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Update on Costs of Incarceration

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The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) supports Parliament by providing analysis, including analysis of macro-economic and fiscal policy, for the purposes of raising the quality of parliamentary debate and promoting greater budget transparency and accountability.

In June 2010, the PBO published [a report assessing the financial cost of the Truth in Sentencing Act](#). In 2017, a member of the Senate requested that the PBO update certain details included in that report regarding the financial costs of incarceration by gender and security level.

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Executive Summary

This report updates the Parliamentary Budget Officer's estimates of the financial costs associated with offenders in federal custody. For this analysis the costs associated with correctional interventions and internal services are not included.

In 2016-17, an average of 14,310 offenders were in federal custody. The average institution-specific expenditure associated with each inmate were \$114,587 /year or \$314/day per offender and 96% of those cost are attributable to custody. The cost of incarceration varies substantially depending on the type of inmate, as outlined in the table below.

Summary Table 1

Estimated cost per offender, 2016-17

Type of Inmate	Annual	Daily
Male Minimum	\$47,370	\$130
Male Medium	\$75,077	\$206
Male Maximum	\$92,740	\$254
Female (all levels)	\$83,861	\$230
Segregation (Incremental)	+\$463,045	+\$1,269
Healing Lodge	\$122,796	\$336
Youth	\$73,632	\$202
Regional Treatment Centre ¹	\$139,128	\$381

Note: Only institution-specific costs are included. Female (all levels) includes minimum, medium and maximum and costs for for each type were not available.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Officer. Model based on historical capacity and number of inmates in segregation provided in CSC Response to PBO IR0305 and expenditures from Public Accounts.

When inmate population expand, correctional facilities must also be expanded. The cost of expanding existing facilities also varied substantially depending on the type of inmate and is detailed in the table below.

Summary Table 2

Expansion Cost per Bed based on Security Level

Security Level	Expansion cost per bed
Male Minimum	\$131,737
Male Medium	\$100,236
Male Maximum	\$175,759
Women	\$259,894
Women Structured Living Environment	\$533,765

Source: Correctional Service of Canada, Information Request IR0305.

Large expansions of capacity would require constructing entirely new facilities, which would entail higher costs.

1. Introduction

1.1. Scope

In June 2010, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) published a report assessing the financial cost of the *Truth in Sentencing Act*, which limited credit for time served in pre-sentence custody.² The purpose of this report is to update estimates of the costs of incarceration used in that report. However, the estimated costs by security level set out in this report are not directly comparable because this report distinguishes costs associated with segregation and excludes costs associated with correctional interventions and internal services which were not institution specific.³

This update was undertaken at the request of a member of the Senate. In line with that request, this report contains a particular focus on the disaggregation of costs by security level, the costs of segregation, the costs of private security, and the cost of inmate transportation. There is extensive existing research regarding the cost savings associated with preventing crime or allowing offenders to serve their sentences in the community. However, the focus of the request and this report is exclusively on the costs associated with offenders in federal custody.

This report provides a starting point for understanding the financial cost of proposals impacting levels of incarceration and segregation. The PBO's focus on financial costs reflects PBO's mandate and expertise and does not reflect a judgement regarding the relative importance of financial cost considerations in criminal justice policy-making.

This report may be relevant to the review of issues relating to the human rights of prisoners in the correctional system being undertaken by the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights.⁴ It may also be of relevance to Parliament's consideration of Bill C-56 An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Abolition of Early Parole Act.⁵ Federal corrections are one of many interrelated components of public expenditures related to Criminal Justice in Canada, as outlined in the PBO's 2013 Expenditure Analysis of Criminal Justice in Canada.⁶

1.2. Security Classifications

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is responsible for inmates who have been convicted and sentenced to terms of more than two years. In 2016-17, an average of 14,310 offenders were in federal custody. CSC's expenditures

associated with custody centers in 2016-17 totaled \$1.63 billion (\$114,587 per inmate) of which \$1.57 billion (\$109,971 per inmate or 96%) was attributable to CSC custody program.⁷

The cost of incarcerating individuals varies substantially depending on the gender of the inmate and the security level to which they are assigned. As explained by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), there are three security levels:

In **Maximum security** the schedules that govern an inmate's day-to-day routine are strict. The buildings are surrounded by a barbed-wire fence and correctional officers are armed and posted in strategic locations.

