

# FY 2025 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION BUDGET BRIEF

*Maura T. Healey, Governor | Kimberley Driscoll, Lt. Governor*



## **Keeping Massachusetts Safe**

*Jonathan W. Kelland, Fiscal Policy Analyst*

### **Introduction**

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) is responsible for the policy development and budgetary oversight initiatives that aid in crime prevention, homeland security preparedness, and ensuring the safety of Massachusetts' residents and visitors. While ensuring achievements in criminal justice and police reform are maintained, the Healey-Driscoll Administration's House 2 proposal addresses the challenges posed throughout the public safety sector.

### **Public Safety Initiatives**

The FY25 House 2 budget recommendation includes a number of key investments for public safety supports and initiatives, including:

- \$10.6 million maintained to support the 91<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts State Police Recruit Training Troop (RTT), slated to begin in November 2024.
- \$2 million to sustain the Project Safe Neighborhood Initiative, which was funded for the first time in FY24. This program is a collaborative public safety model that brings together federal, state, and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and community leaders to identify the emerging trends in a community and to develop comprehensive solutions to reduce crime and protect communities. Similar efforts in Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee have resulted in enhanced youth engagement and reduced violent crime.
- \$600,000 to expand Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) training across the Secretariat. EOPSS adopted the standard for a proactive, integrated active shooter and hostile event response. This bolsters our first responders' ability to train, prevent, and respond to emergencies across the state. Massachusetts is the first in the nation to adopt an integrated, standardized ASHER response statewide.
- Funding maintained at the Executive Office for the paid internship program, first launched in 2022. The 2023 cohort attracted a high volume of interested applicants and ultimately employed more than 50 student interns across the Secretariat. The program promotes accessible, equitable pathways to a career in public safety.

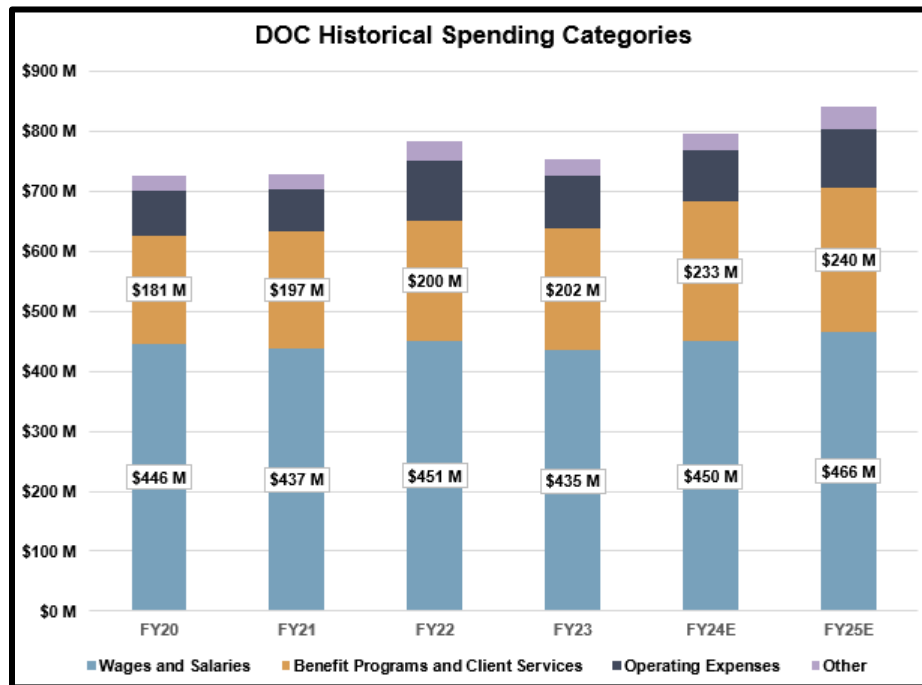
### **Programming and Investments at the Department of Correction**

In December 2023, the Department of Correction (DOC) formally implemented no cost phone calls across its 14 correctional facilities to provide equitable access to sustained communication between incarcerated individuals and their loved ones. No cost calls alleviate the financial burden and remove barriers for an individual in DOC custody to stay connected with their outside support system. Strong family support helps to advance the rehabilitative

## Budget Brief: Keeping Massachusetts Safe

process, reduces recidivism, contributes to successful reentry upon release, and ultimately improves community safety. House 2 includes at least \$35 M to enhance equity and eliminate barriers to communication that is essential to rehabilitation across all correctional facilities, including those operated by county sheriff departments.

