

WHY DOC?

#WICORRECTIONSWEEK



We asked staff to tell us their reason for choosing a career in the Department of Corrections. Staff from every division and department shared the variety of reasons why DOC is a great place to work. From great benefits and amazing co-workers to wanting to make a difference in the lives of others, see what some of our amazing staff had to say. What is your WHY DOC?

The job description was what I have been looking for and it aligned with my career path. I noticed that the DOC is striving to make evidence-based decision, which interested me to apply for it. Fortunately, I got the offer and I am happy with the working environment. It is very promising that the DMS is open for new ideas in automating and applying AI to the system. I will continue contributing my part in helping DOC meet its mission and goal.

DANIEL ABEBE

Machine Learning and Data Engineer, Division of Management Services

I wanted to be an example to my children, family and community by showing them that our beginnings doesn't have to be our end.

FRANCESCA AGNEW

Programs Office Operations Associate, Division of Adult Institutions

After discharging from The Marines, I wanted to get into public safety and continue serving the community. The DOC is focused on public safety through the custody and supervision of individuals that are incarcerated. I knew this was a job for me. As a Corrections employee, I knew that I would have the opportunity to positively impact the lives of others getting ready to re-enter the community. As a frontline DOC employee, I have observed lasting change with a positive impact for individuals and the people of Wisconsin. DOC employees maintain a safe environment for those living and working in our state's prison system and I am proud to be a part of this. I feel that I make a positive difference in the lives of others.

RONALD J. BENISCH II

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

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Started out in 1975 as a way to make more money, get good benefits (health and life insurance, paid vacation, sick leave, retirement account). Then with a change of jobs, found a spot that tweaked my interest and offered continued learning, challenges and growth.

CAROL BRIONES

Corrections Sentencing Associate, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose my career in the Department of Corrections to help individuals recognize their potential, maximize their strengths, and confidently pursue their goals. I believe all people are capable of leading meaningful, productive lives and can make valuable contributions to society if they have the motivation and the tools to do so. I have heard many people say they chose the field of corrections to 'make a difference,' but it wasn't until I began working with persons in our care that I realized the significance of this statement. As a corrections professional, I have the vitally important opportunity to make a difference in individuals' lives every single day. I accomplish this by utilizing these opportunities appropriately and implementing evidence-based practices to guide and encourage persons in our care toward success. I value my role within the Department of Corrections and am proud to work with countless other dedicated professionals who feel similarly about this rewarding career choice.

JOLYNN BROADDUS

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

Helping people with mental health concerns has always been important to me. The position in Reentry provides an opportunity to serve marginalized people and communities who may not get assistance otherwise.

LARS BROWN

Reentry Disabilities Treatment Director, Office of the Secretary

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When the private sector company I worked for started having financial problems, I started searching for a new job. I found a position with DOC and found my new "home away from home". I value the team approach and appreciate how we all work together to make our agency run smoothly!

JILL BRUNK

Financial Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

I wanted a job working for the State or Feds for the benefits. I was interested in DOC, thinking I may be able to help people. I don't do much of that but I guess I do make an impact on offenders by just being nice and treating them with respect.

SHARON BUGELLA

Office Operations Associate, Division of Community Corrections

I like to think that choosing this profession I can help give PIOC skills they can use to become better adjusted upon release. Showing that every action that one makes has an opposite and equal reaction helps put life into perspective. I use that to explain to PIOC why things happen and how to avoid things that could hurt their rehabilitation. I think with working in this field I can do the most good and guide those on the path to reentry.

ANDREW BUSTOS

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

Over 20 years ago, I had to make the decision of staying at my same old boring job or move on to something more motivating and interesting and at the same time something that might help out the community and the state. It seemed to be a good chance to fulfill my hope of someday helping others. And having a steady job doing so.

THOMAS CLARK

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

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I chose the Department of Corrections because I have always wanted to help people. (Fire fighter, police, EMT) I already started a family and I could not finically sustain going back to school for an associate's degree. At the time my wife worked for the Sherriff's department. I applied and I got the job. The benefits at the time where the best available. This is one of the few jobs that I can think of with the retirement and benefits.

MICHAEL COLE

Lieutenant, Division of Adult Institutions

While studying Criminal Justice at Hamline University, I became enamored with the recreational opportunities available to those incarcerated at the Louisiana State Prison. I knew at that moment I wanted to obtain a position that would allow me to make a positive impact while doing something I loved, and being a Recreation Leader allowed me to fulfill both of those desires. One of the best things about the DOC is the diversity of reasons people enter this line of work, and the experiences they bring with them.

