

# RI's Criminal Legal System Investment

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FY 2023 BUDGET



Every year, from January through June, criminal justice policies are debated in the Rhode Island legislature, most often in the hearings of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. Advocates, practitioners, legislators, and people with lived experience deliberate about proposed bills, with every party involved asserting or defending their value system—who does our criminal legal system serve and how? What does justice look like for Rhode Islanders? However, our state’s positions and values on criminal legal system reform are also reflected in the state budget. The budget sets the financial priorities for Rhode Island, and in doing so makes an implicit statement about our commitments. How much do we invest in justice agencies and how much do we invest in community-based services? How much do we invest in crime prevention vs. crime response? How much do we invest in healing victims of harm and how much do we invest in trying to create new pathways for people who’ve harmed others?

At the Center for Health and Justice Transformation, we believe that these are the kinds of questions Rhode Island is inherently answering when it decides where to put our state dollars. We also believe there should be more robust dialogue in Rhode Island about what our communities think about the answers. Every year, we will publish a budget summary using a criminal justice lens to start that conversation. For our inaugural budget summary, we are providing an overview of new funding being allocated to agencies and projects related to three categories: (1) criminal justice infrastructure, (2) community investments, and (3) opioid and other substance use programming. If you have ideas for how this document should evolve in future years, please share them with us at: [info@healthandjustice.org](mailto:info@healthandjustice.org).

**KEY:**

TERM	DEFINITION
General revenue	“Uncommitted” revenue available to the state to spend for any purpose.
Federal funds, restricted receipts, and specified funds	Funds dedicated to a specific purpose. The state cannot spend this money on anything besides its intended purpose.

## FUNDING CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFRASTRUCTURE

### **Child Support Enforcement ..... \$915,000**

The Budget includes \$305,000 in general revenue and \$610,000 in federal funds to expand child support enforcement (CSE) across the State. At current staffing levels, the Family Court is unable to service a full calendar in all the counties. This funding will allow for cases to be heard every day by using one courtroom and a team of people dedicated to CSE.

### **Rhode Island Legal Services ..... \$90,000**

The Budget allocates \$90,000 to Rhode Island Legal Services to provide housing and eviction defense to indigent individuals.

### **State Crime Laboratory ..... \$1.5 million**

The Budget allocates \$1,516,015 for the State Crime Lab, which is housed at University of Rhode Island. This is an increase of \$190,568 from the previous year.

### **Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers ..... \$9.3 million**

The Budget includes \$9.3 million in general revenue for anticipated settlement of the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers (RIBCO) employee contract. The funding represents FY2023 base payroll costs assuming terms similar to those of other state employee unions that finalized contracts this year.

### **ACI: Wi-Fi & Technology ..... \$3.3 million**

The Governor proposed to use \$3.1 million in federal ARPA SFRF (American Rescue Plan Act State Fiscal Recovery Fund) in FY2023, and \$50,000 each year from FY2024 through FY2027, to install Wi-Fi and technology throughout the ACI. The Budget funds the initiative; however, it shifts from federal funds to restricted Information Technology Investment Funds which are budgeted through the Department of Administration.

### **ACI: Radio & Communication ..... \$2.7 million**

The Budget shifts \$2.7 million from ARPA SFRF to general revenue for a new radio/communication system throughout the ACI.

### **ACI: Healthcare Staff ..... \$665,340**

The Budget increases general revenue by \$665,340 to provide four incentives that address healthcare staffing shortages at the ACI: \$487,340 for Pathways training, \$31,000 for equipment allowances, \$59,000 for mentoring bonuses, and \$88,000 for recruiting bonuses. (Governor’s Budget Amendment)

**Correctional Officer Training Academy ..... \$270,000**

The Budget includes \$270,000 in general revenue to increase the stipend granted during the Correctional Officer Training Academy from \$1,000 to \$1,300 to support improvement in the recruitment of Correctional Officers.

