

NDCS Report on the Use of Retention Funds

Quarter 2: July-September 2016

During the 2016 session, the Legislature provided \$1.5 million dollars to the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) as part of LB 956 to be used for strategies to retain quality staff in resource shortage areas. The statute includes a requirement for quarterly reports to the Governor and Legislature addressing (1) how the funds are being utilized, (2) the impact of the use of the funds on retention of quality staff, (3) staff vacancy and turnover data and (4) plans for future use of the funds. This report is the second quarterly retention fund report, covering the period from July 1 through September 30, 2016 and also includes a plan for use of a similar appropriation in future years. Due to the delay in the release of this second quarterly report, information on expenditures of retention funds has been included through November of 2016 when available.

1. How the funds are being used: Retention Initiatives

After receiving the appropriation in April, input was solicited from staff, stakeholders and policymakers on how best to utilize these one-time funds to help retention efforts. The initiatives identified through this process were announced by Director Frakes on June 15, 2016 and information on how to participate was distributed to staff throughout the agency. Four primary areas were identified: Training and Professional Development, Stress Reduction and Coping Strategies, Work-Life Balance and Behavioral Health Training. Each of these four subject areas contains one or more retention initiatives. A short description of each of the initiatives is provided below along with an update on implementation to date. Appendix 1 at the end of this report provides a list of the existing projects, their purpose and intended targets, potential outcome measures, the amount of funds which have been allocated, current progress and expenditures to date.

- a. Training and Professional Development -Retaining quality staff includes providing opportunities to acquire new skills, education and training which will allow them to maximize their potential.

Below are several strategies being implemented to improve training and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels.

- i. Professional Development Bonus –The existing tuition reimbursement program has been expanded to cover the cost of the employees attending approved professional development courses as well as provide a bonus to staff for successfully completing the courses. Employees are eligible to receive reimbursement of the cost of the course and a bonus of up to \$250 for successfully completing a professional development course, depending on the number of hours required to complete the course.

Update: Sixty six staff have taken advantage of the professional development stipend through the end of November with a total payout of \$11,250. After reviewing feedback from staff that the compensation was less than wages that could be earned for working overtime hours, the bonus amounts were increased to a maximum of \$500 per participant. The program will be monitored bi-weekly to determine participation levels.

- ii. Behavioral Health Symposium –A behavioral health symposium is being organized in collaboration with other criminal justice stakeholders to provide professional growth opportunities for NDCS employees, probation and parole staff, and interested community providers.

Update: The department is partnering with probation, parole, behavioral health and criminal justice stakeholders to maximize participation in this event, which is being targeted for the spring of 2017. A planning committee is meeting regularly to define the curriculum, identify speakers and the other logistics associated with an event of this type. A save the date announcement will go out before the end of 2016.

- iii. Health Care Staff Continuing Education– Similar to the professional development bonus, this initiative reimburses licensed health care employees for completing required continuing education.

Update: Health care continuing education reimbursement is being processed through the Department’s tuition reimbursement process which includes all other tuition reimbursement in the Department. Accounting is working to separate out the health care reimbursements and will report out current utilization in the third quarter report in January 2017.

- iv. Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor Certification – In order to attract and retain Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors, reimbursement is being provided to behavioral health staff who acquires LADC certification.

Update: We have not yet had any staff complete LADC training and apply for reimbursement.

- v. Staff Training Academy Technology Upgrades – Providing staff the training and tools to perform their job is an important part of employee retention. The department is upgrading technology at the staff training academy to move to computer-based instruction, which will improve the ability to enrich the curriculum with computer based curriculum and materials as well as familiarize staff with the Department’s computer systems during pre-service.

