

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: May 18, 2022

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Chantell Jewell, Superintendent, Milwaukee County House of Correction (HOC)

Subject: An Informational Report regarding the roles and functions of the House of Correction

File Type: Informational Report

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### **REQUEST**

There is no request at this time.

### **BACKGROUND**

Chairwoman Nicholson has requested an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the House of Correction. The prepared overview is intended to aid the on-boarding of newly elected and serve as a reminder for existing Supervisors.

The following report serves to give a broad overview of the Milwaukee County House of Correction. It is divided into subsets to include our mission, values, overall chain, leadership budget, staffing, resident demographics, Covid-19 mitigation, and programming.

### **Mission**

“The Milwaukee County House of Correction is an honorable organization of committed Officers with the integrity to adapt, overcome and achieve. We will maintain and ensure a safe and secure environment that consists of correctional programs to rehabilitate and re-introduce our citizens back into the community.”

### **Vision**

- Allow justice-involved individuals to thrive by building upon their identified strengths while comprehensively addressing their needs
- Through partnership and collaboration, we will address drivers of criminal behavior to enhance public safety and quality of life, resulting in safer communities.

## **CORE Values**

The Milwaukee County House of Correction (HOC) operates under three sets of values. All three are elementary to every function within HOC.

The first set of core values have been set by Superintendent Chantell Jewell since her appointment on November 16, 2020.

- **Humanity**- Value all differences treating everyone with dignity and respect.
- **Integrity**- Operate from the highest ethical character while maintaining a strong sense of honesty and morality
- **Security**- Maintain a safe and secure institution
- **Competency**- Achieve excellence through recruitment, training, and leadership
- **Community**- Engage partners to increase access to services

## **Overview**

The Milwaukee County House of Correction receives and maintains custody of individuals sentenced in Milwaukee County who are committed by authorized courts for periods not exceeding one year and from other jurisdictions as authorized by County ordinance; provides programs of work release, rehabilitation, education, work, and training; provides medical, dental, and mental health services to residents; and releases individuals upon expiration of sentence, upon orders of the courts, or other recognized authorities. Section 302.315 of the Wisconsin Statutes permits HOC to receive and maintain custody of individuals being held pretrial at the request of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). Residents accepted from the MCSO, or any other jurisdiction must be vetted by a Classification system to ensure the safety of both residents and staff. HOC operates a program of home detention using electronic surveillance equipment and oversees the Day Reporting Center where sentenced individuals can obtain job training and AODA services. HOC is governed primarily by Department of Corrections Administrative Code 350.

## **Leadership**

The Chief Elected Official who maintains authority over the HOC is the County Executive who appoints a Superintendent. Chantell Jewell is currently the Superintendent, and she was appointed on 11/26/2020. There are also two Assistant Superintendents who maintain operations and programming within the facility.

