TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 2

Key Findings and System Observations 3

Introduction and Purpose 4

Recruitment and Hiring Pipeline 4

Recruitment and Hiring PROCESSTIMELINE 7

Training Pipeline and Certification Requirements 11

Staffing Levels and Overtime Drivers 14

- Vacancy Levels and Hiring Timelines 15
- Training Pipeline Requirements 15
- Shift Coverage Requirements 15
- Leave Usage and Scheduling Considerations 15
- Coordination of Hiring and Training Cycles 15

Operational and Policy Considerations 16

- Recruitment and Hiring Process Considerations 16
- Hiring and Training Pipeline Considerations 16
- Workforce Scheduling and Work-Life Considerations 16
- Longer-Term Workforce Considerations 17

Funding and Resource Considerations 17

Policy and Governance Considerations 18

Conclusion 19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to Amendment 30 to the 2026 Recommended Budget and examines recruitment, hiring, training, and staffing practices for correctional officer and deputy sheriff positions across Milwaukee County. The analysis was conducted by the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance in coordination with the Department of Human Resources, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, and the Community Reintegration Center.

This effort reflects cross-departmental collaboration to better understand current system dynamics, identify operational constraints, and highlight areas that may warrant further consideration.

Milwaukee County continues to receive a substantial number of applicants for public safety positions; however, conversion from applicant to hire remains relatively low, and in several years, hiring has only marginally exceeded separations. As a result, net staffing growth has been limited, contributing to ongoing vacancy levels.

The analysis indicates that applicant volume is one factor, but attrition within the hiring pipeline, hiring timelines, and early-career retention appear to be significant contributors to current staffing challenges. Conversion rates for correctional officer positions are generally below 10 percent, and hiring outcomes vary significantly year to year.

The hiring process for these positions involves multiple sequential steps, including applicant screening, interviews, background investigations, pre-employment processing, and training. Background investigations are among the most time-intensive stages, particularly for deputy sheriff candidates, whose hiring timelines may extend by five to six months before academy training. In comparison, correctional officer hiring timelines are shorter but still require several weeks to months, depending on processing and training coordination.

Training requirements further affect workforce availability. Newly hired correctional officers must complete jailor certification training, while deputy sheriffs must complete a multi-month academy program. Training capacity, instructor availability, and facility constraints influence how quickly new hires can be deployed. When training capacity is constrained, onboarding delays may extend vacancy periods and contribute to continued reliance on overtime.

Mandatory overtime is primarily driven by structural staffing gaps in operations that require continuous 24-hour coverage. These gaps result from a combination of vacancy levels, hiring and training timelines, leave usage, and scheduling constraints. Because new hires cannot immediately fill operational roles, existing staff are often required to work overtime to maintain minimum staffing levels.

Many components of the hiring and training process are governed by Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) rules and state law, including certification requirements, background checks, and training standards. As a result, certain elements of the process cannot be modified at the County level without statutory or regulatory changes.

This report outlines several potential operational and policy considerations to support workforce stabilization. These include strategies to improve recruitment pipeline efficiency, reduce hiring timelines, expand training capacity, enhance retention, and evaluate scheduling and overtime practices. Additional options include strengthening recruitment infrastructure, improving coordination between hiring and training cycles, and exploring longer-term structural strategies such as controlled over-hiring or expanded training capacity.

Consistent with the intent of Amendment 30, this report is exploratory in nature. It is intended to clarify current system dynamics, identify constraints, and outline potential areas for consideration. The options described do not constitute formal recommendations and would require further analysis, cross-departmental coordination, and evaluation of fiscal and operational impacts before implementation.

KEY FINDINGS AND SYSTEM OBSERVATIONS

The following observations reflect cross-departmental input and are intended to describe current system dynamics influencing staffing outcomes.

Applicant volume is strong, but conversion to hire remains relatively low

Milwaukee County receives a substantial number of applicants for correctional officer and deputy sheriff positions; however, fewer than 10 percent of applicants are typically hired. In several years, hiring has only slightly exceeded separations, resulting in minimal net staffing growth.

Recruitment challenges appear to be influenced more by attrition within the hiring pipeline rather than applicant supply alone

The primary constraint is not the number of applicants, but where candidates exit the hiring process. Attrition may occur due to qualification gaps, non-responsiveness, background screening outcomes, hiring timelines, or early-career turnover.

Hiring timelines, particularly for deputy sheriff positions, are lengthy and sequential

The hiring process includes multiple required steps that must be completed in sequence. Background investigations are the most time-intensive phase, particularly for deputy sheriff candidates, who may take five to six months before academy training.

Training capacity influences how quickly new hires can become operational

Training schedules, instructor availability, and facility constraints influence how quickly new staff can be deployed. When training capacity is constrained, onboarding delays may extend vacancy periods.

Staffing levels are influenced by structural factors that contribute to ongoing reliance on overtime

Mandatory overtime is primarily driven by staffing gaps in 24-hour operations. These gaps are influenced by vacancies, hiring and training timelines, leave usage, and scheduling constraints.

