

Budget Briefing: Corrections

The Department of Corrections is primarily concerned with operating state prisons and criminal rehabilitation programs.

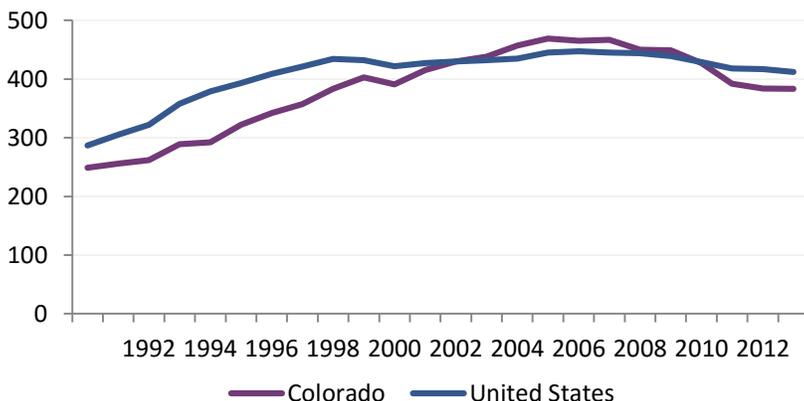
For many years, corrections took a larger and larger share of General Fund appropriations to compensate for a spike in incarceration rates. Corrections eventually surpassed programs like higher education and peaked at just over 9 percent of the General Fund in 2010. Since then, corrections funding has dropped below higher education once again but still remains a large segment of the budget.

The two major factors that drive the corrections budget are the number of prisoners and the cost to keep them imprisoned. When adjusted for inflation, the daily cost per prisoner has remained mostly the same for the last 25 years. In 2014, that annual cost was \$36,890 per prisoner.

In contrast, the number of prisoners increased dramatically since 1991, resulting from a higher per capita rate of imprisonment, increasing the corrections budget. At its peak in 2006, 469 people were imprisoned out of every 100,000 Coloradans, slightly above the national average. Since then the rate has leveled off at and dropped slightly below the national average, at 383 per 100,000 in 2014.

While rates of imprisonment have dropped, people of color are still disproportionately arrested and imprisoned. In Colorado, blacks are more than seven times likely to be imprisoned than people of other races, while Hispanics are 2.5 times more likely to be imprisoned. While Colorado's incarceration rates have slowed overall, there is still much work to be done to create a non-discriminatory corrections system.

Colorado Incarceration Rates (per 100,000)



Quick Facts

FY 2015-16 Appropriations: \$780 million from the General Fund

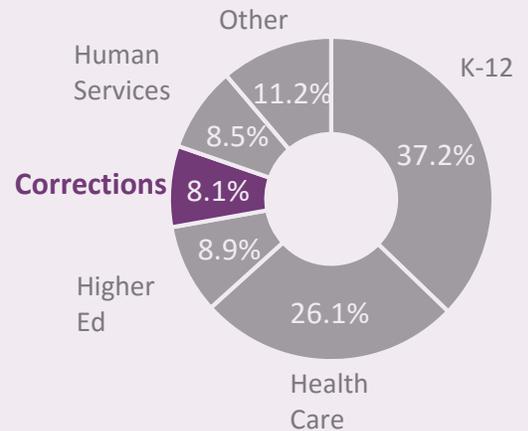
Prisoners: 20,304

Parolees: 9,134

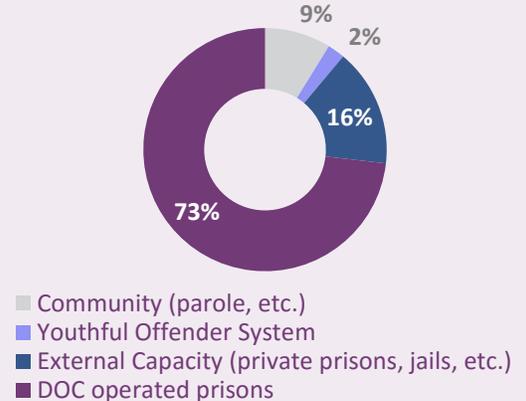
State Prisons: 20

Private Prisons: 4

Share of General Fund



General Fund Costs



2014 Incarceration Rates per 100,000 People

