

2020-2021

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Corrections
Officer
Compensation
Study for
Milwaukee
County

Master of Public
Administration Capstone,
University of Oregon

CORRECTIONS OFFICER COMPENSATION STUDY FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Sheriff's Office

**PREPARED BY STUDENTS IN THE
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CAPSTONE
JUNE 2021**

Sustainable City Year Program
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UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

School of Planning, Public
Policy and Management

About the Sustainable City Year Program

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is the flagship program of the Sustainable Cities Institute, an applied think tank focusing on sustainability and cities through applied research, teaching, and community partnerships. SCYP is a massively scaled university-community partnership program that matches the resources of the University with one Oregon community each year to help advance that community's sustainability goals. SCYP is a founding member of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), a collection of institutions that have successfully adopted a new model for community innovation and change.

This project was funded in part by the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, at UO, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon.

IPRE operations and projects take place at various locations in Oregon and wishes to acknowledge and express our respect for the traditional homelands of all of the indigenous people of Oregon. This includes the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes. We also express our respect for all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home.

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Executive Summary

This study endeavors to identify what work conditions may improve the retention and recruitment of Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) corrections officers. Approaches to informing the research team's understanding of this question included reviewing existing literature on employee retention, corrections officer stress and burnout, and organizational structure and climate. The literature provided initial recommendations informing the team's administered survey and interviews and final recommendations. These early findings suggested improvements in the following areas:

- **Recruitment:** use professional recruitment agency and focus on desired competencies during the process while being clear about job expectations
- **Selection:** streamline process to reduce hiring time and reduce barriers to employment to allow for the selection of higher quality candidates and minimize turnover costs
- **Leadership Development:** quality leadership is essential; adequate training and incentives to promotion are key in developing leadership capacities
- **Communication:** extensive communication about the job, organization, and work issues by management can greatly reduce turnover; communication should also include realistic promotion opportunities, genuine administration interest, and full use of employee skills
- **Promotional Opportunities:** much of the research notes the importance of advancement opportunities for corrections officers and clear communication of promotion availability and requirements increases job satisfaction
- **Pay:** administrators should review benefits and salary schedules available to ensure fair compensation for corrections officers

Building on the background research and to capture local perspectives regarding the high turnover of corrections officers and its effects, the team collected data from Milwaukee County internal documents, administered surveys to current MCSO corrections officers, and interviewed Milwaukee County leadership. The data revealed key areas for improvement in the structure and culture of the organization. Specifically, the data informed the team's final recommendations:

1. Improve pay
 - a. Implement pay step increases
 - b. Reduce training costs
 - c. Consider noncompete clause
2. Improve workplace communication
 - a. Embrace good communication practices
 - b. Recognize individual communication preferences
 - c. Bridge intergenerational communication gaps
3. Improve workplace environment
 - a. Reduce reliance on overtime
 - b. Support long-term employment

Background

Milwaukee County, Wisconsin is experiencing high attrition rates among corrections officers at the Sheriff's Office. The effects of turnover are widespread, impacting the experiences and outcomes of inmate populations, including facility programming, reduction in sentences, and rates of recidivism. Currently, Milwaukee County attributes the consistent turnover of corrections officers to low wages, the dangerous nature of the job, and competitive wages offered by other local employers.

This study endeavors to identify what work conditions may improve the retention and recruitment of Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) corrections officers. Approaches to informing our understanding of this question include reviewing existing literature on employee retention, corrections officer stress and burnout, and organizational structure and climate. Additionally, to capture local perspectives regarding the high turnover of corrections officers and its effects, we collected data from Milwaukee County internal documents, administered surveys to current MCSO corrections officers, and interviewed Milwaukee County leadership. The data show increasing correction officers' pay, improving workplace communication, and improving the workplace environment are elements contributing to high rates of turnover. This report recommends addressing these areas to increase retention of MCSO corrections officer and reduce attrition. It is outlined as follows: literature review, methods, data analysis, recommendations, and conclusion.

Literature Review

Correctional institutions and correctional officers have been a source of interest for researchers curious about the relationship between a guard's job requirements and potential long-term, organizational impacts. Studies have shown that correctional officers experience high levels of stress, which may influence the high burnout and turnover rates documented among employees in this field. Centered around a discussion on the correctional workforce, this review will cover (1) officer turnover, (2) stress and burnout, and (3) organizational components impacting correctional officers' job satisfaction.

Turnover

Correctional facilities have faced extensive challenges in securing and maintaining a high-quality work environment. These impact staffing levels and proficiency, and result in large expenditures for jails including recruiting and training replacement officers, and covering overtime in vacant positions (Price, Kieckbusch, & Theis, 2007). Russo et al. (2018) argue that turnover ultimately diminishes the success of the sector. Several reasons, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, may explain an employee's decision to leave their place of work. Additional factors may include an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with their organization, their formal and informal interpersonal connections, and the perceived cost of leaving a job (Holton et. al., 2001). It becomes clear that both on-the-job and off-the-job influences can affect an employee's choice to stay in their position.

To reduce turnover, Holton et. al. (2001) suggests employers utilize strategies that connect people within the organization, offer opportunities and resources for community activities and involvement, and incorporate job perks associated with length of time on the job to make costs of leaving higher. This is supported by Price, Kieckbusch & Theis (2007) who note that sound management practices, not just salaries and benefits, tend to reduce attrition. Poor supervision, vague job content, limited advancement opportunity, low pay and insufficient training appear to negatively impact jail officer satisfaction. Alternatively, open communication, access to supervision, effective promotion processes, and available fringe benefits positively influence an employee's intent to stay. Research conducted by Yang, Brown, and Moon (2011) supports these findings and includes supportive relationships with supervisors and coworkers, and challenging jobs requiring a wide variety of skills as positively impacting job satisfaction.

In order to retain officers and support higher levels of job satisfaction, focusing on lowering stress and burnout and reforming elements of organizational structure and climate become crucial.

Officer Stress and Burnout

Sources of stress within corrections is reasonably well-researched, with a growing list of published material on the topic as the complexity and pressures of the job increase. In a study conducted by Finn (1998), survey results show that over one third of corrections officers rate their job as "very" or "more than moderately" stressful. As jails increase prisoner counts and experience higher incidences of dangerous criminals with longer sentences, the stress levels of the job increase; a trend occurring in the last twenty years.

Finn (1998) identifies three main sources of stress including organizational, work-related, and external causes. Examples of organizational sources involve understaffing, overtime, shift work, supervisor demands, role conflict, and role ambiguity. Work-related stress may include threat of inmate violence, actual incidences of inmate violence, and problems with coworkers. Lastly, external sources of stress contain the public perception of corrections officers and poor pay. These triggers are seen in higher turnover, burnout, excessive sick time, impaired health, reduced safety, premature retirement, and impaired family life for corrections officers (Finn, 1998; Gross et. al., 2014).

According to Gross et. al. (2014), female correctional officers experience slightly higher rates of stress likely due to family demands. The researchers find statistically significant relationships between gender and work stress concerning “absences, tardiness, counseling slips, demotions, sick leave, workman’s compensation, depersonalization, self-estrangement, blood pressure, obesity, physical distress, and hospitalization” (Gross et al. 1994, 228).

While these three sources should each be considered with equal resolve, according to the literature, role conflict predominates officer stress and job dissatisfaction. Role conflict is understood as the dissonance officers confront when required to maintain safe and secure jails while helping inmates rehabilitate (Finn, 1998). This division is supported by Finney et. al. (2013) who found correctional officers experience “stress and burnout” in the workplace due to unclear administrative policies, poor communication between supervisors and subordinates, inability to make decisions and workplace climate.

Organizational Structural Components

Apart from the aforementioned factors impacting correctional officers’ job satisfaction, Taxman and Gordon (2009) analyze how perceptions of justice and fairness around administrative decisions and decision-making processes affect officers’ connection to their jobs and organizations. The researchers argue that the low retention rate of correctional officers nationwide cannot be attributed to their stressful work environment alone. Rather, Taxman and Gordon (2009) suggest that other structural and managerial factors can affect how satisfied and committed an employee is to his or her workplace. In surveying over 1,000 correctional staff across one mid-Atlantic state, the researchers focused on how perceptions of the decision-making process are influenced by leadership style, the climate for learning, the organizational climate, and job stress.

Based on the results of the survey, Taxman and Gordon (2009) emphasize that involving staff in decision-making or team-based processes from the beginning is very important and can lead to a more positive work environment. Furthermore, consistency and fairness in manager-employee relations can create more trust in the decision-making process, as well as in the decision maker. Committing to an open exchange of information and ideas between leaders and employees is equally important as open dialogue could result in a better understanding of the organizational structure overall. The authors suggest that by implementing these practices and strengthening the relationships between staff and leadership, the provision of service could also be positively affected.

Conclusion

Based on the information gathered from the literature, the team developed a deeper understanding of some of the challenges facing corrections officers and correctional institutions. The best practices discussed by researchers helped the team craft recommendations for the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, which are discussed in the recommendations section of this report.

Methods

The report was compiled utilizing a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to inform the recommendations to Milwaukee County on best practices for retention and compensation of corrections officers. The data were collected to present a better understanding of the influence compensation, organizational structure, and workforce culture has on corrections officers' decisions to leave their job.

Description of Data

The research team collected data from surveys, interviews, and internal documents. A description of each type of data is below.

- **Internal Documents:** Exit surveys completed by former corrections officers from Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office were received from Milwaukee County. The research team used these data to identify reasons for leaving by corrections officers. Additional materials provided by the Sheriff's Office included job solicitation, internal budget, demographic data of corrections officers, and onboarding and training materials.
- **Surveys:** Surveys were given to current corrections officers for Milwaukee County. The surveys were designed to add data on the current climate and culture of Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, the surveys provided data on the corrections officers' perceptions of current and ideal compensation structure.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with Milwaukee County leadership, including management within the sheriff's office and county commissioners, were used to provide insight on budgetary and political priorities as well as day-to-day operations of the organization. Interviews were conducted over the phone or by video call with one member of the research team and team members recorded responses.

Beyond the above data sources described, the research team utilized existing literature to identify challenges faced in turnover, recruitment, and compensation for corrections officers. The literature culminated into key takeaways and best practices for Milwaukee County to utilize in considering organizational structure and culture as well as budgetary and compensation needs. The literature also provided a foundation to develop key survey and interview questions to use in subsequent data collection. Further, the research team identified other corrections officer compensation in neighboring counties and a pay structure used by other counties for their corrections officers as points of comparison to Milwaukee County's current corrections officer compensation.

Analysis

- **Internal Documents:** A member of the research team provided summaries of the internal documents received from MCSO. Exit surveys were collected and personal information

was redacted. The research team compiled the data into a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. Quantitative data was summarized using averages and total counts of each response. To analyze the qualitative data, the team each coded responses and met for consensus on code identification. The codes were categorized, and findings were summarized using two overarching themes: structure and culture.

- **Surveys:** Surveys were developed using both close-ended questions paired with statements of agreement and open-ended questions based on the findings in early conversations with the clients and from the literature review. The surveys were then distributed to current corrections officers by the research partners at MCSO. The data was collected and coded by two team members. Codes were again broken into the two overarching themes utilized in the exit surveys.
- **Interviews:** Upon transcribing the interviews, two team members went through the transcription and added codes to identify key themes within the responses. The codes were categorized within the two overarching themes utilized throughout the analysis, structure and culture. The findings were summarized.

Subject Protections

Given the interaction with human subjects, the project applied for and got approval from the University of Oregon Institutional Review Board to move forward with the project. All survey and interview subjects gave informed consent, signed or verbally, before proceeding with formal surveys and interviews. Personal identifying information was redacted from internal documentation upon review by the research team.

Data Analysis

Upon collecting the data described above, the team analyzed and summarized the findings below. First, the internal documents are synthesized to provide additional context to the data gathered in the surveys and interviews. The exit surveys were key in the internal documents received from Milwaukee County. A summary of the data collected through the exit surveys and findings conclude the discussion of internal documents. Second, the team describes the administration, structure, and findings of the survey given to current corrections officers. Finally, a discussion of the interview process and findings is presented.

Review of Milwaukee County Internal Documents

Objectively understanding the nature of corrections officers' work required reviewing internal Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office documents. The research team reviewed onboarding training material, administrative policies and procedures, corrections officer solicitations from five Wisconsin Counties, and Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office demographic statistics. Internal documents were provided, upon request, by Captain Joshua Briggs, the team's MCSO liaison. A summary of each document's contents is outlined below.

