

# LIFER'S GROUP INC.

## MA DOC EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR FISCAL 2021

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# A Lifer's Group Inc. Report On The Department Of Correction's Expenditures And Staffing Levels For Fiscal Year 2021

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## 1. Introduction

In response to a Public Records Request, the Department of Correction (DOC) provided data on the expenditures of funds and staffing levels for the DOC in Fiscal Year 2021 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021). The staffing levels were for Full Time Employees (FTEs) only. Both the FTEs and the expenditures were reported for various categories for Fiscal 2021.

The percentages for the expense categories below were provided by the DOC. The percentages and ratios for staffing levels and differences and respective percentages for expenditures and staffing levels from Fiscal 2020, 2019, and 2018 noted later in this report were calculated by the author.

## 2. Fiscal 2021 DOC Expenditures

As in past Lifer's Group Inc. reports on DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels,<sup>1</sup> the expenditures of funds and percentages of the total amounts spent in Fiscal 2021 were broken down into nine categories. For Fiscal 2021, those categories are listed below in order from highest amount spent to the lowest and the resultant percentages.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Employee Expenses	456,623,952	63.4
Prisoner Health Costs	184,538,552	25.6
Utilities	22,388,901	3.1
Prisoner Food Costs	14,310,553	2.0
Prisoner Program Costs	13,885,583	1.9
Infrastructure	12,977,354	1.8
Other Expenses <sup>2</sup>	9,502,257	1.3
Administrative Expenses	4,056,243	.6
Legislative Expenses	<u>2,375,000</u>	<u>.3</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>720,658,395</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Total Expenses in Fiscal 2021 decreased by \$23,541 or .3% from Fiscal 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Those past reports can be accessed at: [www.realcostofprisons.org/writing](http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing).

<sup>2</sup> Other Expenses include: Facility Furnishings, Cleaning Supplies, Security Equipment, Vehicle Maintenance.

### 3. DOC Staffing Levels For Fiscal 2021

The numbers and percentages for the DOC's FTEs for Fiscal 2021 broke down as follows:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Security Personnel <sup>3</sup>	3,207	71.0
Administrative Support Staff	496	11.0
Maintenance	295	6.5
Correction Program Officers (CPOs)	235	5.2
Management	201	4.4
Educational Staff	<u>84</u>	<u>1.9</u>
<b>Total FTEs</b>	<b>4,518</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

<b>Category</b>	<b>Fiscal 2021</b>	<b>Fiscal 2020</b>	<b>Fiscal 2019</b>
Employee Expenses	456,623,952	466,693,799	440,433,611
Prisoner Health Costs	184,538,552	174,317,963	169,041,475
Utilities	22,388,901	22,204,778	23,350,539
Prisoner Food Costs	14,310,553	13,646,814	13,500,699
Prisoner Program Costs	13,885,583	8,865,120	8,173,475
Infrastructure	12,977,354	13,842,167	12,872,382
Other Expenses	9,502,257	14,263,893	6,675,550
Administrative Expenses	4,056,243	4,427,402	4,317,594
Legislative Expenses	<u>2,375,000</u>	<u>2,420,000</u>	<u>2,375,000</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>720,658,395</b>	<b>720,681,936</b>	<b>680,740,325</b>
<b>MA Custody Pop. Jan. 1</b>	<b>6,553</b>	<b>7,864</b>	<b>8,454</b>
<b>Annual Cost Per Prisoner</b>	<b>109,974</b>	<b>91,643</b>	<b>80,523</b>

The source for the MA Custody Population for each year was the DOC's Institution Fact Cards for January 1st of each year. The Annual Cost Per Prisoner was calculated by the author by dividing the Total Expenses for each fiscal year by the January 1st MA Custody Population number for each fiscal year.

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<sup>3</sup> Security Personnel includes the number of Correction Officers and the number of uniformed Captains.

