



# COLORADO

## Department of Corrections

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### ANNUAL REPORT CONCERNING THE STATUS OF PRIVATE CONTRACT PRISONS

A REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE  
DUE DECEMBER 1, 2023, PURSUANT TO C.R.S. 17-1-201(2)

PREPARED BY  
THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ANALYSIS  
DECEMBER 2023

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION .....	1
CONTRACTS .....	2
FUNDING .....	3
PRIVATE PRISON UTILIZATION .....	4
PRIVATE PRISON POPULATION .....	5
PRIVATE PRISON PROGRAM SERVICES .....	8
CORECIVIC COVID-19 MEASURES .....	10
CORECIVIC STAFFING .....	11

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## INTRODUCTION

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In the 1990s and 2000s, there was a trend of increasing prison populations which outpaced the construction of state facilities. This growth required the use of private prisons to assist in housing Colorado inmates. In 1995, House Bill (HB) 1352 created Title 17, Part 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) concerning the request for a proposal process for corrections privatization. This report is intended to comply with the annual reporting provision listed in C.R.S. 17-1-201(2):

No later than December 1 of each fiscal year, beginning with the 1996-97 fiscal year, the Executive Director shall submit a report to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate concerning the status of contracts in effect, and, with respect to completed prisons, the effectiveness of each private contract prison governed by a contract with the department.

In 1999, the Colorado Department of Corrections' (CDOC) Prison Operations created the Private Prisons Monitoring Unit (PPMU) to oversee private contract prisons. The PPMU was established to ensure that private contract prisons are following CDOC policies, contract specifications, and American Correctional Association (ACA) standards. The provisions of each contract stipulate that CDOC training requirements as well as food, medical, educational, and other service requirements are met.

The PPMU staff is comprised of facility monitors and program specialists. The facility monitors are assigned to specific facilities. These monitors are expected to audit all shifts during the reporting month. The PPMU also staffs a medical monitor, a mental health monitor, and a food service monitor. These monitors conduct routine weekly visits to all facilities and are responsible for specifically monitoring all of the applicable service functions.

The PPMU works closely with the CDOC's Offender Services to ensure that all inmates housed in private contract prisons meet the required custody level as determined by the inmate classification assessment.

## CONTRACTS

During fiscal year (FY) 2023, the CDOC had two private prison contracts, which were established as inter-governmental agreements with local jurisdictions (Bent and Crowley counties) for inmate housing and program services. In turn, the two counties contracted with CoreCivic to provide services to the CDOC. **Figure 1** summarizes the facilities and vendors with whom the CDOC had contracts, along with the population capacity and assigned jurisdictional on-grounds population as of June 30, 2023.

<b>FIGURE 1</b>			
<b>Private Prison Contracts as of June 30, 2023</b>			
<b>Facility</b>	<b>Operated by</b>	<b>Population Capacity</b>	<b>Assigned*</b>
<b>Bent County Correctional Facility (BCCF)</b>	CoreCivic	1,388	1,237
<b>Crowley County Correctional Facility (CCCF)</b>	CoreCivic	1,500	1,493

*\* Excludes 48 restrictive housing management beds from Crowley County Correctional Facility and 78 restrictive housing management beds from Bent County Correctional Facility pursuant to contract and use.*