Figure 1

MCSO Internal Documents	
Document Name	Description
Demographic Data	Provides total number of corrections officers by race/gender.
Onboarding Training Materials	Describes Milwaukee County structure/hierarchy and non-monetary benefits (i.e., medical/dental/vision/life insurance).
Administrative Policies/Procedures	Describes MCSO corrections officer work policies/processes for performance of duties and supervising inmates.
Budget	Outlines MCSO budgetary allocations.
Job Solicitations	Describes corrections officer job description, required skills/experience, salary, qualifications, and benefits.

Figure 1 summarizes the Milwaukee County internal documents reviewed for this study.

Onboarding Training Materials

Benefits

These documents outline the benefits offered to Milwaukee County corrections officers and other employees. Benefits include medical insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, tuition reimbursement, wellness programming, legal assistance, vacation and paid sick time-off, and retirement offerings. Milwaukee County employees, either full time or part time, who work more than 20 hours a week and their legal dependents are eligible for county benefits. All benefits are effective on the first of the month following the date of hire, except for life insurance. Life insurance is effective six months after being hired.

Work Expectations

Corrections officers' work environment is hierarchical and military-like environment. When referring to someone senior in the organization, an individual is to use the senior person's title or refer to him or her as "sir" or "ma'am." Addressing a senior person by his or her first name is unacceptable.

Corrections officers work a variety of schedules and are often required to work weekends, holidays, and forced overtime. Failure to report for a shift can result in a documented absence.

Professional Roles and Responsibilities

Corrections officers may be required to or engage in monitoring inmates, responding to fires within jail; handling medical emergencies; responding to inmates fighting; participating in the Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) - tactical response to disruptive inmates; responding to combative inmates; distinguishing which inmates should be kept

separated; ensuring restrictions of jail are implemented; accounting for firefighting equipment and sharp objects; conduct formal inspection of cells; and oversight of inmates on suicide watch.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Collectively, the MCSO's administrative policies and procedures inform corrections officers of their day-to-day responsibilities and how to conduct professional tasking. Administrative policies and procedures address:

- Administration and management;
- Security and control;
- Emergency preparedness;
- Operations;
- Inmate management, services, and programs;
- Court staging; and
- Health services

Corrections Officer Job Solicitations from Five Wisconsin Counties

Corrections Officer job solicitations for Milwaukee County, Waukesha County, Brown County, Outagamie County, and Kenosha County were reviewed and compared for similarities and differences. Categories reviewed and compared include starting salary, job descriptions, job requirements, minimum qualifications, and benefits offered. Each category and the team's findings are summarized below.

Starting Salary

Milwaukee County's starting salary for corrections officers is \$20.38 per hour. A pay scale of \$20.28-\$23.41 per hour is also reflected, but a distinction as to what skills warrant \$23.41 is not articulated. Only two other counties, Waukesha County and Brown County, provide a starting salary, both of which fall within \$21.23 – \$23.25 per hour. However, Waukesha County offers a pay scale of \$23.38-\$30.88 per hour. Applicants with previous corrections officer or law enforcement experience may be eligible to receive hourly pay at the higher end of the pay scale.

Job Descriptions

Corrections officer job descriptions across the five counties were relatively consistent. The only notable distinction is Kenosha County mentions a written test requirement prior to be considered for the corrections officer position.

Job Requirements

The job requirements are consistent across the five counties. However, Kenosha County and Milwaukee County describe physical requirements. Kenosha County requires applicants to be able to wear a ten-pound duty belt, lift 50 pounds, push and pull 25 pounds, and be able to bend/squat/move/reach and walk. Milwaukee County states applicants should be able to restrain a 250-pound inmate.

Minimum Qualifications

Four out of five counties require applicants to possess a high school diploma or a GED and one to three years post-high school work experience. Brown County requires applicants to have

either an associate's degree or bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college. However, this requirement for higher education is not substantiated with a higher hourly wage.

Benefits

All the counties advertise offering medical insurance, dental insurance, vision, insurance, wellness programs, and retirement benefits. Additionally, Waukesha County and Milwaukee County advertise tuition reimbursements.

Exit Surveys

Upon request from the research team, Captain Joshua Briggs provided 23 exit surveys collected from individuals that terminated their employment at Milwaukee County Jail. The surveys included 12 Likert scale questions, asking employees to rate their satisfaction with the job, work conditions, schedule, salary, benefits, and colleagues on a scale of 1-4. The second half of the survey included 10 open-ended questions asking employees what they did and did not like about the position, their experience as an employee of Milwaukee County, and what their plans are for future employment. Respondents were employed with the County anywhere from 3 weeks to approximately 5 years and submitted their exit survey between November 2019 and February 2021. The team redacted any personally identifiable information and cleaned and coded the responses. Below is a summary of the responses received in the exit surveys.

Findings

Reasons for Leaving

Corrections Officers noted a handful of reasons for leaving the Sheriff's Office. Most of these reasons fell within three broad categories: displeasure with the organization, personal reasons, and external influences. Displeasure with the organization accounted for three of the 23 responses and included pay, treatment, and training. Notably, in this particular question, only one officer noted pay as their reason for leaving. Personal reasons were the most common reason for leaving and included responses pertaining to personal and family health concerns, relocating, other family concerns, and the officer's overall fit with the job and organization. Fourteen individuals identified personal reasons as their reason for leaving the Sheriff's Office. Finally, external influences, specifically other job opportunities, accounted for eight of the reasons for separation from the organization. Some corrections officers noted their new opportunities were with the military, attending the police academy, or moving to a corrections officer position closer to their residence.

Employment

Three questions asked respondents about their plans for future employment and the benefits provided by these new employers. Of the 23 respondents, 13 had a new employer lined up upon the termination of their position with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office. New employment opportunities included healthcare, returning to previous positions, entering the military, moving into sworn law enforcement, or a corrections officer position with a new county. Specifically, three individuals noted they were leaving the Sheriff's office to move to a job in a new county, namely, Waukesha, Waushara, and Fond Du Lac. The remaining respondents noted they did not have solidified new employment or noted it was inapplicable. With the opportunities for new employment described in the responses, most respondents noted these opportunities provided

meaningful improvements regarding the structure of their organization. These included higher pay, more training, improved operations, and additional schedule flexibility. The most noted improvement was three responses mentioned higher pay and increased schedule flexibility as additional offerings by their new employer. Other benefits mentioned by those with secured employment after their time with MCSO are more paid-time off and parking.

Job Satisfaction and Suggestions for Improvement

Responses to the question regarding what corrections officers liked about working with Milwaukee's Sheriff Office were separated into three main categories that reflected components pertaining to organizational structure and culture. The overarching categories included a handful of more specific codes. Similarly, the question regarding respondents' dislikes about their position with MCSO was identified with specific codes and categorized into the broad categories of structure and culture. The table below puts forth the most common responses in each category with the specified code within that category.

Figure 2

Workplace Question Responses Categorized Using Culture and Structure	
What did you like about working with Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office?	
Culture	Colleagues
Structure	Benefits; Advancement
What did you not like about working with Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office?	
Culture	Colleagues
Structure	Overtime

Figure 2 summarizes the responses to open-ended workplace questions (blue cells) using the themes culture and structure (grey cells). The most common codes noted in the data within the respective themes are listed on the right (white cells).

In addition to employers likes and dislikes with the position, the exit surveys revealed that 17 respondents would reconsider employment with Milwaukee County in the future and 19 said they would recommend employment with Milwaukee County to others.

Suggestions for improvements were provided by 13 respondents. Six respondents suggested improvements around the structure of the job including improvements to overtime, benefits offered, and rotating job posts. The remaining responses were encompassed as cultural improvements, specifically suggesting more appreciation for their work, improved administration, more structure to the job, and increased communication and transparency within the organization. It is also noteworthy that of the 23 exit survey responses, 8 said there were no improvements that could be made that would have kept them from leaving as many of these respondents left the organization for personal reasons.

Survey

During this study, MCSO corrections officers had the opportunity to participate in a voluntary 20-question survey. The survey solicited corrections officers' perspective regarding their work

schedule, salary, benefits, training, and workplace climate. The survey findings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Findings

Close-ended Questions

The first seven questions use five statements of agreement to evaluate corrections officers' perspectives about their job, work schedule, training, salary, benefits, and workplace relationships. The five statements of agreement options include "very satisfied," "satisfied," "neutral," "unsatisfied," and "very unsatisfied." The use of standardized responses allowed the research team to understand how corrections officers feel about specific aspects of working for Milwaukee County.

Most of the responses to questions were not skewed as either "very satisfied" or "very unsatisfied." Survey responses consistently varied. This reveals surveyed corrections officers have different levels of satisfaction with their job, work schedule, training, benefits, and workplace. The only exception is 91% of survey respondents said they are very unsatisfied with their salary and unsatisfied with their salary.

Figure 3

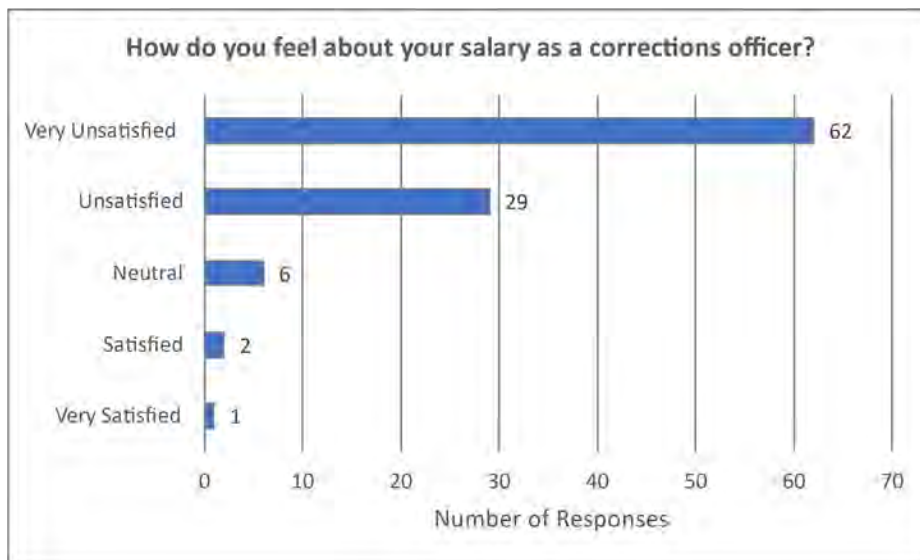


Figure 3 depicts survey respondents' feelings about their salary as a corrections officer. This question received 100 responses.

Open-ended Questions

Eight open-ended questions asked respondents about recruitment, retention, workplace environment, professional work experience, and length of employment with Milwaukee County. Using an open-ended question framework helped the research team understand the benefits and perceived disadvantages of employment as a corrections officer within the Sheriff's Office.

Applicable survey responses were coded individually and then categorized using the two primary themes: culture and structure.

Culture was selected because once the data were coded, the team noted responses focused primarily on workplace behavior, interactions and skills that could be addressed without policy or budgetary interventions. For example, one respondent provided the following feedback when asked about how the work environment, *“I feel unsafe at times, and that the environment is unprofessional. We do not get treated fairly at all. You get to the point where you just come to work and leave.”* This sentiment was echoed by other respondents. Specifically, they shared how favoritism, unprofessional interactions between corrections officers and management, and lack of respect for corrections officers contribute to a hostile work environment.

Structure was also selected because the data reflected responses specific to Milwaukee County policies, insufficient staffing, salary, and forced overtime, all of which could be address via policy or budgetary interventions. For example, a comment received from a respondent states, *“There is too much turnover of employees creating way too much mandatory overtime (especially additional 8 hour shifts over our own scheduled shifts), too many people calling in sick, abusing FMLA.”* Comments about staffing, work schedules, forced overtime, inmate supervision policies, and parking policies were common.

Additionally, it is important to note the team inferred that feedback falling under the culture theme may be handled by jail management. Whereas feedback falling within the structure theme may need the involvement and/or approval of the Sheriff or elected officials.

Overall, respondents conveyed a variety of benefits and perceived disadvantages of their employment as corrections officers. The benefits of being an employee of Milwaukee County included reliable work, benefits, professional experience, and it is a stepping-stone to being a law enforcement officer. However, the perceived disadvantages include forced overtime, high turnover, insufficient training, and dangerous interactions with inmates. Furthermore, respondents said they feel the workplace environment “needs improvement.” Some corrections officers responses were coded as “unprofessional,” “poorly managed,” and “stressful.” A summary of the most frequent codes is provided below.

