

# LIFERS' GROUP INC.

## MA DOC Expenditures And Staffing Levels For Fiscal Year 2019

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# Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Highlights .....	<i>i</i>
1) Public Records Request .....	1
2) Fiscal Year 2019 DOC Expenditures .....	1
3) Staffing Levels For Fiscal 2019 .....	2
4) A Three Year Comparison of DOC Expenditures In Dollars .....	3
5) A Three Year Comparison of DOC Staffing Levels of FTEs .....	4
6) A Comparison of Percentage Changes in Expenditures .....	6
7) Discussion .....	6

# Highlights

## The Four Key Findings

- 1) Inmate Healthcare Costs increased in FY 2019 by 24.9% over FY 2018 and 46.6% as compared to FY 2017. (page 6)
- 2) Inmate Program Expenses decreased by 31.2% in FY 2019 as compared to FY 2018. The DOC spent 1.15 cents of every dollar in FY 2019 on Inmate Programs. (page 6)
- 3) While the number of Custody Prisoners decreased by 405 or 4.6% in FY 2019 as compared with FY 2018, the number of Full Time Employees increased by 343 or 7.4% as compared to FY 2018. Thus, for nearly every prisoner who left, one Full Time Employee was added. (pages 2, 4, 6)
- 4) The average cost per prisoner in FY 2019 exceeded \$80,500, an increase of over \$10,000 from FY 2018 or 13.8%. (page 3)

## Other Findings

- 5) Employee Expenses and Inmate health Costs combined accounted for 89.5% of the total DOC expenses for FY 2019. (page 1)
- 6) The total amount of expenses by the DOC in FY 2019 surpassed \$680 million and exceeded FY 2018 by 8.6%. (page 2)
- 7) The percentage of older prisoners (age 50 and up) increased to 28% (2,280) of the total custody population in FY 2019, an increase of 52% from FY 2011. (page 7)
- 8) The average cost per prisoner for programs expenses in FY 2019 was \$966.82, a decrease of 27.9% from FY 2018. (page 8)

# A Lifers Group Inc. Report On The Department of Correction's Expenditures and Staffing Levels for Fiscal Year 2019

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## 1. Public Records Request

In response to a Public Records Request, the Department of Correction (DOC) provided data regarding the expended funds by the DOC in Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019) as well as the staffing numbers for Full Time Employees (FTEs) in various categories for the same time period.

## 2. Fiscal 2019 DOC Expenditures

The expended funds and percentages of the total amount spent in Fiscal 2019 were broken down into nine categories. For Fiscal 2019, those categories in order from highest to lowest in dollars spent and the resultant percentages were as follows:

Category	Amount	%
Employee Expenses	440,433,611	64.7
Inmate Health Costs	169,041,475	24.83
Utilities	23,350,539	3.4
Inmate Food Costs	13,500,699	2.0
Infrastructure	12,872,382	1.9
Inmate Program Costs	8,173,475	1.15
Other <sup>1</sup>	6,675,550	1.0
Administrative Expenses	4,317,594	.6
Legislative Expenses	2,375,000	.4
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>680,740,325</b>	

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<sup>1</sup> This is the first year of reporting for this category which includes: "Facility Furnishings, Cleaning Supplies, Security Equipment, Vehicle Maintenance, etc."

## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

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Total Expenses in Fiscal 2019 increased by \$54,140,946 or 8.6% over Fiscal 2018. Inmate Health Care costs saw a significant increase. Employee Expenses also increased, although the percentage of total expenses decreased slightly. Inmate Program Expenses, however, dropped markedly to barely in excess of 1 cent of every dollar spent for the year. See Section 4 for a three year comparison of DOC expenditures.

### 3. Staffing Levels for Fiscal 2019

The DOC added designations for FTEs<sup>2</sup> in Fiscal 2019, i.e., Service Maintenance, Skilled Craft, and Technicians. The numbers and percentages of DOC FTEs for Fiscal 2019 are broken down into the following seven categories:

Category	#	%
Protective Service	3,627	72.8
Professionals	920	18.5
Officials and Administrators	197	4.0
Office/Clerical	150	3.0
Skilled Craft <sup>3</sup>	54	1.1
Service Maintenance <sup>4</sup>	24	.5
Technicians <sup>5</sup>	5	.1
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>4,977</b>	

The total number of FTEs increased by 343 or 7.4% in FY 2019 as compared to FY 2018. The number of Protective Service personnel (Captains and Correctional Officers) increased by 261 FTEs or 8.8%. The other categories remained relatively the same from Fiscal 2018. See Section 5 for a three year comparison of DOC Staffing levels.

