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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
 DEPARTMENT OF
 CORRECTIONS
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HELEN E. HANKS
 COMMISSIONER

PAUL D. RAYMOND, JR.
 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

78

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Ken Weyler, Chairman
 Fiscal Committee of the General Court
 State House
 Concord, New Hampshire 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
 and the Honorable Executive Council
 State House
 Concord, NH 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to NH RSA 14:30-a, VI, the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC) respectfully requests authorization to accept and expend \$402,107 of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021(ARPA), State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the purpose of providing a \$10,000 recruitment incentive to each eligible newly hired law enforcement officers. This is an allowable use of ARPA FRF funds under Section 602(c)(1)(A) to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. Effective upon approval of the Fiscal Committee and the Governor and Executive Council for the period of June 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. 100% Federal Funds

Funds are to be budgeted in FY 2024 in 02-46-46-460510-26XX0000^[1] as follows:

Account	Description	FY2024 Current Authorized	Requested Action	FY 2024 Adjusted Authorized
010-500100	Personal Service Perm	-	360,000	360,000
040-501587	Indirect Costs	-	36,522	36,522
041-500801	Audit Fund Set Aside	-	365	365
060-500601	Benefits	-	5,220	5,220
	TOTALS	-	402,107	402,107

[1] All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH4605A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602PH4605Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

EXPLANATION

These funds are sought to continue the \$10,000 recruitment incentive payment to each newly hired law enforcement officer hired by November 29, 2024, to be paid as soon as practical upon hire. All ARPA funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and spent by December 31, 2026.

The State of New Hampshire Recruitment Incentive Program, presented by the NH Department of Administrative Services (DAS), was approved on 06/07/2022 by the State Fiscal Committee and Governor and Executive Council to allow for a state agency, subject to the approval of the Director of Personnel at the Department of Administrative Services, to develop agency-specific recruitment and retention plans. (See attached DOC Recruitment Incentive Policy Proposed) This program was extended by a previously approved amended accept and expend FIS 23-187 (approved by Fiscal Committee 6/23/23) and G&C item #160 (approved on 6/14/23). The currently approved DAS program is for any newly hired corrections officers hired on or before May 31, 2024. The DOC is seeking to accept and expend funds for the same purpose pursuant the Department's authority in RSA 21-H:4,V(a)(1)(B).

The DOC's mission is a 24 hour/7 days a week responsibility to provide safety and security. It does not have the ability to go without staff coverage. The DOC cannot refuse to take people sentenced to prison. This has been an unprecedented time for the agency with staff vacancy rates. The department cannot function without critical levels of corrections officers. We have done everything within our authority to recruit employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and post its aftermath (See attached summary of activities). In addition to our State experience, the US Department of Labor continues to forecast a targeted labor decline in the profession of corrections of 7% for the next ten years. DOC is requesting the continuation of the temporary recruitment incentives in a critical area of professionals within our agency as we continue to navigate the extremely difficult hiring environment exacerbated by the health crisis, and a national forecasted decline as our department needs these additional tools to be at a purposeful hiring advantage in order to combat the above outlined issues.

Recruitment Incentives:

A \$10,000 sign-on incentive for new full-time law enforcement corrections officers, as defined in NH RSA 106-L and in NH RSA 100-A, to be paid as soon as practical within the first pay periods of employment with the requirement that the newly hired full-time corrections officer commits through a legal employment agreement to a minimum of at least 1-year of employment with the department (see attached agreement). Requirements for payment shall include that the eligible employee is continuously employed in a qualifying position through the applicable recruitment incentive period and is performing satisfactorily at the conclusion of their first year of employment. The new full-time corrections officer must not be or have been on an extended leave of absence with or without pay to receive the recruitment incentive payment.

