

The Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
Summer 2018 Interim Prison Population and Parole Caseload Projections
July 2018

Introduction

The DCJ January 2018 prison population forecast indicated that the Colorado adult prison population would decrease slightly though consistently (1.6%) across FY 2018, followed by strong growth through FY 2024. However, a reduction in the population was observed only through October of 2017, with growth returning over ensuing months. By year-end, the population actually increased by 0.2%, exceeding the forecast by 1.7%.

Based on actual year-end figures and additional factors outlined below, the DCJ forecast has been adjusted slightly upward through FY 2020. Across the following four years, however, somewhat slower growth than originally predicted is expected.

Inmate Population

At the time of the January 2018 projection, the prison population was in a period of decline, with releases on an upward trend. Attendant to unforeseen increases in parole returns, a reversal in release patterns, and an overestimate of the impact of HB 17-1326, the overall population estimate was 1.7% too low by the end of FY 2018.

While the estimate of new court commitments in FY 2018 was very precise (within 0.2% of actual), parole returns exceeded the forecast by 11.4%. Conversely, parole releases were overestimated by 5.4%. While discretionary releases did continue to increase as expected, the projected increase in mandatory releases did not materialize.

This interim forecast incorporates a number of adjustments. All figures were synchronized with the actual year-end inmate population size. Estimates of future parole returns were increased, while the projected increase in new court commitments has been significantly moderated in response to the slowing in the growth of criminal court filings.

Preliminary data indicate that criminal filings increased by only 4.5% in FY 2018, after experiencing 12.5% growth over each of the prior two years. This leveling in felony filings is observed across all crime types and felony classes. The moderation of the projected increase in new court commitments significantly lowers the expected rate of growth in the prison population in upcoming years.

As such, the year-end population forecast is revised upward through fiscal years 2019 and 2020. While the quarterly projection figures throughout FY 2019 and the first three quarters of FY 2020 are much higher than those indicated in the January 2018 forecast, this is merely an adjustment for actual year-end figures. The RATE of growth is actually slower, such that the current projected figure for the overall population at the end of FY 2020 matches that reported in the January 2018 forecast. The growth rate

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remains moderated throughout the projection horizon. The prison population is expected to reach 25,365 by the end of FY 2024, 8.7% lower than the figure predicted in January 2018.

Female prison population

While the DCJ January 2018 forecast of the female prison population had a very low degree of error (-0.7%), this interim forecast significantly decreases the projected number of women in prison.

As stated above, the growth in criminal court filings has slowed. However, while the growth in filings that involve women has also slowed, it remains stronger than for overall population. Additionally, women comprise an increasing proportion of filings, increasing to an estimated 24.4% in FY 2018. This compares to 23.8% in FY 2017 and 23.4% in the prior 2 years. These trends have and will continue to exert more upward pressure on the female inmate population. Therefore the rate of growth incorporated in the female inmate population forecast remains somewhat higher than that expected for men.

Parole Caseload

At the time of the January 2018 forecast, the domestic parole caseload was expected to increase 4.6% by the end of FY 2018. However, the caseload actually increased 5.9%. In response to the actual year-end caseload figure and to expected adjustments in the size of the inmate population and parole releases, the caseload estimate has been revised upward. However, as in the case of the prison population forecast, the rate of growth between fiscal years 2020 and 2024 has been significantly reduced.

A slight reduction in the caseload is expected in FY 2019 due to the shorter parole periods introduced by SB 13-250. Drug offenders sentenced under this legislation have much shorter parole periods than those sentenced prior to 2013. These individuals will be beginning to discharge their parole sentences in late FY 2018, exerting downward pressure on the size of the caseload in the following years.

Summary

This interim forecast indicates the overall prison population will grow 4.9% by the end of the current year, from the actual population of 20,136 as of the end of FY 2018 to 21,122 by June 2019. By the end of FY 2024, the population is expected to reach 25,374, a 26.0% increase.