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## FUNDING

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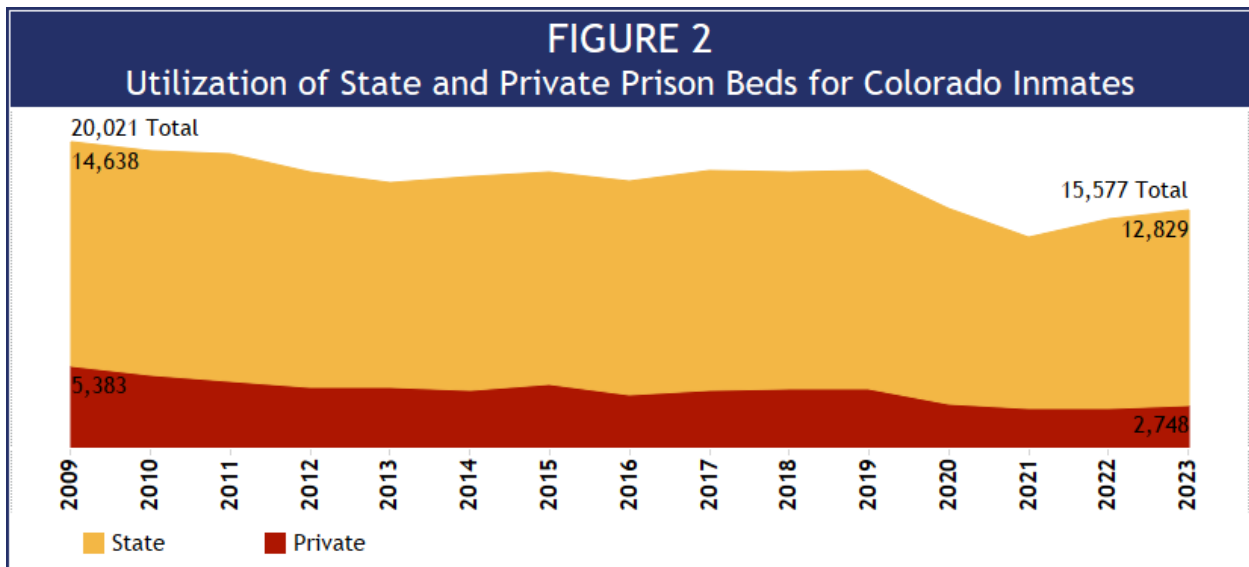
Compensation to the private contract prison vendors and local municipalities through the intergovernmental agreements is provided through appropriations made available by the Colorado General Assembly. From July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, private prisons were reimbursed at a rate of \$63.32 per inmate, per day. Funding for private prisons is provided through the External Capacity subprogram in the Long Bill. The total amount appropriated in HB 22-1329 for FY 2022-23 was \$59,322,367, which provided funding to house 2,567 inmates in private prisons. During the mid-year budget adjustment process, the Joint Budget Committee approved a funding change that shifted money from the Payments to Local Jails budget line to the Payments to Private Prisons budget line. This funding realignment increased the number of funded inmates in private prisons to 2,660 for FY 2022-23.

Funding allocated to the two facilities from the CDOC is based on inmate bed needs. The CDOC does not provide a bed guarantee to any private vendor to commit or guarantee a minimum census at any private prison.

## PRIVATE PRISON UTILIZATION

As the inmate population grew during the 1990s and 2000s, so did Colorado’s use of private contract prisons. At the peak of Colorado’s inmate population in 2009, inmates in private prisons accounted for 26.9% of all incarcerated inmates. The total prison population decreased from 15,635 inmates in FY 2020 to 13,730 in FY 2021 and 15,011 in FY 2022. However, in FY 2023, the population began to rise again, reaching 15,577 inmates by June 30, 2023.

During the same time, the private prison rate has dropped, from 18.2% (2,842) of the incarcerated population in FY 2020 to 17.6% (2,748) of the incarcerated population as of June 30, 2023. **Figure 2** shows state and private prison utilization levels and trends since 2009. The private prison population remained relatively consistent until 2019, but then significantly declined in FY 2020 and FY 2021. This can be attributed partly to the decommissioning of Cheyenne Mountain Reentry Center in February of 2020, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic which decreased inmate population across the State.



