

Document



The Real Cost of Rikers

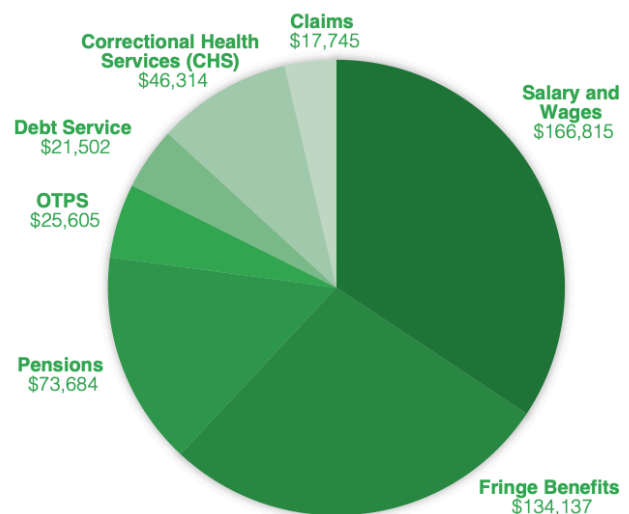
Over the 2025 fiscal year, New York City kept an average of 6,823 people in jail every day.¹ The financial burden on taxpayers was staggering; the Department of Correction spent over \$1.3 billion during the same period.² That figure, however, does not account for significant incarceration-related expenditures such as pension funds and fringe benefits for DOC employees, health care for the incarcerated population, and claim settlements. Including these costs results in an overall burden of **\$3.31 billion**.³ To incarcerate a single person for a full year, New York City spent \$485,801, or \$1,330 per day.

To incarcerate one person for a year, New York City spends

\$485,801

Over three-quarters of that figure went towards staffing, including salary, benefits, and pensions. The last quarter funded health services for incarcerated individuals, debt service, claims, and Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS) expenditures, like equipment and utilities.

Fig. 1, DOC-Related Expenditures Per Capita



¹ NYC Comptroller, *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY 2025*, 478.

² NYC Comptroller, *Report*, 315.

³ Itemization on next page.

Fig. 2, Breakdown of DOC-Related Expenditures⁴

Category	Amount (\$ in thousands)	Amount per capita (\$)
Salary and Wages	1,138,178	166,815
Fringe Benefits	915,218	134,137
Pensions	502,745	73,684
OTPS	174,703	25,605
Debt Service	146,706	21,502
Correctional Health Services (CHS)	316,002	46,314
Claims	121,071	17,745
Total	3,314,623	485,801

Nearly all claims against the DOC are made by incarcerated individuals for personal injury and civil rights claims;⁵ meaning, on average, the City can expect to settle approximately **\$17,745 for every incarcerated person** regarding injuries and civil rights violations inflicted by correctional institutions and staff.

Programs that provide services in the community for people who may otherwise cycle in and out of jail provide far more cost-effective solutions. For example, Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) is an initiative of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene that provides housing and intensive services for individuals with behavioral health needs who have histories of cycling through the criminal legal system. In FY25, 120 JISH units were operational in New York City, at a per person cost of **\$58,200**.⁶ This February, the City released a [request for proposals](#) to open another 190 units.

Further, the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice invested approximately \$37 million in ATI programs over FY25⁷. These programs provide various services to justice-impacted New Yorkers to combat recidivism, including mental health and substance use treatment, job readiness, education assistance, benefits enrollment, and case management. Those programs served 8,121 people,⁸ resulting in a per person cost of just **\$4,500**.

⁴ Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget, *Message of the Mayor on the Executive Budget for FY 2026*, 112; The City of New York, *Adopted Budget Supporting Schedules for FY 2026*, 3285; New York City Comptroller, Claims Dashboard.

⁵ New York City Comptroller, Claims Dashboard - Settlement Details.

⁶ \$31,860 annual rental costs, and \$26,363 annual services costs, per Department of Health contracts.

⁷ Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice. *Local Law 34 Annual Report*, 11.

⁸ MOCJ, *Report*, 11.

Calculations

[Report from FY2021](#): \$556,539 per person, per year

FY 2025: \$485,751 per person, per year

- FY2025 Forecast from FY2026 Budget (includes pensions, fringe, debt service): \$2,877,212,000
 - [FY 2026 Executive Budget - Message of the Mayor](#)
- Correctional Health Services (CHS): \$316,001,789
 - *Looks it like it was actually \$316M in FY2025, per this document (page 3291 of the PDF lists CHS budget) [Supporting Schedule](#)*
- Claims: \$121,071,426
 - For claims, you can use this dashboard [Trends Data - Office of the New York City Comptroller Mark Levine](#)

FY	Claims Filed (#)	Settlement (#)	Settlement (\$)
2025	3,145	1,286	\$121,071,426
Total	3,145	1,286	\$121,071,426

- Average daily jail population for FY2025: 6,823
 - [ACFR 2025](#), pg. 512

MOCJ

- MOCJ currently invests approximately \$37 million annually to fund 23 ATI programs administered by 14 services providers throughout NYC. In FY25, those programs served 8,121 New Yorkers.