

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 plain and simple answer is I wanted to make a difference, and help guide the people in our care in a more positive direction. I would like to think I did just that.

SPENCER ABBOTT

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I really wanted to help guide people to make changes in their lives. If I could help one person see their life in a different positive direction, I have met my personal accomplishment. I have been also truly blessed to work with amazing co-workers and other professionals in Washburn County.

TAMARA ADLER

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I had a desire to work in a rehabilitative environment where I have the opportunity to help PIOC turn their lives around. I wanted to put my skills and experiences to good use. While working in an environment that is challenging and rewarding and where no two days are ever the same.

CAITLIN BAIRD

Treatment Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions

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I originally chose Corrections because I wanted the opportunity to advance in a company without a ceiling, and be able to take care of my family. I stay in Corrections because I assist in advancement of persons in our care futures and their family's futures, for me that's very fulfilling. If you can find a career that is fulfilling you will never work again because it's now your calling.

MELVIN BEAN JR

Work Release Coordinator, Division of Adult Institutions

I started with the DOC in January 2012 in Human Resources as it was the first position I found when I moved to Wisconsin. However, since that time I have transferred to my current position as Corrections Program Supervisor. In this position (prior to COVID, and hopefully again in the future), I have been able to provide programs, counselling, and connections to directly benefit PIOC during their incarceration and help them be more successful upon their release. By working with staff, volunteers and community partners, I feel I am supporting the mission of the DOC.

DEBORAH BEUTTLER

Corrections Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career in the DOC to help people at their lowest point make changes and turn their lives around.

DANA BOETTCHER

Treatment Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions

When I began my career with the State of WI, I already had two years in with WRS from when I worked for a police department. I took a pay cut to work for the state because the benefits were excellent. The benefits are still very good, even though now we pay for our health insurance and contribute to our retirement. I have worked for DCC, DAI and back to DCC and they have always felt like a family where we have each other's backs. I have always felt that whatever my position was, what I did really does matter to the PIOC, the public, and to co-workers.

MARCIA BOURQUE-GALLIGAN

Program Support Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections

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I chose a career in Corrections because I was always interested in law enforcement and I used to watch a lot of prison movies growing up, although once you work the job you find out it is nothing like the movies. I also needed to find a job with good insurance and start paying off my student loans.

TROY BREITLOW

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose to work for the Department Of Corrections because it was in my field of study. In college my major was Criminal Justice, and I originally pursued a career as a Racine Police Officer but things didn't work out. I had a good friend that worked in corrections and he kept telling me to join the team. I've been in corrections for fifteen years, and I really like that I can be so many people in one. I have to put on many coats upon my arrival at my institution, including social worker, chaplain, psychologist, nurse, to name a few. I have to make sure I take care of those in my custody and care, and that includes staff.

PLESCHETTE BUENO

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

I was a single mother at the time I applied. I was going to college part time for Criminal Justice and decided on a career as a Probation/Parole Agent as it sounded exciting and rewarding. I knew it would be a stable career with good benefits that would help as I was raising two sons. It has now been 24 years since I started this position and so much has changed since 1994. When I look back I made the right choice.

PAM CHARVAT

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I interned here while in college and enjoyed helping the women.

MARY CONNER-MENAREK

Social Worker, Division of Adult Institutions

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I chose the DOC to build by resume and advance my career on IT. Getting into the state will open the door to so many other great jobs out there in other departments.

DAKOTA DAO

IS Technical Services Senior, Division of Management Services

I wanted a career that would help me provide for my family with the freedom to be able to do so. I feel as though I can do this while being a part of a large team that has the same goal, which is to protect the community from offenders while working to rehabilitate them to help them release back into the community.

AMBER DAVIS

Offender Classification Specialist Senior, Division of Adult Institutions

I had been managing a restaurant for eight years and had become disenchanted. I had previously served in the Army for ten years and wanted to continue to serve my Country in a different capacity. After searching for occupations with other employers, I happened across the DOC job offerings. Upon reviewing the qualifications and duty descriptions, I felt that this was a job that would use the skills I had honed in the Army, and would be an easy transition for me.

MIKE FINK

Corrections Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose DOC for the health benefits, job security, promotional and transfer opportunities, and to help others change and be successful.

