

## **Corrections Officer Hiring FAQ**

### **Why should I be a corrections officer?**

Corrections Officers play a critical role in keeping our communities safe, and transforming the lives of those who are incarcerated.

\$43,973 is a good starting salary for a job that does not require a college degree and requires minimum work experience. After one year, officers can be promoted to Corrections Officer 2 with a salary range of \$45,163-\$65,250).

Being a corrections officer is a career. With good work ethic, officers can move up the ranks to become sergeants, lieutenants, and captains as well as other opportunities within the department. Others choose to stay at the corrections officer 2 rank and work the shift and location they have earned.

This career provides an excellent benefits package and the ability to retire at the age of 55 if desired.

### **What Community College or college degrees prepares me for this work?**

While we have many officers with degrees in law enforcement, criminal justice, there are just as many who do not have a degree at all. Corrections Officers come from all backgrounds—law enforcement, social work, retail work—you name it.

### **What is the age minimum?**

You must be 18 to work in an adult facility and 21 to work in a juvenile facility

### **What is the age maximum?**

There is no age maximum. Applicants must pass a pre-placement physical which is based on the job duties. This includes an eye exam, hearing exam, drug test, tuberculosis test, respirator clearance test and review of your medical history.

### **What are the great benefits I keep hearing about?**

Low-cost health and dental insurance, retirement at age 55 with a life-time pension, additional deferred compensation retirement, short and long-term disability, pre-tax flexible spending accounts, tax deferred savings, employer-paid life insurance and optional additional life insurance, and the Employee Assistance program which provides free counseling and other assistance.

**I don't know how to be a corrections officer. I'm intimidated by the prospect of this new type of work. What advice do you have?**

Almost all Corrections Officers start off with no experience. Corrections is a family, and veteran officers will help you along the way. Every officer goes through a six-week training academy with other new officers.

Minnesota is among the safest corrections operations in the nation. It's important to note that working in corrections is not like what is often portrayed in the movies, which is often sensationalized for dramatic effect.

An officer's job is to communicate information to the incarcerated people and to ensure they are safe and following the rules. If you treat others with respect and have the ability to put yourself in another person's shoes, you will receive the same in return.

### **What is the inside of a prison like?**

The inside of a prison is very much like the inside of a high school: There is a warden, teachers, nurses, maintenance staff, therapists, case managers, and so much more.

Incarcerated people are busy all day going to their jobs, going to school, going to treatment groups, recreating outside, and eating in the cafeteria. At night they stay at or near their cells and spend time relaxing and communicating with their loved ones on the outside through telephones, video visiting and more.

### **Will I be protected by a union?**

Yes, corrections officers are represented by the AFSCME union and receive protections and benefits as such. The union represents the collective interests of its employees and helps workers unite to negotiate over wages, hours, benefits and other working conditions.

### **What if I am not a big/strong person?**

Physical traits like these are at the bottom of the list when it comes to what we look for in corrections officers. What's most important? Communications skills. If you can communicate effectively and respectfully, we are looking for you. Other skills needed? Following and implementing the security rules that will keep our facilities safe.

### **I'm hearing there is a lot of overtime for new officers?**

It is true that new officers are first to take mandatory overtime shifts. This can wear on new officers, so the more people we have joining our ranks, the less forced overtime there will be. Many senior officers voluntarily take overtime shifts as it can be very financially lucrative.

### **I have a criminal background, can I be an officer?**

All applicants must pass a criminal background check. Most criminal offenses will not prevent you from being hired. If you have questions about your specific case, contact [susan.ricci@state.mn.us](mailto:susan.ricci@state.mn.us) in HR.

### **I have a family member or friend currently incarcerated. Can I still be an officer?**

Many of us are impacted by incarceration when it comes to family and friends. This does not preclude you from being a corrections officer, however, it is critically important that you be honest when completing information when requested about people that you know that have been or are incarcerated so the proper steps can be taken.

### **Are you accepting part-time officers?**

Not at this time.

### **Are you accepting lateral transfers?**

We are not able to accept lateral transfers from other states or jurisdictions. Current Minnesota Department of Corrections officers can transfer to another DOC facility.

### **Can you tell me more about the qualifications?**

1. Be at least 18 years old to work at an adult correctional facility, and at least 21 years old to work at a juvenile correctional facility (MCF-Red Wing) unless you are enrolled or have completed course work in a post-secondary education program to pursue a degree in a behavioral science; **AND**
2. Possess a high school diploma or GED; **AND**
3. Be able to pass a criminal history check, which will be conducted prior to hire. In order to pass, you must have successfully completed all sentencing and/or restitution requirements of law enforcement jurisdictions, including probation; **AND**
4. Be able to possess a firearm; **AND**
5. Have a valid driver's license.

### **In addition, you must possess at least ONE of the following in order to qualify for further consideration and assessment:**

1. Completion of an Associate degree in Corrections, Criminal Justice, Criminology, Law, Law Enforcement, Psychology, Counseling, Counseling Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, or a Human Services related field with an emphasis in corrections/criminal justice; OR
2. Completion of a Bachelor's degree in ANY field from an accredited college/university; OR
3. One or more years of full-time work experience in ANY field. (**NOTE:** The work experience does NOT have to be in Corrections); OR
4. Two or more years of part-time (at least 20 hours per week) work experience in ANY field. (**NOTE:** The work experience does NOT have to be in Corrections); OR
5. Honorable discharge from active military duty in any branch of the United States' Armed Forces; OR
6. Current member in good standing in any branch of the United States' Armed Forces; OR
7. Successful completion of an internship in a Minnesota Correctional Facility in a related security area.

