



Overview of 2023-24 Proposed Corrections Budget

Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) is a statewide coalition of organizations working to reduce the number of people imprisoned in California and the number of prisons and jails in the state. We advocate for an investment in justice that centers care, not punishment.

Governor Newsom's [2023-24 proposed budget for Corrections](#) is \$19.3 billion overall – almost all of which (96%, or \$18.6 billion) comes from State Funds. This includes about \$14.2 billion in state funding for the **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)**. About \$2 billion is allocated to local community corrections, and over \$800 million is dedicated to “enhancing law enforcement activities.”

CURB supports many of Governor Newsom's efforts since 2019 to address failed punitive policies and practices that did not increase public safety. However, many Californians are depending on a shift in investments toward safety strategies that are community-centered, like good jobs and much needed social services that are healthier for all. Our state is facing a \$24 billion deficit and CDCR is a money pit. **Despite reductions in prison populations and occupied prison beds, spending on corrections has continued to increase over the last decade.** According to the proposed budget, California will save \$417 million from closing prisons, yet CDCR will still receive a budget increase this year of \$468 million. This is not a responsible use of the people's resources.

The campaign to [Close California Prisons](#)—anchored by CURB—demands that the administration and state legislature adopt a community-informed [roadmap](#) to close at least seven more prisons by 2025 as part of this year's budget process, and take action to reduce CDCR's out-of-control spending. Embracing a prison closure roadmap will help ensure that corrections budgets are actually slashed when prisons close, and cost savings are invested in the communities that need resources the most.

The state's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office concludes that closing 5 prisons by 2025 could ultimately result in at least \$1.5 billion in ongoing operational cost savings. This is a conservative approach to prison closure objectives. Closing [10 state prisons](#) by 2025, as CURB's analysis recommends, would more efficiently capitalize on downward trending prison populations and ensure an additional \$1.3 billion in infrastructure and capital outlay spending alone. Long-overdue changes to the carceral landscape necessitate a comprehensive strategy for closing

prisons, supporting towns where prisons close, and investing in justice-impacted communities.

POPULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE: CDCR facilities are operating at 108% design capacity, down from 150% in 2011. The decline in prison populations expands opportunities to close prisons, cut CDCR's budget, and increase spending from the general fund to non-carceral, community-based safety investments like jobs, healthcare and reentry services.

The average daily adult population of people in prison is now projected to be 93,396 in FY 2023-24. Projections for 2022-23 decreased 6.6 percent since the spring, and fall projections indicate the number of adults incarcerated will continue to decline over the next year. **The population is projected to continue its long-term downward trend, declining to 87,295 in 2025-26.**

The average daily population of people paroled is projected to also decline, from 43,668 in 2022-23 to 41,345 in 2023-24. It is then projected to further decline to 36,473 by June 30, 2027 due to an overall decrease in prison population and shorter parole terms.

The Good:

Prison Capacity and Closures - The Governor's Proposed Budget shows a continued desire to shrink California's prison system to reflect the needs of the state. Based on current projections that exhibit ongoing declines in the incarcerated population, and understanding that future policy changes may significantly affect long-range population projections, the most conservative analysis shows that it's in California's best interest to **close at least two additional state prisons by 2024-25, totalling 5 closures including DVI, CCC and CVSP.**

- **Deuel Vocational Institution (DVI)** shut down in September 2021, saving \$150.3 million in General Funds annually.
- In April 2021, CDCR announced plans to close the **California Correctional Center in Susanville (CCC)** and, in November 2022, CDCR initiated the facility's closure. This is expected to save \$142.8 million annually every subsequent year.
- CDCR also has announced plans to **deactivate specific facilities within 6 prisons** by the end of 2023. These facility deactivations at the California Rehabilitation Center, California Institution for Men, California Correctional Institution, Pelican Bay State Prison, California Men's Colony, and Folsom Women's Facility within Folsom State Prison are expected to save \$150 million every year.
- Finally, in December 2022, CDCR announced plans to terminate the lease of the **California City Correctional Facility** by March 2024, ending its use as a state prison, and to close the **Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (CVSP)** in Blythe by March 2025.

The Bad:

Prison Surveillance - CURB maintains that spending more resources on “oversight” will not bring the required level of accountability to an already failing system. While we acknowledge all efforts to reduce harm inside California prisons, poor care, corruption, and abuse that prison systems and Corrections staff inflict on imprisoned people cannot be fully mitigated by any amount of state spending under a system centered in punishment. The best way to ensure incarcerated people are not abused in prisons is to release them.

- **\$87.7 million to deploy audio/visual surveillance systems** to the remaining institutions that do not yet have them. The budget also includes **\$9.6 million** to continue the department’s process for **reporting and investigating allegations of staff misconduct**.

