

May 6, 2026

Thomas Faust, Director  
District of Columbia Department of Corrections

**Via Email**

Dear Director Faust:

Please find enclosed post-hearing budget oversight questions from the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety. **Please provide responses to these questions no later than close of business on Thursday, May 7, 2026.** If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Anaiah Mitchell, Senior Policy Advisor, at [amitchell@dccouncil.gov](mailto:amitchell@dccouncil.gov) or Eloy LaBrada, Deputy Committee Director, at [erodriguezlabrada@dccouncil.gov](mailto:erodriguezlabrada@dccouncil.gov).

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "BE Pinto". The signature is stylized and includes a horizontal flourish at the end.

Brooke Pinto  
Councilmember, Ward 2  
Chairwoman, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety  
Council of the District of Columbia

cc: Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs

***Staffing, overtime, vacancies***

1. ***[Vacancy Savings] There is a 17% planned vacancy savings rate for the agency is that correct? If so, what factors were used to determine this vacancy savings rate?***

Yes, the agency's current planned vacancy savings rate is 17%. This rate was determined based on our actual vacancy rate, which reflects current staffing levels and hiring trends.

- a. ***Based on the current actual vacancy rate, how many additional staff does the Agency have the capacity to hire?***

Based on the current vacancy savings, the Department of Corrections (DOC) can hire staff on an attrition basis. This means that for each employee who leaves DOC, we have the budgetary capacity to hire one replacement.

2. ***Please provide the total personnel budget allocation in FY27 for the OIS department.***

DOC Office of Investigative Services (OIS) includes Investigators, Prison Rape Elimination Act team, Surveillance Center and Body Worn Camera Coordinators, Across the OSI team there are currently 33 filled positions and six vacant for a total of 39 FTEs. The total cost is \$4,251,094.

3. ***During the hearing, there was discussions about recruitment but what about retention? As you know, DOC CO's currently do not have union representation which I am concerned is further contributing to the low retention at the facilities.***

Pursuant to a court order, the DOC union has been temporarily recertified, and an election is currently underway to establish the agency's permanent union representation.

- a. ***What is the most critical issue affecting retention of DOC staff?***

The most critical issue affecting retention of DOC staff is the high workload resulting from ongoing vacancies. This creates increased operational pressure, contributes to employee burnout, and impacts overall job satisfaction, making it more challenging to retain staff long-term. To address these retention challenges, DOC has worked to strengthen our recruitment and hiring to reduce vacancy driven workload and worked to enhance employee wellness and burnout prevention initiatives, including mental health resources and workload management support.

- b. ***What would be the most critical investment we could make in the FY 2027 budget to reduce attrition rates among DOC staff – in particular, correctional officers?***

The officer's union has consistently maintained and stated that a defined contribution retirement system is needed for long term staff retention. Without such a pension plan, comparable to that offered by regional agencies, staff often view their jobs as unsustainable in the long term.

***Education/Programming***

- 4. Please provide the total funding allocation for the READY center, including funding for all available programs and funding allocations for all partner agencies (i.e. DHS, DBH, DMV, DCHA, and DOES).***

<b>DOC READY Center</b>	<b>FY26 Funding</b>
Office Infrastructure Maintenance	\$200K local funds
Staffing	\$178K (Personnel)
Programming	\$600K local funds (LeadUp/Lead Out)

READY Center funding for FY 2027 in DOC’s budget is tabulated above. DOC does not have access to partner agency funding and is unable to provide information related to funding and commitments from those agencies.

- 5. [Lead Up! and Lead Out!] There is roughly \$700K provided in this budget for the Lead Up! and Lead Out! Program, despite spending approximately \$1.4M on the program in 2025. What are the implications of this large decrease and its impact on program operations?***

The reduction in LEAD Up! Lead Out! funding will result in a significant decrease in reentry programming and contractual services supporting residents inside Central Detention Facility (CDF) and Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF) and at the READY Center. These funds support a broad range of programming and reentry efforts, including workforce development classes; vocational training such as painting, plumbing, barbering, and cosmetology; cognitive behavioral therapy programs such as Thinking for a Change; industry certification training; recovery support services; physical wellness programming, including the Twinning Project with D.C. United; and arts, literacy, and enrichment opportunities.

- b. Are any other partners, like DBH planning to provide additional funding for this program?***

At this time, there are no identified alternate funding sources for these services. DOC remains responsible for funding reentry and READY Center programming under the Department’s leadership. Additionally, the DBH workforce development

program funding for FY26 decreased by more than \$700,000, further limiting available external support for these efforts.

6. **[Grants and Contracts]** *There is \$315 allocated for a contract that does not have a vendor name or number or a stated purpose. Please describe the anticipated services that are proposed to be procured through this contract ([see Common Budget Questions FL0 FY27 Attachment I, Tab: Contracts \(Acct PL1 713200C\), Line 13.](#))*

This contract supports PREA Audit services. It is contracted annually and the vendor is DRB Consulting LLC.

