

LIFER'S GROUP INC.

Report on the

MA DOC EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS
FOR FISCAL 2023

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**A LIFER'S GROUP INC. REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION'S EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023**

1. Introduction

In response to a public records request, the Department of Correction (DOC) provided data on the expenditures of funds and the staffing levels of Full-Time Employees (FTEs) by the DOC in Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023). Both the expenditures and the staffing levels were reported for various categories. These categories are consistent with prior Lifer's Group Inc. reports on the expenditures and staffing levels of the DOC. ¹

The differences between years and the resultant percentages for expenditures and staffing levels, the percentages for Fiscal Year 2023, the ratios of staffing levels and the differences in expenditures and staffing levels when compared with other fiscal years were calculated by the author.

2. Fiscal Year 2023 DOC Expenditures

Category	Amount	%
Employee Expenses	\$452,502,896	60.6
Prisoner Health Costs	198,046,633	26.5
Infrastructure	24,801,278	3.3
Utilities	23,922,577	3.2
Prisoner Food Costs	18,513,595	2.5
Other Expenses ²	12,964,666	1.7
Prisoner Program Costs	9,437,102	1.3
Administrative Expenses	4,585,139	.6
Legislative Earmarks ³	<u>1,780,835</u>	.3
Total Expenses	746,554,721	

Total Expenditures in Fiscal 2023 decreased by \$15,010,803 or 2.0% from Fiscal 2022. While the total expenditures decreased in comparison to Fiscal 2022, the following four categories increased, in order of percentage changes: Infrastructure by

\$4,726,975 or 23.6%, Prisoner Food Costs by \$2,511,000 or 15.7%, Administrative Expenses by \$499,021 or 12.2%, and Prisoner Health Costs by \$2,875,708 or 1.5%. The following five categories decreased when comparing Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2022, in order of percentage changes: Prisoner Program Costs by \$6,701,251 or 41.5%, Legislative Earmarks by \$559,165 or 23.9%, Other Expenses by \$628,046 or 4.6%, Employee Expenses by \$17,719,951 or 3.8%, and Utilities by \$12,094 or .05%.

3. DOC Staffing Levels for Fiscal 2023

The numbers and percentages for the DOC FTEs for Fiscal 2023 broke down as follows:

Category	Number	%
Security Personnel ⁴	2849	68.6
Administrative Staff	497	12.0
Maintenance	289	7.0
Manangement	218	5.3
Correction Program Off.	212	5.1
Educational Staff	82	2.0
Total FTEs	4147	

The number of FTEs increased by 158 or 4% comparing Fiscal 2023 with Fiscal 2022. The number of prisoners, as reported herein, however, decreased by 2.0%. Of the six categories of FTEs, three increased from Fiscal 2022: Administrative Staff by 153 FTEs or 44.5%, Maintenance by 63 FTEs or 21.8%, and Management by 7 FTEs or 3.3%. The number of FTEs decreased in the following three categories: Education Staff by 2 FTEs or 2.4%, Security Personnel by 61 FTEs or 2.1%, and Correction Program Officers by 2 or 1.0%.

4. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Expenditures

The three year comparison of DOC expenditures includes data on the MA Custody Population as of January 1 of each year. In addition, the Annual Cost Per Prisoner is presented. The source for the custody population figures was the DOC's Institution Fact Cards published semi-annually by the DOC.

Category	Fiscal 2023	Fiscal 2022	Fiscal 2021
Employee Exp.	452,502,896	470,222,847	456,623,952
Prisoner Health	198,046,633	195,170,925	184,538,552
Infrastructure	24,801,278	20,074,303	12,977,354
Utilities	23,922,577	23,934,671	22,388,901
Prisoner Food	18,513,595	16,002,595	14,310,553
Other Exp.	12,964,666	13,592,712	9,502,257
Prisoner Programs	9,437,102	16,138,353	13,885,583
Administrative	4,585,139	4,086,118	4,056,243
Legis. Earmarks	<u>1,780,835</u>	<u>2,340,000</u>	<u>2,375,000</u>
Total Expenses	746,554,721	761,562,524	720,658,395
MA Custody 1/1/23	5,847	5,962	6,553
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	127,682	127,736	109,974

The number of prisoners in custody in MA on January 1, 2023 was 135 fewer than on January 1, 2022 or a decrease of 2.2%. Total Expenses decreased by \$15,010,803 or a similar 2.0% in Fiscal 2023 as compared to Fiscal 2022. As a result, the Average Cost Per Prisoner in Fiscal 2023 was reduced by \$54.00 or .04%, not keeping pace with percentage decreases in the number of prisoners or the total Expenses.

The most striking change from Fiscal 2022 expenses as compared to Fiscal 2023 was the nearly 42% drop in Program Costs for prisoners. It is interesting to note that in Fiscal 2021, when the prisons were in lockdown from COVID, the Department of Correction spent over \$4 million more on programs for prisoners than in Fiscal 2023.

