Delivering effective correctional services that hold offenders accountable and result in changed offender behavior—while also addressing the needs of crime victims—requires a multifaceted approach.

Our “SAFETY FIRST” approach recognizes that being and feeling safe is a basic human need. In order to provide correctional services that meet the justice interests of victims and the needs of offenders, we must be concerned about the safety of all corrections staff, the safety of those residing in our correctional facilities, and those under correctional supervision.

The effectiveness of our corrections system is a ‘main street’ issue for all Minnesota communities. 95% of the women and men incarcerated in Minnesota’s prisons will one day return to communities and neighborhoods throughout Minnesota. Given this reality, it only makes sense that Minnesota’s Department of Corrections initiates rehabilitative intervention efforts. Effective service delivery to the correctional population requires thorough assessment of offender needs and risks followed by the use of evidence-based intervention strategies.

When communities are more connected, they’re safer. We want Minnesota’s response to crime and wrongdoing to be fair, effective, and meaningful. It’s time to replace the failed “tough on crime” approach with a “smart on crime” approach. This approach provides for meaningful accountability while working to address the needs of those who have offended at the community level – reserving the costly use of Minnesota’s prisons for those who represent higher-risk and have more significant intervention needs. The smart approach also demands that we ensure that offenders maintain pro-social connections with their family, friends, and faith or spiritual community during incarceration, as these will serve as needed support upon community reentry.

We help ensure people in Minnesota are safe. The Walz-Flanagan budget funds critical needs for corrections, including staffing, programming, healthcare, and victim notification.

PRISON SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Department of Corrections is in critical need of additional correctional officers and programming staff, as well as security infrastructure and technology, to ensure the safety of our dedicated staff who put their lives on the line everyday working in our facilities. We must
ensure the safety and security of our prisons, our staff, and those incarcerated to ensure the safety of all Minnesotans.

The Walz-Flanagan budget provides critical services and staffing to ensure evidence-based programming, restrictive housing reform, and funds critical infrastructure enhancements to increase the overall security and safety of our prisons.

This impacts the safety of all staff working in our prisons, those incarcerated, and keeps the public safe. It also provides opportunities for programming for those incarcerated.

Fund Additional Correctional Staff
The funding request, provides $2.7 million in FY2020 and $7.020 million in FY2021 to hire 120 correctional officers by the end of FY2021. Additionally, the request provides $268,000 in FY2020 and $625,000 in FY2021 to add 6 lieutenants by the end of FY2021.

Fund Prison Security Infrastructure and Technology Needs
This funding provides $3.2 million in FY2020, $2 million in FY2021, and $600,000 in each subsequent year to add key security infrastructure upgrades including cameras, radios, body scanners, and other crucial security systems. This request also includes $900,000 in FY2020 and $2.1 million in FY2021 for MN.IT to dedicate 16 employees to the DOC to address current needs, phased in semi-annually over two years.

Office of Ombudsman for Corrections
This funding provides $900,000 each year to reestablish the Office of Ombudsman. The office will be an independent entity with 6 full-time staff to receive and investigate complaints from and on behalf of those subject to incarceration in state and local facilities in Minnesota.

OPERATING BUDGET
Compensating employees at the Department of Corrections is one of the most critical parts of the agency’s budget. Necessary increases in employee compensation are not reflected in the DOC’s base budget. Each year costs rise—employer-paid health care contributions, FICA and Medicare, and other salary and compensation-related expenses.

It is critical for the DOC to provide continuity of service to ensure safe and secure prisons and effective community supervision. This includes maintaining our current recidivism rate and keeping staff, those incarcerated, and the public safe. DOC employees provide basic needs to incarcerated individuals, including treatment and programming needs, and supervise those who are released from prison in Minnesota communities.
Maintain Current Staffing Levels Critical to Current Operations
The Walz-Flanagan budget funds $10.558 million in FY2020 and $17.778 million in FY2021 to maintain the current level of service to keep our prisons and communities safe. It will maintain 162 FTEs in FY2020 and 300 FTEs in each subsequent year.

OFFENDER HEALTH CARE
The Department of Corrections is constitutionally mandated to provide health care to individuals who are incarcerated in our prisons. This requirement serves nearly 10,000 people with medical and mental health services. Those who are incarcerated are less healthy than the general population and often have complex medical and mental health issues.

