Office of the

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

REPORT ON THE OFFENDER POPULATION FORECASTS (FY2026 TO FY2031)

To The Governor and General Assembly

Commonwealth of Virginia

Richmond, Virginia

October 15, 2025

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Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

October 15, 2025

TO: The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Chairwoman, Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Patrick A. Hope
Chairman, House Courts of Justice Committee

The Honorable Scott A. Surovell
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee

Each year, the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security is required to present revised offender population forecasts to the Governor, as well as the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, the House Courts of Justice Committee, and the Senate Courts of Justice.

To revise the forecasts, my office brought together policy makers, administrators, and technical experts from all branches of state government for a series of meetings over the course of the summer and early fall. Using a consensus approach, with input from all those who participated in the process, a forecast for each of the four offender populations was adopted.

As required by the Appropriation Act, this report is respectfully submitted for your consideration. Please contact my office should you have questions regarding any aspect of the offender forecasts.

Sincerely,

Marcus R. Anderson

Marcus R. Anderson
Secretary

Authority

This report has been prepared and submitted to fulfill the requirements of Item 377 of Chapter 725 of the 2025 Appropriations Act (see Appendix A, Legislative Directive). This provision requires the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security to produce revised six-year forecasts for four confined criminal justice populations: the state-responsible adult offender population, the local-responsible adult offender population, the state-responsible juvenile population, and the local-responsible juvenile population. Pursuant to the Appropriation Act requirements, these forecasts are presented by October 15 of each year to the Governor, as well as the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, the House Courts of Justice Committee, and the Senate Courts of Justice Committee. In addition, the Secretary must ensure that the adult state-responsible population forecast includes an estimate of the number of probation violators in the overall population who may be appropriate for punishment via alternative sanctions. This document contains the Secretary's report for 2025.

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Executive Summary

Forecasts of persons confined in state and local correctional facilities are essential for criminal justice budgeting and planning in Virginia. The forecasts are typically used to estimate operating expenses and future capital needs and to assess the impact of current and proposed criminal justice policies. The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security oversees the forecasting process and as mandated by the General Assembly (see Appendix A, Legislative Directive), presents updated forecasts annually to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, the House Courts of Justice Committee, and the Senate Courts of Justice Committee.

To produce the offender forecasts, the Secretary's Office uses a consensus forecasting process that brings together policy makers, administrators, and technical experts from many state agencies across all branches of state government. The objective is to ensure that statistical models meet high technical standards while also providing key policy makers and administrators in the criminal justice system the opportunity to provide input into the forecast. See Virginia's Offender Forecasting Process (Section I) for more about Virginia's consensus forecasting, and Forecasting Methodologies (Section II) for more about the statistical modeling.

Offender Population Forecasts

FY2026 – FY2031

Fiscal Year	Adult Local-Responsible Jail Population (FY Average)	Adult State-Responsible Offender Population (June 30)	Technical Probation Violators in the Adult State-Responsible Offender Population (June 30)*	Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Population (FY Average)	Juvenile Detention Center Population (FY Average)
FY2025 Actual Population	*15,759*	*27,089***	*1,634***	*318*	*500*
FY2026	15,942	27,180	1,646	347	486
FY2027	16,089	27,243	1,747	368	494
FY2028	16,238	27,216	1,752	351	499
FY2029	16,396	27,240	1,788	347	501
FY2030	16,538	27,249	1,801	356	503
FY2031	16,692	27,293	1,824	361	503
Average FY Change	*1.0%*	*0.1%*	*4.3%*	*2.2%*	*0.1%*

*The Technical Probation Violator forecast is a subgroup of, and not in addition to, the Adult State-Responsible Offender Forecast.
**Preliminary

For more information about each population forecast, see their relevant sections:

- Section III, Adult local-responsible jail population
- Section IV, Adult state-responsible offender population
- Section V, Juvenile state-responsible direct care population
- Section VI, Juvenile local-responsible detention center population

I. Virginia's Offender Forecasting Process

The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security oversees the annual offender forecasting process. These forecasts are essential for criminal justice budgeting and planning in the Commonwealth. They are used to estimate operating expenses and future capital needs for state prisons, local and regional jails, and juvenile correctional facilities. In addition, the forecasts provide critical information for assessing the impact of current and proposed criminal justice policies.

The Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security uses a consensus forecasting process. First implemented in Virginia in the late 1980s, consensus forecasting is an open, participative approach that brings together policy makers, administrators, and technical experts from many state agencies across all branches of state government. The objective is to ensure that statistical models meet high technical standards while also providing key policy makers and administrators the opportunity to provide input into the forecast. The process also helps promote general understanding of the forecast and the assumptions that drive it.

The process is structured through committees. The Technical Advisory Committee is composed of experts in statistical and quantitative methods from several agencies. Analysts from the relevant agencies are tasked with developing each forecast. This includes the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for the adult local-responsible jail forecast, the Department of Corrections (DOC) for the adult state-responsible offender forecast, and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) for the juvenile direct care and juvenile detention center forecasts. In each case, the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) produces a forecast as well, for comparison. Analysts from the separate agencies work independently of each other. While individual members generate the various forecasts, the Technical Advisory Committee as a whole scrutinizes each forecast model according to the highest statistical standards. Selected forecasts are recommended for consideration by the Secretary's Policy Committee.

Led by the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Policy Committee is made up of agency directors, members of the General Assembly, and top-level officials from Virginia's executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Generally, at least one prosecutor, sheriff, police chief, and jail administrator are invited to serve on the Policy Committee to represent their respective associations. The diverse backgrounds and expertise of the Policy Committee members promote in-depth discussions of the issues and trends in Virginia's criminal justice system.

The Policy Committee reviews the various forecasts recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee and considers them in light of any known outside factors that could not be accounted for in the statistical models (such as recent legislation or new alternatives to incarceration). The Policy Committee may make adjustments to the forecasts as it deems appropriate.

The forecasting process benefits from rigorous quantitative analysis by the Technical Advisory Committee and high-level review by the Policy Committee. Through the consensus process, a separate forecast is produced for each of the four major correctional populations.

II. Forecasting Methodologies

Analysts on the Secretary's Technical Advisory Committee use two types of methodologies to develop offender forecasts: time series modeling and computer simulation modeling.

Time series modeling is a set of statistical techniques that apply specifically to the analysis of data points that occur over time. Time series forecasting assumes that there is a pattern in the historical values that can be identified. The goal is to define the pattern, understand the short-term and long-term trends, and pinpoint any seasonal fluctuations. Significant policy changes made in past years can be included in the statistical model and the impacts quantified. Time series models then use the pattern, trend, and seasonal variation identified in the historical data to project future values. Examples of time series forecasting techniques include exponential smoothing and Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) modeling. Models developed from the same data can differ based on the choice of criterion to optimize, the external factors included (factors that may be correlated with population changes), how many years of historical data are included in the analysis, etc.

When developing time series models, analysts on the Committee withhold the most recent twelve months of data, for testing. Individual models are used to predict those twelve months, and their degree of success is a major factor in choosing between models. Models are compared across a variety of accuracy statistics so that the model with the best set of statistical properties can be selected. Once a model is selected, it is re-run using all of the historical data to produce a forecast. Only forecasts produced from models meeting the Technical Advisory Committee's strict standards are presented to the Secretary's Policy Committee.

DOC and DJJ use computer simulation modeling to forecast the adult state-responsible inmate population and the juvenile direct care and detention center populations, respectively. Computer simulation models are designed to mimic the flow of offenders through a system over the forecast horizon. Both DOC and DJJ use Simul8 forecasting software for this purpose. Agency analysts can structure a simulation model to accurately portray their particular system. Key inputs required to accurately simulate the system are the number of people entering the system (admissions), and the number of people exiting the system (releases). The agencies have the necessary information (such as sentence length) to estimate releases. To estimate admissions, the agencies use time series models that are developed by the Technical Advisory Committee and approved by the Policy Committee.