Recruitment, training, and retention function as interconnected components of a broader staffing system

Workforce stabilization depends on the interaction of hiring timelines, training capacity, and early-career retention. Improvements in one area alone are unlikely to produce sustained staffing gains.

Some workforce strategies may involve policy or ordinance considerations, depending on how they are further evaluated

Some approaches to workforce stabilization, such as limited over-hiring above authorized FTE levels to offset attrition and training lag, may require additional policy guidance or ordinance clarification, particularly where hiring practices exceed current authorized staffing levels.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This report responds to Amendment 30 to the County Executive's 2026 Recommended Budget, directing the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance (SBP), in coordination with the Department of Human Resources, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), and the Community Reintegration Center (CRC), to examine recruitment, hiring, training, and staffing practices for deputy sheriff and correctional officer positions.

The amendment requests analysis of the recruitment and hiring pipeline, applicable certification and training requirements, and potential operational or policy considerations that may support workforce stabilization and reduce reliance on mandatory overtime.

This report summarizes current recruitment practices, hiring timelines, training requirements, and staffing dynamics affecting public safety operations, and identifies areas that may warrant further operational or policy consideration.

In alignment with the intent of Amendment 30, this report is designed to support a shared understanding of current processes and constraints across departments. It is not intended to present finalized recommendations, but rather to inform future discussions regarding potential operational, policy, or resource considerations.

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PIPELINE

Current Recruitment Infrastructure

Milwaukee County Human Resources uses broad digital job-posting platforms and social media to advertise open positions. The MCSO and the CRC supplement these efforts through community engagement activities, paid advertising (billboards, transit, and retail), hiring expos, military pipeline programs, and other agency-specific outreach initiatives. These observations reflect coordination across departments and are intended to provide a shared understanding of current recruitment dynamics.

As Tables 1 and 2 show, efforts generate significant applicant volume, and available data indicate that conversion rates from applicants to hires are relatively low, particularly for correctional officer positions. For example, in 2025, 1,435 applicants led to 91 MCSO correctional officer hires (~6% conversion), while 1,389 applicants led to 110 CRC correctional officer hires (~8% conversion). In several years, separations closely mirror hiring totals, resulting in minimal net staffing growth.

These trends suggest that applicant volume alone does not fully explain current recruitment outcomes, and that attrition within the hiring pipeline may be an important contributing factor. Understanding where attrition occurs within the hiring pipeline will be important for identifying which factors most significantly affect recruitment outcomes.

Table 1: Application-to-Hire Conversion and Net Staffing Change

CRC Correctional Officer					
Year	Applicants	Hires	Separations	Conversion Rate (Hire/Applicants)	Net Gain/(Loss)
2025	1389	110	86	7.9%	+24
2024	1702	65	67	3.8%	(2)
2023	945	131	65	13.9%	+66
MCSO Correctional Officer					
Year	Applicants	Hires	Separations	Conversion Rate (Hire/Applicants)	Net Gain/(Loss)

2025	1435	91	88	6.3%	+3
2024	859	111	109	12.9%	+2
2023	2195	118	77	5.4%	+41
MCSO Deputy Sheriff					
Year	Applicants	Hires	Separations	Conversion Rate (Hire/Applicants)	Net Gain/(Loss)
2025	572	38	33	6.6%	+5
2024	870	18	41	2.1%	(23)
2023	293	35	33	11.9%	+2

Table 2: Recruitment Pipeline Data for 2025

Position	Applicants	Qualified Candidates	Candidates Disqualified for Being Non-responsive	Conditional Offers	Hires	Academy, or Jailor Entry	Academy or Jailor Completion	12-Month Retention
CRC Correctional Officer	1389	1271	219	146	110	22	19	134 (74% Retention Rate)
MCSO Correctional Officer	1435	949	543	119	91	55	48	128 (72% Retention Rate)
MCSO Deputy Sheriff	572	454	154	50	38	41	30	209 (91% Retention Rate)

To further illustrate recruitment efficiency, Table 3 shows the approximate number of applicants needed to produce one hire for each position type.

Table 3: RecruitmentYield Ratio (Applicants per Hire) for 2025

Position	Applicants	Vacancies	Hires	Applicants per Hire
CRC Correctional Officer	1389	30	110	~13 applicants per hire
MCSO Correctional Officer	1435	48	91	~16 applicants per hire
MCSO Deputy Sheriff	572	40	38	~15 applicants per hire

These data points illustrate the scale of applicant flow through the system and highlight where attrition may occur, but further analysis would be needed to isolate the relative impact of specific factors.

The data show that while applicant volume is substantial, conversion rates vary significantly year to year and are often below 10%. In several years, separations closely offset hiring totals, resulting in minimal net staffing growth despite high applicant interest.

Comparative Recruitment Practices: Milwaukee Police Department

To better understand recruitment strategies that may yield higher proportions of qualified applicants, the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) 's recruitment practices were reviewed. Because MPD recruits within the same regional labor market and applicant pool, its recruitment model provides a useful comparison point.

Like Milwaukee County, MPD utilizes job fairs, community engagement, digital job postings, and social media outreach. However, MPD supplements these efforts with several structural recruitment strategies designed to cultivate candidate pipelines and strengthen recruitment infrastructure.

