

LIFER'S GROUP INC.

REPORT ON MA DOC EXPENDITURES

AND STAFFING LEVELS FOR FISCAL 2024

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## HIGHLIGHTS

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|---|------|
| 1) Employee Expenses (58.7%) plus Prisoner Health Costs (26.9%) equalled 85.6% of the total expenditures for Fiscal 2024  | 2    |
| 2) The number of FTEs decreased by 80 or 1.9%. Three categories increased, two decreased, and one remained the same.  | 3    |
| 3) The Annual Cost Per Prisoner surpassed \$130,000 an increase of 2.9% from Fiscal 2023.   | 4    |
| 4) The ratio of Security Personnel to Prisoners was 1:1.5 prisoners, a drop from 1:2.1 in Fiscal 2023.  | 5    |
| 5) The January 1st prisoner count increased by 2.8% from Fiscal 2023; FTEs count decreased by 1.9%.   | 5    |
| 6) The annual expense of prisoner related costs per prisoner in Fiscal 2024 was \$41,007.78 as compared to \$38,651.84 in Fiscal 2023 and \$38,126.78 in Fiscal 2022. | 6    |
| 7) Total Expenses in Fiscal 2024 was 16% higher than in Fiscal 2019. The prisoner count decreased by 29% and the number of FTEs decreased by 18%.                     | 6    |
| 8) The annual cost per prisoner in Fiscal 2024 increased over 63% as compared to Fiscal 2019.   | 6    |

A LIFER'S GROUP INC. REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTIONS'S EXPENDITURES AND STAFFING LEVELS  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

1. Introduction

In response to a public records request, the Department of Correction (DOC) provided data on the expenditure of funds and the staffing levels of Full-Time Employees (FTEs) by the DOC in Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024). Both the expenditures and 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. <sup>1</sup>

The differences between years and the resultant percentage calculations for expenditures and staffing levels, the percentages for Fiscal Year 2024, the ratios of staffing levels and the differences in expenditures and staffing levels when compared to other fiscal years were computed by the author.

There are two new calculations - Ratio of Other Staffing Levels For FTEs to the Number of Prisoners in MA Custody, i.e., FTEs not involved in Security (see Section 5) and Average Cost of Prisoner Related Expenses, i.e., funds spent on providing services to prisoners - Prisoner Health Costs, Prisoner Food Costs, and Prisoner Program Costs (see Section 7).

In addition, there is a new section - Comparison of Expenditures and Staffing Levels Between Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2019 (see Section 8.)

Note that Expenses and Expenditures are used interchangeably throughout this report when referring to funds spent by the DOC.

## 2. Fiscal Year 2024 DOC Expenditures

Category	Amount	% of Total
Employee Expenses	464,146,414	58.7
Offender Health Care	212,259,576	26.9
Utility Expenses	27,506,937	3.5
Infrastructure Expenses	26,106,048	3.3
Offender Food Expenses	18,591,977	2.4
Other Expenses <sup>2</sup>	17,531,338	2.2
Offender Program Expenses <sup>3</sup>	15,643,227	1.9
Administrative Expenses	4,600,605	.6
Legislative Earmarks	<u>3,737,847</u>	.5
Total Expenses	790,123,969	

Total Expenditures in Fiscal 2024 increased by \$43,569,248 or 5.8%. Every category increased compared to Fiscal 2023. The top four categories in percentage increases were: Legislative Earmarks - 210%, Offender Program Expenses - 66%, Other Expenses - 35%, and Utility Expenses - 15%. The four highest in increased actual dollars expended were: Offender Health Care Expenses - \$14,212,943, Employee Expenses - \$11,643,518, Offender Program Expenses - \$5,206,125, and Other Expenses - \$4,560,672. It is interesting to note that despite the 66% increase in Offender Program Expenses, the DOC still spent less than 2¢ of every dollar on programs for prisoners. Legislative Earmarks are funds mandated by the legislature that the DOC pays to cities and towns which house one or more of the DOC's facilities.

