

A Look Inside the Fiscal Year 2027 New York City Department of Correction Budget

For too long, New York City has overinvested in punitive measures while undervaluing other programs proven to deliver safety. Mayor Mamdani’s preliminary budget proposal for fiscal year (FY) 2027 moves the city in the right direction, proposing funding increases for services that help New Yorkers find safety and stability—including homeless outreach, public assistance, and emergency food. But despite revenue shortfalls, the administration is allowing Department of Correction (DOC) overspending to continue at the cost of investments in the services that deliver neighborhood safety, such as community-based mental health services, supportive housing for system-involved people, and mental health crisis response.

Police and corrections budgets continue to rise

The FY2027 preliminary budget allocates \$2.99 billion to DOC and \$13.19 billion to the New York Police Department (NYPD)—representing a 5 percent increase for each agency compared with last June’s adopted budget.¹ Although this is significantly less than increases to agencies like the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) or the Department of Social Services (DSS), it still amounts to an \$800 million budget increase. Further, this is likely an underestimate due to poorly estimated overtime, as discussed below.

Percentage change, FY2026 adopted to FY2027 preliminary budget

Agency	Percentage change	2026 adopted budget	2027 preliminary budget
Homeless Services	23%	\$3.65B	\$4.74B
Social Services	18%	\$12.71B	\$15.42B
Youth and Community Development	7%	\$1.55B	\$1.67B
Police	5%	\$12.53B	\$13.19B
Correction	5%	\$2.85B	\$2.99B
Health and Mental Hygiene	4%	\$2.86B	\$2.97B
Criminal Justice	2%	\$871.81M	\$894.16M
Housing Preservation and Development	-1%	\$2.96B	\$2.94B
Commission on Human Rights	-3%	\$21.50M	\$20.91M

Note: Budget figures include fringe benefits, pension contributions, and debt service

Source: Vera Institute of Justice analysis, IBO budget data, OMB FY2026 adopted and FY2027 preliminary budgets

DHS’s budget increase is driven primarily by \$1 billion in additional funding for shelter operations, while DSS’s budget increase reflects a \$2.7 billion increase to public assistance.² These investments fund services that directly help New Yorkers.

DOC’s large budget is driven by personnel costs, not meaningful investments

DOC’s budget increase is driven largely by personnel-related costs rather than investments like educational, therapeutic, and reentry programming, which receives just \$14 million annually.³ The NYPD’s budget

increase is similarly concentrated in personnel-related costs, including a significant increase in funding for the Chief of Department’s office.⁴

In the FY2027 preliminary budget, 87.3 percent of DOC funding relates to personnel costs, meaning any significant reduction in DOC’s budget must address staffing levels.⁵ The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) authorizes a uniformed headcount of 7,060 officers through the end of FY2030—three years after the city’s deadline to close Rikers Island.⁶ As of January 1, 2026, DOC’s payroll has 5,759 uniformed officers.⁷ Filling 1,301 vacancies would cost the city approximately \$174 million in salaries, fringe benefits, and pension contributions.⁸

This massive staffing increase would move DOC in the wrong direction. The agency is poised to downsize when Rikers closes, and the Lippman Commission estimates that the new borough-based jails will only require 3,240 officers.⁹ More practically, the last few years have shown that DOC is unable to hire officers rapidly. Despite slashing entry requirements, condensing training from six months to three, and receiving \$4.2 million in FY2025 and \$5 million in FY2026 for recruitment, the agency has been unable to hire enough officers to offset attrition: in 2025, 470 officers left DOC while only 445 were hired.¹⁰ Compared to the average jail in the United States, DOC already employs more than triple the number of corrections officers per incarcerated person. Increasing DOC staffing to 7,060 officers would propel that ratio to more than four times the national average.¹¹

According to the federal monitor overseeing DOC, any issues related to staffing stem from mismanagement rather than a lack of personnel.¹² For example, 109 officers are currently assigned to the vacant Anna M. Kross Center.¹³ The agency must address its mismanagement issues to better deploy existing officers in a way that supports safety for everyone in our jails.

