

Nevada Department of Corrections Population and Expense Trends (2019 – 2025)

Nevada Department of Sentencing Policy

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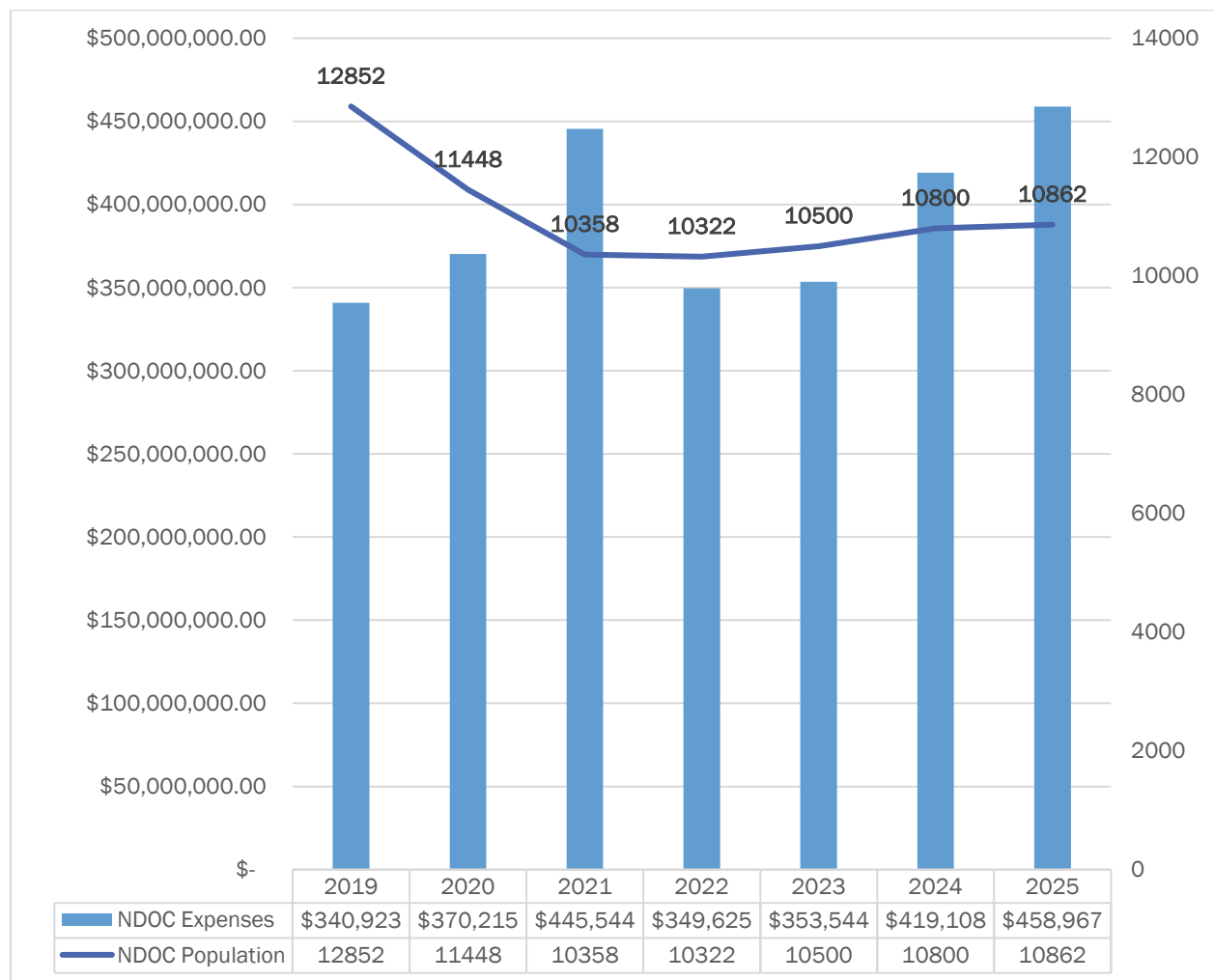
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OVERVIEW

This report reviews the Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) population and expenditure trends from 2019 through 2025. It highlights systemwide changes and the primary drivers of correctional spending, providing context for policy and budget discussions related to long-term cost management.

