



## Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services  
Overview - Q00  
Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget  
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Public Safety, Transportation and Environment Subcommittee  
Senator Sarah K. Elfreth, Chair  
January 25, 2024

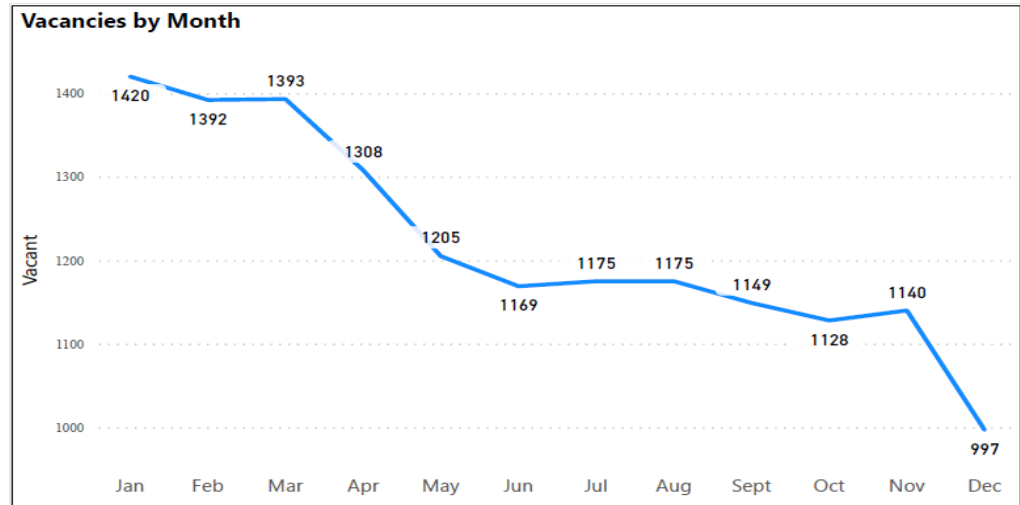
Appropriations Committee  
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee  
Delegate Jazz Lewis, Chair  
January, 29th, 2024

### Vacancies

**Issue: DPSCS should brief the committees on hiring goals for fiscal 2024 and 2025 to minimize or eliminate the need for mandatory overtime in the future.**

### **Response:**

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services recognizes the impact of vacancies on overtime expenditures and has made considerable progress towards filling vacant positions. In Calendar Year (CY) 2023, the Department hired 945 new employees. This resulted in a vacancy rate reduction from 14.63% in January 2023 to 10.81% in December 2023.



### Recruitment Strategies

During FY 24 and FY 25, the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) will build upon strategic recruitment initiatives to attract more qualified applicants and streamline the hiring process. During calendar year (CY) 2023, the Department found success with the following recruitment strategies:

- Same-Day Hiring Events
- Streamlined Processes
- Targeted Marketing and Advertising

### Same-Day Hiring Events

The Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) organized several successful one-day hiring events and job fairs in 2023, attracting up to 500 participants in a single day. These events were held in local communities to provide easy access for interested applicants. 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.

Hiring managers were on-site which allowed attendees to apply for jobs that align with their skills and interests. 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.

During 2023, the Recruitment Unit participated in 191 recruitment and outreach events across Maryland and neighboring states, significantly broadening the applicant pool, with over 25,000 applications received throughout the year.

From October - December 2023 (Q4), the Department received 7,595 applications for all positions and hired a total of 244 new employees. Correctional Officer I represented 10.6% of all applications received and 45% of hires (109) for Q4 of 2023. See chart below.

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

**Streamlined Processes**

In a collaborative effort with hiring managers, the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) successfully refined and simplified various stages of the recruitment and hiring process. The focus was on identifying qualified candidates more efficiently, thereby bypassing the traditionally time-consuming structured interviews which typically required a three-member panel and extended over several days. 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. 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. By allowing candidates to complete these essential steps on-site, the need for separate appointments with the Background Investigations Unit was eliminated. This integration of processes led to a considerable reduction in the overall hiring timeline. This optimization not only saved time but also enhanced the candidate experience, making the hiring process more efficient and applicant-friendly.

