



CIC | DC Corrections Information Council

**Testimony of Donald L. Isaac, Executive Director
DC Corrections Information Council
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety Budget Hearing
Wednesday, April 12, 2023
*Updated April 25, 2023***

Good Morning, Chairman Pinto and other members of the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety. I am Donald L. Isaac, the Executive Director of the DC Corrections Information Council, commonly known as the “CIC.” Board members Charles Thornton, Katharine Huffman, and Nkechi Taifa join me in thanking you for your continued support.

As you know, the CIC is an independent monitoring body initially established under the 1997 Revitalization Act, with its mandate further expanded and detailed in the DC Jail Improvement Act of 2003. The CIC is mandated to inspect, monitor, and report on the conditions of confinement in the prisons, jails, and halfway houses where DC residents are incarcerated. This includes approximately 2,600 residents in 110 Federal Bureau of Prisons’ (BOP) facilities and contract facilities located all throughout our nation, as well as approximately 1,200 residents in the local custody of the DC Department of Corrections (DOC).

For fiscal year 2024, the CIC’s budget increased from \$1,158,046.50 to \$1,182,861, which represents an increase of approximately \$25,000. The

budget is comprised entirely of local funds.

Personnel Services

The Personnel Services budget for FY 2024 increased from 1,100,337.75 to \$1,127,652.52. It represents a variance of \$27,314.77. The agency has 11 FTEs, and one vacancy – for a total of 12 FTEs. Over the past few months, we have been grateful to welcome three new employees.

Agency growth increases the agency's ability to travel and inspect facilities while also performing daily functions, such as researching, analyzing data, writing reports, disseminating data, and directly corresponding with members and families of the incarcerated population. As the office grows, we seek to increase the non-personnel services budget to accommodate the existing and anticipated needs of the office.

Non-Personnel Services

The FY 2024 budget for non-personnel services decreased from \$57,708.75 to \$55,208.48. It represents a variance of \$2,500.27. The proposed number does not fully cover the current and anticipated needs of the office. This reduction in the proposed budget will pose a hardship for the agency in FY24. Not only do we have to fund the travel required to report on facilities nationwide, but we were also hoping to enhance the office regarding equipment, professional development, contracting and consulting, and office

supplies. Our prior enhancement request totaled \$125,000; however, we would be grateful for even a fraction of that number.

For travel, the CIC had requested \$50,000 to support costs for flights, lodging, car rental, rising gas prices, and reimbursements for staff without sacrificing other operational costs. Overnight stays are a mandatory part of the work when traveling nationally to federal prisons.

For equipment, the CIC requested \$15,000 to support the necessary technological upgrades and items required to perform work. Staff expansion also requires purchasing new items for research and writing, such as computers and laptops.

For professional development, the CIC requested \$10,000 to support attendance at conferences and opportunities for network building, which broadens the agency's understanding of the criminal justice landscape and impacts the quality of agency research and reporting.

For contracting and consulting, the CIC requested \$25,000 for consulting with subject matter experts related to new trends within the field, best practices, staff skill development, and expanding strategic initiatives. The enhancement would increase the scope and impact of our mandate by informing our knowledge of specific and measurable goals that allow us to have greater impact within our reports and recommendations.

Lastly, for office supplies the CIC requested \$25,000 to help with costs for general operations, database systems, and increased use of printed

surveys and postage - as we increase work productivity with an expanding staff.

Out of them all, the priority is travel, followed by equipment and office supplies. We recognize that the current city budget has many spending demands and pressures; however, travel, equipment, and supplies are critical to the core functions of our agency. We thank Mayor Bowser for the \$7,500 towards equipment and office supplies.

Legislative Projections

The CIC has also received preliminary budget estimates from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for costs associated with implementation of the Corrections Oversight Improvement Omnibus Amendment Act of 2022, which is projected to become law on May 11, 2023. I am enthusiastic about acquiring the resources and manpower necessary for successful execution of the Act. The estimated projection for FY24 totals \$354,000 for the following: \$247,000 to fund two program analyst positions to support timely execution of all legislative requirements; an additional \$5,000 for non-personnel services; and \$102,000 to contract with national policy experts. The priority for those estimates is funding the two program analyst positions to increase both the scope of CIC research and reporting deliverables required by the Act according to the timelines specified.

The CIC is extremely grateful for continued support from the Council and the Bowser Administration, and we are eager to exceed expectations based upon feedback during the Performance Oversight hearing. Thank you.