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## PRIVATE PRISON POPULATION

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The CDOC Executive Director establishes the correctional standards by which the private prisons are expected to operate (C.R.S. 17-1-202 (III) (e)). These standards are memorialized in annual contracts. C.R.S. 17-1-104.9 requires that the department not place state inmates classified higher than medium custody in private contract prisons. The two private contract prisons work collaboratively with the department to house inmates with a wide range of needs. The CDOC uses a scale of 1-5 to identify the needs level of an inmate, with 1 indicating the lowest need and 5 indicating the highest need. Private contract prisons house inmates with medical needs of 4 and below (if the inmate is medically stable) and mental health needs of 3 and below. This allows the state to manage those inmates with higher needs, including higher custody levels and management issues, in state prisons.

The criteria for private prison eligibility include:

- Level III (medium) custody or below
- Low to moderate needs levels
  - Medical needs levels 1-4
  - Mental health needs levels 1-3
  - Intellectual needs 1-3

Subsequent figures detail differences in the two inmate populations regarding demographic, needs, criminal risk, and criminal history variables. The comparison consists of 4,615 Level III state facility male inmates and 2,748 private facility inmates housed in Colorado as of June 30, 2023. There are no female inmates currently housed in private prisons; thus, female inmates are excluded from the comparison.

**Figures 3 through 7** detail the characteristics of inmates in CoreCivic facilities (BCCF and CCCF) and in state level III male facilities as of June 30, 2023. Data is unavailable for some inmates.

