



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Governor Tony Evers / Secretary Kevin A. Carr

Waupun Correctional Institution

Date: April 30, 2021

To: All DAI Institution Staff

Sarah Cooper

From: Sarah Cooper, Administrator
Division of Adult Institutions

Subject: Waupun Correctional Institution - Supplemental Staff Initiative

The challenge of staffing correctional sergeant and officer positions is well-known throughout the Department, the Division, and of course in our institutions. Some institutions have been managing this issue in varying degrees for extended periods of time. They have seen that as staff become more fatigued, some move to other classifications, some transfer to other sites, and others leave state-service. This results in more work for even less people. Fatigue for those remaining employees increases and the pattern is repeated over and over. This is a cycle that several institutions have been managing for several years.

Throughout history, the Division of Adult Institutions has demonstrated that when any one of its locations is in critical need, the others can be counted on to provide whatever assistance may be asked of them. Most, if not all of you, have been part of some sort of response in aid of another facility at some time in your career. It is that spirit of support, sacrifice, and cooperation that we are counting on at this time.

Waupun Correctional Institution has been operating with an extremely high vacancy rate for a long period of time. Last pay period (pay period 8), the vacancy rate for officers at WCI was 44.59% and the vacancy rate for sergeants at WCI was 32.31%. This equals a combined vacancy rate of 41.89%. Most of us can understand the impact this has on staff and within an institution. Therefore, as a division, we need to come together in a bold and unique way. We must understand we are all one team, ready to help as needed, in a manner we would each desire if we worked in an institution with this high of a vacancy rate.

To that end, a plan has been developed to augment the current staffing levels at Waupun which draws upon the service of sergeants and officers from other Division of Adult Institutions in numbers that will help provide staffing adequate to support safe operation of the facility.

The framework of the plan calls for most DAI institutions with a combined sergeant and officer vacancy rate of less than 20% to deploy 4 staff each on an every other pay period basis for a two-week assignment at Waupun. This will begin the week of June 6th. Each pay period will involve six (6) institutions resulting in a total of 24 personnel being deployed at a time. This number will essentially have the effect of reducing vacancies at Waupun by 8.11% to a level of 33.78% - which is still higher than any other facility. This plan will begin continued throughout the remainder of calendar year 2021, with each participating institution having performed eight cycles of service involving 32 staff. Of course, the plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and altered if necessary.

Facilities with less than a 20% combined vacancy rate who will participate include:

- Redgranite Correctional Institution
- Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility
- Oshkosh Correctional Institution
- Racine Youthful Offenders Correctional Facility
- Stanley Correctional Institution
- Fox Lake Correctional Institution
- Racine Correctional Institution
- Green Bay Correctional Institution
- New Lisbon Correctional Institution
- Oakhill Correctional Institution
- Jackson Correctional Institution
- Prairie du Chien Correctional Institution

The manner in which each facility will determine the four staff for any given rotation will be:

- Request volunteers from all uniform staff.
- If there are not enough volunteers, tactical teams (ERU and CNT) will be encouraged to assist.
- If there are still not enough volunteers, the least senior uniform staff based on state seniority regardless of classification shall be ordered to fill the remaining slots.

We've explored the idea of being able to offer a financial incentive for staff to volunteer for these assignments. Unfortunately, there is no language in the compensation plan which would authorize us to do so. However, we will provide lodging for anyone who wants it and will be travelling 40 miles or more to WCI one way (from their home or headquartered location, whichever is closer to WCI). Staff will also be reimbursed for mileage and meals according to the ASM 601. More information about these issues will be shared in the near future.

Sergeants and officers deployed to Waupun will be assigned one of two schedules while working Monday through Friday each of the two weeks. The hours of work will be either (6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) or (12:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.). An option to work additional hours is also available. Deployed staff will not be ordered for overtime unless unavoidable circumstances exist.

The first Monday at Waupun will involve training deployed staff in post(s) to which they will be assigned during the two weeks. The posts will involve either working directly with Waupun staff or in posts with duties that can be performed by an experienced correctional sergeant or officer with minimal familiarization.

I understand this is a unique approach and one that has not been employed in the past. But as was stated before, our history of coming together in a time of need, and the ability for all staff to understand a bigger picture, gives me the confidence that the DAI Team will pull together and provide the requested assistance.

I'd like to emphasize there is an understanding and recognition that other institutions are also struggling with high vacancy rates. The intent of this plan is not to minimize or ignore those challenges. DAI Leadership and Institution Leadership continue to explore a variety of approaches, strategies and initiatives to enhance staffing at all sites. Additionally, DAI has brought together a Recruitment and Retention Committee which is also exploring different options to assist with vacancy rates across the division. We are always open to other ideas and suggestions and encourage people to bring their ideas forward.

Thank you all for the work you are doing. Thank you for taking time to read and process this information. Most importantly, thank you in advance to those who will be part of this effort over the next several months.