SHERI FROMOLZ

Corrections Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

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Long-term job security, benefits, opportunity, support and growth. I am grateful to be in a position that makes a difference in others' lives and also on a team that makes a difference in my life.

DEBRAN GIBSON

Treatment Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions

I wanted to end the cycle of dead-end jobs and start a career I could be proud of. The DOC has given me so many opportunities to grow as a person and make what I want of my career.

MATTHEW GREIBER

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

I like the working environment here.

SHENG-HE GU

EMR Developer, Division of Management Services

I chose a career in corrections because I have multiple family members who have been in the system on the other side, and I wanted to make a difference for just one person as that is what they needed.

HEATHER HAEFLINGER

Probation and Parole Agent Senior, Division of Community Corrections

I enjoy the opportunity to help people and what better what then to be the sideline cheerleader helping individuals get back on their feet, make better choices and become successful members of our society.

SHIRLEY HAESE

Probation and Parole Agent Senior, Division of Community Corrections

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I chose the DOC because of the benefits and working with the PIOC to help rehabilitate.

RUSSELL HURST

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I did not choose DOC but DOC chose me. I applied for various state positions because I was impressed with the retirement benefits. Managing finances and being of service to others comes natural to me. My position with WCCS DOC payroll & benefits has its challenges, but has been a very rewarding by chance career. I love what I do and take pride in assisting our hardworking staff with in the Department of Corrections.

LIZANN J. JAHNKE

Payroll and Benefits Specialist Advanced, Department of Administration Human Resources

As SUD Clinical Supervisor it's important to me that everyone is given the opportunity to gain the skills they need to overcome obstacles that prevent them from reaching their full potential. By providing evidence based programming, the persons in our care are given opportunities for positive change and success. This benefits the person, their family, and ultimately the community. I am proud to be a "DOC Difference Maker."

KELLY JO JODAR

Corrections Program Supervisor/SUD Clinical Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose this career because I wanted to make a change and to help benefit the prison system. I also wanted a career in policing and figured why not start in corrections?! I have a great career with great benefits and I'm incredibly grateful for that!

AMBER JUSTIAN

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

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My brother worked for the DOC for almost twenty years, and when I moved up to this area I saw that Lincoln Hills was hiring and thought that the DOC would be a good place to start a career and be able to retire from.

MICHAEL KACZMAREK

Youth Counsellor Advanced, Division of Juvenile Corrections

After a previous career unrelated to Corrections, I decided to go back to school to become a Substance Use Disorder Counselor. I was driven by a passion to understand addiction more and help individuals and, indirectly as a bonus, their families get to a healthier place within themselves and with each other. I was placed in a DAI facility to complete one of my internships. After seeing how much mental illness, substance use disorders, and the justice system intertwine, I wanted to do my part to help those individuals in a setting that gave them the opportunity to address all of the areas of need, if they are willing. Being able to provide skills and tools to individuals to (hopefully) make better decisions and cease the revolving door of Corrections gives me the opportunity to do just this.

VERONICA KASPER

Treatment Specialist 1, Division of Adult Institutions

The DOC hires for education and leadership positions based on merit, education, and expertise. The DOC provides fair opportunity and consistent employment.

NATHAN KENNEDY

Education Director, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose to work as vocational teacher in mechanical design, because I want to make a difference in the lives of incarcerated people. I want to give them hope, and help them train for a new career, a new future and a new life.

JAY KIDDER

Vocational Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions

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In my position as teacher, I KNOW that I am truly helping each and every person I interact with on a daily basis. I value the diversity in the men that walk through these hallways. They all have such a unique mix of experiences and cultural perspective. That is what makes employment within the DOC very rewarding for me.

LORI KOENIG

Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career with DOC to be able to assist clients achieve their goals and work within the criminal justice system.

DORI KORFMACHER

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I was drawn to a place where I can inspire and uplift others and I have found myself inspired and uplifted too. I am always seeking a wider worldview of spirituality and humanity. Working in a place that many in the community would sooner forget than acknowledge, there are wide spaces for hope, encouragement, and new life.

