



# Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Proposal: Advancing Criminal Justice Reform

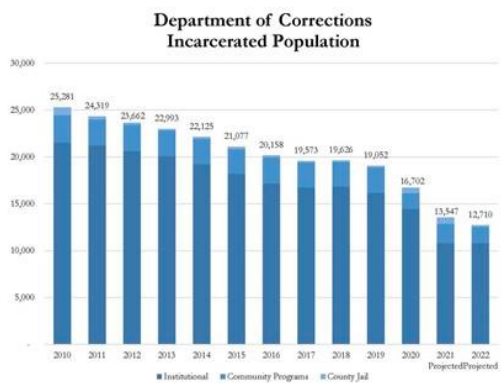
*Total budget investment in criminal justice: \$18.45 million*

Although there is still more work to do, the Murphy Administration, working in partnership with the New Jersey Legislative Black and Latino Caucuses, has made tremendous progress addressing inequities in our criminal justice system over the past three years. The Governor’s FY2022 proposed budget includes funding for both front-end and back-end criminal justice reforms to continue progress.

Proposed front-end funding will support lessening the burden on individuals seeking expungement of criminal records, equipping local police officers with body-worn cameras, and developing software to make law enforcement forfeiture actions more transparent.

Proposed back-end funding allows incarcerated individuals placed in isolated confinement to undergo daily examinations by health professionals as well as supports implementation of the “Earn Your Way Out” law.

To protect the health of those in the State’s custody and staff throughout the pandemic, the Governor signed Executive Order 124 and enacted Public Health Emergency Credit legislation in 2020 to reduce the State’s adult prison and youth facility populations and enable more social distancing. Because of these releases and other criminal justice reform policies, the DOC population is now closer to 13,000 compared to nearly 19,500 when the Governor took office.



This decreased population has allowed the Administration to responsibly consolidate and close a DOC facility in three consecutive years and reduce contract spending. As a result of the dramatic decrease in DOC’s population—including a nearly 80% reduction in DOC’s residential community release program population—the State will reduce overall spending in administrative and contracted categories, taking into account projected future population fluctuations. The State will re-allocate these savings into services for incarcerated people and committed youth that will support the educational, workforce, and transitional needs of individuals, thus better preparing them for successful transition into communities upon release.

New and increased investments across the Juvenile Justice Commission and Department of Corrections include:

- **\$5 million** to improve internet infrastructure for DOC’s incarcerated population to access education, employment, and legal materials;
- **\$4.2 million** more for our counties’ Youth Services Commissions and their work to reduce juvenile delinquency;
- **\$3 million** for a New Jersey Locally Empowered, Accountable, and Determined (NJ LEAD) grants program so DOC can fund non-profits that facilitate re-entry;
- A new total of **\$2.25 million** for the Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prison Program (NJ STEP), which will complement legislation signed by Governor Murphy last year that provides Tuition Aid Grants (TAG) for incarcerated residents pursuing higher education;
- **\$2 million** for IT modernization and security improvements in adult correctional facilities; and
- At least **\$2 million** in support from the Department of Labor’s Workforce Development Partnership Fund (WDPF) for a new HVACR career training program at JJC and an apprenticeship program and other career services for DOC.

The budget proposal will provide additional funding to the Division of Family Development in DHS to support the removal of the drug conviction prohibition for General Assistance (GA) clients. This will allow more recently released individuals to access critical emergency housing and cash assistance services.