



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

Hiring and Attrition Report

January 2024

**Governor Wes Moore
Lt. Governor Aruna Miller
Secretary Carolyn J. Scruggs**

Introduction

The Budget Committees included the following Committee Narrative on page 159 of the 2023 Joint Chairmen's Report requesting the Department submit a report on hiring and attrition:

Further provided that \$100,000 of this appropriation made for the purpose of General Administration may not be expended until the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services submits the second of four quarterly hiring and attrition reports to the budget committees. The reports shall include

- *a breakdown of all hires and separations for each of the 3 months in question by category of employee (correctional officer, community supervision agent, or administrative employee) and by reason for separation.*
- *narrative summarizing all hiring events and changes to the hiring process that occurred during the quarter; the quantity, type, and cost of bonuses disbursed; as well as overall applications received, tested, and interviewed.*

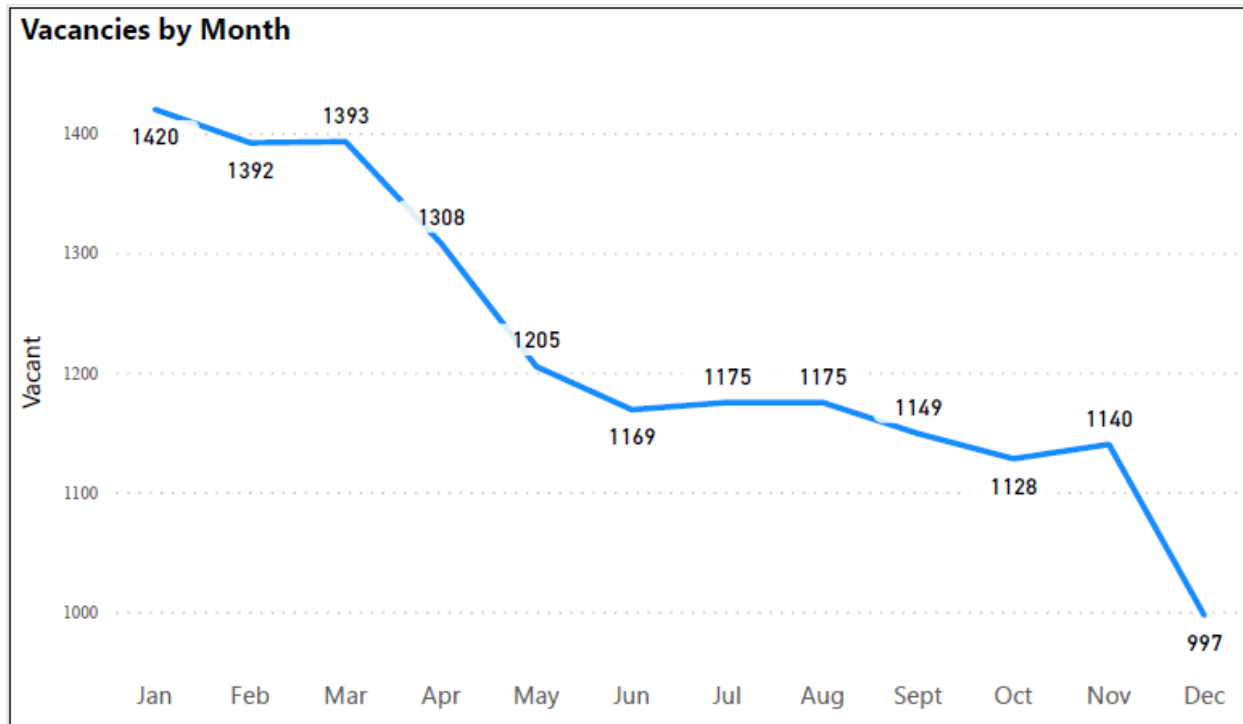
The first quarterly report shall be submitted to the budget committees no later than October 25, 2023, and the second report shall be submitted to the budget committees no later than January 25, 2024. The budget committees shall have 45 days from the date of the receipt of the second quarterly report to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Overview