Recruitment and retention are the department's number one priority. Areas we have focused on have included but are not limited to streamlining our hiring processes, renting a digital billboard for recruitment off Interstate 93 by the Hooksett toll booths, training our first correctional group of departmental staff to start our peer-to-peer program, increase the base wages of certified officers to be competitive and many more recruitment and retention initiatives. These initiatives, while helpful, are still competing with organizations such as the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Berlin NH. Locally, police and county jail departments, including Rockingham, Hooksett, Hanover, Barnstead, and Keene, are offering sign-on bonuses up to \$15,000.

Allowing the state Department of Corrections to offer agency-specific temporary recruitment incentives will provide significant positive impacts toward helping our department attract the right people and continue to address the stressors resulting from COVID-19. Payments under this request will be managed in accordance with the department's policy to ensure federal and state reporting compliance (see attached).

Pursuant to U.S. Treasury 31 CFR Part 35, RIN 1501-AC77, the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act authorizes use of the funding to address the public health emergency. This request supports restoring DOC security levels to pre-pandemic levels to maintain essential state correctional services, pursuant to 31 CFR Part 35.

Over the last two years, the vacancy rate associated with these specific positions has worsened due to COVID-19 fatigue that resulted in mass retirements in our corrections officer ranks, that also effected other law enforcement agencies similarly in our State. The increased competition in the law enforcement labor market as a result adds to the challenge to recruit and retain good candidates in our law enforcement ranks, especially in our correctional settings.

Recruitment incentives have been distributed to 65 newly certified corrections officers since the inception of the recruitment incentive program on June 30, 2022, including 29 corrections officers in FY 2023 and 36 corrections officers in FY 2024 year-to-date. The DOC has also had the one of its largest academy classes graduate recently on February 23, 2024, with 20 officers.



NH RSA 106-L has further defined "Law enforcement officer" as certified or certifiable by the police standards and training council. These certification standards are outlined in detail in state administrative rules (POL) and are the standards which state corrections officers are certified and deemed certifiable. Newly hired corrections officers are generally not certified but deemed certifiable and become certified at the completion of their academy. Prior to certification, newly hired corrections officers are paired up with a mentor or preceptor as part of the training process.

Funds are to be budgeted as follows:

Class 10 - Personal Services: Funds for recruitment incentive payments for full-time corrections officers

Class 40 - Indirect Costs: Funds to cover statewide indirect costs (SWCAP) associated with non-general funding.

Class 41-Audit Fund Set Aside: To comply with RSA 124: 16 that requires all agencies that receive federal funds to set aside a percentage (0.1 %) of the federal revenue received to pay for financial and compliance audits.

Class 60 - Benefits: Benefit costs associated with recruitment payments made to employees, as described above.

In the event that federal funds are no longer available and general funds are not appropriated during the budgeting processes, this program would terminate.

Respectfully Submitted,


Helen E. Hanks
Commissioner



Guidelines: Administration of ARPA Funded Recruitment Incentive	
Applicability: Newly Hired Full Time Corrections Officer Trainees	Date Issued: 03/19/2024 PPD 1274.00
Issued By: Helen E. Hanks, Commissioner	

I. PURPOSE:

This policy guideline applies to NH Department of Corrections PPD #1274, DOC Recruitment and Retention Policy. The purpose of this guideline is to establish a process to financially incentivize newly hired full-time corrections officer trainees as defined in NH RSA 106-L and retain existing sworn law enforcement within the corrections officer ranks by providing a ten-thousand (\$10K) recruitment incentive for filling one of our most critical vacancies as a corrections officer. This guideline adheres to the State of New Hampshire RSA 21-H:4(V) "The department shall develop a program for the recruitment, selection, placement, and retention of qualified applicants for the New Hampshire department of corrections..."

II. SCOPE:

This policy guideline is limited to only newly hired full-time state corrections officers or part-time certified state corrections officers who convert to full-time state corrections officers but must maintain continuous employment and in good standing.