In **Medium security** the site is still fenced but the rules are less restrictive. Officers are not armed, although weapons are available – under lock and key – in specific locations.

In **Minimum security** inmates live in living units (houses) in groups of seven or eight. There is no barbed wired fence and there are no armed officers. Inmates can organize their schedule according to the activities they are required to participate in, and often are responsible for their own meals.⁸

Men and women are housed in separate institutions, but a similar classification applies to each.⁹ Some institutions, particularly women's institutions, hold inmates at multiple security levels. As of 31 March 2016, 22% of federal inmates were in minimum security, 63% were in medium security, and 15% were in maximum security.¹⁰

Some offenders are supervised in the community at a much lower cost. In 2016-17, an average of 8,572 offenders were supervised in the community at an average cost of \$18,058/year.¹¹

1.3. Segregation and other forms of isolation

The Parliamentarian who requested this report inquired specifically about the costs associated with segregation and other forms of isolation.

Within each security level, an individual may be placed in administrative or disciplinary segregation.

Administrative segregation is intended to protect the safety and security of the individual and institution, or to facilitate an investigation. Administrative segregation must be reviewed regularly, including daily visits by the institutional head and a registered health care professional.¹² As of 9 August 2016, there were 360 inmates in administrative segregation, representing 2.5% of the offender population.¹³

Of the offenders in administrative segregation, 205 offenders (57%) were segregated based on safety and security, 142 (39%) were segregated based on the inmate being in danger, and 13 (4%) were segregated to avoid interference with an investigation.¹⁴

Most offenders in administrative segregation are in maximum or medium security.¹⁵ Demographically, 98% of administratively segregated offenders were male and 38% were aboriginal.¹⁶ Table 1-1 summarizes the number of individuals in segregation as of 9 August 2016.

Table 1-1 Individuals in Segregation, 2016

	Maximum Security	Medium Security	Minimum Security	Undetermined (ex. in intake)
Segregated Offenders	170	148	12	30

Notes: Figures as of August 9, 2016.

Source: Correctional Service of Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation, 2016](#)

In 2014-15, 1,574 out of 6,284 male inmates (25%) admitted to segregation were placed there voluntarily, as were 19 out of 442 female inmates (4%) admitted to segregation. Voluntary administrative segregation occurs when an inmate requests segregation and the institutional head believes on reasonable grounds that staying in general population would jeopardize the inmate's own safety and there is no reasonable alternative. This distinction is no longer made and voluntary admissions may have been significantly reduced by recent CSC policy changes.¹⁷

Disciplinary segregation occurs when an offender is found guilty of a serious disciplinary offence.¹⁸ Disciplinary segregation may not exceed 30 days, or 45 days when an inmate is ordered to serve a period of segregation while he/she is still serving a period of segregation for another serious offence.¹⁹ The average number of inmates in disciplinary segregation is not known. 2011-12 data suggests that about 2.2% of admissions to segregation were disciplinary which, given the legally limited duration of disciplinary segregation, likely translates into an even smaller portion of the segregated population.²⁰ As a reference point for confirmation, 3% of admissions to segregation in Ontario in 2016 were disciplinary.²¹

In addition to administrative and disciplinary segregation, inmates may be isolated from the general population to some extent in the Special Handling Unit, a Regional Treatment Centre, or a Structured Living Environment.

