

Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Forecasts

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

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Prepared by
Linda Harrison
Office of Research and Statistics
Division of Criminal Justice
Colorado Department of Public Safety

Colorado Department of Public Safety
Stan Hilkey, Executive Director

Division of Criminal Justice
Matthew M. Lunn, Director

Office of Research and Statistics
Jack Reed, Research Director

700 Kipling Street, Denver, CO 80215
<https://dcj.colorado.gov/dcj-offices/ors>



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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
Executive Summary.....	6
Introduction	7
Background	7
Organization of this Report	7
Assumptions Affecting the Accuracy of the DCJ Forecast.....	8
Section 1: Colorado Criminal Justice Forecasting Model.....	9
Adult Prison Population Forecasting Methodology	9
Section 2: Colorado Adult Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections	10
Adult Inmate Population Forecast	10
Adult Parole Caseload Forecast	18
Prison Population Trends	20
Factors Influencing the Current Forecast.....	21
Parole Caseload Factors and Trends	23
Section 3: Length of Stay Estimates for Prison and Parole Admissions during FY 2024.....	24
Offense categories	24
Parole releases subject to lifetime supervision	25
Section 4: Division of Youth Services Juvenile Commitment, Detention, and Parole Projections	37
Juvenile Commitment, Detention, and Parole Forecasting Methodology	37
Juvenile Commitment Population and Parole Caseload Trends and Forecasts.....	37
Juvenile Detention Population Trends and Forecast	43
Appendix A: Legislation Affecting Prison Population Management.....	48

List of Figures

Figure 1. Actual prison population between the end of FY 2015 and December 2024, with the comparison of the current DCJ prison population forecast to the December 2023 forecast.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 2. Actual and projected quarterly male and female prison populations, FY 2015 through FY 2031..	11
Figure 3. Colorado prison admissions and releases: actual and projected FY 2015 through FY 2031	16
Figure 4. Colorado prison admission detail: actual and projected FY 2015 through FY 2031	17
Figure 5. Colorado prison release detail: actual and projected FY 2015 through FY 2031.....	17
Figure 6. Historical and projected domestic parole caseload: FY 2015 through FY 2031	19



Figure 7. Quarterly inmate population, FY 2010 through December 2025	21
Figure 8. Proportion of new commitments with violent or aggravated enhanced sentences	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
Figure 9. Historical and projected year-end juvenile commitment year-to-date average daily population, ¹ FY 2020 through FY 2029.....	41
Figure 10. Historical and projected annual new juvenile commitments FY 2020 through FY 2029.....	41
Figure 11. Historical and projected juvenile parole year-end average daily caseload, ¹ FY 2020 through 2029.....	43
Figure 12. Monthly detention average daily population, ¹ FY 2012 through December 2024.....	44
Figure 13. Historical and projected juvenile detention year-end average daily population, ¹ FY 2020 through FY 2029	47

List of Tables

Table 1. DCJ December 2024 adult prison population projections: actual and projected populations, FY 2005 through FY 2031	12
Table 2. DCJ December 2024 end-of-quarter adult prison population projections: FY 2025 through FY 2031	13
Table 3. DCJ December 2024 prison population projections: actual and projected prison admissions, FY 2005 through FY 2031	14
Table 4. DCJ December 2024 prison population projections: actual and projected prison releases by type, FY 2005 through FY 2031.....	15
Table 5. DCJ December 2024 adult domestic parole caseload projection FY 2024 through FY 2031	18
Table 6. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 new commitments	26
Table 7. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 male new commitments	27
Table 8. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 female new commitments	28
Table 9. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 parole returns with a new crime	29
Table 10. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 male parole returns with a new crime	30
Table 11. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 female parole returns with a new crime.....	31
Table 12. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 combined new court commitments and parole returns with a new crime	32
Table 13. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 prison admissions, category totals excluding habitual and sex offender act convictions	33
Table 14. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 prison admissions, category totals including habitual and sex offender act convictions	33
Table 15. Estimated average length of stay for new parole intakes during FY 2023.....	35
Table 16. DCJ January 2025 Forecast: Actual and projected juvenile commitment FY-end ADP ¹ and new admissions, FY 2020 through FY 2029.....	39



DCJ 2024 Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Forecasts

Table 17. DCJ January 2025 quarterly juvenile commitment average daily population ¹ forecast, FY 2024 through FY 2029	40
Table 18. DCJ January 2025 Forecast: Actual and projected juvenile parole year-end average daily caseload, ¹ FY 2020 through 2029	42
Table 19. DCJ January 2025 Forecast: Actual and projected juvenile detention FY-end average daily population, ¹ FY 2020 through FY 2029	45
Table 20. DCJ January 2025 quarterly juvenile detention average daily population ¹ forecast, FY 2024 through FY 2029	46



Executive Summary

Department of Corrections Forecasts

The Colorado prison population is projected to increase 2.6% between the end of fiscal year (FY) 2024 and the end of FY 2027, growing from 17,489 to 17,946. Growth is expected to accelerate slightly over the following four years, increasing an additional 6.3% by the end of FY 2031, with the population reaching 19,075.

Similarly, the number of men in prison is expected to increase by 8.9% between the end of FY 2024 and FY 2031, from 15,984 to 17,406, while the number of women in prison is expected to increase by 10.9%, from 1,505 to 1,669 across the same time frame.

The domestic parole caseload is also expected to experience slow growth, increasing only 0.01% by the end of FY 2025. By the end of FY 2031, the caseload is predicted to reach 7,845, a 7.3% increase over the caseload size as of the end of FY 2024.

Division of Youth Services Forecasts

The year-end average daily population (ADP) of juveniles committed to the Division of Youth Services is projected to increase 3.3% during FY 2025, reaching 273.6. Slower growth is expected over the following four years, with the ADP increasing another 4.8% and reaching 286.7 by the end of FY 2029.

The juvenile parole caseload is expected to increase 2.9% during the current FY, reaching an average daily caseload (ADC) of 98.5. An additional 3.3% increase is expected in FY 2026, followed by slower growth across the following three years, with the ADC predicted to reach 105.4 by the end of FY 2029.

The juvenile detention population ADP is expected to decline to 190.8 (-1.9%) by the end of the year due to declines seen in the first half of FY 2025. However, growth is expected to return with an 8.7% increase in FY 2026, reaching an ADP of 207.4. By the end of FY 2029, the ADP is projected to reach 250.5.

Introduction

Background

The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ), pursuant to 24-33.5-503(m), C.R.S., is mandated to prepare correctional population projections for the Legislative Council and the General Assembly. Per statute, DCJ has prepared projections of these populations since the mid-1980s. This report presents the most recently developed forecasts for the Colorado adult prison and parole populations across the upcoming seven Colorado state fiscal years.¹ Additionally, forecasts of the Colorado juvenile commitment, detention, and parole populations through the next five fiscal years are presented.

Also included are estimates of the average length of stay in prison for inmates admitted to prison during the previous fiscal year, as well as estimates of the average stay on parole for new parole discharges. These are used to calculate cost savings resulting from proposed legislation and policy changes.

The Division produces this comprehensive analysis of the adult prison population forecast annually each winter. These figures are adjusted the following summer to accommodate recent trends in admissions and releases, new legislation, and policy changes.

Organization of this Report

Section 1 of this report describes the Colorado Criminal Justice Forecasting Model (CCJFM) and the methodology used to prepare the adult prison projections. Section 2 provides the adult prison population forecasts for state fiscal years 2025 through 2031, including estimates of prison admissions and releases by type. These are followed by the parole caseload forecasts for fiscal years 2025 through 2031, as well as a discussion of the factors and assumptions applied to the development of the current projections.

Following the adult population forecasts, Section 2 presents estimates of the average lengths of stay by offender category for prisoners admitted during fiscal year 2024, as well as estimates for the average length of stay on parole for new releases to parole.

The last section presents the juvenile commitment, detention and parole projections for fiscal years 2025 through 2029. The juvenile population estimates include year-end and quarterly average daily population (ADP) forecasts for the committed population statewide, estimated numbers of new commitments, and year-end average daily caseload (ADC) forecasts for the juvenile parole caseload. These are followed by year-end and quarterly ADP forecasts for the detention population.

¹ The Colorado state fiscal year spans July 1 of the previous year through June 30 of the current year.

Assumptions Affecting the Accuracy of the DCJ Forecast

Forecasting future prison populations is not an exact science. Factors that can affect growth are often unpredictable and somewhat speculative, as they are dependent on the decisions and behaviors of individuals and organizations at multiple points in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. These include (but are not limited to) law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, probation and parole officers, and correctional officials.

The projection figures for the Colorado Department of Corrections' incarcerated and paroled populations and the Division of Youth Services' committed, detained, and paroled populations are based on the multiple assumptions outlined below.

- ❑ The Colorado General Assembly will not pass new legislation that impacts the length of time individuals are incarcerated or the number of individuals receiving such a sentence.
- ❑ The General Assembly will not expand or reduce community supervision programs in ways that affect prison sentences or commitments.
- ❑ Decision makers in the justice system will not change the way they use their discretion, except in explicitly stated ways that are accounted for in the models.
- ❑ The data provided by the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Division of Youth Services (DYS) accurately describe the number and characteristics of individuals committed to, released from, and retained in DOC and DYS facilities.
- ❑ Incarceration times and sentencing data provided by DOC and DYS are accurate.
- ❑ Admission, release, and sentencing patterns will not change dramatically from the prior year through the upcoming seven years, except in ways that are accounted for in the current year's projection models.
- ❑ Seasonal variations observed in the past will continue into the future.
- ❑ The forecasts of the Colorado population size, gender, and age distributions generated by the Colorado Demographer's Office are accurate.
- ❑ District and Juvenile court filings, probation placements, and revocations are accurately reported in annual reports provided by the Judicial Department.
- ❑ No catastrophic event such as war, disease, or economic collapse will occur during the projection period. Note that this final factor has been particularly relevant during recent years.

Section 1: Colorado Criminal Justice Forecasting Model

Adult Prison Population Forecasting Methodology

Data from multiple sources are incorporated into the forecasting model to simulate the flow of individuals into the system, as well as the movement of those already in the system. These data include offender-based information concerning admissions to and releases from the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC), as well as the population currently incarcerated. Analysis of these data is conducted by DCJ's Office of Research and Statistics. Colorado population forecasts are provided by the [Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office](#). Criminal and juvenile case prosecution, conviction, sentencing, and probation revocation data are obtained from the Colorado Judicial Branch's information management system, with analysis conducted by DCJ. Additional information comes from [annual reports issued by the Judicial Department](#).

Future prison populations are modeled for three cohorts: new court commitments to prison, parole returns to prison, and the population currently incarcerated. The cohort of new commitments is comprised of estimates of the composition and number of future admissions, including not only those newly sentenced to prison but also those failing probation or community corrections and subsequently incarcerated. These estimates are based on historical trends of prison admissions, crime rates, criminal case filings, conviction rates, sentencing practices, probation placements, and probation revocation rates. Recent changes in laws or policies are also considered.

The projected future admissions cohort is disaggregated into approximately 70 categories according to governing offense type, felony class, and sentence length. The duration of each category's stay in prison is estimated using data concerning the length of stay for those with similar profiles released in prior years, adjusted to reflect recent changes in law or policy. Cumulative survival distributions are applied to each of the profile/sentence length groups to determine a rate of release and the size of the remaining population.

The cohort of currently incarcerated individuals is treated similarly. This cohort is also disaggregated into approximately 70 offense profile and sentence length groups, with cumulative survival distributions applied to estimate their rate of release. These survival distributions are adjusted to reflect changes in law or policy that may impact those currently incarcerated, which may differ from those influencing the future admissions cohort. The release of individuals currently in prison (referred to as the stock population), the estimates of future admissions, and the anticipated release of those admissions are combined to forecast the size of incarcerated populations in the future.

A different approach is used to forecast parole populations. The number of releases to parole each year is estimated in the process of developing the prison population forecast. An average length of stay is applied to determine the number that will remain on parole at the end of each year and the number that will carry over into the following year. These figures are totaled to estimate the size of the parole caseload at the end of each fiscal year.

Section 2: Colorado Adult Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections

Adult Inmate Population Forecast

The prison population forecast produced by DCJ in December 2023 was quite accurate through June of 2024, at which point the forecast figure was 0.2% lower than the actual population size realized (a difference of 28 individuals). This discrepancy was mainly due to unexpected growth in the female population which increased by 4.5% between April and June 2024 alone. This degree of growth has not been observed in at least the past decade.

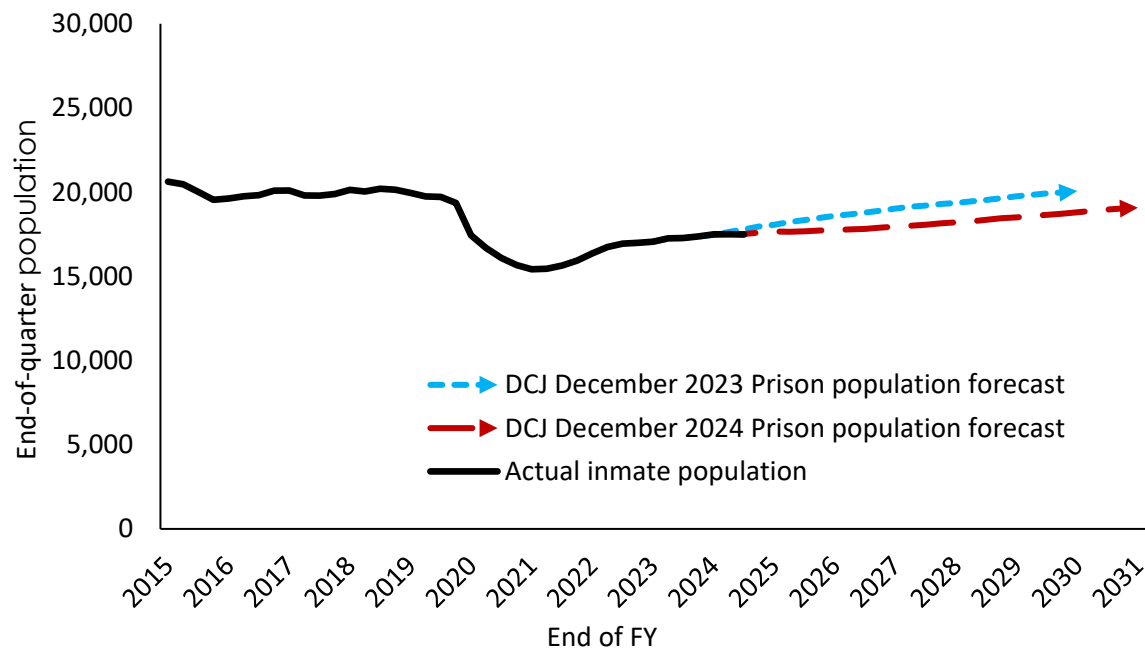
Therefore, a slight upward adjustment was prompted at the time of the development of the interim projections in June. While strong growth had occurred across the state fiscal year (FY) 2024 with a 2.5% increase in the inmate population, this growth reversed shortly thereafter across August, September, and most notably in October 2024, when the total population fell by 50 inmates. Some growth returned in November and early December, but the projected population exceeded that attained at the end of December by 1.8%.

Expectations for growth have been adjusted downward (see Figure 1). The current forecast predicts an increase of 2.6% in the population size over the three years between FY 2024 and the end of FY 2027, with an additional increase of 6.3% by the end of FY 2031, when the population is expected to reach 19,075.

The number of men in prison is expected to increase by 8.9%, from 15,984 to 17,406, between the ends of FY 2024 and the end of FY 2031. The number of women in prison is expected to increase by 10.9%, from 1,505 to 1,669, across the same time frame.