The Mamdani administration has publicly committed to closing Rikers Island.¹⁴ Yet increasing funding for DOC and maintaining its authorized uniformed headcount at 7,060 officers sends a conflicting message, as DOC will face no pressure to use resources more efficiently. This is especially troubling amid a multi-billion dollar budget deficit, when various agencies are being asked to scrutinize their spending.¹⁵

DOC’s overtime budget remains high—and inaccurate

DOC’s preliminary overtime budget for FY2027 is \$165.6 million.¹⁶ However, based on overtime spending in recent years, that is likely to be a significant underestimate. As of January 1, 2026—just halfway through FY2026—DOC already spent \$174 million (108 percent) of its \$160.8 million overtime budget for the year—significantly higher than any other uniformed agency’s overtime overspending.¹⁷ If spending in FY2027 resembles the current fiscal year, DOC’s budgeted 12-month overtime will last less than six months.¹⁸

Percentage of FY2026 adopted overtime budget spent after six months

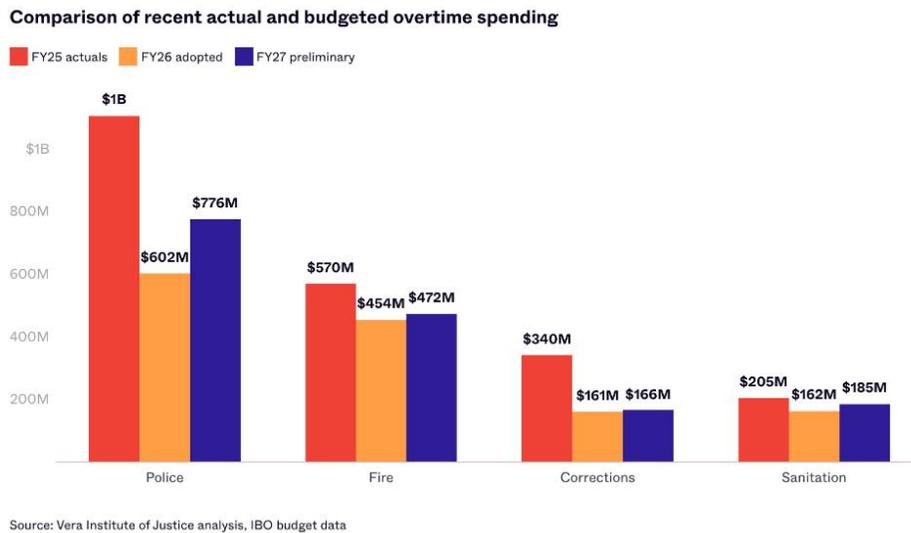


Note: Figures include both uniformed and civilian overtime spending as of January 1, 2026
Source: Vera Institute of Justice analysis, IBO budget data

DOC and NYPD routinely underestimate their overtime budgets only to adjust them upward midyear. The Fire Department (FDNY) and Department of Sanitation (DSNY) also underestimate their budgets, but to a much

lesser extent. For DOC and NYPD, the gulf between budgeted overtime and actual overtime is so large—and so consistent across years—that it is possible the agencies are lowering their overtime budget predictions to evade accountability for spending. For example, DOC is on track to spend \$626 million on jail operations this fiscal year; if the FY2027 DOC preliminary budget included this figure instead of the \$427 million underbudget, the agency’s budget would be 10.7 percent higher than the FY2026 adopted budget, not 5 percent higher.¹⁹ In other words, overspending on overtime has an enormous fiscal impact.

Neither DOC nor NYPD can hire their way out of overspending on overtime. Research from the Independent Budget Office and Office of the New York City Comptroller both show that there is no relationship between DOC or NYPD hiring and reductions in agency overtime.²⁰ By allowing for persistent underbudgeting, the city enables this mismanagement, which takes money from other services that benefit all New Yorkers.



Despite some efforts by leadership, overtime spending remains persistently high.²¹ Resolving this issue requires both accurate budgeting and better personnel management. Leadership must deploy existing staff efficiently, reinforce strong oversight that prevents overtime abuse, and submit realistic budgets based on expected overtime spending to which city government can hold the agencies accountable.

Apart from overtime spending, the city should create new units of appropriation for executive management and programming to help make DOC’s budget more transparent.