CSC has one Special Handling Unit, which is a facility that incarcerates "male inmates who pose an ongoing danger to the public, staff and/or other inmates, and who cannot be safely managed at any other maximum security institution."²²

Regional Treatment Centres house inmates who are unable to function in parent institutions due to mental disorders, cognitive impairment, or physical disabilities associated with aging. They offer multiple levels of security and are provincially recognized hospitals or psychiatric hospitals.²³

Structured Living Environments are a voluntary option available to minimum and medium security women with significant cognitive limitation and mental health concerns.²⁴

2. Overall Costs of Incarceration

2.1. Breakdown of Operating Expenses

Aggregated cost data shows that almost three quarters of operating expenses associated with keeping federal inmates in custody are attributable to salaries and employee benefits. "Utilities, materials and supplies", "Amortization of tangible capital assets" and "Professional and special services" also represent significant shares of total costs.²⁵ Table 2-1 summarizes the expenses associated with custody for 2016-17.

Table 2-1 Operating Expenses Associated with Custody, 2016-17

	Total Spending	Average cost per Inmate	% of Total
Salaries and employee benefits	1,102,774,000	78,188.74	70%
Utilities, materials and supplies	136,852,000	9,703.06	9%
Amortization of tangible capital assets	127,889,000	9,067.57	8%
Professional and special services	96,746,000	6,859.47	6%
Payment in lieu of taxes	35,063,000	2,486.03	2%
Machinery and equipment	28,779,000	2,040.48	2%
Repairs and maintenance	27,693,000	1,963.49	2%
All other expenses	17,891,000	1,268.51	1%
Total	\$1,573,687,000	\$109,971	

Notes: Correctional interventions and internal services are not included. Cost per inmate based on total spending divided by average custodial population (14,310).

Source: Correctional Service of Canada, [2016-2017 Financial Statements](#), s 16.

Most Correctional Service of Canada employees are involved in managing inmates in custody. The CSC has 0.72 Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTEs) for each offender in custody (excluding correctional interventions and internal services) or in other terms, an offender to staff ratio of 1.37:1. Community supervision is often delivered through contracts with community organizations, reducing CSC personnel requirements. Table 2-2 below provides the average number of offenders per FTE for various types of activities.

Table 2-2 Average number of Full-time Equivalent Employees, 2016
17 Fiscal Year

Activity	Actual FTEs	Affected Offenders	Offenders per FTE
Custody	10,432	14,310	1.37
Correctional Interventions²⁶	4,057	22,882	5.64
Community Supervision	226	8,572	37.93
Internal Services²⁷	2,506	22,882	9.13
Total	17,221	22,882 ²⁸	1.33

Notes: Offender per FTE based on personnel divided by applicable offender population.

Source: FTEs from Correctional Service of Canada, [2016-17 Departmental Results Report](#).

The major employee groups involved in custody at correctional institution are identified below in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3 Correctional Institution Employees by Type, %, 31 March 2016

Correctional Officers	57%
Administration	13%
Health Care	7%
Program Staff	6%
Parole Officers/Parole Supervisors²⁹	5%
Instructors/Supervisors	3%
Other (includes trades and food services)	9%

Source: Public Safety Canada, [2016 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview](#) at Figure B2.

Federal Correctional Officers are unionized and paid between \$55,970 and \$74,985 per year excluding overtime.³⁰ The national average wage for correctional officers was \$31.25/h, or \$65,000 per year excluding overtime, with minimal variation in median wages across provinces.³¹

2.2. Private Security Costs

The Parliamentarian who requested this report inquired specifically about private security costs.

In the 2016-17 FY, the Correctional Service of Canada spent \$12.8 million on protective services; representing 0.8% of CSC's budget, see Table 2-4.

Table 2-4 Protective Services Expenditures of Correctional Service of Canada, various fiscal years

Fiscal Year	Expenditures on Protective Services
2012-2013	17,663,220
2013-2014	18,101,391
2014-2015	14,819,362
2015-2016	13,984,065
2016-2017	12,802,003

Source: Receiver General for Canada, *Public Accounts of Canada*, Volume III, Section 3 – Professional and Special Services, various years.