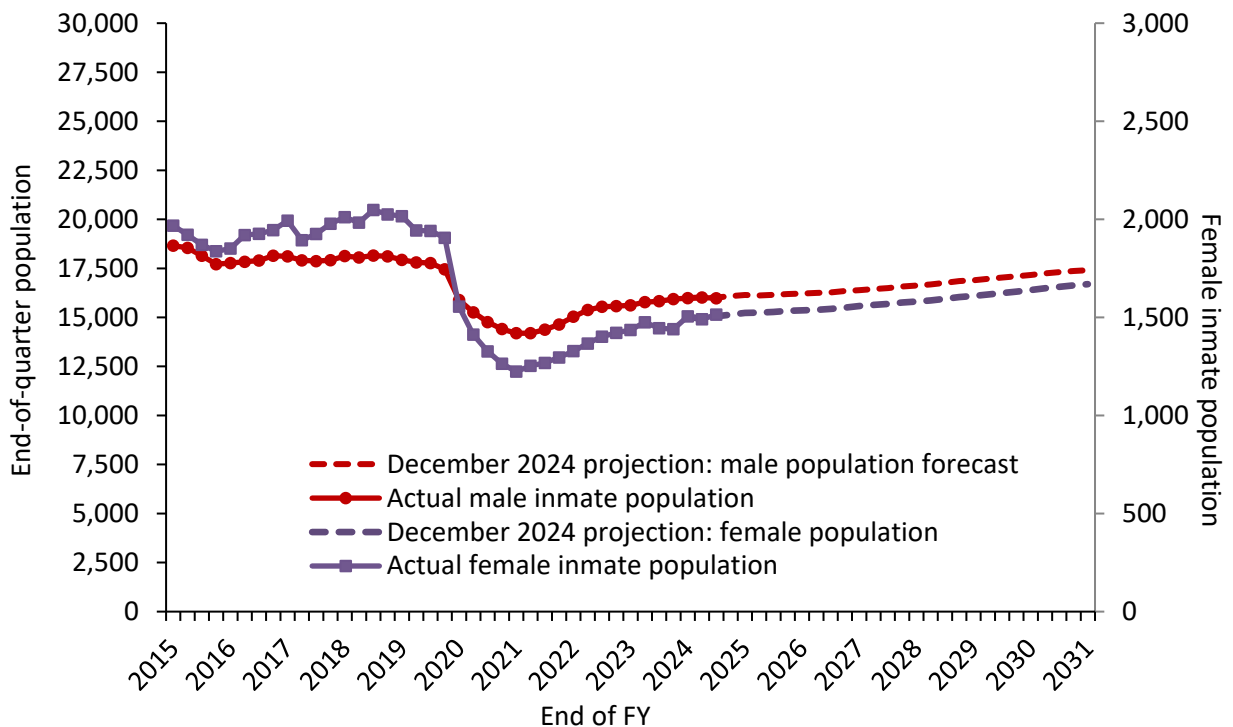
Figure 1 displays the total prison population at the end of each quarter between the end of FY 2015 through the first half of FY 2025 (June through December 2024) and compares the current prison forecast to that prepared in December 2023. Figure 2 compares the actual and projected trends in the male and female inmate populations through FY 2031.

Figure 1. Actual prison population between the end of FY 2015 and December 2024, with the comparison of the current DCJ prison population forecast to the December 2023 forecast



Data source: Actual population figures FY 2015 through December 2024, [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).

Figure 2. Actual and projected quarterly male and female prison populations, FY 2015 through FY 2031



Data source: Actual population figures FY 2015 through December 2024, [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).

DCJ 2024 Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Forecasts

Table 1 displays the historical total and gender-specific growth in the prison population by year for FY 2005 through FY 2024, as well as the projected population through the end of FY 2031. Table 2 displays total and gender-specific projected quarterly growth in the prison population across fiscal years 2025 through 2031. Annual projected numbers of admissions by type are given in Table 3, followed by the projected number of releases in Table 4.

Table 1. DCJ December 2024 adult prison population projections: actual and projected populations, FY 2005 through FY 2031

FY End	Total Population Count	Total Population % change	Male Population Count	Male Population % change	Female Population Count	Female Population % change
2005*	20,704	5.8%	18,631	4.6%	2,073	18.1%
2006*	22,012	6.3%	19,792	6.2%	2,220	7.1%
2007*	22,519	2.3%	20,178	2.0%	2,341	5.5%
2008*	22,989	2.1%	20,684	2.5%	2,305	-1.5%
2009*	23,186	0.9%	20,896	1.0%	2,290	-0.7%
2010*	22,860	-1.4%	20,766	-0.6%	2,094	-8.6%
2011*	22,610	-1.1%	20,512	-1.2%	2,098	0.2%
2012*	21,037	-7.0%	19,152	-6.6%	1,885	-10.2%
2013*	20,135	-4.3%	18,355	-4.2%	1,780	-5.6%
2014*	20,522	1.9%	18,619	1.4%	1,903	6.9%
2015*	20,623	0.5%	18,655	0.2%	1,968	3.4%
2016*	19,619	-4.9%	17,768	-4.8%	1,851	-5.9%
2017*	20,101	2.5%	18,108	1.9%	1,993	7.7%
2018*	20,136	0.2%	18,125	0.1%	2,011	0.9%
2019*	19,951	-0.9%	17,935	-1.0%	2,016	0.2%
2020*	17,441	-12.6%	15,886	-11.4%	1,555	-22.9%
2021*	15,434	-11.5%	14,218	-10.5%	1,216	-21.8%
2022*	16,361	6.0%	15,033	5.7%	1,328	9.2%
2023*	17,054	4.2%	15,618	3.9%	1,436	8.1%
2024*	17,489	2.6%	15,984	2.3%	1,505	4.8%
2025	17,661	1.0%	16,139	1.0%	1,523	1.2%
2026	17,749	0.5%	16,213	0.5%	1,536	0.9%
2027	17,946	1.1%	16,388	1.1%	1,558	1.4%
2028	18,202	1.4%	16,621	1.4%	1,581	1.5%
2029	18,504	1.7%	16,895	1.6%	1,609	1.8%
2030	18,802	1.6%	17,162	1.6%	1,640	1.9%
2031	19,075	1.5%	17,406	1.4%	1,669	1.8%

* Actual population figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).



Table 2. DCJ December 2024 end-of-quarter adult prison population projections: FY 2025 through FY 2031

FY	End of Month	Total Count	Total % change	Male Count	Male % change	Female Count	Female % change
2024	<i>June 2024*</i>	17,489	-0.1%	15,984	-0.5%	1,505	4.5%
2025	<i>September 2024*</i>	17,507	0.1%	16,016	0.2%	1,491	-0.9%
	December 2024	17,515	0.0%	16,009	0.0%	1,506	1.0%
	March 2025	17,599	0.5%	16,085	0.5%	1,514	0.5%
	June 2025	17,661	0.4%	16,139	0.3%	1,523	0.6%
2026	September 2025	17,642	-0.1%	16,117	-0.1%	1,525	0.1%
	December 2025	17,676	0.1%	16,149	0.2%	1,528	0.2%
	March 2026	17,722	0.3%	16,189	0.2%	1,533	0.4%
	June 2026	17,749	0.2%	16,213	0.2%	1,536	0.2%
2027	September 2026	17,786	0.2%	16,247	0.2%	1,539	0.2%
	December 2026	17,817	0.2%	16,273	0.2%	1,543	0.3%
	March 2027	17,897	0.4%	16,347	0.4%	1,550	0.4%
	June 2027	17,946	0.3%	16,388	0.3%	1,558	0.5%
2028	September 2027	18,011	0.4%	16,447	0.4%	1,564	0.4%
	December 2027	18,063	0.3%	16,495	0.3%	1,568	0.3%
	March 2028	18,147	0.5%	16,572	0.5%	1,575	0.5%
	June 2028	18,202	0.3%	16,621	0.3%	1,581	0.4%
2029	September 2028	18,264	0.3%	16,677	0.3%	1,586	0.3%
	December 2028	18,359	0.5%	16,764	0.5%	1,595	0.5%
	March 2029	18,456	0.5%	16,853	0.5%	1,603	0.5%
	June 2029	18,504	0.3%	16,895	0.3%	1,609	0.4%
2030	September 2029	18,586	0.4%	16,970	0.4%	1,616	0.4%
	December 2029	18,654	0.4%	17,030	0.4%	1,624	0.5%
	March 2030	18,724	0.4%	17,093	0.4%	1,631	0.4%
	June 2030	18,802	0.4%	17,162	0.4%	1,640	0.5%
2031	September 2030	18,890	0.5%	17,241	0.5%	1,648	0.5%
	December 2030	18,963	0.4%	17,307	0.4%	1,656	0.4%
	March 2031	19,029	0.3%	17,365	0.3%	1,663	0.5%
	June 2031	19,075	0.2%	17,406	0.2%	1,669	0.4%

* Actual population figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).

Table 3. DCJ December 2024 prison population projections: actual and projected prison admissions, FY 2005 through FY 2031

FY End	New Court Commitments	Parole Returns with a New Crime	Technical Parole Violations	Other Admits	Total Admissions
2005*	5,789	835	2,649	160	9,433
2006*	6,149	1,034	2,792	193	10,168
2007*	6,380	1,014	3,047	188	10,629
2008*	6,296	1,221	3,353	168	11,038
2009*	5,922	1,131	3,776	163	10,992
2010*	5,345	1,039	4,164	156	10,704
2011*	5,153	962	3,678	142	9,935
2012*	4,926	813	3,248	129	9,116
2013*	5,144	815	3,558	103	9,620
2014*	5,235	877	4,054	103	10,269
2015*	5,248	808	3,614	86	9,756
2016*	5,100	804	2,837	62	8,803
2017*	5,698	930	2,455	66	9,149
2018*	6,172	1,072	2,660	68	9,972
2019*	6,217	2,214	1,245	50	9,726
2020*	5,324	1,577	1,040	44	7,985
2021*	3,603	751	698	39	5,091
2022*	4,710	792	740	14	6,256
2023*	4,795	940	828	10	6,573
2024*	4,748	1,110	790	15	6,663
2025	4,702	1,337	599	14	6,652
2026	4,734	1,272	683	17	6,705
2027	4,895	1,229	691	14	6,829
2028	5,043	1,216	681	12	6,952
2029	5,171	1,214	680	15	7,081
2030	5,309	1,207	675	12	7,203
2031	5,428	1,222	685	12	7,347

* Actual prison admission figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).

Table 4. DCJ December 2024 prison population projections: actual and projected prison releases by type, FY 2005 through FY 2031

FY End	Mandatory Parole	Discretionary Parole ¹	Total Parole Releases	Sentence Discharge	Other ²	Total Discharges
2005*	4,688	1,598	6,286	1,576	387	8,249
2006*	4,370	2,813	7,183	1,397	374	8,954
2007*	3,439	5,069	8,508	1,283	319	10,110
2008*	3,279	5,596	8,875	1,367	323	10,565
2009*	4,918	4,118	9,036	1,452	315	10,803
2010*	6,466	2,868	9,334	1,415	284	11,033
2011*	6,413	2,095	8,508	1,427	225	10,160
2012*	5,584	3,607	9,191	1,284	183	10,658
2013*	5,140	3,806	8,946	1,397	163	10,506
2014*	5,020	3,220	8,240	1,510	162	9,912
2015*	5,278	2,658	7,936	1,577	146	9,659
2016*	5,228	3,084	8,312	1,361	168	9,841
2017*	4,793	2,557	7,350	1,191	146	8,687
2018*	5,333	3,436	8,769	1,052	123	9,944
2019*	4,278	4,291	8,569	1,191	132	9,892
2020*	3,400	5,710	9,110	1,280	131	10,521
2021*	2,177	4,049	6,226	763	126	7,115
2022*	1,741	2,928	4,669	563	103	5,335
2023*	2,002	3,115	5,117	667	99	5,883
2024*	1,272	4,108	5,380	741	94	6,215
2025	1,048	4,352	5,400	1,032	89	6,521
2026	1,071	4,576	5,647	1,017	91	6,755
2027	1,060	4,518	5,578	964	89	6,631
2028	1,060	4,512	5,572	948	89	6,609
2029	1,053	4,483	5,536	939	88	6,563
2030	1,068	4,540	5,608	927	89	6,624
2031	1,087	4,620	5,708	934	90	6,732

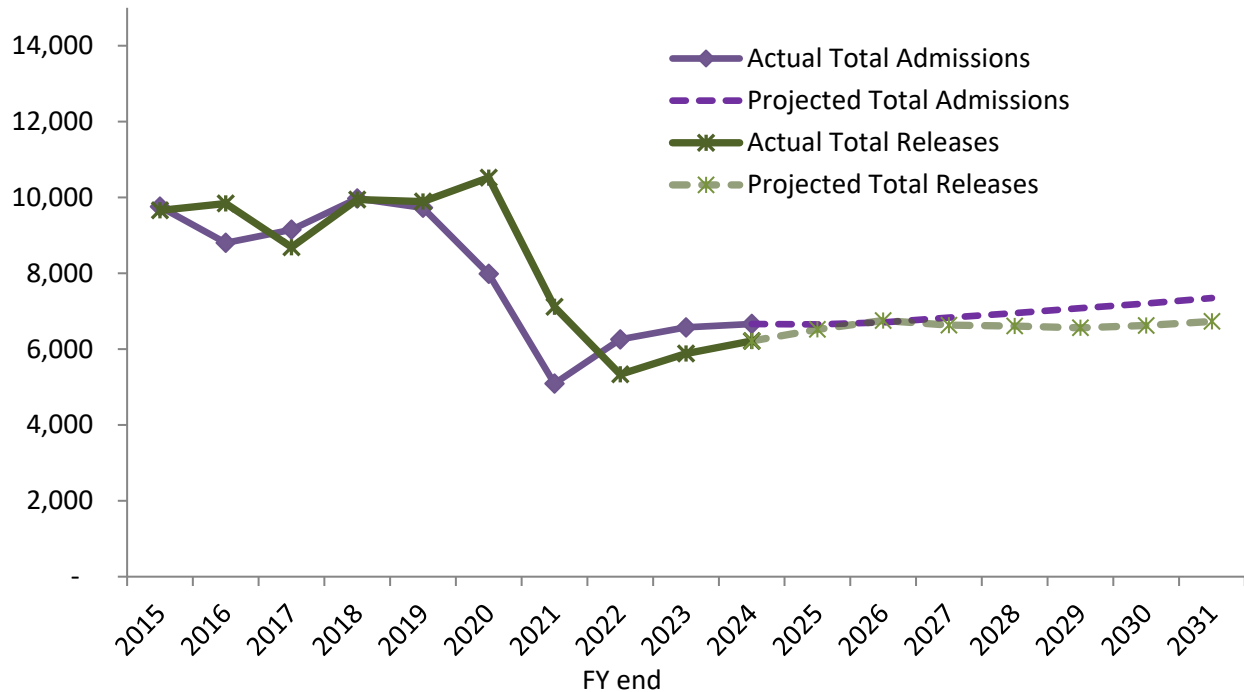
¹ Due to a decrease in community transportation resources in 2005, inmates to be released on their mandatory release date were classified as discretionary releases. A change in the electronic coding of these inmates enabled them to be correctly classified as mandatory parole releases in 2008. The increase in discretionary releases between 2005 and 2008, and the decrease between 2008 and 2010, is an artifact of this change in coding.

² This category includes, among other things, death, releases on appeal, bond release, and court-ordered discharges.

* Actual prison discharge figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).