Pipeline Development	Recruitment Marketing and Outreach	Recruitment Infrastructure and Incentives
MPD partners with Milwaukee Public Schools and community organizations to support its Police Aide Program, which employs individuals ages 17–20 in a paid, two-year apprenticeship-style program designed to prepare participants for careers as Milwaukee police officers. This program allows MPD to cultivate candidates who are familiar with the profession and departmental expectations prior to entering the police academy.	MPD maintains a broader recruitment marketing strategy with an estimated annual investment of approximately $130,000. Recruitment campaigns include transit advertising, gas-station advertising through GSTV partnerships, marketing at Milwaukee Area Technical College, shopping-mall and movie-theater advertising, and streaming media campaigns across television and digital platforms. MPD has also partnered with media organizations such as Sinclair Broadcasting Group to support targeted recruitment campaigns.	MPD uses a continuous recruitment model, allowing candidates to apply year-round rather than during limited application periods. The department also maintains a lateral recruitment program that allows experienced officers from other agencies to join at salary steps commensurate with prior experience. Recruitment incentives have included signing bonuses for lateral candidates and employee referral bonuses for successful hires. MPD also participates in the 30x30 Initiative, a national effort to increase the representation and retention of women in policing through targeted recruitment and workplace policy improvements.

Key Observations

While both Milwaukee County and MPD employ similar outreach and advertising methods, MPD appears to place greater emphasis on certain structural recruitment strategies that cultivate long-term candidate pipelines. Examples of these strategies include early-career pipeline programs, continuous recruitment models, targeted marketing campaigns, and recruitment incentives designed to attract experienced officers.

Programs such as MPD's Police Aide Program illustrate how structured early-career pathways can help prepare candidates prior to entering the formal hiring process.

Recruitment Process Observations and Considerations

Current data suggests that applicant volume may not be the primary constraint; rather, the percentage of applicants who ultimately qualify and convert to hire is relatively low. Strengthening front-end recruitment processes may help improve the proportion of qualified applicants entering the hiring pipeline.

Based on these observations, several areas may warrant further consideration, including:

- Improving Applicant Prerequisite Transparency
  Providing clearer information regarding minimum qualifications, disqualifying factors, and physical readiness expectations may help prospective applicants determine eligibility before applying. Realistic job previews that describe scheduling expectations, overtime requirements, and physical demands may also improve candidate self-selection.

- Implementing Recruitment Performance Metrics
  Tracking recruitment performance indicators, such as application-to-qualified rates, time-to-hire, academy completion rates, and early-career retention, may help identify where attrition occurs within the hiring pipeline and inform future recruitment strategies.

- Strengthening Dedicated Recruitment Infrastructure
  High-performing agencies often maintain dedicated recruitment staff responsible for outreach, school partnerships, military transition programs, and lateral recruitment efforts. Expanding recruitment capacity may help improve engagement with qualified candidates and strengthen long-term recruitment pipelines.

- Integrating Recruitment and Retention Strategies
  Recruitment and retention should be viewed as interconnected components of workforce stabilization. If early-career attrition is high, improving retention within the first 12–24 months may produce greater net staffing gains than increasing applicant volume alone.

Recruitment and retention should be viewed as interconnected components of a single workforce stabilization strategy. Increasing applicant volume without addressing pipeline attrition and early-career retention is unlikely to produce sustained staffing gains.

Agencies with stronger applicant-to-hire ratios often combine broad recruitment outreach with structural workforce development strategies, including dedicated recruitment infrastructure, continuous recruitment models, early-career pipeline programs, and systematic monitoring of recruitment performance metrics. Applying similar principles, where appropriate, may warrant further consideration as Milwaukee County continues to evaluate opportunities to strengthen recruitment outcomes and workforce stability.

The following section examines the sequence of hiring steps and the estimated timelines for the recruitment, screening, and training processes.

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESSTIMELINE

The recruitment, hiring, and training processes for correctional officer and deputy sheriff positions involve multiple coordinated stages across Milwaukee County Human Resources, agency hiring teams, and investigative units.These stages include job posting, applicant screening, interviews, background investigations, pre-employment processing, and training.

Table 4 summarizes the sequence of these steps, the responsible entity, and the estimated minimum and maximum time required to complete each stage for CRC Correctional Officers, MCSO Correctional Officers, and MCSO Deputy Sheriffs.

For clarity, the hiring process can be generally grouped into four primary phases:

1. Recruitment and applicant screening
2. Background investigation and candidate selection
3. Pre-employment processing
4. Training

The timelines presented below are estimates and may vary based on applicant volume, the complexity of background investigations, training availability, and operational needs.

