

Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act 2026 Legislative Report



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Background

The Minnesota Rehabilitation and Reinvestment Act (MRRA), enacted in 2023¹, establishes a statutory framework directing the Department of Corrections (DOC) to implement policies that incentivize participation in rehabilitative programming, reduce incarceration through earned release mechanisms, and reinvest resulting savings into public safety and community-based supports.

Under MRRA, the DOC must do the following:

- Conduct assessments of individuals' criminogenic needs and develop Individualized Rehabilitation Plans (IRPs);
- Establish policies for earned incentive release credits (EIRCs) that allow eligible incarcerated individuals to earn reduced time in prison by participating in rehabilitative programming and meeting other requirements;
- Establish policies for earned compliance credits and supervision abatement status for individuals under community supervision;
- Establish a fund to reinvest earned incentive release savings and a mechanism to allocate the state's savings to:
 - Crime victim services,
 - Community corrections,
 - Community-based supports.

The law also requires the DOC to:

- Provide opportunities for victim input; and
- Engage with stakeholder groups to develop policies.

Beginning January 15, 2026, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Corrections is required by Minnesota Statutes § 244.51 to submit a report to the legislature and designated stakeholder groups. This initial report² will focus on the DOC's progress in policy development and implementation of MRRA.

¹ Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 52, Article 12

² The total cost of salaries, printing, and supplies incurred in the development and preparation of this report was approximately \$1,351 (reported as required by Minn. Stat. §3.197).

The Minnesota Department of Corrections is required to report on the following for the prior calendar year:

- 1) a qualitative description of policy development; implementation status; identified implementation or operational challenges; strategies identified to mitigate and ensure that the act does not create or exacerbate gender, racial, and ethnic disparities; and proposed mechanisms for projecting future savings and reallocation of savings;
- 2) the number of persons who were granted earned incentive release credit, the total number of days of incentive release earned, a summary of committing offenses for those persons who earned incentive release credit, a summary of earned incentive release savings, and the demographic data for all persons eligible for earned incentive release credit and the reasons and demographic data of those eligible persons for whom earned incentive release credit was unearned or denied;
- 3) the number of persons who earned supervision abatement status, the total number of days of supervision abatement earned, the committing offenses for those persons granted supervision abatement status, the number of revocations for re-offense while on supervision abatement status, and the demographic data for all persons eligible for, considered for, granted, or denied supervision abatement status and the reasons supervision abatement status was unearned or denied;
- 4) the number of persons deemed ineligible to receive earned incentive release credits and supervision abatement and the demographic data for the persons; and
- 5) the number of victims who submitted input, the number of referrals to local victim-serving agencies, and a summary of the kinds of victim services

MRRA Components

MRRA establishes a framework that prioritizes rehabilitation, the use of incentives, and reinvestment in programs intended to reduce recidivism. The MRRA framework intends to incentivize incarcerated individuals to address identified criminogenic risks and needs

through skill development and demonstration and to prepare for community reentry and reintegration.

Under MRRA, eligible individuals serving an executed prison sentence receive an Individualized Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) tailored to and targeting their specific risks, needs, and circumstances. These plans guide participation in treatment, education, and other evidence-based programming during the time they are incarcerated and during their term of supervised release. Individuals who successfully complete their IRP objectives and demonstrate positive behaviors can earn early release credits, allowing them to reduce their term of incarceration while improving public safety outcomes. Similarly, those on supervised release may earn compliance credits that reduce active correctional supervision requirements when they meet program goals and follow expectations.

The framework also requires victim outreach and engagement to allow those impacted by crime to share their views and provide input regarding rehabilitative goals, safety concerns, and release conditions. Additionally, MRRA requires the reinvestment of savings generated by earned early releases into programs that support rehabilitation and successful community reintegration, creating a more effective and sustainable system.

Policy Development

Following enactment of MRRA, the DOC undertook a multi-year planning and development effort to operationalize the law in a manner that is safe, consistent, and aligned with legislative intent. This work involved the establishment of multiple cross-functional and multidisciplinary workgroups and subgroups – including DOC and Community Corrections Act (CCA) County subject matter experts – to develop policy recommendations, to establish operational and procedural objectives, and to identify implementation requirements and strategies.

These groups were responsible for developing MRRA’s core policy framework, creating high-level operational workflows, establishing data and reporting strategies, proposing earned release review and decision-making guidelines, and ensuring alignment with community supervision practices. The planning structure allowed the DOC to translate MRRA statutory framework into practical, system-wide procedures and to prepare staff and partners for implementation.