Recommendations

Reining in DOC spending will enable city leaders to invest more in infrastructure and services that deliver community safety and stability. Based on extensive conversations with city government, advocates, and experts, we advise investing:

- \$11 million for eight more Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams and \$2 million for four more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams, to scale up community-based mental health treatment and eliminate long waitlists for care;²²
- \$20.3 million for 150 units of low-barrier housing, accompanied by a commitment to assess the need for transitional reentry housing and fund additional units accordingly;²³
- \$1.3 million for alternatives to incarceration (ATI) and \$3.3 million for reentry services to offset slated budget cuts, \$6.9 million to expand programs serving court-involved young people with mental health needs, and \$10 million in additional ATI funding to scale services up to meet demonstrated need;

- \$10 million in additional funding for the Commission on Human Rights, which enables New Yorkers with conviction histories to find community-based stability through housing and employment;
- \$3 million in additional funding for the Board of Correction (BOC) to enable the agency to hire staff for rigorous jail oversight; and
- \$17.5 million in additional B-HEARD funding to make non-police mental health crisis response available 24 hours a day within its current operating boundaries and include peer specialists, who would bring valuable expertise to response teams.

By investing in these services, the Mamdani administration can follow through on its commitment to shrink the jail population in preparation for the move off Rikers Island, deliver responsive and effective governance, and improve community safety for all New Yorkers.

Endnotes

- ¹ The budget numbers presented in this brief were provided to Vera by the Independent Budget Office (IBO) in February 2026 and are on file with the author. Vera used data from IBO to have the most up-to-date numbers; for more information, contact Benjamin Heller at bheller@vera.org. Note that all fiscal year (FY) 2027 preliminary and FY2026 adopted departmental totals include fringe benefits, pension contributions, and debt service, which Vera drew from the New York City Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to supplement the IBO figures. See OMB, *The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2027: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2026), 38E, 36E, 69E, 28E, 39E, 137E, 59E, 134E, and 68E, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/perc2-26.pdf>; and OMB, *The City of New York Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2026: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2025), 101E, 93E, 175E, 70E, 105E, 316E, 154E, 307E, and 173E, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt25/erc6-25.pdf>.
- ² IBO budget data.
- ³ IBO budget data. DOC's budget increase comes primarily from fringe benefits (\$71.7 million increase) and jail operations personnel costs (\$13.4 million). DOC has granted \$14 million in contracts for external programming, as per Jacob Kaye, "After Controversial Cuts, Nonprofits to Return to Rikers Island," *Queens Daily Eagle*, February 2, 2026, <https://queenseagle.com/all/2026/1/30/after-program-cuts-and-fallout-city-taps-nonprofits-to-resume-services-at-rikers>.
- ⁴ IBO budget data. Personnel-related costs for the Chief of Department are set to increase by \$150.6 million, from \$659.2 million in the FY2026 adopted budget to \$809.8 million in the FY2027 preliminary budget.
- ⁵ To calculate this number, Vera added all personnel costs, fringe benefits, and pension contributions. Then, Vera divided that sum by the entire DOC budget including fringe benefits, pension contributions, and debt service.
- ⁶ OMB, *Full-Time and Full-Time Equivalent Staffing Levels Fiscal Years 2026-2030* (New York: OMB, 2026), 35, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/feb26-stafflevels.pdf>.
- ⁷ IBO budget data.
- ⁸ First, Vera added personnel costs, fringe benefits, and pension contributions before dividing that sum by personnel costs to calculate that for every \$1 DOC spends on personnel costs, it spends an additional \$1.45 on fringe benefits and pension contributions. Then, Vera multiplied the average starting salary for a corrections officer (\$54,652) by 2.45 to calculate a total cost per officer of \$133,753.91. Finally, Vera multiplied that number by the total number of vacancies (1,301) to calculate the total cost of filling vacancies, which is \$174,016,436. For a corrections officer starting salary, see NYC Department of Correction, "Salary & Benefits," accessed March 2, 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/jointheboldest/officer/salary-benefits.page>.
- ⁹ Independent Rikers Commission, *A Path Forward: The Blueprint to Close Rikers* (New York: Independent Rikers Commission, 2025), 67, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b6de4731aef1de914f43628/t/6802a228b5619e3f5bafd0cf/1745003055967/Independent+Rikers+Commission+Blueprint+to+Close+Rikers+Island+March+2025.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ Graham Rayman, "NYC No Longer Requires College Credit for New Officers at Rikers Island and Other Jails, Correction Commissioner Decides," *NY Daily News*, April 21, 2023, <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/04/21/nyc-no-longer-requires-college-credit-for-new-officers-at-rikers-island-and-other-jails-correction-commissioner-decides>; Graham Rayman, "NYC Correction Dept. Slashes Academy Training Time for Officers in Half," *NY Daily News*, April 17, 2023, <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/04/17/nyc-correction-dept-slashes-academy-training-time-for-officers-in-half>; and recruitment figures from Testimony Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice by Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, March 7, 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doc/media/march-7-2025-testimony.page>. For attrition and hiring data, see Office of the New York City Comptroller, "Department of Correction (DOC)," accessed March 4, 2026, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/department-of-correction-doc/dashboard/>.
- ¹¹ As of January 1, 2026, DOC had 5,759 uniformed officers compared to a jail population of 6,776. Uniformed officer headcount from IBO budget data. Jail population from Vera Institute of Justice, "New York Criminal Legal System Data Hub: Jail, NYC," accessed March 4, 2026, <https://www.vera.org/ny-data-hub/jail>. This ratio equals 1.2 incarcerated people for every officer. In contrast, as of 2023, the average jail in the United States had four incarcerated people for every uniformed officer, as per Zhen