The use of simulation forecasting requires making certain assumptions, such as:

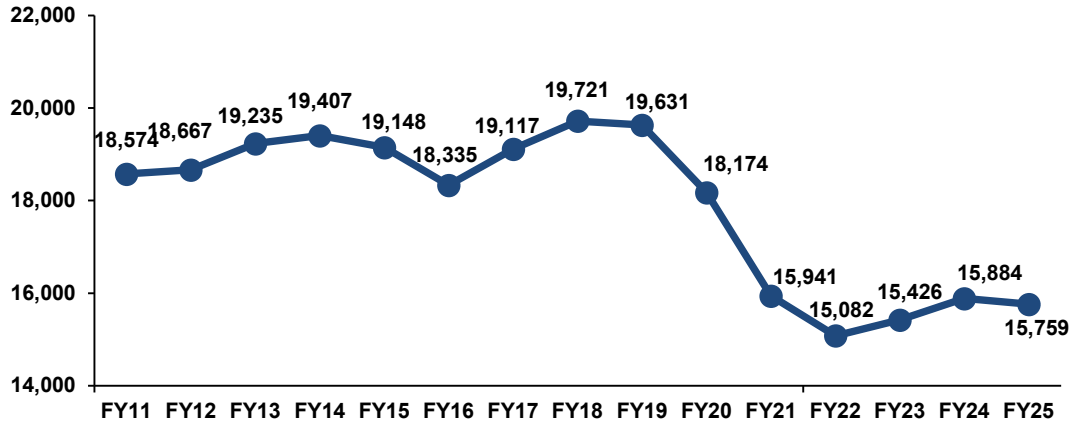
- the number of future commitments/admissions,
- the categories (types) of future commitments/admissions,
- the sentence lengths of future commitments/admissions,
- the rate at which future commitments/admissions will earn available sentence credits,
- the length of time individuals in the existing population will serve before release, and
- how confined individuals will be released in the future, if more than one release/exit type is possible (e.g., court order, discretionary parole, etc.).

III. Adult Local-Responsible Jail Population

The adult local-responsible jail population is defined as the number of persons confined in local and regional jails across the Commonwealth, excluding state and federal inmates and ordinance violators. Because jail populations fluctuate daily (with higher numbers on weekends) and seasonally (with peaks during late summer and early fall and lows during the winter months), the average daily population is used for reporting and forecasting purposes.

The local-responsible jail population has fluctuated over the last decade (Figure 1). Between FY2010 and 2014, the local-responsible jail population increased 4.5%, to 19,407 individuals. The population then decreased 5.5% between FY2014 and 2016, then reversed again to increase 7.6% by 2018. The population dropped 0.5% in FY2019, then dropped 7.4% in 2020 and 12.3% in 2021, due to steps taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Figure 1
Local-Responsible Jail Population, Fiscal Year Average Daily Population, FY2011-FY2024



It dropped another 5.4% in FY2022, before rising 2.3% in 2023 and 3.0% in 2024. In FY2025 it dropped 0.8%.

Accuracy of the Forecast Adopted in 2024

The table in Figure 2 compares the monthly local-responsible jail population to the forecast approved in October 2024. The forecast averaged 0.1% above the actual population for FY 2025.

Figure 2
Accuracy of the Local-Responsible Jail Population Forecast Adopted in October 2024

	Actual	Projected	Difference	Percent Error
FY2025 Average Population	15,759	15,770	11	0.1%

The local-responsible jail population is comprised of four subpopulations: pretrial defendants, sentenced offenders with pending charges remaining, local-responsible (LR) felons, and sentenced misdemeanants. All four subpopulations showed substantial drops after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 3 for June population). The greatest change was for sentenced misdemeanants, which dropped 70.2% between June 2019 and June 2020. The largest subpopulation, pretrial defendants, dropped 16.1% during that period. All subpopulations increased between June 2020 and June 2021 but then dropped again by June 2022. Between June 2022 and June 2023, the total local-responsible jail population increased 2.1%, driven mainly by

an increase in the pretrial population. The total local-responsible jail population increased 0.2% between June 2023 and June 2024, and 1.2% between June 2024 and June 2025, again driven mainly by the increase in the pretrial population.

Figure 3
Average Daily Population (ADP), Local-Responsible Jail Subpopulations, June 2019–June 2025

	Average Daily Pop., Local-Responsible Jail Subpopulations				
Month	Pretrial	Pending Charges	LR Felons	Misdemeanants	Total
June 2019	11,590	3,686	2,835	1,554	19,666
June 2020	9,723	2,679	1,323	463	14,188
June 2021	10,917	2,997	1,652	857	16,422
June 2022	10,357	2,785	1,500	827	15,469
June 2023	10,935	2,723	1,303	831	15,793
June 2024	11,048	2,696	1,218	856	15,818
June 2025	11,286	2,611	1,212	895	16,003
June 2024 to 2025	***2.2%***	***-3.2%***	***-0.5%***	***4.5%***	***1.2%***

Factors Affecting the Population

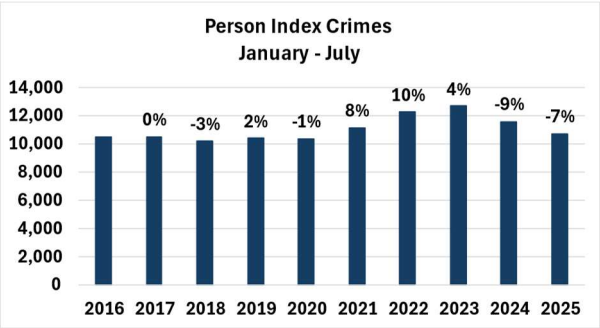
The single greatest factor impacting the local-responsible jail population in this decade has been the COVID-19 pandemic and state and local policies implemented to reduce its spread. The effect of these policies has faded, but they resulted in a shifting of the average population level from approximately 19,000-20,000 to roughly 15,000-16,000. The population will experience upward and downward changes going forward as it has in the past, but it is starting from a lower level.

Typically, the local-responsible jail population is driven largely by crime and arrest trends. Legislative changes, including the decriminalization of possession of marijuana (effective July 1, 2020), subsequent legalization (effective July 1, 2021), the increase in the felony threshold for larceny offenses (effective July 1, 2020), and the elimination of a felony charge for the third conviction of petit larceny (effective July 1, 2021) may have led to a reduction in arrests, particularly felony larceny arrests, thereby reducing the growth in this population.

Figure 4 presents monthly crime trends for the first seven months of calendar years 2016-2025 (preliminary). (Data for Figures 4, 5, and 6 are from the Virginia Crime Repository, va.beyond2020.com.) For person index crimes (murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault), the number of crimes reported in the first seven months of the year stayed relatively level for 2016-2020, either increasing or decreasing between 0% and 3% each year. Starting in 2021, person crimes began increasing steadily; 8% in 2021, 10% in 2022, and 4% in 2023. That trend then reversed, dropping 9% in 2024 and 7% in 2025 (preliminary). The number of reported person crimes for January-July 2025 is 2% over the same period for 2016.

Property index crimes (burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) were already dropping consistently in the years before the pandemic and then dropped more significantly in the first seven months of 2020 and 2021. Overall, reported property crimes dropped 22% between the first seven months of 2016 and the same period for 2021. They increased sharply (24%) in 2022, almost returning to the 2017 level. After remaining flat in the first seven months of 2023, reported property crimes dropped 3% in 2024 and 14% in 2025 (preliminary). The number of reported property crimes in the first seven months of 2025 is 1% lower than the same period of 2020.