During Calendar Year (CY) 2023, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services made considerable progress towards reducing vacancies by hiring 945 new employees, 364 correctional officers and 581 staff in all other classifications throughout the Department. This initiative resulted in a reduction of the vacancy rate from 14.63% in January to 10.81% in December 2023. The success of these hiring efforts is largely due to the implementation of expanded hiring flexibility and effective one-day hiring events. These events allowed for immediate interviewing, pre-screening, and conditional job offers. Additionally, the department enhanced its leadership by promoting 225 correctional staff (CO Sergeant - Major) to new positions in CY23.

A competitive recruitment market has made it historically difficult to fill administrative and professional positions within the Department. However, the Department of Budget and Management's expanded authority to agencies for salary offers coupled with a series of COLAs and step increments in FY24 has positioned the Department well to offer a competitive salary, particularly for jobs requiring certifications and credentials. Effective July 1, 2023, State regular and contractual employees received a 2% COLA and a step increment on July 1, 2023, or January 1, 2024, based on the employee's entry-on-duty date (EOD). In addition, State regular employees with an EOD prior to July 1, 2018, received an additional step effective July 1, 2023. These enhancements go a long way to improve hiring and retention outcomes.

In the calendar year 2023, the Department experienced success in vacancy reduction across all positions. This trend is driven by increases in hiring efforts offset by a decrease in separations.



Recruitment

In the calendar year 2023, the Department has received 25,984 applications for all positions. Applications for Correctional Officer I positions represented 15.0% of all applications¹ received. In Q4 2023, the Department received 7,595 applications for all positions. Applications for Correctional Officer I positions represented 10.6% of all applications received.

2023 Oct - Dec	Correctional Officer I Positions	Correctional Positions	Community Supervision Positions	Administrative Positions
Applications	805	4694	1520	576
Tested and/or Interviewed	597	2201	202	35
Hired	109	14	7	114

Recruitment Strategies

¹ Total application metrics do not include freename candidates (Reinstatements, Transfers, DORS, etc.)

In 2023, the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) implemented several strategic initiatives to enhance recruitment efficiency within the Department. The primary goals were to attract more qualified applicants, streamline the hiring process, minimize applicant withdrawal rates, and bolster new hire retention. Key strategies employed were:

1. **Same-Day Hiring Events:** These events were designed to expedite the hiring process. By conducting interviews and preliminary screenings on the spot, the HRSD was able to provide conditional job offers to suitable candidates immediately. This approach not only reduced the time to hire but also improved the candidate experience by offering a quick and decisive hiring process.
2. **Streamlined Processes:** The HRSD focused on refining and simplifying various stages of the recruitment process. This involved eliminating unnecessary steps and making the process more efficient. By reducing complexities, the department was able to accelerate the hiring cycle, decrease the likelihood of applicant withdrawal, and start onboarding quality hires more quickly.
3. **Targeted Marketing and Advertising:** To attract a diverse and qualified pool of applicants, HRSD invested in targeted marketing and advertising campaigns. These campaigns were tailored to reach potential candidates through various channels, including social media, job fairs, and community outreach programs.

Same-Day Hiring Events

The Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) of the Department organized several successful one-day hiring events and job fairs in 2023, attracting up to 500 participants at each event. These were strategically held in local communities for easy access. Additionally, the Department collaborated with various state agencies to diversify and enhance the range of job opportunities available. Utilizing social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, the Department effectively promoted specific positions, drawing interest prior to the events. Hiring managers were present on-site, offering job overviews, enabling attendees to apply for roles aligning with their skills and interests. Over the year, the Recruitment Unit was involved in more than 191 recruitment and outreach events across Maryland and neighboring states, significantly broadening the applicant pool. The focus for the upcoming quarter is set to be on enhancing applicant engagement and experience.