Update: Quotes have been obtained for the cost of laptop computers. Monitors have been ordered and the PA system is being upgraded in collaboration with NET. Student instructional materials are being upgraded to take advantage of utilizing computers with internet access to improve the educational experience and reduce printing costs. The target completion date for obtaining and installing equipment upgrades is January 2017

- b. Stress Reduction and Coping Strategies. Correctional employees need techniques and strategies to cope with the unique challenges and stress they experience in the correctional environment. It is a reality that working under a heightened state of alertness in a stressful environment such as corrections can be exhausting and lead to physical and mental health issues. Employees need techniques and strategies to cope with the unique challenges and stress they experience in the correctional environment.

- i. Resiliency Training - "Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment" is a program developed to address the long-term impact on overall health and functioning of corrections staff due to corrections-related workplace stress and issues specific to the prison environment.

Update: NDCS has contracted with Desert Waters Correctional Outreach to provide this training to over 600 staff at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, Nebraska State Penitentiary and Lincoln Correctional Center in September and October 2016. Training for executive staff is scheduled for November and a train the trainers program to develop the in house capability to deliver this training throughout the department will occur in December 2016.

- ii. Staff Support Training - Contracted training provided to victim advocates at each facility to provide an additional support for staff who are struggling with the difficulties of the job.

Update: Five victim services staff attended critical incident stress management training provided by the Mental Health Association in September at a cost of \$75 per participant. An additional 13 staff are scheduled to attend this 2 day training in January.

c. Work-Life Balance

- i. Staff Wellness Centers: Develop wellness centers at NSP and TSCI to provide staff access to exercise equipment, relieve stress and promote engagement.

Update: The Nebraska State Penitentiary has identified a location for the wellness center and has a work group established that is designing the layout and identifying needed equipment and supplies. A bid has been let for the rewiring of the proposed site, and once approved the contractor will begin the electrical work. The plan is to use as much volunteer staff labor as possible and a schedule is being established by the work group to ensure completion of the project as soon as is practicable.

Update: Tecumseh is still working to identify suitable space for the wellness center. They have had discussion about an offsite location in the community but have not settled on a location yet.

1. Commuting Bonus for TSCI – A monthly commuting bonus is being provided to TSCI employees based on how far they live from TSCI. Employees earning more than \$55,000 are not eligible for the commuting bonus.

Update: Through the end of November 2016, \$60,620 in commuting bonuses have been paid to TSCI staff.

Behavioral Health Training

- ii. Schema-Focused Training – Evidence-based integrated therapy approach that focuses on changing long-standing patterns of thinking, which prevent individuals from benefiting from traditional forms of treatment.

Update: 40 behavioral health staff attended a schema-focused therapy training on September 8th and 9th, 2016 at Southeast Community College.

- iii. Trauma-informed care training – Training for clinicians, which informs treatment approaches to recognize the trauma their clients have experienced.

Update: NDCS is working with the Nebraska Psychological Association and Veterans Administration to coordinate a trauma informed care training in 2017.

- iv. Violence Reduction Program and Violence Risk Scale Training – NDCS contracted with Pysnergy consulting to bring in two international experts on violence reduction programming to deliver a three and a half day training for NDCS staff at the beginning of November. Twenty eight staff from NDCS and five staff from the Lincoln Regional Center attended the training. The cost of the training was \$35,000 which includes two years of additional technical support.

2. Impact of the use of the funds on retention of quality staff

The plan for the use of the retention funds was announced by Director Frakes on June 15, 2016. Several of the initiatives, such as the behavioral health symposium, the wellness centers at TSCI and NSP, and technology upgrades at STA will take place or be completed in 2017. Others, such as the professional development bonus are ongoing initiatives that will take time for staff to identify the classes they wish to take and complete the coursework.

The department is documenting participation and expenditures for each of the retention initiatives. We are also asking staff to provide feedback on the retention initiatives they have participated in. Initial feedback from staff has varied by program but has been generally positive. The Desert Waters fatigue to fulfillment training has received very positive feedback from staff who have participated to date. There is appreciation from staff that these issues are being recognized. Some of the initiatives, such as the professional development bonus, are appreciated but also perceived as too little compensation for the time invested by some staff.