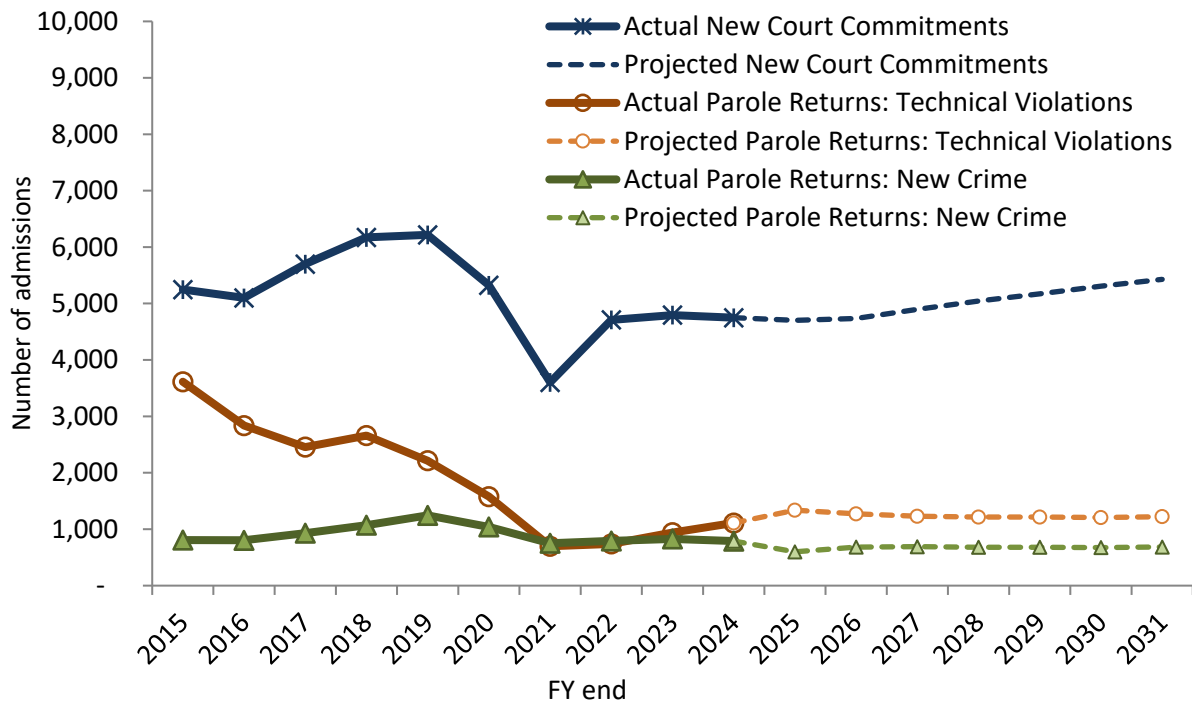
Figure 3 displays historical and projected trends in admissions and releases from prison for state fiscal years 2012 through 2031. Figure 4 displays greater detail in the actual and projected trends in Colorado *prison admissions* from FY2015 through FY2031 by admission type. Figure 5 displays greater detail in the actual and projected trends in Colorado *prison releases* from FY2015 through FY2031 by release type.

Figure 3. Colorado prison admissions and releases: actual and projected FY 2015 through FY 2031



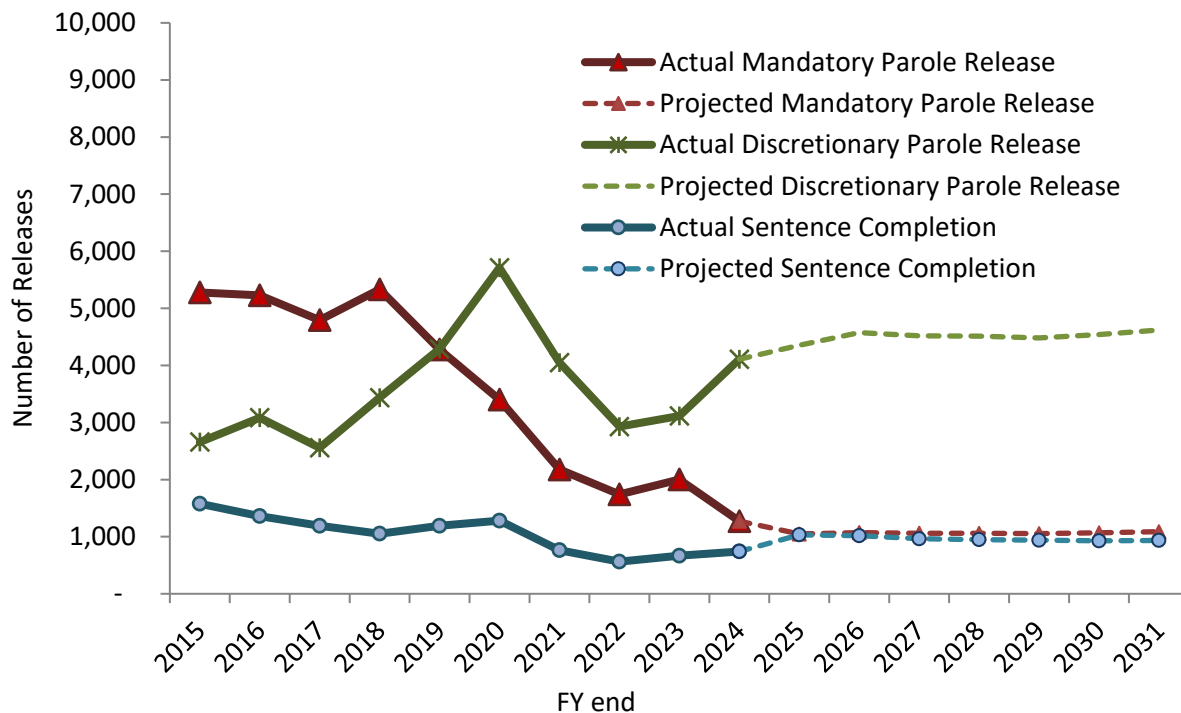
Actual prison admission/release figures: Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#).

Figure 4. Colorado prison admission detail: actual and projected FY 2015 through FY 2031



Actual prison admission/release figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#)

Figure 5. Colorado prison release detail: actual and projected FY 2015 through FY 2031



Actual prison discharge figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#)

Adult Parole Caseload Forecast

The two components used when forecasting future parole caseloads are the expected numbers of releases to parole and their length of stay on parole. These may vary greatly depending on several factors, such as profiles of releases to parole, legislation, parole board policies, community resources, and parole success or failure rates.

Table 5 displays the current DCJ forecast for the domestic parole caseload through the end of state FY 2031, while Figure 6 displays the year-end caseloads for fiscal years 2015 through 2024, and the projected year-end caseloads for fiscal years 2025 through 2031.

As with inmate population forecast, the expectations for the domestic parole caseload have been adjusted downward from previous forecasts. While some growth had been expected, the parole population has remained very stable since December 2022 and even exhibited some decline in early FY 2025. However, slow growth is expected in upcoming months due to anticipated increases in releases to parole.

By the end of FY 2025, the domestic parole caseload is expected to increase by less than a percentage point. This very slow growth trend is expected to continue through FY 2027, followed by somewhat stronger growth in the following years. Overall, the caseload is projected to reach 7,845 by the end of FY 2031, a 7.3% increase over the caseload seen at the end of FY 2024.

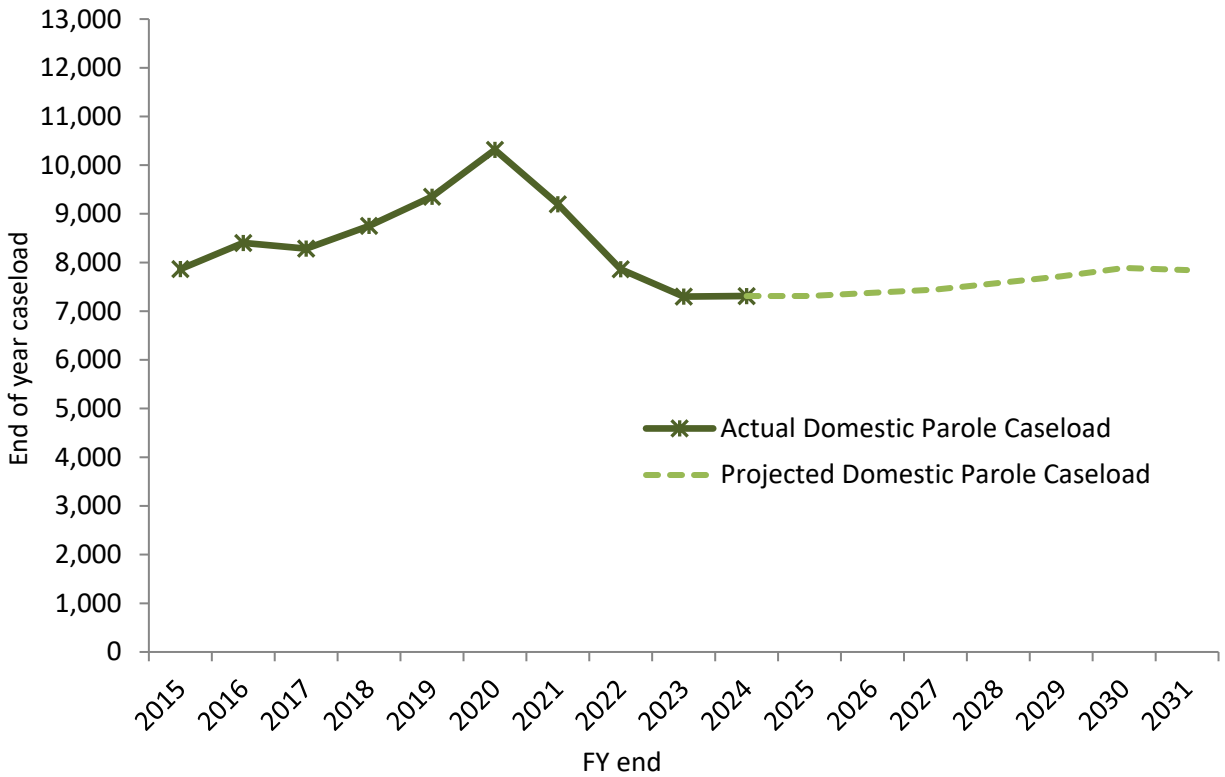
Table 5. DCJ December 2024 adult domestic parole caseload projection FY 2024 through FY 2031

FY End	Domestic Parole Caseload	Annual Growth
2024*	7,311	0.2%
2025	7,312	0.0%
2026	7,377	0.9%
2027	7,444	0.9%
2028	7,577	1.8%
2029	7,717	1.9%
2030	7,888	2.2%
2031	7,845	-0.6%

* Actual parole caseload figure: Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#)



Figure 6. Historical and projected domestic parole caseload: FY 2015 through FY 2031



* Actual parole caseload figures. Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#)

Prison Population Trends

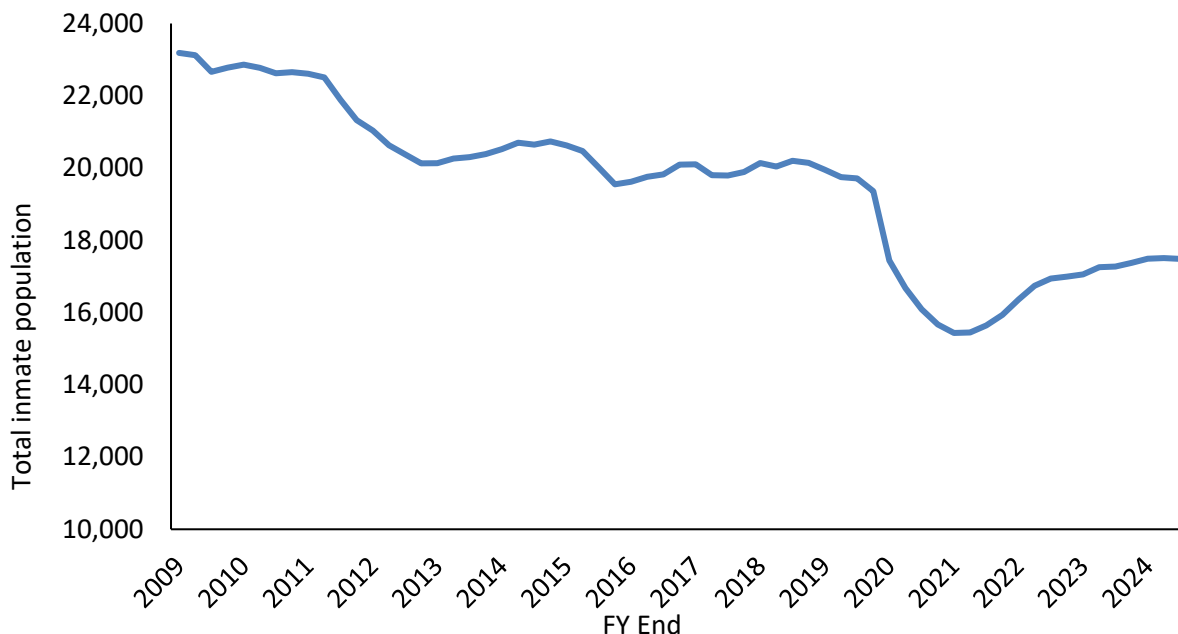
Figure 7, below, displays the quarterly inmate population spanning FY 2010 through mid-FY 2025. After decades of continuous growth, the population began to decrease in FY 2010, largely due to legislation passed in 2010 which diverted a significant number of offenders from prison and shortened sentence lengths (See House Bills (HB) 2010-1338, 1352, 1413, 1373, 1374). This decline accelerated in FY 2012 and FY 2013, in the wake of additional legislation passed between 2011 and 2012 which expanded earned time, shortened the length of stay in prison for technical parole violators, and provided for the early parole of certain inmates (see HB 12-1223 and SB 11-241). However, this decline stabilized in the fourth quarter of FY 2013 and was followed by a period of growth across FY 2014 into early FY 2015.

This interval of growth once again reversed, with the population declining through March 2016. This decline was attributable to a reduction in parole returns, which in turn was partially due to legislation passed in 2014 and 2015. This legislation directed DOC to provide reentry services and required the use of alternative sanctions for parole violations prior to revocation (see HB 14-1355 and SB 15-124).

Additionally, policies implemented within the Division of Parole led to further reductions in parole revocations during FY 2016. At the end of this period, the population reached 19,550. At the time, this was the lowest month-end figure observed since 2003. However, the population began increasing through the remainder of FY 2016 and throughout FY 2017. A brief decline occurred in August and September 2018, coinciding with the appointments of new parole board positions. Subsequently, the population remained relatively stable, with small decreases evident across FY 2019 and early FY 2020. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of FY 2020, the decline in the population drastically accelerated. In the twelve months following March 2020, the population fell by 19.0%, to 15,670 inmates. By the end of FY 2021, the population fell further to 15,434 inmates. This is the lowest inmate population seen in Colorado in the past 25 years.

Growth in the prison population returned throughout FY 2022 and FY 2023. By the end of FY 2022, the population reached 16,361, a 6.0% increase over the population size at the end of the prior fiscal year. This growth was initially associated with increases in new commitments to prison, which increased by 30.7% in FY 2022 alone. This increase was expected with the normalizing of court operations following the disruptions of 2020 and the accompanying 42.0% decline in new commitments across fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

While admissions were increasing, the number of releases from prison declined by 25.1% (See Figures 4 and 5, above). This reduction in releases was also expected, given the increase in the number of prisoners released in April and May 2020 in response to efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the pool of inmates eligible for release. By the end of FY 2023, the population reached 17,054, an additional 4.2% increase over that realized at the end of the prior year.