The number of men in prison is expected to increase 4.9% by the end of FY 2019, reaching 19,010 male inmates. By the end of FY 2024, this number is expected to increase to 22,809, a 25.8% increase. The number of women in prison is expected to reach 2,112 by year-end. By the end of FY 2024, this figure is expected to increase to 2,566, a 27.6% increase.

However, the domestic parole caseload is expected to decline 2.8% during the current year, to a caseload of 8,509. Growth is expected during each of the ensuing years, such that the caseload is expected to increase 20.3% reaching 9,972 parolees.

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The DCJ Summer 2018 interim prison population projections are presented below in Tables 1 and 2. Figures 1 and 2 provide comparisons of this interim projection to the DCJ January 2018 projection for the total and female inmate populations, respectively.

Updated estimates of annual admissions and releases by type are presented in Tables 3 and 4. The interim domestic parole caseload projection is presented in Table 5, below. A comparison of the DCJ January 2018 parole caseload projection to the interim projection is displayed in Figure 3.

Table 1. DCJ Summer 2018 Interim Quarterly Prison Population Projections

FY	End of month:	Total population	% change	Male inmates	% change	Female inmates	% change
2017	Jun-17*	20,101	0.04%	18,108	-0.21%	1,993	2.47%
2018	Sep-17*	19,803	-1.48%	17,909	-1.10%	1,894	-4.97%
	Dec-17*	19,793	-0.05%	17,868	-0.23%	1,925	1.64%
	Mar-18*	19,892	0.50%	17,914	0.26%	1,978	2.75%
	Jun-18*	20,136	1.23%	18,125	1.18%	2,011	1.67%
2019	Sep-18	20,391	1.27%	18,354	1.26%	2,037	1.30%
	Dec-18	20,654	1.29%	18,590	1.28%	2,064	1.31%
	Mar-19	20,910	1.24%	18,820	1.24%	2,090	1.26%
	Jun-19	21,122	1.01%	19,010	1.01%	2,112	1.06%
2020	Sep-19	21,339	1.03%	19,205	1.02%	2,134	1.04%
	Dec-19	21,534	0.91%	19,376	0.89%	2,158	1.12%
	Mar-20	21,741	0.96%	19,561	0.95%	2,179	1.01%
	Jun-20	21,977	1.09%	19,773	1.08%	2,204	1.14%
2021	Sep-20	22,205	1.04%	19,976	1.03%	2,229	1.14%
	Dec-20	22,442	1.06%	20,186	1.05%	2,255	1.17%
	Mar-21	22,653	0.94%	20,374	0.93%	2,279	1.04%
	Jun-21	22,866	0.94%	20,562	0.92%	2,304	1.09%
2022	Sep-21	23,098	1.01%	20,772	1.02%	2,326	0.96%
	Dec-21	23,278	0.78%	20,934	0.78%	2,344	0.76%
	Mar-22	23,508	0.99%	21,140	0.98%	2,367	1.01%
	Jun-22	23,751	1.04%	21,356	1.02%	2,395	1.19%
2023	Sep-22	23,925	0.73%	21,513	0.74%	2,412	0.68%
	Dec-22	24,130	0.86%	21,700	0.87%	2,430	0.76%
	Mar-23	24,325	0.81%	21,876	0.81%	2,448	0.76%
	Jun-23	24,561	0.97%	22,088	0.97%	2,473	1.03%
2024	Sep-23	24,743	0.74%	22,257	0.76%	2,487	0.54%
	Dec-23	24,958	0.87%	22,443	0.84%	2,516	1.17%
	Mar-24	25,185	0.91%	22,654	0.94%	2,531	0.61%
	Jun-24	25,365	0.71%	22,799	0.64%	2,566	1.38%