With regard to determining the impact of the initiatives, not enough time has passed to evaluate the impact they are having on staff retention. As time passes and participation increases we will be able to analyze if staff who are participating in these programs are being retained at a higher rate than those who are not taking advantage of the programs. There are also other factors such as the collective bargaining negotiations and the merit bonuses announced by Director Frakes in August, that impact the analysis employees make when choosing to remain employed in a job. These will make it difficult to isolate the unique impact the retention initiatives are having on overall retention rates but any positive impact is helpful. Future quarterly reports will include additional information on the impact on employee retention as it becomes available.

3. Staff Vacancy and Turnover Data

The first quarterly report provided turnover and vacancy data for fiscal year 2016 to act as a baseline for evaluating the impact of the \$1.5 million in retention funds on turnover and vacancies. Table 1 contains the monthly turnover rate for protective services employees during fiscal year 2016 and the first quarter of FY 2017. Table 2 provides monthly turnover for the agency as a whole for 2015 and 2016 and Table 3 documents monthly protective services turnover for the past 5 years. Protective services is one of the highest need areas in the agency from a staffing perspective and is the primary focus of these retention efforts. Table 4 contains year to date agency wide turnover information and end of year projections. Table 5 provides protective services vacancy information over the same time period.

NDCS is still clearly struggling with protective services turnover and turnover as whole, but we are hopeful these new initiatives will help us make progress . July of 2016 had the highest protective

services turnover of any month in the past 5 years. August and September show improvement over the rest of the quarter, with the September rate of 2.7% moving closer to the monthly target of 2.33%. The impact of the retention initiatives should help this trend continue for the remainder of 2016.

Table 1: Protective Services Turnover – FY 2016 + Q1 FY 2017

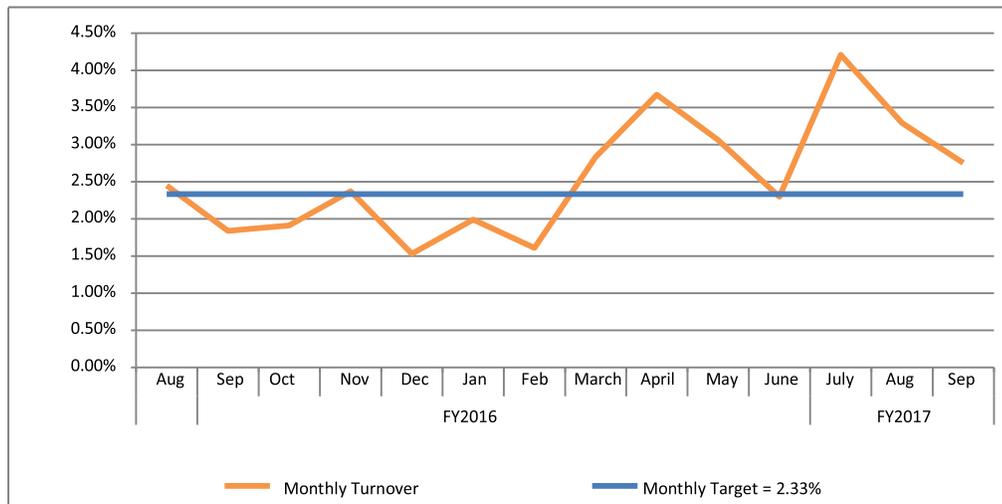


Table 2 NDCS Monthly Turnover 2015-2016

Year	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2015	50	44	54	47	61	56	52	46	38	35	42	40	565
2016	37	30	54	59	55	53	72	61	52				473