Date	Event Description	Type of Event
10.2.2023	Penn College of Tech	Job Fair
10.3.2023	CCBC Essex Job Fair	Job Fair
10.4.2023	Cut, Cloth, Work, Job Fair	Job Fair
10.4.2023	Howard County Office of Workforce Information Session	Outreach
10.4.2023	WorkForce WV Virtual Job Fair	Job Fair
10.4.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
10.4.2023	Hagerstown In Person Interviews	Hiring Event

10.5.2023	Salisbury Chamber 2023 Job and Career Fair	Job Fair
10.5.2023	HACC-Gettysburg Job Fair	Job Fair
10.7.2023	Cumberland In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
10.7.2023	Apple Butter Festival	Outreach
10.8.2023	Apple Butter Festival	Outreach
10.11.2023	Correctional Dietary Hiring Event	Hiring Event
10.11.2023	Frostburg University Job Fair	Job Fair
10.12.2023	DBM State Job Fair	Job Fair
10.12.2023	University of Maryland Eastern Shore Job Fair	Job Fair
10.12.2023	Autumn Glory Days Parade	Outreach
10.18.2023	Frederick News Post Job Fair	Job Fair
10.18.2023	Liberty University Government & Law Enforcement Job Fair	Job Fair
10.18.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
10.18.2023	Cumberland In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
10.19.2023	Allegany County Job Fair	Job Fair
10.19.2023	Job Zone Job Fair Dahlgren-VA	Job Fair
10.21.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
10.21.2023	Hagerstown In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
10.25.2023	Cut, Cloth, Work, Job Fair	Job Fair
10.26.2023	Eastern Shore Community College Fall 2023 Job Fair	Job Fair
11.01.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
11.01.2023	Hagerstown In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
11.01.2023	HACC-Harrisburg Campus Employer Spotlight	Outreach
11.02.2023	HACC-Harrisburg Campus Job Fair	Job Fair
11.04.2023	Cumberland In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
11.04.2023	Eastern Shore Hiring Event	Hiring Event
11.07.2023	Focus on the Future Middle School Career Outreach	Outreach
11.08.2023	Focus on the Future Middle School Career Outreach	Outreach
11.08.2023	Veterans Day Celebration and Resource Fair	Job Fair
11.14.2023	Eastern WV Comm & tech College Job Fair	Job Fair
11.15.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
11.15.2023	HCC Career Fair	Job Fair

11.15.2023	WVU-Keyser Law Enforcement Job Fair	Job Fair
11.15.2023	Cumberland In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
11.16.2023	Montgomery Co Job Fair	Job Fair
11.18.2023	Hagerstown In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
12.2.2023	Cumberland In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
12.6.2023	Hagerstown In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
12.6.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
12.6.2023	HACC-Gettysburg Campus Employer Spotlight	Outreach
12.9.2023	East In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
12.15.2023	Veteran Job Club	Outreach
12.16.2023	Hagerstown In Person Interviews	Hiring Event
12.20.2023	Cumberland In Person Interviews	Hiring Event

Streamlined Processes

In a collaborative effort with hiring managers, the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) effectively restructured the recruitment and selection processes. The focus was on identifying qualified candidates more efficiently, thereby bypassing the traditionally time-consuming structured interviews. These interviews typically required the involvement of a three-member panel and extended over several days. A key aspect of this streamlined process was implemented during hiring events. Candidates who received conditional job offers were able to initiate their background checks and complete fingerprinting immediately at the event location. This integration of processes led to a considerable reduction in the overall hiring timeline. By allowing candidates to complete these essential steps on-site, the need for separate appointments with the Background Investigations Unit was eliminated. As a result, candidates could progress more rapidly through the background investigation process, accelerating their journey towards final employment. This optimization not only saved time but also enhanced the candidate experience, making the hiring process more efficient and applicant-friendly.