III. POLICY STATEMENT:

Recruiting ethical, talented and professional certifiable law enforcement, specifically corrections officers that ensure safe correctional facilities that are able to deliver rehabilitative programming is critical to the mission of the department. To encourage entry level law enforcement candidates in NH or other States to choose corrections as their law enforcement branch of employment, the department will offer financial incentives to assist in successful recruitment to reduce vacancies, the burden of filling overtime by existing departmental corrections officers and to stabilize our correctional workforce by being a more competitive law enforcement employer due to the fact that all the people we supervise have felonies.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

New Hire: A person who is hired and successfully meets the criteria by State Administrative Rule under Pol and is certifiable as a corrections officer (NH RSA 106-L) brought into the classified state system, who starts employment on or after the start date of this recruitment incentive. This does not exclude the following:

- a. A current state employee who is newly hired as a corrections officer with the NH Department of Corrections.

In Good Standing: A newly hired corrections officers who received the recruitment incentive according to this guideline must within the 12 months post their hire date, must not have received correction action and discipline that would likely result in termination. The newly hired corrections officer status of "in good standing" will be affirmed by the Warden/Director for the division they work within in writing to the NHDOC's Director of Personnel & Information through the completion of their annual performance evaluation (Per 800).

Continuous Employment: A person is continuously employed by no fault of their own and is kept in full-time employment status for the duration of the incentive period. No fault examples include attaining an injury during the Corrections Academy or eligible FMLA event.

Recoupment of Recruitment Incentive: A newly hired corrections officer who does not maintain continuous employment, is not in good standing and leaves through resignation or other means departmental employment before the completion of 12-months post their hire date will be sought through the Attorney General's Office to recoup the recruitment incentive paid.

Retention Period: The period of continuous employment as a corrections officer with the NH Department of Corrections for the new hire in the same qualifying position into which they were hired that qualified them for the recruitment incentive. Twelve months from the hire date to the term of the retention period to qualify for the recruitment incentive.

IV. APPLICABILITY:

To all newly hired Corrections Officer Trainees through the approved and authorized ARPA funded recruitment incentive period who successfully work 1 full calendar year from their initial hire date or transition date to full-time status in employment with the NH Department of Corrections as a state corrections officer.

This guideline is applicable upon initiative approval by Governor and Council and funding is authorized by the Fiscal Committee of the General Court.

The recruitment incentive initiative is applicable through the dates of approved state spending associated with ARPA approved funding management. The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections may terminate the new hire full-time corrections officer trainee recruitment incentive at any time due to funding limitations. The retention incentive will expire following the completion of the twelve months of continuous employment in good standing from the date of hire into the position.

V. PROCEDURE:

NEW HIRE CORRECTIONS OFFICER TRAINEES RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE:

New hire Corrections Officer Trainees will be granted a one-time ten-thousand-dollar (\$10,000.00) recruitment incentive to be paid as soon as practical within the 30 days post their hire date of employment with the requirement that the newly hired full-time correctional officer commits through a legal employment agreement (Attachment 1) to a minimum of at least 1-year of employment from the date of employment in the position as a corrections officer for the full twelve month term. Any recruitment incentive shall be paid out in the eligible employee's paycheck as soon as practical following the determination on eligibility.

To Prevent Repayment to the NH Department of Corrections Recruitment Incentive:

To maintain eligibility, the certifiable or certified corrections officers must remain employed by the Department of Corrections in one of the following positions:

- Corporal,
- Sergeant,
- Lieutenant,
- Captain,
- Corrections Investigator, or
- NH Department of Corrections Probation Parole Officer

through the twelve month (12) approval by Governor & Council and must remain a full-time employee in one of the positions listed above through the last paycheck issue date according to the authorized periods. An employee that transfers (i.e., promotion or demotion) to a position not within the listed ranks above does not remain eligible for the incentive. An employee that transfers to a position not within the listed ranks forfeits their eligibility and will have to repay the incentive payment if the transfer occurs within the first 12 months of their hire date with the department.

