

**Colorado Division of Criminal Justice**

# **Summer 2016 Interim Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections**

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## **The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Summer 2016 Interim Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections**

### **Introduction**

The DCJ 2015 prison population forecast predicted that the Colorado adult prison population would decline by 2.5 percent between the end of fiscal year (FY) 2015 and June 30, 2016. However, the population actually declined by 4.9 percent, from 20,623 to 19,619. *Based on the actual size of the year-end prison population, as well as trends in admissions and releases observed over the past year, these interim projections significantly modify the DCJ 2015 prison population projection.* While the 2015 projection anticipated a 3.2 percent *increase* in the prison population between the ends of FY 2015 and FY 2022, these interim projections envision a *decrease* of 1.0 percent over this time period.

Conversely, the parole caseload grew much more than expected. While the domestic caseload was anticipated to grow by less than 1.0 percent across FY 2016, the actual growth experienced was 6.8 percent. In light of the unexpected trends experienced by both the parole and prison populations, *the DCJ parole caseload projection has been adjusted significantly upward in the short term, but also with a downward adjustment in the longer term.*

### **Inmate Population**

The original 2015 projection indicated a decline through December of 2016, followed by a period of growth throughout the projection period. The adjustments made for these interim projections follow the same pattern, but with significantly lower population figures. The interim projections are presented below in Tables 1 and 2, and graphically displayed in Figure 1. Factors influencing these modifications are outlined below.

The overall population fell very steadily through the first nine months of FY 2016, partially due to declines in all categories of admissions. New court commitments were expected to remain stable, but fell by 2.8 percent. This decline occurred entirely in the first quarter of the year, with consistent increases during subsequent quarters.

Prison admissions due to technical parole violations were expected to fall due to recent legislation and initiatives, but the reality far exceeded expectations during the past year. While such admissions were expected to fall by 12.3 percent, the actual decline was 21.5 percent. This is particularly notable given the significant growth experienced in the parole caseload. This pattern in parole returns to prison due to technical violations is the main source of error in the DCJ 2015 projection.

It is possible that House Bill 2014-1355, which directed DOC to provide reentry services to offenders, and particularly Senate Bill 2015-124, which required the use of alternative sanctions for parole violations prior to revocation, had a far more immediate and powerful impact than expected. In addition, the passage of Senate Bill 16-102, which repeals mandatory minimum sentences for certain assault and bail bond condition violations further augments the reduction in the population projection.

Even though these interim projections modified the expected size of the future prison population, the trend of growth beginning in FY 2018 and throughout the remainder of the projection timeframe remains fairly consistent with that of the December 2015 projection. This is attributable to the slight growing trend that occurred in the final quarter of FY 2016, and to recent increases in all categories of admissions.

The proportions of admissions made up of new court commitments and of parolees returning with a new sentence is much larger than observed over the past seven years. This will serve to put upward pressure on the population. In addition, the passage of HB 2015-1043, which created a class of felony DUI offenders, was expected to begin impacting the population in FY 2017. However, it appears such admissions may accelerate more quickly than expected, with 54 DUI offenders admitted between August and May of FY 2016 alone.

### Female Projection

The projected end of year figure for the female inmate population was 1,851, very close to the end of year actual population of 1,856. The proportion of the overall inmate population made up of women remains high, at 9.4 percent. However, after increasing steadily between FY 2013 and FY 2015, this percentage has remained stable throughout the most recent year. As with the overall population, there were fewer readmissions due to technical parole violations than expected. Based on these factors, the projection of the female prison population was adjusted downward very slightly (see Figure 2).

