California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Air Cooling Pilot Program Supplemental Report

January 2026

Introduction

The 2025 Budget Act provided the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) $17.6 million General Fund in fiscal year 2025-26 and $20 million General Fund in fiscal year 2026-27 to implement an air cooling pilot program (Pilot Program) with the goal of improving indoor environments in housing units throughout the State. The Pilot Program will design, install, and evaluate air cooling alternatives at housing units at three CDCR institutions; the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), Kern Valley State Prison (KVSP), and California State Prison, Los Angeles County (LAC). The Budget Act also included provisional language that requires, on or before January 10, 2026, CDCR to provide the budget committees of both houses of the Legislature, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and the Legislative Analyst's Office a supplemental report detailing the following:

1. The department's current capabilities or plans to collect statewide data on temperature, humidity, and the availability of electric fans in housing units, as well as other areas of prisons that may require cooling.
2. The design type, existing air-cooling infrastructure, if any, and number of days with indoor temperatures exceeding 78 degrees over the past year.
3. A discussion of the steps taken or planned, such as conducting additional engineering studies, to identify cooling options for housing unit design types not included in the pilot.
4. Policies or practices adopted or under consideration to mitigate the effects of indoor heat in the near term, including a description of the policies around electric fan usage.

The supplemental information presented in this document provides additional information for each requirement listed above.

Statewide Data Collection and Availability of Fans

Current Data Collection Capabilities:

CDCR operates a diverse portfolio of correctional institutions across California, many of which were constructed in the mid-to-late 20th century. Many of these facilities were built with limited consideration for modern cooling standards or the technology to monitor/report indoor environmental data such as temperature and humidity. As such, many housing units throughout the State routinely experience high indoor temperatures during the summer months. In 1995, in response to legal mandates from the Coleman court, CDCR implemented a Prevention Plan for Heat-Related Pathologies (Heat Plan). The Heat Plan requires institutions to initiate Stage I alerts when outdoor temperatures reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), and Stage II and III alerts when indoor temperatures reach 90°F and 95°F, respectively.

The Heat Plan also requires each institution to record indoor temperatures at all housing units every three hours during summer months, May through October. Many institutions use basic thermometers with limited features, typically handheld or wall-mounted models. The Plan does not currently require institutions to track or record indoor humidity. The instruments being

utilized rarely include humidity indicators, making collection of humidity data unavailable for staff. Additionally, institutions utilize a physical documentation system requiring staff to manually log temperatures. Transferring the hand-written data to a digital format for reporting purposes has proven to be an extensive, time-consuming process, with the potential for human error. To eliminate these issues, CDCR has initiated a web-based data reporting system at two institutions to upload their heat data information.

Heat Plan Requirements - Temperature Data:

Outdoor Temperature Monitoring

- The Warden or designee shall ensure an accurate thermometer is located in a central, heat-neutral location to monitor outside air temperatures.
- Outside air temperatures shall be recorded every hour, every day, from May 1 through October 31 of each year, or any other time the outdoor temperature is expected to rise above 90°F.

Indoor Temperature Monitoring

- The Warden or designee shall also ensure inside air temperatures are measured in all non-air-conditioned living areas housing incarcerated persons and areas that are air conditioned but could exceed 90°F.
- Temperatures shall be taken at the highest physically located temperature sensor, or, in its absence, the highest accessible non-air-conditioned location where incarcerated persons are housed, which could include a temperature taken within an incarcerated person's cell.
- Inside air temperatures shall be recorded every three hours, daily from May 1 through October 31.
- The Correctional Plant Manager shall ensure testing of all thermometers located within the housing units and outdoors. Testing shall be conducted in April and July each year to ensure accuracy.
- When an institution's location is expected to reach 100°F or higher, the Warden, Chief Executive Officer, and their respective teams shall convene daily to collaborate, address and manage heat related issues and action plans.

Planned Data Collection:

CDCR recently initiated an effort at two institutions, Calipatria State Prison and Mule Creek State Prison, to install advanced sensors to automate the collection of temperature readings, both indoors and outdoors, and replace the current manual process.

Availability of Electric Fans:

Although CDCR has no existing policy on the specific use of electric fans in housing units, they are available throughout all institutions and are utilized in housing units/living areas, kitchens, and program areas to support air circulation and contribute to heat-mitigation efforts during periods of moderate to high temperatures. While electric fans provide relief and serve as an important supplemental resource, the Pilot Program effort seeks to address overall climate-control capabilities statewide.

