



OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING AND BUDGETING

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Promoting Public Safety and Reducing Recidivism: Governor Ritter's Crime Prevention and Recidivism Reduction Plan, FY 2007-08 through FY 2009-10

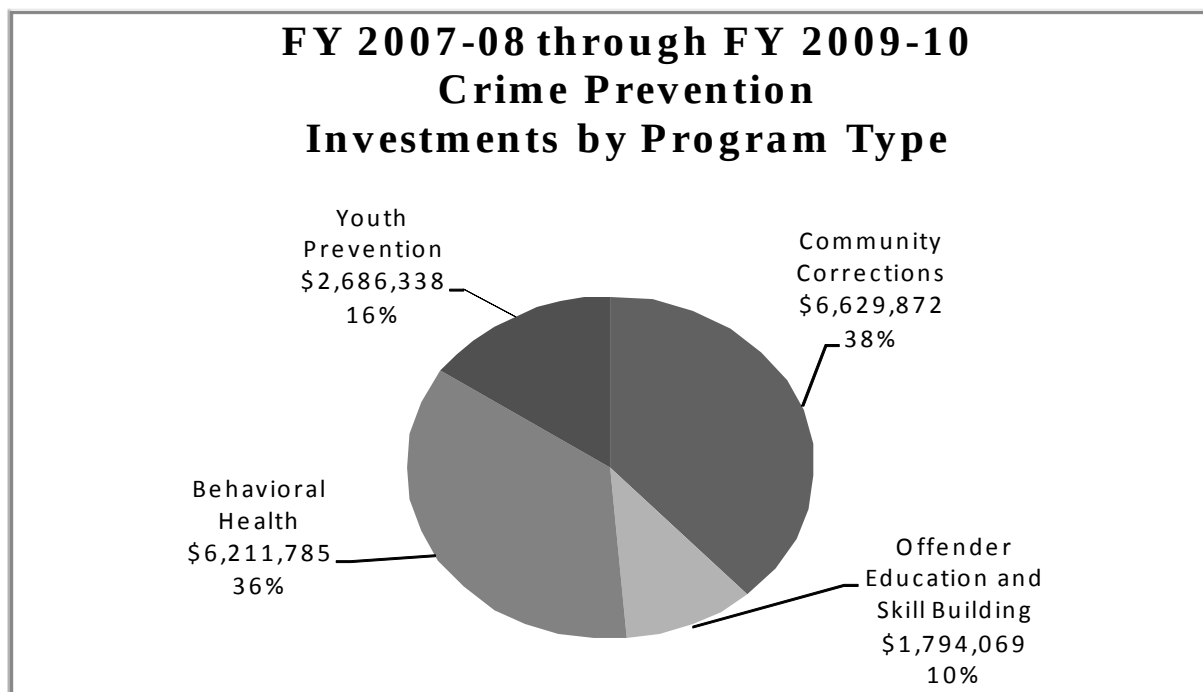
Overview

In the "Colorado Promise," Governor Ritter made a commitment to invest in evidence-based programs that protect public safety by reducing crime and recidivism and that save public tax dollars by managing correctional populations using appropriate tools and sanctions. Like many states, Colorado's recidivism rate – the rate at which offenders return to prison after release – is above 50 percent.

Just three weeks after taking office in 2007, Governor Ritter presented the legislature with a multi-agency budget request aimed at reducing recidivism. In the following years, Governor Ritter continued his commitment to improving public safety and maximizing criminal justice resources with two additional anti-recidivism budget requests.

By diverting offenders from prison, preparing incarcerated offenders to re-enter their communities using behavioral health treatments and skill building activities, and expanding preventive and early intervention services for youth, each year's recidivism package uses evidence-based improvements to save money and protect Colorado communities. These programs save money over the long-term by addressing some of the root causes of recidivism.

The chart below shows the total three year investments in each program type.



Note: Amounts in chart reflect gross appropriated total funds plus August 2009 budget balancing reductions, where applicable.

Program Descriptions

➤ Behavioral Health

Approximately 80.0 percent of offenders in the Colorado Department of Corrections have an identified substance abuse need, and 28.7 percent of incarcerated offenders are identified as having moderate to severe mental health needs¹. According to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, substance abuse treatment and mental health services can reduce recidivism significantly. Colorado-based studies show that the therapeutic community model – an intensive treatment modality for co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues – is also an effective tool for keeping offenders from returning to prison. Governor Ritter has invested more than \$6.2 million to expand behavioral health services for offenders in prisons and under community supervision over three years.