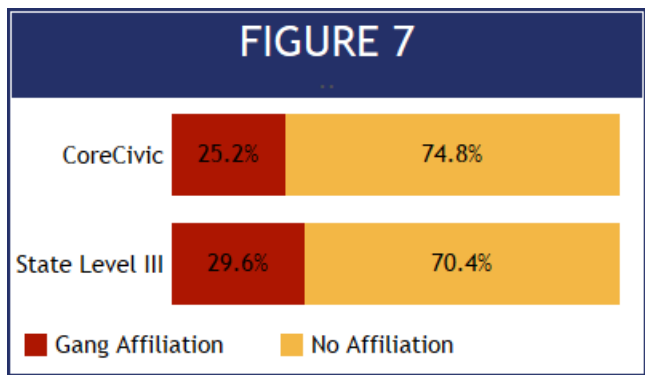
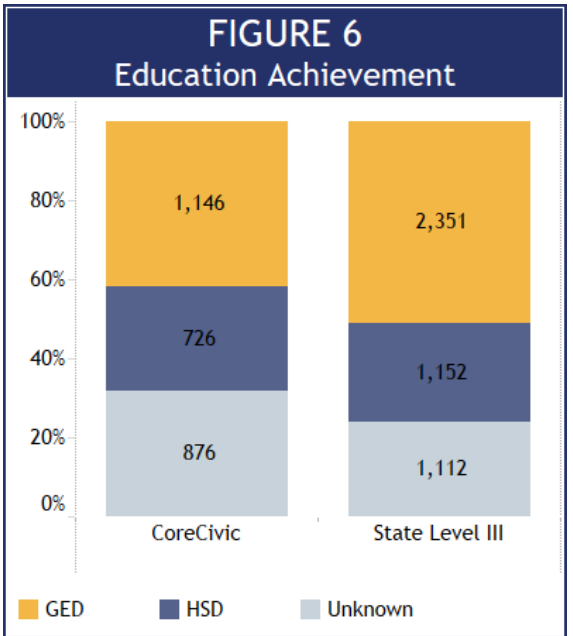
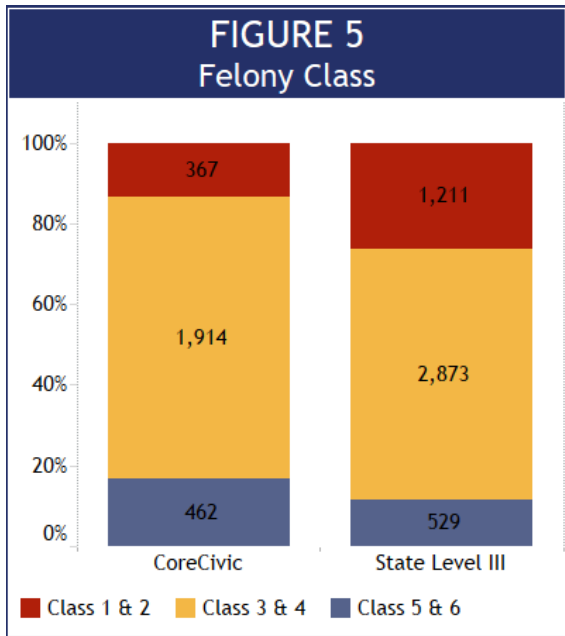
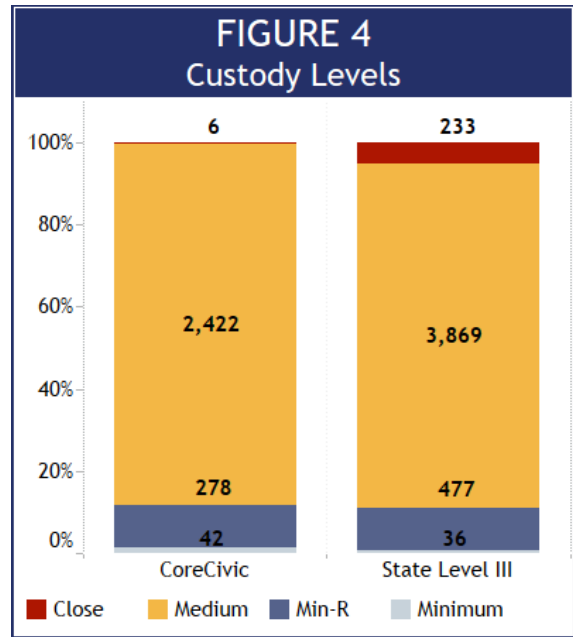