KIM KROGSTAD

Chaplain, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose to work here because youth and adults make mistakes, or due to poor parenting, our society, poor areas of living. Our Youth need guidance someone to confide in and learn from. I spend my time teaching youth life skills like sewing, design, crafts so that when they get out they have a skill to make money so they don't have to make poor choices to survive.

CYNTHIA LESKEY

Recreation Leader Senior, Division of Juvenile Corrections

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Since the earliest that I can remember, I always wanted to pursue a career that would allow me to work with people but I just couldn't decide in what role. After my first couple of criminal justice classes in college, that answer became clear when I learned about the reentry and rehabilitation side of corrections within the criminal justice system. It became clear to me that I wanted to serve my community by working with the client population we work with. Haven't regretted my decision and I hope to continue my career with the DOC.

MAI LOR

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

The benefits that were offered were appealing to me when I started.

WESLEY MCLINN

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

I had went to college for Criminal Justice with a minor in Juvenile Offenses. I was planning on using Corrections as a stepping stone for Probation and Parole. I am now uncertain if I want to leave the prison to work in an office because I enjoy the fast pace, always on your toes line of work.

AMBER MEYER

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I wanted to be hands on and have a chance to teach as well as learn.

RONALD MUELLER

Facilities Repair Worker Advanced, Division of Adult Institutions

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I chose the Department of Corrections because I believed I would have the confidence, communication skills, and positive reinforcement that it would take to be a role model to people in our care. Sometimes people just need to know their worth and realize that they are capable of doing anything that they put their minds to and that help is available if they just ask.

LESA NOVINSKA

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose this career within the DOC based on the Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. I wanted something within the field but that's not the face of the public. I wanted to also help make a change within the community by sacrificing my time, to work and dedicate myself to the job, to make sure I do the best I can.

ALEC OLSON

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career with the Department of Corrections because I wanted a steady income and I was sick of the factory layoffs. I presently worked in factories for 20 years before choosing the career. Also I have a lot of family in the field.

WAYNE OPPERMANN

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

It was a lucky accident. I was dropping my brother-in-law for the testing and interview and here I am 20 years later.

MARTIN PAREDES

Correctional Officer 2, Division of Adult Institutions

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One day in 2007 I took the chance to see if Dodge Correctional had a dialysis program and if they hired dialysis technicians. Within a month I accepted a LTE position and six months later I was hired on as a permanent hemodialysis technician. Working in corrections is not without its stressful times. But at the same time, it also has some fulfilling moments when a PIOC is thankful for the care that you give to them.

DEANNA PERSCHKE

Hemodialysis Technician, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career with the Department of Corrections to help guide individuals in the right direction to better their lives. To teach and give them the tools and resources they need at being successful. I wanted to help make a difference in their life, for them to know there are still people willing to help and want to see them do good.

NIKKI PONTICELLI

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I make a difference in the life of these people. It's my calling. I do what I was chosen to do. Lives are being changed.

CHRISTINE ROBERTS

Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions

I make a difference in the world by teaching at a corrections facility. I give each person in our care the opportunity to improve his life through education, to earn a high school equivalency diploma. This enables him to make a positive contribution to society.

ANDREW RUSSELL

Teacher, Division of Adult Institutions

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I chose a career with DOC because it is a stable but challenging work environment. Decent pay, and related to my field of expertise.

JACOB RYGIEL

HVAC Specialist Advanced, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career in the Department of Corrections because I had a friend and a brother as officers in different institutions. Growing up, I never had any positive influences in my life until I joined the big brothers/big sisters program. My big sister that I was matched up with was a Corrections Officer who later became a Sergeant at Winnebago County. With all the possible career choices in criminal justice it made me believe in the reentry process and that I could work with offenders.

AMY SASS

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I wanted a job where it wasn't going to be the same exact situations every day. I also liked the idea of the amount of different jobs that I could pursue in the DOC.

SAMANTHA SCHATZKE

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

My dad and uncle worked for the state, and the job always seemed interesting to me when I was younger.

DAVID SCHMALTZ

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

Working in the DOC allows me to have a positive impact with a wide variety of other state employees. Being from a different part of the country, I am able to learn and understand a different set of customs, (Bubler, Dinner means lunch and so forth).