All payments over \$100,000 for private security went to the Commissionaires, Public Works and Government Services Canada, or Canada Border Services Agency. While the Commissionaires do offer services related to the care, control and transfer of persons in custody they also provide a variety of other protection services, notably acting as security guards for federal government buildings.³²

2.3. Inmate Transportation Costs

The Parliamentarian who requested this report inquired specifically about transportation costs. Public interest in inmate transfers was heightened by the Office of the Correctional Investigator's Investigation into the death of Ashley Smith, which highlighted that she was transferred 17 times in under a year leading up to her death. Those transfers were primarily due to administrative and capacity issues rather than any treatment plan.³³

In the 2016-17 FY, the Correctional Service of Canada spent \$4.9 million on inmate travel including associated salaries and overtime, representing 0.3% of CSC's budget. Table 2-5 below details the components of travel costs.

Table 2-5 Transportation Cost Expenditures, 2012-13 to 2016-17 fiscal years

Component of Transportation Costs	Average % of Transportation Costs
Domestic Travel	52%
International Travel	2%
Other Travel	3%
Total Operating Costs	58%
Salary	15%
Overtime	27%
Total Salary Costs	42%

Source: Correctional Service of Canada, Information Request IR0305.

There has been no clear trend in inmate transport costs over the last five fiscal years, see Table 2-6.

Table 2-6 Expenditures on Inmate Transport, various fiscal years

Fiscal Year	Expenditures on Inmate Transport
2012-2013	\$3,512,400
2013-2014	\$4,715,589
2014-2015	\$4,330,410
2015-2016	\$4,216,363
2016-2017	\$4,873,505

Source: Correctional Service of Canada, Information Request IR0305.

3. Variation in Costs

3.1. Operating and Capital Costs

The PBO constructed a statistical model explaining 97% of variation in facility-specific expenditures across CSC facilities over the last five fiscal years using inmate capacity by security level and segregated inmate populations.³⁴ The results of the model are presented in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Estimated Cost per Offender by Security Level, 2016-17

Type of Inmate	Annual	Daily
Male Minimum	\$47,370	\$130
Male Medium	\$75,077	\$206
Male Maximum	\$92,740	\$254
Female Multi	\$83,861	\$230
Segregation (Incremental)	+\$463,045	+\$1,269
Healing Lodge	\$122,796	\$336
Youth	\$73,632	\$202
Regional Treatment Centre ³⁵	\$139,128	\$381

Note: Only institution-specific costs are included. Female Multi includes minimum, medium and maximum and costs for for each type were not available.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Officer. Model based on historical capacity and number of inmates in segregation provided in CSC Response to PBO IR0305 and expenditures from Public Accounts.

This statistical model suggests the inmates who are in or who cycle through segregation account for a disproportionate share of costs. Our model suggested an incremental daily cost for inmates in segregation ranging from \$891 to \$1,775.³⁶ CSC does not track resource requirements associated with inmates in segregation and was unable to provide a description of the resource requirements associated with segregation. Other stakeholders were also unable to describe these resource requirements.

3.2. Costs of Adding Capacity

When inmate population expand, correctional facilities must also be expanded. The costs of expanding existing facilities also varied substantially depending on the type of inmate. Table 3-2 presents the average costs per bed of expanding CSC custody centres based on projects completed between 2012-13 and 2016-17.

Table 3-2 Expansion Cost per Bed based on Security Level

Security Level	Expansion cost per bed
Male Minimum	\$131,737
Male Medium	\$100,236
Male Maximum	\$175,759
Women	\$259,894
Women Structured Living Environment	\$533,765

Source: Correctional Service of Canada, Information Request IR0305.

The costs of constructing entirely new facilities is likely higher than the above costs of expanding facilities. In a 2009 Letter to the Standing Senate, Committee of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada noted that prison construction costs depend on a variety of factors, but provided the following order-of-magnitude estimates of capital costs which are provided in Table 3-3.³⁷

Table 3-3 Construction Cost of Correctional Institutions

	Construction Cost	Capacity	Construction cost per inmate
Minimum	\$65 million	250	\$260,000
Medium	\$240 million	400	\$400,000
Maximum	\$240 million	600	\$600,000

Source: Parliamentary Budget Officer, [The Funding Requirement and Impact of the "Truth in Sentencing Act" on the Correctional System in Canada](#), 22 June 2010.