Targeted Marketing & Advertising

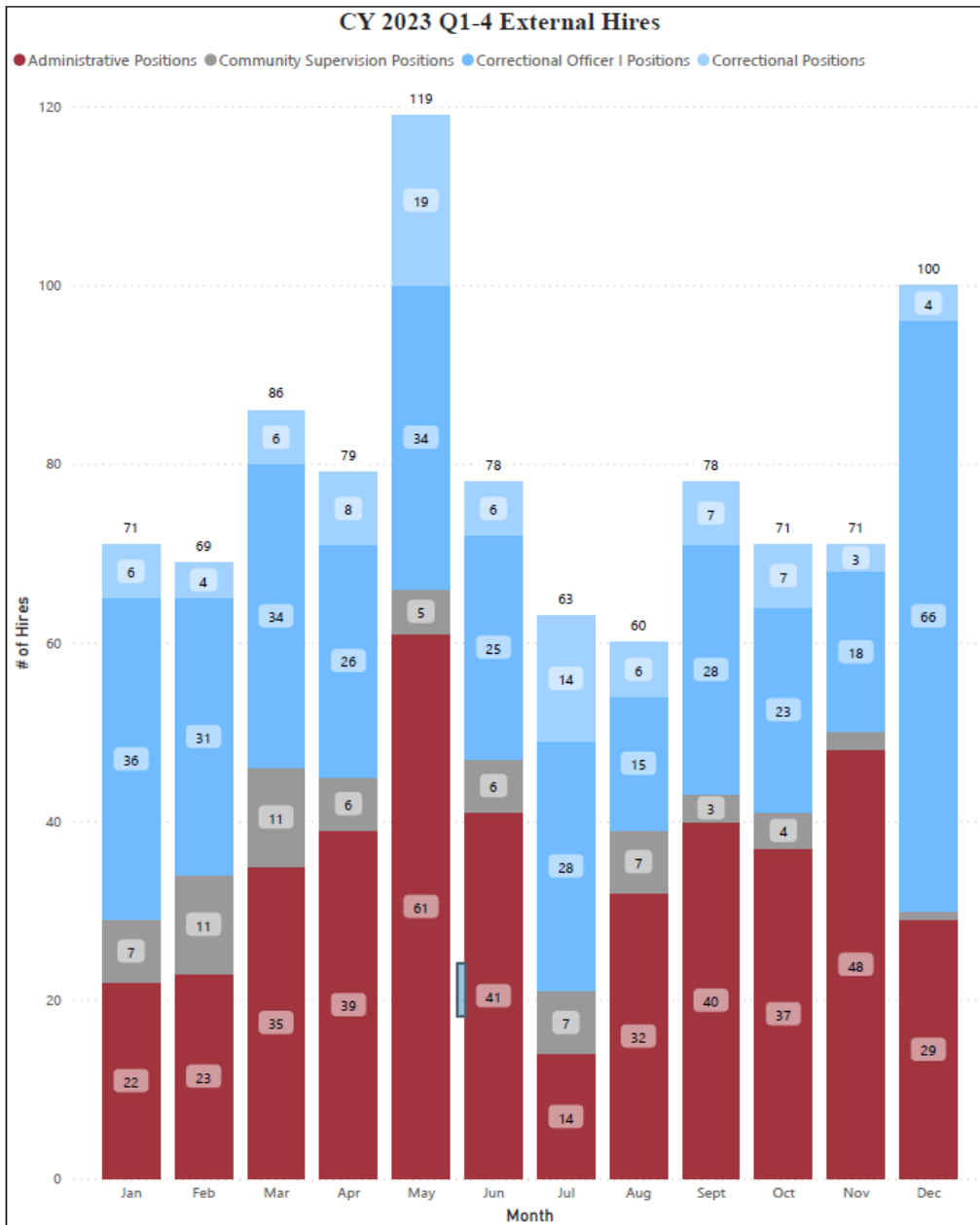
Through social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the Department can share recruitment information and messages from employees and leadership that highlight a wide range of career opportunities. The incorporation of technology into recruitment materials, such as QR codes, allows interested applicants to be linked directly to the job application portal, JobAps, or other candidate specific documents.

