

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2026 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

March 26, 2025

Question:

- What is the current (FY 2025) cost per day per inmate? Can we differentiate this by City/Local/Federal?
- What other reduction options do you propose if not the counselors?
- Can we get a table with the month-by-month inmate population for each month from Jan. 1, 2024, through March 15, 2025? Please differentiate between federal and City inmates.
- What are the best practices for Inmate Classification Counselors in assignments and workload? How are inmate classification counselors recognized in accreditation practices and standards?
- Please provide how long each position is commonly vacant (once it goes vacant).
- Does the position require specific qualifications and/or has ASO used any special recruiting techniques to fill it? How easy or hard is it to fill those positions? What has been the maximum number of inmate classification counselor positions?
- Can you provide data about the relationship between recidivism and the programs offered at the jail and some of the work that Sheriff Office does in classification?

Response:

The Alexandria Sheriff's Office (ASO) estimated total operating expenses for the jail in FY 2025 are \$32,432,593.41, equating to \$261.34 per inmate per day for a capacity of 340. In comparison, FY 2024 operating expenses were \$31,953,294, at a rate of \$257.48 per inmate per day. There is no cost difference for local and federal inmates regarding services, though the federal government covers off-site medical expenses for federal inmates. Operating expenses are guided by the state-mandated Jail Cost Report, which the ASO has submitted for FY 2024, though it has not yet been published.

To achieve a proposed \$236,000 reduction, eliminating vacant sworn Deputy Sheriff positions has been considered, but these roles are essential for maintaining operational effectiveness and public safety.

No established inmate-to-classification counselor ratio exists per guidelines from Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), Affordable Care Act (ACA), or Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Classification staffing levels are based on local operational needs. For instance, Prince William County's classification staff focuses solely on intake, while PREA duties are handled separately. The (ASO) Staffing model includes eight classification counselors and one manager. Four counselors manage intake and housing for up to 25 inmates each, while the other four handle the general population and specialized units, averaging 77 inmates per counselor. Eight classification counselors have been authorized at ASO for at least the past 19 years, if not longer.

The ASO is Triple Crown-accredited, maintaining certifications under VADOC, ACA, and PREA. Classification staff perform various duties, such as conducting orientations, crisis intervention, inmate

screenings, and maintaining classification records. Key PREA standards stipulate intake screenings within 72 hours and reassessments within 30 days or as needed.

Two classification counselor positions have been vacant since September 2024, with a recent job announcement attracting 77 applicants. Preferred qualifications include a relevant bachelor's degree and case management experience in corrections.

The ASO offers programs to reduce recidivism by improving decision-making, employability, and life skills. While the 2024 Program Completion Report details participation, it remains challenging to track for recidivism after release. Research shows educational and vocational programs help reduce reoffending.

Classification staff conduct needs assessments and refer inmates to programs, but current staffing shortages force them to prioritize core duties, limiting their ability to facilitate rehabilitative programming. Until staffing levels are restored, their ability to support and expand rehabilitative programming will remain limited.

Attachments:

[Attachment 1: Average ADC Inmate Population by Month](#)