Figure 4
Crimes Reported to Law Enforcement in Jan-Jul CY2016 – CY2025 (Preliminary)



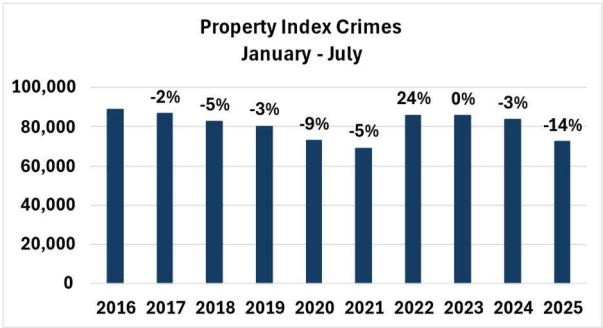
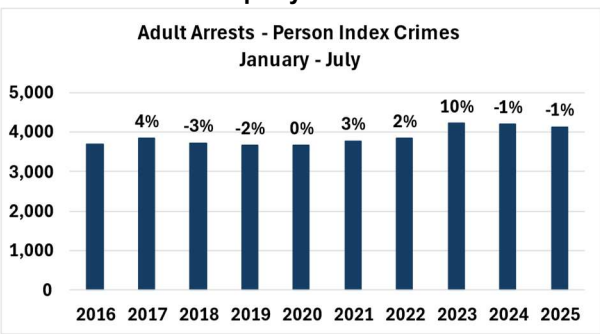


Figure 5 presents similar data on adult arrests. After rising in 2017 and dropping in 2018 and 2019, the number of adult arrests for person index offenses in the first seven months of 2020 was less than 1% below the same period of 2016. They then increased 15% between 2020 and 2023, before dropping 1% in both 2024 and 2025 (preliminary). Adult arrests for property index crimes dropped substantially in the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, with arrests for the first seven months of 2021 being 38% below the same period of 2016. They then increased 48% between 2021 and 2024, before dropping 13% for that period in 2025 (preliminary).

Figure 5
Adult Violent and Property Arrests in Jan-Jul CY2016-CY2025 (Preliminary)



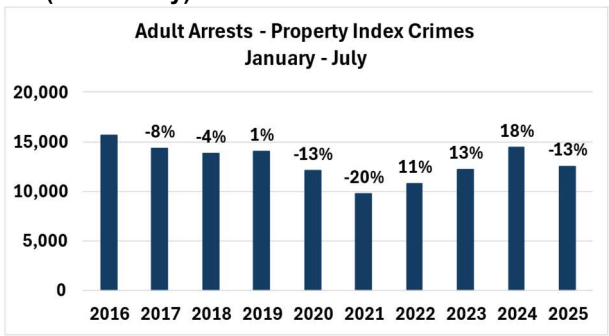
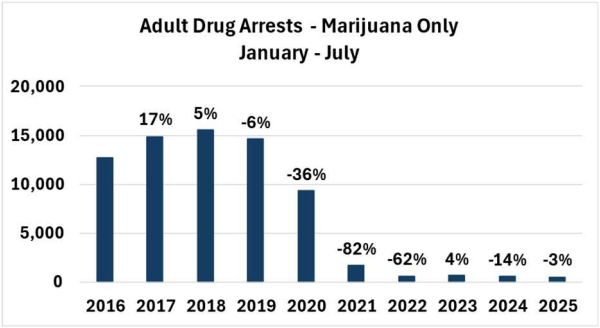
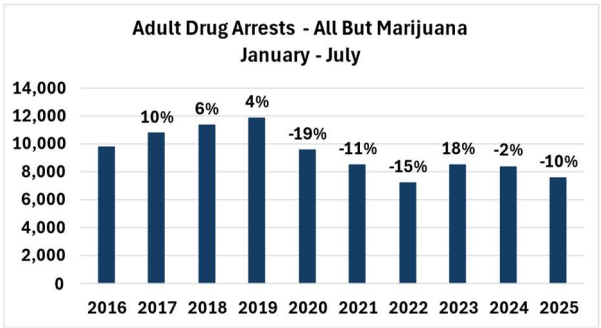


Figure 6 compares adult arrests for marijuana charges with arrests for all other drugs. Marijuana arrests dropped 89% between January-July 2018 and the same period of 2021, following legalization of possession of up to one ounce. Arrests for other drugs dropped 39% between January-July 2019 and the same period of 2022, then increased 18% in 2023, before dropping 2% in 2024 and 10% in 2025 (preliminary).

Figure 6
Adult Drug Arrests in Jan-Jul CY2019-CY2024 (Preliminary)



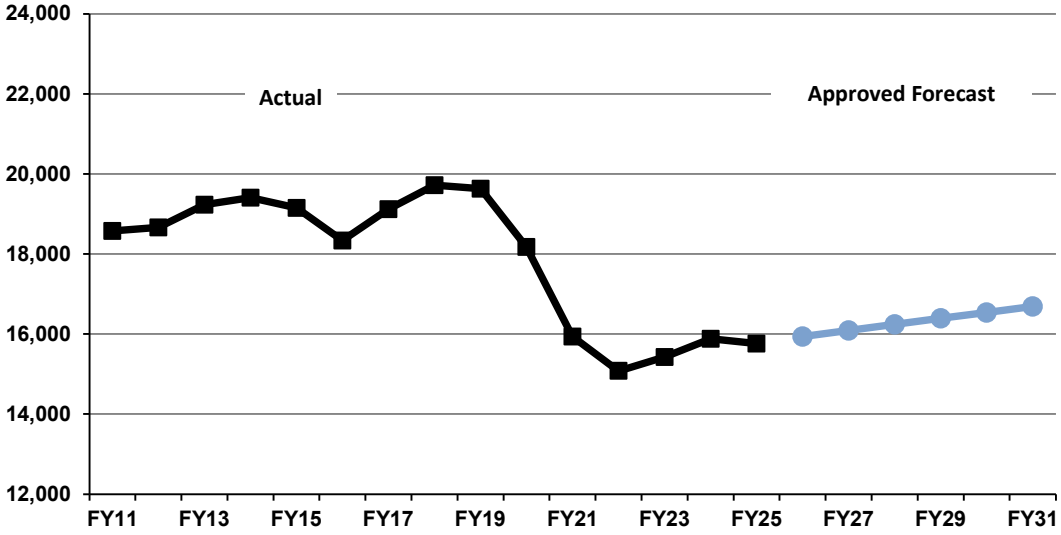


Forecast of the Local-Responsible Jail Population

Forecasts of the local-responsible jail population were produced by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB). Both agencies used time series techniques to forecast this population (time series forecasting techniques are described in the Forecasting Methodologies section of this report). Both models fit the historical data reasonably well as determined by the Technical Advisory Committee, which recommended an average of the two models. Averaging time series models can improve accuracy. Upon review, the Policy Committee approved this recommendation.

The FY2026-2031 local-responsible jail population forecast is shown in Figure 7. The fiscal year average population is projected to increase 1.2% in FY2026, 0.9% in FY2027 and FY2028, 1% in FY2029, and then 0.9% again in FY2030 and FY2031. This results in a projected average daily local-responsible jail population of 15,942 in FY2026, rising to 16,692 in FY2031.

Figure 7
Approved Local-Responsible Jail Population Forecast, Fiscal Year Average Daily Population, FY2026-FY2031



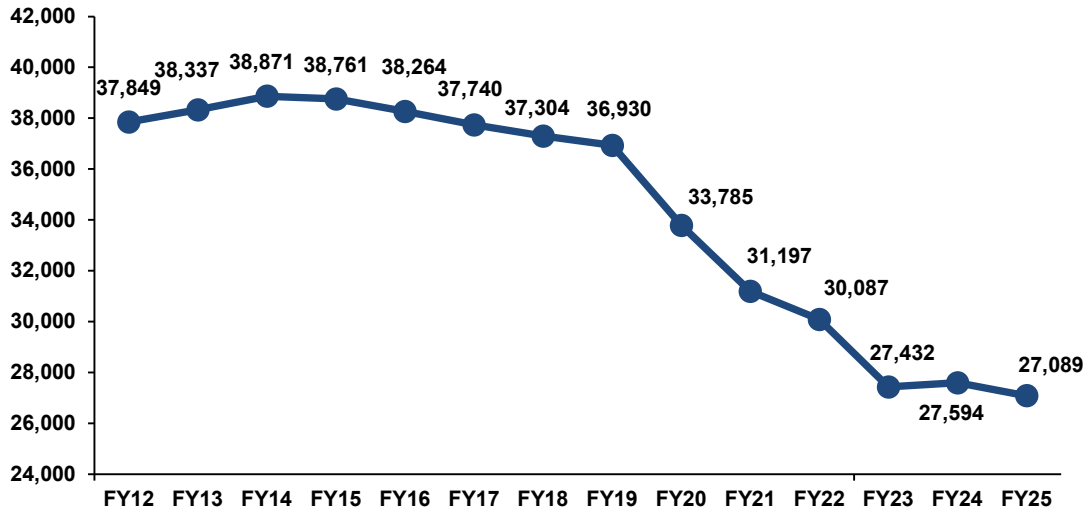
Fiscal Year	Historical	Forecast	Change	Percent Change
FY2019	19,631			
FY2020	18,174		-1,457	-7.4%
FY2021	15,941		-2,233	-12.3%
FY2022	15,082		-859	-5.4%
FY2023	15,426		344	2.3%
FY2024	15,884		458	3.0%
FY2025	15,759			-0.8%
FY2026		15,942	183	1.2%
FY2027		16,089	147	0.9%
FY2028		16,238	149	0.9%
FY2029		16,396	158	1.0%
FY2030		16,538	142	0.9%
FY2031		16,692	154	0.9%