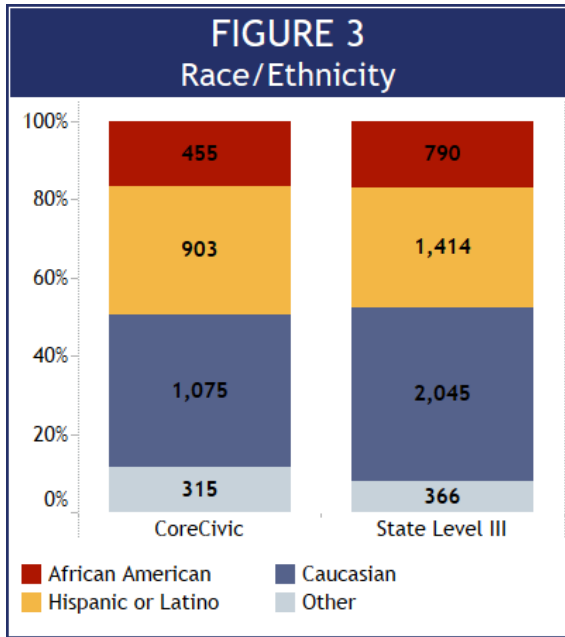
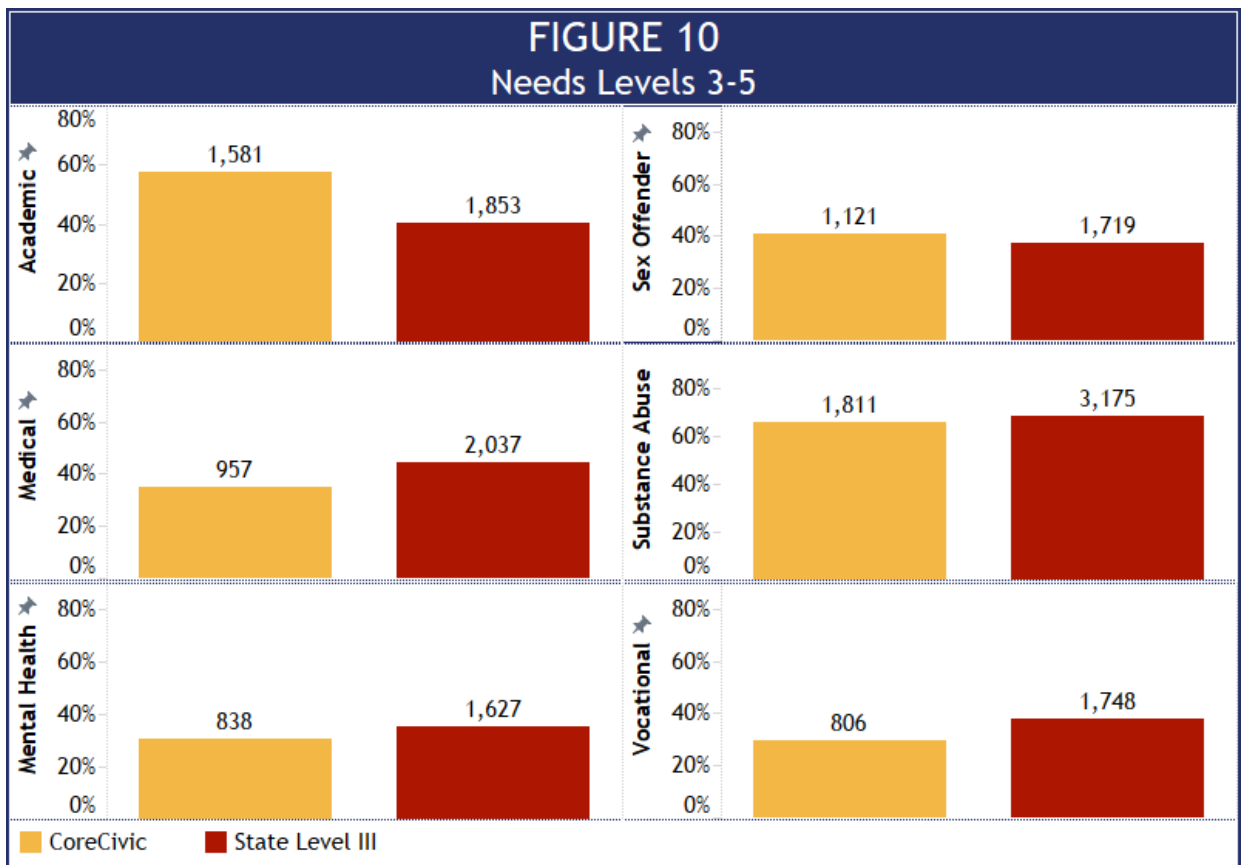
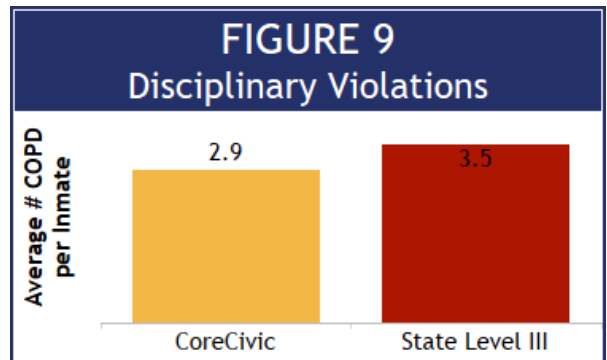
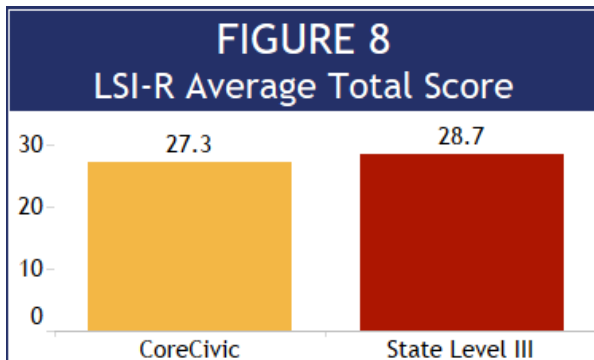