Data was obtained from Nevada Department of Corrections Offender Management Division and the Nevada Open Checkbook budget database.

NDOC POPULATION & EXPENSES



Population Trends

NDOC’s population decreased sharply between 2019 and 2021, falling from 12,852 to 10,358 which is a decline of 19.4 percent. Although population levels have risen slightly since 2022, they continue to remain below 2019 levels. This sustained reduction indicates that Nevada’s correctional system has not returned to pre-2019 incarceration levels.

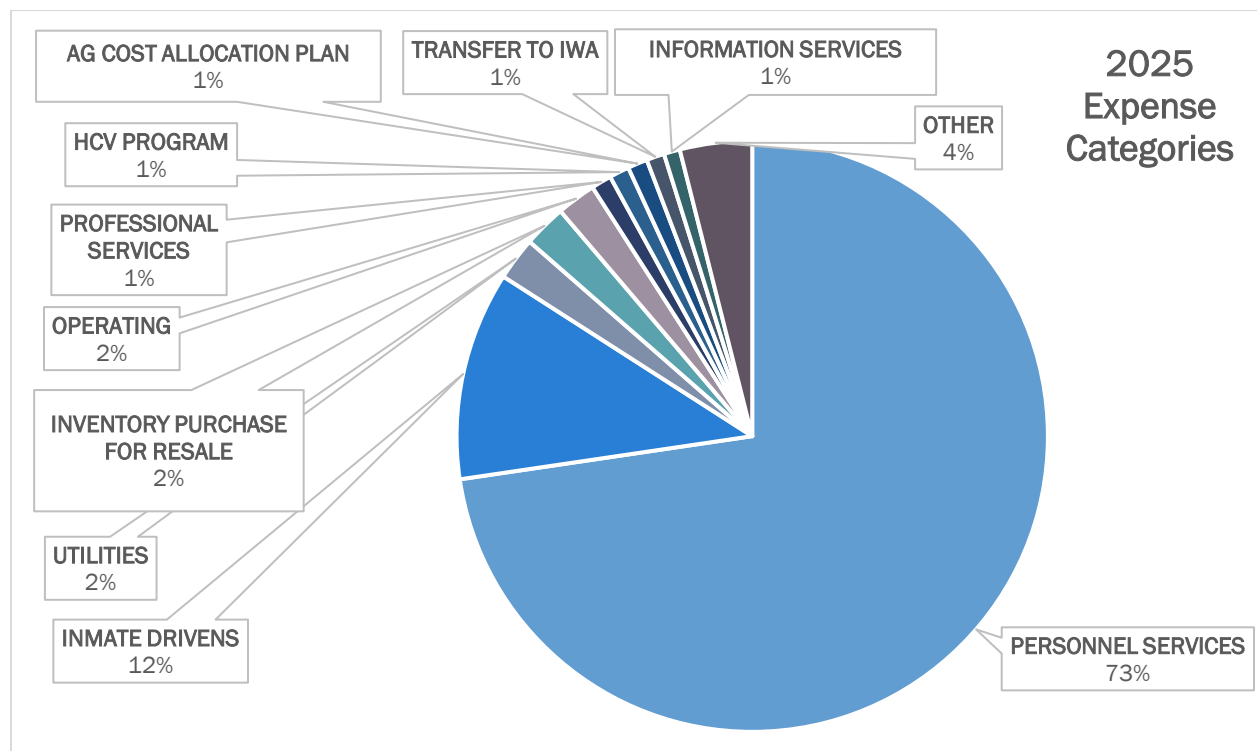
Expenditure Trends

In contrast, NDOC expenditure increased steadily across the entire period. Spending rose from \$340.9 million in 2019 to \$459.0 million in 2025, a 34.6 percent increase. Importantly, expenditures grew even during years when the population was declining most sharply. This pattern demonstrates that NDOC’s cost structure is only partially sensitive to population levels and is driven primarily by fixed costs.