DOC continues to implement innovative and results-driven programming designed to create successful pathways for those preparing for life after incarceration. Massachusetts' investments in educational opportunities and reentry programs empower returning citizens and transform individual outcomes.



House 2 advances DOC's strong commitment to offering academic, vocational, and technical programs for incarcerated individuals. Investing in education is essential to successful reentry and sustained positive life changes: a 2013 Department of Justice study found that participation in an educational program while incarcerated reduces the likelihood of an individual returning to prison by 43% and increases the odds of post-release employment by 11%.

DOC finalized the elimination of all restrictive housing across facilities in June 2023. As an alternative, DOC continues to implement Secure Adjustment Units (SAUs), which are designed to deliver rehabilitative services to individuals based on their unique needs. This program is resource intensive, as it provides individuals with the meaningful programming they need; House 2 funds this initiative as part of the administration's commitment to criminal justice reform in Massachusetts' correctional facilities.

House 2 continues to fund key DOC mental health programs designed to foster healthy environments within facilities while preparing the approximately 6,000 individuals in its care for successful returns to their communities. In correctional settings, the success of the

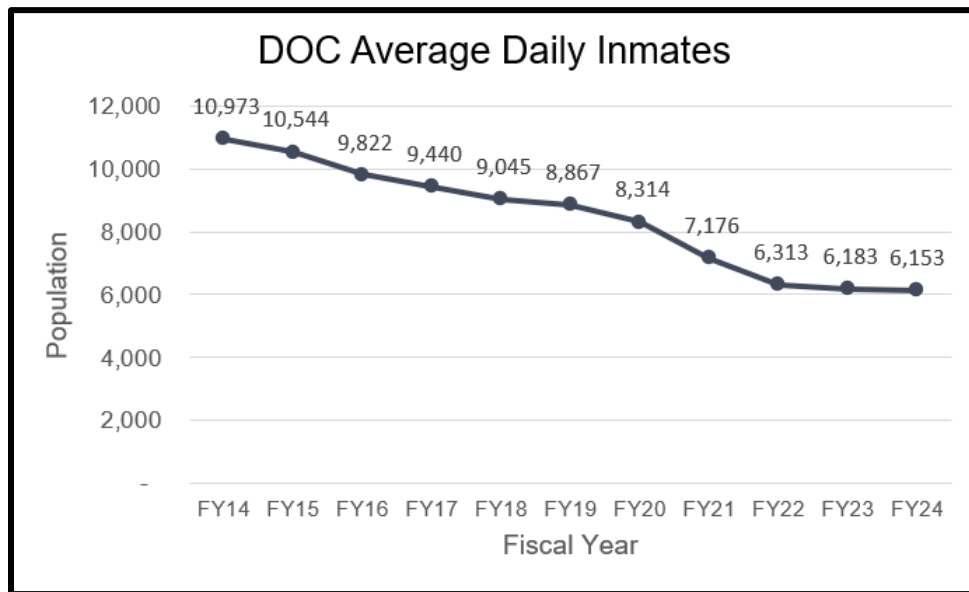
rehabilitative mission relies on a system's ability to provide quality and compassionate care. House 2 continues to fund key mental health programs designed to foster healthy environments for a population that often has complex and significant health needs.

Into FY25, DOC will continue to expand its rollout of body worn cameras (BWCs) for correctional officers, an initiative that began in FY23. The use of BWCs in correctional settings has been shown to improve safety, increase transparency and accountability, provide valuable documentation for evidentiary purposes, and offer a useful training tool for the Department and its officers.