IV. Adult State-Responsible Inmate Population

The largest of the forecasted populations, the adult state-responsible inmate population includes inmates incarcerated in state prisons as well as state-responsible inmates housed in local and regional jails around the Commonwealth. For forecasting purposes, state-responsibility begins on the day an inmate receives a state sentence (i.e., a sentence of one year or more for a felony offense). If the inmate has multiple court cases, state-responsibility starts on the most recent sentencing date that occurs prior to the inmate's classification by the Department of Corrections (DOC). To calculate the total number of state-responsible inmates, two data sources are used. The first source is the DOC Facility Population Summary Report for the last day of each month. The second source is the Local Inmate Data System (LIDS-CORIS) maintained by the State Compensation Board (SCB). The LIDS-CORIS system contains data on all individuals held in jails and the reason for the confinement. This information is used to determine the number of state inmates in jail on the last day of each month. The LIDS-CORIS system is complex, as inmates in jails can proceed through many statuses over time. Thus, for individuals held in the jails, it is not just a matter of reporting head count figures but also determining the legal status of the inmate on the last day of the month. This process can be complicated as inmates may have multiple legal actions occurring, and court records need to be received and interpreted to determine the individual's status. Due to the dynamic nature of this jail data, it takes some time for it to stabilize. Based on a review by the Technical Advisory Committee, this data may take three to five months to mature. Thus, the most recent population figures are considered preliminary.

Beginning in January 2012, the state-responsible inmate population grew from 37,608 to 39,171 in October 2014. However, the population began to gradually decline thereafter, reaching 36,535 in February 2020. Between February 2020 and June 2023, the state-responsible population decreased by more than 9,000 inmates. This decline was due to a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Enhanced Earned Sentence Credits (ESC) implemented on July 1, 2022, and applied retroactively. According to preliminary figures, the number of state-responsible inmates was 27,089 as of June 30, 2025 (Figure 8).

Figure 8
State-Responsible Inmate Population, June 30 Population, FY2012-FY2025



Accuracy of the Forecast Adopted in 2024

In the fall of 2024, the Policy Committee adopted a forecast calling for a 0.6% increase in the population by the end of FY2025 followed by an average annual increase of 0.4% through the end of FY2030. However, the actual state-responsible inmate population did not increase in FY2025 to the extent anticipated by the forecast. By June 30, 2025, the actual population (based on preliminary figures) was 658 inmates lower than projected (Figure 9).

Figure 9
Accuracy of the State-Responsible Inmate Population Forecast Adopted in October 2024

	Actual (preliminary)	Projected	Difference	Percent Error
6/30/2025 End of Month Population	27,089	27,747	-658	-2.4%

Factors Affecting the Population

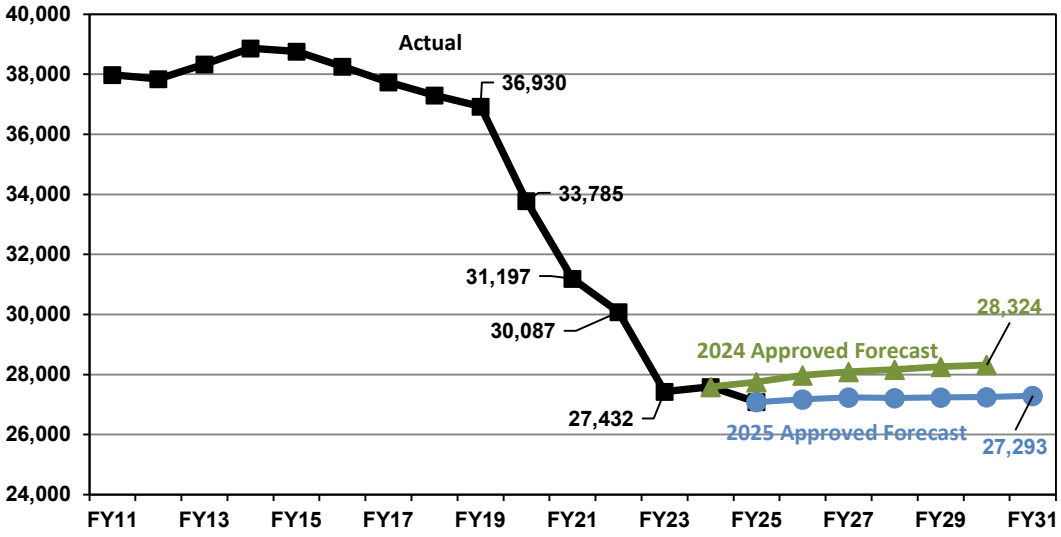
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, several factors affected the state-responsible inmate population. These included: the number and types of felony crimes reported to law enforcement, the number and types of arrests for felony offenses, charging practices of local Commonwealth's attorneys, the number of offenders convicted in Virginia's circuit courts, and the sentencing practices of circuit court judges.

Since March 2020, the state-responsible population has been influenced by a combination of factors: 1) the COVID-19 pandemic (court closures, COVID Early Release Authorization); 2) the implementation of Enhanced Earned Sentence Credits (EESC) effective July 1, 2022 and applied retroactively; 3) the revision of the state's marijuana laws including legalization of marijuana possession (HB2312/SB1406, 2021 General Assembly, Special Session I); 4) the increase in the felony larceny threshold in 2018 and 2020, as well the repeal of the Class 6 felony for a third or subsequent conviction for petit larceny (HB 2290, 2021 General Assembly, Special Session I); 5) the caps on sentences for technical probation violations (HB2038, 2021 General Assembly, Special Session I); and 6) changes to how EESC are applied based on language changes in the Budget Bill effective July 1, 2024 and applied retroactively. The collective impact of these changes is difficult to quantify precisely, particularly if criminal justice decision-makers begin to adjust their practices in response to the legislation.

Forecast of the State-Responsible Inmate Population

The Secretary's Offender Forecasting Policy Committee adopted a state-responsible inmate forecast that calls for an average annual increase in the population through the end of FY2031 of 0.1% per year (Figure 10).

Figure 10
Approved State-Responsible Inmate Population Forecast, June 30 Population, FY2026-FY2031



Fiscal Year	Historical	Approved Forecast	Change	Percent Change
FY2011	37,983			
FY2012	37,849		-134	-0.4%
FY2013	38,337		488	1.3%
FY2014	38,871		534	1.4%
FY2015	38,761		-110	-0.3%
FY2016	38,264		-497	-1.3%
FY2017	37,740		-524	-1.4%
FY2018	37,304		-436	-1.2%
FY2019	36,930		-374	-1.0%
FY2020	33,785		-3,145	-8.5%
FY2021	31,197		-2,588	-7.7%
FY2022	30,087		-1,110	-3.6%
FY2023	27,432		-2,655	-8.8%
FY2024	27,594		162	0.6%
FY2025	27,089		-505	-1.8%
FY2026		27,180	91	0.3%
FY2027		27,243	63	0.2%
FY2028		27,216	-27	-0.1%
FY2029		27,240	24	0.1%
FY2030		27,249	9	0.0%
FY2031		27,293	44	0.2%

The state-responsible inmate forecast is disaggregated by gender below (Figure 11).

