

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: February 16, 2024

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

From: Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, Director Joshua Briggs, Captain Tricia Carlson, and Director James Burnett

Subject: Report in Response to 2024 Adopted Budget Amendment #21

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**BACKGROUND**

This informational report responds to Amendment #21 in the 2024 Adopted Budget. Among other things this amendment states that “the Department of Human Resources and Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance will work with the Office of the Sheriff and the Community Reintegration Center to examine current processes for recruiting, hiring, and retaining correctional officer staff. Process improvements will be explored and, if feasible, implemented to reduce the time to hire/fill correctional officer positions given background check and training requirements. Strategies for developing a system to improve correctional officer engagement rates shall also be developed to increase retention rates, while reducing mandatory overtime hours and excessive turnover and vacancies.”

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) has been partnering with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to improve recruiting, hiring, and retaining correctional officer employees. This report provides an overview of that work, the results that have been achieved and the efforts that will continue into 2024 and beyond.

**RECRUITMENT & HIRING**

A cross-functional team comprised of MCSO and DHR employees has been conducting a systematic review of MCSO Corrections Officer (CO) hiring processes since July 2023. The objective of this cross-functional group is to identify and address opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of CO hiring processes. The first step in this review was to document a detailed deployment flowchart of the process (see Attachment A). This mapping exercise illustrated the complexity of the hiring process, the roles of its numerous stakeholders and some high-level significant opportunities for improvement inherent in the process. These opportunities include candidate responsiveness in providing required documentation and keeping scheduled interview appointments, the length of time it takes to complete a thorough background investigation, and the difficulty in obtaining meaningful information from previous employers. Some of the challenges found within the flowchart are as follows:

- Applicants who apply and then are unresponsive to repeated contacts by background investigators or attempts to schedule interviews
- Applicants who sign up for an interview or meeting with investigators and “No Call/No Show”
- Applicants who cannot provide required documents-significant wait time while they apply for

- Social Security card or get High School transcripts/Diploma from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor
- Applicants who are difficult to get ahold of to come in for fingerprints, bring in required documents and go over the personal history questionnaire. (We email, phone and text)
- Employers who are slow to respond or just don't respond at all when sent an employment history document with a release authorization form
- Delays in getting report back from the DOJ on fingerprint cards submitted
- Having only part-time background investigators
- Slow responses from Law Enforcement agencies for reports from out of state
- Applicants not listing on the personal history questionnaire, as required, all jobs worked within two years of applying with MCSO, which causes significant delays once we receive the DWD adding on additional applicants

MCSO saw significant improvements in CO hiring as the work of this team proceeded. Although hiring has improved, it is anticipated that the work of this team will continue into 2024. Next steps in this review include:

- Identify and evaluate alternatives in the assessment of a candidate's character
- Deployment of a CO hiring process BI dashboard
- Improved communication with candidates as they proceed in the process (platform to refer to)

Numerous other improvements have been implemented outside the work of this process review team. These include:

- Lowered the age requirement
- Reviewed agency Personal History Questionnaire and made changes to shorten this document and make it easier to understand
- Invested in significant advertising for the agency hiring events
- Purchased a livescan fingerprint machine to expedite the fingerprints process and return reports
- Added additional hiring events at various locations within the city of Milwaukee with the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. (May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sept 26<sup>th</sup>, Nov 28, 2023, and Jan 11, 2024)
- Public Affairs and Community Engagement (PACE) increased social media postings around our hiring event dates and provided a QR code for easy sign up
- Special projects adjusted the interview times to include applicants who could only attend later in the afternoon and evening
- Conducted the initial hiring process steps at hiring events so we successfully shortened the time between application submission and hire date
- Transferred (4) full time deputies to Investigative Services Bureau to conduct backgrounds Sept-Feb
- Pay increases
- Piloted a project to complete drug testing before the background investigation was conducted

## **STATISTICAL DATA**

### **Correction Officer Hires**

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
94	130

### **Correction Officer Separations**

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
84	93

### **Hiring Events**

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
7	3

\* Continuous recruitment in 2023

### **Correction Officer vacancies as of 2/13/2024**

	Filled	Open	Total
Correction Officers	207	18	225
Correction Officer - Unfunded	n/a	4	4
<b>Total</b>	207	22	229

\*13 CO's starting on 2/26 and 6 starting on 3/11 (19 total)

\* 1 funded vacancy and 4 unfunded vacancies that we do not have applicants to make offers to

## **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER PAY AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

The Milwaukee County budget has included numerous adjustments to increase Corrections Officer pay in recent years. Corrections Officers receive annual increases that are provided to all general County non-union employees. In addition, multiple increases have been directed specifically towards addressing Correction Officer pay.

