Earned Time on Supervision in D.C.

5-year impact in D.C.

Establishing an earned-time credit program would allow people on supervision in D.C. to reduce their sentences by participating in educational programs or maintaining employment status. This program could amount to $83M in reduced community supervision costs and reduce the supervision population in D.C. by up to 4,700 people over 5 years.
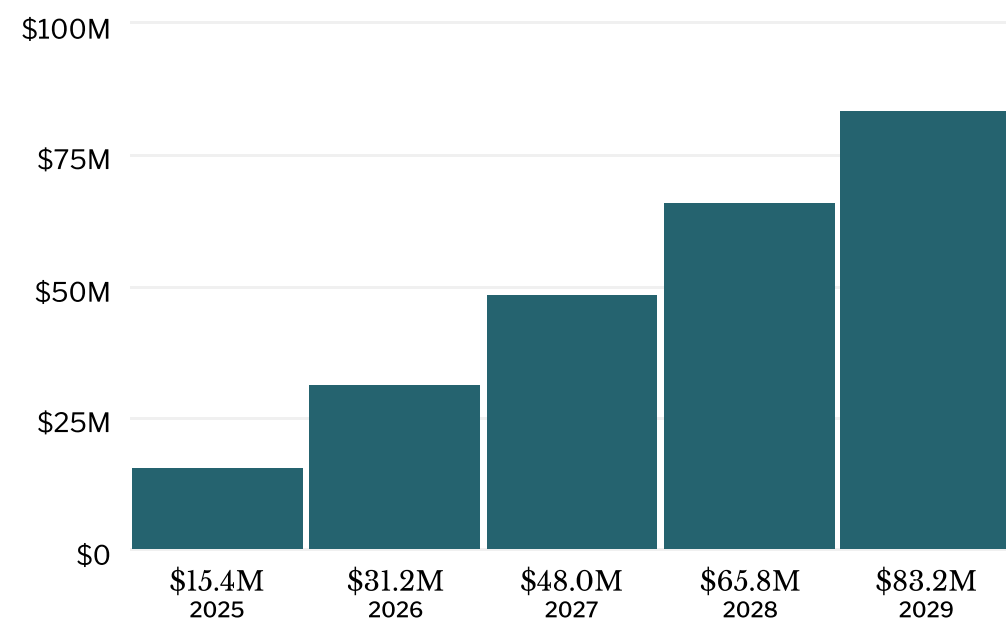
Cumulative supervision cost avoidance

$16.6M
Yearly cost avoidance

$83.2M
5 year supervision cost avoidance

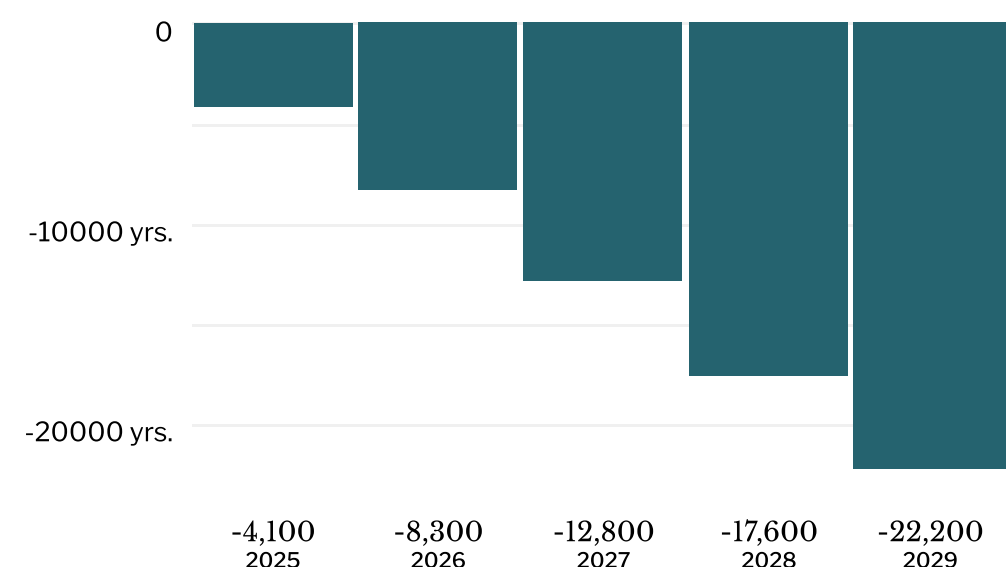| $15.4M | $31.2M | $48.0M | $65.8M | $83.2M |
| 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |

Projected life-years gained through supervision earned-time credits

22,200+
Life years spent out of prison over five years

4,700
Projected reduction in supervision population after 5 years

| -4,100 | -8,300 | -12,800 | -17,600 | -22,200 |
| 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |

The opportunity

As of September 2022, 6,901 adults were on supervision in D.C., where the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency reports that substantial support is needed in order to facilitate the successful return to the community. Over 92% of people on supervision in D.C. self-reported a history with substances and 25% reported having mental health needs. When starting supervision, more than half were unemployed and 29% did not have a high school diploma. Research shows that earned-time credit programs are effective at incentivizing and reinforcing positive behavior, programming participation and other markers of progress towards successful re-entry into the community. Studies have shown that job stability is a particularly important factor in reducing recidivism.

1 in 7
people in D.C. jails are held due to supervision violations

30 days
of earned credits per 30 days on supervision in proposed policy

Minor supervision violations are a significant driver of recidivism within the D.C. correctional system where 1 in 7 people in D.C. jails are detained for supervision violations. Technical violations are non-criminal but often result in substantial jail time as people wait for their hearings: people in jail whose most serious offense is a parole violation are detained for an average of 120 days. Awarding up to 30 days of earned-time credits for every 30 days of supervision creates extra incentives for those on supervision to maintain employment and enroll in educational programming, without jeopardizing community safety. Data in Oregon and South Carolina showed that 90% of people who were compliant for 1 year could have been released early without increasing the rate of re-arrests. A study in NYC showed that early discharge from probation may be associated with lower rates of reoffending. Through these incentives, earned-time credits could support swifter and more successful community reintegration, while reducing expenditures through decreased supervision sentences.

Supervision earned-time in other states

As of 2022, at least 16 states have established supervision earned-time credit programs. States including Missouri, Arkansas and New York offer up to 30 days of credit every 30 days on supervision, depending on violation status, employment, education and other factors. Missouri's supervision population dropped by 18% or 13,000 people over the first 3 years without any increase in post-release revocations.