Figure 7. Quarterly inmate population, FY 2010 through December 2025

Data source: [Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Capacity and Population Reports](#)

However, this growth mainly occurred in the first half of the fiscal year (between July and December of 2022). The rate of growth slowed in the second half such that the population increased by only 0.7% between January and June 2023. Growth accelerated between July and September 2023, with the population increasing by 1.2%. However, this was short-lived, and the population exhibited only an additional 1.4% growth over the remaining nine months of FY 2024. This pattern of very slow growth has continued into early FY 2025.

Factors Influencing the Current Forecast

As previously stated, new commitments declined throughout FY 2020 and FY 2021. This decline accelerated in the final quarter of FY 2020 through the first half of FY 2021. While much of this decline was due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the systemic responses throughout the judicial system, new legislation was a key factor in the sustained reduction of new prison sentences.

The most influential piece of legislation was HB 19-1263, which reclassified several drug felonies as drug misdemeanors for offenses committed on or after March 1, 2020. Additionally, HB 20-1019 reclassified some types of absences or attempted absences from parole or community corrections from a felony to a misdemeanor.

While monthly criminal court filings declined from FY 2021 through early FY 2023, they stabilized mid-FY 2023 and have remained very consistent since. This could be indicative of continued stability in new sentences and admissions to DOC.

Parole returns in general demonstrated slow but steady growth since the beginning of FY 2021, after declining 61.5% in the final quarter of FY 2020 following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This growth accelerated in the second half of FY 2024, increasing by 20.9% over the number of returns that occurred in the prior six months. However, such admissions have remained very stable in the first half of FY 2025.

Overall, while admissions remained very stable throughout FY 2023 and FY 2024, they have consistently exceeded releases, ensuring continued growth. To date in FY 2025, the number of releases has approached the number of



DCJ 2024 Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Forecasts

admissions, slowing growth significantly. This increase in releases is mainly attributable to increases in discretionary parole releases. The number of discretionary releases in the 12 months between December 2023 and November 2024 was 13.1% higher than the number seen in the prior 12-month period.

In addition to prison admissions, a factor influencing trends in the size of the prison population is how long offenders remain in prison. The average length of stay in prison for new commitments released in FY 2024 declined from that for those released in the prior year. This applied to those convicted across almost all crime categories, except lower-level (felony 5 and 6) property crimes and certain other non-violent offenses. This decrease is at least partially attributable to multiple pieces of legislation passed in recent years:

- Senate Bill (SB) 21-271 reduced the felony level for several felony offenses, thereby reducing sentence lengths for those convicted of these crimes.
- HB 20-1019 and HB 23-1037 increased opportunities for inmates to accrue earned time.
- SB 21-146 modified the eligibility criteria for parole for special needs inmates and required the DOC and the Parole Board to improve the parole process for these inmates.
- SB 19-143 was intended to accelerate releases of certain parole-eligible inmates.

Each of these acts serve to reduce the length of stay for new commitments, thereby decreasing growth in the population.

Conversely, the average length of stay in prison for those who were returned to prison for technical parole violations increased steadily, from five months to 12 months between FY 2018 and FY 2021. This average remained at 12 months over the following year, then declined to 10 months throughout FY 2023 and FY 2024, but remains elevated well over the figures seen prior to FY 2021. This increase is mainly attributable to the enactment of SB 19-143, which in addition to accelerating releases, eliminated parole revocations to DOC for determinate periods.

In addition to the legislation discussed above, two pieces of legislation introduced in FY 2023 will impact the prison and parole populations during the forecast timeframe:

- HB 23-1293 increased reclassified multiple felony offenses, modified or removed others, added a new crime of aggravated retaliation against a witness or victim, and removed mandatory sentences for certain felony offenses. These efforts will increase the length of stay for some offenders, reduce it for others, and possibly divert some from prison. The net impact of this bill is expected to decrease the prison and parole populations in future years by about 20 inmates per year starting in the current year.
- SB 23-097 reclassified some motor vehicle theft offenses, increasing sentence lengths for an estimated 37 admissions per year. This will have little impact in the current year, but is expected to increase the average daily inmate population by approximately 150 by FY 2027. As these individuals will remain in prison longer, releases to parole will be delayed, thereby reducing the parole caseload through FY 2027. However, these individuals will also serve longer parole terms, increasing the caseload by 72 individuals beginning in FY 2028, and likely more in the following years.



Parole Caseload Factors and Trends

A 7.6% increase in the caseload occurred over the three months following March of 2020 due to the surge in releases to parole in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of FY 2020, the caseload increased by 10.3% over that seen at the end of FY 2019, the largest increase seen in the parole caseload to date. The caseload began to fall in September 2020, and steadily dropped through December 2022. While some rebound was expected, the average end-of-month caseload has remained very stable, ranging between 7,183 and 7,358 since that time. These figures are lower than those seen in any month across the prior decade.

The lack of growth in the caseload is surprising given the increase in parole releases, which began to rise in January 2023. Releases stabilized in April 2023 and have remained elevated since that time. Additionally, the length of stay on parole increased in fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

As previously stated, parole revocations have experienced slow but steady growth since the beginning of FY 2021. This has led to increases in the ratio of revocations to the size of the parole caseload throughout this time frame and could contribute to suppression of growth in the caseload. However, the length of stay on parole for those revoked has remained elevated in the past few years, which would contribute to the opposite.

It is also notable that the absconder population, which doubled shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, shows no signs of returning to the levels seen prior to April 2020. This population currently represents 11.2% of the total parole caseload, averaging 1,040 per month in the first half of FY 2025. In comparison, this population represented approximately 6.0% of the total caseload prior to FY 2020. The enactment of HB 20-1019, which limited conditions under which one could be charged with felony escape, may be contributing to maintaining the size of the absconder population, along with staff shortages in policing and parole. The exclusion of this population from the domestic caseload serves to reduce the size of the caseload included in the forecast.



Section 3: Length of Stay Estimates for Prison and Parole Admissions during FY 2024

Tables 6 through 12 display the estimated average length of stay (ALOS) in prison for prisoners admitted during FY 2024. These figures are broken out by crime category and felony class, with separate tables provided for new court commitments and for parole returns with a new crime, for men and for women, and for these populations combined. Time spent in prison following technical parole violations is excluded. Totals by admission type, gender and overall are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

The average time that these new admissions are expected to remain in prison is estimated using data provided by the Department of Corrections regarding conviction crimes and sentence lengths for prison intakes during FY 2024, in combination with data concerning time actually served for inmates released during the same year or, in cases with inadequate numbers of releases, prior years.

Estimates for the length of stay on parole are presented in Table 10. These figures include only new admissions to parole, and exclude any parolees who have had their parole revoked and were returned to prison with a new felony conviction. Length of stay on parole is defined as the number of months between initial release to parole and sentence discharge. Accordingly, time spent in prison following revocation due to technical parole violations is included.

Note the number of new sentences given in the following tables may differ from those reported elsewhere, as cases missing critical data elements such as offense, felony class, or sentence length are excluded, as are offenders sentenced under obsolete laws. Additionally, for the calculation of these estimates length of stay is capped at 40 years.

Offense categories

The offense categories presented in the following tables are mutually exclusive. The "Ext" offense category refers to offenses defined by statute as "extraordinary risk of harm offenses" per C.R.S 18-1.3-401(10)(b), which includes but is not limited to those defined as "crimes of violence" per C.R.S. 18-1.3-406.

While certain sexual offenses are considered extraordinary risk crimes, these are presented separately in the 'Sex' category. This is because convicted sexual offenders typically serve more time in prison. Additionally, those convicted under the Colorado Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act of 1998 are excluded from the sex crime category and are presented in the 'Sex Offender Act' category. These are also excluded from the estimates given for each of the overall felony classes.

The 'Habitual' category includes all admissions with habitual criminal sentence enhancers per C.R.S. 16-13-101, C.R.S. 18-3-412, and C.R.S. 18-3-401.2. These cases are excluded from the extraordinary risk, sex, drug, and other crime categories as well as the estimates for each of the overall felony classes.



Parole releases subject to lifetime supervision

The estimates provided regarding the length of stay on parole for the Sex Offender Act category must be viewed with caution. According to data provided by the Department of Corrections, 3,050 individuals subject to the Sex Offender Supervision Act of 1998 have been committed since the inception of the Act as of the end of FY 2024. Almost half (n=1,454) of these have been paroled.

Of those paroled, almost a third (63.3%) were convicted of a felony 4 offense, which carries a minimum parole term of 10 years. The remaining 36.7% were convicted of felony 2 and 3 offenses, which carry a minimum parole term of 20 years. However, of those remaining in prison at the end of FY 2024 only one-third (34.0%) were convicted of felony 4 offenses, while the majority (66.0%) were convicted of felony 2 and 3 offenses.

More relevantly, of those discharging their parole term, 94.5% (n=86) were convicted of felony 4 offenses. Only 5 individuals had felony 2 or 3 convictions. Consequently, both those released to parole and those discharged from parole to date are not representative of those who will be released in the future.

Historically, the average time spent in prison prior to being released to parole is 8 years, and the average time spent on parole prior to successful discharge is 9.8 years. However, half of the 3,050 commitments subject to the Act have never been paroled. Those currently in prison have been incarcerated an average of 10.5 years, with an average minimum sentence of 33 years. While the Act was implemented over 25 years ago, an insufficient number of these offenders have been discharged from parole to adequately portray lengths of stay for current parolees or those to be paroled in the near future.

In previous reports, the estimates of length of stay on parole for those subject to the Act were calculated assuming 100% of statutory minimums would be served. However, releases from parole during the current year served an average of 105% of their statutory minimum parole term. It is probable this percentage will continue to grow, but to what degree is impossible to estimate at this time.



Table 6. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 new commitments

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of new commitments ²	Percent of all new commitments	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	480.00	34	0.64%	3.09
F2 Ext ³	192.33	158	2.99%	5.75
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	67.32	23	0.44%	0.29
Total Felony 2⁶	176.45	181	3.53%	6.22
F3 Ext	108.09	247	4.68%	5.05
F3 Sex	74.03	52	0.98%	0.73
F3 Other	55.58	167	3.16%	1.76
Total Felony 3⁷	85.47	466	9.08%	7.76
F4 Ext	40.00	582	11.02%	4.41
F4 Sex	35.43	39	0.74%	0.26
F4 Other	25.92	797	15.09%	3.91
Total Felony 4⁸	31.96	1418	27.62%	8.83
F5 Ext	17.26	270	5.11%	0.88
F5 Sex	24.19	84	1.59%	0.38
F5 Other	14.90	901	17.05%	2.54
Total Felony 5⁹	16.03	1255	24.44%	3.92
F6 Ext	11.55	85	1.61%	0.19
F6 Sex	8.56	20	0.38%	0.03
F6 Other	7.82	420	7.95%	0.62
Total Felony 6¹⁰	8.45	525	10.23%	0.86
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ¹¹	68.58	21	0.40%	0.27
DF Level 2	27.23	6	0.11%	0.03
DF Level 3 ¹²	18.61	4	0.08%	0.01
DF Level 4	4.01	62	1.17%	0.05
Ext DF Level 1 ¹³	60.56	88	1.67%	1.01
Ext DF Level 2	36.48	221	4.18%	1.53
Ext DF Level 3	23.67	72	1.36%	0.32
Ext DF Level 4	9.03	25	0.47%	0.04
Total Drug Felony¹⁴	34.56	499	9.72%	3.36
Total excluding Habitual and SOA categories	40.02	4378	85.27%	34.13
Habitual ¹⁵	188.68	14	0.27%	0.50
Sex Offender Act (SOA) ¹⁶	249.35	123	2.33%	5.81
Total including Habitual and SOA categories	46.18	4515	85.46%	39.47

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.

Table 7. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 male new commitments

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of new commitments ²	Percent of all new commitments	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	480.00	32	0.61%	2.91
F2 Ext ³	191.51	142	2.69%	5.15
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	66.85	19	0.36%	0.24
Total Felony 2⁶	176.79	161	3.14%	5.54
F3 Ext	108.44	225	4.26%	4.62
F3 Sex	74.95	49	0.93%	0.70
F3 Other	55.96	137	2.59%	1.45
Total Felony 3⁷	86.96	411	8.01%	6.96
F4 Ext	40.88	529	10.01%	4.09
F4 Sex	35.43	39	0.74%	0.26
F4 Other	27.00	651	12.32%	3.33
Total Felony 4⁸	33.29	1219	23.74%	7.90
F5 Ext	17.54	238	4.51%	0.79
F5 Sex	24.19	84	1.59%	0.38
F5 Other	15.50	747	14.14%	2.19
Total Felony 5⁹	16.64	1069	20.82%	3.46
F6 Ext	11.88	77	1.46%	0.17
F6 Sex	8.58	19	0.36%	0.03
F6 Other	7.62	346	6.55%	0.50
Total Felony 6¹⁰	8.40	442	8.61%	0.72
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ^{11,12}	68.27	20	0.38%	0.26
DF Level 2 ¹²	27.23	6	0.11%	0.03
DF Level 3 ¹²	18.61	4	0.08%	0.01
DF Level 4	4.32	43	0.81%	0.04
Ext DF Level 1 ^{12,13}	56.95	73	1.38%	0.79
Ext DF Level 2	36.07	186	3.52%	1.27
Ext DF Level 3	23.53	57	1.08%	0.25
Ext DF Level 4	8.70	20	0.38%	0.03
Total Drug Felony¹⁴	34.65	409	7.97%	2.76
Total excluding Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	41.63	3743	72.91%	30.35
Habitual ¹⁵	188.68	14	0.27%	0.50
Sex Offender Act ¹⁶	249.94	122	2.31%	5.77
Total including Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	48.71	3879	73.42%	35.77

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.

Table 8. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 female new commitments

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of new commitments ²	Percent of all new commitments	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	480.00	2	0.04%	0.18
F2 Ext ³	199.66	16	0.30%	0.60
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	69.55	4	0.08%	0.05
Total Felony 2 ⁶	173.64	20	0.39%	0.68
F3 Ext	104.50	22	0.42%	0.44
F3 Sex	58.90	3	0.06%	0.03
F3 Other	53.85	30	0.57%	0.31
Total Felony 3 ⁷	74.39	55	1.07%	0.80
F4 Ext	31.20	53	1.00%	0.31
F4 Sex	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F4 Other	21.11	146	2.76%	0.58
Total Felony 4 ⁸	23.80	199	3.88%	0.92
F5 Ext	15.13	32	0.61%	0.09
F5 Sex	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F5 Other	11.95	154	2.92%	0.35
Total Felony 5 ⁹	12.49	186	3.62%	0.45
F6 Ext	8.28	8	0.15%	0.01
F6 Sex	8.10	1	0.02%	0.00
F6 Other	8.73	74	1.40%	0.12
Total Felony 6 ¹⁰	8.68	83	1.62%	0.14
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ^{11,12}	74.87	1	0.02%	0.01
DF Level 2 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 3 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 4	3.32	19	0.36%	0.01
Ext DF Level 1 ^{12,13}	78.12	15	0.28%	0.22
Ext DF Level 2	38.61	35	0.66%	0.26
Ext DF Level 3	24.20	15	0.28%	0.07
Ext DF Level 4	10.33	5	0.09%	0.01
Total Drug Felony ¹⁴	34.17	90	1.75%	0.60
Total excluding Habitual and SOA categories	30.52	635	12.37%	3.77
Habitual ¹⁵	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Sex Offender Act (SOA) ¹⁶	177.43	1	0.02%	0.03
Total including Habitual and SOA categories	30.75	636	12.04%	3.70

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.