CDCR remains committed to expanding and enhancing its use of technology in data collection

and tracking by utilizing digital tools. The department is also pursuing heat-mitigation strategies including improvements in air cooling infrastructure, expanded cooling-station access, and continued refinement of the Heat Plan. These efforts reflect a proactive and positive approach to managing rising temperatures and improving the comfort and safety of both staff and the incarcerated population.

Housing Unit and Cooling Infrastructure Information

Housing Unit Design:

Due to the materials commonly used to construct buildings at correctional institutions (typically concrete block), maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures presents a unique challenge. The lack of insulation and the widespread use of concrete construction materials exacerbate heat retention, making it difficult to cool buildings effectively during California's increasingly intense summer months, as many buildings lack thermal resistance to exterior temperatures.

CDCR's housing unit portfolio, comprised of 31 adult institutions, currently consists of 791 total active housing units of varying design styles (270-style, 180-style, Dormitories, Cross-Tops, and Non-Standard designs).

The table below identifies CDCR's existing Housing Unit design types and Heat Data for 2025.

Institution	Housing Unit Types					2025 Heat Data (May-Oct)
	270	180	Dormitories	Cross-Top	Non-Standard*	Days Above 78° Farenheit
ASP	18	0	2	0	0	132
CAL	20	0	2	0	2	137
CCI	5	16	0	0	1	115
CCWF	2	0	14	0	0	97
CEN	20	0	2	0	2	42
CHCF	0	0	9	0	20	0
CIM	0	0	20	0	1	161
CIW	2	0	9	0	0	150
CMC	0	0	5	0	11	33
CMF	0	0	13	0	40	135
COR	10	13	0	0	1	159
CRC	0	0	36	0	0	149
CTF	0	0	8	0	14	60
FSP	0	0	11	0	5	158
HDSP	10	16	2	0	1	89
ISP	20	0	2	0	1	1
KVSP	0	16	2	0	2	66
LAC	18	0	2	0	2	39
MCSP	14	0	2	6	0	11
NKSP	17	0	7	0	1	134
PBSP	0	16	13	0	0	63
PVSP	20	0	2	0	1	67
RJD	20	0	3	0	0	114
SAC	1	22	0	0	2	133
SATF	10	8	7	6	1	133
SCC	5	0	76	0	0	154
SOL	19	0	5	0	1	159
SQRC	0	0	5	0	6	41
SVSP	7	13	0	0	3	1
VSP	2	0	0	14	0	52
WSP	5	0	23	0	0	136
Totals	**245**	**120**	**282**	**26**	**118**	**791 Housing Units**

*Non-Standard: various housing unit styles of atypical design due to age or special use. (Ex. Single-Cells, Restricted Housing, Outpatient Housing, etc.)

Existing Air Cooling Infrastructure:

Historically, housing units have been equipped with only air handling units or evaporative cooling systems, neither of which provide adequate relief from excessive heat. While CDCR has undertaken retrofit efforts in recent years to upgrade systems at select housing units at various institutions to provide air conditioning, these efforts have been limited to buildings that house populations most affected by high indoor temperatures.

The table below identifies CDCR's existing Air Cooling infrastructure as of December 2025.

Institution	Number of Housing Units (HU)	HUs with Air Handlers Only	HUs with Evaporative Cooling	HUs with Mechanical Cooling
ASP	20	0	20	0
CAL	24	0	0	24
CCI	22	21	0	1
CCWF	16	0	16	0
CEN	24	0	0	24
CHCF	29	0	0	29
CIM	21	12	0	9
CIW	11	0	7	4
CMC	16	13	0	3
CMF	53	0	25	28
COR	24	0	24	0
CRC	36	32	1	3
CTF	22	21	1	0
FSP	16	0	12	4
HDSP	29	0	28	1
ISP	23	0	0	23
KVSP	20	18	0	2
LAC	22	0	21	1
MCSP	22	0	19	3
NKSP	25	0	24	1
PBSP	29	28	0	1
PVSP	23	0	22	1
RJD	23	15	0	8
SAC	25	0	23	2
SATF	32	0	30	2
SCC	81	76	5	0
SOL	25	15	6	4
SQRC	11	11	0	0
SVSP	23	0	20	3
VSP	16	0	16	0
WSP	28	0	28	0
TOTALS:	**791**	**262**	**348**	**181**
PERCENT:	**100%**	**33%**	**44%**	**23%**

