



MCF-Stillwater Phased Closure Update

Thursday, September 25, 2025

Legislative Requirements for MCF-Stillwater Closure

Closure of MCF-Stillwater to occur in phases, with full closure by June 30, 2029

- Unlike anything the agency has undertaken before

Legislative requirements for DOC closure planning:

1. Minimize staff layoffs
2. Maximize staff opportunities to transfer to other facilities
3. Engage with labor unions, public officials, and impacted local units of government
4. Identify potential adverse impacts of the closure on incarcerated individuals
5. Minimize disruptions in conditions of confinement, rehabilitative programming, educational opportunities, mental health and medical care, family visitation, and case planning
6. Prioritize access to services that support rehabilitation and successful reentry

FY26 Budget Requirement & Strategy

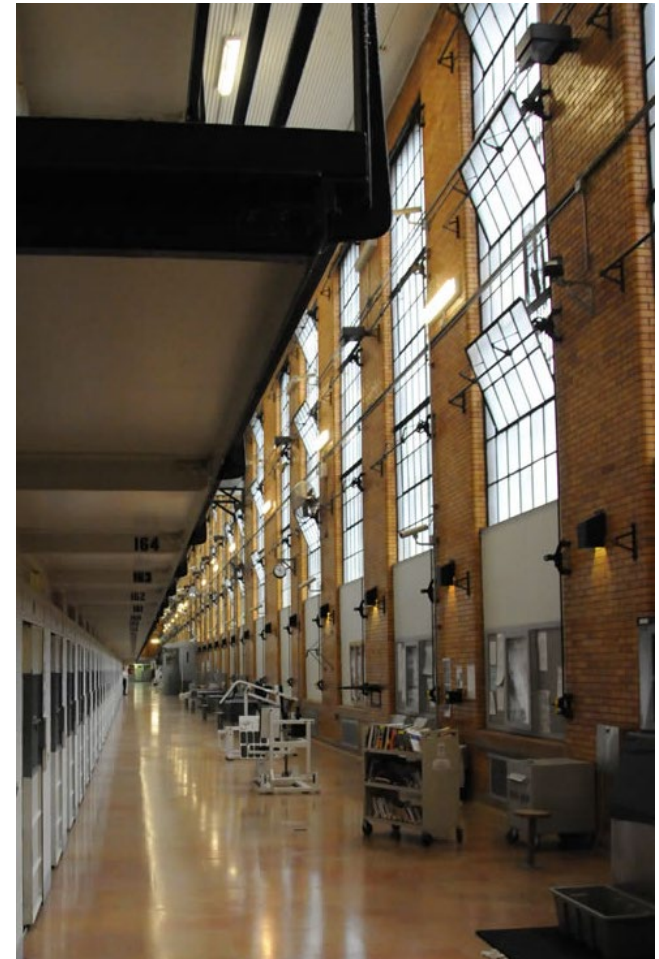
- The DOC must reduce Stillwater's budget by **\$20 million in FY26** as part of the phased closure of MCF-Stillwater.
- We also face **\$10 million in one-time closure-related costs**, such as:
 - Layoff-related expenses
 - Labor agreements (MOUs)
 - Security upgrades
 - Increased staffing at other facilities
- Total savings required in FY26: \$30 million
- To achieve this, DOC needs to reduce Stillwater's population and staffing by approximately **50% for at least nine months of the fiscal year.**

Budget Outlook and Phases

DOC's Phase 1 focuses on reducing the incarcerated population and staffing to realize FY26 budget requirements **before October 1**

Future phases will be building on this foundation to support further budget reduction requirements:

- \$41.5 million in FY27
- \$43 million in FY28
- \$48 million in FY29



Staffing & Workforce

Reduction of MCF-Stillwater staff compliment from **567 to 231 staff**

Under existing labor contracts, each facility is its own seniority unit

- Biggest barrier to staff transfers
- Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) needed to enable staff movement

Consistent, solution-focused union engagement and collaboration

- AFSME, MAPE, MMA, MNA, and SRSEA
- **93 meetings have been held with labor partners since May 15**
- Standing weekly meetings with leadership that includes planning, progress reports, and review of planned communications

Staff Retention Work

- Stillwater staff survey launched June 3 to gather staff preferences
- Established MOUs with various bargaining units
- DOC HR and Labor partners **met with each of the 347 impacted Stillwater staff individually** to discuss their options
- DOC has offered three resource fairs, one career fair, and five job clinics for impacted staff in partnership with local employers like sheriff's offices.
 - Career Fair – attended by more than 100 staff – included Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Loomis, Department of Nature Resources, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, St. Croix Counties, Washington County, Department of Direct Care and Treatment, and more



Staffing Outcomes

- **More than 95%** of the 567 Stillwater staff retained
 - 31 DOC employees received layoff notices
- **No certified uniformed staff laid off**
 - All Stillwater CO2s, CO3s, Lieutenants, and Captains retained
- **No health staff or teachers laid off**
- **Probationary CO1s advancing** into permanent positions as vacancies open
 - Probationary corrections officers will be most impacted, but **working with unions to retain all CO1s in good standing**

