

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Criminal Justice Estimating Conference February 21, 2025

The Criminal Justice Estimating Conference convened February 21, 2025, to revise the forecast of prison admissions and population. During the seven months monitored since the July 2024 Conference, admissions totaled 15,751 which was -579 (-3.5 percent) below the estimate. While reflecting a similar loss to the estimate (-540) that was mostly related to changes in releases, the error rate for the entire prison population was only -0.6 percent—well within the range that various conferences generally attribute to noise.

Several of the variables that are upstream to admissions have not been updated since the summer conference (most importantly, the crime rate and a consistent series of arrests). Among those that have been revised, serious questions remain. For example, felony filings appeared to have a large drop in the 2024 calendar year that brought the annual level below even the shutdown period in the pandemic years. In part, this may be related to the occurrence of hurricanes and other severe weather events that impacted court activity during the year; however, because the 2024 data is so low, the Conference discussed the possibility that the data series may be currently incomplete and subject to a material revision at a later time. The levels of other upstream variables did not exhibit the same extreme declines.

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the steep downward trend in felony filings and the lack of information as to why this is occurring, the Conference adopted a new forecast that was little changed from the prior forecast. Monthly admissions for the remainder of FY 2024-25 were retained from the prior conference, but outer years were adjusted to better reflect the current admission trend. Coupled with changes in final release dates and the new commitments release matrix, the result was only minor modifications to the prison population forecast adopted in July 2024. The annual percentage changes are also similar to those assumed by the prior conference.

Year	Admissions	Releases	End of year pop	End of year over (under) July 2024 CJEC	End of year percent change
FY 24-25	27,876	25,713	89,466	-215	2.5%
FY 25-26	27,998	26,383	91,081	83	1.8%
FY 26-27	28,452	27,256	92,277	138	1.3%
FY 27-28	28,538	27,778	93,037	-267	0.8%
FY 28-29	28,586	27,589	94,034	-223	1.1%
FY 29-30	28,178	27,784	94,428	-383	0.4%