



## FY2026 Budget Analysis & Priorities

**At a cost of over half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create safety.** In addition to exposing people to rampant abuse and violence, Rikers Island wastes resources that are desperately needed for housing, treatment, education, and other investments. It's time to use our precious resources to fund the things that work.

### **Priorities for this year's budget to advance the closure of Rikers:**

- **Allocate at least an additional \$70.6M to meet housing and mental health needs**, and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:
  - Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must **appropriate \$26.6 million in annual funding<sup>1</sup> for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#)**, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels that support an enhanced level of services. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
  - **Allocate \$24.7M more to create 15 more [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) (IMT) teams, and pilot step-down teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people. Resources are needed for both full-service teams, and to pilot a step-down version. The Executive Budget allocates \$5.3M for IMT, but far more is needed to eliminate the waitlist.
  - **Allocate \$7M more to create more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) (FACT) teams**, and to pilot ACT step-down teams in order to cut the long wait times (average of 6 to 12 months) to access this service.
  - **Allocate \$6M more to open four new crisis respite centers**, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
  - **Allocate \$6.3M to open 250 more residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions
- **Increase investments in Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Services.** While the Executive Budget fully restores ATI and reentry programs to their FY2025 funding levels, the budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for these programs by \$2.4 million to enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#).
- **Increase the Board of Correction budget to at least 1% of DOC's budget.<sup>2</sup>** While the Executive Budget restores proposed cuts to BOC's budget, their capacity still falls far

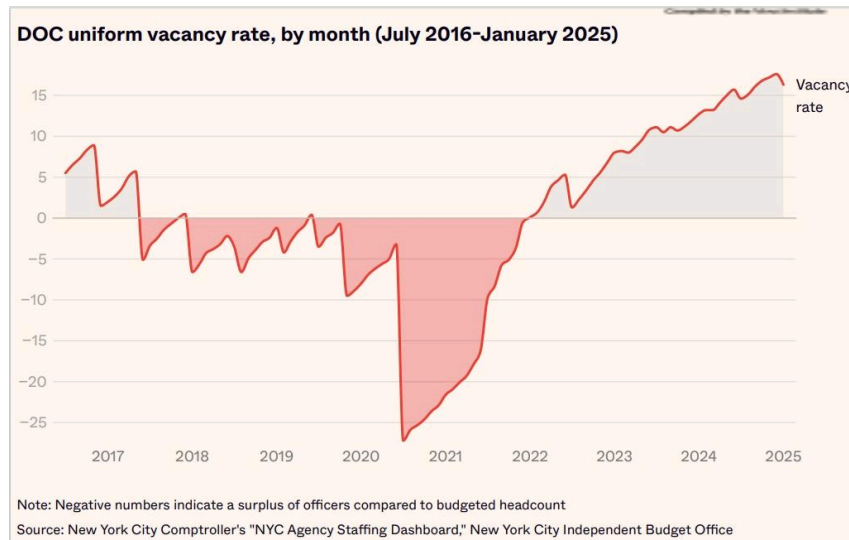
<sup>1</sup> This amounts to \$12.2M in increased annual funding, in addition to the \$14.4M available through the 2019 RFP.

<sup>2</sup> Other oversight agencies like CCRB and IBO have minimum budgets linked to the size of the agency they oversee. [Further outlined here.](#)

short of what's needed to provide sufficient oversight for the City's jails. Establishing a minimum budget would increase BOC's headcount from about 33 currently to approximately 100, but would add only \$8.1M to the overall expense budget.<sup>3</sup>

- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.**

- The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed [5,908](#) and [1,152 positions were vacant](#).<sup>4</sup> OMB has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies (which have been growing since 2022 - see chart below), DOC could realize cost **savings of \$149.6M annually**.<sup>5</sup>



- **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.<sup>6</sup>

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## Preliminary Budget Analysis

**Mayor Adams' proposed budget continues to misappropriate funds that are needed for real public safety investments**, by maintaining DOC budget bloat while cutting funds to alternative to incarceration and reentry programs, and failing to adequately fund supportive housing and community-based mental health treatment. In order to follow through on the legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, City Council must secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration.

### **DOC's budget is still bloated:**

- The Mayor has proposed spending [\\$2.87 billion](#)<sup>7</sup> on jail operations in FY2026.
- The administration is budgeting for [7,060 uniformed DOC officers through FY2029](#).<sup>8</sup> By that time, New York City is required to close Rikers Island and shift to a borough jails system, which the Independent Rikers Commission has estimated will require [only 3,240 uniformed staff](#).

<sup>3</sup> The FY2026 Executive Budget allocated \$4M to BOC. One percent of DOC's \$1.2B budget would give BOC a budget of approximately \$12M.

<sup>4</sup> Per Independent Budget Office

<sup>5</sup> Based on \$129,897 per officer, as [calculated by the Vera Institute](#).