Table 4: Recruitment, Hiring, and Training Process Timeline

	CRC Corrections Officer	MCSO Corrections Officer	MCSO Deputy Sheriff
Phase 1: Recruitment and Applicant Screening. This phase usually takes one week.			
Talent Acquisition	• Position posted (two weeks) • Certify list (1-2 days)	• Position posted (one week or until 200 applicants) • Certify list[1] (1-2 days) • Send list to MCSO special projects and HR employee relations assistant (1-2 days)	• Position posted (4-6 weeks) • Certify list (1-3 days) • Send list to MCSO interview team and HR employee relations assistant (1 day)
HR Employee Relations Assistant	• Review applicants and scrub list (1-2 days)	• Review applicants and scrub list (1-2 days) • Send scrubbed list[2] to the MCSO hiring team (1 day)	• Review applicants and scrub list (1-2 days) • Send scrubbed list to MCSO hiring team (1day)
Phase 2: Background Investigations and Selection (This phase can take: 8- 12 weeks (CRC CO), 15 weeks (MCSO CO), and 5-6 months (MCSO DS)			
CRC/MCSO Hiring Team/Special Projects Team	• Receive the scrubbed list (one week from posting close) • Review the scrubbed list for any disqualifications if applicable (one day) • *Contact applicants/send background packet (applicants are given one week to complete paperwork)* • Initial background check[3] conducted by CRC'S backgrounds department (2 full-time positions) (2-4 weeks) • Schedule interviews with at least 20 applicants (one week)	• Receive initial list (Within 1-2 days of posting close) • Review list-Request disqualifications if necessary (these are requested while the list of applicants are being interviewed, no specific time) • Contact candidates (20-50 applicants per week) • *Send Ready OP[4] link to applicants, this includes the release form and the personal history questionnaire (one week)* • *Schedule and conduct interviews (Interviews are weekly)* • If they pass the file is sent to ISB-Background (Send daily after interviews)	
CRC and MCSO Background Investigators	• Conduct interview- must pass assessment (review background info with applicant) (one week)	• Assign background check to investigator (one day-2 weeks, depending on how many are received)	• *Send Ready OP link to applicants this includes the release form (one week*)

[1] A certified list is the official list of candidates. who have met the minimum qualifications for the position they are applying for.
[2] A scrubbed list includes documentation of whether the candidate is a current or former employee of Milwaukee County, as well as verifying any previous discipline
[3] Initial background check looks for open warrants and felonies. Ensure the criminal and employment information provided by the application is accurate
[4] ReadyOp is a web-based platform used by the MCSO to communicate with applications and collect necessary documents.

	• *Applicants are asked to submit vital documents (birth cert., driver's license, diploma).*[5] • Conduct a full background check[6] (done via outside vendor, BackgroundsChecks) (1-2 days) • *Check references and verify employment (1-2 weeks)*	• Review application packet (one week) • *Applicant meets with the background investigator to review the application packet, fingerprint, and collect documents.* • Conduct a full background check (2-6 weeks) • Review background check report (1-2 days) • Send to Director for decision-Same day • Send to HRBP	• Arrange for the applicant to do the modified Physical Readiness Test (PRT) • Conduct Initial background (driving record and criminal history) (1 week) • Schedule and conduct initial interview (1-2 weeks) • Conduct full background check (extensive) (4-8 weeks)
CRC Captain/MCSO Director/Sheriff	• Reviews hiring folder for applicant recommended for hire (applicant overview) and makes final approval (2-3 days) • Of the twenty applicants interviewed, an average of 2-3 are recommended for hire. • Captain signs off on their choices	• ISB Captain reviews full application packet, reviews background report, and approves application (1-2 days) for submission to the Director and/or Deputy Director. Background folders are typically reviewed immediately upon receipt.	• Sheriff reviews full application packet, reviews background report, and approves application (1-2 days)
Sheriff and Investigative Bureau Services (IBS) Inspector			• Final interview (1-2 weeks) • Complete full PRT, which is LESB mandated (1 week) • Makes verbal offer to candidate
Phase 3: Pre-Employment (This phase can take 3 to 4 weeks for all positions)			
Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP)	• Make verbal offer to candidate, often extended offers to multiple candidates • Sends written offer with instructions and forms (1 day) • Notify pre-employment	• Make verbal offer to candidate, often extend offers to multiple candidates • Sends written offer with instructions and forms (1 day) • Notify pre-employment	• Sends written offer with instructions and forms (1day) • Notify pre-employment (1 day)
Human Resources Pre-Employment	• Receive notification that a formal offer was made, they send the applicant pre-employment requirements and instructions (1 day) • Arrange drug screen and physical (48 hours) • Inform HR management assistant of pre-employment results (drug screen, physical)	• Receive notification that a formal offer was made, they send the applicant pre-employment requirements and instructions (1 day) • Arrange drug screen and physical (48 hours) • Inform HR management assistant of pre-employment results (drug screen, physical)	• Receive notification that a formal offer was made, they send the applicant pre-employment requirements and instructions (1 day) • • Arrange drug screen and physical (48 hours) • Inform HR management assistant of pre-employment results (drug screen, physical)
HR Operations	• Conduct new employee orientation (2 hours and held every Monday) •	• Conduct new employee orientation (2 hours and held every Monday) •	• Conduct new employee orientation (2 hours and held every Monday) •
Phase 4:Training (This phase takes ~12 weeks (CRC CO), 12 weeks (MCSO CO), and 6 months (MCSO DS)			
CRC Training/ MCSO Academy	• Conduct new employee orientation and new employee paperwork (1 week) • Four-five weeks of field training	• Conduct new employee orientation and new employee paperwork (1 week) • 4 weeks (216 hours) of field training	• Conduct new employee orientation and new employee paperwork (1 week)

[5] It can take some applicants several weeks to obtain their needed documents and is unique to their individual circumstance.

