



Rhode Island

"The goal now is to see if you can rehabilitate lives instead of just locking them up."

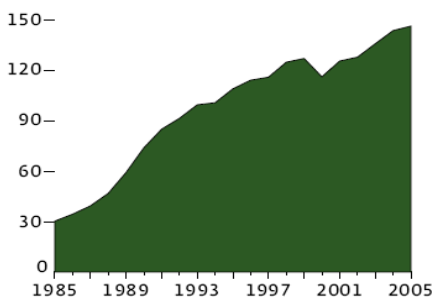
—Governor Donald L. Carcieri (R)

Prison Population & Cost Indicators

- Over the past 20 years, Rhode Island's annual spending on corrections increased from \$30 million to \$146 million. Meanwhile, the state's prison population grew by 168 percent.
- Rhode Island's prison population is projected to increase by 21 percent by FY2017, at an additional cumulative operating cost of at least \$300 million.
- Thirty percent of offenders released from prison are reincarcerated within one year. Fifty percent of offenders are back behind bars within three years.

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EXPENDITURES FROM GENERAL REVENUE (FISCAL YEARS 1985 - 2005) RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (IN MILLIONS)



Drivers of Incarceration & Spending

- Rhode Island's prison population growth has been driven by a large number of probation violations and people failing to appear for court hearings. In 2005, 32 percent of those admitted awaiting trial were people who failed to appear for court hearings.
- The state has one of the highest rates of people on probation in the country (about 21,000, or 3 percent of the adult population), with half on inactive status. Probation sentences for felony offenders average about five years, about double the national average. Probation violators, both for new crimes and technical violations, account for 41 percent of sentenced admissions.
- Officers with non-specialized caseloads actively supervise about 240-250 offenders apiece, not including inactive or "banked" cases, in which probationers receive no supervision at all. Nationally, probation caseloads average 130 per officer.
- Once granted parole, about 25 percent of offenders are not released as scheduled. Those pending placement in residential substance abuse treatment beds often wait in prison for as long as 67 days.

"Managing the growth of the prison population and making communities safer are not mutually exclusive goals."

—Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D)

Public Safety Performance Project

An operating project of The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Public Safety Performance Project seeks to help states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control corrections costs. The project helps states diagnose the factors driving prison growth and provides policy audits to identify options for reform, drawing on solid research, promising approaches and best practices in other states. The initiative also helps state officials, practitioners and others share state-of-the-art knowledge and ideas through policy forums, public opinion surveys, multi-state meetings, national, regional and state-level convenings, and online information about what works.

PARTNERS

The project works with the Pew Center on the States and a number of highly respected external partners, including the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Vera Institute of Justice, to provide expert, nonpartisan information and assistance to states.

CONTACT

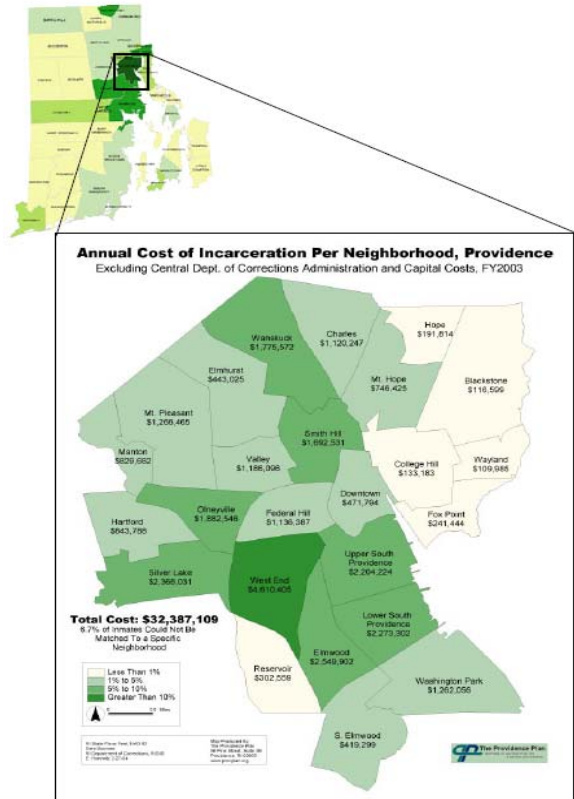
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Opportunities & Action

- In March 2004, Governor Carcieri signed an executive order establishing a cabinet-level Steering Committee on Corrections Reform and Prisoner Reentry.
- As the state prepares for difficult discussions about how to close a significant budget gap, legislative leaders and the governor are acutely aware of the recent increase in the state's prison population, and its projected growth over the next decade.
- State leaders asked the Council of State Governments (CSG) to report on factors driving the system's growth, held a high-profile policy forum to release the findings, and have worked together to find immediate solutions.
- State leaders are considering several policy options to increase public safety and help avert additional prison growth and costs, including establishing accountability for offenders' successful completion of evidence-based programs, ensuring that parole decisions are based on a validated risk assessment, and concentrating probation resources on high-risk offenders and on the initial period of community supervision.



The Public Safety Performance Project and CSG's Justice Center are providing nonpartisan research, analysis and expertise to help state policy makers and corrections officials assess these and other options.

By the Numbers			
2005 Index crime rate per 100,000 (rank):	2,970.1 (35)	2006 Corrections budget:	\$162 million
2005 Violent crime rate per 100,000 (rank):	251.2 (39)	2006 Corrections share of budget:	4.9%
2005 Incarceration rate per 100,000 (rank):	189 (48 th)	Releases reincarcerated in 3 years:	50%
2006 Prison population:	2,853	2011 Projected prison population:	3,052

Sources: FBI Uniform Crime Reports; Bureau of Justice Statistics, various publications; National Association of State Budget Officers State Expenditure Reports, annual series (corrections share of state general funds, FY2005); "Public Safety, Public Spending: Forecasting America's Prison Population 2007-2011," Pew Public Safety Performance Project; Rhode Island Department of Corrections. Updated February 2007