Table 9. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 parole returns with a new crime

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of new crime returns ²	Percent of all new crime returns	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	480.00	2	0.04%	0.18
F2 Ext ³	100.38	21	0.40%	0.40
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	69.58	11	0.21%	0.14
Total Felony 2 ⁶	89.79	32	0.62%	0.56
F3 Ext	67.06	65	1.23%	0.83
F3 Sex	37.11	4	0.08%	0.03
F3 Other	45.70	89	1.68%	0.77
Total Felony 3 ⁷	54.27	158	3.08%	1.67
F4 Ext	44.51	77	1.46%	0.65
F4 Sex	46.41	4	0.08%	0.04
F4 Other	35.00	216	4.09%	1.43
Total Felony 4 ⁸	37.62	297	5.78%	2.18
F5 Ext	23.69	43	0.81%	0.19
F5 Sex	23.88	12	0.23%	0.05
F5 Other	24.66	144	2.73%	0.67
Total Felony 5 ⁹	24.40	199	3.88%	0.95
F6 Ext	15.29	5	0.09%	0.01
F6 Sex	18.23	1	0.02%	0.00
F6 Other	11.99	21	0.40%	0.05
Total Felony 6 ¹⁰	12.83	27	0.53%	0.07
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ^{11,12}	29.66	12	0.23%	0.07
DF Level 2 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 3 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 4	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Ext DF Level 1 ^{12,13}	46.09	6	0.11%	0.05
Ext DF Level 2	35.79	21	0.40%	0.14
Ext DF Level 3	29.97	2	0.04%	0.01
Ext DF Level 4	0.00	0	0.00%	0.00
Total Drug Felony ¹⁴	35.22	41	0.80%	0.28
Total excluding Habitual and SOA categories	39.98	756	14.73%	5.89
Habitual ¹⁵	54.09	5	0.09%	0.05
Sex Offender Act (SOA) ¹⁶	164.67	7	0.13%	0.22
Total including Habitual and SOA categories	41.21	768	14.54%	5.99

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.



Table 10. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 male parole returns with a new crime

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of new crime returns ²	Percent of all new crime returns	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	480.00	2	0.04%	0.18
F2 Ext ³	100.38	21	0.40%	0.40
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	61.52	9	0.17%	0.10
Total Felony 2 ⁶	88.72	30	0.58%	0.52
F3 Ext	68.35	63	1.19%	0.82
F3 Sex	37.11	4	0.08%	0.03
F3 Other	48.09	79	1.50%	0.72
Total Felony 3 ⁷	56.53	146	2.84%	1.61
F4 Ext	44.29	70	1.33%	0.59
F4 Sex	46.41	4	0.08%	0.04
F4 Other	35.51	190	3.60%	1.28
Total Felony 4 ⁸	38.00	264	5.14%	1.95
F5 Ext	23.45	41	0.78%	0.18
F5 Sex	23.88	12	0.23%	0.05
F5 Other	25.11	127	2.40%	0.60
Total Felony 5 ⁹	24.65	180	3.51%	0.86
F6 Ext	15.29	5	0.09%	0.01
F6 Sex	18.23	1	0.02%	0.00
F6 Other	12.48	15	0.28%	0.04
Total Felony 6 ¹⁰	13.42	21	0.41%	0.05
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ^{11,12}	29.66	12	0.23%	0.07
DF Level 2 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 3 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 4	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Ext DF Level 1 ^{12,13}	51.86	4	0.08%	0.04
Ext DF Level 2	32.95	18	0.34%	0.11
Ext DF Level 3	29.97	2	0.04%	0.01
Ext DF Level 4	0.00	0	0.00%	0.00
Total Drug Felony ¹⁴	33.79	36	0.70%	0.24
Total excluding Habitual and SOA categories	41.01	679	13.23%	5.42
Habitual ¹⁵	54.09	5	0.09%	0.05
Sex Offender Act (SOA) ¹⁶	164.67	7	0.13%	0.22
Total including Habitual and SOA categories	42.35	691	13.08%	5.54

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.



Table 11. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 female parole returns with a new crime

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of new crime returns ²	Percent of all new crime returns	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Ext ³	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	105.82	2	0.04%	0.04
Total Felony 2 ⁶	105.82	2	0.04%	0.04
F3 Ext	26.57	2	0.04%	0.01
F3 Sex	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F3 Other	26.81	10	0.19%	0.05
Total Felony 3 ⁷	26.77	12	0.23%	0.06
F4 Ext	46.69	7	0.13%	0.06
F4 Sex	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F4 Other	31.25	26	0.49%	0.15
Total Felony 4 ⁸	34.52	33	0.64%	0.22
F5 Ext	28.63	2	0.04%	0.01
F5 Sex	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F5 Other	21.33	17	0.32%	0.07
Total Felony 5 ⁹	22.10	19	0.37%	0.08
F6 Ext	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F6 Sex	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F6 Other	10.76	6	0.11%	0.01
Total Felony 6 ¹⁰	10.76	6	0.12%	0.01
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ^{11,12}	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 2 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 3 ¹²	-	0	0.00%	0.00
DF Level 4	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Ext DF Level 1 ^{12,13}	34.57	2	0.04%	0.01
Ext DF Level 2	52.80	3	0.06%	0.03
Ext DF Level 3	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Ext DF Level 4	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Total Drug Felony ¹⁴	45.51	5	0.10%	0.04
Total excluding Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	30.96	77	1.50%	0.46
Habitual ¹⁵	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Sex Offender Act (SOA) ¹⁶	-	0	0.00%	0.00
Total including Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	30.96	77	1.46%	0.45

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.



Table 12. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 combined new court commitments and parole returns with a new crime

Offense category	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of commitments ²	Percent of all commitments	Average length of stay effect (months)
Felony 1	480.00	36	0.68%	3.27
F2 Ext ³	181.54	179	3.39%	6.15
F2 Sex ⁴	-	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	68.05	34	0.64%	0.44
Total Felony 2 ⁶	163.43	213	4.15%	6.78
F3 Ext	99.54	312	5.91%	5.88
F3 Sex	71.39	56	1.06%	0.76
F3 Other	52.15	256	4.85%	2.53
Total Felony 3 ⁷	77.57	624	12.15%	9.43
F4 Ext	40.53	659	12.47%	5.06
F4 Sex	36.45	43	0.81%	0.30
F4 Other	27.85	1013	19.17%	5.34
Total Felony 4 ⁸	32.94	1715	33.40%	11.00
F5 Ext	18.14	313	5.92%	1.07
F5 Sex	24.15	96	1.82%	0.44
F5 Other	16.24	1045	19.78%	3.21
Total Felony 5 ⁹	17.17	1454	28.32%	4.86
F6 Ext	11.75	90	1.70%	0.20
F6 Sex	9.02	21	0.40%	0.04
F6 Other	8.01	441	8.35%	0.67
Total Felony 6 ¹⁰	8.66	552	10.75%	0.93
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ^{11,12}	54.43	33	0.62%	0.34
DF Level 2 ¹²	27.23	6	0.11%	0.03
DF Level 3 ¹²	18.61	4	0.08%	0.01
DF Level 4	4.01	62	1.17%	0.05
Ext DF Level 1 ^{12,13}	59.64	94	1.78%	1.06
Ext DF Level 2	36.42	242	4.58%	1.67
Ext DF Level 3	23.84	74	1.40%	0.33
Ext DF Level 4	9.03	25	0.47%	0.04
Total Drug Felony ¹⁴	34.61	540	10.52%	3.64
Total excluding Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	40.01	5134	100.00%	40.01
Habitual ¹⁵	153.26	19	0.36%	0.55
Sex Offender Act ¹⁶	244.79	130	2.46%	6.02
Total including Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	45.46	5283	100.00%	45.46

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.



Table 13. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 prison admissions, category totals excluding habitual and sex offender act convictions

Admission category*	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of commitments ²	Percent of all commitments	Average length of stay effect (months)
Total New Commitments	40.02	4378	85.27%	34.13
Total Parole Returns	39.98	756	14.73%	5.89
Total Male Admissions	41.53	4422	86.13%	35.77
Total Female Admissions	30.57	712	13.87%	4.24
Grand Total	40.01	5134	100.00%	40.01

*Parole returns on a technical violation are excluded.

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.

Table 14. Estimated average length of stay for FY 2024 prison admissions, category totals including habitual and sex offender act convictions

Admission category*	Average length of stay (months) ¹	Number of commitments ²	Percent of all commitments	Average length of stay effect (months)
Total New Commitments	46.18	4515	85.46%	39.47
Total Parole Returns	41.21	768	14.54%	5.99
Total Male Admissions	47.75	4570	86.50%	41.31
Total Female Admissions	30.77	713	13.50%	4.15
Grand Total	45.46	5283	100.00%	45.46

* Parole returns on a technical violation are excluded.

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison" on page 33.

Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay in prison

(Notes applicable to Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14.)

1. For the calculation of these estimates, length of stay is capped at 40 years.
2. The number of new sentences indicated may differ from those reported elsewhere, as cases missing critical data elements such as offense, felony class, or sentence length are excluded. Additionally, offenders sentenced under obsolete laws are excluded.
3. The “Ext” category refers to offenses defined by statute as “extraordinary risk of harm offenses” per C.R.S 18-1.3-401(10)(b) and does not include all crimes that might be considered violent.
4. Convicted sexual offenders typically serve more time, though some sexual crimes are considered extraordinary risk crimes. Therefore, this group is identified separately. Sexual offenders convicted under the Colorado Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act of 1998 and subject to lifetime supervision are presented as a separate category and are excluded here.
5. “Other” includes all crimes except sex, drug, and extraordinary risk crimes. Examples include theft, burglary, motor vehicle theft, forgery, and fraud. Additionally, crimes that may be considered violent but are not considered extraordinary risk are included. Examples of these include (but are not limited to) manslaughter and some assaults and robberies.
6. Includes admissions convicted of felony 2 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes. Felony 2 habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act are excluded.
7. Includes admissions convicted of felony 3 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act. These are excluded from the overall felony class categories.
8. Includes admissions convicted of felony 4 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
9. Includes admissions convicted of felony 5 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
10. Includes admissions convicted of felony 6 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
11. Includes admissions sentenced under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 2013, which created a new series of drug felony levels described under Article 18 of the Colorado Criminal Code. Drug crimes committed after June 30, 2013 are included in these categories. These do not correspond to the felony classes of non-drug crimes, nor those of drug crimes committed prior to July 1, 2013.
12. As few offenders sentenced under this crime category have been released from prison, little data are available on which to base these estimates. Therefore, the estimated length of stay was calculated using release data from similar crime types with comparable sentence lengths.
13. Includes admissions convicted of crimes which are both under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 2013 as well as defined as “extraordinary risk of harm offenses” per C.R.S 18-1.3-401(10)(b).
14. Includes all admissions sentenced under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 2013.
15. Includes all admissions with habitual criminal sentence enhancers per C.R.S. 16-13-101, C.R.S. 18-3-412, and C.R.S. 18-3-401.2. These cases are excluded from the extraordinary risk, sex, drug, and other crime categories as well as the data for each of the overall felony classes.
16. Includes admissions sentenced under the Colorado sex offenders act per C.R.S. 18-1.3-904, or the Colorado Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act of 1998 per C.R.S. 18-1.3-1004. These cases are subject to indeterminate sentences and are excluded from the other sex crime categories as well as from the data for each of the overall felony classes.



Table 15. Estimated average length of stay for new parole intakes during FY 2023

Offense Category	Average Length of Stay (Months) ¹	Number of releases to parole ²	Percent of all parole releases	Average Length of Stay Effect (Months)
F2 Ext ³	29.66	60	1.44%	0.43
F2 Sex ⁴	0.00	0	0.00%	0.00
F2 Other ⁵	25.74	35	0.84%	0.22
Total Felony 2 ⁶	28.21	95	2.34%	0.66
F3 Ext	32.72	194	4.67%	1.53
F3 Sex	36.97	39	0.94%	0.35
F3 Other	35.98	161	3.87%	1.39
Total Felony 3 ⁷	34.47	394	9.69%	3.34
F4 Ext	24.87	478	11.50%	2.86
F4 Sex	27.70	25	0.60%	0.17
F4 Other	24.94	741	17.83%	4.45
Total Felony 4 ⁸	24.97	1244	30.59%	7.64
F5 Ext	19.05	199	4.79%	0.91
F5 Sex	18.73	77	1.85%	0.35
F5 Other	18.40	1022	24.60%	4.53
Total Felony 5 ⁹	18.52	1298	31.92%	5.91
F6 Ext	9.68	152	3.66%	0.35
F6 Sex	9.98	23	0.55%	0.06
F6 Other	9.70	447	10.76%	1.04
Total Felony 6 ¹⁰	9.70	622	15.29%	1.48
Drug Felony (DF) Level 1 ¹¹	11.33	9	0.22%	0.02
DF Level 2	14.14	4	0.10%	0.01
DF Level 3	8.83	3	0.07%	0.01
DF Level 4	9.99	81	1.95%	0.19
Ext DF Level 1 ¹²	14.87	46	1.11%	0.16
Ext DF Level 2	16.97	158	3.80%	0.65
Ext DF Level 3	9.50	94	2.26%	0.21
Ext DF Level 4	10.48	19	0.46%	0.05
Total Drug Felony ¹³	13.17	414	10.18%	1.34
Total excluding Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	20.37	4067	100%	20.37
Habitual ¹⁴	27.93	21	0.51%	0.14
Sex Offender Act ¹⁵	188.06	67	1.61%	3.03
Total including Habitual and Sex Offender Act categories	23.11	4155	100%	23.11

Footnotes: See "Definitions and details concerning estimates of length of stay on parole" on page 35.



Definitions and details concerning estimates of the length of stay on parole

(Notes applicable to Table 15)

1. These estimates reflect the length of time individuals are expected to spend on parole from the time of their first release to parole until their successful discharge from parole. Time spent in prison following revocation due to technical parole violations is included. However, returns to prison due to a parole revocation with a new conviction are excluded.
2. The number of new parole intakes reflected here will differ from those reported elsewhere, as cases missing critical data elements such as offense, felony class, or parole sentence length are excluded, as are interstate parolees and parole violators previously returned to prison with new sentences. Additionally, cases sentenced under obsolete laws are excluded.
3. The “Ext” category refers to offenses defined by statute as “extraordinary risk of harm offenses” per C.R.S 18-1.3-401(10)(b) and does not include all crimes that might be considered violent.
4. While some sexual crimes are considered extraordinary risk crimes, such crimes are included in this category. Sexual offenders convicted under the Colorado Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act of 1998 and subject to lifetime supervision are excluded. Note: This figure is missing because no felony 2 sex offenders were paroled during the year. Very few of these offenders are paroled, as most fall into the lifetime supervision category. Of those that do not, a disproportionate number have been released from prison as sentence discharges, martin/cooper releases, and discharges to charges or detainers rather than being paroled. If an estimate is to be applied, it is recommended to apply the figure provided for the felony 3 sex offender category as this group has same statutory parole term.
5. “Other” includes all crimes except sex, drug, and extraordinary risk crimes. Examples include theft, burglary, fraud. Additionally, crimes that may be considered violent but are not considered extraordinary risk are included. Examples include (but are not limited to) manslaughter and some assaults and robberies.
6. Includes parole intakes convicted of felony 2 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act. These offenders are excluded from the overall felony class categories.
7. Includes parole intakes convicted of felony 3 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
8. Includes parole intakes convicted of felony 4 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
9. Includes parole intakes convicted of felony 5 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
10. Includes parole intakes convicted of felony 6 sex, drug, extraordinary risk, and other crimes, with the exception of habitual offenders and sex offenders convicted under the sex offender act.
11. Includes parole intakes sentenced under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 2013, which created a new series of drug felony levels described under Article 18 of the Colorado Criminal Code. Drug crimes committed after June 30, 2013 are included in these categories. These do not correspond to the felony classes of non-drug crimes, nor drug crimes committed prior to July 1, 2013.
12. Includes parole intakes convicted of crimes under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 2013, but which are also considered “extraordinary risk of harm offenses” per C.R.S 18-1.3-401(10)(b).
13. Includes all parole intakes sentenced under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 2013.
14. Includes all parole intakes subject to habitual criminal sentence enhancers per C.R.S. 16-13-101, C.R.S. 18-3-412, and C.R.S. 18-3-401.2. These cases are excluded from the extraordinary risk, sex, drug, and other crime categories. as well as the data for each of the overall felony classes.
15. Includes all parole intakes sentenced under the Colorado sex offenders act per C.R.S. 18-1.3-904, or the Colorado Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act of 1998 per C.R.S. 18-1.3-1004. These cases are excluded from the other sex crime categories as well as the data for each of the overall felony classes. Note the parole terms for sex offenders subject to the Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act range from a minimum of 10 to 20 years up to the remainder of the offender's life.