[6] Full background is a review and verification of the information the applicants provided within and outside of the State of Wisconsin. This includes a complete criminal and civil charges and/or cases.

	• Jailor's class to be completed within one year of hire (5 weeks and is scheduled 2-3 times a year)	• Jailor's class to be completed within one year of hire (5 weeks and is scheduled 2-3 times a year)	• Pre-academy preparations, including uniform fittings (This happens during the 30 days needed by HR • Academy (5-6 months)

As illustrated above, the hiring process involves multiple sequential steps, many of which depend on coordination across departments and external entities. The overall timeline is influenced not only by the number of steps involved but also by the time required to complete each stage and the dependencies between them.

Several stages contribute significantly to the overall hiring timeline. Background investigations represent one of the most time-intensive portions of the process, especially for deputy sheriff candidates. These investigations involve a detailed review of criminal history, employment history, driving records, and other personal history factors and may require coordination across multiple jurisdictions.

Overall, the hiring process for correctional officer positions is generally shorter than the process for deputy sheriff positions. The estimated timeline for CRC and MCSO correctional officer hiring ranges from eight to 15 weeks, excluding certain Human Resources processing steps and training requirements. In contrast, the hiring process for deputy sheriff positions may require five to six months prior to academy training due to the more extensive background investigation and screening requirements.

Responsibilities for these stages are shared across multiple entities. Milwaukee County Human Resources performs core talent acquisition functions, including posting positions, certifying applicant lists, extending written offers, and coordinating pre-employment requirements, such as drug testing and medical examinations. Agency hiring teams within the CRC and MCSO conduct applicant reviews, schedule and conduct interviews, and coordinate candidate communications. Background investigations are conducted by agency investigative units and background investigators, who verify criminal history, employment history, and other relevant information prior to final hiring approval.

Several steps within this process, particularly background investigations and certification requirements, are governed by state law and Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) standards, which limit the extent to which certain timelines can be modified at the local level.

Because training requirements are a key component of the overall hiring timeline, the following section provides additional context on certification and training standards for correctional officer and deputy sheriff positions.

TRAINING PIPELINE AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Training and certification requirements are a key component of the overall hiring and onboarding process for correctional officers and deputy sheriffs. These requirements are governed in part by Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB) standards, state law, and County-level operational practices. As a result, training timelines and requirements reflect a combination of external mandates and local implementation.

Table 5 compares LESB minimum employment requirements with current County hiring standards for Correctional Officers (CRC and MCSO) and Deputy Sheriffs. The comparison illustrates that many core hiring and training requirements, including background checks, certification standards, and medical and physical readiness requirements, are established by state law or LESB administrative code rather than solely by County policy.

In particular, sworn Deputy Sheriffs must meet dual certification (Deputy/Jailor) standards and complete approximately 1,000 hours of academy training, including passage of a Physical Readiness Test with defined entrance and exit benchmarks. Correctional Officers must complete approximately 200 hours of jailor certification training during their probationary period and maintain LESB certification thereafter.

While the County may exercise discretion in certain areas (such as preferred qualifications, internal physical standards, or sequencing of hiring steps), many pre-employment and certification requirements—including felony prohibitions, domestic violence disqualifiers, drug testing, fingerprinting, medical clearance, and certification standards—are governed by external regulations. As a result, several components of the hiring and training process cannot be modified at the County level without statutory or regulatory changes.

Table 5: Law Enforcement Standard Board Requirements as they apply to Milwaukee County Corrections

Minimum LESB Employment Standards	CRC Correctional Officer	MCSO Correctional Officer	MCSO Deputy Sheriff
	Must be a current resident of the United States	Must be eligible to work legally in the United States.	Must be a citizen at the time of appointment
Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.	Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.	Applicants must be 19 years of age or older	Applicants must be 20 years of age or older
A high school diploma, HSED or GED requires	A high school diploma, HSED, or GED is required	A high school diploma, HSED, or GED is required	A high school diploma, HSED, or GED is required
Law enforcement or tribal law enforcement officers must possess either a two-year associate degree or a minimum of 60-accredited credits.	N/A	NA	Associate degree- 60 College credits within 5 years of hire date
Must possess a valid driver's license at the time of application	N/A	Preferred for MCSO-CO	Mandatory for MCSO-Deputy
Applicants must not have been convicted of any federal felony	Applies	Applies	Applies
Applicants must not have been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, convicted of domestic abuse, or convicted of a crime that is subject to the imposition of the domestic abuse surcharge	Applies	Applies	Applies
Pass fingerprinting	Pass fingerprinting[7]	Pass fingerprinting	Pass fingerprinting
Pass a background check conducted by or on behalf of the employing agency	Felonies, unless pardoned, will be rejected along with any domestic violence-related charges.	Felonies, unless pardoned, will be rejected along with any domestic violence-related charges.	Felonies, unless pardoned, will be rejected along with any domestic violence-related charges.
Free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition that might adversely affect the performance of duties as a law enforcement officer	Applies	Applies	Applies
Applicants must undergo a medical assessment by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner to verify that they can meet the physical standards required of the position.The applicant must also provide the examiner with a personal medical history.	• Pre-placement/physical examination • Audiogram • TB test • Spirometry • Vision	• Pre-placement/physical examination • Audiogram • TB test • Spirometry • Vision	• Pre-placement/physical examination • Audiogram • TB test • Spirometry • Vision

[7] Scan fingerprint to check for warrants, criminal history, alias, and to verify identity.