## **Budget**

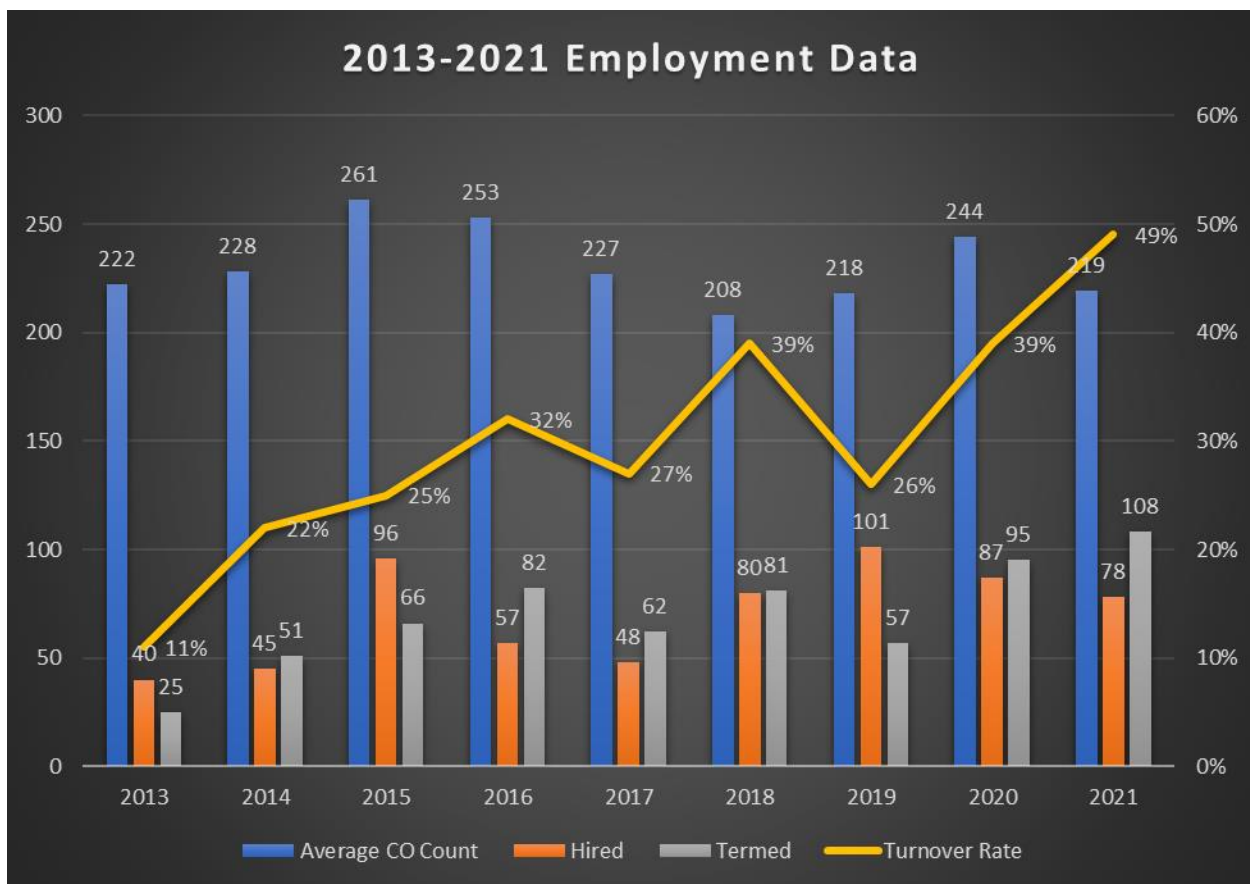
The HOC has a 2022 budget that includes \$53.9 million in expenditures, \$6.9 million in revenue and a total tax levy of \$47 million. HOC oversees a \$22.5 million medical/dental/mental health contract for both the jail and the HOC. It further provides oversight of the food contract of \$3 million which serves the jail, youth detention and the HOC.

## **Staffing**

Staffing has been difficult for most correctional facilities and the HOC is no different. The HOC currently has 154 Officer positions filled with 80 open positions. 2022 turnover percentage sits at approximately 49% which is a historical high (turnover stats are available through 2006). Recent turnover percentages were at approximately 20-30%. Among the reasons for the high turnover is the low starting wage (compared to surrounding counties), the lack of step increases within the pay range, increased overtime, and the difficulty of the position.

To reduce overtime, we have had to schedule Sergeants in housing units, eliminating their traditional role as floor supervisors. Lieutenants have now filled that role while also fulfilling their duties as administrators over key HOC functions.

The following chart will show employment trends of average officer count, how many Officers hired, how many termed (retired, separated, or resigned), and the annual turnover rate since 2013.



### **Campus Makeup**

The HOC was established in its current form in 1947 although it's history dates back into the late 1800's.

The HOC campus is comprised of over 600,000 square feet and includes three distinct structures. The North building, built in 1947, the South building, built in 1999 and the ACF which

was originally constructed in 1990 but repurposed by FEMA in 2020 into a Covid-19 Alternate Care Facility for safely housing and monitoring Residents with Covid-19. The ACF was activated briefly in November of 2020 and has not been used since. The HOC can potentially house up to 1,766 Residents should staffing allow.

The HOC grounds also includes a graphics department, powerhouse, an LESB (Law Enforcement Standards Board) certified training academy which is operated by HOC Officers, a laundry facility that services the HOC, CJF and Juvenile Detention, welding shop, general maintenance workshop, vehicle maintenance garage, MATC/Franklin school facilities for Residents, a chapel, 2 gymnasiums, a records department, booking room, production kitchen with loading dock, a recycling center, jobs center, health center with mental health and dental facilities, and a compost area.

The housing units can accommodate up to 70 individuals in a dormitory style setting. HOC utilizes a direct supervision model, meaning that there is an officer inside the housing unit without any structural barriers 24 hours a day.