➤ Community Corrections

Community corrections, commonly called halfway-houses, are a lower-cost supervisory sentencing option that, like prisons, are at or are exceeding capacity in Colorado. A community corrections bed costs approximately \$37.74 per day, compared to approximately \$52.69 per day for a prison bed. Increasing the capacity in the community corrections system ensures that judges maintain this important, cost-effective tool for appropriate offenders. Over the last three years, Governor Ritter has added more than 300 new community corrections diversion beds to provide a secure alternative to prison for appropriate offenders.

➤ Youth Prevention and Intervention

Youth who enter the child welfare or juvenile justice systems have a higher probability of also entering the adult correctional system. The Governor's recidivism packages have included several initiatives aimed at providing prevention and intervention services to youth to prevent them from penetrating deeper into the juvenile and adult corrections system. In total, Governor Ritter has invested nearly \$2.7 million in youth prevention and intervention efforts.

➤ Offender Education and Skill Building

Preparing offenders for community re-integration through job training, basic education, and life skill acquisition addresses common reasons – unemployment, poor social and relational abilities, and lack of time and self management – that offenders return to prison. Approximately 25 percent of the Department of Corrections' population needs a General Education Degree (GED), and many offenders require job-specific training. Expanding general and vocational education programs in prison is a key component of Governor Ritter's anti-recidivism efforts because these programs are demonstrated to reduce recidivism by between 7.0 percent and 9.0 percent. Governor Ritter has invested approximately \$1.8 million in these cost-effective programs since 2007.

Investments and Savings

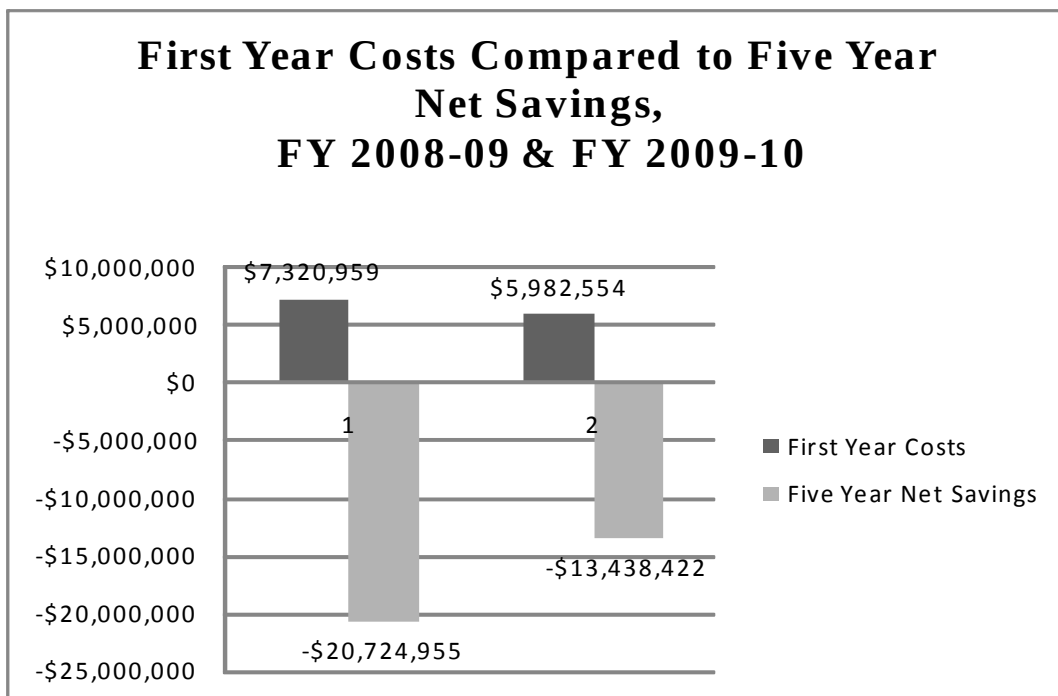
The Department of Corrections' (DOC) budget increased 127.5 percent from FY 96-97 to FY 06-07, more than double the rate of growth in overall State available General Fund. This growth required more than \$124 million over the General Fund 6.0 percent annual spending limit over this same period.

Each of the three packages generated both an immediate and long-term savings by maximizing the use of lower-cost alternatives to prison in the first year and by investing in programs that reduce the rate of return to prison over five years.

