
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

October 6, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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BOARD OF CORRECTIONS — OCTOBER 2020

Meeting. The Board of Corrections met on October 2, 2020, through a Zoom video conference. Meeting materials and a video of the meeting may be found on the Department of Corrections (DOC) [website](#).

Introduction. The Eighth Judicial District Director, Dan Fell, provided a welcome and overview of the District. The District contains 14 counties in southeast Iowa, with about 2,700 offenders currently under supervision and 99 staff members throughout the 14 counties. The District contains two residential facilities located in Ottumwa and Burlington. Kollin Alfred, Executive Officer of the Eighth District, also presented on the Iowa Risk Assessment applied in the Eighth District.

COVID-19 Update. DOC Director Beth Skinner provided an update on the impact of COVID-19 in the institutions. Overall, the institutions are 6.6% over capacity, which is down from 22.0% in March. The current prison population is 7,389. Since March 1, there have been 1,774 parolees and 543 on work release. The Board of Parole (BOP) has completed 7,343 reviews since April 1, with 43.0% of those reviews resulting in release.

The DOC is currently taking admissions, but at a slower rate in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To date, 14,259 offenders have been tested for COVID-19 and 1,334 of those tests have returned as positive. Currently, there are 116 positive cases in the institutions statewide. The positive cases are located as follows: nine cases at the Iowa Medical Classification Center, 91 cases at the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility, 15 cases at the Clarinda Correctional Facility, and one case at the Newton Correctional Facility.

Administrative Rules Update. DOC General Counsel Michael Savala provided an overview of two recent administrative rules changes proposed to the Administrative Rules Review Committee. The first rule relates to the regulation of Community-Based Corrections and periodic review of each District. In order to receive funding through the DOC, there has to be an accreditation and periodic review of the services provided at each CBC District. The Iowa Code does not require this to be done within a specific time frame and the current administrative code requires this review every two years. The CBC Directors have agreed to change the rule to every five years in order to accommodate heavy workloads and to allow for more time for feedback and discussion. The second rule change is a technical change related to the placement of offenders in OWI treatment at prisons if there is no bed availability in a residential facility. The technical change will align the rule language to match the Iowa Code. The Board approved both of the rule changes.

Telephone Rebate Expenditures. Fiscal Manager Steve Dick presented the proposed FY 2021 expenditures from the Inmate Telephone Rebate Fund. The proposed expenditures from the fund total approximately \$1.1 million. The Board approved the proposed expenditures from the fund. The proposal included the following expenditures:

- \$500,000 for educational programming
- \$390,000 to provide free “o-mails” to inmates through 2021
- \$83,000 for the inmate law library
- \$60,469 for telephone administration
- \$25,000 for inmate table program management
- \$7,000 for translation services and other miscellaneous items

Recidivism Update. Research Director Sarah Fineran presented on the Statewide recidivism rate for FY 2020. Recidivism is defined as re-entry into prison within three years of release. As a result, the FY 2020 recidivism rate refers to those who exited prison in FY 2017. The FY 2020 recidivism rate is 39.8%. Individuals were at highest risk for recidivism within the first 6 to 12 months following prison release. The rate has increased by 1.9% over a three-year period. The factors contributing to the increase include both factors within the DOC and the overall community as a whole. Within the last three years the overall community-based corrections offender-served population has increased by 3.3%. The parole population has increased by nearly 57.0% since FY 2011, and the special sentence offender served populations have increased by 233.0% since FY 2011. In addition, institutional treatment is needed to reduce recidivism. Of those who recidivated in FY 2020, 65.0% either did not receive treatment while incarcerated or did not successfully complete institutional treatment programming.

Next Meeting. The next Board of Corrections meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2020, at a location to be determined.

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