Figure 4

Responses to Open-ended Questions Categorized Using Culture and Structure	
How do you feel about the workplace environment?	
Culture	Needs Improvement
Structure	Insufficient Training
Why did you seek employment with Milwaukee County as a corrections officer?	
Culture	Education
Structure	Law Enforcement
As a corrections officer, what if anything, make Milwaukee County a competitive employer?	
Culture	Nothing
Structure	Benefits
What, if any, work conditions could improve your employment as a corrections officer?	
Culture	Improve Work Environment
Structure	Increase Pay

Figure 4 summarizes the responses to open-ended survey questions (blue cells) using the themes culture and structure (grey cells). The most common codes noted in the data within the respective themes are listed on the right (white cells).

Demographic Data

The following graphs depict MCSO corrections officers' demographics and the demographics of survey respondents. This information is provided for direct comparison and to demonstrate that the perspectives shared by respondents only represent less than half of MCSO corrections officers. Please note, MCSO data is orange and MCSO survey respondent data is blue.

Figure 5

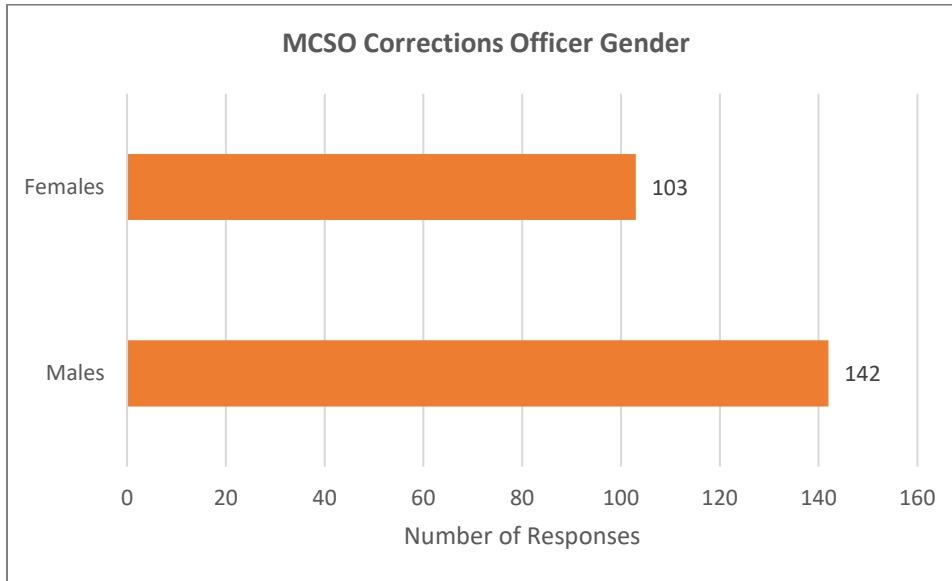


Figure 5 depicts the number of male and female corrections officers within the MCSO. This data was provided by the MCSO.

Figure 6

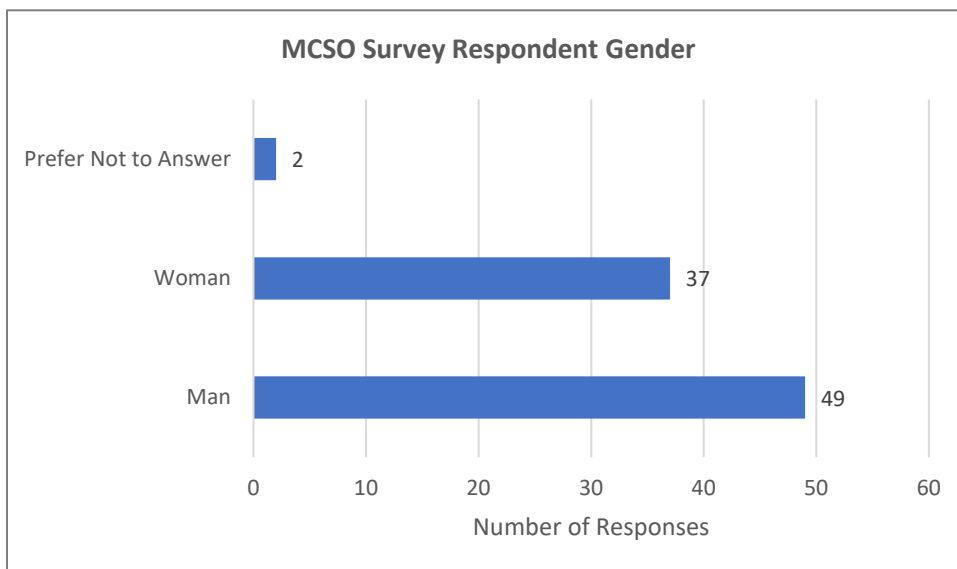


Figure 6 depicts the number of male and female survey respondents. Non-binary was provided a gender category. Non-binary is omitted from the graph because zero survey respondents identified as non-binary. This question received 88 responses.

Figure 7

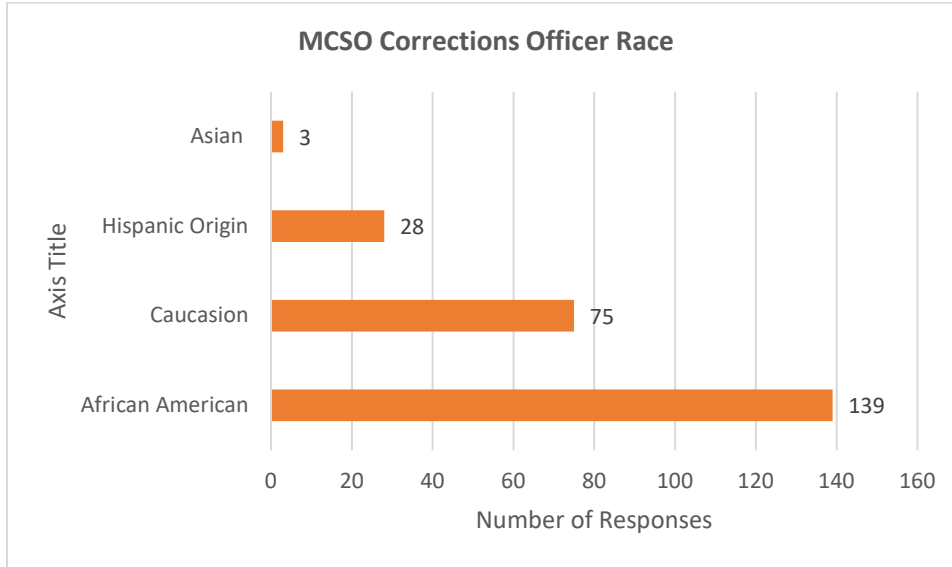


Figure 7 depicts the races of MCSO corrections officers. This data was provided by the MCSO.

Figure 8

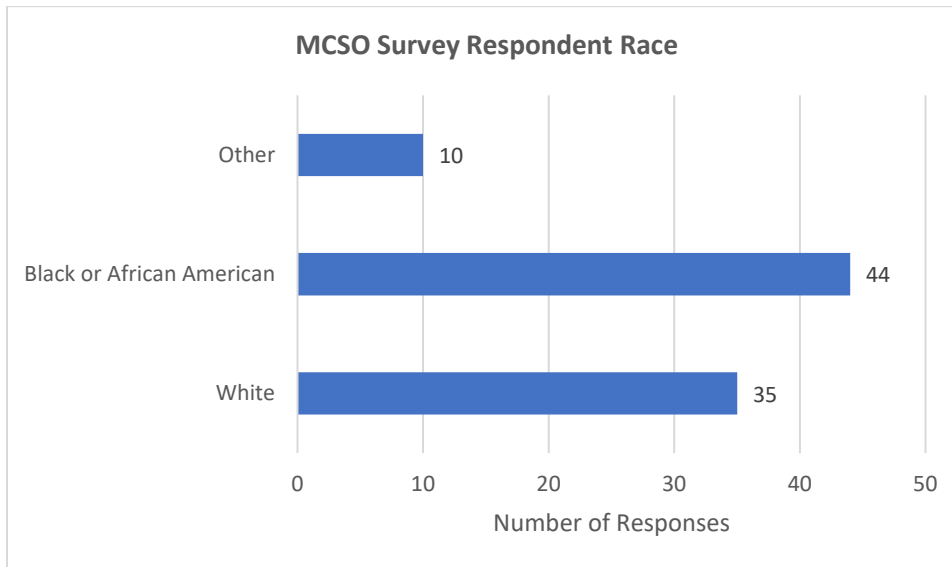


Figure 8 depicts the race of survey respondents. American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were provided among racial categories, but were not selected by survey respondents and were therefore omitted in the graph. This question received 89 responses.

Figure 9

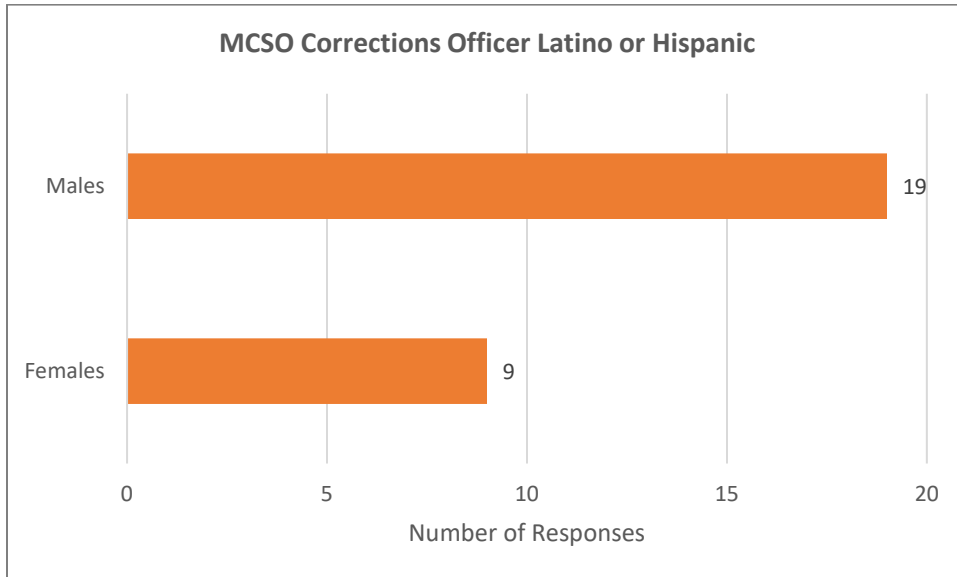


Figure 9 depicts the number of Latino or Hispanic corrections officers within the MCSO. This data provided by the MCSO.

Figure 10

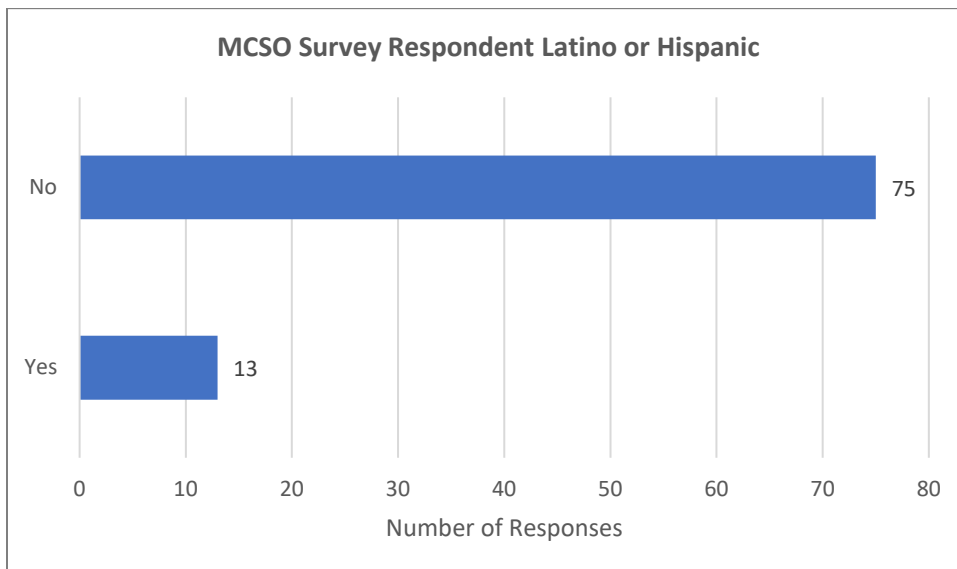


Figure 10 depicts the number of Latino or Hispanic survey respondents. This question received 88 responses.

