

June 2015

Overtime for Correction Officers on Pace to Reach Highest Level in Over Two Decades

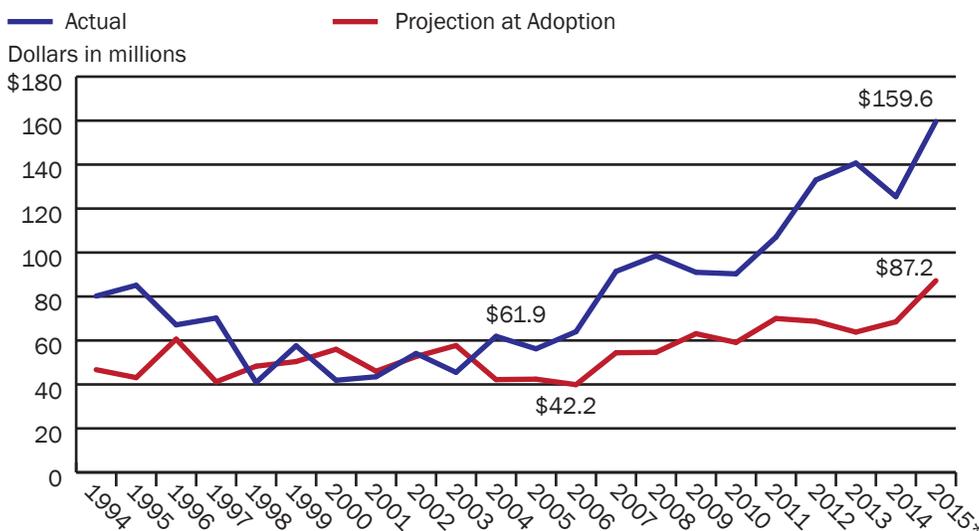
The Mayor’s 2016 executive budget anticipates \$79.8 million in overtime expenditures for officers in the Department of Correction (DOC) next year, an amount most likely insufficient given recent history. As has been the case over the last decade, correction overtime spending in the current year will again significantly exceed the amount originally budgeted. While the 2015 adopted budget projected \$87.2 million in overtime spending, actual spending from July through April 2015 (the first nine months of fiscal year 2015) reached \$130.5 million. (Unless otherwise noted, years refer to city fiscal years.) IBO projects that by the end of 2015 total overtime spending will reach \$159.5 million, exceeding the adopted budget by \$72.3 million.

In addition to routinely exceeding budgeted levels, the average number of hours worked by correction officers has

also increased, growing by 58.0 percent from 2006 through 2014. As a result, spending on overtime for correction officers has more than doubled over the same period, rising from \$64.0 million to \$125.4 million in 2014 (the spending increase exceeds the growth in overtime hours due to wage gains resulting from labor settlements).

A likely factor driving the increase in overtime spending has been a decline in correction officers deployed in the city’s jails. Since 2002 the number of correction officers has fallen by 16.1 percent, from 10,636 to 8,922 in 2014. Although the average daily population of the city’s jails decreased by a similar percentage over this time period, the logistics of Rikers Island limit the extent to which staffing can be reduced, either with officers on regular time or by officers working overtime. The number of deployed

Greater-than-Projected Overtime Each Year Since 2004



NOTE: IBO projection for 2015.