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

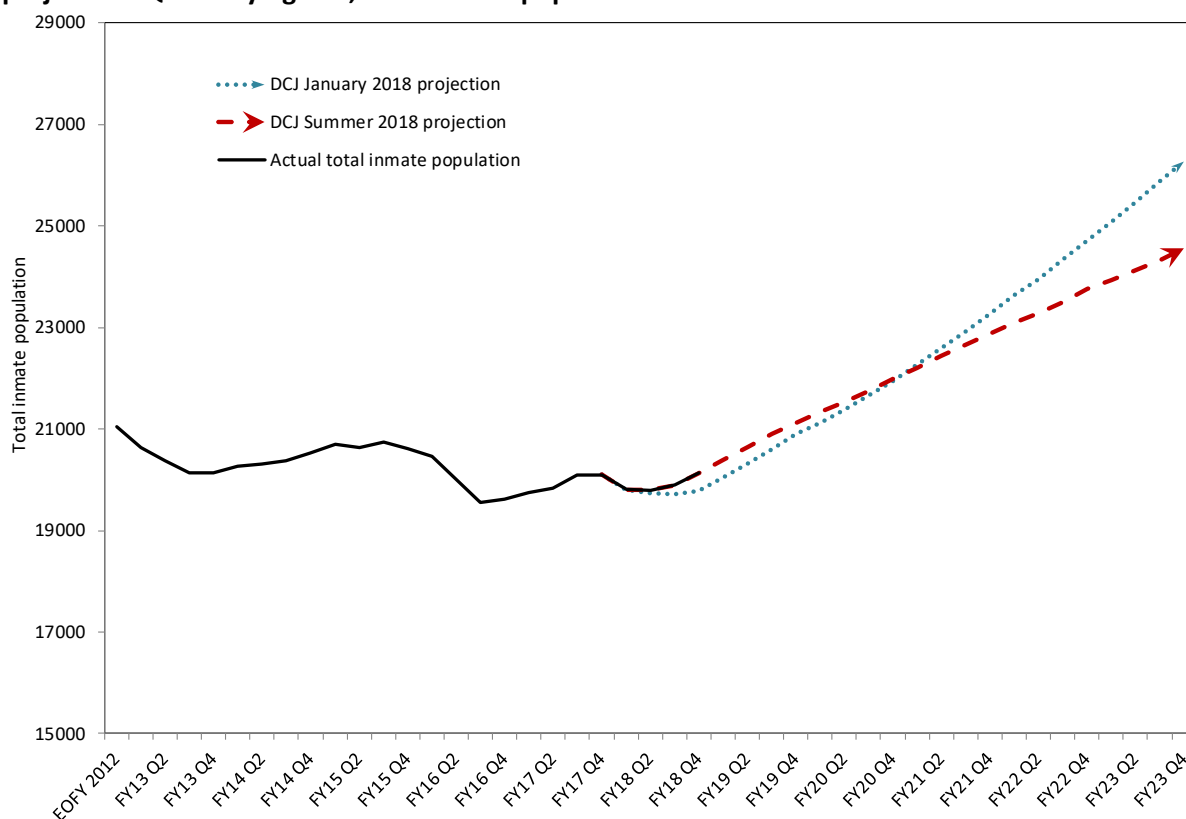
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Table 2. DCJ Summer 2018 Interim End of Fiscal Year Prison Population Projections

FY	Total population	% change	Male inmates	% change	Female inmates	% change
2017	20,101	2.46%	18,108	1.91%	1,993	7.67%
2018	20,136	0.17%	18,125	0.09%	2,011	0.90%
2019	21,122	4.90%	19,010	4.88%	2,112	5.02%
2020	21,977	4.05%	19,773	4.01%	2,204	4.37%
2021	22,866	4.05%	20,562	3.99%	2,304	4.51%
2022	23,751	3.87%	21,356	3.86%	2,395	3.96%
2023	24,561	3.41%	22,091	3.44%	2,471	3.17%
2024	25,374	3.31%	22,809	3.25%	2,566	3.84%