DAN CROMWELL

Warden, Division of Adult Institutions

Even though I haven't completed my BS Degree, it is for Secondary Education Biology and I have always wanted to teach. I also worked as an LTE for the Dept of Public Instruction for five summers at Science World. My brother, sister-in-law, mom and dad all worked for the State of Wisconsin for decades and my parents retired as State Employees.

PAMELA DANKS

Education Assistant, Division of Juvenile Corrections

The position that I am in is a near perfect match for my educational experiences and training and my personal interests. I stay because there are constantly new challenges, allowing me to develop new skills, both social and technical and because of the opportunity to develop positive relationships with the youth we serve.

JONATHAN DAVIS

Teacher, Division of Juvenile Corrections

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I chose to work for the Department of Corrections after learning the details about how our business activities impact the persons in our care. Not only by creating a safer Wisconsin, but helping the persons in our care rehabilitate into productive family members, neighbors, and members of society upon re-entry. Their lives matter, and BCE has given me an opportunity to be a part of that by selling the goods and services that those in our care work hard to make while they create opportunity for themselves as well.

STEVE DONGARRA

Sales and Marketing Manager - BCE, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career with the DOC because I wanted a career that felt meaningful, as though I was providing a service to help someone else. I like to feel like I did something that mattered when I go home at the end of the day, and the Wisconsin DOC has given me that thus far.

RYAN EBERT

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

At first it was just a job. I needed a job. Now after over five years of employment with DOC-DCC I am proud to use the skills I have acquired to be a piece in this corrections puzzle. My greatest pride comes in my work through the DOC IMT. I have been "crunching the numbers of COVID" for over 400 days in the EOC. I am proud to have been part of this team and look forward to the next IMT adventure.

CINDY EMERSON

Operations Program Associate, Division of Community Corrections

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I originally became a Probation and Parole Agent because I wanted to help others become the best versions of themselves and help reduce recidivism. I enjoyed helping my clients get linked to resources they needed and working with them on skills needed to be successful in the community and hopefully in return find themselves not returning through our doors in the future. I chose to promote to Field Supervisor because I wanted to help agents become the best versions of themselves too and I looked at it as now I am helping nine caseloads, not just one. Even when I saw one success out of many possible successes, that feeling is what I hold onto and makes me feel fulfilled in what I do.

SAMANTHA FARRINGTON

Corrections Field Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections

I have always wanted to work for the State of Wisconsin and had an opportunity.

AMBER GRAY

Inventory Control Coordinator, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose to work for the Department of Corrections because it gives me an opportunity to work with a generally underserved and undervalued population. I have the opportunity to add value to the lives of the PIOC's through modeling treating them with the respect they deserve. I believe that treating the men I work with respectfully and reminding them of their own strengths and self-worth is more impactful than anything we can teach them in a classroom. Working with the DOC gives me the opportunity to really make an impact in others' lives the community around me.

NICOLE HANKEN

AODA Social Worker, Division of Adult Institutions

When I first started I chose Corrections because insurance did not cost anything and made it worth starting a career with the state. You also didn't have to pay in towards your pension and had great benefits!.

STEPHANIE HARVILL

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

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I wanted to be a Probation and Parole Agent because I believe in rehabilitation and restorative justice techniques to address criminal behaviors and change lives. My goal is to implement evidence-based practices to help my clients work through tough situations and address the areas of their lives that contribute to criminal behaviors. I believe in their capacity to change and want to help keep the community safe and advocate for populations that are underserved.

MARY JENSON

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I was in Healthcare for 20 years and was a CNA in HSU and fell in love with the way the system was run and how smooth everything went and wanted to be a part of it so now here I am loving my job

LATASHIA JONES

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I started working for the Department of Corrections after graduating from college. August 2021 will mark 38 years in the DOC. The job sounded interesting, and the benefits were (and still are) amazing! Every day is different and the variety is part of the reason I am still here. The best days are those in which I make some small difference in a staff member's life.

KAYE MEISSNER

Payroll and Benefits Specialist Advanced, Department of Administration Human Resources

Coming from a Military background, I enjoy working with disciplined staff that reach for excellence each and every day.