The first year gross savings from each package is as follows:

- ✓ Governor Ritter's FY 2007-08 Recidivism Reduction and Offender Diversion Package saved approximately \$3.0 million in the first year.
- ✓ Governor Ritter's FY 2008-09 Crime Prevention and Recidivism Reduction Package saved approximately \$3.2 million in the first year.
- ✓ Governor Ritter's FY 2009-10 Crime Prevention and Recidivism Reduction Package saved approximately \$4.1 million in the first year.

Over five years, the programmatic investments are expected to generate savings by reducing crime and recidivism. The chart below shows the requested first year investments in FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10, and the corresponding anticipated net five year savings from each package.

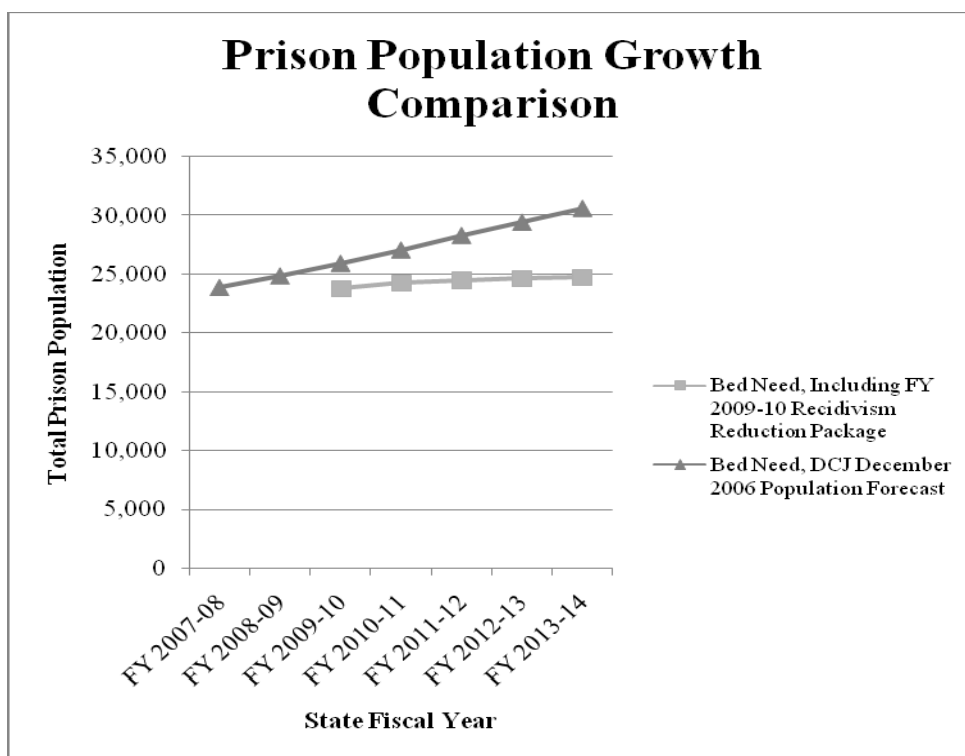


Note: Data from FY 2007-08 is not available. Amounts are in total funds and reflect the OSPB request, revised for August 2009 budget reductions, where applicable. Costs are reflected as gross amounts.

Bed Savings

Anti-recidivism efforts invest money in programs in the short term to realize long-term savings in the prison budget. In 2006, the Division of Criminal Justice was projecting that the prison population would reach 30,000 offenders by FY 2013-14.

When the anticipated bed savings from the November 1, 2008 FY 2009-10 Crime Prevention and Recidivism Reduction package were added to the August 2008 DCJ prison forecast, the growth trend was significantly altered, as shown in the chart on the following page.



Note: The rate of growth projected by Division of Criminal Justice's 2006 forecast for FY 2013-14 is extrapolated using the prior year's growth rate. The bed need including the FY 2009-10 Recidivism Reduction Package is based on the Division of Criminal Justice's August 2008 forecast and the funding increases requested by Governor Ritter on November 1, 2008.

Capital Construction Savings

In addition to operating budget savings derived from lowering DOC's caseload, the FY 2009-10 Recidivism Package prevents the need for \$336.2 million in Capital Construction Funds for expansion of the Trinidad Correctional Facility. (Note: These capital funds would have been derived from a General Fund transfer to the Capital Construction Fund). The proposed expansion of the Trinidad Correctional Facility would have added 2,061 new male beds to the DOC system.

ⁱ Data is from Colorado Department of Corrections Fiscal Year 2007 Statistical Report, pp. 47-48