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

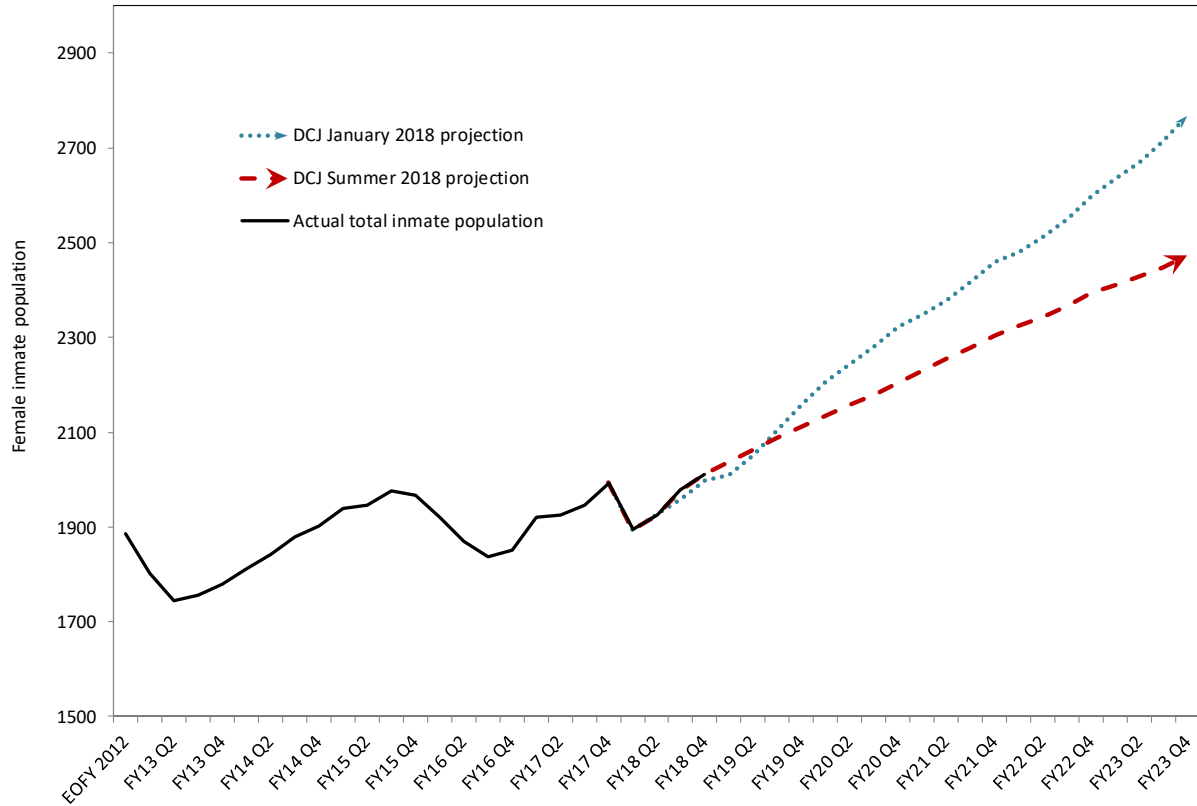
Figure 1. Comparison of DCJ January 2018 prison population projection to DCJ Summer 2018 interim projection: Quarterly figures, total inmate population



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2018. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.

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Figure 2. Comparison of DCJ January 2018 prison population projection to DCJ Summer 2018 interim projection: Quarterly figures, female inmate population



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; *Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2018*. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.

Table 3. DCJ Summer 2018 Interim Prison Population Projections: Estimated prison admissions by type

SFY	New court commitments	Technical violation returns	Parole returns with a new crime	Other	Total admissions
2017*	5,698	2,455	930	66	9,149
2018*	6,172	2,660	1,072	68	9,972
2019	6,407	3,113	1,255	65	10,839
2020	6,644	3,017	1,206	67	10,934
2021	6,886	3,063	1,225	70	11,244
2022	7,134	3,102	1,243	72	11,551
2023	7,387	3,198	1,275	75	11,934
2024	7,646	3,323	1,325	77	12,371

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

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Table 4. DCJ Summer 2018 Interim Prison Population Projections: Estimated prison releases by type

SFY	Parole releases			Sentence Discharge	Other	Total Releases
	Mandatory	Discretionary	Total			
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	5,192	3,324	8,516	1,213	127	9,856
2020	5,299	3,399	8,697	1,255	124	10,076
2021	5,443	3,472	8,915	1,326	119	10,360
2022	5,600	3,591	9,191	1,352	123	10,666
2023	5,836	3,766	9,602	1,392	129	11,123
2024	6,061	3,911	9,972	1,446	134	11,552