<sup>6</sup> The City of New York. Departmental Estimates. January 2025. p 1368

<sup>7</sup> Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. ["A Look Inside the NYC FY 2026 Preliminary Budget."](#) Vera Institute of Justice. February 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Financial Plan of the City of New York. Fiscal Years 2024 - 2028. Full time and full time equivalent staffing levels.

Uniform headcount reductions are consistent with and necessary for a lower jail population and closing Rikers - in fact, these reductions should have started years ago [when the jail population started to decline](#).

- DOC is on track to spend roughly \$300 million on overtime for uniform staff in FY25, 136% above [their adopted budget](#).
- [An analysis by the New York City Comptroller](#) showed that the **cost of incarcerating a person at a Rikers on an annual basis reached \$507,317** in FY 2023.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by overstaffing. The FY2026 budget projects that [87% of DOC expenses](#) will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.
- **The administration is planning either to continue overusing incarceration or to employ almost twice as many correction officers as people in custody by FY2028.** Neither option makes sense, morally or financially.

### **Commitments in the Close Rikers plan are still inadequately funded:**

- In the [Points of Agreement on Closing Rikers](#), the administration agreed to establish 380 more units of [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#), a model that has been hugely successful in reducing jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and generating substantial cost savings. But funding rates proposed in the RFP issued were so low that [qualified providers have not applied](#), and operators of the existing 120 units have been struggling to provide the quality services they are committed to because of funding rates that were drastically lower than other similar supportive housing programs. In FY2025, the City Council included \$6.4M in their discretionary budget to increase funding rates, but without a commitment from the administration to scale up this investment, these funds could only be applied to increase funding rates for the 120 existing units for 3 years.
- [The Close Rikers Plan](#) also promised "A new community-based mental health safety net." This administration has clearly fallen short of that goal - the number of people in Rikers diagnosed with a serious mental illness has [increased by more than 60% since January 2022](#) without sufficient investments in community-based interventions and care.
- The preliminary budget includes increased investments in the Supervised Release Program, which will be greatly beneficial if applied to expand the Intensive Case Management pilot program. The budget also includes increased investments in transitional housing, which must be brought online immediately, must have the lowest possible barriers to entry, and must be paired with an increased investment in permanent housing (like JISH, 15/15 supportive housing, and other deeply affordable housing).

### **Jail oversight cuts are proposed:**

- DOC continues to [violate minimum standards](#) established by the Board of Correction, including [continued illegal use of solitary confinement](#); revelations of [sexual abuse claims on Rikers spanning decades](#); and recent disclosure of [DOC officers "deadlocking" people with severe mental health needs](#). Strong oversight is crucial. BOC needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor's Executive Budget proposes [reducing their staff from 35 to 33 positions](#).

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Does the Department of Correction have a staff shortage?**

No. In fact, they are overstaffed. In "[A Shrinking System with Similar Spending](#)," the Independent Budget Office reported that between 2014 and 2023 "DOC staffing declined by 24%, while the jail population fell by 45%." In her [contempt order](#) issued in November 2024, Judge Laura Swain noted that "*enormous resources—that the City devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed and underserved—are not being deployed effectively.*" Reducing their headcount now is an important first step to [rightsizing](#) the department.

### **If they are not understaffed, why is there a shortage of officers to cover posts and provide services?**

Multiple investigations and reports from the Nunez federal monitor have documented widespread mismanagement of DOC's enormous workforce, including officers [failing to fulfill their duties and falsifying tour records](#), [improper assignment of officers to non-jail posts](#) (including over [700 uniformed officers assigned to civilian posts](#)), and likely abuse of medical and personal leave (as reported [in November 2024](#)).

### **Does DOC need to replace officers who are retiring?**

Eliminating vacancies would not prevent DOC from replacing officers who quit, retire, or are terminated. It could push DOC to more effectively supervise and manage their very large staff. In 2024, over 500 uniformed staff left, but DOC was able to hire only 290 officers, despite launching a broad recruitment campaign and lowering eligibility requirements.

### **How does NYC's jail spending compare to other cities?**

DOC's budgeted headcount of more than one uniformed officer for each incarcerated person is more than [4 times higher than the national average](#). NYC's is the only jail system among the nation's 50 largest cities that has nearly as many officers as people in custody.

### **What will we do about those jobs? Aren't a lot of correction officers people of color, and women?**

The choice to invest so much of New York City's budget in incarceration has meant that DOC has become a path to the middle class, including for many women and people of color.<sup>9</sup> New York City could and should make a different choice - to invest in and raise salaries, for example, for [EMS workers](#), [green jobs](#) that can help us meet our goals for a vibrant and climate resilient city, and [human services jobs](#) that address community needs. Black and Brown workers deserve jobs with good wages and benefits that aren't dependent on the incarceration of their neighbors and families. We must invest in a [just transition](#) to expand and better compensate jobs outside of law enforcement - for example, in sectors like human services, where more than 80% of workers are women of color, and where constant budget cuts currently result in lost jobs and depressed wages.

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<sup>9</sup> New York City correction officers are paid \$92,000/year after 5.5 years on the job, and receive generous benefits. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/jointheboldest/officer/salary-benefits.page>