Stillwater Staff Transitioned

121 Stillwater staff will be transferring to new facilities

- Biggest transfers to Oak Park Heights and Lino Lakes
- Staff will be completing new facility orientation in early October
 - Priorities are ensuring sufficient Stillwater staff while also supporting smooth transitions to new facilities
 - Wardens at each facility have a welcome plan for relocated staff

Other facilities report being **eager to receive staff from Stillwater**

- Builds expertise and leadership in facilities across the state
- Increased staffing to support programming and work opportunities at facilities

Supporting Smooth Staff Transitions

Safety and staff retention is top priority:

- Other facilities will be staffed above their usual budgeted compliment
- Allowing officers transferring a two-week transitional leave
- Offering two weeks of on-the-job training for transferred officers
- Ensuring orientation for all staff on new location's culture and infrastructure
- Retaining probationary corrections officers until the transitional leave and on-the-job training period is over to help with population management



Incarcerated Person (IP) Transfers

- Stillwater population reduction by 50% before October 1 – **1,189 to 553 IPs**
- **Relocation rubric developed** to strategically and safely guide transfers
 - Medical and mental health care continuity prioritized, then rehabilitative programming, educational programming, and other relevant individual factors, such as:
 - MnSafeD score – DOC's validated assessment for determining risk of institutional misconduct
 - IP incompatibilities – Safety focused analysis of known issues among and between certain IP's
- Case planning coordination is built into transfer timelines
- Visitation applications from friends and family of transferring IPs prioritized

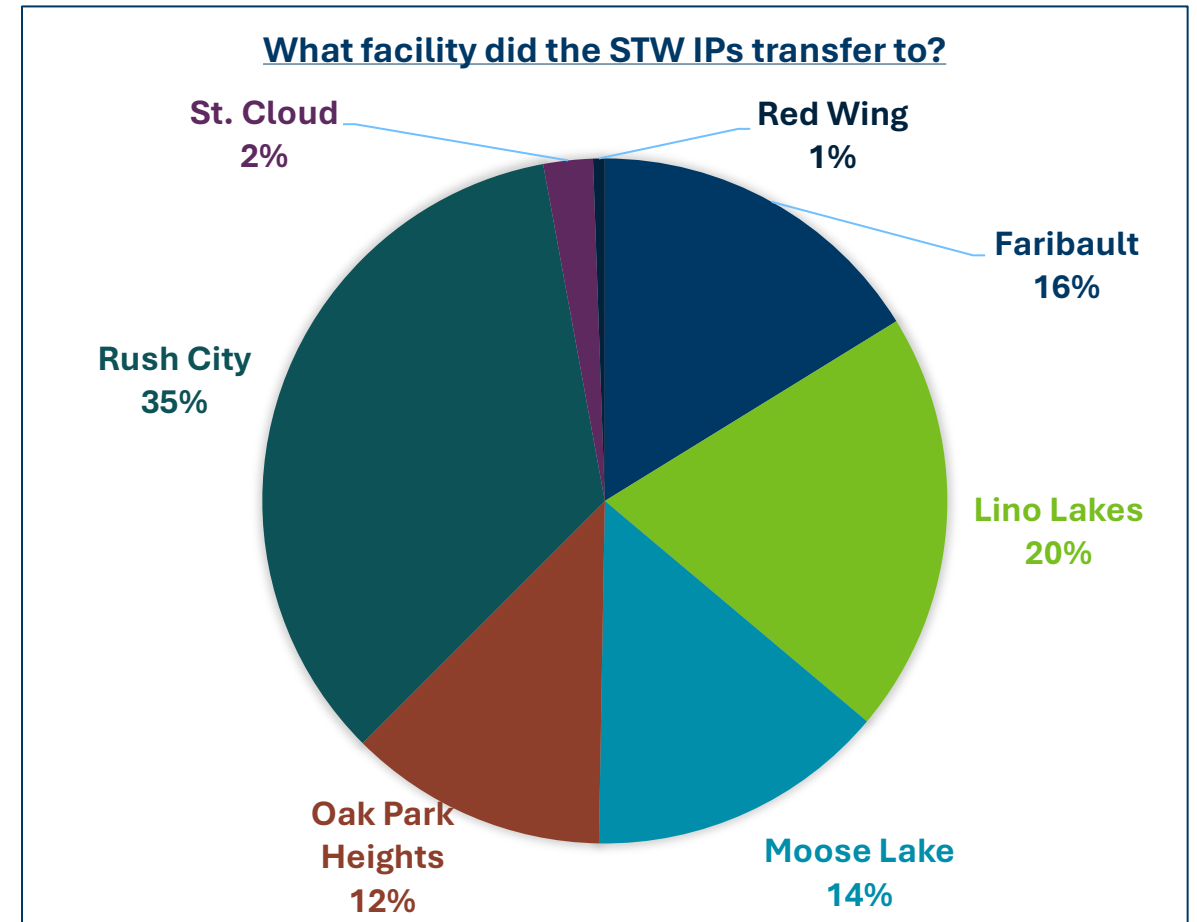
Incarcerated Population Transfer Numbers

Down to **487 incarcerated persons (IPs) estimated** at MCF-Stillwater.