	• PPFT	• PPFT	• PPFT
Applicants must complete a satisfactory oral interview with the employing agency	Applies	Applies	Applies
Applicants must submit to a drug test for the presence of the following controlled substances or their metabolites: amphetamines, cannabis or cannabinoids, opiates, cocaine, and phencyclidine (PCP).	**5 PANEL W/6 Am 28500N** • Amphetamines • Cocaine • Marijuana • Opiates • PCP	**5 PANEL W/6 Am 28500N** • Amphetamines • Cocaine • Marijuana • Opiates • PCP	**5 PANEL W/6 Am 28500N** • Amphetamines • Cocaine • Marijuana • Opiates • PCP
	Must complete Jailors Training (5 weeks)	Must complete Jailors Training (5 weeks)	**The Academy dual-certification Deputy and CO is roughly (1,000 hours).** **Recruits must pass the Physical Readiness Test** **Entrance Standards** • Vertical jump = 11.5 in • Agility run = 23.4 sec • Sit ups = 24 • 300 meter run = 82 sec • Push ups = 19 • 1.5 mile run = 20 min:20 sec **Exit Standards** • Vertical jump = 14 in • Agility run = 19.5 sec • Sit ups = 30 • 300 meter run = 68 sec • Push ups = 23 • 1.5 mile run = 16 min:57 sec

Training Capacity and Expansion Considerations

Training capacity represents a key operational factor influencing how quickly new hires can be deployed. Newly hired employees must complete the required certification and operational training before they can fully perform all duties associated with their positions. As a result, the frequency and capacity of training classes directly influence workforce availability.

For correctional officer positions, newly hired employees must complete jailor certification training in accordance with LESB requirements. This training typically consists of approximately six weeks of coursework and is offered periodically throughout the year. Because certification must be completed within a defined period after hire, training schedules must be coordinated with hiring timelines to avoid deployment delays.

For deputy sheriff positions, recruits must complete academy training that includes both law enforcement and jailor certification components. This training program requires approximately 1,000 hours of instruction and typically spans five to six months prior to full operational deployment. As a result, the timing and capacity of academy classes represent a significant factor in the overall timeline from recruitment to fully trained personnel.

In addition to initial training requirements, correctional officers and deputy sheriffs must complete ongoing in-service and recertification training. These requirements may include annual training in areas such as use of force, legal updates, defensive tactics, and other mandated topics, as well as additional training for supervisory, leadership, or instructor roles.

Training capacity is influenced by instructor availability, facility constraints, and the volume of required training activities. In addition to academy and certification training, instructors are responsible for ongoing in-service training, onboarding, remediation, and specialized instruction throughout the year. These dynamics reflect input from training leadership and illustrate how training resources are currently allocated across competing operational needs.

Information provided by MCSO training leadership indicates that current training operations are structured to meet existing requirements and may include extended hours, such as evenings and weekends, and the use of operational staff serving as adjunct instructors to supplement full-time training personnel.

Training demand is driven not only by the number of new recruits entering the pipeline, but also by required annual recertification training and additional agency training needs. As staffing levels increase, training requirements for both new hires and existing personnel also increase, placing additional demand on instructor time and training resources.

Expanding training capacity may require additional instructional staff, increased training space, and investment in equipment and facilities. Facility limitations may also influence the number of students who can participate in certain types of instruction at any given time, affecting the ability to increase class sizes or frequency.

When training capacity is limited relative to demand, delays in onboarding new staff may extend vacancy periods and contribute to continued reliance on overtime to meet operational staffing requirements.

STAFFING LEVELS AND OVERTIME DRIVERS

Mandatory overtime within the MCSO and the CRC is influenced by staffing levels relative to the requirements of continuous 24-hour public safety operations. Both agencies operate facilities and services that require consistent staffing coverage, including correctional housing units, court security operations, transportation responsibilities, and other legally mandated functions. When available staffing falls below operational needs, overtime assignments may be used to maintain minimum staffing levels.

Several factors contribute to these staffing dynamics.

Vacancy Levels and Hiring Timelines

Vacancies created through retirements, resignations, promotions, or other separations cannot always be filled immediately due to the time required to recruit, screen, and train new employees. As described earlier in this report, hiring timelines for correctional officers may range from several weeks to several months, while deputy sheriff hiring and academy training may take five to six months or longer before a recruit is fully deployable. During these periods, operational shifts must continue to be staffed, which may increase reliance on overtime among existing personnel.