The percentage of Total Expenses for Employee Expenses decreased in Fiscal 2021 to 63.4% from 64.8% in Fiscal 2020. The actual funds spent for Employee Expenses in Fiscal 2021 decreased 2.2% from Fiscal 2020, but increased 3.7% from Fiscal 2019 and increased 8.7% from Fiscal 2018.

The number of FTEs in Fiscal 2021 decreased by 141 or 3.0% from Fiscal 2020. See the following section for the full comparison.

In actual dollars spent in Fiscal 2021, four of the nine categories showed increases when compared to Fiscal 2020. Those four categories were:

- Prisoner Health Costs by \$10,220,589 or 5.9%
- Prisoner Program Costs by \$5,020,463 or 56.6%
- Prisoner Food Costs by \$663,739 or 4.9%
- Utilities by \$184,123 or .8%

Actual dollar expenses for the following categories decreased in Fiscal 2021 when compared to Fiscal 2020:

- Employee Expenses by \$10,069,847 or 2.2%
- Other Expenses by \$4,761,636 or 33.4%
- Infrastructure by \$864,813 or 6.3%
- Administrative Expenses by \$371,159 or 8.4%
- Legislative Expenses by \$45,000 or 1.9%

The number of prisoners in custody on January 1, 2021 decreased by 1,311 when compared to January 1, 2020 or by 16.7%. Total Expenses, however, decreased by \$23,541 or .3% in Fiscal 2021 as compared to Fiscal 2020. As a result, the Average Cost Per Prisoner in Fiscal 2021 was \$109,974, an increase of 20% from Fiscal 2020.

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

Comparing Fiscal 2021 with Fiscal 2020, the total number of FTEs decreased by 141 or 3%. Interestingly, while the number of FTEs decreased by 3%, Employee Expenses decreased 2%. In Fiscal 2021 as compared to Fiscal 2019, FTEs decreased by 9%, while Employee Expenses for Fiscal 2021 as compared to Fiscal 2019 increased by 4%.

The total number of prisoners in MA Custody decreased by 1,311 or 16.7% from Fiscal 2021 as compared to Fiscal 2020. The ratio of all FTEs to prisoners in Fiscal 2021 was 1:1.5 as compared to 1:1.7 in Fiscal 2020. Thus, there were fewer prisoners per FTE in Fiscal 2021 than in Fiscal 2020. The same held true for the ratio of Security Personnel to prisoners in Fiscal 2021. In Fiscal 2021 the ratio was 1:2.0, while in Fiscal 2020 the ratio was 1:2.4. Thus, in Fiscal 2021 there were two security FTEs for every prisoner. While the number of Security Personnel

and the number of prisoners were both lower, the decrease in the number of Security FTEs, however, did not keep pace with the decrease in the number of prisoners, i.e., the percentage decrease for Security FTEs from Fiscal 2020 to Fiscal 2021 was 3.5%, while the percentage decrease in prisoners for the same time period was 16.7%.

The table below gives the three comparisons in the total number of FTEs and the number of Security FTEs for Fiscal 2019 through Fiscal 2021 and the resultant ratios to the number of prisoners on January 1st of each fiscal year.

Category	Fiscal 2021		Fiscal 2020		Fiscal 2019	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Security Personnel	3,207	71.0	3,324	71.4	3,627	72.8
Other	<u>1,311</u>	29.0	<u>1,335</u>	28.6	<u>1,350</u>	27.2
<b>Total FTEs</b>	4,518		4,659		4,977	
<b>Total Prisoners - 1/1</b>	6,553		7,864		8,454	
<b>Ratio FTEs to Prisoners</b>	1:1.5		1:1.7		1:1.7	
<b>Ratio Security to Prisoners</b>	1:2.0		1:2.4		1:2.3	

## 6. Comparison of Percentage Changes In Expenditures For Fiscal 2021 Compared to Fiscal 2020, Fiscal 2019, and Fiscal 2018