**State Police Training Academy (Foster) ..... \$5.1 million**

The Budget provides \$5.1 million from Rhode Island Capital Plan (RICAP) funds from FY2023 through FY2027 for improvements at the State Police Training Academy in Foster, with \$1.4 million disbursed in FY2023. The funding will be used for the replacement of the antiquated firearms training simulator; environmental and safety renovations to the firing range, including a new firearms shelter and a sound dampening system; replacement of HVAC system, roof, windows, and electrical systems; repaving of roadways; and preparation of an emergency vehicle operators course feasibility study. Based on updated project schedules, the Budget shifts \$911,380 in RICAP funds from FY2022 to FY2023.

**Statewide Body-Worn Camera Program ..... \$15 million**

The General Assembly allocates \$15 million for the Statewide Body-worn Camera Program. The statewide program is designed to equip approximately 1,700 of Rhode Island’s uniformed patrol officers - across every municipal police department and the Rhode Island State Police - with body-worn cameras.

**State Trooper Bargaining Contract ..... \$8.4 million**

The Budget includes an additional \$8.4 million, including \$7.9 million in general revenue, to cover the increased costs of the new State Trooper collective bargaining contract in FY2023. The Governor’s Budget did not include additional personnel spending because at the time it was introduced into the General Assembly, negotiations were ongoing.

**Office of the Attorney General ..... \$1.0 million**

The Budget includes \$1.0 million in additional general revenue funding for pay grade increases for attorney staff. The increases equate to an average annual increase of 3.0 percent.

**Office of the Public Defender ..... \$140,322**

The Budget increases funding at the Office of the Public Defender in FY2023 by \$140,322 to add 1.0 FTE attorney position.

**Mental Health Court ..... \$1.6 million**

The Budget shifts \$952,482 in federal ARPA SFRF to general revenue. This funding supports 7.0 FTE positions within the Judiciary to create a Mental Health Court pilot program in

collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Mental Health Advocate. Of the total:

- \$107,900 and 1.0 Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist are within the Supreme Court
- \$844,582 and 6.0 FTE positions are within the District Court

The Budget additionally adds:

- \$234,477 and 2.0 FTE positions within the Office of the Mental Health Advocate
- \$204,005 and 2.0 FTE positions within the Office of the Attorney General

The Budget finally adds \$213,575 in funding from a federal grant for Mental Health Treatment Court in the District Court. This will be used to create the evaluation processes that will be necessary for the new court to determine eligibility and track progress. The grant is available in FY2022 (\$14,600) and FY2023 (\$213,575). (Governor’s Budget Amendment)

**Crisis Intervention Training ..... \$550,000**

The General Assembly allocates \$550,000 for Crisis Intervention Training to provide training every three years for law enforcement as well as continuing education opportunities.

**9-8-8 ..... \$1.9 million**

The Budget adds \$1,875,000 to create a 9-8-8 hotline for crisis behavioral health services.

**COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS**

**Automatic Expungements ..... \$720,000**

The General Assembly allocates \$340,000 to the Judiciary and \$380,000 to the Office of the Attorney General to implement automatic expungements of marijuana convictions, in light of passed 2022 legislation legalizing recreational use of marijuana.

**Homelessness Assistance Program ..... \$7 million**

The General Assembly allocates \$7 million for the Homelessness Assistance Program to expand housing navigation, behavioral health, and stabilization services to address pandemic-related homelessness. The program will support both operating subsidies for extremely low-income housing units and services for people transitioning from homelessness to housing, including individuals transitioning out of the Adult Correctional Institutions.

**EOHHS: Pay-For-Success ..... \$141,465**

The Budget adds \$141,465 in restricted receipts to a five year, pay-for-success pilot program

within EOHHS to provide supportive housing with additional wraparound services to a cohort of 125 individuals experiencing homelessness. The program is focused on individuals who are high users of the health care, judicial, and/or shelter systems in an effort to reduce statewide costs while improving the outcomes for individuals with complex needs.

**Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness ..... \$1.3 million**

In addition to the pay-for-success pilot program, \$1.3 million in federal grant funds was assigned to the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness (RICEH) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to be used to support initial planning and offset ongoing program costs to the State. There will be 1.0 new Chief Health Program Evaluator FTE position to serve as an operations manager addressing the staffing needs of EOHHS and Medicaid’s Housing Supports and Services Initiative, as well as supporting the implementation of the pilot program.

**Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence ..... \$230,000**

The Budget allocates \$230,000 to the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence for a domestic abuse court advocacy project.

**Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence Program ..... \$2.5 million**

The Budget adds \$2.5 million more in SFRF funds for the Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence Program. Funds will be used to provide additional housing, clinical and mental health services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

**OPIOID AND OTHER SUBSTANCE USE PROGRAMMING**

**McKinsey Opioid Settlement Fund ..... \$990,000**

The Budget increases restricted receipts by \$740,000 to allow for expenditures from the McKinsey Opioid Settlement Fund (Governor’s Budget Amendment):

- \$410,000 for drop-in harm reduction centers
- \$300,000 for naloxone supplies for the University of Rhode Island’s community first responder program that distributes kits to community partners for at-risk populations. URI’s program offers the general public live webinar/in-person seminar or an interactive learning module to become certified as a Community First Responder and receive free naloxone (Narcan) by mail.
- \$30,000 for harm reduction infrastructure.

The Budget additionally increases restricted receipts by \$250,000 through an adjustment to the McKinsey Opioid Settlement account for a total of \$250,000 to be dedicated to a new pilot program for investing in substance use disorder workforce. (Governor’s Budget Amendment)

**McKinsey Settlement ..... \$510,000**

The Budget reduces funding from the McKinsey Settlement from \$890,000 to \$510,000 in FY2023. Of the remaining funds, \$450,000 will be used for an interagency evidence-based communications campaign on polysubstance use, fentanyl risk, and harm reduction, and \$60,000 will be used for the West Elmwood Health Equity Zone (HEZ). The West Elmwood HEZ is one of three HEZs in the State; it encompasses the West End, Elmwood, South Elmwood, and Reservoir neighborhoods in Providence, as well as the western portion of the Upper South Providence neighborhood. HEZs “expand community-based health initiatives and infrastructure; treatment, prevention, and surveillance through multiple state agencies; and state and local law enforcement training and capacity building.” (Governor’s Budget Amendment)

**Opioid Stewardship Fund ..... \$635,872**

The Budget increases restricted receipts by \$635,872 to allow for expenditures from the Opioid Stewardship Fund, providing \$500,000 for harm reduction infrastructure and \$135,872 for a 1.0 Quality Assurance Officer for rapid opioid overdose death detection to provide timely reports within 31 days of a reported fatal overdose as compared to the current 90-day reporting timeframe. (Governor’s Budget Amendment)

**Opioid Abatement Account**

The Budget establishes the Opioid Abatement Account to place distributions from the State’s share of various opioid settlement agreements, and appropriates \$9.9 million from the Teva and Allergan settlements, \$6.4 million from the Distributor Settlement Agreement, and \$3.7 million from the Janssen Settlement Agreement. The programming of the Opioid Abatement Account will be determined through formal recommendations from the Advisory Committee to the Secretary of EOHHS. The Distributors Settlement requires the establishment of an Advisory Committee to ensure that the State and participating municipalities have equal input into the distribution of the funds for approved purposes across the State. It remains to be seen how these funds will be used. (Governor’s Budget Amendment)

**Marijuana Trust Fund & Social Equity Assistance Fund**

The revenue and penalties from the 10.0 percent excise tax on marijuana will be deposited into the Marijuana Trust Fund restricted receipt account which will be used for regulatory and public health expenditures. These expenditures have not been pre-determined. The sales tax revenue will be deposited as general revenue, and the local tax collected by the Division of Taxation will be distributed to the municipalities. Licensing fee and penalty revenue is deposited into the Social Equity Assistance Fund to support programs for individuals disproportionately impacted by the prohibition of marijuana. The Budget does not outline what programs will be financially supported from this Fund.



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The Center for Health + Justice Transformation (CHJT) is a non-partisan organization whose mission is to advance health equity in the criminal justice system. In pursuit of this mission, CHJT provides technical assistance, training, capacity-building and develops innovative projects that work in unison to transform our criminal justice system. Our work reflects our core values of collaboration, racial equity, lived experience and integrity. We envision a criminal justice system that centers equity, is less punitive, and redefines public safety. That system decriminalizes addiction, mental illness, and poverty, prepares individuals and communities for reentry, and seeks to mitigate the collateral consequences of conviction and incarceration. For more information, please visit [www.healthandjustice.org](http://www.healthandjustice.org).