Additionally, as required by law, throughout the planning and implementation phases, the statutorily designated stakeholders, subject-matter experts, community-based advocates, and current and formerly incarcerated persons worked collaboratively with the DOC to inform policy and identify operational considerations. The DOC also received technical

assistance from the Center for Effective Public Policy to assist in evidence-based policy development and implementation planning.

Earned Incentive Release

Earned Incentive Release is a central feature of the MRRA, formalized in DOC Policy 204.064, effective February 2, 2026. This policy establishes a framework for individuals in custody to earn early release by actively participating in targeted programming that promotes rehabilitation, enhances public safety, and ensures meaningful victim engagement.

Throughout 2025, draft policies underwent extensive review by corrections professionals, Minnesota-based victim coalitions, county attorneys, community corrections agencies, behavioral health experts, system partners, and community organizations. Stakeholder feedback shaped the final policy, underscoring the importance of clear eligibility criteria, equity and disparity monitoring, and robust release planning with transitional supports.

Policy 204.064 establishes the core requirements for earning release credits under MRRA. Eligibility for participation is limited and depends on statutory and policy criteria, including sentence length, assessed risk level, and the absence of disqualifying conditions such as active warrants or very high-risk designations. Not all individuals committed to the custody of the DOC are eligible to participate.

For those who are eligible, the foundation of the process is the Individualized Rehabilitation Plan (IRP). Each IRP is developed through a comprehensive assessment process using validated tools, such as MnSTARR³ and the DOC Self-Reported Assessment. These assessments inform rehabilitative plans tailored to each individual's unique risk, need, and responsivity factors. The IRP also includes standard objectives, such as completion of recidivism-reduction programming that targets the individual's highest risk and need areas, development and submission of a success planner, and preparation for release through transitional planning. Policy 204.064 is available in DOC facilities and online in DOC's public policy manual.⁴

Earned Incentive Release Credits are awarded for completing programming, participating in structured activities, and demonstrating prosocial behavior. Credits may be earned through accomplishments such as completing educational programs, engaging in substance use disorder treatment, and participating in cognitive-behavioral interventions. Additional credits may also be awarded for exceptional actions, including promoting safety or preventing harm within a facility in ways that exceed ordinary expectations. The policy

³ Minnesota Screening Tool Assessing Recidivism Risk

⁴ <https://policy.doc.mn.gov/DOCPolicy/>

also incorporates victim input at both the beginning and conclusion of the rehabilitation and release process. DOC's Victim Services and Restorative Justice Unit facilitates opportunities for victims to provide input during IRP development and release planning, ensuring victim perspectives are considered in a trauma-informed manner.

The policy includes defined equity and oversight mechanisms. The commissioner has designated an MRRA release authority responsible for tracking and reporting potential gender and racial disparities in the awarding of Earned Incentive Release Credits. In addition, the DOC has established internal review teams that convene to analyze contributing factors and develop corrective action plans when disparities are identified, supporting consistent and equitable policy implementation across facilities.

Earned Incentive Release Pilot Programs

To ensure the policy is operationally effective, the DOC conducted multiple rounds of pilot testing across three DOC facilities – Minnesota Correctional Facility (MCF)-Shakopee, MCF-Moose Lake, and MCF-Faribault. These pilots allowed staff to implement and evaluate the policy within complex, real-world correctional settings. The testing process helped identify procedural, workflow, and workload management challenges, which in turn informed substantive policy revisions, the development of new procedures, and the creation of supporting tools. As implementation continues and operational experience grows, additional policy refinements are anticipated.

The DOC has also established a phased implementation plan that sequences rollout across state prison facilities to support careful and deliberate adoption consistent with legislative intent. This approach promotes manageable implementation, supports corrections staff, and allows for credible review of eligibility determinations and earned credits. It also ensures alignment with public safety objectives, meaningful engagement of victims, and ongoing improvements to staff training and case processing efficiency.

Earned Compliance Credit & Supervision Abatement

Earned Compliance Credit provides a one-month reduction from the period of active supervision during a supervised release term (and the conditional release term, if applicable) for every two months in which an individual on supervised release demonstrates full compliance with conditions of release and satisfactory progress toward the goals identified in their supervision case plan. At the start of supervised release, individuals work with their supervision agent to develop a case plan that establishes rehabilitative programming, stabilization objectives, and other expectations to be completed while on supervision. To earn Earned Compliance Credits, individuals must:

1. Comply with all conditions of release, including avoiding new offenses or violations resulting in revocation;
2. Demonstrate meaningful progress toward case plan goals; and
3. Have no new protective orders or violations.

