

Colorado Division of Criminal Justice

Summer 2007 Interim Adult Prison and Parole Population Projections

Pursuant to 24-33.5-503 (m), C.R.S.

July 2007

Linda Harrison

Kim English

Office of Research and Statistics

Kim English, Research Director

Division of Criminal Justice

Jeanne M. Smith, Director

Colorado Department of Public Safety

Peter A. Weir, Executive Director

700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000

Denver, Colorado 80215

Telephone: (303) 239-4442

Fax Number: (303) 239-4491

<http://dcj.state.co.us/ors>

The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Summer 2007 Interim Prison Population Projections

The DCJ December 2006 prison population projections estimated that the Colorado adult prison population would grow by 28.64 percent between June 2007 and June 2013, to a population of 29,443. Based upon prison population statistics for fiscal year-end 2007, this estimate has been modified. The DCJ summer 2007 interim projections indicate a reduced growth rate of 24.18 percent between June 2007 and June 2013, to a prison population of 27,963.

New projection models are not developed to obtain these figures, as data required to do so are not available at this time. However, the information that is available indicates that prison growth over the last nine months of FY 2007 was significantly slower than expected. Releases to parole exceeded the number estimated, while the number of admissions for the year appears to be lower than estimated in the December 2006 DCJ projections.

In December 2006, DCJ predicted that the prison population would increase by 3.98 percent during the fiscal year, reaching 22,889 by June 30, 2007 (see table 1). The actual population increased by 2.30 percent, to 22,519. The projection exceeded the actual population on June 30, 2007 by 1.64 percent.

The December 2006 projections also indicated that the female inmate population would reach 2,391 by June 30, 2007, an increase of 7.70 percent over the course of the fiscal year. The actual increase was only 5.54 percent, to a year-end population of 2,341. The DCJ projection exceeded the actual fiscal year-end female inmate population by 2.15 percent. As the male population projections are simply an artifact of the total projected population minus the projected female population, they will not be elaborated upon here.

Table 1. December 2006 DCJ Prison Population Projection Accuracy

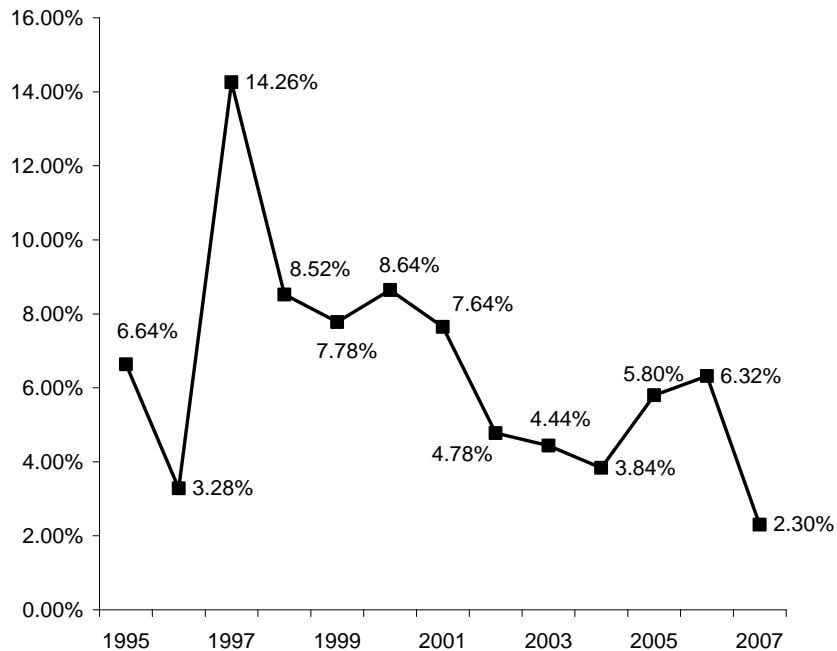
	Total	Males	Females
June 30, 2007 Actual Population	22519	20178	2341
June 30, 2007 Projected Population	22889	20497	2391
N Difference	370	319	50
Percent Error	1.64%	1.58%	2.15%

As the December 2005 projections were found to be slightly low at the end of FY 2006,¹ the December 2006 projections were adjusted upward. However, this adjustment proved to be excessive by the end of FY 2007. Another factor resulting in the 1.64 percent projection error included a slowing growth rate.

¹ The first year error rate at the end of FY 2005 was misreported as 1.05 percent in the DCJ December 2006 projection report. The actual error rate for that period was 0.50 percent.

The prison population grew by only 2.30 percent during FY 2007. This is the lowest growth rate observed since prior to 1995. Figure 1 displays the annual rates of growth observed in the prison population since 1995. Growth in the female population was also low, at 5.45 percent.

Figure 1. Colorado Prison Population Growth Rates FY 1995 - FY 2007



A very significant factor in this slowing growth is an increase in releases, which increased by 12.65 percent in FY 2007. This is the largest increase in releases observed in the past 10 years. This increase is particularly evident in releases to parole, which currently comprise approximately 85 percent of all releases from prison. Releases to parole increased by 18.24 percent in FY 2007, while the proportion of prisoners discharged upon sentence completion has declined since 2004 (see figure 2).

Releases from prison were under-estimated by 3.75 percent in the DCJ December 2006 projections, and releases specifically to parole were under-estimated by 4.95 percent (see table 2). This under-estimation of releases accounts for at least a portion of the over-projection in the 2006 projections.