7. **[Wi-Fi/internet]** *I see there is a contract with OCTO for Wi-Fi capabilities is \$140K – a \$75K decrease from FY26 proposed levels. There are also no notable one-time enhancements despite spending almost \$400K on Wi-Fi in FY25. As you know, improving internet access to allow for residents’ tablets the ability to testify at Council hearings is very important. This is something the committee would like your help in standing up, if we can.*

- a. *If this wi-fi would support residents connecting to our Council hearings, are there other hurdles to allowing residents to testify once the wi-fi is up and running?*

The wi-fi currently being installed will support staff and facility operations. Staff need Wi-Fi access in the facilities so they can use digital systems for reporting, communication, and daily operations. Reliable connectivity supports safety tools, upgrades to our offender management system and quick access to policies or records, helping the facilities run efficiently and securely.

The Wi-Fi upgrades are not intended to support access for DOC residents. DOC resident tablets are already on a secure platform, which will only allow access to approved, closed-network services on their tablets. It will not provide general internet connectivity to Council hearings.

8. **[LEARNS FIS]** *The FIS states that “IEP evaluations may require up to 55 hours of specialist work.” According to data from OSSE dated October 1, 2025, a Comprehensive Psychological Evaluation, the standard baseline evaluation used to determine eligibility for special education, the maximum number of hours permitted is thirteen (13) hours. This appears to be a significant overestimation of the limit of what OSSE allows and what OSSE allows to be paid for using tax payer dollars. Can you explain the thought process here?*

The hours cited in the OSSE data apply only to a psychological evaluation. However, an IEP is an individualized assessment that may require multiple types of evaluations depending on the student's needs, including assessments by psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, or other specialists.

According to the FIS for LEARNS (page 4, footnote 17), OSSE reimbursement rates for the development of an IEP in a private school setting may total up to \$9,500, which corresponds to the maximum reimbursement level of 55 hours across all required specialists.

- 9. *The FIS allocates approximately \$600,000 annually for Grievance Management salaries and fringe during the first year, which includes the initial portal build, and every year afterwards. Considering DOC already has an internal grievance process, why are five additional new dedicated staff required, each year after the first year, to manage a digital version of an existing administrative function that the DOC is already handling?***

The FIS allocates approximately \$600,000 annually for Grievance Management salaries and fringe in the first year, which includes the initial portal build, and in each year thereafter. Although DOC already maintains an internal grievance process, the five additional dedicated staff are required to support the expanded responsibilities associated with a digital grievance system.

Digital grievance management involves ongoing technical oversight, data entry and verification, quality assurance, compliance monitoring, reporting, tracking deadlines, and ensuring timely responses within statutory and policy requirements. The new system also increases transparency and documentation expectations, which require dedicated personnel to manage effectively.

- a. *The FIS assumes a need for one new attorney to “provide legal guidance and training on system controls, privacy, data sharing, and the grievance process.” Given that the DOC already has a General Counsel’s office, which already handles compliance for the DOC, including existing grievance compliance efforts, what is the rationale for hiring a new, dedicated DOC position?***

The FIS includes the need for one new attorney to provide legal guidance and training on system controls, privacy, data sharing, and grievance process requirements. While DOC's Office of the General Counsel currently manages compliance matters, including those related to the existing grievance process, the

rationale for adding a dedicated attorney is based on the expanded legal obligations associated with a digital system.

A digital grievance platform introduces additional responsibilities such as ongoing privacy compliance, data sharing governance, system control oversight, policy development, and training requirements tied specifically to electronic records. These functions require sustained legal review and monitoring that exceed the current workload of the DOC General Counsel's office. Therefore, the FIS includes the need for an additional dedicated position to ensure continuous compliance and mitigate legal risk as the system becomes operational.

**10. *The FIS states that the DOC requires \$220,000 for “additional technology and documentation systems for IEP development and education progress tracking...” The education contractor already has the necessary technology for IEP development and tracking as required to be compliant with the IDEA. What additional technology and documentation systems are necessary to account for this additional cost?***

The cost estimate reflects the assumption that DOC would need to build and maintain its own infrastructure if DOC is to directly provide, oversee, or maintain these services. Although the contractor has the necessary systems in place, DOC would still need to contract with them to gain access to these tools and to implement the additional services. To ensure full compliance and appropriate oversight, DOC would also need:

- DOC-controlled access to the contractor's system;
- Additional hardware required for DOC staff to use, monitor, and document within the system.
- Any necessary customization, licensing, user seats, and integration to ensure DOC can independently track, document, and verify IEP development and educational progress; and,
- Supporting documentation systems to meet legal, reporting, and audit requirements.

These costs collectively account for the additional \$220,000 identified in the FIS.