Section 4: Division of Youth Services Juvenile Commitment, Detention, and Parole Projections

Estimates of the juvenile commitment, parole, and detention average daily populations (ADP) over the upcoming five years are presented in this section. The juvenile commitment population estimates include annual and quarterly year-to-date (YTD) ADP forecasts for the committed population statewide, along with projected annual numbers of new juvenile commitments statewide. These are followed by year-end average daily caseload (ADC) forecasts for the statewide juvenile parole population, as well as the annual and quarterly detention ADP forecasts.

Juvenile Commitment, Detention, and Parole Forecasting Methodology

These forecasts are developed utilizing data concerning monthly trends in detention, commitment, and parole populations. Time series analyses are applied to data derived from these historical trends, producing a variety of scenarios.² The model displaying both the best fit to the actual data and the most reasonable outcomes given recent changes in laws and policies, trends in juvenile delinquency filings, probation revocations, and population forecasts prepared by the Colorado State Demography Office provides the basis for the final forecasts.

Juvenile Commitment Population and Parole Caseload Trends and Forecasts

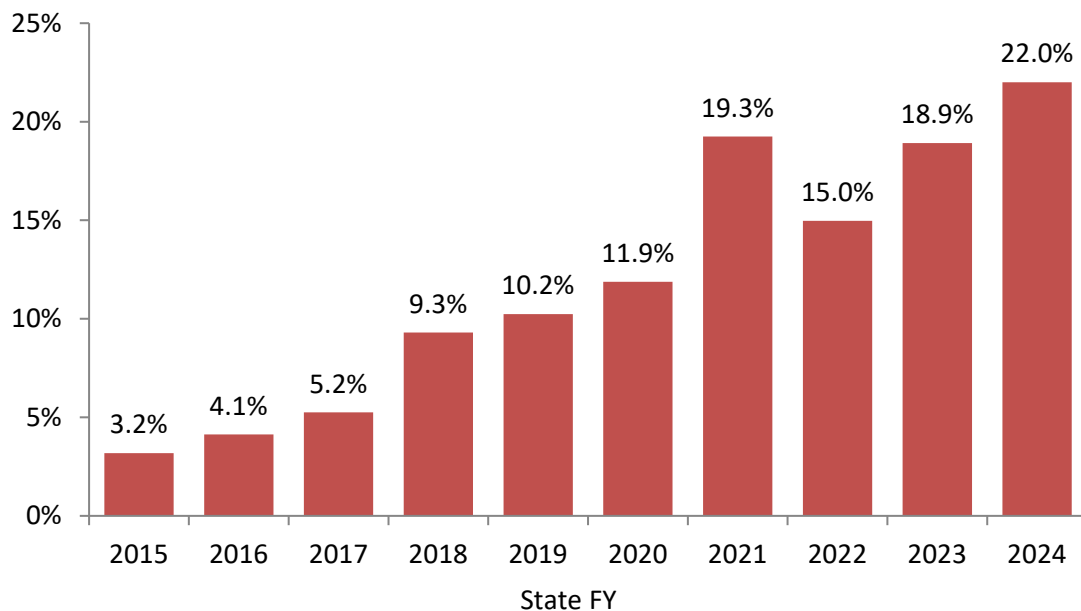
Juvenile Commitment. Whereas the DCJ projection produced in January 2024 indicated a gradual decline throughout the projection timeframe, the current forecast reverses this expectation. This is based on the observed return to growth that began in May 2023. The recency of this turn of events at the time of the prior forecast made any extrapolation from the data impossible. However, this pattern of growth continued throughout FY 2024, such that the monthly ADP increased 5.7% by the end of the year.

The recent pattern of growth is notable after 20 years of decline seen in the committed population prior to FY 2023. The case for continued growth is supported by increases in the number of new commitments combined with an increasing average length of stay. New commitments increased by 10.9% in FY 2023 and by an additional 9.3% in FY 2024.

Additionally, the average length of stay has increased slightly over the past three years. This increase is correlated with the proportion of new commitments convicted of violent crimes, which increased from 41.0% in FY 2021 to 52.5% in FY 2024. The proportion of those with violent or aggravated enhanced sentences has increased almost 7-fold over the last 10 years (see Figure 8). However, the lengths of new sentences to DYS have stabilized through calendar year 2024 which may serve to curb the growth rate in the future.

² Box, G. E. P., G. M. Jenkins, and G. C. Reinsel (1994). *Time series analysis: Forecasting and control*, 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.



Figure 8. Proportion of new commitments with violent or aggravated enhanced sentences

Data source: Data provided by the Department of Youth Services, Colorado Department of Human Services.

Supplementary factors that support the expectation of growth include increases in multiple other components of the juvenile justice system. Juvenile arrests increased by 28.0% across the past three calendar years, after 13 years of decline.³

Juvenile delinquency court filings declined every year but one between FY 2000 and FY 2017 (in 2015, filings increased by 1.7%). Subsequently, this decline slowed such that annual delinquency filings remained very consistent across fiscal years 2018 and 2019. Across the two following years, the decline accelerated with filings falling by 42.9%, partially, if not mainly, driven by the influence the COVID-19 pandemic exerted throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems during those years. Since that time, juvenile delinquency court filings have rebounded, increasing by 38.0% between the end of FY 2021 through FY 2024. However, the number of filings occurring in early FY 2025 may be indicative of a reduction in this growth rate.⁴ Note that this contributes to a level of uncertainty in the current forecast.

Following the pattern of delinquency filings, juvenile probation admissions have increased by 32.5% in the past two years, after 15 years of decline.⁵ This will likely lead to an uptick in probation revocations, resulting in increases in commitments to DYS.

Based on these observations, it is projected that a return to growth will occur throughout the remainder of FY 2025, continuing throughout the projection timeframe. The commitment yearly ADP is expected to

³ Data provided by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation from the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

⁴ Source: Data provided by Colorado Judicial Branch, State Court Administrator's Office.

⁵ Colorado State Judicial Branch. [Colorado Judicial Branch Annual Reports](#). Denver, CO: Colorado Judicial Branch.



DCJ 2024 Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Forecasts

increase by 3.3% during FY 2025, reaching 273.6. Slower growth is expected over the following four years, with the ADP increasing another 4.8% and reaching 286.7 by the end of FY 2029.

Table 16 summarizes the actual year-end ADP and new commitment figures for fiscal years 2019 through 2024, and the current forecasts through FY 2029. Table 17 presents the projected YTD ADP for the end of each quarter of the fiscal years between FY 2025 and FY 2029. Following these tables, the historical ADP from FY 2020 through FY 2024 and the projected ADP through FY 2029 are depicted in Figure 9. Figure 10 displays historical new commitments to DYS since FY 2020 and projected new commitments through FY 2029.

Table 16. DCJ January 2025 Forecast: Actual and projected juvenile commitment FY-end ADP¹ and new admissions, FY 2020 through FY 2029

FY End	YTD ADP ¹ Forecast	Annual Growth	Annual New Commitments	Annual Growth
2020*	454.8	-21.3%	259	-11.0%
2021*	341.2	-25.0%	185	-28.6%
2022*	283.0	-17.1%	165	-10.8%
2023*	257.5	-9.0%	183	10.9%
2024*	264.8	2.8%	200	9.3%
2025	273.6	3.3%	203	1.7%
2026	276.7	1.1%	209	2.7%
2027	280.0	1.2%	214	2.4%
2028	283.4	1.2%	220	2.8%
2029	286.7	1.2%	226	2.9%

¹ Year to date average daily population: The average number of youth present in a residential facility on a daily basis during the specified FY.

* Actual year-end average daily population Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)



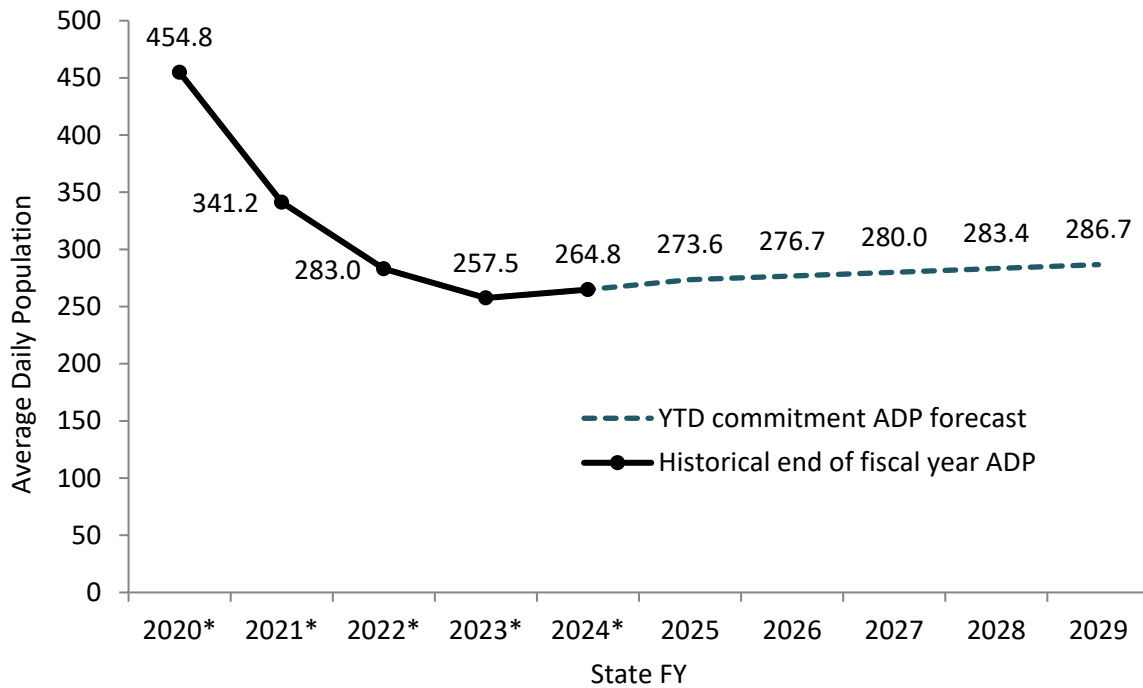
Table 17. DCJ January 2025 quarterly juvenile commitment average daily population¹ forecast, FY 2024 through FY 2029

FY	Quarter Ending	YTD ADP ¹ Forecast	Quarterly Growth
2024*	<i>June, 2024*</i>	264.8	0.6%
2025	<i>September, 2024*</i>	277.0	4.6%
	<i>December, 2024*</i>	273.6	-1.2%
	March, 2025	273.3	-0.1%
	June, 2025	273.6	0.1%
2026	September, 2025	275.5	0.7%
	December, 2025	275.9	0.1%
	March, 2026	276.3	0.2%
	June, 2026	276.7	0.1%
2027	September, 2026	278.8	0.8%
	December, 2026	279.2	0.1%
	March, 2027	279.6	0.1%
	June, 2027	280.0	0.1%
2028	September, 2027	282.1	0.7%
	December, 2027	282.5	0.1%
	March, 2028	282.9	0.1%
	June, 2028	283.4	0.1%
2029	September, 2028	285.5	0.7%
	December, 2028	285.9	0.1%
	March, 2029	286.3	0.1%
	June, 2029	286.7	0.1%

¹ Year to date average daily population: The average daily number of youth present in a residential facility during the specified reporting quarter.

* Actual average daily population figures. Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

Figure 9. Historical and projected year-end juvenile commitment year-to-date average daily population, FY 2020 through FY 2029

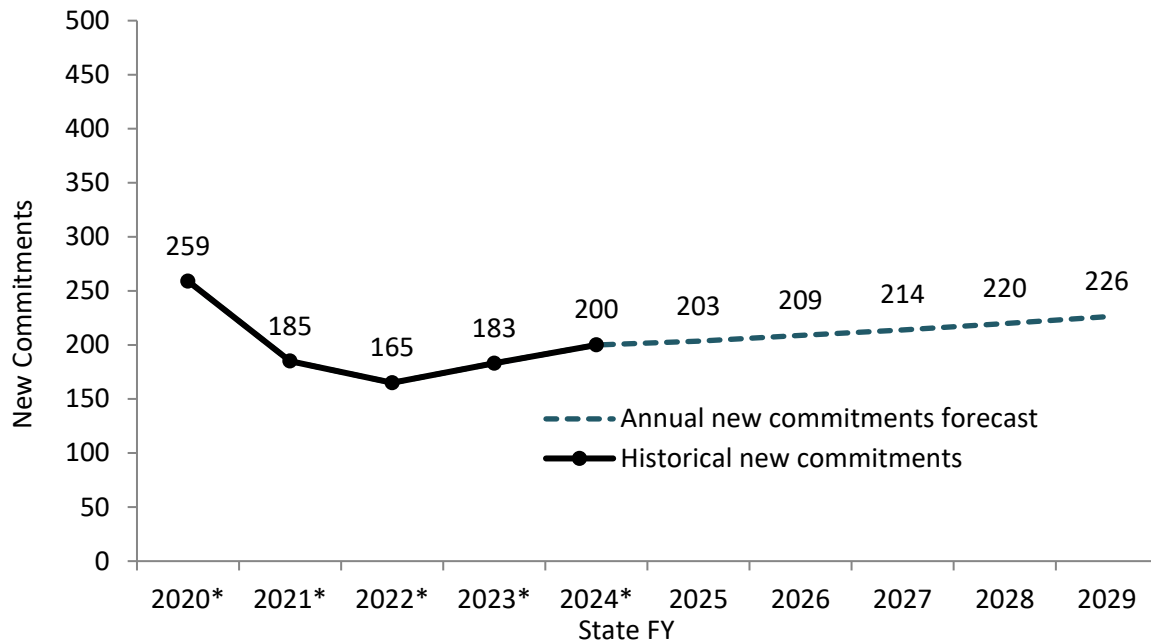


¹ The average daily number of youth present in a residential facility during the specified FY.

* FY 2020 to FY 2024 data points reflect actual year-end average daily population figures.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

Figure 10. Historical and projected annual new juvenile commitments FY 2020 through FY 2029



* FY 2020 to FY 2024 data points reflect actual new commitment figures.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)



Juvenile Parole. In line with the expectation for the committed population, the parole caseload is also expected to increase to 98.5 ADC by the end of FY 2025, a 2.9% increase from FY 2024. Overall, the caseload is expected to increase by 10.1% by the end of FY 2029.

While growth is expected based on increases in future discharges to parole, this is moderated by reductions in the average length of stay on parole, which has declined during the current year. Youth discharged to date in FY 2025 had an average length of stay on parole of 6.5 months, compared to 6.9 months for those discharged during the first half of FY 2024.

Table 18 summarizes the historical ADC since FY 2020 and the projected ADC through FY 2029. These figures are also graphically displayed in Figure 11.