- In 2021, the County utilized federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide a \$3.00 per hour premium pay increase to Corrections Officer staff
- In 2022, the premium pay increase was converted into a permanent pay increase and the funding source has been shifted to tax levy to make the pay raise sustainable
- The 2023 Adopted Budget included an appropriation of \$1.5 million to further increase Corrections Officer pay grades by \$1.50 per hour
- The 2024 Adopted Budget included an appropriation to further increase Corrections Officer starting pay to a minimum of \$30 per hour and to provide an approximately 13.5% increase to Corrections Officer staff

From 2020 to 2024, the budget for Corrections Officer pay has increased by approximately \$14.5 million or 46%. Starting pay for Corrections Officer I has increased from \$20.38 per hour to \$30 per hour. The following tables show changes in budgets and changes in Corrections Officer pay from 2020 to 2024.

Budgeted Salaries for Correction Officers in 2020 and 2024				
Agency	2020	2024	Variance	Note
400 - Sheriff	\$13,625,413	\$ 19,557,807	\$ 5,932,394	This includes Correctional Offcr, Corr. Sergeant, Corr. Lieu., Truck Driver, Youth Corr. Officer, and Supervisor Youth Corr Officer)
430 - CRC	\$14,076,008	\$ 20,646,013	\$ 6,570,005	
800 - DHHS	\$ 3,948,122	\$ 5,981,298	\$ 2,033,176	
Total	\$31,649,543	\$ 46,185,118	\$ 14,535,575	

Correction Officer - Hourly Pay Ranges Budgeted 2020 and 2024							
Job Class Name	Paygrade	2020		2024		Variance 2020 to 2024	
		Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Correctional Officer I Nm	14Z1	20.38	23.41	30.00	33.69	9.62	10.28
Correctional Officer I Sheriff Nm	14Z1	20.38	23.41	30.00	33.69	9.62	10.28
Family Visitation Security Officer	14Z1	20.38	23.41	30.00	33.69	9.62	10.28
Youth Correctional Officer	14Z1	20.38	23.41	30.00	33.69	9.62	10.28
Correctional Officer Truck Driver	17Z	21.49	24.82	31.35	35.41	9.86	10.59
Correctional Officer Sergeants	22C	23.71	27.36	34.03	38.44	10.32	11.08
Correctional Officer Lieutenant	23CMC	25.83	31.98	36.60	44.11	10.77	12.13
Correctional Officer Lieutenant-Program Facility	23CMC	25.83	31.98	36.60	44.11	10.77	12.13
Supervisor Juvenile Correctional Officer	28MC	28.87	33.52	40.30	45.99	11.43	12.47

Correctional Officer Annual Salary Ranges							
Job Class Name	Paygrade	2020		2024		Variance 2020 to 2024	
		Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Correctional Officer I Nm	14Z1	42,391	48,683	62,399	70,075	20,008	21,392
Correctional Officer I Sheriff Nm	14Z1	42,391	48,683	62,399	70,075	20,008	21,392
Family Visitation Security Officer	14Z1	42,391	48,683	62,399	70,075	20,008	21,392
Youth Correctional Officer	14Z1	42,391	48,683	62,399	70,075	20,008	21,392
Correctional Officer Truck Driver	17Z	44,697	51,616	65,210	73,653	20,513	22,036
Correctional Officer Sergeants	22C	49,312	56,915	70,780	79,955	21,468	23,040
Correctional Officer Lieutenant	23CMC	53,722	66,518	76,126	91,749	22,404	25,230
Correctional Officer Lieutenant-Program Facility	23CMC	53,722	66,518	76,126	91,749	22,404	25,230
Supervisor Juvenile Correctional Officer	28MC	60,056	69,722	83,832	95,659	23,776	25,938

## **SUPERVISOR TRAINING**

MCSO recognizes that we must do what we can to not only recruit and hire enough people but also help them develop into corrections professionals. It is imperative to cultivate good supervisors to support the workforce at the Milwaukee County Jail. MCSO will continue to develop initiatives to build better supervisors by constantly reviewing and enhancing training. All MCSO supervisors (civilian, corrections and sworn) are assigned these training modules (16-hours) in PoliceOne Academy upon their promotion:

- Dealing with Angry Employees
- Dealing with News Media
- Emotional Intelligence for Leaders
- Enhancing Work Relationships
- FEMA ICS-200: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
- FMLA Training for Supervisors
- Goal Setting Skills
- Leadership v. Management
- Science of Employee Engagement
- Sexual Harassment for Managers