Figure 2. Prison Releases FY 1998 – FY 2007

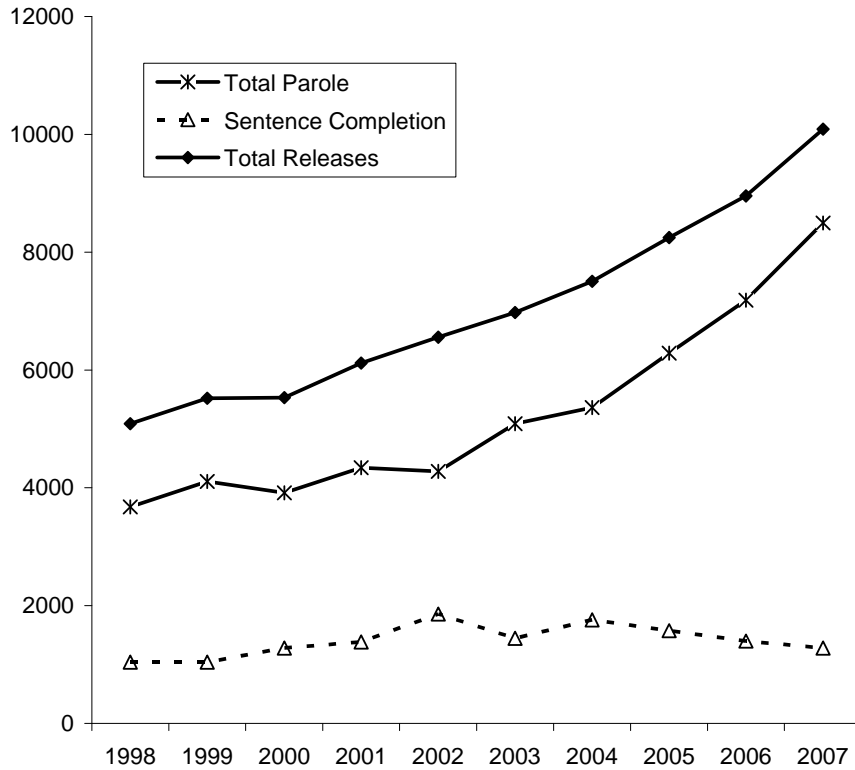


Table 2. DCJ December 2006 Prison Release Projection Accuracy

	Actual	Projected	Error
All Releases	10087	9709	-3.75%
Releases to Parole	8493	8073	-4.95%
Releases to Discretionary Parole	5066	4743	-6.38%
Releases to Mandatory Parole	3427	3330	-2.83%

Based upon the information regarding the FY 2007 year-end prison population, the slowing growth rates, and the increase in releases from prison, the DCJ December 2006 projections have been adjusted downward for the DCJ summer 2007 interim projections. The adjusted projection figures are displayed in table 3.

Table 3. DCJ Summer 2007 Interim Quarterly Adult Prison Population Projections, Total and by Gender

FY	End of month:	Total Population	Quarterly Growth	Male Total Population	Quarterly Growth	Female Total Population	Quarterly Growth
2006	June*	22012	1.95%	19792	1.83%	2220	3.06%
	September*	22203	0.87%	19928	0.69%	2275	2.48%
	December*	22350	0.66%	20030	0.51%	2320	1.98%
	March*	22461	0.50%	20155	0.62%	2306	-0.60%
2007	June*	22519	0.26%	20178	0.11%	2341	1.52%
	September	22660	0.63%	20301	0.61%	2360	0.80%
	December	22716	0.25%	20313	0.06%	2403	1.85%
	March	22844	0.56%	20411	0.48%	2433	1.25%
2008	June	23023	0.78%	20517	0.52%	2506	3.00%
	September	23082	0.26%	20533	0.08%	2549	1.71%
	December	23157	0.33%	20549	0.08%	2608	2.33%
	March	23338	0.78%	20670	0.59%	2668	2.28%
2009	June	23615	1.19%	20879	1.01%	2736	2.56%
	September	23832	0.92%	21057	0.85%	2775	1.42%
	December	24043	0.88%	21176	0.56%	2867	3.30%
	March	24315	1.13%	21349	0.82%	2966	3.47%
2010	June	24633	1.31%	21588	1.12%	3046	2.70%
	September	24842	0.85%	21764	0.82%	3078	1.06%
	December	25069	0.91%	21906	0.65%	3163	2.76%
	March	25416	1.38%	22150	1.11%	3266	3.27%
2011	June	25711	1.16%	22355	0.92%	3357	2.78%
	September	26008	1.15%	22588	1.05%	3419	1.86%
	December	26201	0.74%	22684	0.42%	3518	2.88%
	March	26576	1.43%	22952	1.18%	3624	3.02%
2012	June	26886	1.17%	23157	0.89%	3729	2.91%
	September	27120	0.87%	23349	0.83%	3771	1.12%
	December	27308	0.69%	23413	0.28%	3895	3.28%
	March	27676	1.35%	23688	1.17%	3989	2.40%
2013	June	27963	1.04%	23892	0.86%	4072	2.08%

* Actual data

As expected in light of the increase in prison releases, the parole population projections were 6.42 percent lower than the actual parole caseload at year-end FY 2007. This differential, as well as the increasing trend in parole releases, prompted the upward adjustment of the parole caseload projections. The DCJ summer 2007 interim domestic parole caseload projections are displayed in table 4, along with recalibrated estimates of the out of state and absconder parole populations. The domestic parole caseload is predicted to increase 6.59 percent by the end of FY 2008, from 7,842 to 8,359. The estimate for the end of FY 2013 increased 6.12 percent, from 10,590 to 11,238.

Table 4. DCJ Summer 2007 Interim Parole Caseload Projections

	Domestic Parole	Out of State	Parole Absconders
2006*	6551	1669	622
2007*	7947	1815	781
2008	8359	1867	832
2009	8935	1964	882
2010	9503	2067	931
2011	10046	2181	979
2012	10675	2310	1025
2013	11238	2421	1071

* Actual data