Activity

As of December 31, 2025, the total number of prisoners under MDOC supervision was 32,411. The total number of department employees as of September 27, 2025 was 10,495. Over half of those employees are corrections officers. Academic and vocational programming appropriations, about $77.7 million in FY 2025-26, are included in appropriations for offender success, instead of in appropriations for prisoner custody. That funding is expended on prisoners prior to their release from prison to assure they are prepared to be successful in a career in the community upon release. (Academic and vocational appropriations are not shown in the chart below.)

The Bottom Line

The total FY 2025-26 appropriation for prisoner custody, care, and programming is roughly $1.7 billion. An additional $77.7 million is appropriated for specific education, job training, and career readiness programming for prisoners.