- New facility capacity of 553

2,017 total IP transfers across the system since June 16.

- 728 IPs have been transferred out of Stillwater
- 244 IPs have transferred into Stillwater



Supporting Incarcerated Persons (IP) Transitions

DOC leadership met with Stillwater IP representatives ahead of transfers

- Received important feedback and ideas for improving difficult transitions

Each prison's leadership has been **meeting directly with transferred IPs**

- Answering questions on new environment, programming and job assignments, and more
- Passing those questions back to Communications staff to create weekly IP memos

DOC committed to programming continuity

- Fully utilizing specialty treatment beds across the system
- Filling Challenge Incarceration Program (CIP) and other specialized program beds first
- Higher education students continuing in the program transferred to facilities to continue their classes
- Work opportunities expanding at other facilities

Incarcerated Population Statewide

- Statewide prison population remains stable
- Current prison population is 8,206
- Increased population at other DOC facilities
 - Increased prison population at other facilities for the first time since COVID
 - DOC strategizing ways to increase programming and work assignment opportunities for incarcerated population
 - Future bonding bill proposals will prioritize programming space and specialty beds



Stillwater in Phase 1 – October 2025 through June 2026

- **Expanded Atlantis SUD Program** – From 36 to 93 incarcerated persons (IPs)
 - Approximately 77% of people incarcerated in DOC are diagnosed with substance use disorders
- **Earned Living Units (ELU)** – 310 IPs
 - Significantly modified operations with minimal restrictions for IPs given their demonstrated success.
 - 863 applications reviewed with 310 approved, and waitlist formed
 - Shaping accountability, incentives, and structures directly with IPs
- **Restrictive Housing** – 150 IPs
 - Statewide placement for IPs with long-term restrictive housing sentences

Planning for future fiscal years

Decommissioning and Management Studies will help to inform next steps

- Due to the Legislature on September 30, 2026

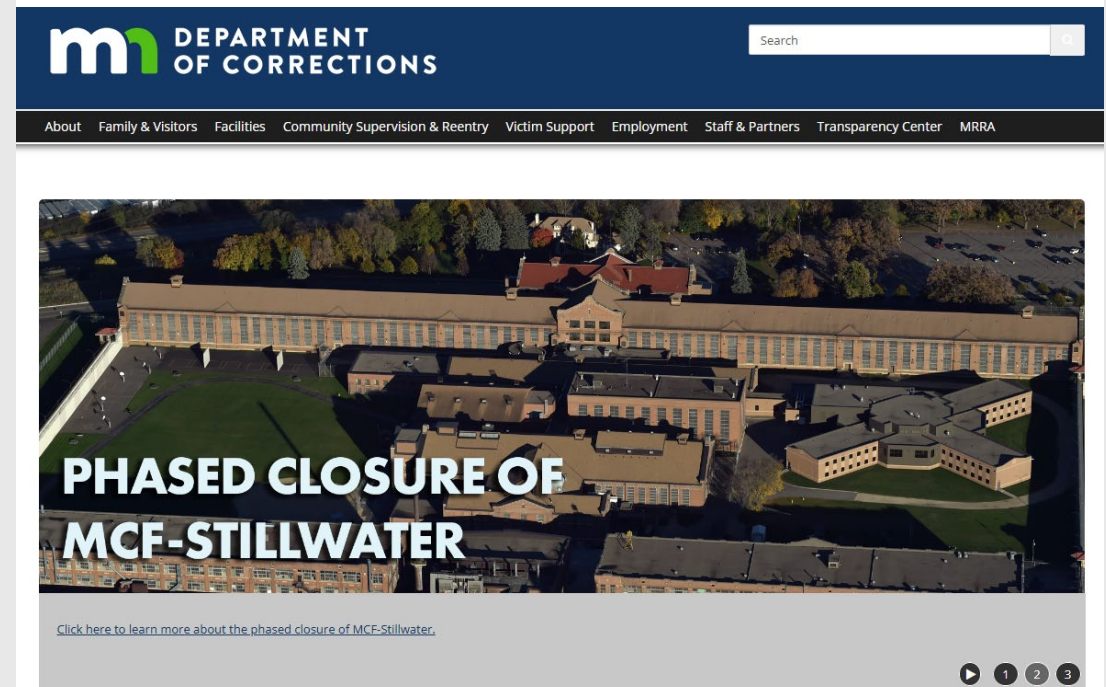
Must continue to achieve additional operational savings each fiscal year through further phased reduction activities at Stillwater

- Decisions about the pace and scope of reductions will be guided by:
 - Staffing capacity
 - Security risks and the safe management of population
 - Availability of programming and medical/mental health services at receiving facilities
 - Facility infrastructure
 - Budgetary pressures and cost-efficiency

Must ensure that no facility becomes overburdened, all staff are supported, and IPs maintain access to programming and essential services

Communication & Transparency

- Weekly memos to staff, incarcerated population, and friends/families
- Public webpage created and updated regularly
- In-person and virtual town halls with staff
- In-person meetings with incarcerated persons
- Briefings to local government leaders and key legislators
- Commitment to being as transparent and responsive as possible



Questions?