- Shaping an Ethical Workplace Culture
- Supervisor Skills
- Workplace Bullying

In 2019 MCSO implemented additional training titled "Responsible Supervision" (3-day), which all corrections supervisors attend and was comprised of:

- Risk Management review of Jail
- Risk Review of Worker's Compensation and Transitional Duty
- HR Review of FMLA & ADA
- HR Review of HR Business Partner
- OCC Legal Update of Section 1983
- Employee Accountability
- Jail Processes
- Supervisor Expectations
- Mental Health Awareness
- Use of Force Management
- Report Writing
- Jail Log Oversight

In 2020 MCSO conducted an additional program as above (3-day) but with additional Law Enforcement specific items which all sworn supervisors attended and was comprised of:

- Risk Management Review of Substance Abuse
- HR Review of Employee Evaluations
- OCC Legal Update 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Amendments
- Generational Differences
- Processing Evidence
- Pursuit Oversight
- SMART Call-Ups
- Critical Incident Oversight
- Badger traCS for Supervisors
- RMS/NIBRS
- Officer Wellness
- Ethics for Supervisors

In 2023 MCSO conducted an in-person supervisor training for all newly promoted corrections (3-day) and sworn (4-day) supervisors who had NOT previously attended the 2019/2020 supervision training events. This training included:

- Supervisor Expectations
- Time Management
- RMS/CMS
- evidence.com (2hr)
- HR Review of Worker's Compensation & Substance Abuse
- HR Review of FMLA & ADA
- Supervisor Oversight

- Use of Force for Supervisors
- OCC Legal Update
- Employee Accountability
- Officer Wellness
- Jail Grievances
- Smart Call-Ups, Special Events (Sworn)
- Pursuit Oversight (Sworn)
- Critical Incident Oversight (Sworn)
- Officer Involved Shooting Protocols (Sworn)
- Criminal Investigations and Evidence Scene Management (Sworn)

In 2024 MCSO will implement CO Supervisor in-service training for all corrections supervisors which will include the additional topics:

- FMLA Laws
- Religious Accommodations
- Grievances
- Supervisor Liability and Supervisor Case Law
- Standards of Supervisor Conduct
- Principles of Supervision (scene management, decision making, follow through)
- Leadership (culture, delegation, mentoring)

Further, Milwaukee County Human Resources- Training and Development identified additional online training for employees transitioning to a supervisory or management position:

#### eLearnings:

- The New Manager's Toolkit: Essential Skills for Success
- Performance Management Demystified: Best Practices for New Managers
- SMART Goal Setting and Action Planning
- The Power of Communication: Achieving Respectful Interactions in the Workplace
- De-escalation
- Business Etiquette
- Leading Effective Meetings
- Decision-Making - available Spring 2024
- Multigenerational Workforce - available Spring/Summer 2024

#### Instructor-led/Instructor-led Virtual Trainings:

- Your Leadership Role
- Leading Diverse Teams
- Performance Evaluation Overview
- Goal Setting and Feedback
- Coaching to Improve Performance
- Conflict Management
- Norms for Teams
- Building Organizational Trust
- DiSC Behavioral Styles
- Emotional Quotient (EQ)

- Fine-Tuning Humor to Maximize Impact - available Spring/Summer 2024
- Culture First Aid Workshop Series (created for supervisors, managers, and leaders) - available Spring 2024
- Respectful Workplace: Navigating Boundaries and Preventing Harassment - available Spring/Summer 2024
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse (created for supervisors/managers) - available Spring/Summer 2024

## **STAFF RETENTION and STAFF ENGAGEMENT**

MCSO recognizes that competitive compensation and benefits are one aspect of staff retention. Additionally, MCSO will continue to work to evolve our understanding of the drivers of staff turnover, improving and implementing the following initiatives to improve the full extent of an employee's experience:

### **Exit Interviews**

Exit interviews can be used as part of a comprehensive initiative to help retain our employees, and findings can offer valuable insights for strategic planning and point towards potential areas for targeted intervention and policy changes. This current practice has given the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) some insight into identifying points of concern and areas for review and reform. Our current Exit Interview process consists of a small set of questions, which does allow for a small scope of perspective. However, the questions are mostly open-ended, which does not allow for a great deal of qualitative data analysis. MCSO has prioritized redesigning the Exit Interview to include online access and questions geared to identify themes.

Additionally, we have concluded that Exit Interviews should not be the first conversation we have with a member about his or her feelings and ideas about job or work culture satisfaction. Meaningful conversations with current members can provide insight into what employees are thinking and reveals problems and concerns. With this in mind, MCSO will implement a new series of Work Culture Surveys for those working in the Milwaukee County Jail and will strive for all departing members to be our best ambassadors.