### **Racial and Gender Make-up of Staff and Residents**

The House of Correction Demographics for Officers are as follows:

- 2% Asian
- 53% Black or African American
- Less than 1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7% Hispanic or Latino
- 3% Two or more races
- 35% White
- 53% Male
- 47% Female

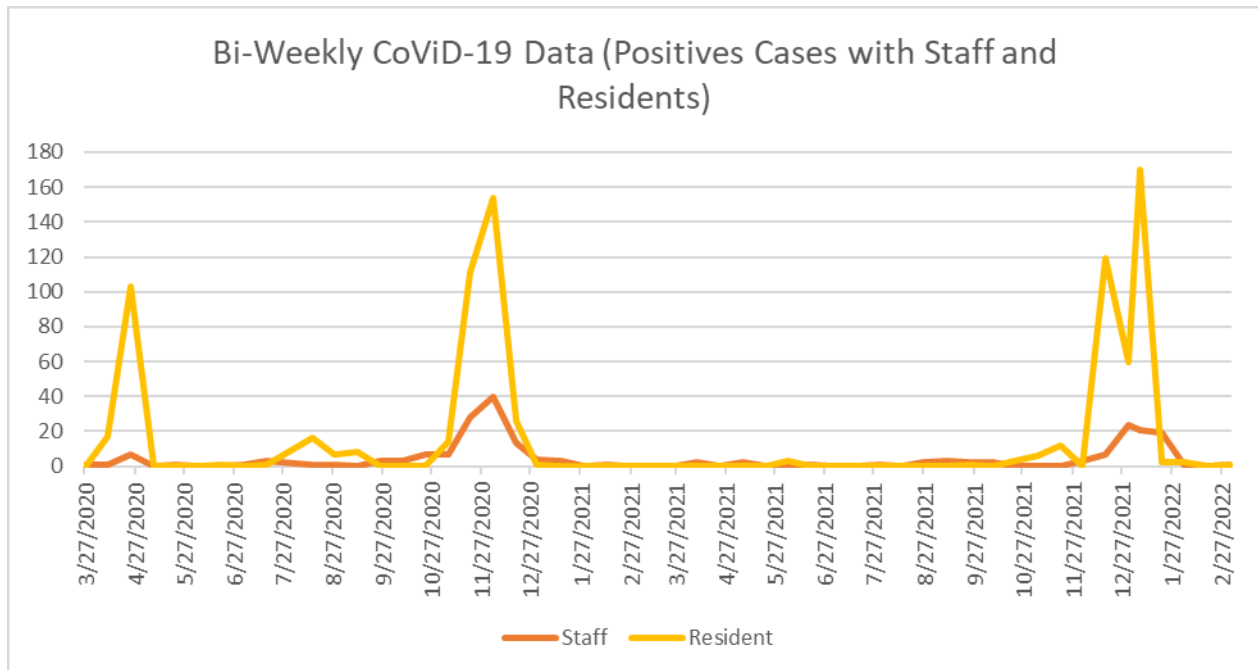
The House of Correction Demographics for Residents are as follows (current population of 757):

- American Indian                      4        (0.53%)
- Asian                                        10       (1.32%)
- Black or African American        488     (64.5%)
- Hispanic                                    99       (13.0%)
- White                                        154     (20.3%)
- Unknown                                  1        (.13%)
- Male 90.5%
- Female 9.5%

### **Covid-19**

The HOC currently (as of April 21, 2022) has no staff or residents Covid-19 positive. Our last reported case was a resident on March 4, 2022.

The below graph details the number of staff and residents that tested Covid-19 positive in two week increments since the first reported case in April of 2020.



The second two “spikes”, one in November of 2020 and one in November/December 2021 are elevated due to HOC’s willingness to accept Covid-19 positive Residents from the CJF. HOC accepted over 100 Covid-19 positive Residents from CJF on January 7, 2022, for example. It should be noted that over the course of Covid-19 exposures, only two Residents were hospitalized. Both for 24 hours, both in April of 2020 and both recovered. No staff were hospitalized due to a Covid-19 infection.

The HOC has adapted 4 housing units within the Jail proper for CoVID-19 mitigation. These four dorms are in the North building and utilize the same ventilation system. Our maintenance supervisor has outfitted these dorms with a negative pressure airflow ability, enhanced ionization units, MERV-13 rated air filters and UV-C lighting to trap and kill not only the Covid-19 virus but any air-born contagion.

The HOC has just completed the installation of UV-C lighting in all the ductwork within the facility. This means that the recycled air will be circulated through these sterilization units which significantly enhances the safety of staff and Residents relative to virus spread.