5. A Three Year Comparison of DOC Staffing Levels For FTEs

Category	Fiscal 2023		Fiscal 2022		Fiscal 2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Security	2849	68%	2910	73%	3207	71%
Other	<u>1298</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>1079</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>1311</u>	<u>29%</u>
Total FTEs	4147		3989		4518	
Total Prisoners	5847		5982		6553	
Ratio of FTEs to Prisoners	1:1.4		1:1.5		1:1.5	
Ratio Security To Prisoners	1:2.1		1:2.1		1:2.0	

6. Percentage Changes In Expenditures For Fiscal 2023 Compared to Fiscal 2022, Fiscal 2021, and Fiscal 2020

Expenditure Category	Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2022	Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2021	Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2020 (5)
Infrastructure	23.6%	91.1%	78.2%
Prisoner Food	15.7%	29.4%	35.7%
Administrative Expenses	12.2%	13.0%	3.6%
Prisoner Health Costs	1.5%	7.3%	13.6%
Utilities	-.05%	6.9%	7.7%
Other	-4.6%	36.4%	-9.1%
Employee Exp.	-3.8%	-.9%	-.03%
Legislative Earmarks	-23.9%	-25.0%	-26.4%
Prisoner Programs	-41.5%	-32.0%	6.5%
1/1 MA Custody Count	-2.0%	-10.8%	-34.5%
FTEs	5.0%	- 8.2%	-11.0%
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	-.04%	16.1%	39.3%
Total Expenses	-2.0%	3.6%	-3.6%

It seems appropriate to note that over the past three fiscal years, the annual cost per prisoner has increased 39.3%. FTEs have decreased 11.0% and the custody count has decreased 34.5%. Yet, the DOC's total expenditures have decreased a mere 3.6%. So, where has the taxpayers money been spent over the past three years? It certainly was not on programs for prisoners. True, prisoner program expenditures increased 6.5% from Fiscal 2020, but that was calculated from an historic low base figure in Fiscal 2023 which was 41.5% below Fiscal 2022.

The DOC has spent 78.2% more on Infrastructure, 35.7% more on food for prisoners and 13.6% on prisoner health costs, even though the prisoner population decreased by 34.5%, and 7.7% more on Utilities. In addition, Employee Expenses only decreased by a miniscule .03%. The DOC needs to allocate its expenditures to categories which contribute directly to its mission, i.e., to prepare prisoners

to rejoin society as productive citizens.

7. Discussion

The DOC spent nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in Fiscal 2023. As in past reports, the question needs to be asked: Have MA taxpayers received \$746+ million in services which have enhanced public safety? This is a particularly relevant question in December 2023 when the DOC in Fiscal 2023 reduced program expenses for prisoners by over 41% while increasing Administrative Support Staff personnel by over 44%. What could those new employees be doing if not providing program support? One measure by which the DOC can be assessed is how much of each dollar it has spent went to Prisoner Programs? In past years, the figure has hovered around a mere 2¢! In Fiscal 2023, however, the DOC sank to even lower depths. For each dollar the DOC spent in Fiscal 2023, it expended a paltry 1.3¢ on Prisoner Programs.

While often discussed in previous Lifer's Group Inc. reports on the Expenditures and Staffing Levels in the DOC, it bears repeating that prisoners are grossly under-valued and under-utilized in areas such as Education and Maintenance. Significantly, in Fiscal 2023, Maintenance FTEs increased by 21.8% over Fiscal 2022. What can these extra employees, as well as those already employed at or \$100,000 or more per year, do that prisoners can't at \$3 per day with proper training? Instructing prisoners to provide services such as welding, plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, masonry, tutoring and even teaching, as was the case when the DOC was under the Department of Health and Human Services, would dramatically reduce costs without a concomitant decline in the quality of services.

In Fiscal 2023, the DOC continued what seems to be an inexorable rise in the annual health costs for prisoners. This situation is the direct result of the aging of the prisoner population. In 2018, the Legislature passed the Criminal Justice Reform Act to release on medical parole those prisoners who are terminally ill or debilitated so they pose no danger to the public. Unfortunately, the Legislature place the sole authority to grant medical paroles into the hands of the Commissioner of Correction. Carol Mici continues to deny prisoners regularly. This paucity of medical paroles

as well as the continuing increase in the number of aged and infirm prisoners has resulted in an increase of 13.6% in health costs for prisoners in Fiscal 2023 over Fiscal 2020.

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

END NOTES

- 1) Past Lifer's Group Inc. reports on Expenditure and Staffing Levels of the DOC as well as other reports can be accessed at: realcostofprisons.org/writing or on Facebook @LifersGroupMCINorfolk.
- 2) Other Expenses include: Facility Furnishings, Cleaning Supplies, Security Equipment, Vehicle Maintenance, Captel phone usage, and IT and Software Licensing.
- 3) Legislative Earmarks are funds paid to cities and towns which host prisons as mandated by the Legislature.
- 4) Security personnel includes the number of Correction Officers (2,779) and the number of uniformed captains (70).
- 5) See Lifer's Group Inc. report on the Expenditures and Staffing Levels and FTEs for Fiscal 2020.