FISCAL SNAPSHOT

THE COST OF CORRECTIONS

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

Summary

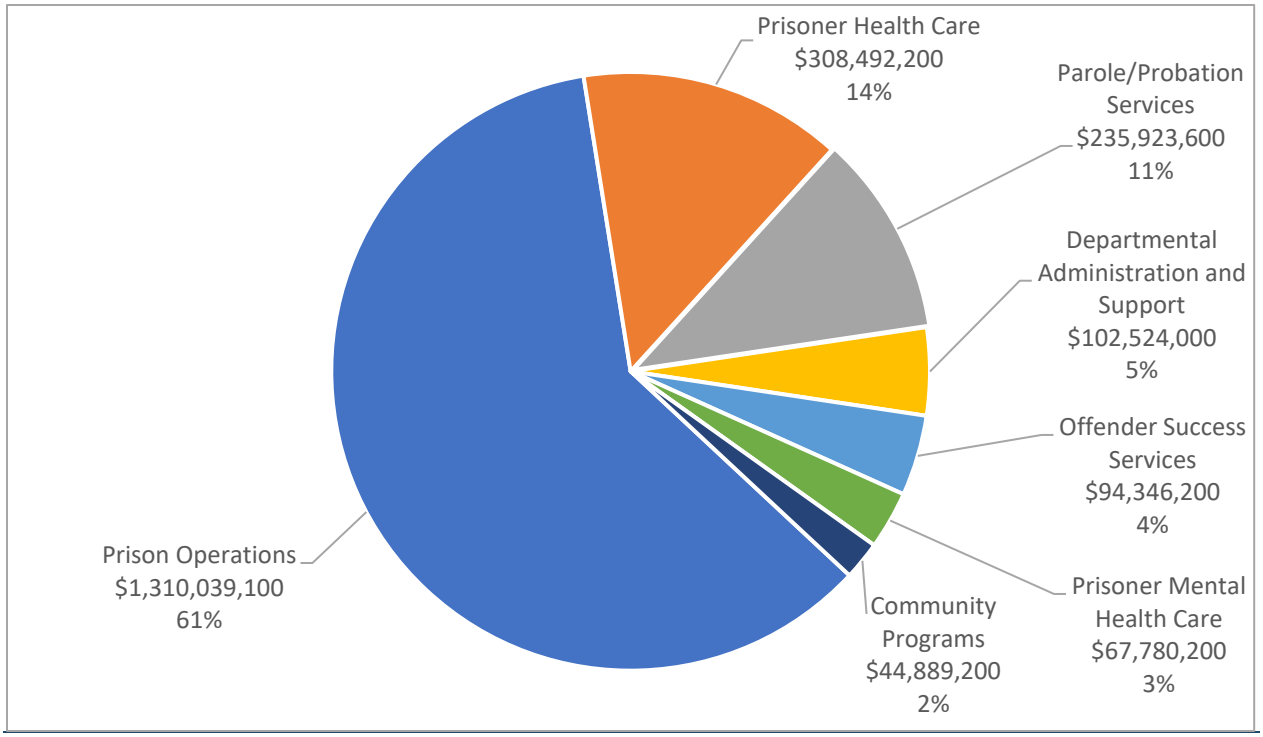
The FY 2025-26 Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) budget totals $2.2 billion. The budget is financed with 98% general fund/general purpose (GF/GP). MDOC makes up about 15% of the state's total GF/GP budget, the second largest share after the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The budget is dominated by personnel costs and is allocated into five major spending areas: prison operations, field services/parole and probation services, offender success services, community programs, and departmental administration and support.

Background

MDOC administers the state's adult prison, parole, and probation systems. Major departmental functions include operation of all state correctional institutions housing adults convicted of felonies and sentenced to prison, monitoring and supervising all parolees and probationers who are under the department's jurisdiction, and overseeing offender success, community corrections, and grant programs designed to encourage alternatives to prison placement. Prison operations continues to be the largest spending component in the budget, followed by prisoner health care, and parole and probation services. Although the number of employees and the number of prisoners have decreased over the past 20 years, appropriations have increased, primarily because of employee economics.

Recent Activity

As of December 31, 2025, the total offender population under MDOC supervision was 73,160 (32,411 prisoners, 31,666 probationers, and 9,083 parolees). As of September 27, 2025, the total number of active classified employees in the state's workforce was 50,377. Of those, 10,495, or 21%, were employed by MDOC.

The Bottom Line

Almost $1.7 billion, or roughly 78%, of the Corrections $2.2 billion budget is allocated to prison operations, including operation of the state's correctional facilities, physical and mental health care for prisoners, prisoner food service, prisoner behavioral programming, prisoner transportation, and staff training.