	Fiscal 2021 to Fiscal 2020	Fiscal 2021 to Fiscal 2019	Fiscal 2021 to Fiscal 2018 <sup>4</sup>
Prisoner Program Costs	+56.6%	+69.9%	+17.0%
Prisoner Health Costs	+ 5.9%	+ 9.2%	+36.4%
Prisoner Food Costs	+ 4.9%	+ 6.0%	+ 3.6%
Utilities	+ .8%	- 4.1%	- .8%
Other Expenses	- 33.4%	+29.7%	None
Administrative Expenses	- 8.4%	- 6.1%	+44.9%
Infrastructure	- 6.3%	+ .8%	-27.5%
Employee Expenses	- 2.2%	+ 3.7%	+ 8.7%
Legislative Expenses	- 1.9%	0%	- 1.7%
Total Expenses	- .3%	+ 5.9%	+15.0%
Total Custody Count 1/1	- 16.7%	- 22.5%	-26.0%
Total FTEs	- 3.0%	- 9.2%	- 2.5%
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	+ 20.0%	+ 36.6%	+55.5%

<sup>4</sup> The expenditure amounts and the breakdown of FTEs for Fiscal 2018 can be found in the LGI report on MA DOC Expenditures and Staffing Levels for Fiscal Year 2020 at [www.realcostofprisons.org/writing](http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing)

## 7. Discussion

The DOC spent nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in Fiscal 2021, a mere \$23,541 less than that spent in Fiscal 2020 even though the number of prisoners incarcerated by the DOC decreased 17%, or 1,311 prisoners, and a decrease of 141 in FTEs or 3% (from 4,659 to 4,518). Of that decrease, 117 were from Security Personnel, a drop of 3.5% (3,324 to 3,207). Only one category of FTEs increased from Fiscal 2020 to Fiscal 2021 - Maintenance by 16 or 5.7% (from 279 to 295). All other categories of FTEs decreased from Fiscal 2020 to Fiscal 2021: Support Staff by 18 or 3.5% (514 to 496), Correction Program Officers by 17 or 6.7% (252 - 235), Management by 3 or 1.5% (from 204 to 201), and Educational Staff by 2 or 2.3% (from 86 to 84). As discussed in previous LGI reports on the expenditures and staffing in the DOC, the use of prisoners for work inside the institutions, particularly in Maintenance and Education, could significantly reduce the employee expenditures for each category. Prior to the transfer of the DOC from Health and Human Services to Public Safety, prisoners were actively working and being trained in areas such as plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, masonry, and welding. Consequently, the number needed in the Maintenance staff was dramatically lower. Presently, while prisoners do work in Maintenance, the number is reduced and there is very little, if any, training. Similarly, prisoners were utilized as teacher aides and tutors in the Education Department. By under utilizing the abilities offered by prisoners, particularly lifers and long-termers, the DOC continues to waste precious resources, both monetary and human.

In addition, the number of all FTEs decreased by 459 or 9.2% when comparing Fiscal 2019 to Fiscal 2021. the number of prisoners, however, when comparing January 1, 2019 to January 1, 2021 decreased by 1,901 or 22.5%. It is clear that the DOC did not keep pace with the decreasing number of prisoners by a similar decrease, percentage wise, in FTEs or by the closing even one of the large institutions, none of which housed even close to 1,900 prisoners.

As noted on page 1, the Total Expenses in Fiscal 2021 decreased by a mere .3%. The disparity in expenditures from Fiscal 2021 and Fiscal 2019 is, however, eye-opening. Total Expenses increased by nearly \$40,000,000 or 6% when comparing Fiscal 2021 and Fiscal 2019. The number of prisoners, however, decreased by 1,901 or 22% and the number of FTEs decreased by 459 or 9%. These figures beg the question: How did the DOC spend 6% more money when the number of prisoners dropped by 22% and the number of FTEs dropped by 9%?