The eligible employee must through the 12-month period recruitment incentive period be performing satisfactorily in good standing or will be at risk of repaying the recruitment incentive if the annual performance evaluation is rated below expectation as outlined in state administrative rule Per 800: Employee Performance Evaluation. The eligible employee must not be or have been on an extended leave of absence with or without pay during the retention period as defined within this guideline.

In situations where recoupment of payment is necessary, the department through the Director of Personnel & Information will write a letter to the Attorney General's Office, Attention to the Senior Attorney over the Civil Bureau with the detailed information indicating the employee's name, dates of employment, reason for the request for recoupment and the signed agreement by the employee affirming our right to seek recoupment so that the State can legally seek recoupment of the recruitment incentive payment. A copy of this policy guideline will also be included in the information sent. This request will be incorporated into the employee's personnel file for record keeping.

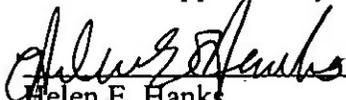
Payments to Eligible New Hires:

The department's Division of Personnel & Information will make payments based on the definitions and procedures as outlined in this policy guidelines through the NH First system in line with the procedures as required by the Department of Administrative Services: Division of Personnel – Bureau of Payroll to ensure proper calculations of any overtime paid during the pay period in which the Recruitment Incentive has been issued to assure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements.

Pursuant to the Policies adopted by the State Department of Administrative Services: Division of Personnel as published on their website and approved by the Fiscal Committee of the Legislature, they will provide access to reports in NH First to monitor who has been paid under this policy guideline; to ensure the auditing of the payroll of these payments for timeliness, and proper accounting practices; and to ensure NH First is properly configured to allow for the inputting of all necessary data fields for this program.

The department's Division of Administration will ensure proper reporting of payments and procedures are in compliance with the federal laws associated with ARPA funds and provided to the GOFERR as required and requested.

Guideline Approved By:



Helen E. Hanks
Commissioner

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE AGREEMENT**

Agreement dated this _____ day of _____ 20____ by and through the Department of Corrections (hereinafter referred to as the "State") and _____ (hereinafter referred to as the "Recipient"). The State and Recipient do hereby mutually agree as follows:

1. The State shall pay to the Recipient a recruitment incentive in accordance with the State NH Department of Corrections Recruitment Incentive Guideline and in line with NH RSA 21-H:4(V), as approved by the fiscal committee of the general court associated with ARPA funded resources or as funded through the NH Department of Corrections State Budget. This payment will only occur if the Department has funds to provide for it.
2. The Recipient shall continue in good standing in the employ of the State in their current position (or in such other position similar in nature with the hiring agency, at equal or greater compensation, to which they may be assigned) for a period of twelve (12) months from their hire date.
3. Should the Recipient breach any of the conditions set forth in this Agreement, the Recipient shall pay to the State a sum equal to all monies previously paid by the State to the Recipient pursuant to State NH Department of Corrections Recruitment Incentive Guideline.
4. The Recipient shall not raise any setoff or counterclaim against the State in any action brought by the State to collect any amount due under this Agreement.
5. Should any amount be found to be due to the State in any action brought against the Recipient pursuant to this Agreement, the State shall, in addition to said amount, be entitled to an award of costs and reasonable amount in attorney fees.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the representative of the State, in their official capacity only, and without personal liability, and the Recipient, have hereunto set their hands on the date first above written.

RECIPIENT

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____
(Printed Name) _____

THE STATE OF NH – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Authorized Representative

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____
(Printed Name & Title) _____