**Table 1. DCJ Summer 2016 Interim Quarterly Prison Population Projections**

Fiscal Year	End of month:	Total Population	% Change	Male Population	% Change	Female Population	% Change
2015	June 2015*	20,623	-0.54%	18,655	-0.55%	1,968	-0.46%
2016	September 2015*	20,469	-0.75%	18,548	-0.57%	1,921	-2.39%
	December 2015*	20,014	-2.22%	18,144	-2.18%	1,870	-2.65%
	March 2016*	19,550	-2.32%	17,713	-2.38%	1,837	-1.76%
	June 2016*	19,619	0.35%	17,768	0.31%	1,851	0.76%
2017	September 2016	19,444	-0.89%	17,609	-0.89%	1,835	-0.84%
	December 2016	19,371	-0.38%	17,542	-0.38%	1,829	-0.34%
	March 2017	19,401	0.15%	17,572	0.17%	1,829	-0.01%
	June 2017	19,443	0.22%	17,607	0.20%	1,835	0.35%
2018	September 2017	19,452	0.05%	17,616	0.05%	1,836	0.02%
	December 2017	19,564	0.58%	17,724	0.61%	1,839	0.21%
	March 2018	19,649	0.43%	17,793	0.39%	1,855	0.85%
	June 2018	19,710	0.31%	17,847	0.30%	1,864	0.45%
2019	September 2018	19,705	-0.03%	17,833	-0.08%	1,872	0.48%
	December 2018	19,750	0.23%	17,861	0.16%	1,889	0.88%
	March 2019	19,814	0.33%	17,922	0.34%	1,892	0.16%
	June 2019	19,862	0.24%	17,958	0.20%	1,904	0.63%
2020	September 2019	19,850	-0.06%	17,939	-0.11%	1,911	0.37%
	December 2019	19,919	0.35%	18,011	0.40%	1,908	-0.16%
	March 2020	19,993	0.37%	18,081	0.39%	1,912	0.21%
	June 2020	20,061	0.34%	18,138	0.32%	1,923	0.58%
2021	September 2020	20,105	0.22%	18,179	0.23%	1,926	0.16%
	December 2020	20,187	0.41%	18,252	0.40%	1,935	0.47%
	March 2021	20,273	0.43%	18,333	0.44%	1,940	0.26%
	June 2021	20,349	0.37%	18,404	0.39%	1,945	0.26%
2022	September 2021	20,358	0.04%	18,410	0.03%	1,948	0.15%
	December 2021	20,399	0.20%	18,446	0.20%	1,953	0.26%
	March 2022	20,417	0.09%	18,462	0.09%	1,955	0.10%
	June 2022	20,417	0.00%	18,472	0.05%	1,945	-0.51%

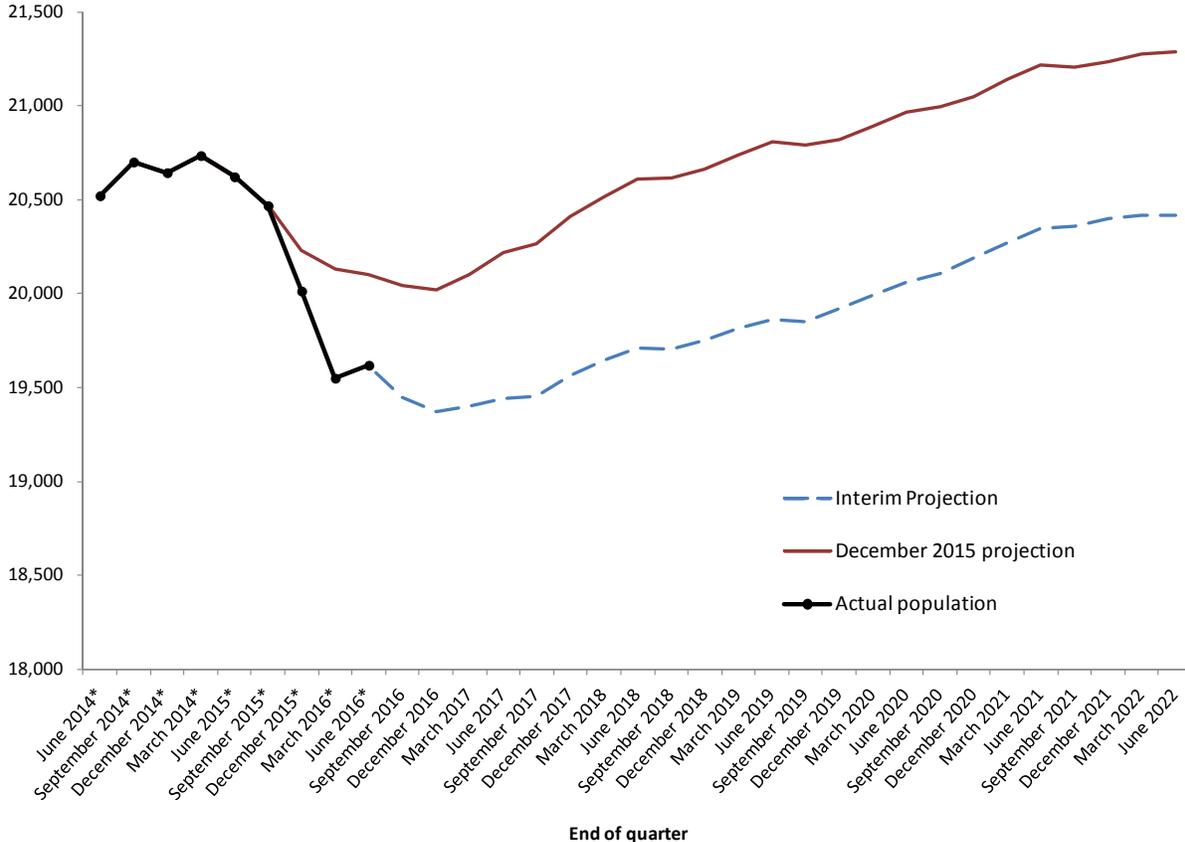
\* Actual data provided by Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports