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<sup>2</sup> FTEs stand for Full-Time Employees

<sup>3</sup> Varying Levels of Storekeepers

<sup>4</sup> Varying Levels for Power Plants and Sewage Treatment Plants

<sup>5</sup> Agents for Industries

## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

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### 4. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Expenditures In Dollars

Category	Fiscal 2019	Fiscal 2018	Fiscal 2017
Employee Expenses	440,433,611	419,925,359	415,637,289
Inmate Health Costs	169,041,475	135,305,313	115,308,393
Utilities	23,350,539	22,564,558	21,541,494
Inmate Food Costs	13,500,699	13,808,628	14,264,789
Infrastructure	12,872,382	17,909,259	16,985,588
Inmate Program Costs	8,173,475	11,871,919	11,232,697
Other	6,675,550	0.00	0.00
Administrative Expenses	4,317,594	2,799,343	2,557,921
Legislative Expenses	2,375,000	2,415,000	2,200,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>680,740,325</b>	<b>626,599,379</b>	<b>599,728,171</b>
MA Custody Pop. Jan. 1 <sup>6</sup>	8,454	8,859	9,038
<b>Annual Cost Per Inmate<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>80,523</b>	<b>70,730</b>	<b>66,356</b>

The percentage of the Total Expenses for Employee Expenses decreased in FY 2019 to 64.7% from 67% in FY 2018 and from 69.3% in FY 2017. Inmate Health expenses continued to increase as a percentage of Total Expenses in FY 2019 to 24.9%, up from 21.6% in FY 2018 and 19.2% in FY 2017. Inmate Food Expenses decreased as a percentage of Total Expenses in FY 2019 to 2.0%, down from 2.2% in

<sup>6</sup> MA Custody Population figures are as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year as per the DOC's *Prison Population Trends 2018* report at page 12.

<sup>7</sup> These figures were calculated by the author, dividing the Total Expenses by the Jan. 1 Custody Population number. The average costs per inmate for Fiscal 2018 and Fiscal 2017 have been adjusted from the Lifers' Group Inc. Report on DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels for Fiscal 2018 (dated December 2018) to reflect the change in the date of the MA Custody levels from July 1<sup>st</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup>.

## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

FY 2018 and 2.4% in FY 2017. Inmate Program Expenses decreased to 1.15% in FY 2019, after remaining at 1.9% in both FY 2018 and FY 2017.

The percentage of Total Expenses in FY 2019 for Infrastructure Expenses was 1.9%, a drop from 2.9% in FY 2018 and from 2.8% from FY 2017. Administrative Expenses increased to .6% of the Total Expenses in FY 2019 as compared to .4% in both FY 2018 and FY 2017. The other expense categories remained essentially the same as percentages of Total Expenses for each of the three fiscal years. See Section 6 for a comparison of percentage changes in expenditures for the three years.

In actual dollars spent in FY 2019, four categories increased when compared to FY 2018:

- a) Inmate Health Costs by \$33,736,162 or 24.9%
- b) Employee Expenses by \$20,508,252 or 4.9%
- c) Administrative Expenses by \$1,518,251 or 54.2%

Two categories decreased in total dollars spent when compared to FY 2018:

- a) Inmate Program Expenses by \$3,698,444 or 31.2%
- b) Infrastructure Expenses by \$5,036,877 or 28.1%

The number of inmates in the custody population decreased by 405 from FY 2018 or 4.6%. The Total Expenses, however, increased by \$54,140,946 or 8.6%. As a result, the average cost per inmate in FY 2019 increased to \$80,523 or by 13.8%. In addition, the average inmate cost in FY 2019 was 21.3% higher than the average cost per inmate in FY 2017.