## 3. DOC Staffing Levels For Fiscal 2024

The numbers and percentages for the DOC FTEs for Fiscal 2024 broke down as follows:

Category	Number	% of Total
Security Personnel <sup>4</sup>	2743	67.4
Administrative Support	509	12.5
Maintenance	303	7.5
Management	214	5.3
CPO Staff <sup>5</sup>	212	5.2
Education Staff	<u>86</u>	2.1
Total FTEs	4067	

The total number of FTEs decreased by 80 or 1.9% as compared to Fiscal 2023. Of the six categories listed above of FTEs in Fiscal 2024, three increased from Fiscal 2023: Maintenance by 14 or 4.9%, Administrative Support Staff by 12 or 2.4%, and Educational Staff by 4 or 4.9%. Two categories decreased in size from Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2024: Security Personnel by 106 or 3.7% and Management by 4 or 1.8%. CPO Staff stayed the same at 212 FTEs.

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

The three year comparison of DOC expenditures includes data on the MA Custody Population <sup>6</sup> as of January 1st of each fiscal year. The source for the custody population figures is the DOC's Institution Fact Cards published as of January 1 and July 1 of each year. As the custody population varies from day-to-day, the January 1st data is used as it represents the population total midway through each fiscal year. While some may choose a different date, January 1st has been consistently utilized for each Lifer's Group Inc. report on the DOC's expenditure and staffing levels to ensure meaningful comparisons.

Expense Category	Fiscal 2024	Fiscal 2023	Fiscal 2022
Employee Exp.	464,146,414	452,502,896	470,222,847
Prisoner Health	212,259,576	198,046,633	184,538,552
Utilities	27,506,937	23,922,577	23,934,671
Infrastructure	26,106,048	24,801,278	20,074,033
Prisoner Food	18,591,977	18,513,595	16,002,595
Other	17,531,338	12,964,666	13,592,712
Prisoner Programs	15,643,227	9,437,102	16,138,353
Administrative Exp.	4,600,605	4,585,139	4,086,118
Legis. Earmarks	<u>3,737,847</u>	<u>1,780,835</u>	<u>2,340,000</u>
Totals	790,123,969	746,554,721	701,562,524
MA Custody 1/1	6011	5847	5982
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	131,446	127,682	127,736
Annual Cost Per FTE	114,125	109,116	117,880

As noted earlier, in Fiscal 2024 every expense category increased in dollars spent as compared to Fiscal 2023. It is interesting to note that while the amount expended for Employee Expenses increased by \$11,643,518 or 2.6%, the number of FTEs decreased by 80 persons or 1.9%. (See the next section.)

The increases in every Expense Category from Fiscal 2023 to Fiscal 2024 contributed to the increase of \$3,764 per prisoner for the Annual Cost Per Prisoner or 2.9%. In the same vein, the Annual Cost Per FTE increased by \$5,009 or 4.6%. (Note: the Annual Cost Per FTE was calculated by dividing the total number of FTEs into the total of Employee Expenses for each year.)

The total number of prisoners in MA custody as of January 1, 2023 and 2024 increased by 164 persons or 2.8% in keeping with the percentage increase in annual cost per prisoner. The annual cost per prisoner in Fiscal 2024 exceeded \$130,000 for the first time since the Lifer's Group Inc. has been reporting on the Expenses and Staffing Levels of the DOC.

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

Category	Fiscal 2024		Fiscal 2023		Fiscal 2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Security	2743	67	2849	68	2910	73
Other Staff	<u>1324</u>	33	<u>1298</u>	32	<u>1079</u>	27
Total FTEs	4067		4147		3989	
Total Prisoners	6011		5847		5982	
Ratio FTEs To Prisoners	1:1.5		1:1.4		1:1.5	
Ratio Security to Prisoners	1:1.5		1:2.1		1:2.1	
Ratio Other to Prisoners	1:4.5		1:4.5		1:5.5	

6. Percentage Changes In Expenditures For Fiscal 2024 Compared to Fiscal 2023, 2022, and 2021

Expenditure Category	Fiscal 2024 to 2023	Fiscal 2024 to 2022	Fiscal 2024 to 2021
Employee Exp.	2.6	-1.3	1.6
Prisoner Health	7.2	8.8	15.0
Infrastructure	5.3	30.0	101.0
Utilities	15.0	14.9	22.9
Prisoner Food	.4	16.2	29.9
Other	35.2	29.0	84.5
Prisoner Programs	65.8	- 3.1	12.7
Administrative	.3	12.6	13.4
Legis. Earmarks	109.0	59.7	57.4
1/1 MA Custody Count	2.8	.5	- 8.3
FTEs	-1.9	1.9	-10.0
Annual Cost Per Prisoner	2.9	2.9	19.5
Total Expenses	5.8	3.8	9.6