The HOC also utilizes two UV-C “robots” to disinfect surfaces thought to be at risk of possible virus exposure. These units were purchased under the CARES act in 2020. HOC has three pressure washers that use anti-viral cleaning agents to disinfect extremely large common areas such as hallways or gymnasiums. Both the pressure washers and “robots” use specially trained Officers to operate them.

The HOC has worked in conjunction with the County’s health care experts to devise a transfer protocol relative to other jurisdictions, including the CJF. The HOC requires any individual transferring to HOC to be in custody at that jurisdiction for a minimum of 120 hours. That individual must then have a negative PCR test within 48 hours of transferring to HOC. Once arriving at HOC, they are placed into a quarantine housing unit for 14 days. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day,

they are tested for Covid-19 utilizing a PCR test. Once they clear Covid-19 protocol by Wellpath, they are then transferred to a general housing unit appropriate for their housing classification.

Vaccination is mandatory for HOC employees (unless a verified exemption request due to medical or religious reasons is submitted). There are no such exemptions for volunteers or contractors. All must be vaccinated and boosted (if eligible).

The resident vaccination rate is currently 39%. Residents assigned to Huber and kitchen/laundry working dorms must be vaccinated. This number is very fluid due to daily transfers in and out of the facility.

Residents are informed upon arrival in our booking room of the vaccine availability and its benefits by the booking room supervisor as well as the booking room nurse. HOC further utilizes Credible Messengers to educate Residents and dispel misinformation. The most common reason for vaccine hesitancy amongst Residents is the belief that the vaccine is not effective and the fear of having a bad reaction to the inoculation.

The biggest incentive seems to be the \$50.00 payment for any Covid-19 vaccine received while in custody. Conceivably, a resident could receive \$150.00 should they get the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and booster while at HOC. The HOC has received \$44,000 from the County Board for the vaccine incentive program and to date, has awarded \$28,550.00 with \$15,450.00 remaining. The money is put into the Resident's account within 3 business days of receiving the vaccine.

The HOC remains under a mask mandate and at minimum, staff and Residents must don surgical masks. Cloth masks are not allowed. Those staff members with exemption status must wear KN-95 masks.

Covid-19 has had a major impact on court proceedings and HOC has adapted. We have transformed our professional visiting area into a remote courtroom. If ordered by the Judge, Residents can appear virtually for their court hearings. They are also able to meet with their attorneys utilizing the same platforms. HOC is currently in the planning stages to reopen on sight personal visitation. Currently, friends and family members may use HOC visiting facilities for visitation using video monitors only. HOC continues to utilize remote visitation with HomWav as the vendor.

Covid-19 had a major impact on recruiting for new Officers. Job fairs and other public functions were not available for 2020 and most of 2021. HOC had to rely on remote options such as billboards, radio ads, bus ads etc. For 2022, the recruitment teams have been able to be more visible in the community which hopefully will allow us to increase our staffing numbers.

## **Programming**

The Milwaukee County House of Correction has established itself as an institution that seeks to maintain programs to rehabilitate and re-introduce our citizens back into the community. Many of these tasks are accomplished by establishing partnerships within community organizations, advocates, and various other groups with similar focus.

However, Covid-19 has also impacted the programming options for Residents. Programming was eliminated in 2020 and a good portion of 2021. It is gradually being reintroduced in 2022. Some of our existing/returning programs as well as those new to 2022 are in a separate

document which is attached.

### **Recent Certifications**

Despite the recent challenges affecting HOC with Covid and staffing shortages, the HOC has made some significant accomplishments. In February of 2020, HOC passed its initial PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) audit. The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 calls for all Federal, State and local correctional facilities to have a zero-tolerance policy regarding prison rape in prisons, jails and police holding facilities. HOC voluntarily underwent a federal audit and risk assessment and was found to be 100% compliant with PREA standards.

In March of 2021, HOC received accreditation from the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) which is the gold standard for correctional healthcare. This accreditation demonstrates our commitment to excellence working cooperatively with our healthcare providers to provide quality care to the individuals in our care. The HOC scored a 100% on the multi-standard audit with remarks from the auditor that HOC had some of the most educated staff that she had seen. It was a proud moment during the most difficult of times.

Our goal at the HOC is to make sure that people leave in a better place than before they came, and we will do this by providing evidence-based programming to reduce recidivism. Additionally, we will strive to create opportunities that support change and address those health disparities that affect our population. We will continue to build strong relationships with our community partners as well as make sure that we are building a competent workforce. By doing these things, will promote behavioral changes that will create safer communities throughout Milwaukee County.

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