Figure 11
State-Responsible Inmate Forecast by Gender
(for June 30 of each year)

Year	Males	Change
FY26	25,125	0.2%
FY27	25,106	-0.1%
FY28	25,057	-0.2%
FY29	25,080	0.1%
FY30	25,042	-0.2%
FY31	25,078	0.1%

Year	Females	Change
FY26	2,055	4.6%
FY27	2,137	4.0%
FY28	2,159	1.0%
FY29	2,160	0.0%
FY30	2,207	2.2%
FY31	2,215	0.4%

As required (see Appendix A, Legislative Directive), the forecast has been disaggregated to identify the number of probation violators within the overall population who may be appropriate for punishment via alternative sanctions. By the end of FY2031, it is projected that the state-responsible population will include 1,824 technical probation violators (Figure 12). Technical violators are supervisees who violated the rules of probation but have not been convicted of a new crime. However, this forecast should be considered a maximum, as the DOC will continue to analyze this subpopulation**.** As the criminal history repository is updated with new conviction information, the proportion of violators identified as technical violators (i.e., those with no new convictions) will decrease.

Based on a previous study, DOC has estimated that 53% of technical violators with a state-responsible sentence may be suitable for alternative sanctions such as its Community Corrections Alternative Program. DOC concluded that approximately 47% of technical violators entering DOC are likely not good candidates for such alternatives due to convictions for violent offenses (22%), mental health issues (15%), or medical conditions (10%).

Figure 12
Technical Probation Violator Population Forecast
The Technical Probation Violator forecast is a subgroup of, and not in addition to, the State-Responsible Inmate Forecast.

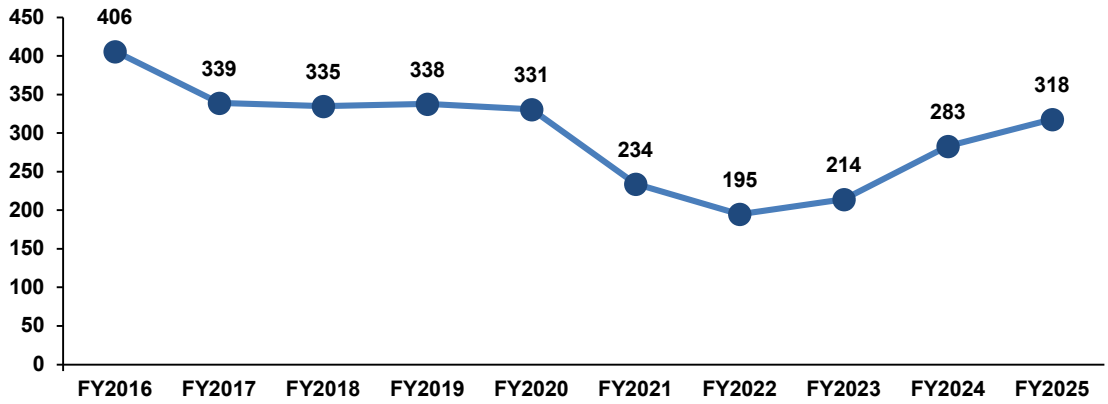
Year	Forecast
FY26	1,646
FY27	1,747
FY28	1,752
FY29	1,788
FY30	1,801
FY31	1,824

V. Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Population

Juvenile state-responsible offenders are committed by a court to Virginia's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). They are housed in juvenile correctional facilities around the state, or they are placed in re-entry, community placement, or other programs; collectively, these make up DJJ's correctional center/direct care population. Virginia's juvenile justice system differs substantially from the adult system. While Virginia has moved to a more determinate sentencing system for its adult offenders, dispositions involving commitment in the juvenile justice system remain largely indeterminate. In FY2025, 70.6% of commitment orders to DJJ were for an indeterminate period of confinement.[1] This means that DJJ, rather than a judge, determines the length of the juvenile's commitment, which is governed by guidelines approved by the Board of Juvenile Justice. The courts commit a smaller percentage of juvenile offenders to DJJ with a determinate, or fixed length, sentence; a juvenile given a determinate commitment may be reviewed by the judge at a later date and may be released at the judge's discretion prior to serving the entire term. In Virginia, juveniles tried and convicted as adults in circuit court may also be committed to DJJ, at the judge's discretion.

The number of juveniles in the correctional center/direct care population has declined overall since FY2000. Statutory changes, use of validated risk assessment instruments, and continued decline in the number of juvenile intake cases at Court Services Units have contributed to the long-term downward trend. Between FY2017 and FY2019, the population began to level off, with the average population ranging from 335 to 339 during these years (Figure 13). In FY2021, the population averaged 234 juveniles, a drop likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and state and local response measures. In FY2022, the decline in the correctional center/direct care population continued, reaching an average of 195 juveniles. However, in FY2023, the population increased for the first time since FY2019, reaching an average of 214 juveniles. This increase is likely due to the population returning to pre-pandemic levels and the change in the length-of-stay (LOS) guidelines that went into effect on March 1, 2023. This increase continued with the population reaching an average of 283 juveniles in FY2024 and 318 juveniles in FY2025.

Figure 13
Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Population, Fiscal Year Average Daily Population, FY2016-FY2025



[1] An individual juvenile may be admitted to direct care with more than one commitment order. In FY2025, 67.1% of juveniles admitted to direct care had indeterminate commitments only (this excludes any juveniles that came in with both indeterminate and determinate sentences or with both indeterminate and blended sentences; it is strictly juveniles with only indeterminate commitment orders).

Accuracy of the Forecast Adopted in 2024

The juvenile correctional center/direct care population projection adopted in 2024 was lower than the actual population throughout FY2025 (Figure 14).

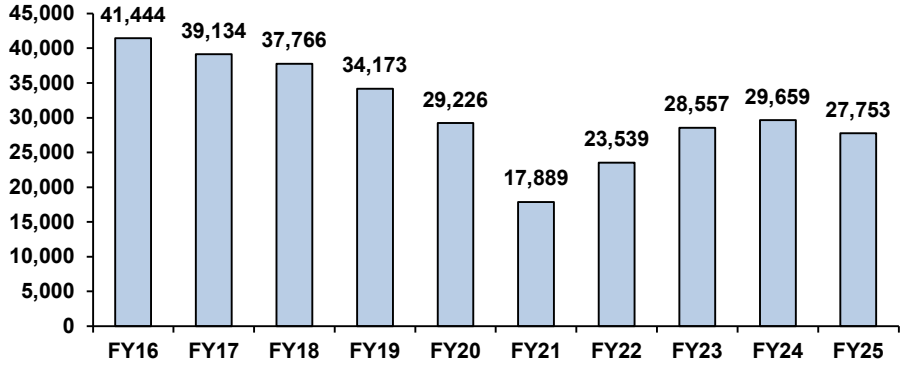
Figure 14
Accuracy of the Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Population Forecast Adopted in October 2024

	Actual	Projected	Difference	Percent Error
FY2025 Average Population	318	322	4	1.3%

Factors Affecting the Population

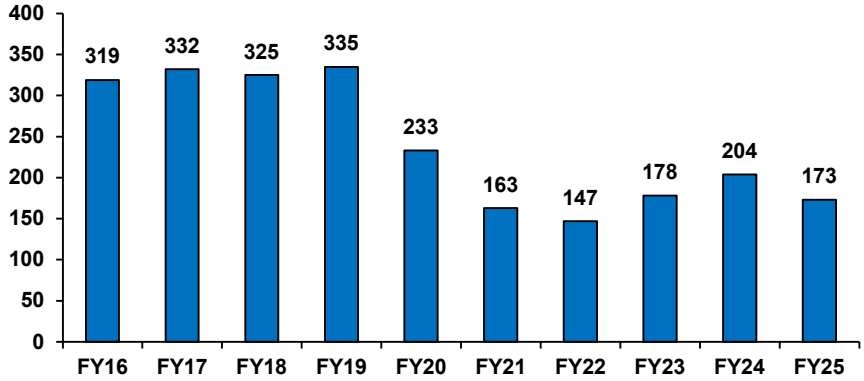
There has been a long-term downward trend in the number of juveniles in the state's correctional center/direct care population. As noted above, statutory changes, use of validated risk assessment instruments, and a significant decline in the number of juvenile intake cases at Court Services Units are among the factors contributing to the smaller population. While the number of juvenile intake cases at Court Services Units (the point of entry into the juvenile justice system) has declined, the percentage decrease in intakes in FY2021 was much larger than in any other year in the past decade (Figure 15). In FY2021, juvenile intake cases fell by 38.8%. However, in FY2022, juvenile intake cases increased by 31.6%. This increasing trend continued in FY2023 with the juvenile intake cases increasing by 21.3%. Another slight increase of 3.9% continued in FY2024. In FY2025, the juvenile intake cases decreased by 6.4%.