- Zeng, *Jail Inmates in 2023: Statistical Tables* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2025), Display 20, <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/jail-inmates-2023-statistical-tables/web-report>.
- ¹² Nunez Monitoring Team, *Status Report by the Nunez Independent Monitor* (New York: Nunez Monitoring Team, 2026), 18-24, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/2026-01-13-20th-Monitors-Report.pdf>.
- ¹³ NYC OMB, *Departmental Estimates* (New York: NYC OMB, 2026), 1379, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/feb26/de2-26.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ Jeff Coltin, “Mamdani Protested New Jails. Now He’s Committed to Building Them,” Politico, October 3, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/10/03/mamdani-protested-new-jails-now-hes-committing-to-building-them-00592455>.
- ¹⁵ Michael Gannon, “Mayor Orders Agency Efficiency Review Post,” *Queens Chronicle*, February 2, 2026, https://www.qchron.com/editions/central/mayor-orders-agency-efficiency-review-post/article_9b558a9e-1364-4bab-984b-1eca6a5a2691.html.
- ¹⁶ IBO budget data.
- ¹⁷ IBO budget data.
- ¹⁸ IBO budget data.
- ¹⁹ IBO budget data. The FY2026 adopted budget figure for jail operations personnel is \$414 million, but in the city’s updated estimates for FY2026 spending, the number rises to \$626.3 million only to fall back to \$427.4 million in the FY2027 preliminary budget, as shared with Vera by IBO.
- ²⁰ Arden Armbruster, *A Shrinking System with Similar Spending: A Decade of Jail Trends (2014–2023)* (New York: IBO, 2024), 1, <https://www.ibo.nyc.gov/assets/ibo/downloads/pdf/public-safety/2024/a-shrinking-system-with-similar-spending-a-decade-of-jail-trends-2014-2023-september-2024.pdf>; and Office of New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, *Overtime Overview: A Deep Dive into NYPD Uniformed Overtime Costs* (New York: Office of New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, 2023), 5-6, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/NYPD-Overtime-Overview.pdf>.
- ²¹ Tim McNicholas, “NYPD Begins Taking Steps to Control Excessive Overtime. Here’s What the Department is Doing,” CBS News, January 13, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/nypd-overtime-jessica-tisch-jeffrey-maddrey/>; and Darcel D. Clark, “NYC DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION CAPTAIN ORDERED TO PAY FINES, RESTITUTION AND HIS PENSION REDUCED FOR STEALING \$14,000 IN PAY: Defendant Pleaded Guilty to Fraud; Put in for Overtime While at NJ Eatery,” press release, February 18, 2025, <https://www.bronxda.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/pr/2025/18-2025-Brice-Williams-sentenced-fraud-DOC.pdf>.
- ²² As of March 2025, IMT teams had waitlists of 672 people. See Caroline Lewis, “NYC Council Press Officials to Cut Wait Times for Mobile Mental Health Teams,” Gothamist, March 24, 2025, <https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-council-press-officials-to-cut-wait-times-for-mobile-mental-health-teams>.
- ²³ In February 2026, the Mamdani administration announced that Just Home would create 58 additional supportive housing units for system-involved people. See New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, “NYC Health Department Releases Updated Request for Proposals to Expand Supportive Housing for Formerly Incarcerated and Homeless New Yorkers,” press release, February 12, 2026, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/press/pr2026/request-for-proposals-to-expand-supportive-housing.page>.