HRSD has identified the need to improve the quality of job postings using the state-wide application portal – JobAps to make them more attractive to prospective applicants. The Department of Budget and Management informed of recent JobAps enhancements that allow video attachments to be included with the job announcement. HRSD will be working with the Office of Communications to develop video content for recruitment advertisements.

An established Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Maryland State Ad Agency (MSAA) has expanded the Department's capacity to reach a diverse workforce using multi-media platforms, such as radio, television, billboards, and printed advertisements. The Department continues to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing and advertising efforts, making necessary adjustments based on recruitment data analytics.

Overall Hiring

The Department has continued its improvement of hiring for administrative positions and community supervision positions. In the calendar year 2023, the Department hired 945 employees across all employee types as illustrated in the CY 2023 Q1-4 External Hires graph.



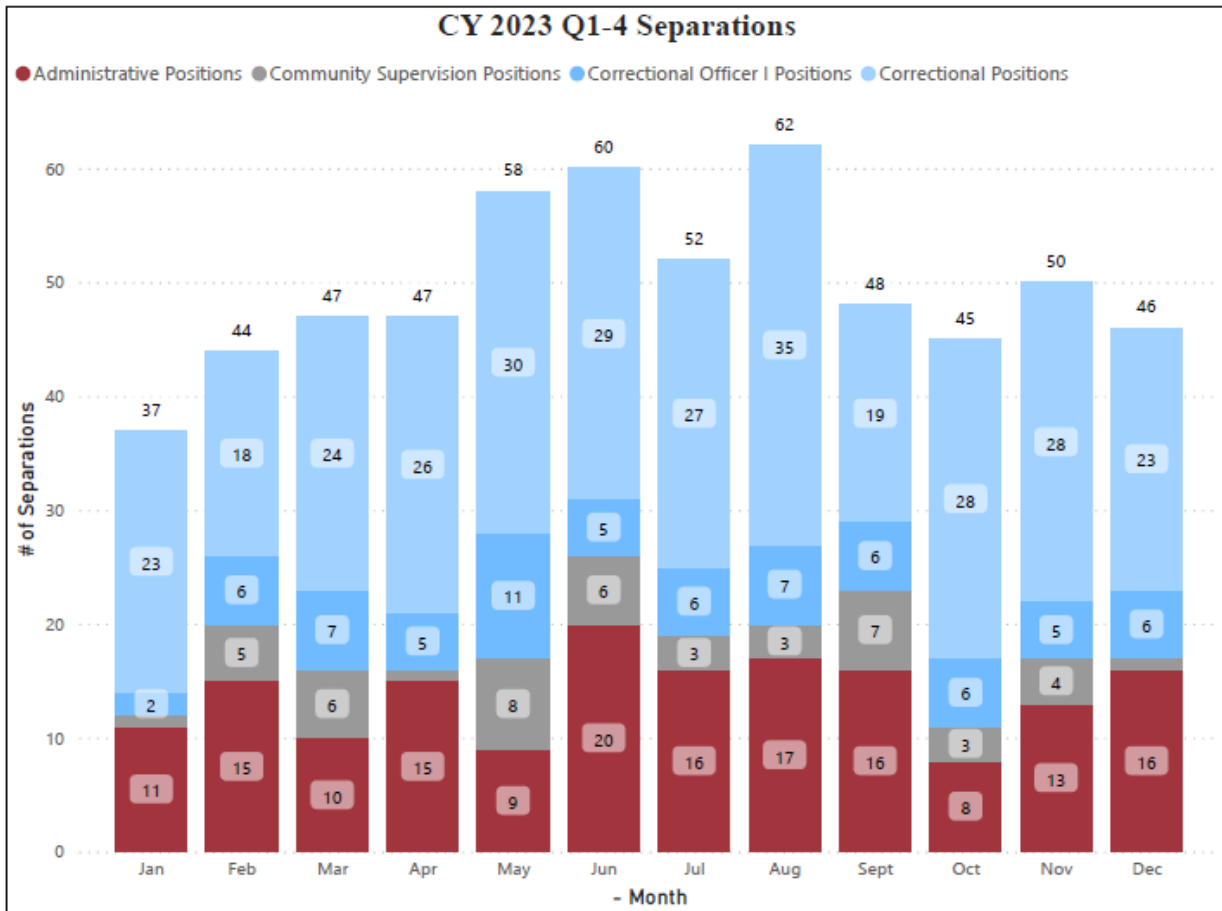