Furthermore, two questions gathered demographic data from respondents concerning their intentions to maintain employment with Milwaukee County as corrections officers and their level of education attained. This information aided researchers in understanding survey respondents' career intentions as a MCSO correction officer.

Figure 11

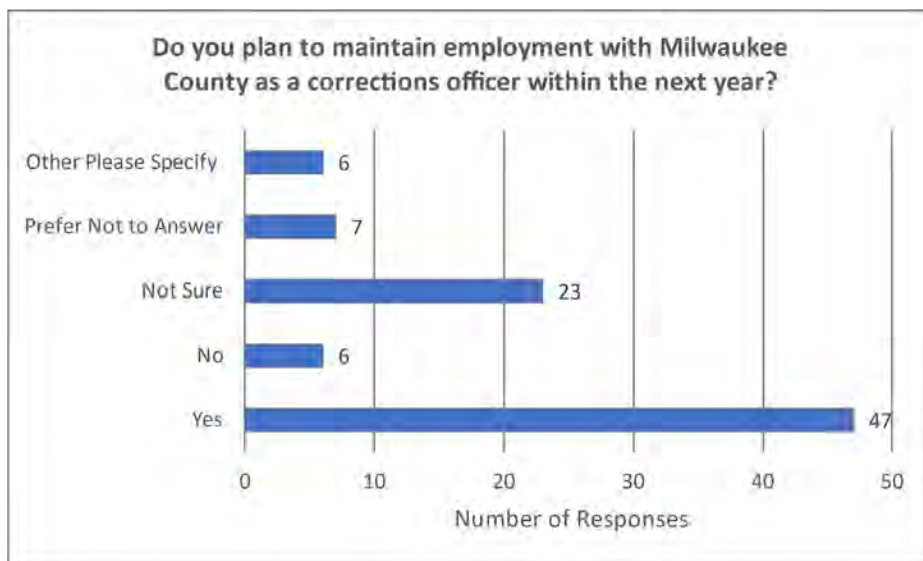


Figure 11 depicts if survey respondents plan to maintain their employment with the MCSO within the next year. This question received 89 responses.

Figure 12

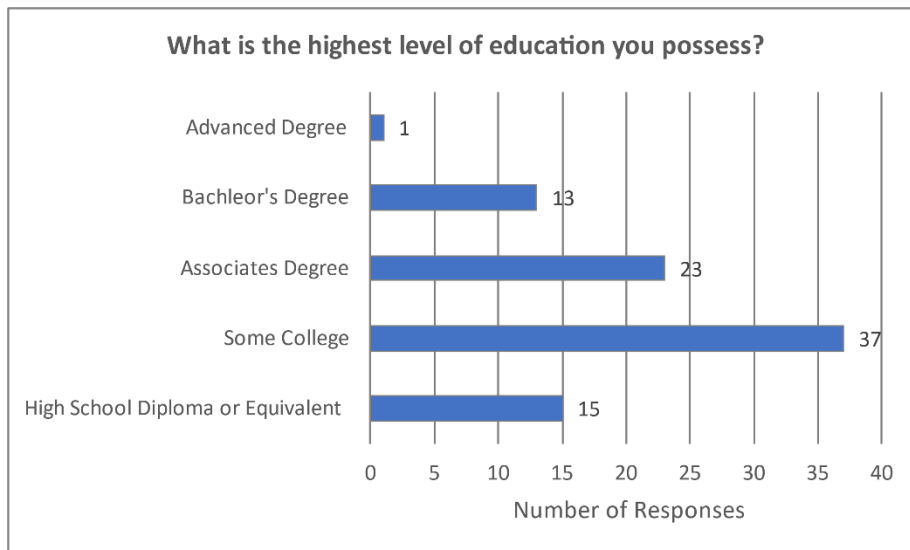


Figure 12 depicts the education levels attained by survey respondents. This question received 89 responses.

Interviews

In order to develop a deeper understanding of the culture and structure of Milwaukee County, the Sheriff's Office and the Milwaukee County Jail, the research team interviewed seven public officials, familiar with correctional processes and county finances. Upon interview completion, the team's revised scope of work resulted in maintaining five of the seven interviews for further analysis. The following provides a summary of the team's findings. To review the team's interview process and questions posed to interviewees, please visit Appendix C.

Findings

To expand the team's knowledge of Milwaukee County correctional and administrative processes, participants answered a series of targeted questions asking them to describe different aspects of correctional work and the general workplace environment. For example, when asked to describe how the roles of corrections officers have changed over the last decade, all five interviewees described the increased responsibility corrections officers face. This is attributed, in part, to structural changes that removed sworn law enforcement from jails and replaced deputies with corrections officers. Whereas prior to this change deputies conducted more administrative duties such as reading and organizing court paperwork, including warrants and sentences, now, corrections officers must decipher and track legal proceedings for all inmates. In addition to this increased responsibility, technological advances such as more complex identification systems, have expanded the required skillset of a corrections officer. Coupled with increased public scrutiny and responsibility, officers are being asked to maintain their professionalism, adhere to protocol, and be precise in their attention to detail.

Following this description, when asked about corrections officers' staffing levels, all participants responded that they were not adequate. Some suggested that the system is too reliant on forced overtime and explained that while the jail is budgeted for more officers, they are unable to fill all positions. Similarly, when asked about corrections officer's retention rates, four of the five respondents described constant turnover among staff. Some elaborated on the challenges of the job including maintaining a work-life balance, managing low pay, and having to do shift work. One interviewee suggested that in order to increase retention, it is important to implement and maintain methods of communication between supervisors and employees. Others noted that many see this job as a stepping stone to becoming a sworn law officer. Another interviewee expressed their desire for people to see this as a career-oriented job and reflected on ways to achieve this goal.

Answers were similar when interviewers inquired about turnover rates. Three of the five respondents noted that it was high and went on to describe the challenges that arise from understaffing and high turnover. These included low morale among officers, increased employee dissatisfaction, more overtime and stress, and higher rates of burnout. One interviewee described a sort of domino effect where the increase in overtime due to low staffing numbers causes people to use more sick or vacation time, which leads to fewer people on the floor and increased frustration. The respondents also noted that high turnover leads to higher costs for the county who expends increased resources on training and recruiting when retention is low. Furthermore, understaffing can lead to increased danger both for the inmates who may be lacking meaningful

supervision, and for the officers whom there are not enough of to run the jail safely and effectively.

After respondents shared their observations on retention and turnover rates, the interviewers went on to ask about the perceived barriers inhibiting officer retention. Three of the five participants suggested that forced overtime, the stress of the job, the low pay, and the challenging work environment were all contributing factors. When asked what actions Milwaukee County may have taken to change work conditions for corrections officers, interviewees highlighted the 15% pay increase officers received over a two-year period, and the creation of more systems of recognition and reward including incentives for field training officers, staff pizza nights, and opportunities to avoid mandatory overtime based on outstanding attendance and professionalism. Respondents also noted that training has been improved. Additionally, there has been a renewed focus on strengthening the supervisor-employee relationship through increased supervisor communication and attentiveness. The implementation of exit surveys has also helped provide insight into why officers may be leaving and ways to improve the organization.

Subsequently, respondents were asked to go a bit further and identify what efforts still need to be done to improve retention. Both structural and cultural changes were proposed including increasing corrections officers pay, offering more training opportunities, and more frequent promotions were suggested. Additionally, providing more rewards and recognition, supporting fraternization among employees, building more solid supervisor-employee relationships, and engaging leaders to instill a culture that corrections officers are appreciated and respected, were highlighted. Although respondents were quick to identify increased pay and resources as key elements to improving the correctional work environment, when asked about budgetary allocations over the last five years, interviewees intimated that it has been relatively flat and there are not enough supervisory positions, which leads to hazardous situations.

The work climate, low pay, and challenging inmate population are some reasons participants suggested that officers leave and pursue employment with other agencies. Asked specifically which organization or company is the jail's biggest competitor, respondents mentioned officers going to work for correctional facilities in other counties or seeking positions in hospital security. However, when interviewers inquired about the best parts of working as a corrections officer and with Milwaukee County, responses were plentiful. Respondents described the dynamism and excitement of the job, the sense of accomplishment they receive, the benefits, and their co-workers.

In sum, the main issues that respondents highlighted include:

- Pay disparities make it hard to keep competent staff;
- The jail is not offering competitive pay compared to surrounding counties;
- High turnover leads to less experienced staff which can cause more dangerous situations and more frustration;
- There are cultural generational differences with the new officers coming in that leadership must adapt and attend to;
- Officers are overworked;
- There is too much overtime; and
- Training is expensive and high turnover results in higher costs

To reform some of these issues, participants recommended focusing on:

- Reducing overtime;
- Eliminating pay inequities;
- Improving leadership;
- Offering more training opportunities;
- Recruiting more heavily on social media and expanding recruiting strategies in general; and
- Incentivizing benefits

Recommendations

Utilizing the data collected and analyzed, the team developed three main recommendations: improve pay, improve workplace communication, and improve the workplace environment. Each recommendation is described in more detail in this section.

Improve Monetary Compensation

As was expressed to the team in initial conversations with project coordinators, there is widespread concern that the high turnover rate among corrections officers working for the Milwaukee County Jail is in large part due to corrections officers' low pay. Based on the information provided from the exit interviews, the survey disseminated to current corrections officers, and in interviews with county officials, it has become clear that this notion is not unfounded. A majority of officers who participated in the surveys expressed unhappiness with their salaries and felt inadequately compensated for their work. Administrators familiar with corrections officers and their work environments felt equally dissatisfied with officers' current conditions. Therefore, to help support corrections officers and reduce the rate of turnover, our final recommendation is to implement structural changes to the pay system and establish step increases for corrections officers.

Pay step increases are not unfamiliar to Milwaukee County or for those who have been employed with the county prior to the passage of Act 10 in 2011. While the ratification of this ordinance altered the legal bounds of wage patterns and expectations, through our conversations with officials, the team was pointed to surrounding counties who have maintained the pre-Act 10 pay structure and who are seen as having a competitive advantage over the Sheriff's Office. Waukesha County, for example, has 15 different steps for corrections officers, which corresponds to a salary range of \$23.03-\$30.42 per hour or \$47,902-\$63,984 per year. According to their Human Resources handbook, the objective of this structure is to "recruit and retain competent individuals in order to provide the required services to the County" (2500-3). These ranges are determined annually and are based on several factors including:

- Recruiting and retaining competent individuals
- Internal equity and external competitiveness
- Comparative rates of pay in both public and private industries
- The amount and type of training and experience required to perform the work

In analyzing the placement of classifications, the county uses market-driven data and the Korn Ferry (Hay) Job Evaluation Method, which is a widely used and accepted tool. Lastly, the county uses several factors to assign points to how a job contributes to the organization by:

- Establishing a credible and consistent hierarchy to jobs and the organization
- Facilitating the development of pay structures and programs
- Enabling comparison data for analyzing internal equity and with the external labor market (Lewandowski, personal communication)

Apart from Waukesha County, Eau Claire County commissioned McGrath Consulting Group to conduct a “comprehensive classification and compensation study of all non-union County positions and all positions that formerly had been unionized prior to Act 10. The County requested an evaluation of the positions in order to update the current non-union system, and incorporate pre-Act 10 union positions into a single system” (McGrath Consulting Group, 5). Using a variety of data collection methods and economic analyses, the study revealed that the “limited movement in a salary schedule, due to limited steps, and no tie to performance, does not provide a compensation system that enhances performance” (McGrath Consulting Group, 16). Therefore, consultants suggested a 16-step schedule with various percentage step increases between steps to allow employees to receive increases beyond the first 1-5 years of employment.

Our team understands that restructuring Milwaukee County’s pay structure is no small feat. However, the demonstrated success of other counties in implementing step systems should encourage officials to strongly consider the value of such a structure; one that was in place no fewer than 10 years ago. While this represents our primary solution for mitigating the effects of corrections officers’ low pay on turnover rates, smaller, intermediary steps may be taken.

The cost of training one correction officer through the Sheriff’s Office training academy equals about \$34,000 (Sheriff’s Budget, 5). Indeed, the team recognizes the importance of due training and preparation. However, in light of the high rates of turnover, we recommend finding ways to reduce expenditures on primary instruction. Alternatively, a noncompete clause may be a viable way to relieve some of the flow of officers to other counties. While these may have a smaller impact on corrections officers’ overall salaries, we believe that they could be incorporated alongside or independently of our primary recommendation.