Training Pipeline Requirements

Newly hired correctional officers and deputy sheriffs must complete required training before they can independently perform all operational duties. Correctional officers must complete jailor certification training, while deputy sheriffs must complete academy training and meet certification requirements established by the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board. While these training requirements are necessary to ensure professional standards and legal compliance, they also influence when new hires can fully contribute to operational staffing. For example, new correctional officer hires must complete initial field training before working independently.

Shift Coverage Requirements

Correctional facilities and law enforcement operations require fixed minimum staffing levels across multiple shifts each day. When vacancies, training assignments, or leave usage reduce the number of available employees, remaining staff may be scheduled for additional shifts to maintain safe and legally compliant operations.

Leave Usage and Scheduling Considerations

In addition to vacancies and training assignments, routine absences such as vacation leave, sick leave, family medical leave, and other approved time off can temporarily reduce staffing availability. Because many public safety roles require minimum staffing levels at all times, even short-term absences may create operational gaps that need to be addressed through scheduling adjustments.

Coordination of Hiring and Training Cycles

Coordination between recruitment cycles, training schedules, and anticipated vacancies can also influence staffing levels. When hiring cycles or training classes occur less frequently than vacancy patterns, agencies may experience periods where staffing shortages persist until the next group of recruits completes training and becomes operational.

Taken together, these factors reflect a dynamic staffing environment in which hiring timelines, training requirements, operational needs, and workforce attrition interact. As a result, efforts to reduce reliance on mandatory overtime often involve coordination across multiple areas, including recruitment efficiency, hiring timelines, training capacity, and workforce retention.

OPERATIONAL AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Several operational and policy considerations may support workforce stability, reduce reliance on mandatory overtime, and strengthen recruitment and retention for deputy sheriff and correctional officer positions. The considerations outlined below reflect concepts discussed through cross-departmental coordination and are presented for further evaluation. They do not represent formal recommendations and would require additional analysis to assess feasibility, fiscal impact, and implementation requirements.

Recruitment and Hiring Process Considerations

Based on observed recruitment patterns and hiring outcomes, several areas may warrant further consideration:

- Improving clarity of qualification requirements by clearly communicating minimum standards, disqualifying factors, and physical readiness expectations to prospective applicants
- Providing realistic job previews that describe scheduling expectations, mandatory overtime requirements, and physical demands associated with correctional and law enforcement positions
- Exploring voluntary pre-screening tools or informational sessions to support applicant self-assessment prior to applying
- Expanding recruitment partnerships with educational institutions, workforce development programs, and military transition initiatives to support long-term candidate pipeline development
- Monitoring recruitment performance metrics, such as application-to-qualified rates, time-to-hire, academy completion rates, and early-career retention, to better understand where attrition occurs within the hiring pipeline

These approaches may support improved alignment between applicant expectations and job requirements and provide additional insight into recruitment outcomes.

Hiring and Training Pipeline Considerations

Coordination between recruitment cycles, background investigations, and training schedules may influence overall hiring timelines and workforce availability. Areas that may warrant further evaluation include:

- Evaluating the structure and frequency of hiring cycles to balance applicant flow with processing capacity
- Assessing background investigation capacity, including potential impacts on processing timelines
- Exploring opportunities to align recruitment cycles with scheduled academy classes or jailor certification courses
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current structured candidate preparation approaches that allow qualified candidates to complete portions of the screening process in advance of anticipated vacancies, where feasible and compliant with civil service requirements

These considerations reflect the interconnected nature of recruitment, screening, and training processes and the role of coordination in supporting workforce readiness.

Workforce Scheduling and Work-Life Considerations

Workforce stability is also influenced by scheduling practices and work-life considerations. Several approaches may warrant further exploration, including:

- Evaluating scheduling practices that may improve predictability, such as minimum notice expectations for non-emergency overtime assignments
- Exploring alternative shift models, such as fixed shifts or modified schedules, where operationally feasible
- Considering approaches that support employees with caregiving responsibilities, such as dependent-care hardship policies
- Reviewing overtime distribution practices to promote transparency and equity in assignment

Implementation of these approaches would require evaluating operational feasibility and, where applicable, coordinating with collective bargaining agreements.

Longer-Term Workforce Considerations

Several longer-term structural approaches may also warrant further evaluation:

- Exploring part-time or supplemental staffing models to support shift coverage
- Considering concepts such as controlled over-hiring to account for expected attrition and training timelines
- Assessing training capacity, including instructor availability and facility constraints, in relation to hiring volume
- Evaluating retention-focused strategies, such as milestone-based incentives, within the context of broader workforce planning

These approaches may involve policy, operational, and resource considerations and would require additional analysis to determine feasibility and potential impact.

Voluntary Overtime and Scheduling Practices

Both the MCSO and the CRC use voluntary overtime lists to distribute overtime opportunities before assigning mandatory shifts. If no volunteers are available, mandatory overtime may be assigned as part of a rotating process to maintain required staffing levels.

Departments may also periodically review existing shift models and scheduling practices to assess whether alternative approaches could help manage overtime demands while maintaining operational requirements. Any potential changes would require evaluation of operational feasibility and, where applicable, coordination with collective bargaining agreements.