Figure 15
Juvenile Intake Cases at Court Services Units



The number of admissions to the correctional center/direct care population decreased by 15.2% in FY2025 compared to an increase of 14.6% in FY2024 and an increase of 21.1% in FY2023, which was the first time it had increased since FY2019 (Figure 16). The extent to which the decision-making of juvenile court judges and other stakeholders contributed to the increase in FY2023 and FY2024 is not definitively known. However, this increase in admissions is the primary driver to the rising population in both FY2023 and FY2024.

Figure 16
Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Admissions



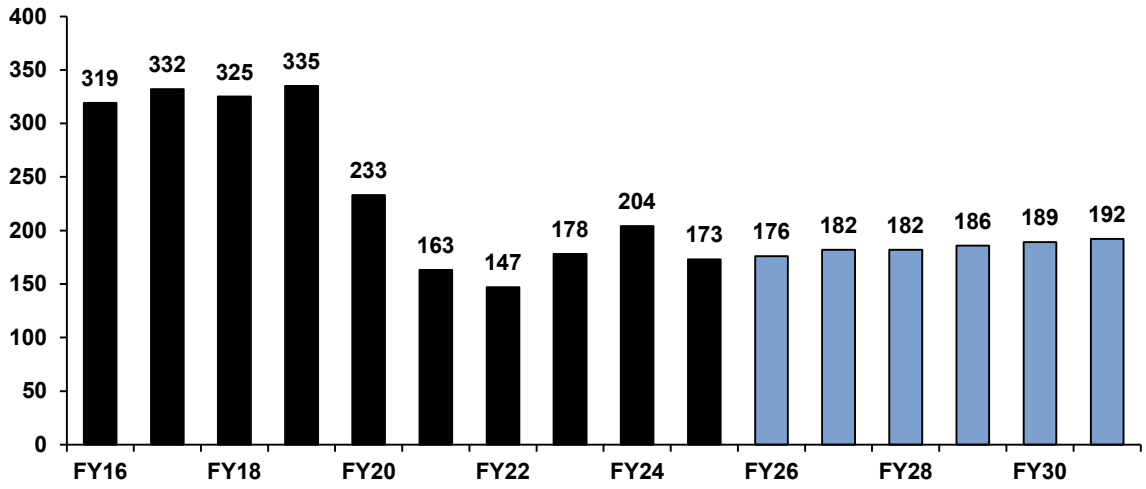
While the number of admissions dropped significantly during the pandemic, juveniles with a determinate commitment set by the court accounted for a slightly larger share of admissions and these juveniles stay longer, on average, than other juveniles.

New Admissions Forecast

The admission forecast is one of the key inputs into DJJ's simulation model. Given the long-term downward trend in juvenile admissions, statistical models based on historical data are not always useful tools in projecting future admissions because the models may project the continuation of the downward trend such that it is not a realistic assumption for future admissions to DJJ. As in previous years, the Policy Committee concluded that the decrease in admissions will not continue long-term. In past years, the Policy Committee elected not to use the statistical forecast of juvenile admissions and instead set a level admission forecast equal to the number of actual admissions during the most recent fiscal year(s). In other years, the Policy Committee utilized the statistical projection for the first year(s) of the forecast horizon and then assumed a flat admission forecast for the remaining years of the forecast period. Last year, the Policy Committee decided to use an average of DJJ's and DPB's statistical models as the official admissions forecast.

For this year's forecast, the Policy Committee approved DPB's model as the official forecast for FY2026 through FY2031. DPB's model was an average of two models where both used time series forecasting techniques as described in the Forecasting Methodologies section of this report (Figure 17). Under this approved forecast, the admissions are expected to increase slightly from 173 actual admissions in FY2025 to 176 admissions in FY2026, and this increase is expected to continue with 192 admissions in FY2031.

Figure 17
Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Admissions Forecast



Assumptions for the Department of Juvenile Justice's Simulation Model

DJJ utilizes a computer simulation model to develop its forecast of the juvenile correctional center/direct care population. A description of simulation modeling can be found in the Forecasting Methodologies section of this report. Use of simulation forecasting requires several assumptions regarding commitments and releases. The following are the important assumptions incorporated into DJJ's simulation model:

- The number of future admissions will reflect the admissions forecast approved by the Policy Committee (see above);
- Future admissions will have the same characteristics (e.g., offenses, prior record adjudications, treatment assignment, institutional offenses, etc.) as admissions in FY2023- FY2025;
- Juveniles given a determinate commitment or blended sentence will comprise the same percentage of admissions as they did during FY2023, FY2024 and FY2025 (three-year average); and
- Juveniles with indeterminate commitments will be assigned length-of-stay categories according to DJJ's new length-of-stay guidelines that went into effect March 1, 2023; based on an average of FY2023, FY2024 and FY2025 admissions characteristics, projected future admissions will be assigned to one of the new length-of-stay categories.

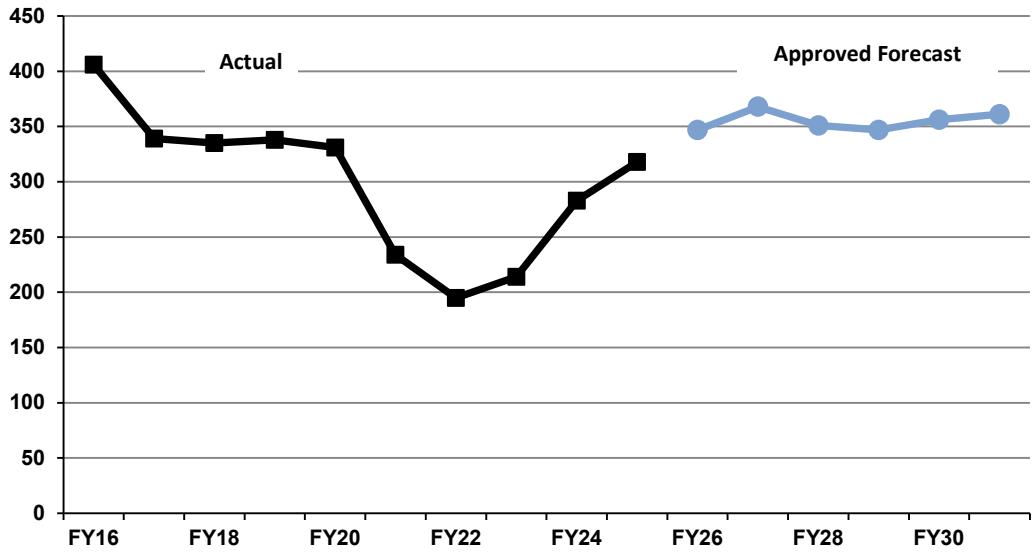
Forecast of the Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Population

After reviewing the juvenile correctional center/direct care population's long-term trend and the most recent figures, the Policy Committee approved the use of DJJ's computer simulation model, programmed with the best available data, to generate a forecast for this population.