7. Direct Prisoner Related Expenses As Compared To Non-Prisoner Related Expenses

	2024	2023	2022
Prisoner Related Exp.	246,494,780	225,997,330	227,311,873
Non-Prisoner Related Exp.	<u>543,629,189</u>	<u>520,557,391</u>	<u>534,250,651</u>
Totals	790,123,969	746,554,721	761,562,524
% Prisoner Related Expenses	31	30	30
Annual Cost of Prisoner Related Expenses Per Prisoner	41,007.28	38,651.84	38,126.78

8. Comparison of Expenditures and Staffing Levels Between Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2019

	Fiscal 2024	Fiscal 2019	% Change
Employee Exp.	464,146,414	440,433,611	5.4
Prisoner Health	212,259,576	169,041,475	25.6
Utilities	27,506,937	23,350,539	17.8
Prisoner Food	18,591,977	13,500,699	37.7
Infrastructure	26,106,048	12,872,382	102.8
Prisoner Prog.	15,643,227	8,173,475	91.4
Other	17,531,338	6,675,550	162.7
Administrative	4,600,005	4,317,594	6.6
Leg. Earmarks	<u>3,737,547</u>	<u>2,375,000</u>	57.4
Total Exp.	790,123,969	680,740,325	16.1
Prisoner Count	6,011	8,454	-28.9
FTEs	4,067	4,977	-18.3
Annual Cost	131,446	80,523	63.2
Prisoner Related Expenses	246,494,780	190,715,649	29.2

Non Prisoner Related	<u>543,629,189</u>	<u>490,024,676</u>	10.9
Total	790,123,969	680,740,325	16.1
Average Cost Per Prisoner of Prisoner Related Costs	41,007.75	22,559.22	81.8

## 9. Discussion

In Fiscal 2024, the DOC continued its seemingly inexorable climb to Total Expenditures of \$800 million, coming in at a mere \$10 million short. As the Lifer's Group Inc. has asked in past reports, the question remains just as pertinent - Have MA taxpayers received an adequate return on its nearly \$800 million investment? One indicator of possible success would be a significant decline in the recidivism rate, i.e., the rate at which those leaving the DOC return for new crimes. According to the latest DOC report on recidivism,<sup>7</sup> the rate for 2019, the latest year for which data were available, was 26%, a drop from 29% in 2017 and 2018. That equals a 10.3% decline. Yet, the expenditures increased by more than 16% in those five years - Fiscal 2024 compared to Fiscal 2019. No \$800 million corporation could survive with a 26% failure rate.

Another bellweather is the expenditures for Prisoner Programs. While the percentage increase in Fiscal 2024 from Fiscal 2023 was nearly 66%, the DOC still spent less than 2¢ of every dollar on programs for prisoners. In Fiscal 2023, the DOC spent over \$9.4 million on programs for prisoners, but \$7.3 or 78% of those funds went to Spectrum Health Services, Inc. to conduct programs supposedly designed to reduce recidivism.<sup>8</sup> Under the contract signed by

by Spectrum and the DOC, Spectrum is required to provide monthly, quarterly and an annual report on its operations in MA facilities. The Lifer's Group Inc. has filed several public records requests seeking copies of those reports. The response has been that the DOC has no such records and that the request has been forwarded to the Health Services Division. To date, the reports have yet to be forthcoming.<sup>9</sup> It is important to remember that Spectrum Health Systems, Inc.'s own claim is to reduce recidivism. Unfortunately, there is precious little evidence that Spectrum is living up to its objective or that the DOC has taken any steps to ensure that Spectrum does.

In Fiscal 2024, as noted earlier, there was a 66% increase in funds expended on programs for prisoners - an increase of \$5.3 million. Could this increase have been for funding new programs? The answer is: No. Rather, \$5 million was spent on a "License/Content renewal for the tablet program," and, \$800,000 as an "increase to the Spectrum CRA contract."<sup>10</sup>

Not to sound like a broken record, the Lifer's Group Inc. is compelled to revisit the continued gross undervaluation and underutilization of prisoners to allay the costs of operating a prison in MA. For instance, when I entered MCI-Norfolk in 1982, there were six civilian workers in Maintenance. Their focus was on training prisoners to be electricians, plumbers, masonry workers and general carpenters. to work in the prison and to be prepared to find jobs once released. In 2024, the Maintenance staff at MCI-Norfolk numbers nearly three times more civilian workers than in 1982. Maintenance staff roam the prison in gangs of two or three or four doing exactly what prisoners had done in the past. The difference shows up in

in expenses. Prisoners were paid less than \$5 per day or \$20 per week or slightly more than \$1,000 per year. Contrast that with over \$100,000 paid each Maintenance staff person including salary, overtime and benefits. To further exacerbate the misuse of funds, Maintenance Staff increased by nearly 5% in Fiscal 2024.