FUNDING AND RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

Recruitment, hiring, and training activities for correctional officers and deputy sheriffs are supported through a combination of departmental operating budgets and centralized Human Resources. These activities represent an essential component of workforce stabilization; however, current recruitment funding across departments is relatively limited and primarily supports basic recruitment outreach and hiring infrastructure.

The Department of Human Resources Talent Acquisition team maintains an annual recruitment budget of approximately $30,000 to support recruitment platforms, job-advertising systems, promotional materials, and hiring-event outreach across Milwaukee County departments.

At the agency level, the MCSO maintains approximately $28,000 annually for community outreach activities, recruitment events, and related advertising. Similarly, the CRC maintains approximately $10,000 annually for recruitment events and outreach activities.

In addition to these budgeted resources, both agencies rely on existing operational and administrative staff to support recruitment and hiring activities. For example, MCSO does not maintain personnel exclusively dedicated to

recruitment functions, and CRC similarly relies on existing staff to assist with recruitment coordination and candidate processing.

Because recruitment, background investigation, and training are labor-intensive processes, staffing capacity in these functions may influence how quickly agencies can move candidates through the hiring pipeline. Adjustments to hiring capacity, recruitment activity levels, or training frequency may require additional personnel resources, training staff, or administrative support.

If the County were to further evaluate some of the operational approaches discussed in this report, such as expanded training capacity, increased recruitment outreach, or additional hiring cycles, potential resource considerations may include:

- Expanded recruitment and marketing funding
- Additional background investigators or hiring support staff
- Additional training instructors or academy staff
- Expanded training facilities, equipment, or classroom capacity

These resource needs would typically be evaluated through the County's annual budget process or through departmental workforce planning discussions.

Departments may also explore external funding opportunities, such as workforce development grants, public safety recruitment initiatives, and state or federal programs that support law enforcement and corrections workforce development. While these funding sources may provide supplemental support, they are often competitive and may not provide long-term operational funding.

Overall, staffing-related strategies that involve expanded hiring pipelines, increased training capacity, or enhanced recruitment infrastructure would require coordination with departmental budgets, Human Resources capacity, and Countywide workforce planning efforts.

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the concepts discussed in this report may involve policy or governance considerations, depending on how they are further developed and evaluated. While many aspects of recruitment, hiring, and training are governed by departmental procedures or civil service rules, certain structural changes could require policy adjustments, ordinance review, or coordination with collective bargaining agreements.

One area that may warrant further evaluation is the concept of controlled over-hiring beyond currently authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) levels. Because hiring and training pipelines for correctional officers and deputy sheriffs can extend several months to more than a year before recruits are fully operational, departments may experience periods where vacancies persist despite ongoing recruitment efforts. Some public safety agencies address this by hiring above authorized staffing levels to account for attrition, academy washout rates, or upcoming retirements. If explored further, this approach may require additional policy guidance or clarification of ordinances to define appropriate parameters.

Another area for consideration involves training pipeline capacity and scheduling practices. Expanding academy class sizes or increasing the frequency of certification sessions may help align training schedules with recruitment cycles; however, such adjustments would likely require additional training staff, instructor availability, and facility capacity. In some cases, expansion of training operations may also require resource allocation through the County's budget process.

Operational policies related to overtime assignment practices, scheduling models, or workforce flexibility may also warrant review in coordination with departmental leadership and labor representatives. Because many public safety scheduling practices are governed by collective bargaining agreements or long-standing operational policies, changes in these areas may require negotiation or formal policy review.

In addition, several aspects of the hiring process, including minimum qualifications, certification standards, and training requirements, are governed by Wisconsin LESB regulations and state law. As a result, certain hiring and training practices cannot be modified at the County level without changes to state administrative rules or statutory requirements.

Overall, while many elements of recruitment, hiring, and training can be addressed through operational coordination and resource planning, some approaches may involve broader policy considerations and would require further evaluation if pursued.

CONCLUSION

The recruitment, hiring, and training processes for correctional officer and deputy sheriff positions involve multiple coordinated stages across Milwaukee County departments, including the Department of Human Resources, the MCSO, and the CRC. These processes are also influenced by external requirements, including Wisconsin LESB certification standards and state law.

Analysis of current recruitment, hiring, and training practices indicates that, while Milwaukee County continues to receive substantial interest from applicants for public safety positions, a combination of hiring timelines, training requirements, and workforce attrition influences overall staffing levels. Because correctional and law enforcement operations require continuous coverage, these factors may contribute to ongoing reliance on overtime to maintain required service levels.

This report has outlined current recruitment practices, hiring timelines, training requirements, and staffing dynamics, and has identified areas that may warrant further operational, policy, and resource consideration. These observations reflect cross-departmental coordination and are intended to support a shared understanding of system dynamics.

In alignment with the intent of Amendment 30, this report is exploratory in nature and does not present formal recommendations. The concepts described would require additional analysis, coordination, and evaluation of operational and fiscal considerations prior to implementation.

Milwaukee County departments will continue to collaborate to monitor recruitment, hiring, and retention trends and to inform future discussions regarding potential strategies to support workforce stability and reduce reliance on mandatory overtime while maintaining required public safety operations.