**Targeted Marketing & Advertising**

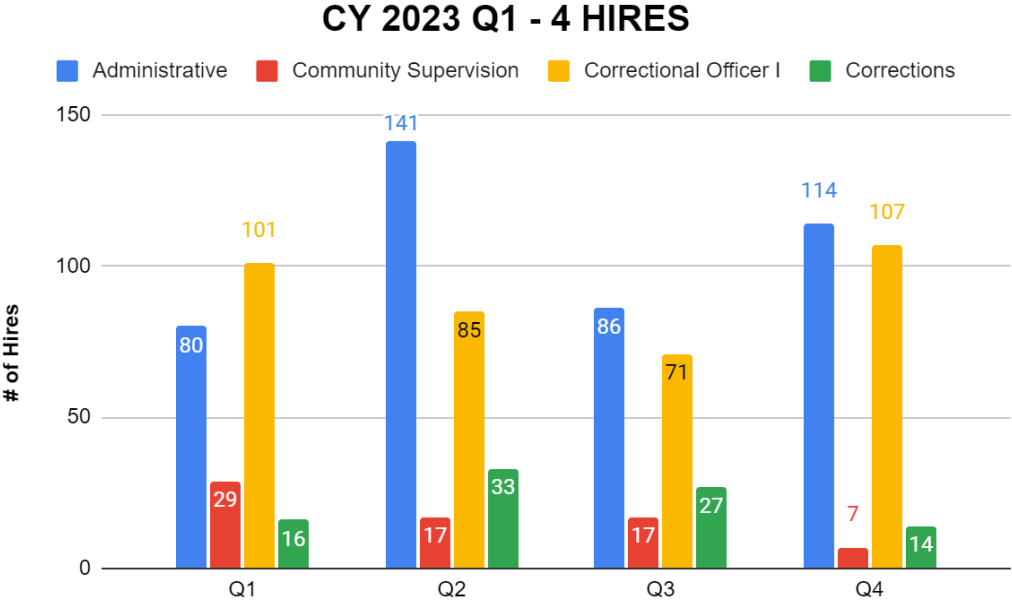
An established Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Maryland State Ad Agency (MSAA) has expanded the Department’s capacity to reach a diverse workforce using multi-media platforms, such as radio, television, billboards, and printed advertisements. Job postings on Indeed have been extremely successful in driving our applications. 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 a need to improve the quality of job postings using the state-wide application portal – JobAps to make recruitments 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 Department’s Office of Communications to develop videos for recruitment and marketing.

**CY 2023 Hire Data**

The Department has continued its improvement of hiring for administrative positions and community supervision positions during FY 24 resulting in the lowest vacancy rates since pre-pandemic. During the calendar year 2023, the Departmental hired 270 new Administrative staff and 28 Information Technology (IT) positions. A further breakdown of Administrative and IT vacancies is listed below.



**Administrative Positions**

The Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) identified several challenges that impact the Department’s ability to fill administrative positions, including but not limited to, low applicant response, length of time to complete the selection process, and applicants declining the position due salary considerations. Through a more collaborative process with Hiring

Managers, the HR Analyst has been able to develop a customized plan to attract the ideal candidate. This targeted approach is intended to increase the number of qualified candidates, particularly for hard to fill positions. This was particularly prevalent for Information Technology (IT) and Administrative positions.

In addition to streamlined recruitment and selection process, the HRSD researched market rate salaries and offered candidates a more competitive salary. The Department was able to fill over 90% of its Administrative positions (Non-IT) with 1077 filled and 112 vacancies as of 12.27.23. The Department was able to fill over 94% of its IT positions, resulting in 6 vacancies as of 12.27.23. The Department will continue its aggressive recruitment efforts to ensure vacancy rates remain low for FY 24 and FY 25.