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

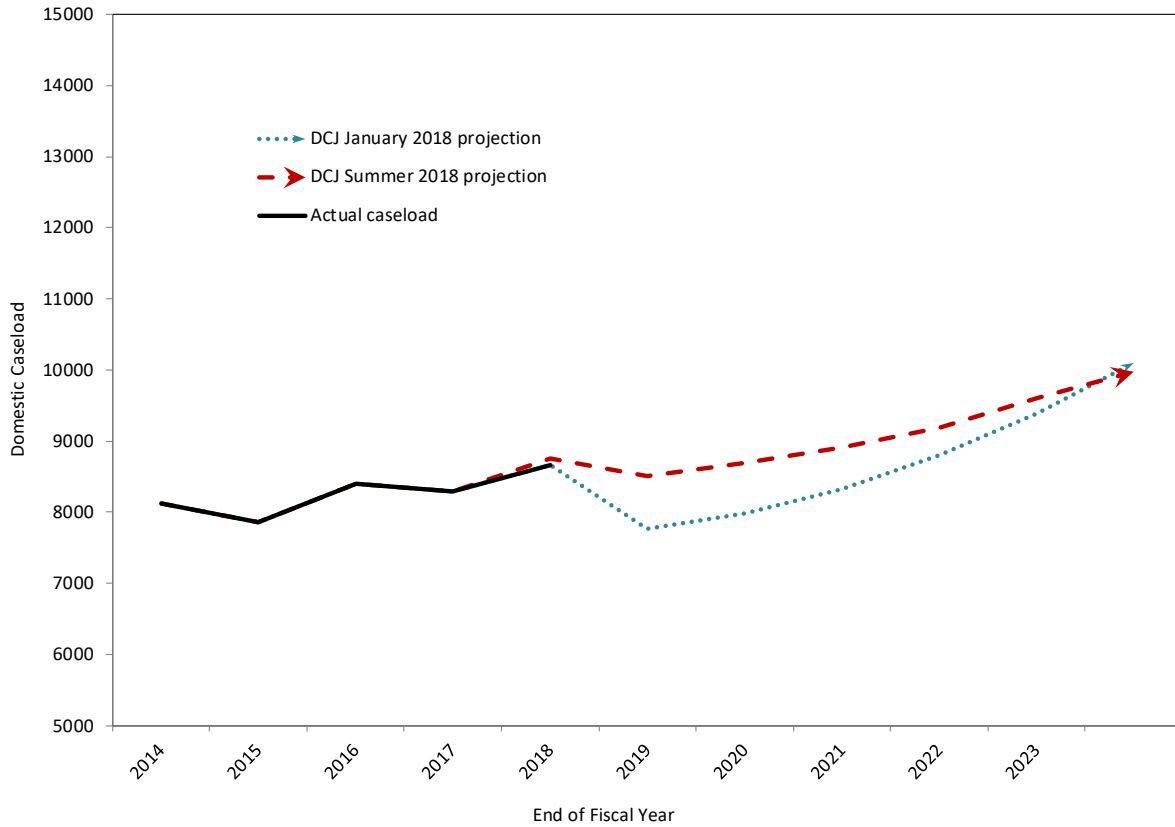
Table 5. DCJ Summer 2017 Interim Domestic Parole Caseload Projection

FY	Domestic Caseload	% change
2017*	8,268	-1.59%
2018*	8,752	5.85%
2019	8,509	-2.78%
2020	8,696	2.20%
2021	8,915	2.51%
2022	9,191	3.10%
2023	9,602	4.47%
2024	9,972	3.85%

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

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Figure 3: Domestic Parole Caseload FY 2014-FY 2018, DCJ January 2018 and DCJ Summer 2018 Interim Domestic Parole Caseload Projections through FY 2024



Sources: Colorado Department of Corrections Monthly Population and Capacity Reports; *Colorado Division of Criminal Justice Correctional Population Forecasts, January 2017*. Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Denver, Colorado.