Providing medical and mental health care to offenders is a public and community health issue. The budget request will fully fund contractual obligations for offender health care, expand 24-hour nursing to two additional prisons, and implement a critically important and long-overdue electronic health records system.

Overall Offender Health Care Request
The Walz-Flanagan budget provides funding of $2.951 million in FY2020 and $5.432 million in FY2021 to fund the medical and mental health needs for those who are incarcerated within the DOC.

Fund Offender Health Care Contract
The 2017 Legislature only provided for partial funding for FY2020 and each subsequent year. This budget proposal will fully fund contractual obligations.

Medical and Nursing Services
This request helps provide staffing levels and services that are adequate to meet the needs of our offender population. At the recommendation of the Office of the Legislative Auditor, a staffing analysis was completed that indicated the current number of health services staff is inadequate to meet the growing complex medical and mental health needs of the offender population.

Expand 24/7 Nursing
The DOC operates 24/7 nursing operations in three correctional facilities (Faribault, Oak Park Heights and Shakopee). This proposal would expand 24/7 nursing to two additional correctional facilities with an offender population of more than 1,000 offenders in each of those prisons.
**Electronic Health Records System**

The 2007 and 2008 Legislatures enacted laws mandating all hospitals and health care providers have an electronic health records system. The DOC is considered a health care provider. EHR systems improve continuity of care and provider efficiency, decrease grievances and result in better overall offender health care.

**INVESTING IN PROGRAMS TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM**

Strengthening family connections for those who are incarcerated and supporting successful reentry for incarcerated American Indians contributes to the community health and public safety of all Minnesotans. Research shows that incarcerated individuals who receive visits from their children while in prison are less likely to become incarcerated again. This proposal will increase the number of in-person visits for higher-risk offenders by reducing or eliminating barriers associated with family visits. Evidence shows that stronger parental and family bonds create healthier and more productive community members. This will have a great impact on creating stronger communities, which in turn helps create a stronger Minnesota.

Too often indigenous inmates do not find the culturally appropriate support they need to successfully reenter their communities and reconnect with their families. Funding for additional programming targeted at this need will help to bridge that gap.

Investing in services to keep youth out of prison has shown to have long-term positive impacts that are proven to safely reduce juvenile detention populations in participating jurisdictions, and improve the juvenile justice system overall. Fundamental goals include decreasing the number of youth unnecessarily or inappropriately detained, reducing the number of juveniles who fail to appear in court or re-offend pending adjudication, redirecting public funds toward effective juvenile justice processes, and reducing disparities within the juvenile justice system.

**Proposal Details**

The Walz-Flanagan budget provides $1 million in FY2020 and $1 million in FY2021 and each subsequent year. It includes $150,000 each year in grant funds for transportation services to children of incarcerated parents, $425,000 each year to improve parenting skills, and $425,000 each year in grant funds for culturally specific reintegration services for American Indian offenders.

**Juvenile Justice Reform**

This funding provides $500,000 each year for juvenile justice reform in Minnesota. $280,000 will be used to fund 2 positions to coordinate and provide services across the state, and $220,000 as grant funds to local agencies to establish juvenile detention alternatives.
The Department of Corrections requires funding for additional supervision agents and pre-trial services to ensure caseloads meet statutory requirements, and that those awaiting sentencing who are deemed high-risk, those who fail to appear to court, and those who remain law abiding prior to sentencing are afforded options to remain in their communities while reducing reliance upon jail beds. The rates of detaining individuals awaiting trial is widely inconsistent across the state, with variations by race, gender, and socio-economic status often disparately impacting people of color and indigenous people. These disparities include avoidable consequences such as loss of employment, loss of housing, jail overcrowding, significant financial impacts to families or the defendant, and an increased probability of conviction as many choose to enter guilty pleas simply to be released from jail.

Implementing a pre-trial supervision unit, and expanding funding for additional supervision agents will help ensure the safety of those agents, and will directly contribute to a safer Minnesota.

ISR supervision agents provide 24/7 supervision that includes random home visits conducted during the night, weekends, and holidays on the highest-risk offenders released from prison. Home visits are often in high-crime neighborhoods or sparsely populated areas where law enforcement backup is not readily available. The funding will allow for agents to conduct their work in pairs and use the proper communications and transport technology to allow them to safely do their jobs.