Correctional Officer Hiring

Staffing shortages in corrections continues to be a national challenge. In the calendar year 2023, the Department hired a total of 364 new correctional officers, with 107 hires in the last quarter of the year. The hiring success for Q4 is attributed to the implementation of a 90-day Background Fast Track Pilot Project from October – December that allowed pre-screened applicants who meet certain background criteria to enter an expedited process. The process included priority appointments for the polygraph exam, medical exam and drug test. By prioritizing candidates who were best prepared to move forward, the Background Investigations Unit was able to clear a higher number of candidates for hire in less time.

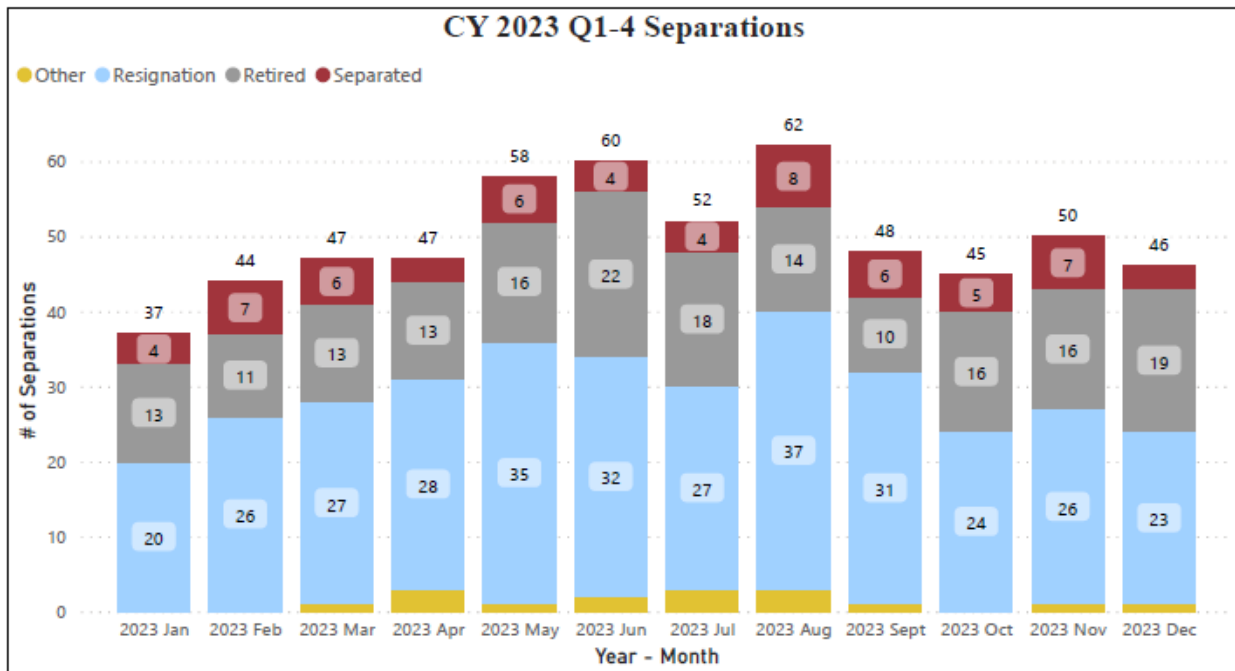
The Department has worked to ensure the salary for entry-level correctional officers remains regionally competitive. With a starting salary of \$51,563, Correctional Officers for DPSCS are still at or above the salary for correctional officers in Maryland counties. Additional incentives, such as a \$5,000 hiring bonus, and the \$2,500 regional incentive for Western and Eastern regions help recruitment efforts for correctional officers.