Figure 8 shows little difference in risk scores as measured by the Level of Supervision Inventory-Revised (LSI-R). Inmates in state level III male prisons are more prone to disciplinary violations (Figure 9). Treatment needs levels are shown in Figure 10. These categories are rated on a 1-5 sliding scale; for this report, only moderate to high needs levels (3, 4, and 5) are shown. CoreCivic facilities house a higher rate of sex offenders. These inmates are currently on the global referral list for sex offender treatment because they are not yet within 4 years of their Parole Eligibility Date (PED), or in some instances, inmates may be ineligible for previously refusing treatment.



## PRIVATE PRISON PROGRAM SERVICES

The CDOC is required by C.R.S. 17-1-103 to provide a range of dental, medical, psychological services, nutrition, education, and work programs in the private contract prisons it monitors. Participation in treatment programs is tracked monthly through the CDOC dashboard measures (see <https://www.colorado.gov/cdoc/departamental-reports-and-statistics>). Since the implementation of achievement earned time per House Bill (HB) 12-1223 in August 2012, standardized coding of program discharges, successful program completions, and achievements have been tracked on the CDOC dashboard measures.

The dashboard measures summarize participation for all prison inmates. Under contractual requirements, sites are required to provide, “Meaningful work and/or program opportunities to the inmate population so that 80% of the eligible population is engaged in meaningful employment for at least three (3) hours per day, five days per week.”

**Figure 11** shows the number of inmates who successfully completed a program in each area in CoreCivic and state level III male facilities during FY 2023. Some inmates may have successfully completed multiple programs within the same area, but they are only counted once per area.

<b>FIGURE 11</b>		
<b>Successful Completions in Program Area</b>		
<b>Program Area</b>	<b>CoreCivic</b>	<b>State</b>
Academic	372	333
Cognitive Education		118
College Partner		57
CTE	197	443
Industry Certificates		268
Mental Health	200	137
Pre-release	419	477
SOTMP		124
Substance Abuse	160	357
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>2,314</b>

*Note: Changes were made to program completion tracking in FY 2021.*

Figure 12 shows the programs and treatment services offered in each CoreCivic location during FY 2023.

FIGURE 12			
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Groups			
Type	Program	Bent County CF	Crowley County CF
Anger Management	CALM: Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it	-	-
	Fear: The Anger Trigger	-	-
	SAMHSA Anger Management Program	✓	✓
Major Mental Illness	BRIGHT: CBT for Depression and Co-Occurring Drug/Alcohol Problems	✓	✓
	CBT for Anxiety and Depression	✓	✓
	CBT for Bi-Polar Disorder	✓	✓
	CBT for Social Anxiety	✓	✓
	CBT for Social Anxiety in Schizophrenia	✓	✓
	Commitment to Change Volume I	✓	-
	Commitment to Change Volume II	✓	-
	Commitment to Change Volume III	✓	-
	DBT: Basic Skills Group	✓	✓
	Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) Complete Program	✓	✓
	Stairways for Borderline Personality Disorder	-	-
STEPS for Borderline Personality Disorder	-	-	
Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)	✓	✓	
Substance Abuse Programs	DUI Education	-	-
	Strategies for Self Improvement and Change (SSIC Level 4B Outpatient)	✓	✓
	Victim Impact	✓	✓
Others	Gender Dysphoria Support Group	✓	✓
	Mental Health First Aid for MH Peer Assistants	✓	✓
	Sex Offender Treatment and Maintenance Program (maintenance)	-	-
Program Overview			
Type	Program	Bent County CF	Crowley County CF
Education	Adult Basic Education (ABE)	✓	✓
	English as a Second Language (ESL)	✓	✓
	General Equivalency Diploma (GED)	✓	✓
Vocational Education	Braille	✓	-
	Career Programs (Core Foundations)	-	✓
	Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	✓	-
	Construction Technology I and II	-	✓
	Construction Truss Program	-	✓
	Customer Service	-	-
	Electronics	-	✓
	Fresh Start Program (Red Rocks CC, Pikes Peak CC and Solid Rock DC)	-	-
	Horticulture (Nursery and Greenhouse)	-	✓
	Introduction to Computer Information Systems	✓	-
	OSHA Program (HVAC and Gas/Oil)	-	-
Woodshop Apprentice Program	-	✓	
Re-entry/ Pre-Release	7 Habits on the Inside	✓	-
	CBI-SA	-	-
	DOC Pre-Release	✓	✓
	Go Further	✓	✓
	Living in Balance	-	-
	Parents on a Mission	✓	✓
Thinking for a Change	✓	-	