### **Community Supervision**

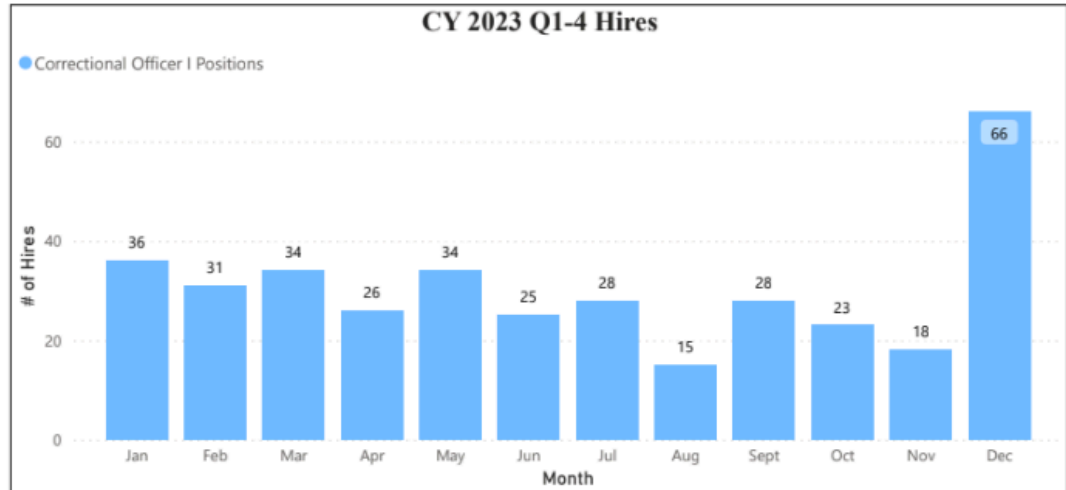
During 2023, HRSD conducted recruitments for Parole and Probation Agent and Drinking Driver Monitor positions, the largest workgroups in Community Supervision, resulting in a large pool of qualified candidates for each position. In the calendar year CY 2023, the Division of Parole and Probation conducted two Drinking Driver Monitor Academies, graduating 26 Drinking Driver Monitors and conducted four Parole and Probation Agent Academies, graduating 103 Parole and Probation Agents. This was a significant increase from calendar year 2022, when only 4 Drinking Driver Monitors and 78 Parole and Probation Agents completed academy training. Filling vacancies in Community Supervision has been a priority and the Department is pleased to report the results of hiring efforts.

### **Filled positions as of 12.27.23:**

- Parole and Probation Agents 92.69% filled - 51 vacancies
- Drinking Driver Monitor 87.78% filled - 11 vacancies

### **Correctional Officers**

Correctional agencies across the country are facing unprecedented staffing shortages, forcing departments to implement several initiatives to improve hiring and increase retention. Increased salaries, hiring bonuses, and other compensatory allowances have helped correctional officer hiring. In 2023, the Department hired 364 new officers into the CO I and COII position.



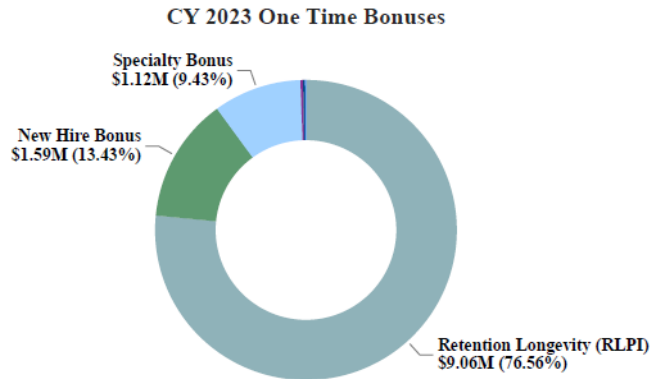
**Correctional Officer New Hire and Referral Bonus** – New correctional officers receive a \$2,000 bonus after graduating from the academy and a \$3,000 bonus after the satisfactory completion of the one-year probationary period. In addition, the Department offers a \$2,500 regional bonus for correctional officers hired to work at facilities located in hard to recruit regions, Somerset, Washington, and Allegheny Counties.

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.

### **Retention Strategies**

Employee retention is as vital as recruitment for the Department. Retaining staff avoids the significant costs associated with hiring and training replacements. For FY 24 and FY 25, the Department will focus 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.

The Department has implemented a number of compensatory incentives that augment retention strategies. They include a Retirement Longevity Program Incentive (RLPI) and several specialty bonuses. The below chart represents a breakdown of One-Time Bonuses paid during 2023.



**Retention and Longevity Pay Incentive (RLPI)**

Beginning in December 2019, correctional officers who meet retirement eligibility may receive up to \$37,500 for working four additional years. In CY23, 734 RLPI payments were paid out totalling \$9.06M.

The Department expanded its retention efforts and implemented the second RLPI 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 program was again expanded to include additional classifications, such as Dietary Officers and Correctional Maintenance Officers, and Maryland Correctional Enterprise Officers.

Effective July 1, 2023, the RLPI program was expanded to include Correctional Case Management, PSCS Social Worker, and Psychology Associate 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 39 re-enrolling as of 01/20/24. Since inception, the RPLI has paid over \$17M to eligible staff, indicating this is a successful retention strategy that should continue to be funded.

