



DOC created this crisis – and the cost to Colorado is real.

The Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) is running out of prison beds. In September, DOC will likely be submitting a supplemental request for millions to open new beds. And in 2026, for the first time in 22 years, **Colorado legislators may be asked to open a new prison.**

With a **projected \$945 million revenue shortfall this year** from HR 1 and more deficits on the horizon, lawmakers will be forced to choose – does Colorado want:

Teachers, or more prisons? Healthcare, or more prisons?

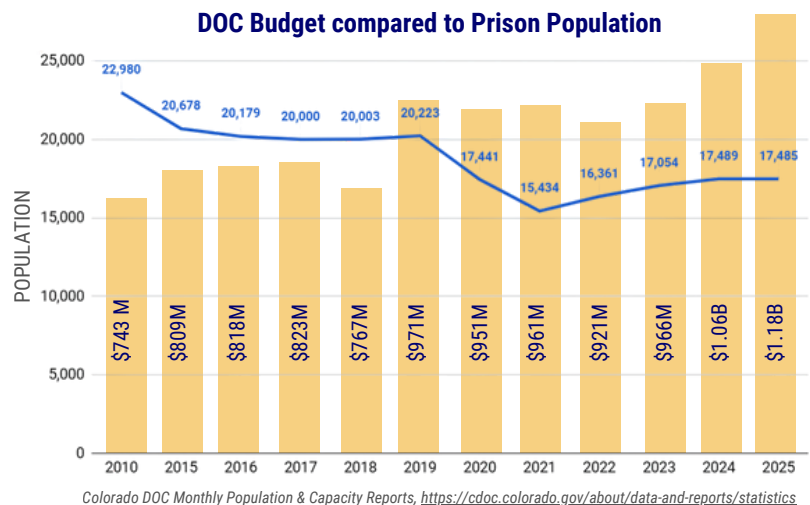
Why is Colorado's prison population growing?

The main driver is a 20% increase (in FY25) in prison admissions for technical parole violations, **with a 30% spike for women.** Technical parole violations include things like missing parole meetings or failing a drug test.

The decision to ask the Parole Board to revoke parole for technical violations is made solely by DOC.

A crisis of their own making:

In 2024 and 2025, CCJRC offered the Legislature real solutions to slow prison admissions and prevent this crisis. **DOC opposed and blocked every single one of them.**



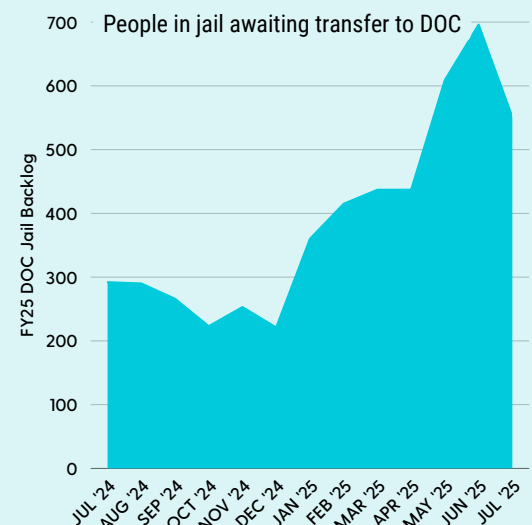
The tools are in place, but DOC refused to use them – until now.

Prison Population Management Measures (PPMM) was passed unanimously in 2018 to allow the state to be proactive when DOC runs low on prison beds. It triggers a list of reasonable measures to stabilize the prison population if the prison bed vacancy falls below 3% for 30+ days.

DOC had been deliberately circumventing PPMM by delaying prison transfers from county jails.

This tactic artificially inflated the prison bed vacancy rate above 3%, blocking the use of the very tools designed to prevent overcrowding.

On August 16, 2025, DOC finally triggered PPMM.



UPDATE **AUGUST 16, 2025**

DOC Finally Triggers PPMM

On August 16, 2025, after more than 30 consecutive days below the 3% vacancy threshold (dropping as low as 1.92%), PPMM was officially triggered for the first time since the law's passage.

What happens now?

- 1 DOC must notify the Chief Judges, District Attorneys, State Public Defender, Community Corrections, the Joint Budget Committee, and the Governor about the shortage of prison beds.
- 2 Division of Criminal Justice provides DOC with weekly updates on funded, unused community corrections placements to maximize referrals.
- 3 The Parole Board reviews:
 - People within 90 days of their mandatory release who have an approved parole plan and meet other criteria.
 - People already granted conditional parole who have now fulfilled the condition (e.g., completed a program).
 - People who are parole eligible, convicted of lower-level nonviolent offenses, have good institutional conduct, are program compliant, have an approved parole plan, no recent revocations (within 180 days), and no active warrants or detainers.

IMPORTANT! Under PPMM, **the Parole Board retains full discretion over every decision** and may grant or deny parole. Community Corrections boards and programs also retain full discretion to accept or reject an applicant. All reviews must comply with the Victim's Rights Act.



DOC's games aren't just crowding county jails, they are draining state dollars, too. Taxpayers are footing the bill for every extra jail bed.

A history of prison population management in Colorado:

- 2018:** HB18-1410 - *Prison Population Management Measures* passes unanimously. Trigger at 2% DOC vacancy.
- 2019:** SB19-143 amends statute, raising trigger to 3% and expanding Parole Board options.
- 2020–22:** During COVID, DOC vacancy rate rises above 15%. Drops to 5.8% by FY22, continues to decline.
- 2023:** CCJRC's *Crisis in Corrections* report warns lawmakers of staffing and prison bed shortages.
- 2024:** CCJRC releases a second *Crisis in Corrections* report, with inmate survey and policy proposals. DOC rejects all.
- 2025:** HB25-1214 introduced, with multiple strategies to slow growth. Passes three House committees but is blocked from a floor vote due to DOC and executive opposition.
- June 2025:** DOC gets over \$1M supplemental to pay for the extra jail beds. JBC staff states "the data suggest policy decisions are key drivers of both the jail backlog and the DOC's total male inmate population. Specifically, increases in technical parole returns and apparent efforts to keep the prison bed vacancy rate above 3.0%, possibly to avoid triggering statutory prison population management measures".
- July 2025:** Jail backlog reaches 551 people awaiting DOC transfer, while DOC has only 444 vacant beds.
- August 16, 2025:** DOC triggers PPMM for the first time.
- September 2025:** Anticipated supplemental request by DOC for millions of dollars to open new prison beds.

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Prison expansion is not the answer.
Join the **No More Prisons Coalition to push**
for effective reform, not more prisons.

Signup at bit.ly/NoMorePrisonsCO
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