Appendix A: Comparison to Provinces

Only one province, Ontario, has published figures regarding the number of inmates who are in segregation. About 7% of inmates in Ontario are in segregation.³⁸

The operational costs per inmate-year associated with incarceration vary between provinces, with federal costs being higher than costs in most provinces, but lower than those in the territories, see Table A-1.³⁹

Table A-1 Average Costs per Inmate by Province, various fiscal years

Jurisdiction	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$101,835	\$102,565	\$96,360	\$95,995	\$89,425
Prince Edward Island	\$68,985	\$70,080	\$67,160	\$78,110	\$100,010
Nova Scotia	\$61,685	\$75,920	\$74,095	\$69,715	\$93,075
New Brunswick	\$62,415	\$66,430	\$66,795	\$75,555	\$71,175
Quebec	\$71,175	\$68,255	\$67,890	\$73,365	\$78,110
Ontario	\$67,160	\$67,160	\$72,270	\$79,570	\$78,475
Manitoba	\$59,495	\$62,780	\$70,810	\$70,445	\$74,460
Saskatchewan	\$54,750	\$53,290	\$58,035	\$60,590	\$60,590
Alberta	\$43,800	\$44,895	unkown	\$44,530	\$51,830
British Columbia	\$64,605	\$65,335	\$72,635	\$77,745	\$73,730
Yukon	\$89,790	\$97,820	\$129,940	\$137,970	\$115,705
Northwest Territories	\$90,885	\$108,405	\$102,200	\$144,540	\$141,620
Nunavut	\$153,665	\$162,790	\$206,590	\$218,270	\$203,670
Federal jurisdiction	\$107,310	\$103,295	\$108,770	\$110,230	\$103,295

Source: Statistics Canada, [CANSIM table 251-0018 - Adult correctional services, operating expenditures for provincial, territorial and federal programs, annual](#).

Federal and provincial inmate populations have different profiles and needs which make comparisons difficult. Inmates in federal institutions have been convicted and sentenced to terms of more than two years. In contrast, most inmates in provincial institutions (60%) are on remand, awaiting trial or sentencing, with the remainder (40%) sentenced to terms of less than two years.⁴⁰ Only 3.3% of sentences for men and 2.1% of sentences for women are two years or longer, meaning federal institutions are only dealing with the most serious offenders.⁴¹

Notes

1. Regional Treatment Centres house inmates who are unable to function in parent institutions due to mental disorders, cognitive impairment, or physical disabilities associated with aging.
2. Parliamentary Budget Officer, [The Funding Requirement and Impact of the "Truth in Sentencing Act" on the Correctional System in Canada](#), 22 June 2010.
3. Correctional interventions provide assessment activities and program interventions for federal offenders that are designed to assist their rehabilitation and facilitate their successful reintegration into the community. Internal services are the 'overhead' functions which support the other programs or help meet corporate obligations, including oversight, communications, legal services, human resources management, financial management, information management, information technology management, real property services, material services, and acquisition service. See CSC, [Departmental Results Report 2016-17](#).
4. Details available via [the Senate's Website](#).
5. Available via [the Library of Parliament's LEGISinfo service](#).
6. Parliamentary Budget Office, [Expenditure Analysis of Criminal Justice in Canada](#), 20 March 2013.
7. Facility specific expenditures based on Public Accounts exclude expenditures associated with national and regional headquarters and training colleges. Inmate number based on inmate numbers and custody expenditure reported in the Correctional Service of Canada's 2016-17 Departmental Performance Report. Custody expenditures based on segmented information in Correctional Service of Canada's 2016-17 Consolidated Financial Statements.
8. Correctional Service Canada, [Frequently Asked Questions](#), Updated 15 August 2013.
9. [CSC Commissioners Directive 706: Classification of Institutions](#), 29 March 2016 at Annex A: Definitions.
10. Public Safety Canada, [2016 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview](#) at Figure C12.
11. Correctional Service Canada, [2016-2017 Departmental Results Report](#) at "Community Supervision."
12. Correctional Service Canada, [Administrative Segregation](#), Updated 3 January 2017.
13. Correctional Service Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation](#), 8 December 2016, at s 3.2.1.