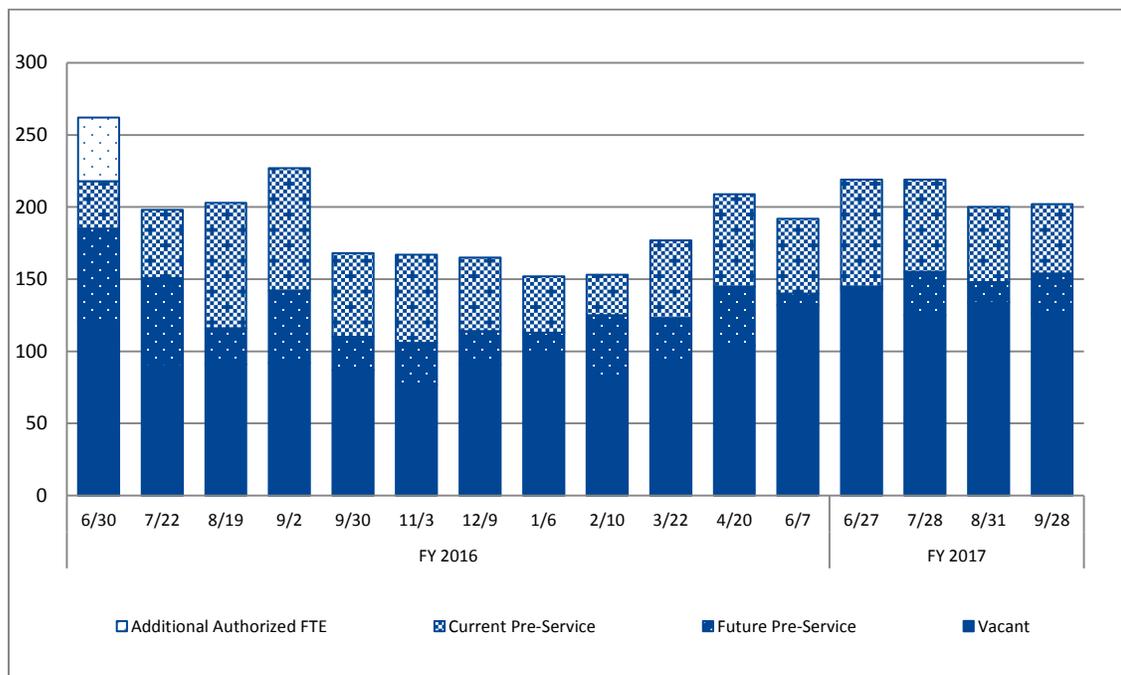
Table 3 NDCS Monthly Protective Services Turnover 2010-2016

Year	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	17	13	21	22	17	25	24	20	30	15	13	16	233
2011	23	15	26	18	23	23	30	15	24	23	23	16	259
2012	20	20	20	26	19	31	19	33	20	18	24	16	266
2103	18	21	21	21	25	24	16	27	27	22	25	28	275
2014	25	19	30	25	33	29	46	41	25	29	28	29	359
2015	41	25	45	32	36	40	36	32	24	25	31	20	387
2016	26	21	37	47	40	30	56	43	36	0	0	0	336

Table 4 2016 Year to Date Agency Turnover Rates

	T/O YTD	Auth FTE	T/O Rate
Total Turnover Rate for Protective Services:	336.00	1,307.00	25.71%
Total Turnover Rate for Nurses:	9.00	47.50	18.95%
Total Turnover Rate for Education:	3.00	27.00	11.11%
Total Turnover Rate for Other:	125.00	1,039.50	12.03%
Total Projected Annual Turnover Rate for Protective Services:			34.28%
Total Projected Annual Turnover Rate for RN's & LPN's:			25.26%
Total Projected Annual Turnover Rate for Education:			14.81%
Total Projected Annual Turnover Rate Other:			16.03%
Total Agency Turnover Rate:	473.00	2,421.00	19.54%
Total Projected Agency Turnover Rate:			26.05%

Table 5: Protective Services Vacancies FY 2016 – FY2017 Q1



4. Plans for the future use of the funds

The initiatives currently underway represent the plan for use of the \$1.5 million appropriation covering the period from April 2016 through the end of the fiscal year in June of 2017. The rate of expenditures will be evaluated quarterly to ensure the funds are used as appropriated. Funds will be reallocated, if necessary, depending on the popularity of the various retention initiatives. As the second quarterly retention report, this document includes the plan for the future use of a similar appropriation as required by Nebraska Revised Statute §90-559.