The Ugly:

Increased CDCR Infrastructure - CURB maintains that all spending on infrastructure repairs is wasteful and will not protect incarcerated people nor the public. **Programs that are meant to care for and support people are best implemented outside of the reach of any punitive department.** CDCR must work on implementing elder parole and compassionate releases to their fullest capacity in order to avoid spending billions on infrastructure to keep people who are no threat to public safety incarcerated. **The Budget Committees on Public Safety must deny CDCR any additional funding for infrastructure projects and direct them to name and prioritize more prison closures and community investment strategies.**

- CDCR's infrastructure includes more than 42 million square feet of state-owned building space on more than 23,000 acres of land (36 square miles) statewide.
- The CDCR is allocating \$1.5 million from the General Fund this year and \$62 million next year to replace the roof at the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility.
- Other expenditures for capital outlay projects this year include:
 - \$35 million for fire suppression upgrades at Pelican Bay State Prison
 - \$34 million for arsenic and manganese removal through a water treatment plant at Valley State Prison
 - \$35 million for facility construction work in Alameda County
 - \$17.5 million for facility construction in Riverside County (SB81)

REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMING: CURB maintains that wellness is best supported in the community and families belong together. CDCR has historically failed to center rehabilitation and has been irresponsible administering rehabilitation programming.

Although programs are necessary for the health and growth of people inside, the effort to connect people with real opportunities when they are released is still lacking. CDCR must continue to implement opportunities for releases, so that people may take advantage of personal growth opportunities at home. People can't get well in a cell.

The Good:

Education and Reentry Housing Enacted From Last Year's Budget-

- \$5 million General Fund in 2022-23, and \$4.7 million ongoing, to permanently fund Bachelor's degree programs at seven institutions in collaboration with the California State University system.
- \$10.6 million General Fund annually for three years (total of \$31.3 million) to continue the Returning Home Well Program. This program, initiated during the pandemic, provides transitional housing to individuals who would otherwise be at risk of being unhoused at the time of their release, with the goal of supporting successful community reintegration.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: It's clear that funds continue to be misspent on local law enforcement, including grotesque [spending](#) for military-grade equipment. CDCR is in fact one of the most egregious military equipment spenders, outpacing almost every law enforcement agency in the state. Instead of deploying weapons of war and lethal police officers against California's most vulnerable residents, we should be investing in community-based care proven to actually reduce criminalized behavior.

The Ugly:

Gutting Public Defense - Moves to defund public defenders could have incalculable negative consequences across the state.

- In 2021, the state legislature established a [Public Defense Pilot Program](#) that provided funds to counties for public defenders and alternate defenders for those who can't afford a lawyer in criminal matters. This program, operated by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) made \$49.5 million available to California's 58 counties to provide post-conviction legal assistance, legal advocacy for youth, bilingual paralegal services, specialized immigration counsel, and much more.
- This year's budget proposes to [eliminate this crucial funding](#) (p. 89), removing the \$50 million that would otherwise go to the Public Defender Pilot program for 2023-24. **This is an egregious deprioritization of the legal support Californians need.**

Police Spending- Outside of resources allocated to support survivors of harm, and in the wake of unabated police violence, increased state spending on police is a jarring reminder of California's ugly tough-on-crime legacy.

- The Budget sustains **\$564.4 million General Fund over three years to bolster local law enforcement** efforts to address “retail theft and other crimes.” Many corporations have admitted “**overestimating**” the amount of theft they experienced last year in the press and to lawmakers, installing an unwarranted state of panic in the general public
- \$123.8 million from the General Fund this year to county probation departments as part of the Community Corrections Performance Incentive Grant + \$8.2 million from the General Fund for county probation departments to supervise individuals on Post Release Community Supervision. **Probation is simply another ineffective arm of law enforcement that does poor work to support the successful integration of people back into their communities.**

DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE (DJJ): The state reduced the adult prison population via realignment in 2011, which resulted in billions of dollars in construction funds for counties across the state. This realignment of youth from the state corrections to county corrections rings the same alarm. Youth must be shifted out of systems that center punishment and provided with restorative and transformative justice accountability programs that center care.

- Upon the closure of CDCR’s Division of Juvenile Justice on June 30, 2023, counties will be responsible for serving all justice-involved youth across the juvenile justice continuum. Accordingly, the 2022 Budget included \$100 million one-time General Fund to support improvements to county-operated juvenile facilities.

For a full summary of the State Budget visit <https://ebudget.ca.gov>. For more information on CURB’s work and advocacy and to read [The People’s Plan for Prison Closure](#) visit curbprisonspending.org or email amberrose@curbprisonspending.org.

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