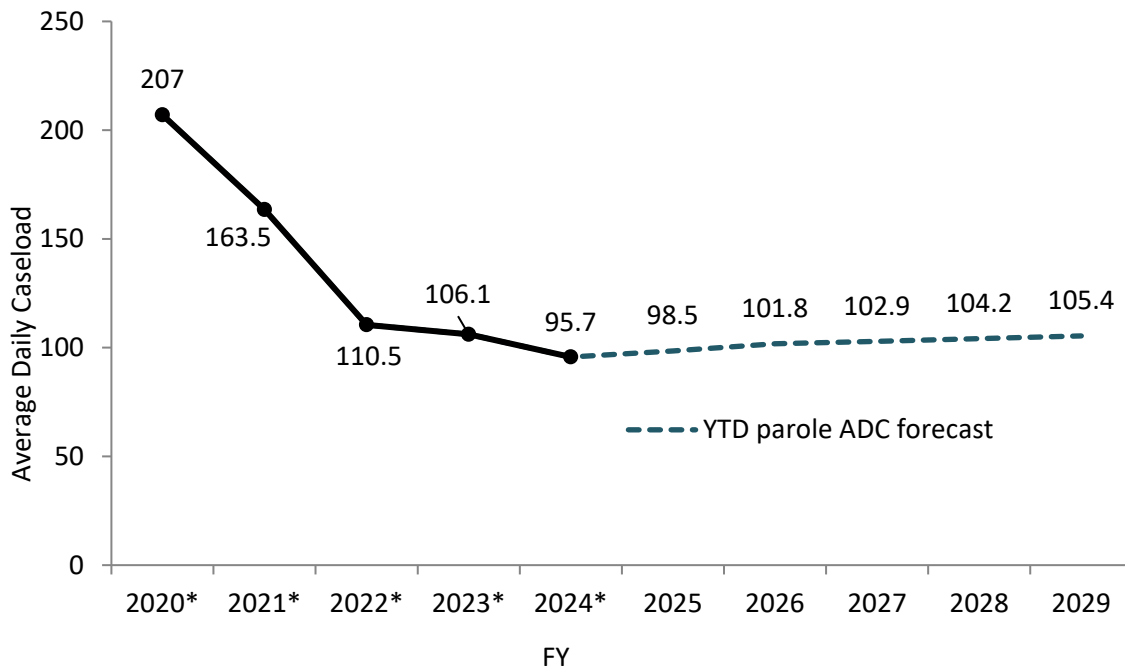
Table 18. DCJ January 2025 Forecast: Actual and projected juvenile parole year-end average daily caseload,1 FY 2020 through 2029

FY End	YTD ADC ¹ Forecast	Annual Growth
2020*	207.0	-3.2%
2021*	163.5	-21.0%
2022*	110.5	-32.4%
2023*	106.1	-4.0%
2024*	95.7	-9.8%
2025	98.5	2.9%
2026	101.8	3.3%
2027	102.9	1.1%
2028	104.2	1.2%
2029	105.4	1.2%

¹ The average daily number of youth on the juvenile parole caseload during the specified FY.

* FY 2020 to FY 2024 data points reflect actual year-end average daily caseload figures.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

Figure 11. Historical and projected juvenile parole year-end average daily caseload,¹ FY 2020 through 2029

¹ The average daily number of youth on the juvenile parole caseload during the specified FY.

* FY 2020 to FY 2024 data points reflect actual year-end average daily caseload figures.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

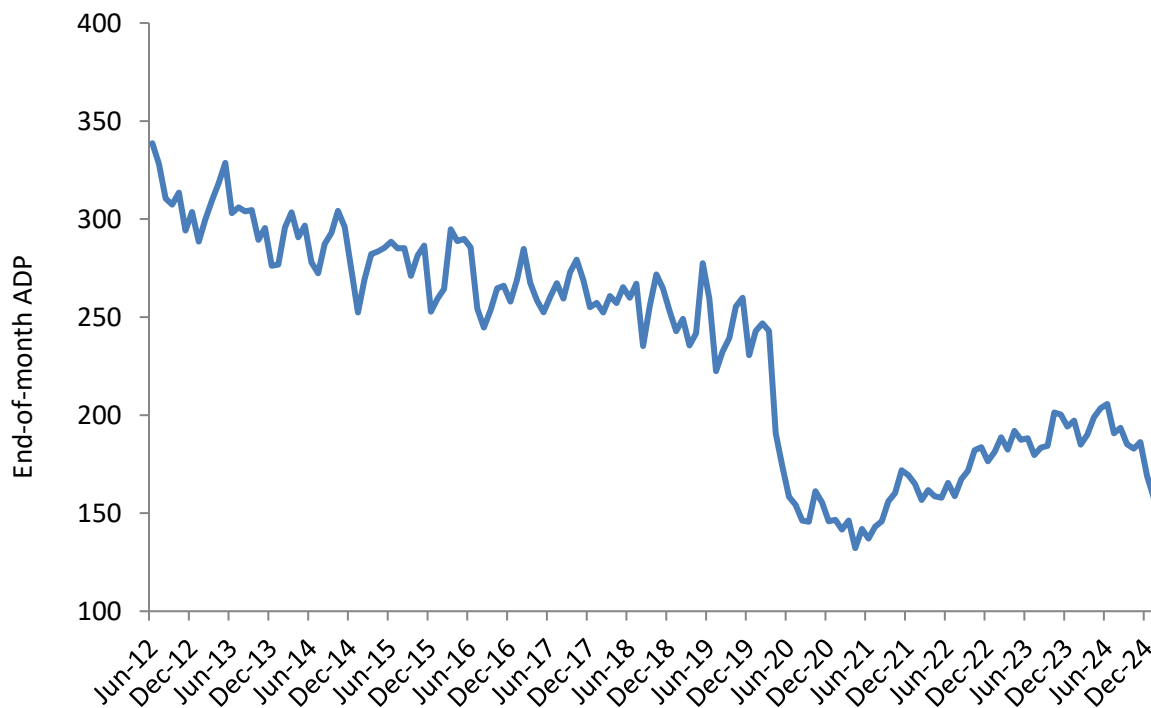
Juvenile Detention Population Trends and Forecast

DYS is responsible for the operation of Colorado's juvenile detention system, which consists of screening to determine needs, community supervision strategies, and management of the eight secure detention facilities housing detained youth. In Colorado, detention serves to ensure that a youth accused of a delinquent act appears for court-ordered hearings and to house adjudicated youth for a period of up to 45 days as sanctioned by the court.

As shown in Figure 12, the juvenile detention year-end ADP declined consistently over the decade prior to FY 2020, with the exception of a 2.2% increase in FY 2018. This decline accelerated to 12.0% in FY 2020 and further to 34.6% in FY 2021. These declines occurred between April and August 2020, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent criminal justice system responses. Data from the first nine months of FY 2020 indicated a small decline of approximately 3.2%. However, the monthly ADP fell by 34.8% in the final quarter of that year.

The population remained stable throughout the remainder of the year, with growth returning in early FY 2022 and continuing through FY 2024. However, this growth subsequently slowed and reversed, such that the ADP has fallen by 17.8% in the first half of FY 2025. Nonetheless, a return to growth is expected based on the factors previously discussed impacting the committed population (i.e. delinquency filings, arrests, and probation admissions).

Figure 12. Monthly detention average daily population,¹ FY 2012 through December 2024



¹ The average daily number of youth in detention within each month.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

Additional factors specifically affecting the detention forecast include:

- Detention screens have increased by 35.0% since FY 2021, after consistent declines over the prior 10 years.
- Admissions to detention, which steadily declined for 20 years, began to increase in FY 2022. Overall, admissions have increased by 25.8% since the end of FY 2021.
- The average length of stay (ALOS) in detention, a significant predictor in the size of the detained population, is at the highest level seen in the past 10 years. The detention ALOS increased from 14.6 days in FY 2015 to 25.9 days as of December 2024, a 77.4% increase. This is at least in part due to increases in the proportion of detainees admitted with charges for violent crimes. This proportion increased from 29.2% in FY 2019 to 41.2% in FY 2024.

The year-end ADP is expected to decline by 1.2% through FY 2025, with a return to robust growth over the following four years. By the end of FY 2029, the ADP is expected to increase by 31.3%, reaching 250.5.

The projected increases in the detention ADP are cause for concern. After SB 21-071 reduced the detention bed cap from 327 to 215 beds, detention centers have continually experienced capacity strain statewide. When examined by maximum daily count data, all four management regions and 21 of the 22 Judicial Districts have operated at or above 100% capacity this FY. Some relief has been provided by HB 23-1307, which allowed DYS to administer an additional 22 emergency detention beds statewide.

DCJ 2024 Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Forecasts

Table 19 summarizes the actual year-end detention ADP for fiscal years 2020 through 2024 and the projected ADP through FY 2029, while Table 20 presents the projected quarterly detention YTD ADP for fiscal years 2024 through 2029. Following these, the historical detention year-end ADP from FY 2019 through FY 2024 and the projected ADP through 2029 are graphically depicted in Figure 13.

Table 19. DCJ January 2025 Forecast: Actual and projected juvenile detention FY-end average daily population,¹ FY 2020 through FY 2029

FY End	YTD ADP ¹ Forecast	Annual Growth
2020*	223.5	-12.0%
2021*	146.2	-34.6%
2022*	158.8	8.6%
2023*	179.2	12.8%
2024*	193.2	7.8%
2025	190.8	-1.2%
2026	207.4	8.7%
2027	218.1	5.1%
2028	234.1	7.4%
2029	250.5	7.0%

¹ The average daily number of youth present in a juvenile detention facility during the specified FY.

* FY 2020 to FY 2024 data points reflect actual year-end average daily population figures.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

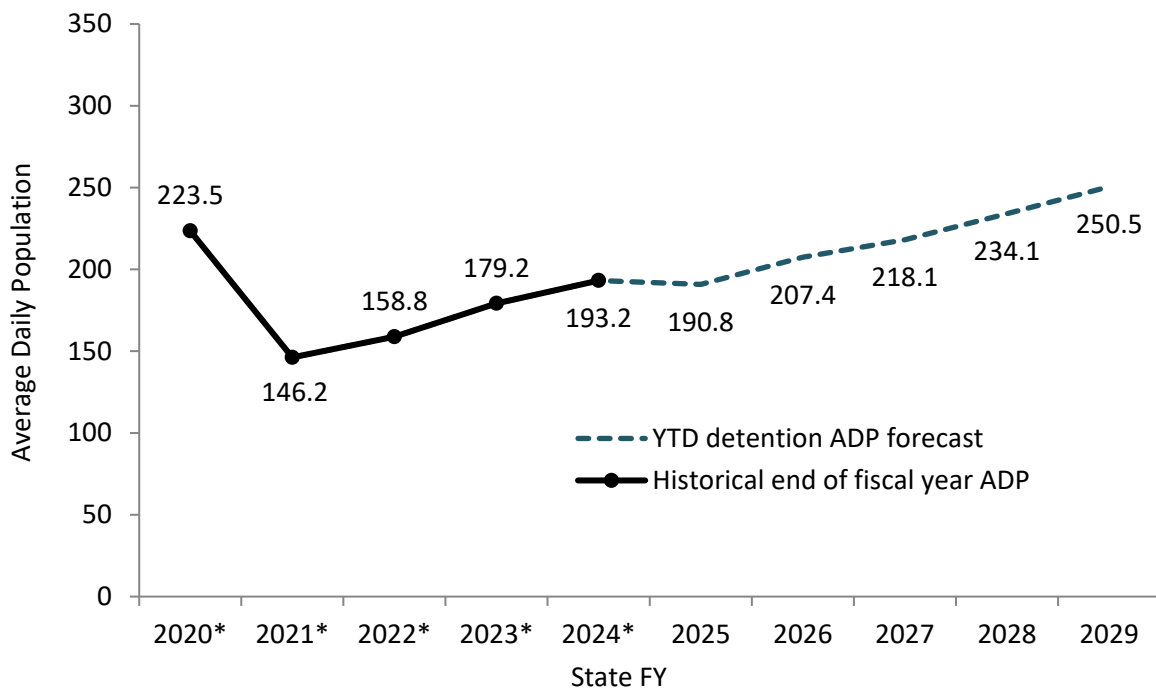


Table 20. DCJ January 2025 quarterly juvenile detention average daily population¹ forecast, FY 2024 through FY 2029

FY	Quarter Ending	YTD ADP ¹ Forecast	Quarterly Growth
2024*	<i>June, 2024*</i>	193.2	1.5%
2025	<i>September, 2024*</i>	189.8	-1.8%
	<i>December, 2024*</i>	184.1	-3.0%
	March, 2025	187.7	1.9%
	June, 2025	190.8	1.7%
2026	September, 2025	196.0	2.7%
	December, 2025	203.1	3.6%
	March, 2026	205.3	1.1%
	June, 2026	207.4	1.0%
2027	September, 2026	208.1	0.3%
	December, 2026	214.6	3.1%
	March, 2027	216.3	0.8%
	June, 2027	218.1	0.8%
2028	September, 2027	222.9	2.2%
	December, 2027	230.2	3.3%
	March, 2028	232.2	0.9%
	June, 2028	234.1	0.8%
2029	September, 2028	238.6	1.9%
	December, 2028	246.4	3.3%
	March, 2029	248.6	0.9%
	June, 2029	250.5	0.8%

¹ Year to date average daily population: The average number of youth present in a juvenile detention facility on a daily basis during the specified reporting period.

* Actual average daily population figures. Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

Figure 13. Historical and projected juvenile detention year-end average daily population,¹ FY 2020 through FY 2029

¹ The average daily number of youth present in a juvenile detention facility during the specified FY.

* FY 2020 to FY 2024 data points reflect actual year-end average daily population figures.

Data Source: [Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services Management Reference Manuals and Monthly Population Reports](#)

With the detention population consistently rising, it is expected to approach the level seen prior to April of 2020 in upcoming years. However, this growth is likely to be moderated by statutory caps set on the number of detention beds allowed. Legislation has repeatedly reduced this number: in 2003, the maximum number of youths allowed in detention was set at 479. The most recent reduction lowered this cap to 215 in 2021. However, the recent passage of HB 2023-1307 allows DYS to administer 22 temporary emergency detention beds, effectively increasing the cap to 237 beds statewide.

According to the DYS, detention centers are experiencing capacity strains statewide. It is not unusual for certain judicial districts to exceed their designated cap and require the use of these emergency beds. When examined by maximum daily count data, each of the eight secure detention facilities in Colorado has operated at or above 100% capacity at some point in early FY 2024.

Local jurisdictions monitor the detention population and hold regular meetings to discuss emergency release lists when they are approaching the cap for their respective regions, which could influence judicial decision-making. The degree to which such decision-making influences placements into detention may slow the expected increase in the detention population, contributing additional uncertainty to the current forecast.

Appendix A:

Legislation Affecting Prison Population Management

Prisoners in Colorado are subject to many different sentencing laws, the most significant of which dates back to 1979 with H.B. 1589. Many of the ensuing changes in legislation have affected the size of the prison population, particularly House Bill 1320, passed in 1985. Changes to parole laws in the 1990s significantly affected the size of the parole population and the associated number of individuals subject to revocation decisions. Several pieces of legislation were passed in 2010 which are expected to have a significant impact on the size of both the prison and the parole populations. These sentencing laws are outlined below.