The correctional center/direct care population forecast generated by DJJ's simulation model is shown in Figure 18. Given the slight shift towards determinate commitments and longer lengths-

of-stays, DJJ's simulation model projects growth in the population for the first two years beginning in FY2026 before a slight decrease through FY2029 and then slightly increasing again through FY2031. The approved forecast projects an increase in FY2026 when the population is expected to reach an average of 347 juveniles. By FY2031, the correctional center/direct care population is expected to reach an average of 361 juveniles (Figure 18).

Figure 18
Approved Juvenile Correctional Center/Direct Care Population Forecast, Fiscal Year Average Population FY2026-FY2031



Fiscal Year	Historical	Forecast	Change	Percent Change
2016	406			
2017	339		-67	-16.5%
2018	335		-4	-1.2%
2019	338		3	0.9%
2020	331		-7	-2.1%
2021	234		-97	-29.3%
2022	195		-39	-16.7%
2023	214		19	9.7%
2024	283		69	32.2%
2025	318		35	12.4%
2026		347	29	9.1%
2027		368	21	6.1%
2028		351	-17	-4.6%
2029		347	-4	-1.1%
2030		356	9	2.6%
2031		361	5	1.4%

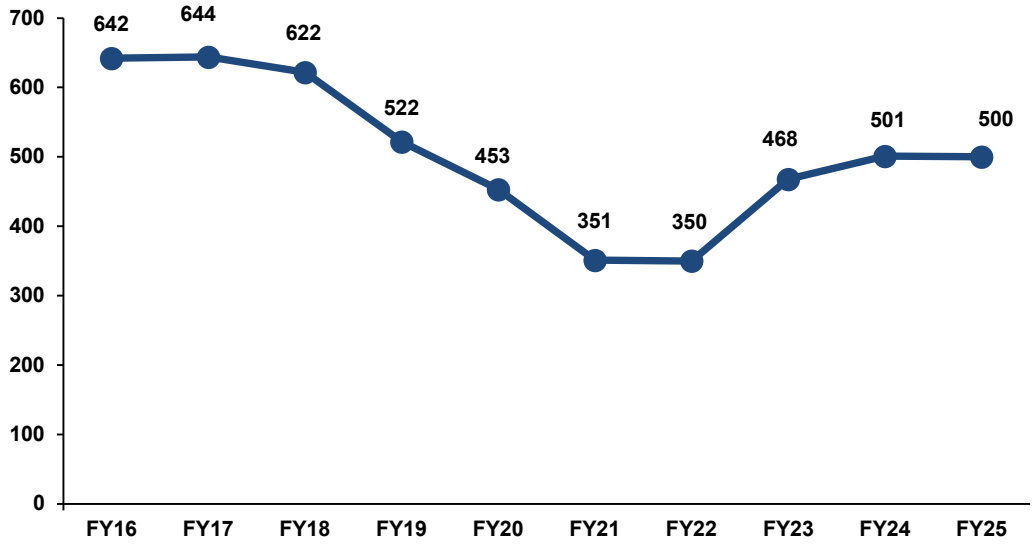
Historical and forecast populations are rounded numbers. The change and percent change were calculated based on the raw data.

VI. Juvenile Detention Center Population

Local governments or multi-jurisdictional commissions operate secure juvenile detention centers (JDCs) throughout the Commonwealth. The Board of Juvenile Justice promulgates regulations, and the Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice is responsible for the certification of these facilities. A judge may order a juvenile to be held in pre-dispositional detention pending adjudication, disposition, or placement. To be eligible for pre-dispositional detention, there must be probable cause establishing that the juvenile committed an offense that would be a felony or a Class 1 misdemeanor offense if committed by an adult, violated the terms of probation or parole for such offense, or knowingly and intentionally possessed or transported a firearm. To be eligible for post-dispositional detention, the juvenile must be 14 years or older and have been found to have committed a non-violent juvenile felony or Class 1 or Class 2 misdemeanor offense. A judge may order an adjudicated juvenile to be held in post-dispositional detention up to 30 days or, if the juvenile detention center operates a post-dispositional detention program, up to 6 months. Historically, most of the JDC population has been comprised of juveniles in pre-dispositional status (pending adjudication, disposition, or placement).

The detention center population declined from an average of 642 juveniles in FY2016 to an average of 522 juveniles in FY2019 (Figure 19). Lower numbers of intakes at Court Services Units and procedures to reduce detention of low-risk juveniles have been important factors in the downward trend. While the overall average population was 453 juveniles in FY2020 and 351 juveniles in FY2021, the monthly population figures decreased significantly between February and June 2020 (from 498 to 345 juveniles). In FY2022, the overall average population was 350 juveniles. However, the overall average population for FY2023 increased to 468 juveniles which is the first time the population increased since FY2017. This increase continued in FY2024 with an average of 501 juveniles. The population remained relatively flat in FY2025 with an average of 500 juveniles.

Figure 19
Juvenile Detention Center Population, Fiscal Year Average Population, FY2016-FY2025



Accuracy of the Forecast Adopted in 2024

The juvenile detention center population forecast adopted in 2024 was lower than the actual population in FY2025. On average for the year, the forecast was 2 juveniles (or 0.4%) lower than the actual population (Figure 20).

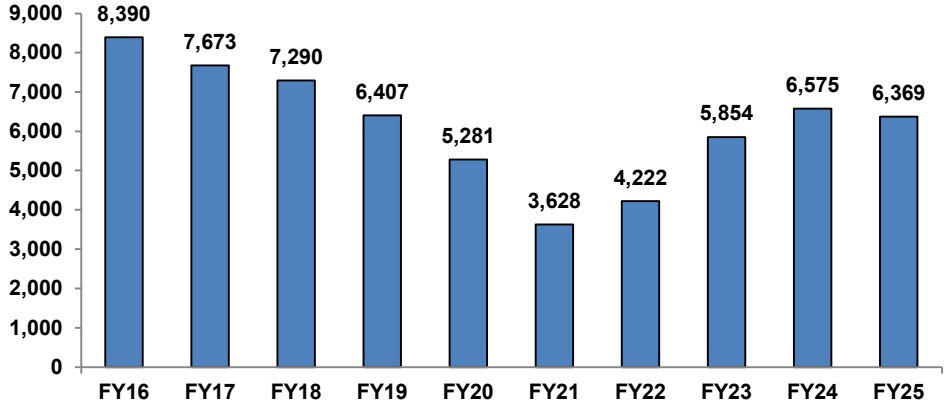
Figure 20
Accuracy of the Juvenile Detention Center Forecast Adopted in October 2024

	Actual	Projected	Difference	Percent Error
FY2025 Average Population	500	498	-2	-0.4%

Factors Affecting the Population

Many of the same factors that drive the correctional center/direct care population, including juvenile intake cases at Court Services Units, also impact the detention center population. As described in the previous chapter, the number of juvenile intake cases at the state's court services units have declined significantly since FY2016. Reflecting this downward trend in intakes, detention center admissions (the first admission of a continuous detention stay, excluding transfers[2]) has declined, particularly after FY2016 (Figure 21). Detainments rose by 16.4% in FY2022, the first increase in the last decade. This increasing trend continued into the next fiscal year with detainments rising by 38.7% in FY2023. In FY2024, detainments continued rising and rose by 12.3%. This growth brought the population back to pre-pandemic levels. Detainments decreased slightly in FY2025 with a decrease of 3.1%.