STEVEN SCHULMAN

Facilities Maintenance Specialist Advanced, Division of Adult Institutions

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Benefits

BE here to protect my fellow BLUE shirts

Protect the community of PIOCS

ROBERT SCHULTZ

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

I wanted a job with steady overtime available and included a retirement plan.

KEVIN SONNTAG

Correctional Officer, Division of Adult Institutions

I was looking for employment with career advancement opportunities, job security and good benefits. I found all of these with the Department of Corrections.

JENNIFER STADTMUELLER

Correctional Management Services Director, Division of Adult Institutions

I chose a career with the DOC because there is a great amount of pride that comes with serving the state of Wisconsin. It is a challenging yet rewarding career and I am always learning something new. I enjoy helping others and giving people the tools they need to succeed.

JADE STURM

Probation and Parole Agent, Division of Community Corrections

I feel it is on a personal basis for me as addiction runs in my family, I hope that I can help someone so another child doesn't have to experience what I did. I also want to help our communities become safe and united!

MARISA TAITER

Treatment Specialist, Division of Adult Institutions

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The Criminal Justice System, to me, is a microcosm for many of the most complicated social ills we collectively face. To be a public servant in the field of community corrections affords me the opportunity to contribute to finding ways to improve the lives of individuals most negatively affected by the aforementioned problems. The work can be equal parts rewarding and challenging, but never does it feel inconsequential.

NIEL THORESON

Regional Chief, Division of Community Corrections

Since I have worked with DOC, I have learned so much on doing my job. I am always learning new tasks. DOC is a very organized department.

JULIE TRACY

Office Operations Associate, Division of Adult Institutions

When I applied, Corrections was a sought out career along with Law Enforcement. The DOC had standards and was run similar to the Military, which I was a part of. Corrections was a job that you performed to a high level and displayed Professionalism.

JAY VANLANEN

Captain, Division of Adult Institutions

Help promote positive changes amongst inmate population.

MICHAEL VERHEYEN

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

At the time I applied, I wanted good health benefits and I wanted a solid career. I was always interested in Corrections. I took a pay cut leaving my full time job to become a correctional officer, but it was worth it.

JENNEFIR WALLS

Captain, Division of Adult Institutions

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I choose to work for DOC because I want to help so I can provide discipline and stability to people whose lives have neither. To me this profession is not about just punishing people, it means serving as a role model and educator. Working for DOC gives me the opportunity to transform criminals address their needs and minimize their risk of re-offending. I also choose this job because it provides stable employment, put my skills knowledge and experience to good use and also work in an environment that is challenging and rewarding and where no two days are ever the same. There's always the opportunity for advancement with DOC. So far I've had a fulfilling career as a sergeant with DOC.

ASHLEY WILBORN

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

Initially, I wanted to be able to help PIOC's get AODA treatment. Over the years, it has evolved into being able to be part of necessary change and providing the skills for PIOC's to be productive in their communities upon release. It's also been an opportunity to be an advocate for and support the great staff that work at SCI.

HEATHER WILHELM-COPAS

Corrections Program Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions

I wanted to use my college degree, to learn, grow and for promotional opportunities offered by the Department of Corrections. I started in DAI, in the correctional institutions and learned so much about corrections and the populations that we serve. I started as an officer, promoted to a SGT and then after a few years felt the need for a new challenge. I took a job as a probation/parole agent in Janesville, later transferring to Beaver Dam and finally to the position as a corrections field supervisor. I have learned so much about human nature both staff and clients as well as challenges. I have been with the DOC for 38 years and it has been a good ride. I am grateful for the opportunities afforded and the chances to grow.

MARY WENDEL

Corrections Field Supervisor, Division of Community Corrections

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I chose a career in the Department of Corrections to be a part of the solution and strengthen the wheel that has been in place for years, not to reinvent it. I know that if I reach one person by leading by example with staff and persons in our care alike. Fair, firm and consistent in all I do is what I strive to do daily. Work hard every day to control the things I can control, not sweat the things I can't control and know the difference.

SHANNON L. WILSON

Sergeant, Division of Adult Institutions

I believe that providing job experience to PIOC gives them an advantage when released. Having job skills will give them the confidence and knowledge needed when applying for jobs outside the prison system.

ROBIN ZILLS

Correctional Enterprises Supervisor, Division of Adult Institutions