Separations

In the calendar year 2023, the Department has experienced 596 separations, an average of about 50 per month. The largest category among separations are correctional officers and other correctional staff working in facilities (64%), consistent with the distribution of Department's positions.



Resignations drive most separations; of the 596 total separations in calendar year 2023, 336 employees have resigned, representing 56% of separations overall. The majority of resignations across all positions are employees who left state service for a non-state position. Roughly 10.57% of separations have been the result of Department-initiated terminations.



Retention Strategies

Employee retention is as vital as recruitment for the Department. Retaining staff avoids the significant costs associated with hiring and training replacements. As highlighted by Gallup in 2023, *“the expense of replacing an employee can range from half to two times their annual salary, which includes both direct and indirect costs”*. The Department is focusing on using separation data and exit interviews to gain insights into the reasons behind employee departures. This strategy will enable a deeper understanding of factors contributing to turnover, thereby aiding in the development of targeted retention strategies. By analyzing this data, the Department can identify trends and issues within the workforce, leading to more informed and effective retention efforts.

Internal Recruitment

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) places significant emphasis on internal hiring as a critical component of its overall employee retention strategy. The agency recognizes that a substantial portion of its staffing needs are met by employees seeking career advancement or changes within their existing job series. For these internal career opportunities, DPSCS often requires a full competitive recruitment process, ensuring the selection of the most suitable candidates for advancement.

“This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \$1 Trillion” from Gallup 2023, which provides an analysis of the annual financial loss U.S. businesses face due to voluntary turnover and emphasizes the range of costs associated with replacing an individual employee

In 2023, the Department underscored its commitment to this approach by intensifying efforts to transition contractual employees into permanent roles. Historically, the Department has recruited contractual workers for State regular positions. However, the focus in 2023 was particularly on converting these positions to offer greater job security and additional benefits. In December alone, 97 contractual employees were transitioned into State merit positions.

This initiative is a testament to the Department's dedication to nurturing and retaining its talented workforce. By converting contractual roles to permanent ones, DPSCS not only offers enhanced job stability and benefits to its employees but also reinforces its commitment to developing a dedicated and long-term workforce. This approach is instrumental in fostering employee loyalty and satisfaction, which are crucial for maintaining a robust and efficient workforce within the Department.

Bonuses

The following bonus figures include updated figures for prior quarters which may have been completed after earlier reports. In CY 2023, the Department paid out 3,498 one-time bonuses totaling \$11.79M as detailed below.

Retention and Longevity Pay Incentive (RLPI) – Enacted in December 2019, correctional officers who have met 20 years of service and are eligible to retire, may participate in RLPI. Qualifying employees may receive up to \$37,500 for working four additional years. In CY23, 734 RLPI payments were paid out totaling \$9.06M.