Figure 21
Juvenile Detention Center Admissions – Distinct Detainments (excluding Transfers)



New Detention Center Detainments Forecast

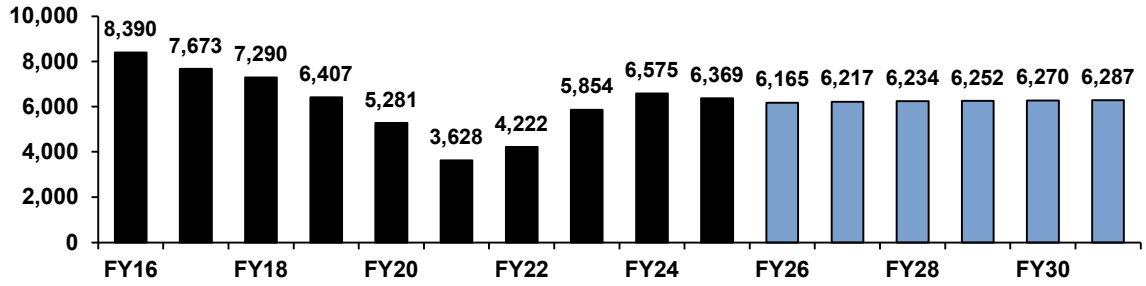
The detainments forecast is one of the key inputs into DJJ's new detention center simulation model. DJJ introduced this simulation model for the first time last year, and this is the first year where detainments were included in the forecasting process. Unlike what has been seen in previous years with the juvenile correctional center/direct care admissions forecast, statistical

[2] A new detainment is not counted if a juvenile is transferred to another JDC or has a change in dispositional status before being released. An individual juvenile may have more than one detainment in a fiscal year.

models based on historical data are useful tools in projecting future detainments because the monthly data for this population is not as small and the models may project the continuation of the most recent trends and seasonality such that it is a realistic assumption for future detainments to DJJ.

For this year's forecast, the Policy Committee approved DJJ's model as the official forecast for FY2026 through FY2031. DJJ's model used time series forecasting techniques as described in the Forecasting Methodologies section of this report (Figure 22). Under this approved forecast, the detainments are expected to decrease from 6,369 actual detainments in FY2025 to 6,165 detainments in FY2026. From there, detainments are expected to increase to 6,287 detainments in FY2031.

Figure 22
Juvenile Detention Center Detainments Forecast



Assumptions for the Department of Juvenile Justice's Simulation Model

DJJ utilizes a computer simulation model to develop its forecast of the juvenile detention center population. A description of simulation modeling can be found in the Forecasting Methodologies section of this report. Use of simulation forecasting requires several assumptions regarding commitments and releases. The following are the important assumptions incorporated into DJJ's simulation model:

- The number of future detainments will reflect the detainments forecast approved by the Policy Committee (see above);
- Future detainments will have the same characteristics (e.g., individual offenses, one or more dispositional statuses, etc.) as detainments in FY2023-FY2025; and
- Juveniles given a pre-dispositional status, post-dispositional no program status, post-dispositional with program status, and other[3] status will comprise the same percentage of detainments as they did during FY2023, FY2024, and FY2025 (three-year average).

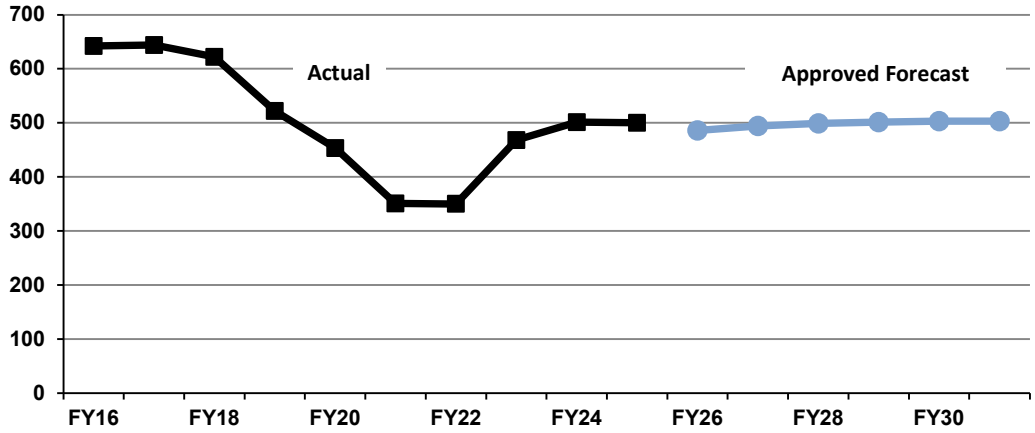
Forecast of the Juvenile Detention Center Population

Forecasts for the juvenile detention population were produced by both DJJ and DPB. DJJ used a new computer simulation model to forecast this population. DPB used time series techniques to forecast this population. After reviewing the most recent available data as well as DJJ's and DPB's proposed models, the Policy Committee approved of a weighted average where two-

[3] Other status includes appealed, awaiting placement, committed to state, committed to state – pending charges, removed from post-dispositional pending court, restoration of mental competency, and transferred to circuit court.

thirds of DJJ's forecast and one-third of DPB's forecast were used. This weighted average was selected because DJJ's simulation model forecasted high for the beginning months of July and August in FY2026 (due to lower than projected detainments) while DPB's overall forecast (which included those two months as historical data) is lower than expected given the most recent annual data. This average is a consideration that the monthly detainments may "catch up" to the detainment forecast used in the DJJ simulation model while also accounting for the lower months of July and August, which were used in DPB's model. Under the approved forecast, the population is expected to decrease to 486 in FY2026 and slowly increase to 503 through FY2031 (Figure 23).

Figure 23
Approved Juvenile Detention Center Population Forecast, Fiscal Year Average Population, FY2026-FY2031



Fiscal Year	Historical	Forecast	Change	Percent Change
2016	642			
2017	644		2	0.3%
2018	622		-22	-3.4%
2019	522		-100	-16.1%
2020	453		-69	-13.2%
2021	351		-102	-22.5%
2022	350		-1	-0.3%
2023	468		118	33.7%
2024	501		33	7.1%
2025	500		-1	-0.2%
2026		486	-14	-2.8%
2027		494	8	1.6%
2028		499	5	1.0%
2029		501	2	0.4%
2030		503	2	0.4%
2031		503	0	0%

Historical and forecast population are rounded numbers. The change and percent change were calculated based on the raw data.

Appendix A

Legislative Directive

2025 Session

Budget Bill - HB1600 (Chapter 725)
Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security
Item 377 Administrative and Support Services
https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2025/1/HB1600/Chapter/1/377/

Authority: Title 2.2, Chapter 2, Article 8, and § 2.2-201, Code of Virginia.

A. The Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security shall present revised six-year state and local juvenile and state and local responsibility adult offender population forecasts to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, and the Chairs of the House Courts of Justice and Senate Judiciary Committees by October 15 of each year. The secretary shall ensure that the revised forecast for state-responsible adult offenders shall include an estimate of the number of probation violators included each year within the overall population forecast who may be appropriate for alternative sanctions.

Appendix B

2025 Committee Members

2025 Offender Population Forecasting Policy Committee Members

The Honorable Marcus R. Anderson, Chair
Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

Ali Ahmad
Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin

The Honorable Aijalon Cordoza
Virginia House of Delegates

Robyn deSocio
Executive Secretary
Compensation Board

Judge Chadwick S. Dotson (Ret.)
Director
Virginia Department of Corrections

Amy Floriano
Director
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

Jody T. Fridley
Director
Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

Colonel Matthew Hanley
Superintendent
Virginia State Police

Lieutenant Colonel Keenon Hook
Deputy Superintendent
Virginia State Police

Linda C. Jackson
Director
Virginia Department of Forensic Science

John Markowitz
Deputy Secretary of Finance

Jackson H. Miller
Director
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Captain Matthew T. Patterson
Division Commander
Criminal Justice Information Services Division
Virginia State Police

The Honorable Russet Perry
Senate of Virginia

Steven G. Popps
Chief Deputy Attorney General

David Reynolds
Legislative Fiscal Analyst
House Appropriations Committee

Kelly Richards
Public Safety Section Coordinator, Senior Budget and Policy Analyst
Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

Catie Robertson
Legislative Fiscal Analyst
Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee

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Theophani K. Stamos
Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Division

Chris Wade
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Supreme Court of Virginia

The Honorable William D. Wiley
Virginia House of Delegates

The Honorable Wren M. Williams
Virginia House of Delegates

2025 Offender Population Forecasting

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Baron Blakley, Chair
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Supreme Court of Virginia