



The Department of Corrections (DOC) is requesting **\$9.091 million from the state's general fund** and **\$10 million from reallocated funds** from unsent program appropriations to address the agency's critical budget shortfall in FY2025. This request is essential to maintain the critical services and staffing for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Unprecedented Staffing Has Lead to Budget Pressures

The prevailing factor in the DOC's budget deficiency is the extraordinary increase in staffing levels. Following years of difficulty in hiring and retaining staff, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, the DOC has finally turned a corner due to newly competitive compensation. With the implementation of competitive compensation packages, which were negotiated as part of a collective bargaining agreement, the department has been able to attract and keep highly qualified staff members. This is crucial, as having a stable workforce is foundational to carrying out the DOC's core functions.

At the beginning of 2025, the DOC was at a 99% staffing rate, where in 2020, the agency averaged at 76%. While these staffing improvements have been vital for ensuring safety and providing essential services, they have placed significant pressure on the department's budget. Moreover, agency's historical practice of using vacancy savings to cover other budget needs is no longer viable, as the department has successfully filled positions, further contributing to the funding shortfall.

The Impact of This Deficiency Request

Without the requested funds, the DOC will face significant operational challenges, including an inability to meet budgetary obligations for June 2025. This could lead to impact staff, decreased programming and services for incarcerated individuals, and potential safety risks.

The deficiency request is crucial not only to maintain staffing levels but also to ensure that essential services, such as education, rehabilitation, and job training programs, continue to function without disruption. These services are vital for reducing recidivism, improving public safety, and helping individuals successfully reintegrate into society.

Quick legislative action on the DOC's deficiency request will ensure that the agency can continue to fulfill its important role in the state's criminal justice system, while promoting public safety and rehabilitation.