AARON MUTTERER

Correctional Officer 2, Division of Adult Institutions

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I initially took an Intro to Criminal Justice class in college because it was the only thing that fit into my schedule. After that class, I was hooked! I did an internship with Probation and Parole while in school and was paired with a great mentor and believed that I had really found my calling. I just celebrated my 27th anniversary with the DOC and am starting on year 28. I can honestly say I am never bored and I still love my job!

ROSE LARSON

Corrections Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

I started as an OOA and then became an agent. It encompasses all of the areas I ever wanted to be in: teacher, attorney, social worker, etc. It allows me to help others who have had a difficult time and need some direction, guidance and support. My schedule allows for flexibility which is important to me. Some days I can do paperwork and others interact with people or a combination of both.

NICOLE LECOUNT

Probation and Parole Agent Senior, Division of Community Corrections

I studied Criminal Justice while in college and considered work in a legal setting, however; my landlord was a probation agent in La Crosse, WI and recommended I consider an internship with probation. I did this in my last year of college and really enjoyed it. I graduated from college of May of 2013 and began as an agent in September 2013 and have been here ever since.

BREE LIEN

Probation and Parole Agent Senior, Division of Community Corrections

I had to find employment that has good benefits, preferably good health insurance as my husband and I were foster parents and raising our three grandchildren.

ELIZABETH MILLS

Librarian, Division of Adult Institutions

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The definition of a correctional officer is "a uniformed official responsible for the custody, supervision, safety, and regulation of prisoners. They are responsible for the care, custody, and control of individuals who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced to imprisonment." however it doesn't talk about another side of those convicted; their families. Many offenders have children whom they've had to abandon while serving their sentence. As someone who knows what being abandoned by a parent feels like, if I can try to make an inmate's sentence worthwhile so they haven't made their children suffer for nothing, then I will. Recidivism rates of offenders in the country are only rising and we see firsthand how easy it is for PIOC to fall back into their past lives after being released. We have the chance to remind them while they're here how good freedom really tastes so they don't come back.

TAYLOR OPPERMAN

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

My personal experiences with the other side or path played a large role in my decision. Having experienced the effects of heading down the path that could have ended at a DAI site. I knew the time had come that enough was enough. I went back to school for AODA/SUD counseling and the rest solidified during my internship which broke my "Us vs Them" mentality.

DUWAYNE PATTERSON

Treatment Specialist 2, Division of Adult Institutions

I love being able to help clients make significant changes in their lives; not because I've counseled them, but because I've enabled them with skills to be their own change agents. I really enjoy the many hats we wear as an agent in the community. The criminal justice system has always fascinated me and working for WI DOC enables me to follow my passion while strengthening my community.

HEATHER PERRAULT

Probation and Parole Agent Senior, Division of Community Corrections

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Choosing a career path in corrections allows us to serve as positive role models to those who may be searching for role models in their lives. We only get one opportunity to make a good first impression. This week we celebrate and renew our commitment by recognizing all of our employees are our department's most valuable resource.

JASON POPP

Corrections Field Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections

I tried several career paths before deciding to work for the DOC as a social worker. I choose to continue working with DOC through DAI because it allows me the opportunity to assist in providing opportunities for change to one of the most difficult client populations a social worker can work with: inmates. I am able to provide re-entry assistance to releasing inmates on a daily basis in addition to listening to the issues and barriers they may face. Simply listening and validating that release is hard has given many of the inmates releasing from my caseload the opportunity to figure out ways to break those barriers through such a simple act.

SHYEKARA PROCKNOW

Social Worker, Division of Adult Institutions

At nearly 49, I changed my career to become an agent. Friends and family thought I was off my rocker. To me, being an agent is the most interesting and fulfilling career bar none. We are able to directly help clients and assist them with reshaping their lives. I think it is important to remember when a client is successful, the change can impact not only themselves but their children and their community, ultimately affecting generations to come.

ANGIE ROBERTS

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I wanted to help facilitate change and make a difference, encourage growth and self-responsibility. I believed in the mission, and initially took pride in what I was doing.

TAMI RODRIGUEZ

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

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I started as a social worker in 1998 shortly after graduation from college from UW-Oshkosh. I was in need of a full-time job and health care benefits. I had the opportunity to work as a LTE at KMCI and enjoyed the correctional environment. The irony is while in college I had heard from others that if you were going to work in corrections go anywhere but TCI. Guess I went against the grain. I have always enjoyed working with the female population.