### **Reentry Services**

The Healey-Driscoll Administration remains committed to promoting successful reentry and improving outcomes for those returning to the community after a period of incarceration. These initiatives span multiple agencies, highlighting the collaborative strategies needed for successful re-entry outcomes:

- EOPSS, DOC and the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) continue to collaborate on the Massachusetts ID Card Program. Providing individuals with valid identification in preparation for release is fundamental to one's ability to secure housing, find a job, and access vital benefits — all requisites for sustained, positive outcomes. „As part of the State ID application process, individuals must submit proof of identity document, most commonly a birth certificate. In cases where an acceptable document is unavailable – often because of incomplete information – an MOU allows DOC to produce an alternative attestation of identity document. House 2 continues to support the funding for this critical service.
- House 2 includes \$1.6 million to continue operating the School of Reentry at Boston's Pre-Release Center. A residential learning center, the School of Reentry allows inmates to maximize the end of their incarceration periods in an environment that fosters academic, personal, and professional growth. Additionally, House 2 includes \$7 million to award grants to nonprofit organizations that focus on disrupting cycles of violence, incarceration, and unemployment among youth and young adults.
- House 2 also maintains key housing assistance programs for those reintegrating into communities. Housing Assistance for Re-Entry Transition, a collaborative program between EOPSS and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, provides transitional supportive housing to young adults and others exiting incarceration, and rental assistance vouchers to older adults. Access to fundamentals such as housing, employment and other necessities is essential for those exiting incarceration and reentering the community.



### **Sustaining Police Reform Progress**

The Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST), a centerpiece of the 2020 police reform legislation, is an independent agency tasked with setting police standards, certifying law enforcement officers, and investigating potential incidents of wrongdoing. The FY25 House 2 budget recommendation supports the POST Commission and the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC), which is tasked with implementing extensive training requirements. Currently, over 1,157 officers have completed MPTC's Bridge Academy program, which is designed to bridge the gap between previous reserve training and new uniform training standards required by law for POST certification. Additionally, House 2 adds \$4.1 million at MPTC to support much needed increased training capacity. This includes a new academy and the replacement of a firing range in central Massachusetts.

As part of the administration's commitment to integrity and accountability – though not a requirement of 2020 police reform legislation – House 2 includes funding to continue to provide body worn cameras for each sworn State Trooper. A tool intended to promote transparency in interactions between Troopers and the public, body worn cameras continue to act as a key safety measure within law enforcement.

### **Encouraging a Diverse Pipeline**

Into FY25, the administration continues to emphasize the importance of diverse talent pipelines, particularly within public safety agencies. House 2 includes \$2 million to support the State Police cadet program, which offers aspiring public safety professionals an equitable pathway to a career in law enforcement. The program offers on-the-job training to introduce the next generation of diverse candidates to the skills, knowledge, and experience needed for a career in law enforcement. The first class of 47 cadets was selected through a rigorous application and screening process and was comprised of 25 (53%) people of color and 13 (27%) women. As part of MSP's robust recruitment efforts to identify the next generation of diverse public safety leaders, the Cadet program underscores this administration's

commitment to the Department of State Police where training, accountability, and representation are paramount.

**Strategic Facility Consolidation**

House 2 offers large operating and capital savings to the state with the closure of Massachusetts Correctional Institution-Concord (MCI-C). MCI-C is a medium security facility housing criminally sentenced males in Concord, MA. By transferring incarcerated individuals and employees to other facilities, Massachusetts will realize savings in several areas, totaling approximately \$16 million in operational costs beginning in FY25.

In addition to savings on the state's operating budget, closing MCI-C will also generate additional savings by forgoing major capital projects such as:

- \$157 million for decarbonization and steam system replacement projects
- \$33 million in deferred maintenance projects

Special programming at MCI-C will move to other facilities, ensuring that the Building Responsible Adults Through Validation and Evaluation (B.R.A.V.E.) will continue to be operational.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration's FY25 House 2 budget recommendation demonstrates its commitment to the programs and infrastructure that support the safety and wellbeing of all who live, work and raise families across Massachusetts.