**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.

## **Reentry Programming**

**Issue: DPSCS should comment on efforts to enhance transitional housing opportunities, local reentry placements, and other rehabilitative reentry programming for its many returning citizens.**

### **Response:**

Successful reentry is absolutely critical to the mission of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Reentry begins as soon as an offender enters the custody of the Division of Correction and includes assessments, case planning, and evidence-based programming and treatment delivery while in custody designed to ensure that the transition back into the community is safe and successful.

The DPSCS continues to seek out new reentry community partnerships. Our Reentry Resource Fairs creates an opportunity for community organizations to participate in our reentry program (behind the fence) to build a rapport and relationship with the incarcerated individuals (II's) before release. Our Reentry team continues to engage community service organizations with a focus on transitional housing, substance use treatment, mental and medical health referrals, and employment opportunities for returning citizens, such as:

The Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake Inc. SEETTS program (Supporting Ex-offenders in Employment, Training, and Transitional Services- partner(s) with DPSCS offers training classes, case management services and career services for successful employment.

Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) provides structured programming for II's located in DPSCS facilities. In partnership with other State agencies, private and community partners, MCE assists participants transitioning back into the community with home planning, workforce preparation and interpersonal skills for employability upon release. The program is voluntary.

MCE offers a 400-hour meat cutting apprenticeship program that can translate to well paid jobs in the community. Hundreds of MCE graduates have found employment as meat cutters once released at Whole Foods, BJ's, Safeway, just to name a few examples. Another example is the AutoCAD design shop in the women's facility. MCE participants learn how to design furniture and layouts. The MCE team recently toured a private company that installs office furniture and are interested in hiring MCE women designers upon returning to the community.



MCE has twenty-six shops located in eleven DOC facilities and combines structured training and employment, education and reentry services to continue to reduce rates of recidivism.

The DPSCS reentry program has a strong focus on transitional housing, MOUD/SUD treatment as well as mental health support for the II's being released to the community. We routinely partner with the following agencies for various reentry services:

Misha House incorporates a therapeutic model of service delivery that provides peer support and housing coordination post release.

Everything Must Change Behavioral Health- this is a mental health clinic providing diagnostic, treatment and prescriptive services related to mental and behavioral health disorders. The II's can use this transitional housing program for CHDU and Parole.

Moore and Moore Management- provide men and women's Transitional housing – also substance use treatment programs and other wrap around services.

New House of Hope- provides transitional housing, substance use outpatient services, mental health services and supportive services for veterans and their families.

The DPSCS reentry program is seeking to work with the Housing Authority of Baltimore City and potentially expand the Reentry Housing Choice Voucher program for II's released into homelessness who suffer from SUD and Mental Illness and receive case management services by the city of Baltimore. Two hundred fifty (250) Housing Choice Vouchers were set aside for issuance for incarcerated individuals who agreed to participate in the program.

The DPSCS reentry program has reengaged with the local detention centers to expand reentry services. The DPSCS reentry team set up meetings, toured local detention centers, met with local reentry teams, and reviewed the current MOU's. It's important to note that these are voluntary Reentry program(s) for the II's and the feedback internally is DPSCS provides more services, more opportunities related to work and education, so the II's do not want to return to the local detention centers with less options for programs and employment. DPSCS is meeting with the local detention center reentry staff to find out what services and opportunities the II's will have if they agree to transfer to the local reentry programs.

**Recommended Action:**

**The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends committee narrative requesting that DPSCS submit a report when an award is made for either contract that describes the context of the decision, the value offered by the awarded contract and the other submitted offers, and the impact on the budget. For technical purposes, this recommendation appears in the operating budget analysis Q00A – DPSCS – Administration**

**Response:**

The Department accepts this recommendation, and will provide a report on the award of the contract that includes publicly available information pertaining to procurement.

**DLS recommends adopting committee narrative requesting that DPSCS report annual data on programming participants and nonparticipants in its annual MFR submission to DBM and DLS. For technical purposes, this recommendation appears in the operating budget analysis Q00A – DPSCS – Administration.**

**Response:**

The Department accepts this recommendation, and will provide additional feedback within the Administration budget response on the suitability of proposed measures based on the 2023 JCR and current data development. New measures would then be submitted in May 2024 in accordance with the normal MFR revision process.