14. Correctional Service Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation](#), 8 December 2016, at s 3.2.1.
15. Correctional Service Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation](#), 8 December 2016, at s 3.2.1.
16. Correctional Service Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation](#), 8 December 2016, at s 3.2.1.
17. Public Safety Canada, [2015 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview](#) at C17. This distinction is no longer tracked.
18. Correctional Service Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation](#), 8 December 2016, at s 1.1.
19. Correctional Service Canada, [Status Report on Administrative Segregation](#), 8 December 2016, at s 1.1.
20. Office of the Correctional Investigator, [Segregation in Canadian Federal Corrections: A Prison Ombudsman's Perspective](#), 22-23 March 2013, under "Segregation Placements: Reasons".
21. [Independent Review of Ontario Corrections](#), March 2017, at Figure 4.
22. [CSC Commissioners Directive 706: Classification of Institutions](#), 29 March 2016 at Annex A: Definitions.
23. [CSC Commissioners Directive 706: Classification of Institutions](#), 29 March 2016 at Annex A: Definitions.
24. [CSC Structured Living Environment Operational Plan](#) at 1.2.
25. Correctional Service of Canada, [2015-2016 Financial Statements](#), at s 17.
26. Correctional interventions provide assessment activities and program interventions for federal offenders that are designed to assist their rehabilitation and facilitate their successful reintegration into the community.
27. Internal services are the 'overhead' functions which support the other programs or help meet corporate obligations, including oversight, communications, legal services, human resources management, financial management, information management, information technology management, real property services, material services, and acquisition service. See CSC, [Departmental Results Report 2016-17](#).
28. The populations being served by the above programs overlap so this figure is not the sum of the populations served by each program. Rather it reflects the total persons being served by Correctional Service Canada programs.
29. These parole officers are situated within institutions, with the responsibility of preparing offenders for release.
30. [Agreement between the Treasury Board and Union of Canadian Correctional Officers](#), 31 May 2014, at Annex A.
31. Department of Employment and Social Development Canada, [Explore Careers – Job Market Report](#), under "Correctional Service Officers NOC 4422" under Wages tab and under Canada tab.
32. Commissionaires, [Security Solutions](#).

33. Office of the Correctional Investigator, [A Preventable Death](#), 20 June 2008 at para 56.
34. The figures for segregated inmates represent the incremental cost over and above the cost associated with a regular inmate at their security level. All other figures reflect the cost associated with capacity for one inmate at the specified security level. Capacity is adjusted for historical changes in total capacity, but not for historical changes in the composition of capacity due to data limitations. Capacity was used rather than actual inmate counts because capacity could be disaggregated by security level. With occupancy at 98% of capacity across the five years of data available, capacity was a close proxy for inmates by security level. Certain facilities were excluded due to incomplete data (largely those which have closed or merged).
35. Regional Treatment Centres house inmates who are unable to function in parent institutions due to mental disorders, cognitive impairment, or physical disabilities associated with aging.
36. This is the 95% confidence range given by the PBO's model.
37. See Parliamentary Budget Officer, [The Funding Requirement and Impact of the "Truth in Sentencing Act" on the Correctional System in Canada](#), 22 June 2010, at 117.
38. [Independent Review of Ontario Corrections](#), March 2017, at III.
39. Statistics Canada, [Table 251-0018 -Adult correctional services, operating expenditures for provincial, territorial and federal programs, annual, CANSIM \(database\)](#).
40. Statistics Canada, [Adult Correctional Statistics 2015-2016](#).
41. Public Safety Canada, [2016 Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview](#) at Table A6.