New York City Independent Budget Office



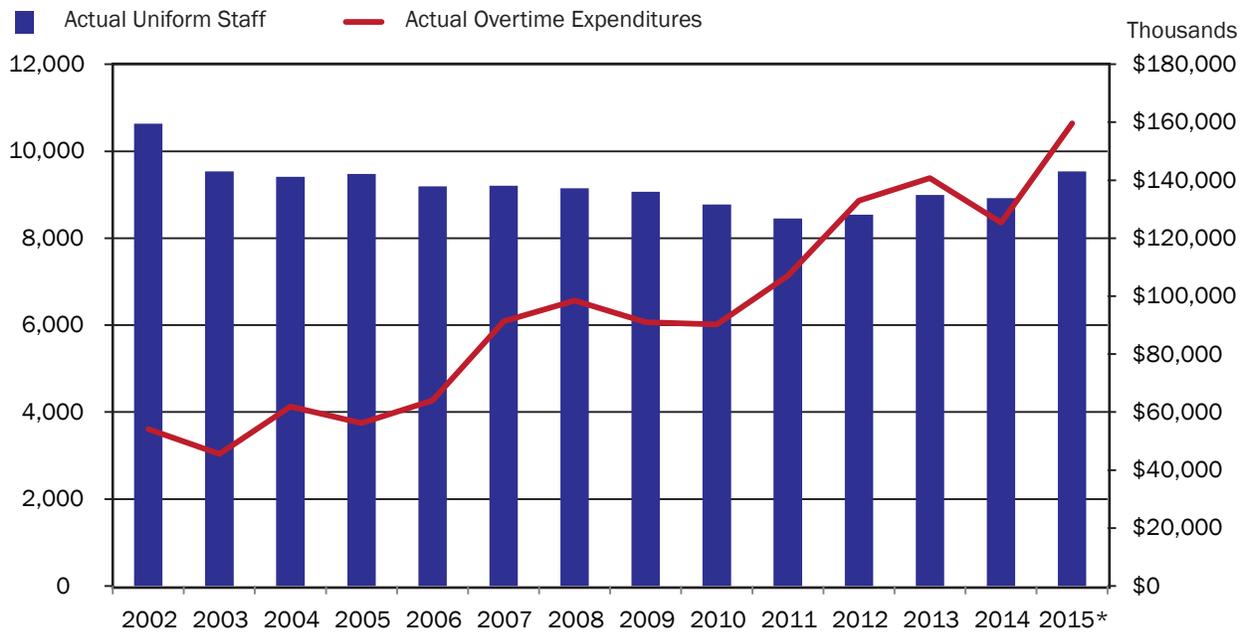
New York City
Independent Budget Office
Ronnie Lowenstein, Director

110 William St., 14th floor
New York, NY 10038
Tel. (212) 442-0632

Fax (212) 442-0350
iboenews@ibo.nyc.ny.us
www.ibo.nyc.ny.us



Correction Officers vs. Overtime Expenditures



NOTES: Expenditures and uniform headcount for 2015 are projections by IBO and OMB. Headcount is as of June 30 for each year.
 New York City Independent Budget Office

officers bottomed out at 8,540 in 2012, when DOC began an effort to increase hiring in an attempt to better keep pace with attrition. In 2015, DOC had three classes of recruits that added a total of 700 new officers. The projected uniform headcount for 2015 is 9,537.

Despite the increase in the number of officers since 2012, IBO expects that overtime expenditures in 2015 will reach their highest level in over two decades. The continued increase in overtime expenditures is likely due to the fact that the department is still operating below the staffing level needed to fill all posts without relying on overtime. In addition, new policies aimed at reducing violence in the jails have increased the need for correction officers. Specifically, new programs designed to improve conditions for the adolescent and mentally ill populations at Rikers depend on increases in staff-to-inmate ratios.

The executive budget includes a total of \$142.0 million from 2015 through 2019 for Mayor de Blasio’s antiviolence reform agenda for DOC. The Mayor’s 14-point plan looks to implement ways to combat violence and promote a culture of

safety on Rikers Island. Some of the main initiatives include: limiting physical contact between inmates and visitors to make it more difficult to smuggle weapons and drugs into the jails; providing comprehensive security camera coverage; separating rival gang members to help curb violence among inmates; and developing crisis intervention teams to respond more quickly to violent incidents.

Of the \$142.0 million added in the executive budget, 77 percent or \$109.3 million will be used to hire nearly 600 additional correction officers from 2016 through 2019. This initiative will likely have an impact on overtime expenditures going forward. At DOC’s preliminary budget hearing, City Council members raised concerns about DOC’s ability to actually increase the size of their recruit classes given the limited capacity of the department’s training academy and its deteriorating condition. The department has included funding to hire 40 more civilian academy instructors from 2015 through 2019.

Prepared by Nashla Salas

Share on



Receive notification of IBO’s free reports by
[E-mail](#) [Text](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [RSS](#)