NH



DOCC

CY2022/2023/2024

NHDOC Recruiting and Retention Mapping/Plan

Recruitment Initiatives

- Social Media Presence
- Increased Marketing Tools & Rebranding
- Defining presence at job/career fairs/events
- Pilot Initiative to Creation of Recruitment/Retention Sgt. (North/South)
- SCORE Program: Teaching Corrections in High School Berlin, NH and Milan, NH.
- Review of Corrections Academy Curriculum & Approval of changes through PSTC
- ARPA funding for 10K Sign on for new Officers
- Development of the Talent Acquisition Team
- Utilization of the Personnel Rules associated with challenges in recruitment – seek waivers as appropriate
- Utilize a connected model with interested candidates, borrowed/adapted from military services approach
- Self-Audit/Alignment to Pol for law enforcement hiring rules – Background Investigations
- Creation of Per Diem Relief Positions
- Maintain dual certification in position transitions for those certified as corrections officers
- Purchase of Digital Billboard for March 2024
- Creation of Full-time Recruitment/Retention Sgts North and 2 for Southern
- Connecting new hires to mentors through the hiring process to answer questions and keep candidates engaged.
- PSTC Physical Training Standards Temporary Adjustment & Rolling Academies

Retention Mapping

- Recruitment & Retention Committee (North/South)
- CLA Recruitment & Retention Committee Nationally
- Shout Outs – Employees submit positive events to share with the whole department on our Intranet
- Creation of Employee Wellness Spaces – All main prisons
- T.H.R.I.V.E. became CORP – Employee Wellness Program
- Increased Internship Programs
- Comfort Dog Program
- Peer-to-Peer Policy and implementation in progress
- Dedicated licensed psychologist for NHDOC staff
- Increased investment in Training & Employee Development
 - Taser upgrade
 - Weapons Upgrade (Lights/Optics)
 - Benchmark Software
 - Budget Increase
 - Range development plan
 - Increased staff allocated to training/employee development
 - Leadership academy in development
- Increased Technology Resources
 - Body Worn Cameras
 - RFID
 - Other areas being explored
- Advocating to replace NHSP-Men (10M in funding)
- Fleet upgrades
- New Hire Onboarding Updates to keep existing staff informed
- Field Training Officer Policy Updates/Progress
- Training Policy Updates in Progress
- Career Path Progression opportunities
- Reallocation of Security Positions - Wages
- House Bill 2 Funding of Reallocations & Incentives approved
- Updates to Employee Recognition Policy
- Handwritten Birthday Cards to All Staff
- Updated Employee Recognition Policy
- Increased training and access to overtime relief for other NHDOC Staff (Non-armed Control Room & Observations)

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION UPDATES

The Department continues to advance internal systems with a focus on retention without losing traction on recruitment. We continue to focus on improving our onboarding process, offboarding process, employee recognition, staff training, employee enhancement and internal communication efforts.



JANUARY 1, 2023 - MARCH 28, 2024

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STAFF

Building off the success of the temporary duty assignments of 2 Corrections Sergeants to manage the recruitment and retention programs for the department, we have reallocated 3 permanent positions to continue this work.

OUTREACH

SOCIAL MEDIA



Our social media presence has had a notable change over the past year. Our increased content and improved branding and has greatly impacted our initiatives. Our goal is to advertise current employment opportunities as well as inform the public about the various areas of the Department.

28 Career Fairs

23 Classroom Talks

16 Community Events

16 College/High School Tours



RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

\$10,000 Sign on Bonus

62 Correctional Officers have received the \$10,000 sign on bonus since 1/3/23. The bonus requires a 1 year commitment and is paid in the employees first paycheck.

Corrections Officer Trainee - PT Preparation

The Department hosted physical training preparation events for COT's Academies 123 & 124 to ensure success in the academy and build important relationships with each other.

Berlin Correctional School Program

NHDOC, in partnership with Berlin High School offers a credit-approved Correctional Law Enforcement Class.

Interstate 93 Billboard - March 2024



RETENTION ACTIVITIES

Family Support Organization (FSO)

A voluntary initiative of the DOC and employee families to keep staff and their significant others/family members informed and supported. The FSO is a communication bridge between DOC leadership and families of employees.



Comfort Dog

The Department has acquired our own Comfort Dog. Zoey visits staff at all facilities to provide support and comfort during critical incidents and high stress situations.