**Table 2. DCJ Summer 2016 Interim End of Fiscal Year Prison Population Projections**

Fiscal Year	Total Population	% Change	Male Population	% Change	Female Population	% Change
2015*	20,623	0.49%	18,655	0.19%	1,968	3.42%
2016*	19,619	-4.87%	17,768	-4.75%	1,851	-5.95%
2017	19,443	-0.90%	17,607	-0.90%	1,835	-0.85%
2018	19,710	1.38%	17,847	1.36%	1,864	1.54%
2019	19,862	0.77%	17,958	0.62%	1,904	2.17%
2020	20,061	1.00%	18,138	1.00%	1,923	1.00%
2021	20,349	1.44%	18,404	1.47%	1,945	1.14%
2022	20,417	0.33%	18,472	0.37%	1,945	0.00%

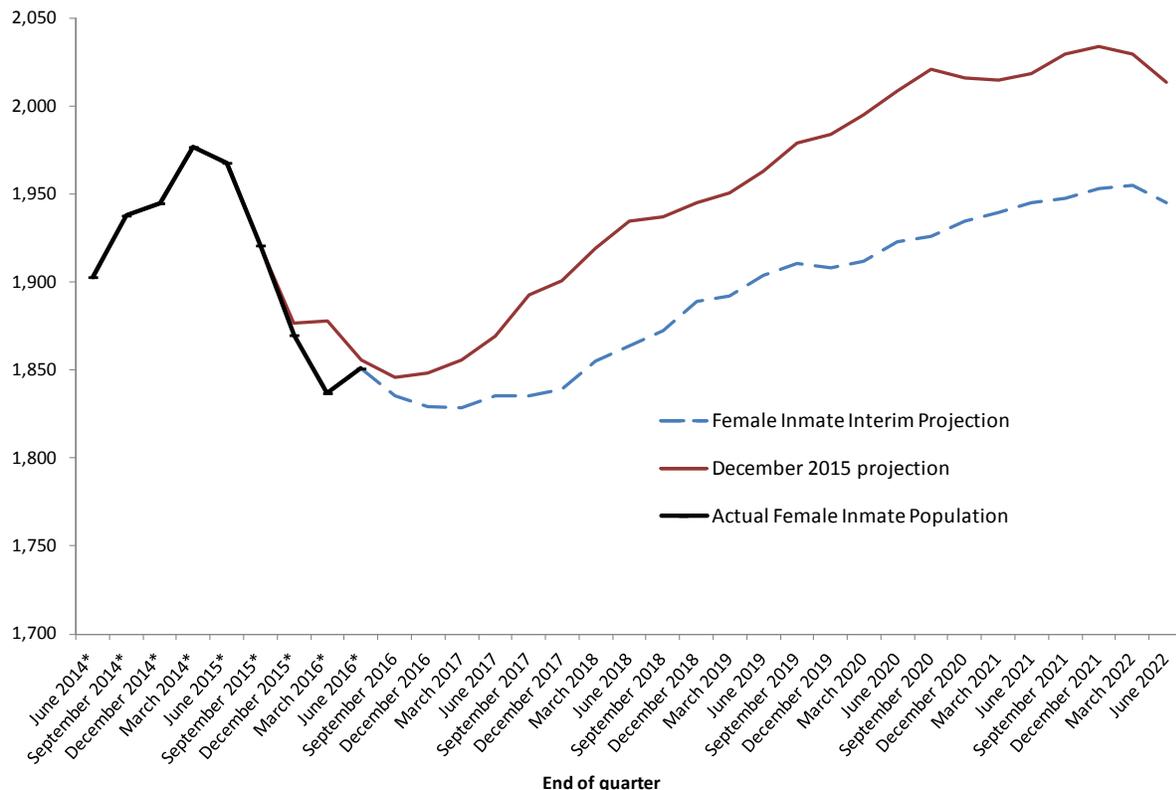
\* Actual data provided by Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports