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## CORECIVIC COVID-19 MEASURES

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As the COVID-19 Pandemic continued, Bent County Correctional Facility (BCCF) and Crowley County Correctional Facility (CCCF), owned and operated by CoreCivic, continued to adhere to the Center for Disease Control and Colorado Department of Public Health recommendations to mitigate and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks, as well as the procedures and guidelines instituted by the Colorado Department of Corrections. CoreCivic has a strict policy to protect its staff, the inmate population, and the public from exposure. Both the staff and inmate population went through regular and frequent testing for COVID-19 and were required to wear appropriate masks, which were provided by CoreCivic.

Beginning in July 2021, BCCF and CCCF resumed programs and other normal operations, while still adhering to Public Health Orders and mitigation strategies as defined by CDPHE and CDOC. Both CoreCivic facilities continue to complete staff and inmate testing, appropriate isolation and quarantine measures, and offer regular vaccination and booster clinics.

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## CORECIVIC STAFFING

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As with many employers and industries in Colorado and across the country, the two private prisons had challenges in hiring and retaining staff. Through COVID-19 protocols and phase III operations, the staffing shortages were easier to adapt to with no movement or programs. Minimal staffing levels were sufficient to accomplish core functions and maintain safe correctional practices. As the pandemic ended, CDOC worked closely with CoreCivic regarding the expected staffing levels at both facilities to maintain safe, secure, and effective correctional institutions. During FY22, modifications were made to the critical staffing patterns at both facilities to effectively post staff and take advantage of the improving staffing numbers. This helped improve and increase delivery of each facilities' services. Updated staffing exhibits have been drafted by CDOC. They are in the final stages of approval and addition to the contracts.

CoreCivic also has several aggressive strategies to improve recruitment and retention, including short-term and long-term housing projects in Las Animas and Crowley. The company raised hourly wages for the correctional series by \$2.00 per hour beginning July 1, 2021. In November 2021, \$1.3 million was awarded from the American Rescue Plan Act to fund three \$1,000 bonuses to all CoreCivic staff working at Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities to support their retention efforts. Effective October 7, 2022, food service provider Trinity, which contracts with CoreCivic, increased the pay rate of their staff at Bent and Crowley's facilities by \$3 per hour. Thanks to these strategies and the strong partnership with CDOC, both Bent and Crowley Correctional Facilities have noticed a decline in staff turnover rates over the past several months. CoreCivic representatives have expressed a strong desire to work with the CDOC to meet expectations for staffing and contract requirements.

PPMU monitors are documenting deficiencies, such as insufficient security rounds, failure to provide inmate programs per contract requirements, and failure to accurately document and report incidents. When these deficiencies are identified, the facility is responsible for developing and completing a corrective action plan to address and prevent future issues. All corrective action plans are submitted to PPMU for approval and follow-up.

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