Considerations for Non-Pilot Program Housing Units

In April 2024, CDCR commissioned an engineering study (Study) to analyze the existing cooling systems at five typical housing units of varying design. The study provided system replacement

recommendations for technologies potentially capable of maintaining indoor temperatures at or near 78°F. The Study emphasized that the optimal approach to improving indoor conditions may vary significantly across CDCR's portfolio, depending on factors such as:

- Construction type and age of the building
- Materials used in walls, roofs, and insulation
- Presence and condition of existing cooling systems
- Orientation of the structure relative to sun exposure
- Geographical location and regional climate conditions

The housing units selected for the Study provide a unique mix of the factors outlined above that will provide data and information that can be extrapolated for additional housing units throughout the State not included in the Pilot Program. A comparative analysis of historical temperature data and post construction temperature data will be used to determine the best approach for addressing air cooling options for all remaining housing units with similar attributes.

For housing units at older institutions or specialized housing units, additional data will be required to identify common trends or patterns to determine the best approach/alternative for those specific designs. Site visits focused on key elements such as mechanical and electrical rooms and associated panels, above-ceiling conditions, temperature spot readings, and equipment visual inspections will also be important. Additional engineering studies (if needed) and analysis will be performed once the final Pilot Program Report/Analysis becomes available.

Policies and Practices for Mitigating Effects of Indoor Heat

As previously mentioned, CDCR has implemented various processes to mitigate the impacts of indoor heat and protect the incarcerated population and staff, most commonly through the use of wall and ceiling-mounted fans to provide some supplementary relief from high indoor temperatures, use of portable fans available for large areas, and personal fans available for individual use.

Additionally, in August 2024, the Heat Plan was updated to require institutions to conduct daily meetings whenever temperatures are expected to reach 100°F or higher. These meetings provide an interactive forum for institutions to identify and address the potential impacts to both staff and the incarcerated population of rising temperatures, as well as to determine appropriate mitigation strategies at the local level. The Heat Plan updates also mandated that cooling stations be readily available and that enhanced cooling and hydration measures be implemented as necessary.

CDCR has also developed specific policies for heat-risk incarcerated individuals who are on certain medications and face health risks in high-heat conditions:

Stage II:
When inside temperatures reach 90°F or more, staff must initiate cooling and hydration measures, which may include cool drinking water, misting, and cold showers. Staff must also

increase observation of heat-risk incarcerated person for signs of heat-related illness, and report any symptoms to health care staff.

Stage III:

When inside temperatures reach 95°F or more, medically trained personnel must perform medical rounds to observe each heat-risk incarcerated person at least once every two hours during the period the inside temperature remains at 95 degrees or above, and record the incarcerated person's condition. If any incarcerated person shows signs or symptoms of heat related illness, they must be provided cooling measures or be sent to the Triage and Treatment Area.

While the policies above were implemented as safety measures for heat-risk incarcerated individuals who are on certain medications, institutions offer the same cooling and hydration options to the entire population, as needed, throughout the summer months. CDCR continues to explore additional alternatives for mitigating the effects of indoor heat for the safety of staff and the incarcerated population.

Conclusion

CDCR will develop a comprehensive report/analysis of the results of the pilot study, detailing the effectiveness of each alternative approach to improve indoor conditions at the pilot institutions. The report will provide the information needed for CDCR to make data-driven decisions for future heating and cooling projects throughout the State.

Exhibit A

Supplemental Report of the 2025 Budget Act

Item 5225-001-0001—California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

1. Air Cooling Pilot Program. On or before January 10, 2026, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shall submit to the budget committees of each house, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and the Legislative Analyst's Office a report on the following:
   a. The department's current capabilities or plans to collect statewide data on temperature, humidity, and the availability of electric fans in HUs as well as other areas of prisons that may also require cooling, such as kitchens.
   b. The design type, existing air cooling infrastructure, if any, and number of days with indoor temperatures exceeding 78 degrees over the past year, or similar available data, for each housing unit in the prison system.
   c. A discussion of the steps taken or planned, such as conducting additional engineering studies, to identify cooling options for housing unit design types not included in the pilot.
   d. A discussion of policies or practices adopted or under consideration to mitigate the effects of indoor heat in the near term, including a description of policies around electric fan usage.
   e. On or before January 10, 2031, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shall submit to the budget committees of each house, the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and the Legislative Analyst's Office a report on the results of the pilot program and recommended statewide strategy for scaling air cooling in a timely and efficient manner. To the extent the strategy would involve deactivating HUs while air cooling is being installed, the report should discuss how the department would manage the impact to the prison population and employees. In addition, the report should include consideration of options to expedite construction.