**Figure 1. Quarterly Inmate Population FY 2014 through FY 2016, DCJ Winter 2015 Population Projection and Summer 2016 Interim Projection through FY 2022**



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2016. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.

**Figure 2. Quarterly Female Inmate Population FY 2014 through FY 2016, DCJ Winter 2015 Population Projection and Summer 2016 Interim Projection through FY 2022**



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2016. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.

**Parole Caseload**

Very modest growth in the total parole caseload during FY 2016 was anticipated at the time of the DCJ 2015 forecast. However, in actuality very strong growth occurred, with a resultant year-end caseload 5.0 percent higher than expected, at 10,603 compared to the projected figure of 10,102. The domestic parole caseload in particular experienced very strong growth, at 6.8 percent by year-end, with the actual caseload 6.2 percent higher than the caseload projected in 2015.

This increase is likely due to the 21.5 percent reduction in technical parole violation revocations observed over the past year, which was also the main source of the error in the prison population projection. While revocations were expected to decline significantly beginning in FY 2017, it appears this came to pass much more quickly than anticipated. As previously stated, it is possible that the recent legislation directing DOC to provide reentry services to offenders, in addition to that requiring the use of alternative sanctions for parole violations prior to revocation, had a more immediate and powerful impact than expected.

The reduction in revocations not only retains parolees on the caseload, it serves to increase the number of successful parole completions and drives up lengths of stay on parole. Therefore, the caseload forecast through FY 2019 has been adjusted upward. However, the current and projected decline in the prison population will force the parole caseload down in FY 2018 and

FY 2019. Very moderate growth, in line with the expected growth of the inmate population, is expected in the caseload in the following years.

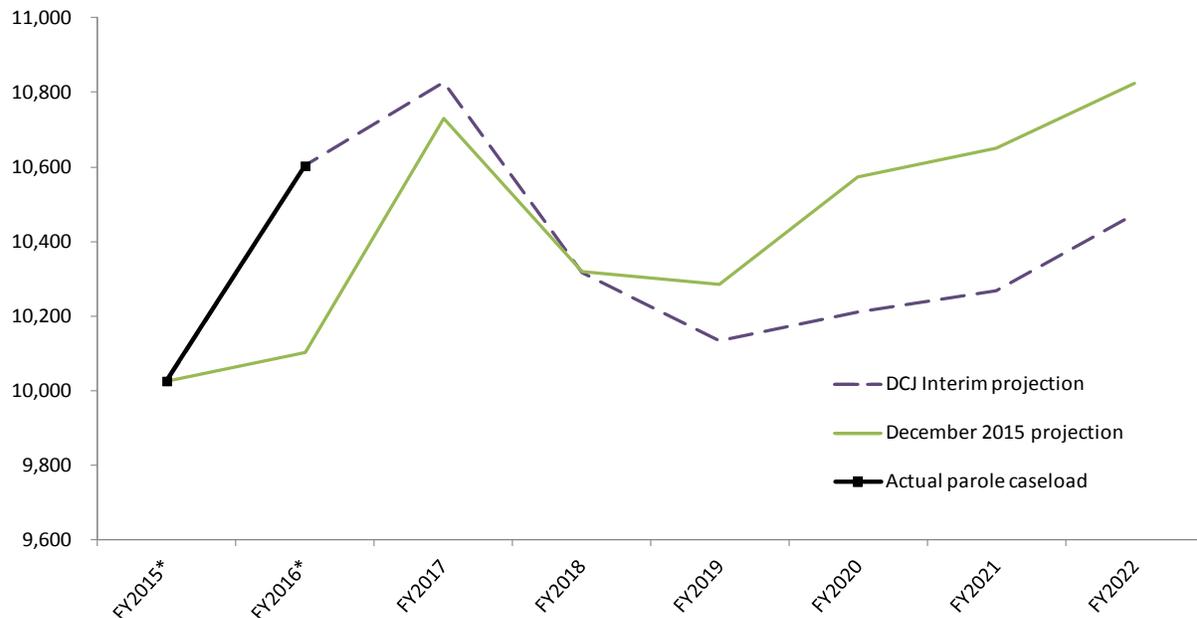
The same factors are at play in the case of the domestic parole caseload. However, while the growth in the domestic caseload generally follows that of the overall caseload, the ratio of the domestic caseload to the overall has increased in the past year. Therefore, an additional upward adjustment was made to the domestic parole caseload.