Improve Workplace Communication

While insufficient pay is noted as a primary reason for workplace dissatisfaction among MCSO correction officers, survey respondents described workplace communication as poor, unprofessional, and disrespectful. Research suggests job satisfaction and organizational commitment are directly linked to an employee’s relationship with his/her employer, management, and coworkers (Holton et al 2001, pg. 1104). Positive connections and interactions within the workplace result in lower rates of turnover. Additionally, effective and communication is known to facilitate and reinforce organizational trust (Mayfield and Mayfield 2002). For these reasons, we recommend mitigating attrition by improving workplace communication within the Sheriff’s Office.

Improving workplace communication can occur in a variety of forms. The University of Virginia recommends practicing the following:

1. Engaging in active listening by hearing what the other person is saying without interrupting. Listen to understand the other person's message. Try not to form a response while listening or redirect the conversation.
2. Paying attention to body language and tone of voice.
3. Practicing empathy by trying to understand the other person's perspective.
4. Seeking to understand and if necessary, ask clarifying questions.
5. Communicating your ideas clearly and succinctly.

It is also worth noting that there may be generational differences impacting communication styles and preferences among corrections officers. Robert Half, a business consulting firm, suggest alleviating intergenerational communication barriers by:

1. Recognizing each person may have a preferred communication style and approach. Adjust communication styles to individual preferences.
2. Sharing organizational information with employees. Take time to collectively discuss how corrections officers have impacted Milwaukee County, the Sheriff's Office, and inmates. Employees' value knowing how they are contributing to the bigger picture. Information can be shared via periodic all hands meetings or at another predefined meeting.
3. Bridging generational gaps by creating mentoring opportunities. Mentorships can facilitate building professional relationships between coworkers and enhance workplace communication and trust.

Improve Workplace Environment

Even beyond workplace communication, improving the work environment for corrections officers was a prevalent theme in the team's data as a way to increase officer satisfaction with their employment, and in turn, encourage their commitment to the Sheriff's Office. Many of the survey respondents and interviewees noted the reliance on overtime and the lack of professional growth and advancement available to corrections officers as problematic elements of the work environment.

Heavy reliance on overtime has numerous dangerous effects. First, the data found that routine and excessive overtime lowered the morale of corrections officers. They were burnt out and were more likely to call in and not come for scheduled shifts in an effort to get some time off of work. This has compounding effects as it results in additional overtime for those who are showing up and the data suggests it imposes a rift among corrections officers in the facility. The other main concern with utilizing overtime is the safety concerns that come with asking tired officers to stay on for another shift. Their patience and focus on the job are reduced and the costs of something going wrong are extensive. With these dangerous effects in mind, some officers noted the appeal of overtime as a way to increase their take home pay. Under these considerations, the team recommends investing in further recruitment to acquire and retain employees who are a better fit for the position. This also addresses the reduced morale among those that find overtime and its allocation frustrating. Further, considering the process by which overtime is assigned allows those who find it more appealing to take advantage of that option and ensures officers are not staying on for double shifts minimizing the safety risks associated with tired and stressed officers on staff.

There were notions in the survey and interview data that suggested creating a more “career-oriented” position for corrections officers. This encompasses some revision to the pay structure as the team recommends below, internal opportunities for advancement, and mentorship support between newer corrections officers and veteran ones and supervisor roles. Providing internal incentives for corrections officers taking on additional responsibilities and opportunities to show them how to execute new tasks in a way that supports their professional development are a couple of ways to show the potential of the position as a corrections officer. Many officers also noted they appreciate the diversity of experiences offered working as a corrections officer for the Sheriff’s Office so building on that appeal and making those opportunities available to officers increases their investment to the organization.

Concluding Remarks

The research team worked in partnership with Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office to address retention, attrition, and compensation of corrections officers. Upon collecting data from internal documents, surveys, and interviews the team discovered the following key findings:

1. Monetary compensation is a problem among officers’ dissatisfaction with their employment
2. Many find the work environment to be unprofessional
3. Excessive and forced overtime adds to an unhealthy and unsafe work environment
4. Corrections officers have varying perspectives of supervisory and management relationships

Given, these findings the team recommends Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Office consider options for adjusting officer pay and the pay structure, improve workplace communication, and improve workplace environment.

Finally, the team would like to thank those that supported the project throughout, including our partners at the MCSO, Inspector Aaron Dobson, and Captain Joshua Briggs, as well as project coordinators from the University of Wisconsin and the University of Oregon. Additionally, we would like to thank all those that participated in our surveys and interviews providing key data to support the culminating recommendations.

Appendix

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Corrections Officer Survey Context

Survey Structure & Administration

Corrections officer perspectives, regarding compensation, schedule, training, and workplace climate, were captured via a 20-question internet-based survey. The survey consisted of 20 questions. Seven of the question were quantitative. Seven of the questions were qualitative. Six of the questions were demographic questions.

Prior to dissemination to correction officers within the Sheriff's Office, the research team provided the survey to Inspector Aaron Dobson and Captain Joshua Briggs on April 9, 2021. The survey closed three weeks later on April 30, 2021. Most questions received between 88 and 100 responses. Quantitative questions, using provided statements of agreement, received 100 responses. Whereas open-ended qualitative questions had between 88 and 89 responses. The difference in response rates is likely due to the ease of simply selecting a response option, instead of respondents having to draft a response. Survey responses for each question are provided in the Appendix.

Consent Agreement

Prior to taking the survey, respondents completed the electronic consent agreement form. The consent agreement informed respondents of the survey's objective, purpose, question length, and voluntary nature. It also acknowledged respondents' rights to speak with the University of Oregon's (UO) Research Compliance Services office with questions or concerns about the study. Contact information was provided for the UO Research Compliance Services office. After reading the consent agreement, respondents had the option of "I consent to participating in this study and wish to continue" or "I do not consent."

Corrections Officer Survey Questions

Consent

This survey asks questions about your work schedule, salary and benefits, training, and workplace climate. It is 20 questions and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. **Completing this survey is voluntary. You will not be penalized for not taking this survey. If you start the survey and do not wish to continue, you may stop at any time.**

Survey responses will be accessed by the research team. All responses will remain anonymous.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this survey, please feel free to email Alyssa Leraas, a member of the research team, at aleraas@uoregon.edu.

An Institutional Review Board ("IRB") is overseeing this research. An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected. UO Research Compliance Services is the office that supports the IRB. If you have questions about your rights or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact: Research Compliance Services, 5237 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-5237 at (541) 346-2510.

- a. I consent
- b. I do not consent

Likert Scale Questions

1. How do you feel about your position as a corrections officer?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

2. How do you feel about your work schedule?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

3. How do you feel about the training you have received as a Milwaukee County corrections officer?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

4. How do you feel about your salary as a corrections officer?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

5. How do you feel about the benefits offered by Milwaukee County?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

6. How do you feel about your relationship with supervisors?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

7. How do you feel about your relationship with coworkers?

Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied

Open-ended Questions

8. How did you hear of the Milwaukee County corrections officer position?

9. Why did you seek employment with Milwaukee County as a corrections officer?

10. As a corrections officer, what, if anything, makes Milwaukee County a competitive employer?

11. How do you feel about the workplace climate?

12. What, if any, work conditions could improve your employment as a corrections officer?

13. At the time you were hired by Milwaukee County as a corrections officer, how many years of work experience did you possess?

14. How long have you been employed with Milwaukee County as a corrections officer?

Close-ended Question

15. Do you plan to maintain employment with Milwaukee County as a corrections officer within the next year?

- a. Yes
- b. Not
- c. Not Sure

- d. Prefer Not to Answer
- e. Other – Please Specify *CORRECTIONS OFFICER INPUTS INDIVIDUAL ANSWER IN PROVIDED TEXT BOX*

16. What is the highest level of education you possess?

- a. High School Diploma or Equivalent
- b. Some College
- c. Associates Degree
- d. Bachelor's Degree
- e. Advanced Degree

17. What is your gender?

- a. Man
- b. Woman
- c. Nonbinary
- d. Prefer Not to Answer

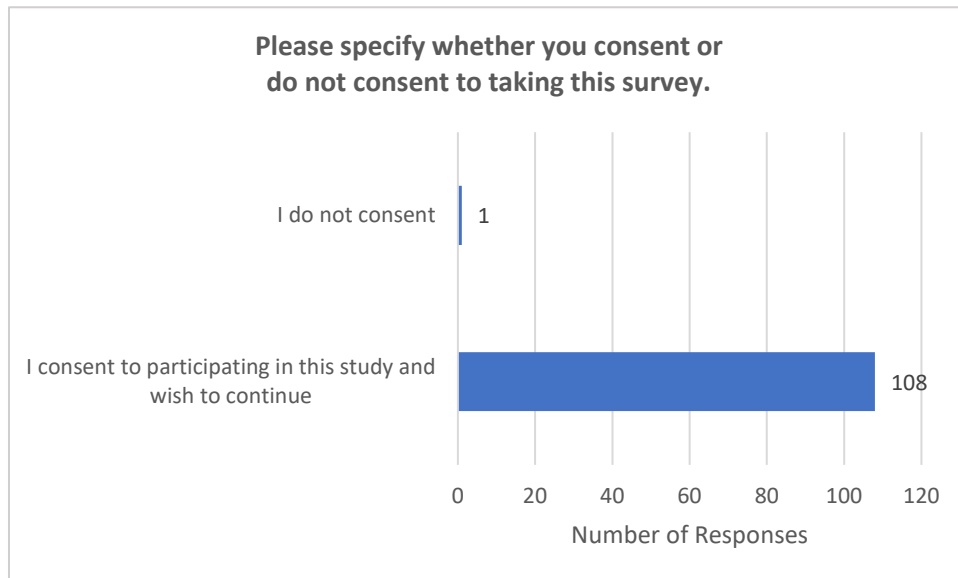
18. What is your race?

- a. White
- b. Black or African American
- c. American Indian or Alaska Native
- d. Asian
- e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- f. Other

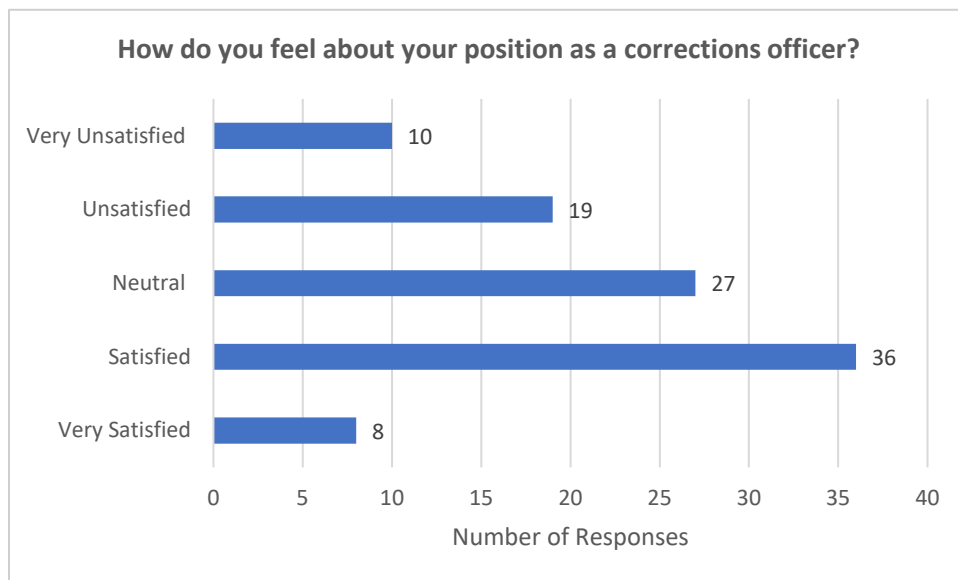
19. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- a. Yes
- b. No

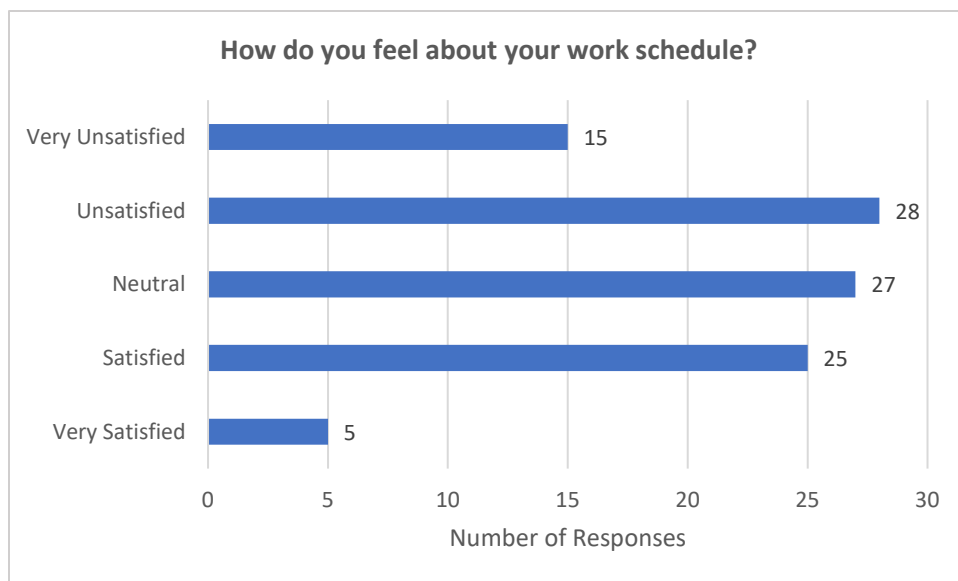
20. Is there anything else you would like to share with the research team?