So long as there are no articulable victim or public safety concerns, once the time served on active supervision combined with awarded Earned Compliance Credits equals the total length of the client's supervised release term, the individual may transition to Supervision Abatement. This means they will no longer be actively supervised but must still comply with certain Supervision Abatement conditions.

Similar to Earned Incentive Release, the DOC is implementing Earned Compliance Credit and Supervision Abatement through a phased, statewide approach designed to promote consistency, system readiness, and public safety. This phased structure allows for testing, evaluation, and refinement prior to full implementation, while maintaining alignment with statutory requirements and community supervision practices.

Throughout 2025, the DOC focused on foundational planning and early implementation activities to support Earned Compliance Credit and Supervision Abatement. This work included developing policy guidance, operational processes, training materials, and coordinating closely with Community Corrections Act (CCA) partners to ensure shared understanding and consistent application across supervision agencies.

A key priority in 2025 was preparing for and initiating pilot testing to validate both business processes and a new technology tool required to accurately calculate and track earned compliance credits. A small group of supervision agents was identified and trained to test draft processes and the functionality of the new software. Feedback from this pilot informed refinements to policy guidance, workflows, training materials, and system design – establishing the operational foundation for broader system readiness.

Following the 2025 pilot and planning work, implementation will continue through a series of phased activities in 2026 to support a controlled and scalable rollout. Subsequent phases will focus on expanding software availability to all supervision entities statewide, providing training and technical assistance, and gradually scaling to ensure eligibility and consistent awarding and tracking of earned compliance credits. Throughout this staged implementation, DOC staff and partner county agencies will refine training, monitor challenges, and apply lessons learned to ensure successful system-wide adoption.

This phased approach enables DOC and its community supervision partners to incorporate feedback, address operational challenges, and ensure that Earned Compliance Credit and Supervision Abatement are implemented effectively and sustainably.

Implementation and Operational Challenges

Earned Incentive Release Challenges

- **Technology limitations:** The DOC's current data system is outdated and unable to support automated tracking and analysis of credits, requiring staff to perform manual reviews. This is an acute problem that DOC will continue to navigate until full implementation of the agency's data transformation project, anticipated in 2028. The agency's new data information system will integrate with other corrections systems data, allowing for more automated analysis, improved data connections, and seamless integration of MRRA policy requirements.
- **Program capacity:** The DOC continues to face significant infrastructure limitations that restrict its ability to deliver rehabilitative programming. Bonding projects at MCF-Shakopee and MCF-Lino Lakes are expanding space for programming and treatment, representing important steps toward building the infrastructure required to support MRRA's goals. The DOC continues to focus its bonding dollar requests on constructing additional programming space which will permit expansion of rehabilitative services across all facilities. Within the last year, the DOC has added nearly 100 substances use disorder treatment beds, with 60 more beds scheduled for 2026. DOC is also in the process of expanding cognitive behavioral intervention programming, but more is needed.
- **Staffing constraints:** Implementing the MRRA framework requires collaboration across all DOC business units and depends upon existing staff assuming additional responsibilities since the agency has not added any additional positions. The initiative employs a training and support model, which is designed to help staff implement lasting and effective workflow changes that become part of standard business processes within the DOC.
- **Multi-disciplinary team and integrated case planning:** While the DOC has always done a variety of assessments on those committed to the DOC for service of their sentence, the agency has been focused on how a multidisciplinary team case planning approach can enhance the effectiveness of rehabilitative efforts focused on the primary criminogenic risk and needs of the people in the system. While the DOC is pursuing this course of action for everyone committed to DOC custody, this effort is of profound importance to MRRA.

Earned Compliance Credit & Supervision Abatement Challenges:

- **Incorporation of case planning as a daily practice:** Implementation of MRRA and Earned Compliance Credit and Supervision Abatement (ECC/SA) requires more than technical or procedural changes; it represents a shift in how community supervision work is structured and carried out. While ECC/SA establishes a clear

statutory framework for earning credits, effective implementation depends on consistent case planning, skill development, and reinforcement of behavioral change during routine supervision interactions. The DOC anticipates challenges as supervision agencies transition, including integrating structured case planning into existing workflows, ensuring consistency in how case plans are developed and linked to ECC/SA eligibility, supporting supervisors in reinforcing new practices, and balancing caseload pressures while incorporating additional structured activities. Addressing this adaptive change will require sustained training, supervisory support, and reinforcement over time rather than a single implementation event.