**Create a Pre-trial Supervision Unit**
The Walz-Flanagan budget requests $1.725 million in FY2020 and $3.45 million in FY2021 to create a pre-trial supervision unit with 12 FTEs (10 agents, 1 supervisor and 1 support staff). Funding includes a proportionate level of pass-through funds to CCA and CPO counties ($1.108M in FY2020 and $2.216M in FY2021 and each subsequent year).

**Fund Additional Agents**
The Walz-Flanagan budget funding provides $2.5 million in FY2020 and $5 million in FY2021 to provide ISR supervision to offenders in the community. This request includes salaries, and supplies and equipment for 19 FTEs (17 agents, 1 supervisor and 1 support staff). This recommendation includes pass through funds to CCA counties ($1.588 million in FY2020, $3.176 million in FY2021 and each subsequent year).
INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT

Integrated case management services are proven to be effective in reducing recidivism for high- and very high-risk offenders. Minnesota must invest in programs that show a strong return on investment.

With the additional support of coordinated case planning upon release, those who participate improve their chances for a successful transition from prison to the community and their families. Caseworkers are trained in integrated case management practices, which requires skills in assessment, motivational interviewing, case planning and the use of specific cognitive-based interventions.

Through this investment, fewer offenders are expected to return to prison. This proposal will ensure more individuals benefit from comprehensive case plans that improve their chances for success in the community upon their release from prison.

Increased ICM Services Provided
The Walz-Flanagan budget ensures that the DOC will provide integrated case management services to 420 additional high-risk offenders, while alleviating caseloads. The overall budget proposal is $321,000 in FY2020 and $831,000 in FY2021 to hire 12 staff, including 10 caseworkers and 2 support staff.

VICTIM NOTIFICATION AND JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A victim notification system is necessary to appropriately communicate with victims and to help ensure the safety of victims of crime. It will securely and accurately provide victim notifications as required by state statute, be a source of information for victim and community safety, and empower victims. The Juvenile Correctional Management System is nearly obsolete, as it was created 20 years ago and needs to be updated to current electronic records standards.

Serving and supporting crime victims is a critical function provided by the Department of Corrections. The DOC’s goal is to promote safety in the lives of victims and others who have been negatively impacted by crime and provide effective, supportive and informative advocacy.

Juvenile Correctional Management System
$750,000 over two years will be used to replace the current Juvenile Correctional Management System. The current system was created about 20 years ago and will be obsolete in the near future. It is a critical offender management system specific to juveniles.
Victim Notification System
The Walz-Flanagan budget provides $400,000 over two years to complete the replacement of the DOC’s victim notification system.

Electronic Monitoring and Transitional Housing for High-Risk Offenders
Electronic monitoring and transitional housing of high-risk individuals are critical services in maintaining public safety. In FY2017, there was a 78 percent increase in the use of electronic monitoring, largely due to more offenders having their sentence restructured instead of being returned to prison.

Upon leaving a prison, offenders very often cannot find adequate housing. This is acutely true for Level 3 sex offenders, some of whom would otherwise be homeless, resulting in the supervision agent’s inability to provide intensive supervised release (ISR) supervision. High-risk offenders require higher levels of monitoring and impede an agent’s ability to conduct proper supervision.

Overall Budget Need
The Walz-Flanagan budget provides $1.5 million in FY2020 and $1.5 million in FY2021 and each subsequent year for electronic monitoring and transitional housing. These funds are needed to maintain the current level of service. Lack of funding may result in high-risk offenders being homeless, and/or being placed on supervision without electronic monitoring devices.

Capital Investments
Maintaining and rehabilitating Minnesota’s correctional facilities is vital in ensuring staff and workplaces are safe, offenders are held accountable, and opportunities are available to help change the behavior of those incarcerated.

Repairing, Replacing, and Renewing Facilities
The Walz-Flanagan capital budget recommendation of $20 million for asset preservation will allow the Department of Corrections to continue addressing a $600 million deferred maintenance backlog. Projects may include correcting safety hazards and code compliance issues, preserving building exteriors and interiors, and major mechanical and electrical system upgrades.

Preserving Life, Health, and Public Safety
The Walz-Flanagan capital budget recommends $7.5 million to renovate existing space to better serve offenders in Lino Lakes who suffer from serious mental illness, $2.7 million for secure interior fencing in St. Cloud, $4.2 million for fire suppression systems in St. Cloud and Stillwater, $2.6 million for a new sewage treatment facility in Togo, and $1.8 million for improved accessibility for visitors and staff in Red Wing.