### **Work Culture Surveys**

As stated, the MCSO/CJF Exit Interview should be a culmination of a series of regular retention conversations with members focused on organizational learning and relationship building and should not be the first conversation we have with a member about their job satisfaction. Work Culture Surveys will consist of a set of three short quarterly surveys, followed by a fourth, more comprehensive, annual survey. The surveys will provide the MCSO with tools to provide a range of benefits from better workplace experiences and staff retention, to improved efficiency and care of occupants. Primarily, the surveys will be designed to offer a structured platform for employees to voice their opinions and concerns. The surveys will provide feedback on various aspects of the workplace experience, such as job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, communication, work culture, staffing and health and wellness.

## **Suggestion Boxes**

Employee suggestion boxes create a channel and opportunity to gather frontline insight into operational processes and allow employees to share their ideas, helpful suggestions, and concerns. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging and engagement among the CJF workforce. Research suggests engaged employees are more likely to be loyal, productive, and highly motivated. Placing suggestion boxes in the employee areas, such as roll call rooms, and dressing rooms will encourage engagement, give members a voice, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Additionally, adding a digital version, i.e., an online suggestion box, can be a powerful tool for driving engagement, innovation, and continuous improvement within the CJF, promoting collaboration, enhancing morale, and generating a sense of ownership among employees.

## **Correction Officer Retention & Engagement Committee (C.O.R.E. Committee)**

MCSO will take steps to create a Correction Officer Retention & Engagement Committee (CORE). This committee would be made up of a small group of volunteers that represent the collective workforce at the Milwaukee County Jail and should include at least one member of management. The C.O.R.E. committee's primary focus would be assisting management in identifying and correcting problems related to job satisfaction, supervisory relations, and work environment. The committee would be expected to discuss issues, develop, and deliver recommendations to management, and communicate effectively with co-workers and management. The committee would not be formed to air grievances, but rather to address issues that are currently known (possibly using information provided by data collected in Exit Interviews, Surveys, and Suggestions). The committee members would be asked to provide thoughtful and realistic feedback and solutions to the ideas and opportunities for improvement that are presented to them. The committee will be a resource for management and employees to communicate effectively about employee suggestions and survey data and work together on improving work culture and environment. Successful employee retention committees are focused on collaboration and getting staff to participate and buy-in to the solution. The committee members would become leaders in the workplace, as they encourage others to participate in the solutions that they helped to develop.

## **Monthly Newsletter ("The Watercooler")**

The Milwaukee County Jail will reinstate its monthly newsletter "The Watercooler". Internal newsletters can inform workers of recent updates, new policy or procedures, important Agency news, industry trends, new hires, and more through a single platform. That helps everyone stay on the same page and prevents communication silos across teams and assignments. The MCSO recognizes that internal company newsletters are important in the modern workplace because they connect employees to their company and its culture, builds relationship and provides resources. MCSO believes this connection in turn will lead to healthier, happier, and more productive employees.

## **News & Social Media Promotion**

MCSO's Public Affairs & Community Engagement (PACE) Unit recognizes that morale and jail operations can be affected by persistent negative, often false narratives about the nature of their difficult jobs. To combat this issue, PACE will more regularly feature the positive accomplishments of Milwaukee County Jail employees on the agency's social media pages and to local news outlets. Additionally, PACE will promote via social media and news outlets the unique, positive work of the Jail's



Special Projects Unit, including high school diploma and GED programs for occupants, literacy programs, and emotional health and spiritual wellness counseling.

### **MCSO Peer Support Program (PSP)**

Peer Support can be defined as offering assistance, based on a shared understanding between people in similar situations. The MCSO currently has a very robust PSP, which spans across all Bureaus and Divisions. The MCSO PSP works to provide access to support services to MCSO members who may be suffering from emotional, personal, physical, or stress related difficulties. The PSP will strive to implement more resources to the Milwaukee County Jail staff knowing that it can be a powerful tool for enhancing employee engagements, satisfaction, and retention.

### **NEXT STEPS**

MCSO will evaluate the need for online applications versus utilizing hiring events which streamlines the process for investigators and applicants alike.

MCSO will work with HR to reevaluate a new hiring platform that allows for additional automated applicant communications, to include real-time applicant status information.

MCSO will review and revise all documents used for hiring to allow for better understanding of the process by the applicants.

Work to improve MCSO onboarding for new members working at the CJF, to include CJF specific commonly needed workplace topics (org charts/maps/resources etc.)

With our improved staffing, we will soon resume occupant open dayroom time from 7:00am – 1:45pm and 3:00pm - 9:45pm daily.

### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Director James Burnett

Director Joshua Briggs

Captain Tricia Carlson