- **Statewide technical support and troubleshooting:** As ECC/SA moves beyond pilot activities and software deployment expands across supervision agencies statewide, technical challenges that are manageable at a small scale may increase in complexity and volume. The DOC anticipates variability in local IT readiness, bandwidth limitations for smaller agencies, increased demand for technical assistance, and the need for timely system adjustments based on real-world use. Supporting a coordinated statewide rollout of new functionality will require clear communication, responsive technical support, and ongoing collaboration with agency partners.
- **Ensuring accurate and consistent data entry:** ECC/SA relies on accurate, timely, and consistent data entry across all participating agencies to ensure credits are calculated and applied appropriately. DOC anticipates a learning curve as staff adapt to new data requirements, including the correct entry of supervision conditions, consistent completion of case planning fields, uniform documentation of credit-related decisions, and clear understanding of how credits are applied or adjusted. While later phases of implementation will include additional quality assurance tools, early implementation will require clear guidance, adequate training resources, and responsive policy and technical support.
- **Stakeholder readiness and buy-in:** Because ECC/SA represents both a statutory requirement and a shift in supervision practices, DOC anticipates varying levels of readiness and comfort across agencies and individual practitioners. Some agencies may adopt the framework quickly, while others may require additional time and support to build confidence in the processes and intent of the policy. Ongoing communication, technical assistance, and engagement will be critical to addressing concerns, reinforcing statutory intent, and supporting consistent application statewide.

Strategies to Mitigate Disparities

DOC acknowledges inherited racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in the criminal justice system and has taken steps to avoid exacerbating them:

- DOC engaged a broad variety of stakeholders, including community groups, advocacy organizations, staff, and people with lived incarceration experience, to ensure policies reflect diverse perspectives.
- Policies clearly define eligibility, required objectives, and review processes to limit bias.
- Standardized components of Individualized Rehabilitation Plans (IRPs) promote consistent treatment and programming expectations across all populations.
- Structured decision-making and documented assessments reduce reliance on informal practices.
- Validated tools like the Minnesota Screening Tool Assessing Recidivism Risk (MnSTARR)⁵ guide IRP development.
- IRPs are flexible, allowing updates based on reassessment, emerging needs, and observed progress.
- Facility and community supervision staff receive training on consistent application of MRRA policies.
- Supervisory oversight and multi-disciplinary teams reinforce uniform decision-making and support fair application of assessments and IRPs.
- Policies require tracking and reporting of racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in earned incentive release awards.

Reinvestments

DOC developed a “direct cost per diem” model to calculate savings from early releases. Direct cost per diem means the actual non-salary expenditures as of July 31 each year from the DOC expense budgets for:

- Food preparation;
- Food provisions;
- Personal support for incarcerated persons, including clothing, linen, and other personal supplies;
- Transportation; and

⁵ Duwe, G., & Rocque, M. (2019, November). *The predictive performance of the Minnesota Screening Tool Assessing Recidivism Risk (MnSTARR): An external validation* (Minnesota Department of Corrections). Minnesota Department of Corrections.

- Professional technical contracted health care services.

DOC has been working with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) to certify the direct cost per diem figure used to calculate savings associated with the MRRA.

Per Minn. Stat. § 244.50, the DOC will work with MMB to reallocate yearly savings as follows:

- 50% to crime victim services via the Office of Justice Programs;
- 25% to community corrections and DOC supervision services;
- 25% to DOC for grants supporting community-based services and evidence-based programming.

Evaluations

DOC will be evaluating the impact of MRRA on both institutional and post-release outcomes. Evaluation efforts will first focus on whether the implementation of MRRA has reduced prison misconduct and increased participation in structured activities such as education classes, programs, and work assignments. After incarcerated individuals have been approved for earned incentive release, the DOC will later evaluate the impact of MRRA on recidivism. Likewise, following the approval of supervised individuals for supervision abatement, the DOC's evaluation will determine the effects on post-release outcomes, including recidivism.

Stakeholder Feedback

Victim Organizations Feedback

The Department of Corrections' Victim Services and Restorative Justice Unit Director conducted regular meetings with statewide crime victim coalitions, including Mending the Sacred Hoop, the Minnesota Alliance on Crime, the Minnesota Children's Alliance, the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, and Violence Free Minnesota. These meetings were used to provide updates on MRRA implementation, identify areas of concern, and solicit input and recommendations from coalition representatives. Engagement with the statewide crime victim coalitions began in March 2024 and continued on a monthly basis through June 2025.

In addition to ongoing meetings, DOC provided multiple trainings on MRRA and the associated planning processes for the statewide crime victim coalitions and their member organizations. These trainings occurred five times between March 2024 and July 2025 and were designed to support understanding of the law, implementation timelines, and opportunities for victim input.