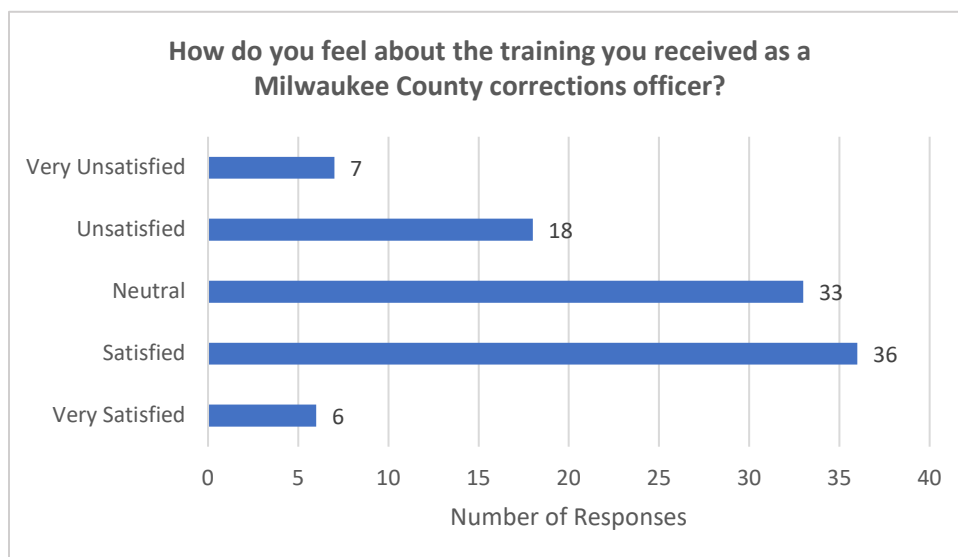
Prior to taking the survey, respondents were informed of the survey's voluntary nature and requested their consent. Although 108 respondents consented to taking the survey, most questions received between 81 and 100 responses.



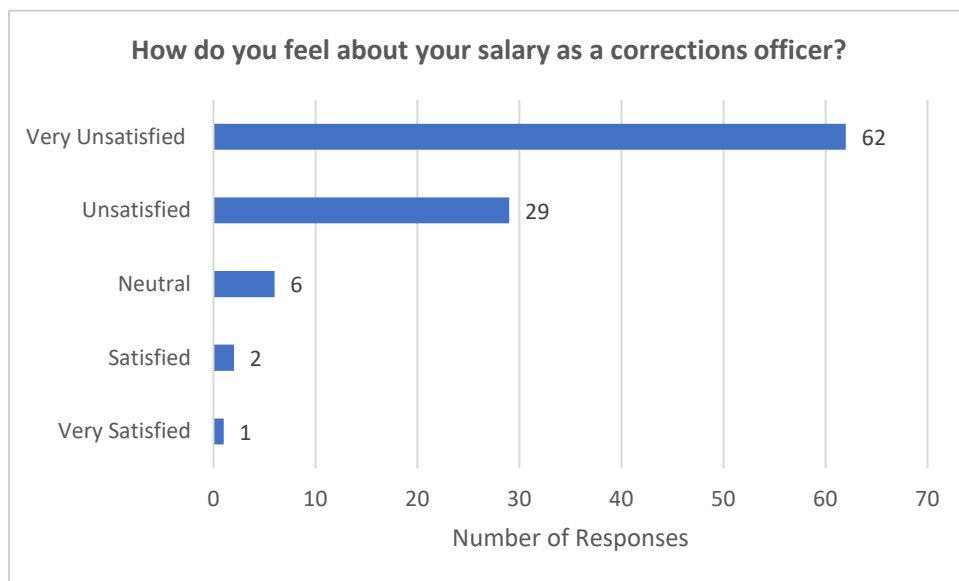
This question received 100 responses.



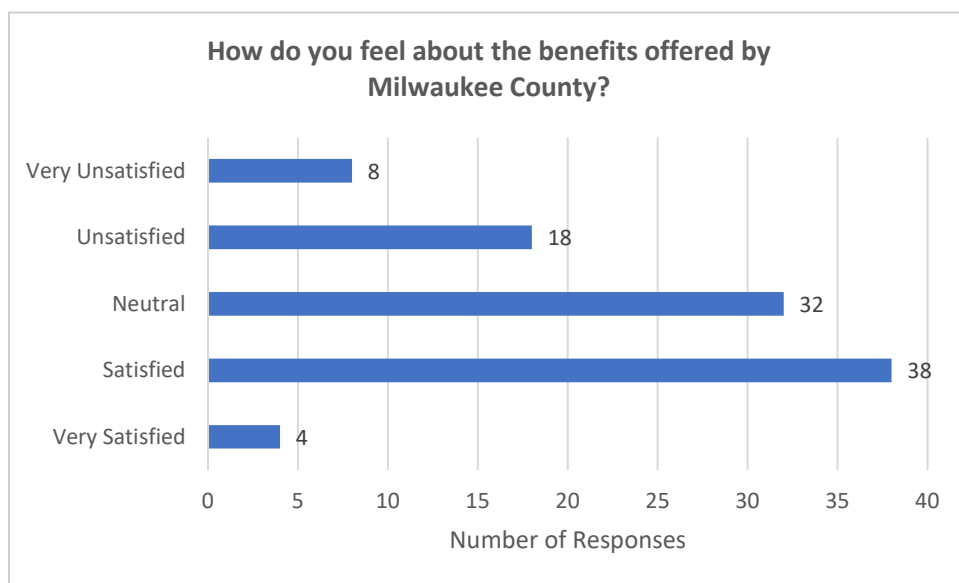
This question received 100 responses.



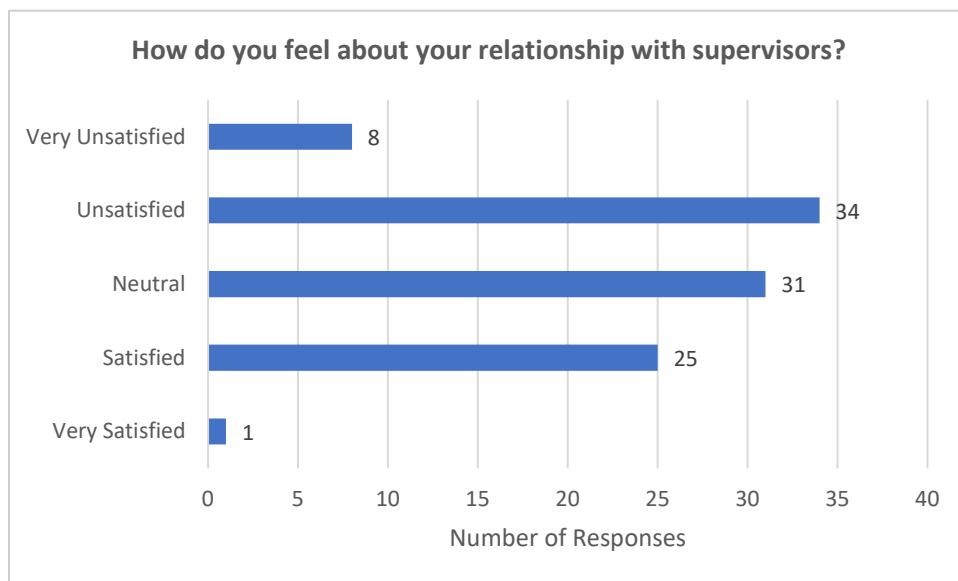
This question received 100 responses.



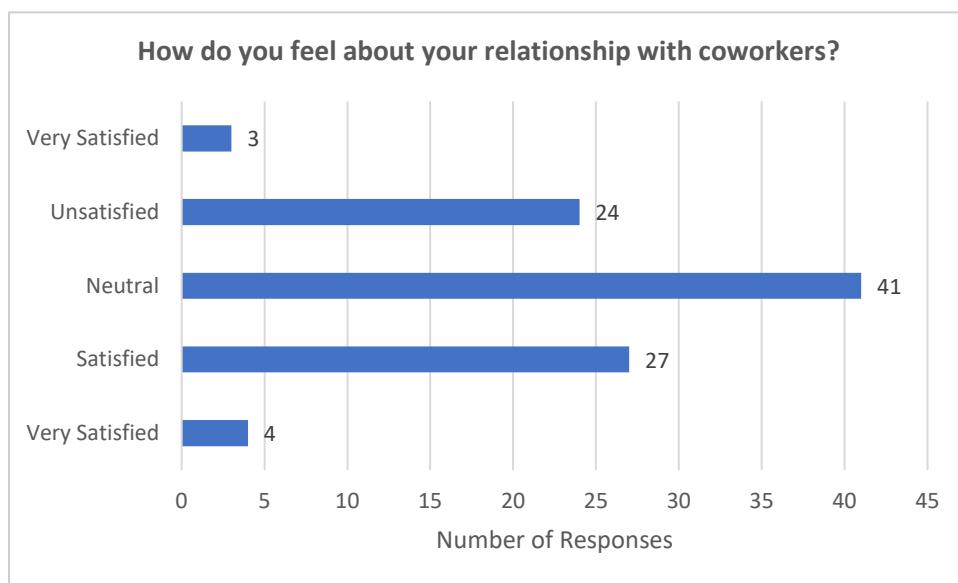
This question received 100 responses.



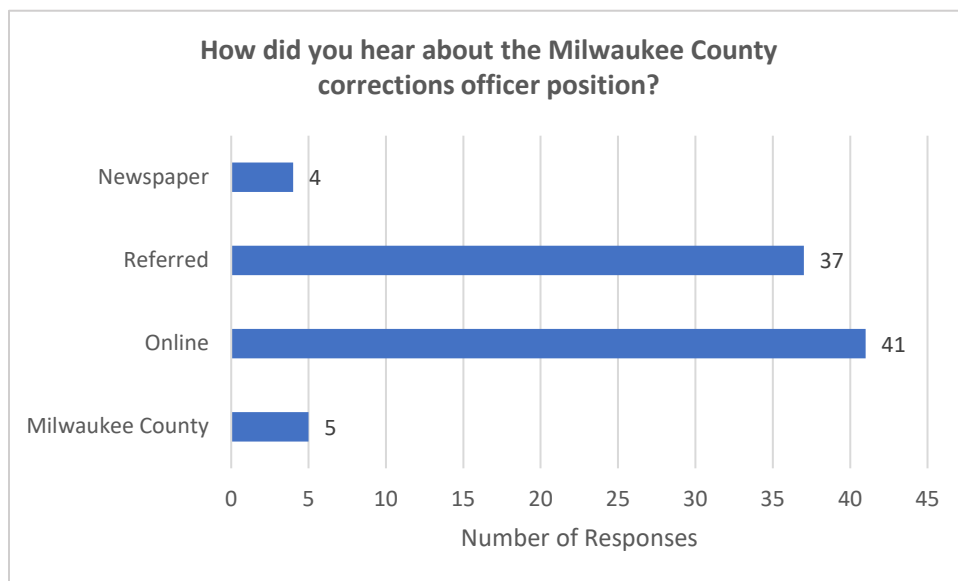
This question received 100 responses.



