



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Governor Tony Evers / Secretary Kevin A. Carr

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 15, 2023

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DOC Celebrates Security Staff Graduates at Madison College

November, December classes to add nearly 300 new officers to adult facilities, among largest graduating classes in department history

Madison, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) on Wednesday graduated 144 security staff from its Facility Staff Training and Support (FSTS) Program, providing much-needed resources to the department’s adult institutions throughout the state.

The ceremony for Group 399 was held at Madison College with friends and family in attendance. Between Group 399 and Group 398, which graduated in November, 297 new correctional officers have joined DOC, making them two of the largest graduating classes in the department’s history. The new influx of security staff is largely driven by the new compensation plan included in Governor Evers’ biennial budget and included in the final budget approved by the Wisconsin State Legislature. The plan set starting pay at \$33 per hour for correctional officers, which can be as high as \$41 per hour with add-ons. When Governor Evers took office, the starting wage for correctional officers was \$16.65. Governor Tony Evers joined DOC Secretary Kevin Carr during the ceremony to congratulate the graduates for successfully completing the intensive six-week training program.

“Bolstering our staff resources at correctional institutions statewide has been a critical part of our administration’s work over the last five years to address decade-long corrections staffing challenges, and it’s clear this hard work is paying off as we welcome some of the largest graduating classes in department history,” said Gov. Evers. “Adequate staffing resources are essential for ensuring folks in our care have the support, programming, and rehabilitation they need to be successful, and we will continue to use every option available to us to continue addressing staff vacancy rates at these institutions.”

The DOC is already beginning to see the effects of the pay increases Gov. Evers and the Evers Administration secured through the biennial budget process. The department began 2023 with a 32% vacancy rate among correctional officers and sergeants, which reached as high as 35% in August. With the influx of new staff, the vacancy rate is projected to be below 30% by the end of the year. Updates on staffing and vacancies can be found on the [DOC’s interactive dashboard](#).

“The compensation plan has energized our recruitment and retention efforts, and we are encouraged by the level of interest we are seeing in our security positions,” said Secretary Carr. “It’s no secret that staffing has played a

role in our ability to increase movement at facilities facing restrictions, and this wave of new employees will provide us with more options as we continually assess operations and work to restore regular movement.”

As part of its recruitment campaign, the DOC has used social media, television, radio and direct mail advertising to attract job seekers. These efforts have led to a spike in applications and, in November alone, the DOC completed hundreds of interviews at walk-in events held at institutions through Wisconsin.

In total, the DOC graduated more than 600 uniformed staff from its eight FSTS academies in 2023. The program includes a comprehensive curriculum that involves both classroom education and more than 50 hours of on-the-job training at a DOC facility. The training is held at the Corrections Training Center at DOC’s central office in Madison and locally at select institutions.

Decade-long corrections staffing challenges have contributed to modified movement at Waupun Correctional Institution (WCI) and Green Bay Correctional Institution (GBCI), but the DOC continues to assess operations and restore regular movement at correctional institutions. On Nov. 14, Governor Evers and Secretary Carr [announced a number of measures](#) to help ensure the safety of staff and persons in our care at both facilities, including changes to staff rounds, use of restrictive housing, and steps to restore movement. Additionally, the department is working to transition WCI to single-cell housing by March 1, 2024.

“DOC’s dedication to the safety and security of WCI, GBCI, and all our secure institutions remains a central tenet of our daily work and overall mission,” said Secretary Carr. “Our department and our administration have an unwavering commitment to fostering an environment that upholds the highest standards of safety.”

At GBCI, only administrative rules related to visitation and recreation are suspended. Persons in our care are offered recreation once per week, and the facility resumed in-person visitation on Nov. 27. These activities at GBCI are increasing in frequency based on anticipated staffing additions. At WCI, only administrative rules related to visitation, recreation and personal hygiene thresholds remain suspended. Religious services and video visitation have resumed. Importantly, GBCI’s secure perimeter is fully functional and populations at both institutions pose no risk to their respective communities.