One clear result of the DOC's spending while the number of prisoners drops as does the number of FTEs is in the annual cost per prisoner which has exploded. In Fiscal 2018, the average cost per prisoner was \$70,730. In Fiscal 2109. the average cost per prisoner rose to \$80,523. In Fiscal 2020, the average cost climbed to \$91,643. And in Fiscal 2021, the average



cost per prisoners topped \$100,000 at \$109,974, a 20% increase from Fiscal 2020, a 37% increase from Fiscal 2019, and a 56% increase from Fiscal 2018. The DOC needs to be held accountable for this continuing significant rise in the average cost per prisoner.

One may argue that the method used to calculate the average cost per prisoner may not be optimal, i.e., Total Expenses from July 1st through June 30th of each year divided by the prisoner population as of January 1st of each fiscal year, since the number of prisoners ebbs and flows throughout each year and the expenses for the second half of a fiscal year may be substantially different from that spent in the first half. But, the calculations of the percentage changes year by year do not suffer similarly as the method of calculation remains constant. Thus, while some might quibble with the actual dollar figures, the trend remains unmistakable. The cost per prisoner in the MA DOC has increased 20% in one year, 37% in two years, and 56% in three years.

Two changes in expenditures for Fiscal 2021 also stand out. The first is the 56.6% increase in Prisoner Program Costs. This increase came during the fiscal year in which the prisons were in lockdown status due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, inmate programs were severely curtailed and, in most cases, canceled altogether. The increase of over \$5,000,000 from Fiscal 2020 needs an explanation from the DOC.

The DOC maintains a Central Program Account funded by a percentage (10%) of the revenues contributed by each institution, primarily from commissions paid by the Keefe Commissary Network to each institution resulting from canteen purchases by prisoners.<sup>5</sup> The total expenditures from that Central Program Account in Fiscal 2021 was \$11,640.71,<sup>6</sup> of which \$7,613.61 was spent on booklets for prisoners to use to journal during the lockdown. The Lifer's Group Inc. has requested a breakdown of the Prisoner Program Costs for Fiscal 2021 from Mr. Michael Moniz, Director of Programs Services for the DOC. As of the date of the completion of this report, a response has not been forthcoming.

The second change in expenditures for Fiscal 2021 as compared to Fiscal 2020 which stands out is the decrease of over 33% for Other Expenses. This expense category includes Cleaning Supplies. It is surprising that the DOC may not have significantly increased the amount spent on Cleaning Supplies due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

An inquiry has also been lodged with the DOC seeking a detailed breakdown of the Other Expenses category, particularly Cleaning Supplies, for Fiscal 2021 and Fiscal 2020. As of the date of the completion of this report, no response from the DOC has been forthcoming.

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<sup>5</sup> The Lifer's Group Inc. publishes a report each year on the three DOC Central Account: the Central Program Account, the Law Library Fund, and the Central Inmate Z-1 Account. These can be accessed at [ralcostofprisons.org/writing](http://ralcostofprisons.org/writing).

<sup>6</sup> See the Lifer's Group Inc. report of the DOC's Central Program Account published in December 2021.

Health Costs for prisoners remains on the rise despite the opportunity the DOC was given under the Criminal Justice Reform Act of 2018 to release on medical parole those prisoners who were terminally ill or debilitated. According to Prisoners' Legal Services in an article published in the Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly (October 5, 2020), medical parole "remains a cruel illusion for far too many sick and dying prisoners." Little has changed in the past year. Thus, the paucity of medical paroles as well as the continuing increase in the number of aged and infirm prisoners has resulted in the following: from Fiscal 2018, health costs have risen 36%, from Fiscal 2019 by 9%, and from Fiscal 2020 by 6%. These increases have occurred despite a 26% decrease in the prisoner population from Fiscal 2018, a 22% decrease from Fiscal 2019, and a 17% decrease from 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. This report can be viewed at: [www.realcostofprisons.org/writing](http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing). Permission is granted to copy or utilize any information contained in this report as long as the proper attribution is made.