Another obvious area where the DOC can better utilize the talents of prisoners is in the school. Prisoners in every facility include those with all levels of college degrees. Again, referring to the 1980's, prisoners taught Adult Basic Education classes as well as tutoring those prisoners who were studying to pass the GED exam to gain a high school equivalency diploma. That was then. Today, no prisoner is allowed to "teach" in a school setting.

The second highest expense category in Fiscal 2024, as it has been for many years, was Prisoner Health Costs, nearly 27% of total DOC expenditures. Prisoner Health Costs jumped by 15% over Fiscal 2021, While the MA custody population declined by 8%. The comparison is even more stark when Fiscal 2024 is compared to Fiscal 2019 where Prisoner Health Costs increased by 29%. What is driving this explosion in health care costs for prisoners? Inflation surely plays a part. But, more to the point, is the aging of the prisoner population coupled with the reluctance to grant medical paroles for those who meet the criteria laid out in the legislation. Rather than heeding testimony from medical experts, the DOC continues to deny medical paroles solely on the discretionary ground that a prisoner could still be a threat to society. While no one advocates the release of anyone who actually could be a threat to society, it beggars belief that prisoners confined to wheelchairs, those who are suffering from dementia, or any proven debilitating condition could endanger society. Threats to whom and how? The

net result is that the DOC willingly expends hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep those incarcerated who have demonstrated that they no longer need to be in prison.

Elderly prisoners, even those who are not debilitated, cost at least two to three times the medical costs of younger prisoners. Is it not time for the legislature to pass legislation calling for parole hearings for those who are elderly and have served a significant length of years, say 25 years? The Lifer's Group Inc. stands solidly behind such legislation as well as a bill allowing parole hearings for all prisoners. Those who could prove to the Parole Board that they can return to society safely, not commit any new crimes and are able to contribute to the welfare of society by living as productive citizens.

The Lifer's Group Inc. would like to acknowledge the timely responses by the DOC to our numerous public records requests. We thank Ms. Kate Silvia, Director of Communications, for her work in providing the data we need to complete our various reports. What is frustrating, however, is the DOC's failure to file reports required by legislation, contracts, or the budget. For example, the budget passed by the legislature calls for the DOC to report on its use of solitary confinement - line item 8900-0001, In addition, the budget also required the DOC to report to joint committees of the legislature on efforts "to ensure high-quality educational programming for incarcerated persons." We have already cited the lack of reports from Spectrum Health Systems, Inc.

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 and other reports can be accessed at: [realcostofprisons.org/writing](http://realcostofprisons.org/writing) or on Facebook @LifersGroupMCINorfolk.
- 2) Other Expenses are: Clothing, Facility furnishings, Laundry & Cleaning Supplies, Security Equipment, ADA Equipment, Vehicle Maintenance, IT & Software Licensing, Captel phone usage, etc.
- 3) Offender Program Expenses do not include DOC Programmatic staff expenditures which are included in Employee Expenses.
- 4) Security personnel includes the number of Correction Officers (2,671) and the number of uniformed captains (72).
- 5) CPOs are Correctional Program Officers, f/k/a case workers who conduct classification hearings and assist prisoners in dealing with daily issues such as obtaining a print out of their accounts.
- 6) MA Custody Population equals all prisoners housed in MA facilities. Those prisoners held out-of-state are not included.
- 7) Massachusetts Department of Correction Prison Population Trends Report - Calendar Year 2023, July 2024 at 45.
- 8) Response dated March 22, 2024 from the DOC to a public records request filed by the Lifer's Group Inc.
- 9) Response dated October 10, 2024 from the DOC to a public records request filed by the Lifer's Group Inc.
- 10) Response dated October 18, 2024 to a public records request filed by the Lifer's Group Inc.