### 5. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Staffing Levels for FTEs

Over the three year time period, the total of FTEs increased by 598 or 13.7%. In comparison, the total number of MA Custody inmates decreased by 584 or 6.5%. Thus, for every prisoner released over the last three years, the DOC has **added** more than one full-time employee. As a result, the ratio of FTEs to inmates decreased from 1 FTE to 2.06 inmates in FY 2017 to 1 FTE to 1.7 inmates in FY 2019. In other words, there is now one DOC full-time employee for every 1.7 prisoners. As noted in the Lifers' Group Inc. December 2018 report on MA DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels (page 5) nationally, the ratio of FTEs to inmates approximates 1 FTE for every 10 inmates.

The number of FTEs in Protective Service increased by 261 or 7.8% in FY 2019 as compared to FY 2018. Officials / Administrators increased by 10 or 5.3%; while Professional FTEs decreased by 6 or .6% and Office / Clerical FTEs decreased by 5

## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

or 3% in FY 2019 as compared to FY 2018. Overall, the number of FTEs increased by 343 or 7.4% in FY 2019 as compared to FY 2018.

The ratio of Protective Service FTEs to inmates decreased from 1 FTE to every 2.6 inmates in FY 2018 and FY 2017 to 1 Protective Service FTE for every 2.3 inmates in FY 2019. As noted in the aforementioned December 2018 Lifers' Group Inc. report, the average for state prisons nationally is 1 Protective Service FTE for every 4.9 inmates.

See the table below for the three year comparison in the number of FTEs in each category and the percentages of that total number.

	FY 2019		FY 2018		FY 2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Protective Service	3,627	72.8	3,366	72.6	3,471	79.3
Professionals	920	18.5	926	20.0	592	13.5
Officials / Administrators	197	4.0	187	4.0	175	4.0
Office / Clerical	150	3.0	155	3.4	141	3.2
Other <sup>8</sup>	83	1.7	0		0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,977</b>		<b>4,634</b>		<b>4,379</b>	
Facility Count as of 1/1	8,454		8,859		9,038	
Ratio: FTEs to Prisoners	1:1.7		1:1.91		1:2.06	
Ratio: Protective Service FTEs to Prisoners	1:2.3		1:2.6		1:2.6	

<sup>8</sup> Includes Service Maintenance, Skilled Craft & Technician FTEs.



## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

### 6. Comparison of Percentage Changes In Expenditures for FY 2019, FY 2018, and FY 2017

	FY 2019 to FY 2018 % Inc. or Dec.	FY 2019 to FY 2017 % Inc. or Dec.
Administrative Expenses	+54.2	+68.8
Inmate Health Expenses	+24.9	+46.6
Employee Expenses	+4.8	+6.0
Utilities Expenses	+3.5	+8.4
Inmate Program Expenses	-31.2	-27.2
Infrastructure Expenses	-28.1	-24.2
Inmate Food Expenses	-2.2	-5.3
Legislative Expenses	-1.7	+8.0
Total Expenses	+8.6	+13.5
Total Custody Count	-4.6	-6.5
Total FTEs	+7.4	+13.7
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	+13.8	+21.3

### 7. Discussion

As noted in previous Lifers' Group Inc. reports on DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels,<sup>9</sup> one indicator of the priorities of the DOC is to examine where it spends its money. For instance, as has been shown, in FY 2019, sixty-five cents of

<sup>9</sup> For copies of these reports, see: [www.realcostofprisons.org/writing](http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing), or send a request to: Chairman, Lifers' Group Inc., MCI-Norfolk, P.O. Box 43, Norfolk, MA 02056.

## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

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every dollar spent by the DOC went to employees. For Inmate Programs, however, the DOC spent 1.15 cents, down from 1.9 cents in FY 2018.