**11. [LEARNS Grievance Portal] *For the online grievance management system purchased through a third-party vendor, the FIS notes that, “additional funding [to the \$1,250,000] could be required to find a vendor who could meet the deadline [of the bill].” Has the DOC spoken with grievance management system vendors? Has each of these vendors already informed the DOC that they will not be able to produce the management system by July 1, 2027, over a year and a few months from today? How long do vendors estimate this system will take to build on a non-rushed timeline?***

This timeline is based on using the competitive procurement process through OCP. DOC has not yet engaged directly with grievance management system vendors, and therefore no vendor has indicated that they would be unable to meet the deadline of July 1, 2027. Because competitive procurement has not begun, we do not yet have vendor specific estimates for development timelines.

However, industry experience suggests that a full digital grievance system—requiring customization, integration with DOC security and data systems, testing, staff training, and implementation—can take significant time to complete. A non-rushed timeline generally depends on the complexity of the required features, security standards, and interoperability needs. The FIS therefore includes a precautionary note indicating that additional funding may be necessary to secure a vendor capable of completing the system by the statutory deadline once the formal procurement process begins.

### ***Healthcare and Substance Abuse***

#### ***12. Please explain the changes in the Inmate Resident Health Services budget:***

- a. ***Overall, it appears there is \$52.8M allocated in FY27; this is the total, including the UNITY contract. If the Unity contract is roughly \$51M, what are the remaining funds in this line item being used for? How much of this funding is allocated for behavioral health services?***

Behavioral Health is included in the overall comprehensive benefits/costs for all residents. This is supported in first line of the contract. The contract has a reimbursable clause for all prescription drugs (everything from HIV medications, chronic illness medications, illicit drug therapy, etc.) and in-patient hospitalization. In-patient hospitalization occurs when inmates have to be transported for treatment at area hospitals for services that cannot be provided at the facility. This occurs several times each week. DOC always reserves and uses this funding for prescriptions and in-patient hospitalization, contractual lines 7 and 8, as DOC is responsible for all inmate prescription and in-patient hospitalization related expenses regardless of the cost. With DOC's increased population, and the number of residents requiring care, these costs have escalated and are expected to continue to rise in FY 2027. Additionally, DOC is required to upgrade the agency's eMAR (electronic Medical Administration Record) system to meet outstanding HIPAA requirements that our current system does not support. This will cost approximately \$900K in FY2027.

- 13. [Substance Abuse] How much of the proposed FY27 \$52.8 million in "Resident Health Services" is being allocated for the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program?***

The MAT program is funded mostly through the SOR grant, of which \$1,366,883.00 is utilized for the support of the contractual FTEs at Unity Healthcare and the expensive long-acting injectable forms of MAT (Brixadi, Sublocade, and Vivitrol). An additional \$153,000 from the Unity Healthcare contract from DOC is used for Methadone and Suboxone (MAT). The SOR funded staffing includes addictions medicine providers, Suboxone dispensing nurses, peer navigators, certified addictions counselors, a Substance Use Disorder specialist, and Clinic Director.

**14. [Staff health and wellness] *My understanding is that there is currently only 1 person (a wellness coordinator) in the Wellness Coordinator department, but I do not see this position listed at all in the FY27 proposed budget which is concerning given that I've heard many complaints over the past year about how low the morale inside the facilities are due to cultural shifts, burnout, and a lack of career or advancement opportunities. Is there a wellness coordinator funded in the FY27 budget? If not, why, and what are the plans to support staff without one?***

There have been no cuts to DOC positions in FY27. The Wellness Coordinator position is currently filled and funded in the proposed FY27 budget. The Department recognizes the importance of staff wellness, particularly given the demanding nature of correctional work, and remains committed to supporting employee wellbeing, morale, and resilience across the agency.

**a. *What are their current hours of operation? How often does the wellness coordinator engage with staff?***

The Wellness Coordinator's regular hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with additional on-call availability for crises or emergencies. The Wellness Coordinator engages with staff on a daily basis through direct outreach, attendance at roll calls across shifts and facilities, wellness programming, and ongoing staff support initiatives.

**b. *How does the current Wellness Coordinator track improvements in staff wellness, mental health, or morale?***

To track and assess staff wellness and morale, the Department utilizes weekly reporting and data tracking tools focused on five core areas of wellness. The Wellness Coordinator also works closely with the DOC Wellness Committee, which serves as an ongoing feedback mechanism for frontline staff. Additional efforts include staff satisfaction surveys, "Mindfulness Mondays" wellness

activities, and regular pulse checks to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement.

***15. Please provide the Committee with a copy of the RFI for the new jail annex that is expected on May 15<sup>th</sup> once it is available.***

DOC has received and reviewed the pending RFI. The Department of General Services (DGS) is in the process of finalizing the RFI. DGS has indicated they will provide the DC Council with the link once it has been released to the public.