- ❑ In 1979, House Bill 1589 changed sentences from indeterminate to determinate terms and made parole mandatory at one-half (the mid-point) the sentence served.
- ❑ In 1981, House Bill 1156 required that the courts sentence offenders above the maximum of the presumptive range for “crimes of violence” as well as for crimes committed with aggravating circumstances.
- ❑ In 1985, House Bill 1320 doubled the maximum penalties of the presumptive ranges for all felony classes and mandated that parole be granted at the discretion of the Parole Board. As a result of this legislation, the average length of stay projected for new commitments nearly tripled from 20 months in 1980 to 57 months in 1989. In addition, parole became discretionary which contributed to increased lengths of stay. After the enactment of H.B. 1320, the inmate population more than doubled over the next five years.
- ❑ In 1988, Senate Bill 148 changed the previous requirement of the courts to sentence above the maximum of the presumptive range to sentencing at a minimum the mid-point of the presumptive range for “crimes of violence” and crimes associated with aggravating circumstances.
- ❑ In 1989, several class five felonies were lowered to a newly created felony class six with a presumptive penalty range of one to two years through the passage of Senate Bill 246.
- ❑ In 1990, House Bill 1327 doubled the maximum amount of earned time that an offender is allowed to earn while in prison from five to ten days per month. In addition, parolees were allowed to accumulate earned time while on parole. This legislation reduced time spent on parole as well as reduced the length of stay for offenders who discharged their sentence.
- ❑ In 1990, Senate Bill 117 modified life sentences for first-degree felony convictions to “life without parole.” The previous parole eligibility occurred after 40 calendar years were served. This affected sentences for crimes committed after September 20, 1991.
- ❑ In 1993, House Bill 1302 reduced the presumptive ranges for certain non-violent class 3 through class 6 felonies and added a split sentence mandating a period of parole for all crimes following a prison sentence. This legislation also eliminated earned time awards while on parole.



- ❑ Sentencing for habitual offenders was also changed in 1993 with House Bill 1302. This bill revised the sentence for repeat offenders convicted of class 1 through class 5 felonies. Offenders who have twice been convicted of a previous felony are subject to a term of three times the maximum of the presumptive range of the current felony conviction. Those who have received three prior felony convictions are sentenced to four times the maximum of the presumptive range of the current felony conviction. Additionally, any offender previously sentenced as a habitual offender with three prior convictions, and thereafter convicted of a crime of violence, is subject to a life sentence with parole eligibility after 40 calendar years.⁶
- ❑ In 1993, Senate Bill 9 created the provision for certain juvenile offenders to be prosecuted and sentenced as adults, and established the Youthful Offender System (YOS) within the Department of Corrections (DOC). Initially, 96 beds were authorized, with the construction of a YOS facility with a capacity of 480 beds approved.
- ❑ In 1994, Senate Bill 196 created a new provision for habitual offenders with a current conviction of any class one or two felony, or any class three felony that is defined as a crime of violence, and who have been previously convicted of these same offenses twice. This “three strikes” legislation requires that these offenders be sentenced to a term of life imprisonment with parole eligibility in forty calendar years.
- ❑ In 1995, House Bill 1087 reinstated earned time provisions for certain non-violent offenders while on parole. This legislation was enacted in part as a response to the projected parole population growth resulting from the mandatory parole periods established by H.B. 93-1302.
- ❑ In 1996, House Bill 1005 broadened the criminal charges eligible for direct filings of juveniles in adult court and possible sentencing to the YOS. This legislation also lowered the age limit of juveniles eligible for direct filing and sentencing to YOS from 14 to 12 years of age.
- ❑ House Bill 98-1160 applied to offenses occurring on or after July 1, 1998, mandating that every offender must complete a period of parole supervision after incarceration. A summary of the major provisions that apply to mandatory parole follows:
 - Offenders committing class 2, 3, 4, or 5 felonies or second or subsequent class 6 felonies, and who are revoked during the period of their mandatory parole, may serve a period up to the end of the mandatory parole period while incarcerated. In such a case, one year of parole supervision must follow.
 - If revoked during the last six months of mandatory parole, intermediate sanctions including community corrections, home detention, community service or restitution programs are permitted, as is a re-incarceration period of up to twelve months.
 - If revoked during the one year of parole supervision, the offender may be re-incarcerated for a period not to exceed one year.

⁶ Affects convictions for crimes of violence defined by CRS § 18-1.3-406.

- ❑ House Bill 98-1156 concerned the lifetime supervision of certain sex offenders, and is referred to as the 'Colorado Sex Offender Lifetime Supervision Act of 1998'. A number of provisions in the bill addressing sentencing, parole terms, and parole conditions are summarized below:
 - For certain crimes,⁷ a sex offender shall receive an indeterminate term of at least the minimum of the presumptive range specified in 18-1-105, C.R.S. for the level of offense committed and a maximum of the sex offender's natural life.
 - For crimes of violence,⁸ a sex offender shall receive an indeterminate term of at least the midpoint in the presumptive range for the level of offense committed and a maximum of the sex offender's natural life.
 - For sex offenders eligible for sentencing as a habitual sex offender against children (pursuant to 18-3-412, C.R.S.), the sex offender shall receive an indeterminate term of at least the upper limit of the presumptive range for the level of offense committed and a maximum of the sex offender's natural life.
 - The period of parole for any sex offender convicted of a class 4 felony shall be an indeterminate term of at least 10 years and a maximum of the remainder of the sex offender's natural life.
 - The period of parole for any sex offender convicted of a class 2 or 3 felony shall be an indeterminate term of at least 20 years and a maximum of the sex offender's natural life.
- ❑ In 2003, Senate Bill 252 allowed the Parole Board to revoke an individual who was on parole for a nonviolent class 5 or class 6 felony, except in cases of menacing and unlawful sexual behavior, to a community corrections program or to a pre-parole release and revocation center for up to 180 days. This bill also allowed DOC to contract with community corrections programs for the placement of such parolees. Additionally, the bill limited the time a parolee can be revoked to the DOC to 180 days for a technical revocation, provided that the parolee was serving parole for a nonviolent offense. Finally, this bill repealed the requirement of an additional year of parole if a parolee is revoked to prison for the remainder of the parole period (originally effected by H.B. 98-1160).

⁷ Such crimes are defined in CRS § 18-1.3-10, and include the following: Sexual assault, as described in section 18-3-402; sexual assault in the first degree, as described in section 18-3-402 as it existed prior to July 1, 2000; Sexual assault in the second degree, as described in section 18-3-403 as it existed prior to July 1, 2000; Felony unlawful sexual contact as described in section 18-3-404; Felony sexual assault in the third degree, as described in section 18-3-404 (2) as it existed prior to July 1, 2000; Sexual assault on a child, as described in section 18-3-405; Sexual assault on a child by one in a position of trust, as described in section 18-3-405.3; Aggravated sexual assault on a client by a psychotherapist, as described in section 18-3-405.5(1); Enticement of a child, as described in section 18-3-305; Incest, as described in section 18-6-301; Aggravated incest, as described in 18-6-302; Patronizing a prostituted child, as described in section 18-7-406; Class 4 felony internet luring of a child, in violation of section 18-3-306(3); Internet sexual exploitation of a child in violation of section 18-3-405/4/; Attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of these offenses if such attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation would constitute a class 2, 3, or 4 felony.

⁸ Defined by CRS § 18-1.3-406.



- ❑ House Bill 04-1189 lengthened the amount of time that must be served prior to parole eligibility for violent offenders.⁹ First time offenders convicted of a violent offense must serve 75% of their sentence less any earned time awarded. If convicted of a second or subsequent violent offense, the full 75% of their sentence must be served.
- ❑ Also in 2004, Senate Bill 04-123 recognized the YOS as a permanent program by eliminating the repeal date.
- ❑ In 2008, House Bill 1352 modified the revocation placement options available to the Parole Board for offenders whose parole has been revoked based on a technical violation, who have no active felony warrants, and who were on parole for a class 5 or class 6 nonviolent felony offense other than menacing or unlawful sexual behavior by precluding such offenders from being placed in community return-to-custody facilities.
- ❑ Also in 2008, House Bill 1382 modified the law regarding offenders for whom the Department of Corrections can mandate sex offender treatment, and also expanded the population of offenders who are eligible for earned time by allowing earned time eligibility while on parole or after re-parole following a parole revocation.
- ❑ House Bill 09-1351 increased the maximum monthly earned time from 10 days to 12 days per month for certain inmates convicted of class 4, 5, or 6 felonies and changed the maximum earned time reduction from 25% to 30% of an offender's total sentence. In addition, the bill created 'earned release time' for inmates meeting certain qualifications. Inmates convicted of class 4 or class 5 felonies who meet these qualifications may earn their release 60 days prior to their mandatory release date, while eligible class 6 felons may earn release 30 days prior to their mandatory release date.
- ❑ In 2010, House Bill 1374 clarified eligibility criteria for the enhanced earned time that was created the prior year in House Bill 09-1351 and made substantial changes to the statutory parole guidelines in C.R.S. § 17-22.5-404. A statement of legislative intent was added, with the requirement that the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) develop a risk assessment scale for use by the Parole Board that includes criteria shown to be predictors of recidivism risk. The DCJ, DOC, and the Parole Board were also required to develop the Parole Board Action Form, to document the rationale for decisions made by the Board. The Parole Board is required to use the risk assessment scale and the administrative guidelines for both release and revocation decision making.
- ❑ Also in 2010, House Bill 1360 allows the Parole Board to modify the conditions of parole and require the parolee to participate in a treatment program in lieu of a parole revocation. A parolee who commits a technical parole violation, and was not on parole for a crime of violence, may have his or her parole revoked for a period of no more than 90 days if assessed as below high risk to reoffend, or up to 180 days if assessed as high risk. Additionally, placement in a community return to custody facility for a technical parole violation was expanded to include people convicted of a

⁹ As defined by CRS § 18-1.3-406.



non-violent class 4 felony. The bill also specified that the Division of Adult Parole provide the judiciary committees of the House and Senate with a status report regarding parole outcomes and the use of money allocated pursuant to the bill. A portion of the savings are required to be allocated for re-entry support services for parolees including obtaining employment, housing, transportation, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and other services.

- ❑ House Bill 11-1064 created a presumption favoring the granting of parole to certain qualifying inmates serving sentences for drug possession or drug use offenses.
- ❑ Senate Bill 11-241 expands the definition of special needs offenders, and permits the inclusion of offenders convicted of certain felony 1 and felony 2 crimes qualifying for a special needs parole consideration. Additionally, the bill creates a presumption in favor of granting parole for certain inmates with a detainer from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE).
- ❑ House Bill 12-1223 restores eligibility for earned time to people re-incarcerated for a parole revocation and expands earned time for major program completion or extra-ordinary conduct by an inmate that promotes the safety of staff, volunteers or other inmates. Additionally, the bill allows prisoners re-incarcerated for technical parole violations to accrue earned time. Any cost savings are to be reinvested into vocational and educational programming inside prison and re-entry support services for people on parolee.
- ❑ House Bill 14-1355 provided over \$8 million in funding and 78.4 FTE per year for reentry programs for adult parolees. These funds are to develop and implement programs to assist inmates to prepare for release to the community as well as provide equipment, training, and programs to better supervise offenders in the community.
- ❑ Senate Bill 15-124 narrows the scope of behavior warranting arresting a parolee for a technical violation, and requires the use of intermediate and alternative sanctions to address noncompliance with conditions of parole. Such sanctions can include a short-term period of jail confinement and referral to treatment or other support services.
- ❑ House Bill 15-1122 stipulated that an offender is ineligible for parole if he or she has been convicted of certain penal discipline violations or failed to participate in required programs.
- ❑ Senate Bill 16-180 required CDOC to develop and implement a specialized program for juveniles convicted as adults and sentenced to an adult prison. Additionally, Senate Bill 16-181 allowed juveniles sentenced for a class 1 felony committed on or after July 1, 1990, and before July 1, 2006, to be re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole.
- ❑ House Bill 17-1308 removed the mandatory imposition of certain parole conditions related to changes of residence, drug testing, personal contacts and payment of restitution.
- ❑ House Bill 17-1326 lowered parole revocation terms for certain parolees from 180 days to 30 or 90 days, dependent on conviction crimes. Additionally, the bill changed the maximum time a revoked parolee can be held in the preparole release and revocation facility from 180 to 90 days and repealed the Department of Corrections' authority to operate community return-to-custody



facilities. Finally, it directed the Parole Board to conduct parole release review in lieu of a hearing for certain low-risk inmates.

- ❑ House Bill 18-1029 lowers mandatory parole periods from five years to three years for class 3 felony crimes committed on and after July 1, 2018, and for class 2 felony crimes that are not crimes of violence. This will affect the size of the parole caseload, but not for approximately 8 years from implementation.
- ❑ House Bill 18-1109 expands the existing eligibility requirements for special needs parole, and adds a third eligibility category for special needs parole consideration. The bill lowers the age requirement for one of the existing special needs offender categories from 60 to 55 years and older, and adds a category of special needs offenders to include those determined to be incompetent to complete any sentence and not likely to pose a risk to public safety.
- ❑ House Bill 18-1410 requires that DOC track the prison bed vacancy rate at in DOC facilities and funded private prisons. If the vacancy rate falls below 2 percent for 30 consecutive days, DOC is required to notify other state government agencies and may request that other agencies take action to increase the vacancy rate.
- ❑ Senate Bill 19-143, signed into law May 28, 2019, makes various changes to prison population management options, reentry services, parole, and facility security level designations. Most relevantly, parole revocations to DOC for determinate periods are eliminated, and the circumstances under which a parolee may be revoked for a technical parole violation are severely limited. In addition, the Bill attempts to accelerate releases of low and medium risk parole-eligible inmates by allowing the DOC to submit to the board a list of low and medium risk parole-eligible inmates with an approved parole plan for board review within 30 days. Further, the bill requires a majority vote by the full board to deny parole for an inmate assessed as low or very low risk with an approved parole plan and a recommended release.
- ❑ House Bill 20-1019, signed March 10, 2020, was drafted for the express purpose of prison population reduction and management. This bill, among other provisions, requires the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to convene an advisory group to study future prison bed needs in Colorado, including strategies to safely reduce the prison population, a utilization analysis of all facilities that can be used to house inmates, a program analysis to align with best practices, an analysis of the best practices and programs that are necessary for successful reintegration, alternatives to incarceration, and recidivism reduction strategies. Additionally, the bill creates a new crime of an unauthorized absence, and eliminates the requirement that earned time be awarded in accordance with certain statutory categories, allowing earned time to be awarded when there is positive progress.
- ❑ Senate Bill 21-146 modified the eligibility criteria for parole for senior and special needs inmates and requires the DOC and the Parole Board to develop policies and procedures to improve the special needs parole process.
- ❑ House Bill 23-1037 allows inmates sentenced for a nonviolent felony offense to receive additional earned time for completing an accredited degree or other credential awarded by a regionally accredited institution of higher education while the inmate is incarcerated or on parole. Offenders may receive 2 years of earned time for a doctoral degree, 1.5 years for a master's degree, 1 year



for an associate or baccalaureate degree, and 6 months for a certificate or other credential that requires at least 30 credit hours.

- ❑ Proposition 128, approved by Colorado voters in 2024, increases the amount of time people convicted of certain violent crimes on or after January 1, 2025 from 75% to 85% of their sentence before being eligible for parole. Additionally, those who have been convicted for a crime of violence twice before must serve 100% of their sentence, without any earned time reduction. Those sentenced prior to the implementation of this law were also required to serve 100% of their sentence, less any earned time granted. This measure is not expected to affect the size of the inmate population until FY 2043.

In addition to legislation specifically impacting sentencing laws and parole requirements, new laws affecting prison admissions and sentence lengths are introduced every year. Many of these may result in an increase or a decrease in the number of individuals sentenced to DOC, or the length of their prison sentences. Collectively they may have a significant impact on the size of future prison populations. These changes in legislation are taken into account in the development of prison population forecasts.