**Table 3. DCJ Summer 2016 Interim Total and Domestic Parole Caseload Projections**

Fiscal Year	Total Parole Caseload	% change	Domestic Parole Caseload	% change
2015*	10,026	-3.89%	7,865	-3.09%
2016*	10,603	5.76%	8,402	6.83%
2017	10,826	2.10%	8,574	2.05%
2018	10,317	-4.70%	8,202	-4.34%
2019	10,133	-1.78%	8,066	-1.66%
2020	10,212	0.78%	8,139	0.90%
2021	10,269	0.56%	8,184	0.56%
2022	10,473	1.98%	8,347	1.98%

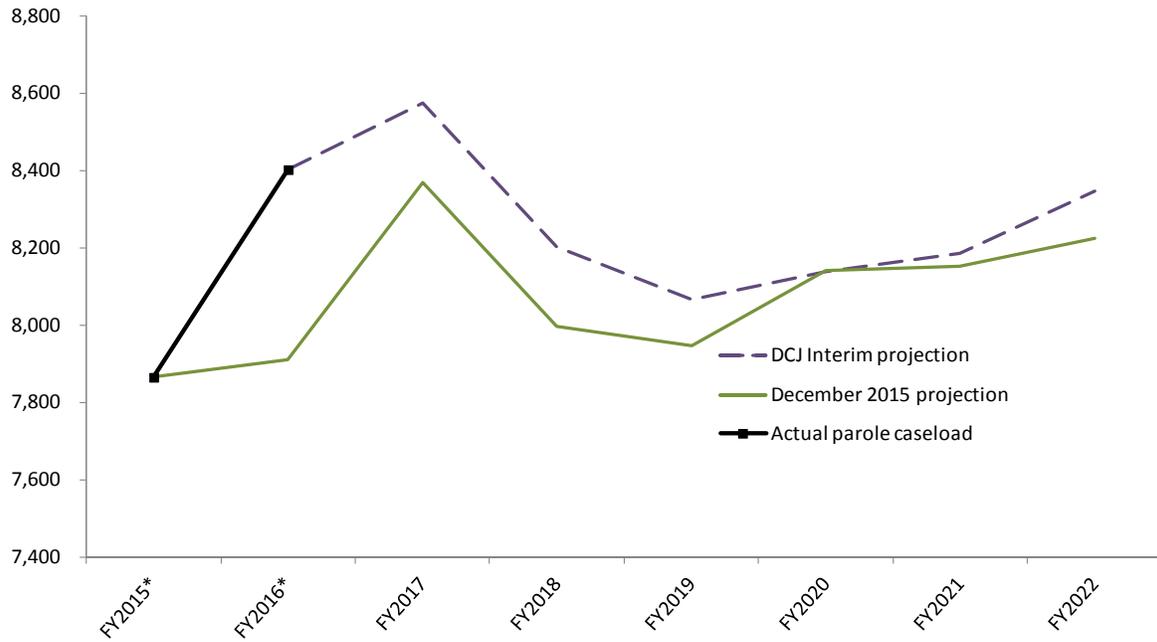
\* Actual data provided by Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports

**Figure 4: Actual Total Parole Caseload FY 2014-FY 2016, DCJ Winter 2015 and Summer 2016 Interim Parole Caseload Projections through FY 2022**



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2016. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.

**Figure 5: Actual Domestic Parole Caseload FY 2015-FY 2016, DCJ Winter 2015 and Summer 2016 Interim Parole Caseload Projections through FY 2022**



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; *Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2016*. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.