The first step in determining if a future appropriation request is made is to evaluate the existing retention initiatives, identify those which are demonstrating a positive impact on retention and reinvest in those incentives. Outcome measures for the existing initiatives which can be found in Appendix 1. Evaluating impacts on retention take time but feedback from staff, participation rates and recruitment successes can be documented more quickly.

In addition to evaluating and reinvesting in the current retention initiatives, potential options are being explored including:

- a. Retention Bonuses. On August 30, 2016 Director Frakes initiated a \$500 retention bonus for staff in the following job classifications hired prior to January 1, 2016: Corrections Officer, Chemical Dependency Counselor, Registered Nurse, Corrections Corporal, Chemical Dependency Treatment Specialist, Licensed Practical Nurse, Unit Caseworker, Licensed Mental Health Practitioner I, Food Service Specialist, and Licensed Mental Health Practitioner II. The department will evaluate the impact and staff feedback regarding these bonuses and the potential to expand them to cover additional job classifications with a future retention appropriation.
- b. Referral/recruitment bonuses. Referral bonuses for existing staff who recruit new employees that remain employed through their probationary period is another potential retention initiative that has been identified as an option for future retention funds.
- c. Training: Case management academy and Supervisory training. Research shows that employee engagement is the single most important factor in employee satisfaction and retention. NDCS is in the process of developing a case management training academy as well as a supervisors' academy to help develop leaders who are educated in evidence based approaches to corrections and engaged in motivating offenders to change. Investing in employees through training and developing quality supervisors are two areas being considered as option for the use of future retention funds.
- d. Staff Safety Initiatives. Staff safety is critical to employee retention in any occupation, but it is absolutely essential in corrections. The increase in staff assaults over the last year has contributed to the existing turnover and retention issues. Director Frakes has renewed focus throughout NDCS on staff safety and we are looking at a variety of options to keep staff, inmates and the public safe, from training and equipment to staff and inmate councils. Investing in safety initiatives is another option being considered for a future retention appropriation.

In conclusion, the staff of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services would like to thank the Governor and Legislature for appropriating the \$1.5 million in retention funds in LB 956. Recognizing the importance of staffing issues is an important first step in identifying potential solutions. The results from the current quarter will provide greater insight on the effectiveness the strategies implemented, and viability of requesting additional funds in the next biennium. The next quarterly retention report, covering the period from October through December 2016, will be issued on or before January 27, 2017.