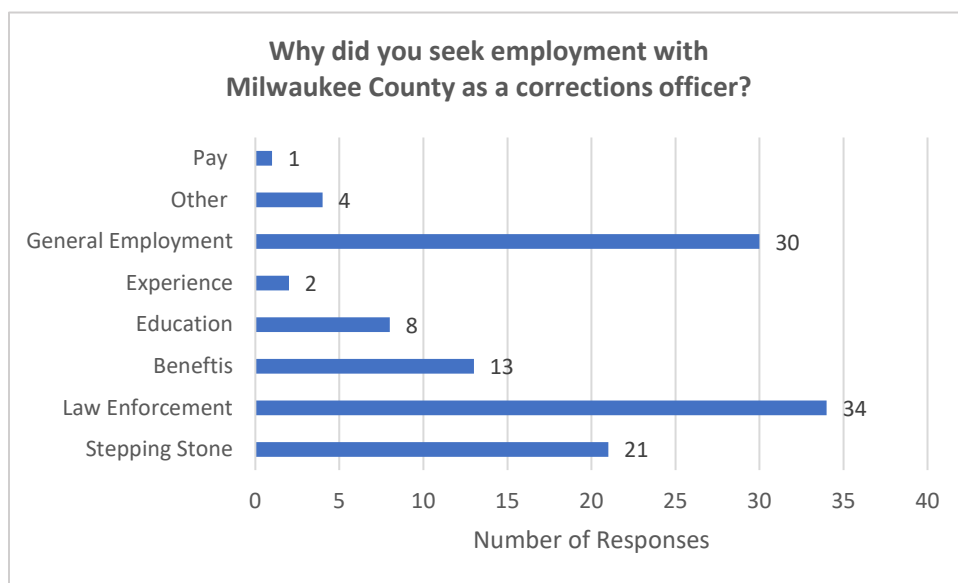
This question received 99 responses.



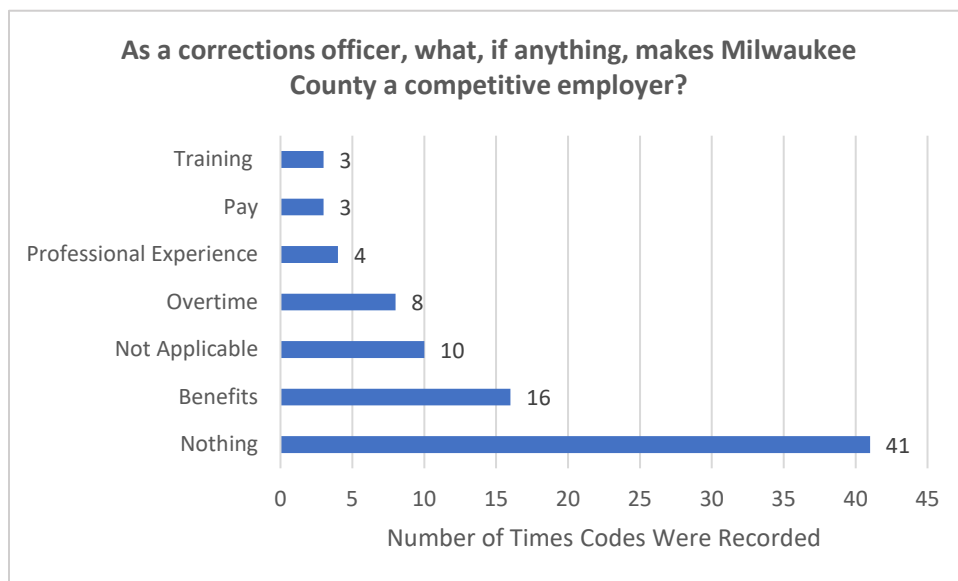
This question received 99 responses.



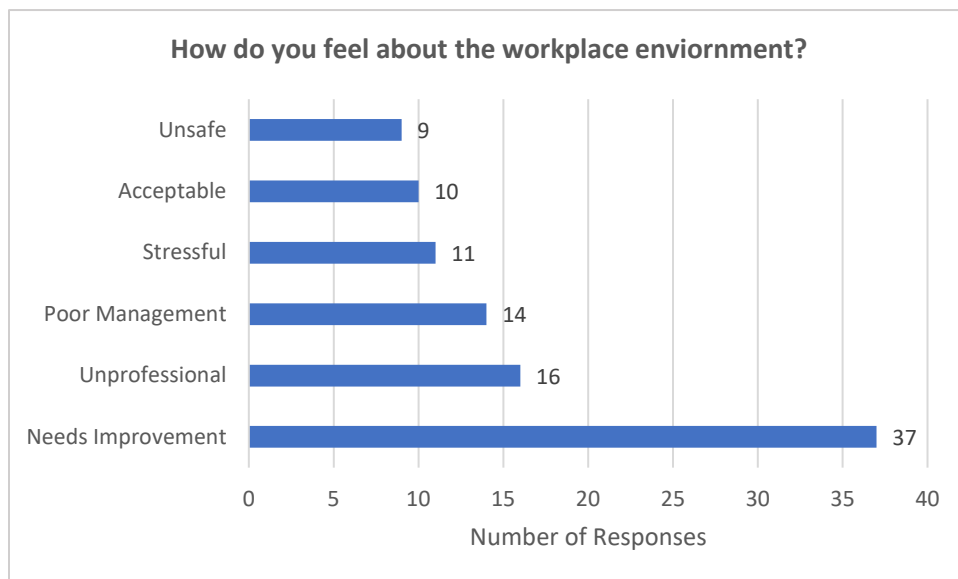
This question received 87 responses.



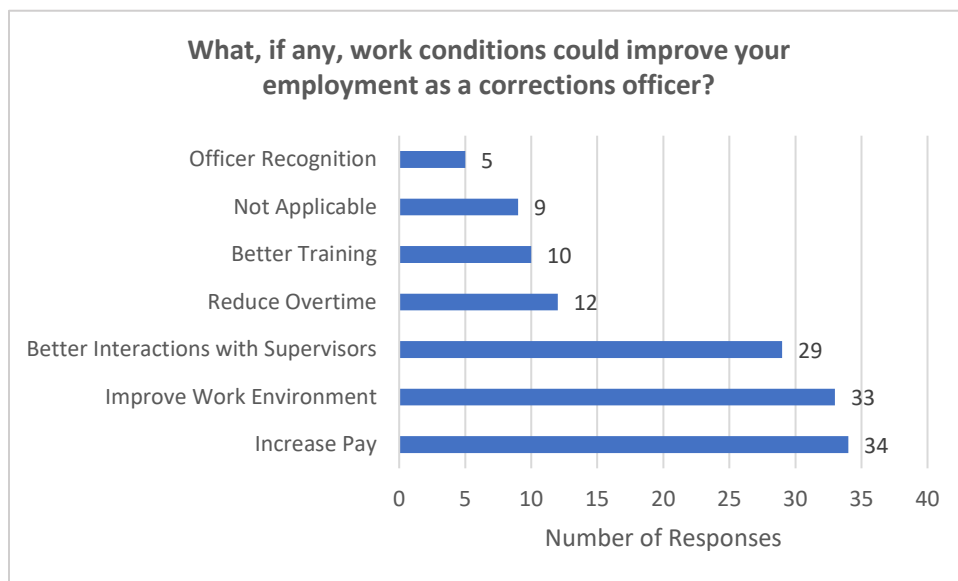
This question received 87 responses.



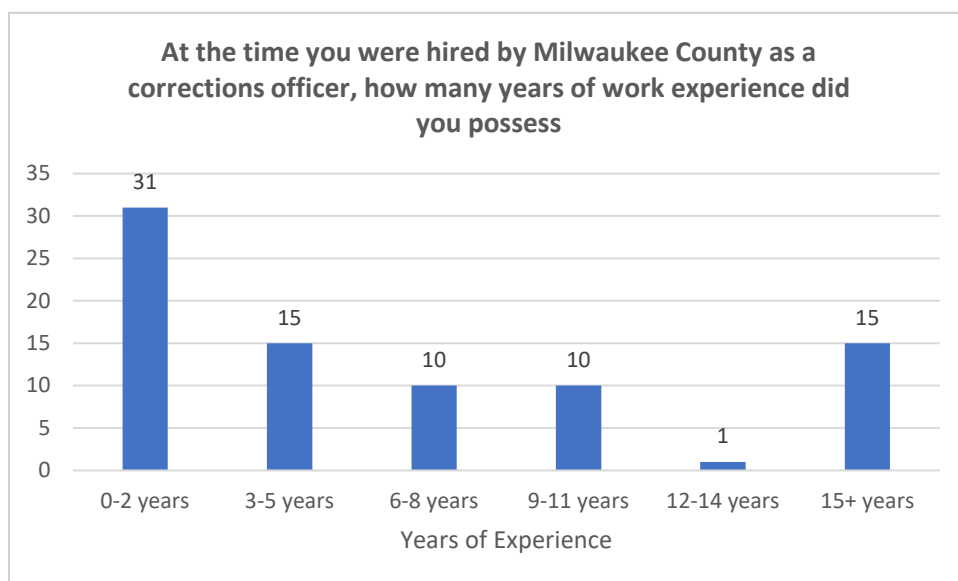
This question received 81 responses. However, when the data were reviewed the codes graphed consistently emerged as elements that make Milwaukee County a competitive employer.



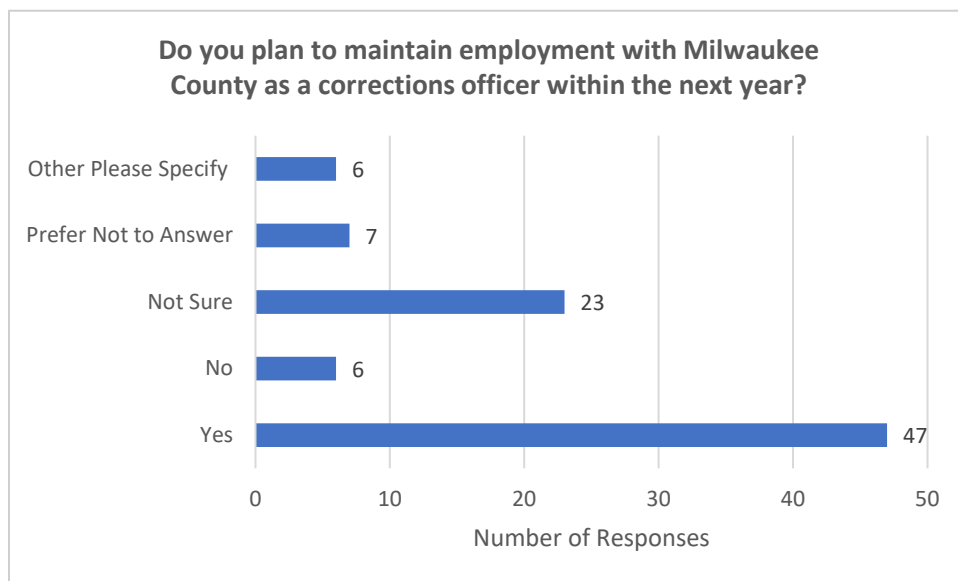
This question received 82 responses. However, when the data were reviewed the codes graphed reflect survey respondents' feelings about the workplace climate.



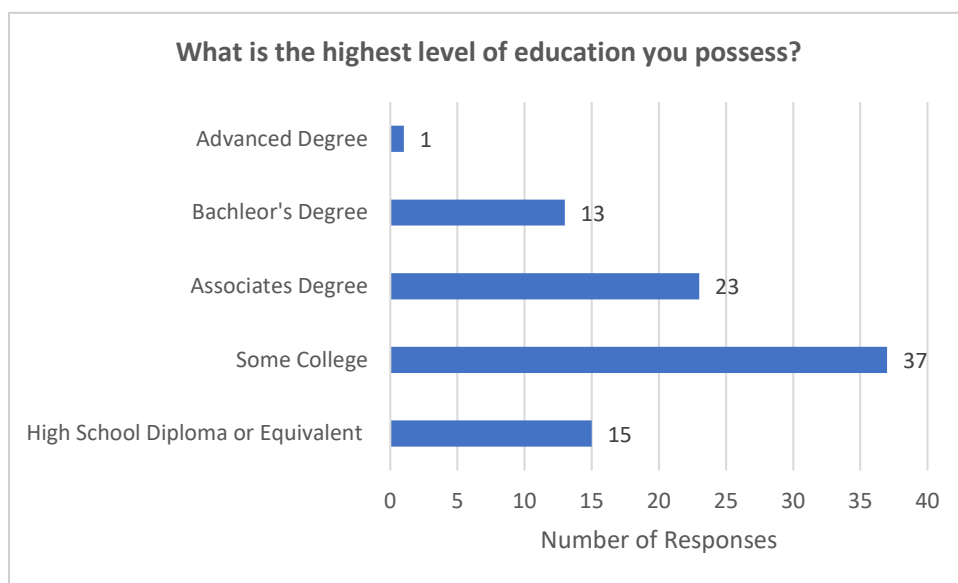
This question received 81 responses. However, when the data were reviewed the codes graphed reflect survey respondents' feelings about what elements could improve their employment as a corrections officer.