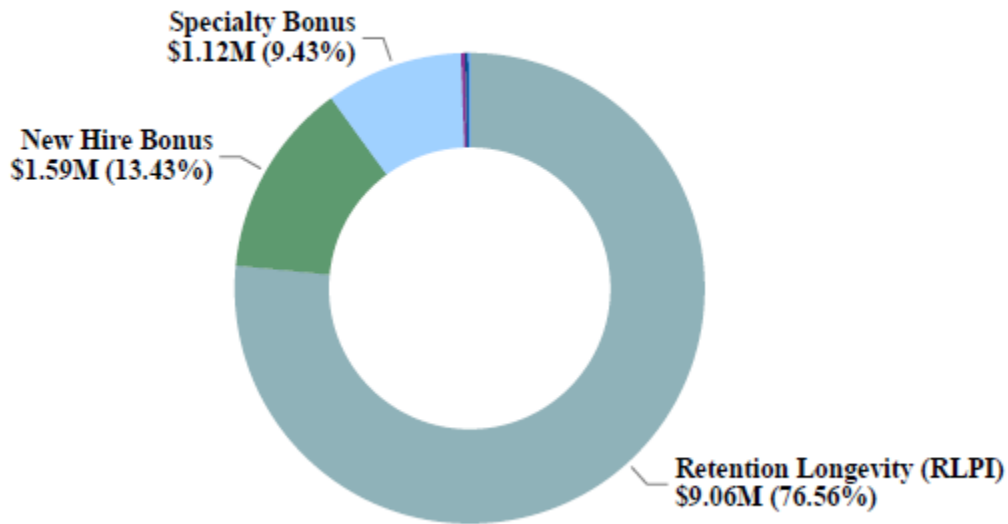
Additionally, the Department has expanded its retention efforts and implemented the second retention bonus program for eligible Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) employees effective July 1, 2022. Since the inception of the program 180 DPP employees, including Parole and Probation Agents and Field Supervisors have enrolled in the RLPI program. In November 2022, the Department expanded the program to include additional eligible classifications. In CY23, a total of 157 employees outside of the Correctional Officer Series have received this RLPI Bonus totaling \$1.22M. Effective July 1, 2023, the RLPI program was expanded to include Correctional Case Management, PSCS Social Worker, Psychology Associate, Psychologist Correctional and Psychology Services Chief positions with 54 employees receiving the first payment totaling \$420,000. Effective July 1, 2023, the RLPI bonus for Correctional Officers and Sergeants was extended through 6/30/2025 with 26 re-enrolling as of 01/12/24.

Specialty Bonuses

Beginning in CY21 a variety of specialty bonuses to include; special operations, contraband interdiction efforts, involvement as instructional trainers, and weapons certification, were offered to incentivize qualification and training in key skill areas across correctional classifications. These specialty bonuses rewarded employees who engaged in development and targeted qualifications that filled key operational gaps, allowing for more flexibility in post assignments and security operations. In CY23, 1,967 specialty bonuses were paid out, with the largest bonus, \$656,000, being awarded for weapons certification.

New Hire and Referral Bonus – New correctional officers receive a \$2,000 bonus after graduating from the academy and a \$3,000 bonus after the satisfactory completion of the one-year probationary period. Employees receive \$500 for referring a successful candidate for a correctional officer position. In CY23, the Department paid 744 new hire bonuses for a total of \$1.59M and 53 referral bonuses for a total of 26.5K.

CY 2023 One Time Bonuses



Summary

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services has made significant strides in reducing its overall vacancy rate, thanks to its assertive recruitment strategies. These efforts have been particularly effective in areas such as community supervision, information technology, and pre-trial detention services. Looking ahead to the next quarter, the Department is optimistic about further improving its hiring for mental health and administrative positions.

In the realm of correctional officer recruitment, there has been a notable improvement in 2023, with the Department successfully hiring 364 new officers, surpassing the 316 hires in 2022. However, the Department aims to reach or exceed the hiring levels achieved in 2020 and 2021, when the number of new correctional officer hires exceeded 450 each year. This goal reflects the Department's commitment to addressing the challenge of staffing shortages in correctional facilities.

The Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) is continuously developing and refining recruitment strategies to enhance hiring effectiveness. The Department remains a competitive employer, attracting a diverse range of candidates not only from within the agency but also from other state agencies and the private sector. This broad appeal underscores the Department's status as an employer of choice and is a testament to its successful recruitment policies and practices.