During these engagements, statewide crime victim coalitions raised several key areas of concern, including:

- Protecting victim confidentiality throughout MRRA processes;
- Ensuring crime victims have timely and meaningful opportunities for input during needs assessment, Individualized Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) development, and release planning;
- Providing clear, accessible communication to crime victims, advocates, and victim-witness staff regarding MRRA processes and engagement opportunities;
- Developing processes to communicate appropriate local community-based advocacy services to crime victims, as required by statute;
- Clarifying the assessments and programming available in facilities and the community for individuals with domestic violence or intimate partner violence histories;
- Clarifying the assessments, programming, and review processes applicable to individuals convicted of criminal sexual conduct offenses;
- Assessing the adequacy and availability of programming for individuals releasing under MRRA, including culturally responsive programming and programming specific to domestic violence behavior change;
- Ensuring that victim safety considerations are incorporated into decisions related to supervision abatement; and
- Addressing how outstanding restitution obligations are considered in supervision abatement decisions, including the need for a nuanced evaluation of an individual's ability to pay.

The statewide crime victim coalitions provided substantive input into the development of crime victim input forms used within MRRA processes, assisted in creating information provided to crime victims regarding local community-based advocacy resources, and contributed feedback on multiple sections of MRRA policy. This engagement informed DOC's efforts to incorporate victim perspectives and statutory requirements into MRRA implementation.

Prosecutor Notification

Born out of consultation with the Minnesota County Attorney's Association, a legislatively identified stakeholder group, the prosecutor notification process was developed and embedded within the Earned Incentive Release (EIR) policy. This process includes the MRRA team notifying the relevant Minnesota county attorney(s) when an incarcerated person will undergo review for EIR. The notification solicits relevant information that may not have been contained within case documents, was not known at the time of sentencing,

or has recently arisen. The prosecutor notification form seeks information on the following specific topics:

- Current or pending criminal cases
- Safety or security concerns based on recent/current behavior
- Relevant information that was not known at the time of sentencing

County attorney offices are provided a 30-day window for response and may request additional time if needed.

Staff Observation for Growth & Planning

MRRA Earned Incentive Release is not just about what programs incarcerated people complete to change their behaviors; it also relies on data that can illuminate how they demonstrate change in the ways they live their lives while incarcerated. Incorporating feedback from corrections professionals on how incarcerated individuals engage in their living environments offers further data for incorporation into reviews. Hundreds of corrections professionals assisted in the design of the information gathering tool. The process of gathering information, creating and modifying feedback and data collection tools, and ongoing evaluation is crucial for sustained improvements to the MRRA policies.

Implementation Data⁶

As of December 31, 2025:

- 25 total reviews for Earned Incentive Release have been conducted, of which:
 - 12 individuals have been approved to move forward to release planning
 - 9 individuals have been granted earned incentive release
 - 13 individuals were discontinued from the review process
 - 1 individual was denied Earned Incentive Release
- Total Incarceration Days Saved:⁷ 1,716 days
- Projected Reinvestment Amount⁸: \$34,405.80
- Primary Offense of Persons Who Received Earned Incentive Release Credit:
 - Drug-Related: 5
 - Driving While Intoxicated: 2

⁶ The figures included in this report reflect preliminary, uncertified data based on information available at the time of publication. These data will be finalized and certified in coordination with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) at fiscal year-end.

⁷ “Incarceration days saved” reflects the cumulative reduction in time spent in prison due to Earned Incentive Release under MRRA, compared to an individual’s expected release date under standard sentencing practices. In Minnesota, incarcerated individuals are typically released to supervised release after serving approximately two-thirds of their executed sentence.

⁸ The calculation presented here is preliminary and subject to final certification by MMB at fiscal year-end.

- Weapons: 2
- Race/Ethnicity of Persons Who Received Earned Incentive Release Credit:
 - White: 7
 - Black: 0
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native: 1
 - Hispanic: 0
 - Asian or Pacific Islander: 1
 - Unknown: 0
- Race/Ethnicity of Persons Reviewed and Discontinued/Denied:
 - White: 11
 - Black: 0
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native: 3
 - Hispanic: 0
 - Asian or Pacific Islander: 0
 - Unknown: 0
- Age of Persons Who Received Earned Incentive Release Credit:
 - 18-24: 1
 - 25-34: 0
 - 35-44: 2
 - 45-54: 2
 - 55-64: 3
 - 65+: 1
- Age of Persons Reviewed and Discontinued:
 - 18-24: 0
 - 25-34: 1
 - 35-44: 5
 - 45-54: 5
 - 55-64: 3
 - 65+: 0
- 11 cases where a least one victim was identified:
 - 8 cases with valid contact information were provided information and no response was received.
 - 3 victim responses received.
 - 1 victim expressed specific concerns.