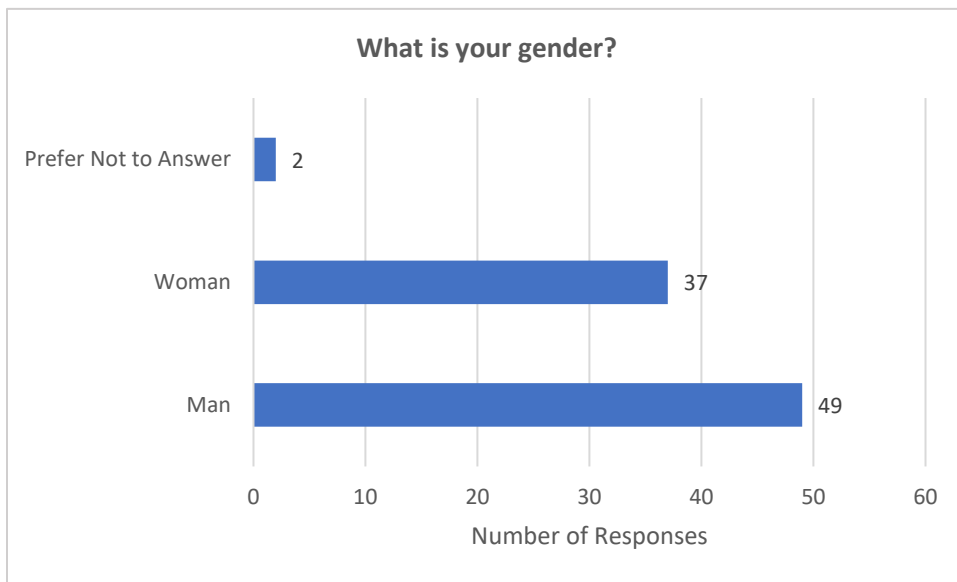
This question received 86 responses.



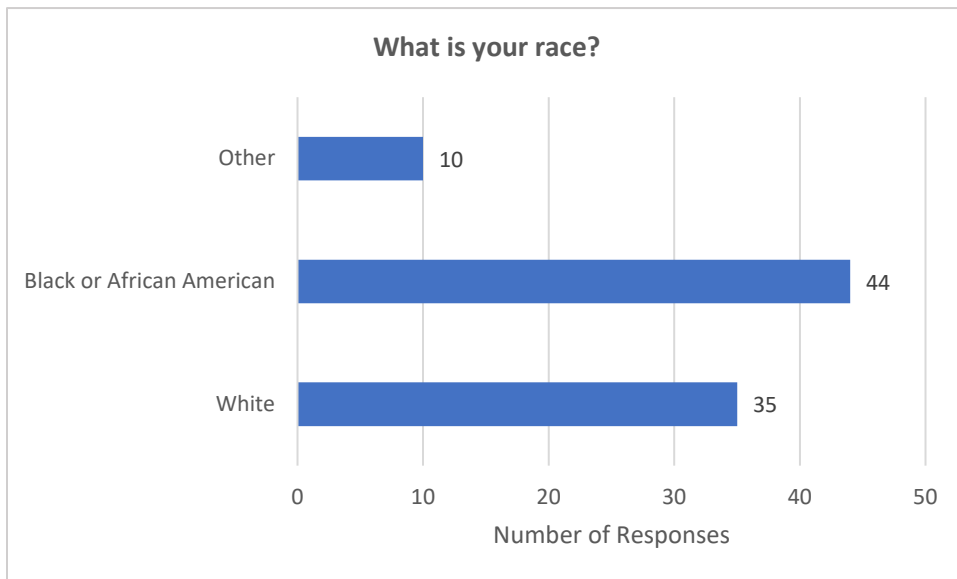
This question received 89 responses. Three responses corresponding to “Other Please Specify” conveyed survey respondents are maintaining their employment for the non-monetary benefits. The other three survey respondents communicated they are actively looking for new employment opportunities.



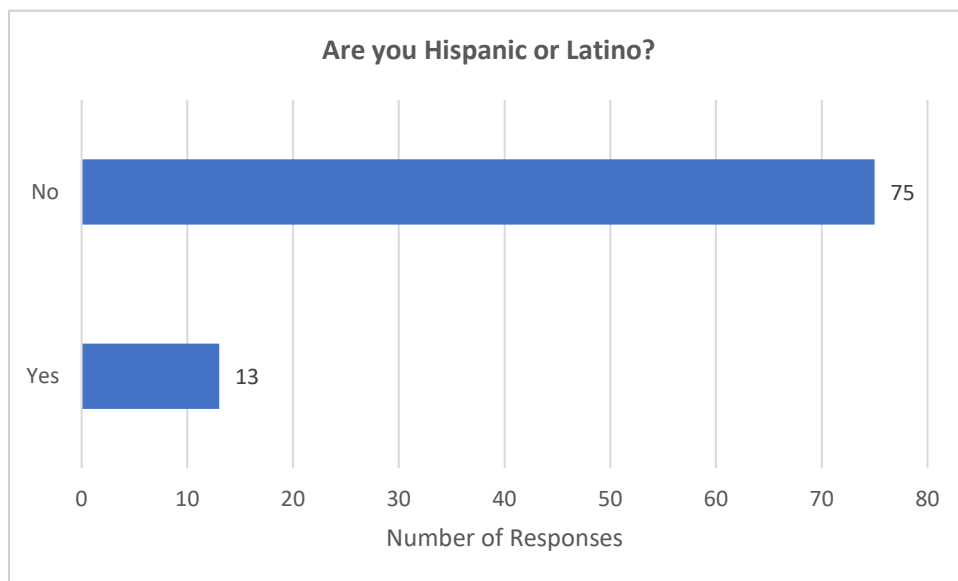
This question received 89 responses.



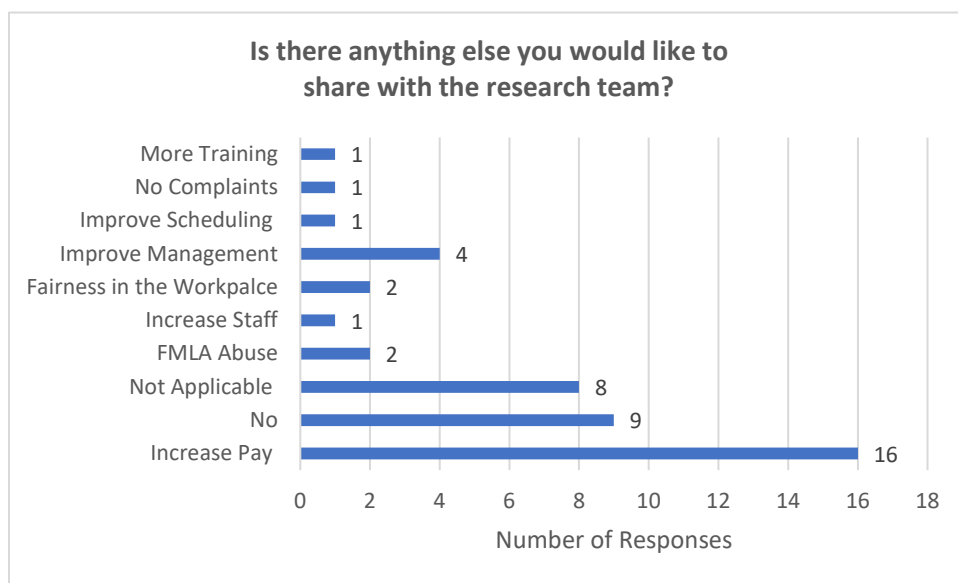
This question received 88 responses. Within the survey, non-binary was provided as a gender option. Since non-binary was not selected by survey respondents, it was omitted from the graph.



This question received 89 responses. Within the survey, racial categories American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were provided as options. Since survey respondents did not identify as the aforementioned races, these options were omitted from the graph.



This question received 88 responses.



This question received 45 responses. As demonstrated by the graph, survey respondents stated they desire a pay increase, but also noted a variety of other perceived workplace challenges. Eighteen respondents stated they did not have anything to share with the research team. These responses are reflected in the graph categories “No Complaints”, “Not Applicable”, and “No”.

Appendix C: Interview Process & Questions

In order to develop a deeper understanding of the culture and structure of Milwaukee County, the Sheriff's Office and the Milwaukee County Jail, the research identified 13 public officials, familiar with correctional processes and county finances, to potentially interview. Included in the list of interviewees were personnel from the Sheriff's Office, the House of Corrections, the County Executive's Office, and several Chairs of various County committees. Upon receiving approval from the Sheriff's Office, two team members sent requests to each person on March 15, 2021. The requests provided a brief description of the project and an explanation of the purpose of the interview. Of the 13 requests, seven officials agreed to participate. The interviews were conducted over a two-week time period, and generally lasted between 30 minutes to one hour. Interviews were mostly conducted by one of the two team members, although one was attended by both. All interviews were held over Zoom and were recorded with interviewee permission as indicated by the completed consent form each participant signed prior to the discussion. Upon interview completion, the team's revised scope of work resulted in maintaining five of the seven interviews for further analysis. The five interview recordings were transcribed by otter.ai, a website that offers transcription services. Both team members proceeded to clean and code the transcripts and observe the data for common trends and patterns.

Consent form

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as a part of Corrections Officer Compensation Project, led and organized by the University of Wisconsin, Madison and the University of Oregon's Capstone Group. Comprised of graduate students, the Capstone project is a yearlong effort beginning in students' second year of their master's degree, where students work on real world or simulated projects that require conducting in-depth needs assessments, evaluations, cost-benefit analyses, or other applied research.

This year, three graduate students, Lindsay Cook, Alyssa Leraas, and Maya Noviski have been assigned to evaluate Milwaukee County's current Corrections Officer compensation structure and workplace culture. In order to provide county leadership with data-based analysis/recommendations aimed at effectively reducing corrections officer turnover, we are interested in hearing from public officials familiar with different aspects of the House of Corrections, the Sheriff's Office, and the Juvenile Detention Center.

To ensure that all information is accurately transcribed, we are asking for your consent to have this interview be recorded. All interviews will be securely stored for the duration of our project and any information used from participant responses for the final report will be kept anonymous.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email Dr. Benjamin Clark, Associate Professor at the University of Oregon and Faculty Lead for the Capstone Project at

bclark2@uoregon.edu and/or Megan Banks, Sustainable City Year Program Director and Capstone Project Advisor at mbanks@uoregon.edu.

We appreciate your participation in this effort and your willingness to complete this short survey indicating your voluntary consent at having this interview be recorded.

UO IRB protocol number: 11242020.030

Interview Questions

1. Please describe how the roles of corrections officers have changed in the last ten years?
2. Do you consider corrections officers staffing levels to be adequate?
3. From your perspective, what actions has Milwaukee County taken to change work conditions for corrections officers?
4. Can you describe the onboarding process for corrections officers including recruitment and training?
5. From your perspective, is the turnover rate for corrections officers high or low?
6. What challenges arise from understaffing and high turnover of corrections officers within County facilities?
7. What is your perspective on the retention rate of corrections officers?
8. What efforts do you believe need to be done to improve retention for corrections officers? Who needs to support such efforts?
9. What do believe is the greatest barrier to retaining corrections officers?
10. To the best of your ability, please describe budget allocations for the House of Corrections, Juvenile Detention Center, and the Sheriff's Department over the last five years?
11. What organization or company would you say is your biggest competitor? I.e. where do corrections officers go once they've left? What organizations and/or companies have former corrections officers secured employment after working for Milwaukee County as a corrections officer?
12. What would you say is the best part (or greatest benefit) of working for Milwaukee County?

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UniverCity Alliance
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

About UniverCity Year



UniverCity Year is a three-phase partnership between UW-Madison and communities in Wisconsin. The concept is simple. The community partner identifies projects that would benefit from UW-Madison expertise. Faculty from across the university incorporate these projects into their courses, and UniverCity Year staff provide administrative support to ensure the collaboration's success. The results are powerful. Partners receive big ideas and feasible recommendations that spark momentum towards a more sustainable, livable, and resilient future. Join us as we create **better places together.**