KALEN RUCK

Deputy Warden, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose to work for the Department of Corrections because I wanted to provide for my growing family, and the DOC not only offered competitive pay and benefits at the time, but it also has a retirement plan that will provide for us, long after my career. Now that I have worked for the DOC for almost five years, I have been led to continue my career here because of amazing fellow staff I've been able to meet and work alongside, ample advancement opportunities, as well as wage increases to keep up with the current market. Although this job can be difficult and exhausting at times, knowing that fellow staff have each other's back and the comradery that goes along with that keeps the whole thing together, and keeps us all moving forward.

JACOB SCHULTZ

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

At the time the pay wasn't that good but the healthcare was very good and free. 100% coverage with no Co-pay.

DALE SMITH

Lieutenant, Division of Adult Institutions

I went back to college after my children were grown and I got my Criminal Justice Degree. I wanted to put my degree to good use so my friend Sandra Morris who works for the DOC encouraged me to apply at the DOC. I have now been at the DOC for over five years. One of the best decisions I ever made.

KATHRYN STREGE

Corrections Food Service Leader 2, Division of Adult Institutions

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Have had family members on wrong side of the law and seen how much it affects and disgraces the family. I had to change that. To be honorable is a big part of who I am and I am proud to be a part of the DAI DOC.

SHANNON TAYLOR

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

Good supervisors, staff, learn more knowledge, benefits

MAMATHA THUMMALA

Program Analyst/QA, Division of Management Services

If someone had told me I would be teaching at a maximum security institution, I would have laughed in his face. Here I am, five years later, and still enjoying my job. No two days are the same which keeps it interesting enough so the time goes quickly. I feel a sense of fulfillment and intrinsic reward when a student finally understands how to solve a quadratic equation or make an inference. Helping these men to achieve their dreams of a GED so they can be role models to their children and feel personal success is challenging but rewarding. Honestly, the health and retirement benefits are wonderful, too. Though some days are more challenging than others, I am glad I chose to teach in the DOC.

REBECCA VANCE

Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions

I was unemployed and applying for any job I could possibly be qualified for, including with the state. I received a call from HR on a Saturday, stating that they had a position I might be good at, though I hadn't applied for it. I thought it was a hoax and didn't return the call, believing that no one who really worked in HR would be calling other than Monday through Friday. HR did not give up so, I came in to interview and I got the LTE position which then allowed me to apply for a different department onsite.

THERESA E. VANT HOFF

Office Operations Assistant, Division of Adult Institutions

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To be able to give those who need/want help an opportunity to make changes and work on success. I do not feel as though these individuals have been able to have all of the help they need in society and it feels great to be able to be a part of giving them the opportunity, skills, tools and hope for positive changes!

MELISSA WHEELER

Treatment Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions

I liked the potential opportunities available in advancement and participation in groups like ERU, CNT, Peer Support and STG. In addition the DOC offers an excellent benefit package.

BRIAN WILLIAMS

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

As a mental health provider, I've always wanted to help those suffering from a range of mental disorders, but did not like the changes ushered in by "managed care" and for-profit health care agencies. I discovered that working in the DOC provided me with both the autonomy that was absent in private practice, and offered many opportunities to utilize my skills as a clinician in a variety of contexts. It has been a great fit for me since I started in 2003, and will be until my retirement next year. For example, I began my career in the DOC as a psychological associate at TCI. After several years of working in a maximum/medium security women's prison, I took a position at REECC to gain experience working in a minimum custody setting. Once licensed as a psychologist, I accepted a position at RCI working full-time at a medium security men's prison, learning sex-offender treatment and evaluation for several years. Again, a new growth opportunity presented itself, and from there I transferred to DCC where I worked as Chief Regional Psychologist in Region 1, which at that time included Dane, Green and Rock Counties. That position allowed me to utilize my skills in psychological assessment and evaluation of men and women released to the community on supervision. Along the way, I worked with so many wonderful people in many different disciplines within the Department, and gained a perspective on the value of a multi-disciplinary team approach for patient care. My latest and final position is as Supervising Psychologist at FLCI. I've enjoyed the challenges and learning opportunities associated with each new position along the way, and have especially appreciated all the wonderful and dedicated people I've worked with in the DOC.

SALLY WILLIAMS

Supervising Psychologist, Division of Adult Institutions

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Early retirement and good benefits.

AARON ZUHLKE

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

If we don't care from the patients who will? I believe that I help show the PIOC that people will treat you fairly and with respect and in return they will treat you the same way. I am not here to judge your convictions, I am your nurse and that is my one and only job.

ANONYMOUS

Licensed Practical Nurse, Division of Adult Institutions