The mission of the Department of Corrections (DOC) is to improve public safety by positively changing lives. The DOC is committed to operating a safe and humane corrections system. However, a combination of chronic underfunding and steadily rising costs is eroding the ability to deliver on this vital public expectation. Additionally, DOC is experiencing a significant increase in the flow of drug contraband into prison facilities, which can cause erratic and dangerous behavior, disrupt operations, and endanger health and safety of staff and incarcerated individuals. The decreasing access to jail beds due to low reimbursement rates requires DOC to house more violators in prisons, which further strains capacity and increases the introduction of contraband.

### Responsible Budgeting for Public Safety

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### Stabilizing Staffing Levels

DOC requests additional staffing to address unfunded costs of custody staffing related to non-discretionary relief costs and the growing medical and mental health needs of the incarcerated population. These costs are non-discretionary and are already occurring. These requests align with the recommendations outlined in the legislatively mandated staffing report produced by CGL Management Group.

Funding additional custody positions will mitigate unfunded overtime costs and reduce the need for mandatory overtime. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 over-expenditure in custody overtime salaries and benefits totaled nearly $19.8 million, resulting in deferral of critical repairs and maintenance, hiring delays in non-custody positions, and the need to create savings within other areas of DOC to avoid overspending at the agency-level. Excessive mandatory overtime contributes to correctional staff fatigue, jeopardizes staff safety and security and decreases morale, leading to increased turnover.

**Custody Staff: Health Care Delivery**

The DOC’s prisons have been impacted by aging populations, hospital closures and reductions in services, an increased need for specialty care providers, and an increased need for on-site mental health observation and supervision. Additional staff are needed to provide off-site medical transportation, community hospital watches and one-on-one watches. (48.4 FTEs, $8.6M).

**Custody Relief Factor**

Custody staff require relief for regular days off and vacations, sick time, and mandatory training days. Shift relief factors identify the number of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) required to fill a single custody post. The Custody Staffing Model’s relief factor of 1.67 for authorized leave, sick leave, and training does not provide adequate FTEs and funds necessary to meet the demands created by mandatory leave and training requirements of staff. DOC requests an increase from 1.67 to 1.83 to fund current costs. (53.9 FTEs, $14.5M).

### Increasing Staff Safety

To address the safety and security of staff and incarcerated individuals within our prison facilities, DOC requests additional resources to meet identified safety and security needs for contraband management and food quality.
Contraband Management
The DOC requests funding to continue operating the body scanner at the Washington State Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), mitigating the introduction of contraband to the facility and reducing the need for invasive strip searches. The DOC experiences a high volume of drug-related violence, and WCCW has a large number of incarcerated individuals presenting with contraband hidden in body cavities. See graph below, illustrating the increase in drug-related infractions over the last five years.

When a person with contraband is identified, DOC must place the incarcerated individual under a dry cell watch to monitor the health of the person, to safely recover the contraband as it is released from the person’s body, and to prevent contraband from reaching the incarcerated population. The additional funding will fund staff increased dry cell watch posts that have resulted from the pilot. (10.9 FTEs, $2.7M).

Food and Staff Safety Improvements
Reinstating hot breakfast as part of the CI Food Service program is critical to the safety of staff and incarcerated individuals. In FY 2018, a hunger strike at the Washington State Penitentiary (WSP) jeopardized the safety of staff and incarcerated individuals. The strike stemmed from incarcerated individuals protesting the low-quality, unhealthy food options provided in cold breakfast trays. To mitigate the strike, DOC increased custody staffing and made emergency purchases to avoid further escalation. Without funding to provide traditional hot breakfast service at all five facilities under the CI program, DOC faces the real possibility of these strikes happening again and putting more individuals at risk. (0.0 FTEs, $900K).

Enhancing Gender Responsive Policy and Practices
The DOC requests funds to evaluate and improve gender-informed policies and practices. Identifying and addressing critical differences between male and female incarcerated individuals improves correctional management and services for incarcerated women, to include appropriate trauma-related services, and improves the life circumstances of their children, thereby mitigating intergenerational cycles of criminality. The DOC has consolidated its women’s facilities under one Deputy Director and has hired a permanent Gender Responsive Manager to focus solely on this work. However, the agency does not yet have a fully integrated gender responsive culture or framework. Improperly applying assessment and classification guidelines to female incarcerated individuals affects not just their custody classification levels. It also affects housing, access to certain programs, such as work release, and opportunities to receive skills to both reduce their risk of recidivism and address causal factors that led to their incarceration in the first place, which differ greatly from their male counterparts. (0.0 FTEs, $136K).
New Employee and One-Time Values Training

DOC requests funding to implement a values-focused training curriculum to improve DOC’s culture, focused on equity, understanding implicit bias, inclusion, embracing diversity, courage, treating others with respect and operational norms for all DOC staff. Planned training programs can support organizational change to ensure DOC employees are guided in a manner that aligns with our strategic plan, focusing on people and achieving results. (0.7 FTEs, $154K).