Employee Wellness Areas

Employee wellness areas have been established and/or renovated at facilities to include a gym and break area. The department is rolling out vending machines for staff with fresh food on site across the department.

FSO & CORP Events

A number of staff retention events were held throughout the year including Trunk or Treat, Photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



123rd Academy COT PT Preparation Day



Berlin Correctional School Program



Trunk or Treat Headquarters



Investigations with Santa & Mrs. Claus

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STATS



CORRECTIONS OFFICER RECRUITMENT STATISTICS AS OF 3/28/24

S - Southern Team
N - Northern Team

TO BE HIRED

38	HIRED - COMPLETED (S-28/N-10) <i>Hired & Completed Academy</i>
11	HIRED - IN ACADEMY (S-11/N-00) <i>Currently attending Academy 124</i>
03	HIRED- NEED ACADEMY (S-3/N-00) <i>Waiting to attend next academy</i>
05	APPROVED TO HIRE (S-04/N-01) <i>Anticipated hired date TBD</i>
04	FINAL CLEARANCE (S-04/N-00) <i>Final interview and completing of paperwork</i>

IN RECRUITMENT PROCESS

11	BACKGROUND (S-09/N-02) <i>in midst of background investigation</i>
11	ONBOARDING (S-11/N-00) <i>Completed PT/LEAL Need DOT, Medical Exam</i>
33	SCHEDULED PT/LEAI (S-27/N-06)

OUTREACH

66	IN CONTACT (S-50/N-16) <i>Actively in communication</i>
57	HOLD REQUESTED (S-51/N-06) <i>Applicant requested a hold</i>
21	WAITING ON RESPONSE (S-18/N-03) <i>Attempted contact, waiting on response</i>

862 TOTAL CONTACTS
(S-738/N-124)

REMOVED FROM PROCESS

602	REMOVED (S-522/N-80) <i>No response, No Show PT, Withdraw, Not Hired, Termed in 1st year</i>
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EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

979	TOTAL BUDGETED POSITIONS <i>*6 Adult Parole Board Members</i>
251	TOTAL FULL TIME VACANCIES
43.35	AVERAGE EMPLOYEE AGE
8.50	AVERAGE YEARS OF SERVICE

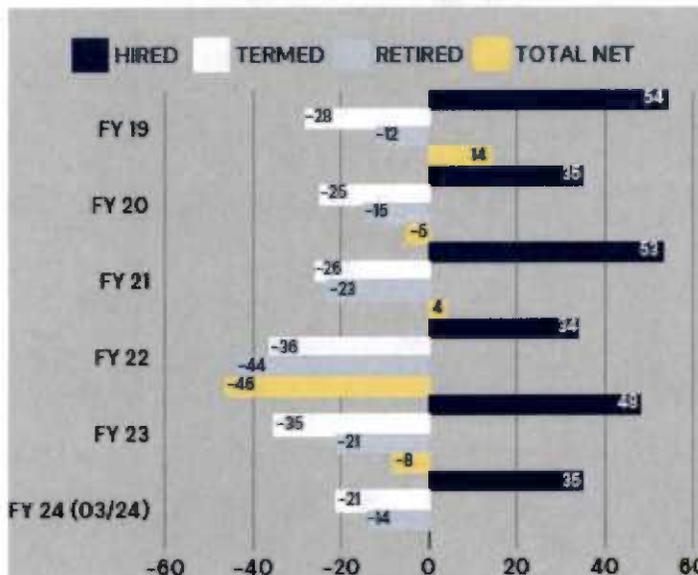


64 PER DIEM - HIRED (S-43/N-21)
Civilian Correctional Support Positions

115	ELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT (16%)
37	GROUP I STAFF
51	GROUP II SWORN
27	GROUP II CIVILIAN

HIRED, TERMED AND RETIRED STAFF TRENDS

NHDOC Security Staff Trending by Fiscal Year



NHDOC Civilian Staff Trending by Fiscal Year