APPENDIX: NDCS RETENTION INITIATIVES

Strategy	Intended Target	How it Works	How it Impacts Retention	Potential Measure	Cost	Progress/Expenditures to Date
Professional Development Stipend	Protective Services	Design process to provide stipend when staff complete online training courses	Encourage professional development; Shows commitment to staff and recognition that new skills are valuable; Helps recruiting	Measure retention for employees taking advantage of professional development.	\$450,000.00	\$11,250.00
Resiliency Training	Protective Services	"Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment" is a program developed to address the long term impact on overall health and functioning of corrections staff due to corrections-related workplace stress, the issues specific to the prison environment	The skill-building exercises teach employees to cope with the stressors and/or trauma experienced on the job, which means they will be better equipped to handle the stress of the job, they react to situations better, they and provides	Feedback from staff on training; Measures retention of participating staff.	\$100,000.00	Training Provided to staff at NSP and LCC in September. Scheduled for TSCI in October and Executive Staff in December 2016.
Peer Support Training	Victim Advocates	Contracted training would be provided to the victim advocates at each facility to provide an additional support for staff who are struggling with the difficulties of the job	Provide a level of support for staff outside of their normal supervisory structure where they may be more comfortable sharing issues w/ peers;	Staff surveys re: support services Retention rates for participating employees	\$75,000.00	\$1500. 5 staff attended CISM training in Sept and 13 more are scheduled for January
Staff Wellness Center (onsite TSCI/NSP)	All facility staff	Develop wellness centers to provide staff access to exercise equipment, relieve stress and promote engagement.	This is a need identified by staff which will provide an onsite stress relief opportunity and potentially save employees \$ by not having to pay for a gym membership.	Facility usage rates and employee feedback Retention rates at facilities where they are provided	\$200,000.00	Contract for electrical out for bid.
Commuting Stipend for TSCI	TSCI Staff	Provide a monthly commuting stipend to TSCI employees based on how far they live (by Zip Code) from TSCI. \$50 > 30 miles, \$25 <30 miles	Travel time and cost have been identified as two factors affecting recruitment and retention at TSCI.	TSCI retention rates	\$300,000.00	\$60,620.00
Technology Upgrades at STA	All Staff	Upgrade Technology at the Staff Training Academy to move to electronic materials	Better prepare staff for use of our computer and data systems. Improve staff engagement by providing the tools and training they need to do their job effectively.	Staff retention - completing probation, and staying 1 yr after going thru updated academy) Employee feedback on staff training academy	\$100,000	Quotes obtained for laptops. Monitors and PA system ordered. Jan 2017 target date.
Create temporary position (SOS) to manage projects, and track metrics	All Staff	Temp position to coordinate the entire process of retention strategies	A dedicated position to coordinate these initiatives will help insure are implemented on time, with fidelity, and that we measure the impact on retention		\$75,000.00	An administrative assistant position has been assigned to help coordinate the project .
Subtotal					\$1,300,000.00	
Health Services						
Licenses	LMHP, Dually Licensed Staff	Reimbursing Medical Staff for the costs to maintain licensure beyond their primary license.	This is in addition to what we currently reimburse in licenses	Participation Rate Retention rate for participating staff Employee Engagement	\$10,000.00	
Schema-focused training	LADC, LMHP, PhD	Evidence based integrated therapy approach that focuses on changing long-standing patterns of thinking that prevent individuals from benefiting from traditional forms of treatment.	Provides additional skills/tools to BH staff for dealing with the most difficult inmates and alternative approaches that may be more effective with all clients.	# of staff who participate and complete training Retention rate for participating staff Employee Engagement	\$10,000.00	Training occurred on September 8-9th, 2016 at no cost to the Dept.
Trauma-informed care training	LADC, LMHP, PhD	Covington - need to schedule	Provides greater skills and informs treatment approaches to recognize the trauma that their clients have experienced.	# of staff who participate and complete training Retention rate for participating staff Employee Engagement	\$10,000.00	Training will occur in 2017 in collaboration with VA and NPA.

NDCS RETENTION INITIATIVES

Strategy	Intended Target	How it Works	How it Impacts Retention	Potential Measure	Cost	Progress/Expenditures to Date
LADC training	LADC	Paying for classes to become a LADC	Expands scope of practice for staff, providing additional opportunities for advancement	# of staff who acquire LADC certification Retention rate for participating staff	\$10,000.00	
Behavioral Health Symposium	All BH staff and external stakeholders	Host symposium to provide professional development and CEUs, could be used as recruiting tool as well. Costs include venue, staff travel, materials	Educates staff, policymakers, stakeholder and potential employees of the work NDCS behavioral health does; Professional development, education on best practices	# of New applicants from contacts at Conference Positive press on work of NDCS behavioral health staff	\$35,000.00	Planning Group formed. Tentative Dates - April 14-16 2017
Pay for professional CEUs	All licensed staff	Reimbursement for CEUs	Encourage professional development; Shows commitment to staff and recognition that new skills are valuable; Helps recruiting	HC Staff retention rates # of CEU credits earned	\$125,000.00	
Subtotal for Health Services					\$200,000.00	\$73,270.00
TOTAL					\$1,500,000.00	