Key Takeaways

- Population declined substantially and, despite modest recent increases, remains well below 2019 levels.
- Total expenditure increased consistently, rising nearly 35 percent since 2019.
- The divergence between population and spending confirms that system costs are driven by structural and operational factors rather than population alone.

TOP EXPENSE CATEGORIES



Overview of Spending Composition (FY 2025)

FY 2025 expenditures show a strong concentration of spending in personnel-related categories. Personnel Services alone accounted for 73 percent of total NDOC spending in 2025.

Major expenditure categories include:

- *Personnel Services*: \$333.5 million (73%)
- *Inmate Drivens*: \$52.4 million (12%)
- *Utilities*: \$10.8 million (2%)
- *Inventory Purchases for Resale*: \$10.8 million (2%)
- *Operating*: \$9.9 million (2%)

Top 5 Expense Groups (2019-2025)

Year	PERSONNEL SERVICES	INMATE DRIVENS	UTILITIES	INVENTORY PURCHASE FOR RESALE	OPERATING	OTHER
2019	\$ 231,987,210.95	\$ 38,924,606.33	\$ 11,315,732.16	\$ 9,455,983.28	\$ 10,784,535.16	\$ 379,379,594.38
2020	\$ 249,035,767.16	\$ 44,832,459.81	\$ 10,944,272.27	\$ 9,173,251.33	\$ 10,790,585.33	\$ 415,653,902.34
2021	\$ 245,042,773.23	\$ 38,129,929.53	\$ 10,074,391.87	\$ 8,970,017.04	\$ 10,944,522.52	\$ 577,928,098.53
2022	\$ 233,960,085.13	\$ 41,400,062.30	\$ 11,392,047.32	\$ 9,557,766.22	\$ 10,427,932.68	\$ 392,513,453.11
2023	\$ 230,877,346.65	\$ 45,953,812.05	\$ 14,087,247.78	\$ 8,263,747.21	\$ 9,436,048.65	\$ 398,469,886.02
2024	\$ 292,637,893.80	\$ 45,341,607.97	\$ 13,751,116.30	\$ 9,369,854.35	\$ 10,553,819.11	\$ 466,563,269.87
2025	\$ 333,517,205.58	\$ 52,371,557.70	\$ 10,780,878.06	\$ 10,754,531.84	\$ 9,861,779.35	\$ 500,649,494.95

Primary Cost Drivers

Personnel Services is the dominant driver of NDOC expenditures. Growth in salaries and overtime explains most of the department’s overall spending increase. Personnel costs rose significantly from 2019 to 2025 and remain NDOC’s largest fixed operational expense.

Secondary Cost Drivers

Inmate-driven costs, such as food, medical care, and housing, represent 12 percent of spending. Although material, these costs have grown more slowly than personnel expenditure and do not account for the overall rise in spending.

Other Spending Categories

All remaining expenditure categories each make up a small portion of the total budget, generally between 1 and 3 percent. These costs have remained relatively stable over time. The FY 2025 “Other” category totals \$18.1 million and is more clearly itemized compared to prior years, reflecting improved categorization and transparency.

Key Takeaways

- Personnel Services lead correctional spending and are the primary cost driver.
- Inmate-driven costs are significant but secondary.
- Operational and administrative costs remain relatively stable and represent a small portion of the budget.

CONCLUSION

From 2019 to 2025, NDOC experienced a decline and gradual rebound in population alongside a steady increase in expenditures. The data clearly demonstrates that correctional costs are driven primarily by personnel and other structural factors, rather than population levels alone.

As a result, per-inmate costs have risen significantly. Moving forward, efforts to manage correctional spending will likely need to focus on staffing models, cost structures, and long-term operational efficiencies, rather than relying solely on changes in incarceration levels.