The increases in Employee Expenses (4.8%) and Inmate Health Expenses (24.6%) in FY 2019 from FY 2018 are significant since the total custody inmate population as reported for January 1, 2019 and January 1, 2018 respectively decreased by 405 inmates or 4.6%, while the total amount of funds expended by the DOC increased by 8.6%. The percentage increase from FY 2018 to FY 2019 in Inmate Health Expenses, which had also increased by 17.3% from FY 2017 to FY 2018, is particularly significant since the inmate population went down. The increase in Inmate Health Expenses arguably reflects the continuing aging of the prisoner population and the attendant increase in medical costs to house the aging prisoner population. Since FY 2017, Inmate Health Expenses have risen over 46%. The question then is: How long can such increases be sustained until the DOC addresses this burgeoning expense category, fueled by the continually aging inmate population?

According to information provided by the DOC's Research & Planning Division pursuant to a public records request, the percentage of older prisoners aged 50 and up increased 52% since January 2011. See the table below for a comparison of the numbers and percentages of prisoners aged less than 50 as compared to those 50 and over on January 1, 2011 as compared to January 1, 2019..

Age	1/1/11		1/1/19	
Less than 50	7,530	83%	5,764	72%
50 and up	1,496	17%	2,280	28%

Inmate Food Expenses decreased 2.2% from FY 2018, concomitantly with the decrease in the inmate population, although the Custody Population decreased 4.6% as compared to FY 2018. Thus, in Fiscal 2019, the average cost per meal increased to \$1.46 from the average cost per meal in FY 2018 of \$1.44. The average cost per meal was calculated by the author by dividing the total Inmate Food Expense by the January 1<sup>st</sup> Custody Count and then dividing that figure by 365 and then by 3.

The precipitous drop in Inmate Program Expenses – 31.2% from FY 2018 – is particularly troubling for it cannot be due solely to the decrease in the Inmate Custody Population. 1.15% of the Total Expenses in FY 2019 went to Inmate Programs, while Employee Expenses increased nearly 5%. No one disputes that prisons need to be staffed, but if the DOC is to accomplish its Vision (“To effect positive behavioral change in order to eliminate Violence, Victimization, Recidivism”) and Mission (“To promote public safety by managing offenders while providing care and appropriate programming in preparation for successful reentry

## DOC Expenditures and Staffing – FY 2019 – October 2019

into the community”,<sup>10</sup> spending slightly more than one penny for every dollar on Inmate Programs is simply not sufficient.

To that point, the average cost per prisoner for programming in FY 2019, as calculated by the author, was \$966.82, a decrease from \$1,340.10 or 27.9% lower than for FY 2018. At that rate of decrease, the average cost for Inmate Programming in FY 2020 would be less than \$700.00 per prisoner.

Equally troubling is the leap in average cost per Custody Inmate to over \$80,500, an increase of 13.8% in one year and 21.3% over two years. This cost is a rough average to be sure, but it is the percentage increase which is eye-popping.

Corrections experts estimate that the medical costs alone for elderly prisoners can be two to three times the average.<sup>11</sup> Increasing FTEs, particularly security staff, will not stem the tide of the increasing costs to house prisoners in MA, especially in medium and maximum security facilities. One area in which the DOC needs to explore is utilizing available bed space in lower cost, lower security facilities, even for long-term and life sentenced prisoners.

In 2018, the average daily populations as compared to operational capacities were as follows:<sup>12</sup>

	Maximum	Medium	Min./Pre-Rel.	Totals
Operational Capacity	1,978	6,598	1,632	10,208
Average Population	1,617	5,982	1,109	8,708
Available Bed Space	362	616	523	1,500
% Available Space	18%	9%	32%	14.7%

Thus, only 68% of the bed space in Minimum and Pre-Release facilities was filled, while Medium institutions were at 91% of Operational Capacities.

The Lifers’ Group Inc. welcomes all comments, critiques, and/or questions concerning this report. Please direct all such correspondence to: Gordon Haas, Chairman, Lifers’ Group Inc., MCI-Norfolk, P.O. Box 43, Norfolk, MA 02056. Copies of this report are available upon request. Permission is granted to copy or utilize any information contained in this report as long as proper attribution is made.

<sup>10</sup> MA DOC Annual Report – 2014. At page 5.

<sup>11</sup> MASS(achusetts) Incarceration of the Elderly. Dirk Greineder. Lifers’ Group Inc. April 2016. [www.realcostofprisons.org/writing](http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing)

<sup>12</sup> MA DOC Prison Population Trends – 2018 at page 8.