

Alaska Department of Corrections Recruitment & Staffing Review

September 30, 2026



Project Overview

The Alaska Department of Corrections contracted Gibraltar Consulting to assess the department's overall approach to recruitment, specifically examining practices, procedures, strategies, and tactics.

Operating under Delivery Order 20-01-26-0223, Gibraltar Consulting was tasked to provide a diagnostic review and audit of current practices, including a SWOT analysis. Additionally, messaging, marketing, and overall branding of the department would be examined. The diagnosis would conclude with a formal report, including actionable recommendations.





METHODOLOGY

Approach to the staffing diagnosis

Facility Visits

- ACC
- GCCC
- LCCC
- SCCC

Conversations

- Executive Team
- HR Team
- Background Unit
- Recruiters
- Superintendents
- Director of Institutions
- PIO
- ACOA Leadership

Data Review

- Alaska labor market statistics
- Alaska media analysis

3rd Party Dialogue

- Media & marketing professionals
- Data/analytics specialists
- Recruitment specialists

Executive Summary





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CURRENT STATE

The Alaska Department of Corrections, like most state correctional departments, continues facing recruitment and retention challenges. The current CO vacancy rates hover just north of **13%**, driven by heightened staffing shortages at ACC and SCCC.

While the different facilities feel the staffing strain to different degrees and in different ways, virtually all the facilities expressed heightened concern. Frustrations over the staffing issue were voiced often during interviews, citing growing staff stress and burnout, leading to more callouts, which then requires additional overtime coverage, creating the staffing "doom loop" that we've witnessed in other state correctional agencies.

The bottom line is: the sense of urgency to address the staffing issues, and more specifically departmental recruitment, is palpable and warrants an evolved, results-based approach.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THREE MACRO NEEDS

In examining the Alaska Department of Corrections' current recruitment challenges, three macro needs emerged during the diagnosis:

- **Develop and implement a more intentional, aggressive approach to generating a greater volume of candidate leads**, ultimately facilitating a significant lift in viable applicants.
- **Construct new processes and staff mobilization to nurture greater alignment and connectivity between the key spheres of stakeholders with recruitment**: central office, HR, facility-level personnel, and the union.
- **Embrace a more vigilant, comprehensive, efficient use of data, analytics, and dashboards** to measure impact, monitor performance, and inform decision making.

A *"measure everything we can, any way we can"* mindset needs to be embraced by all, coupled with a packaging of the data that allows for easy digestion by all stakeholders.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CULTURAL & BEHAVIORAL PIVOTS

Facility tours and staff conversations revealed real need for shifts in how the team is operating, particularly with each other:

- **To cease accepting things at face value and begin respectfully questioning things for the purpose of improving performance.** There needs to be an adoption of curiosity and continuous quality improvement, pushing each other on how the department can do it better, faster, easier, more efficiently, and more effectively.
- **To begin nurturing more diverse, comprehensive collaboration.** There is simply not enough idea and perspective exchange, with most of the dialogue operating within silos and amongst familiar team members. More cross-facility, cross-department dialogue must occur to address a challenge as sizeable as the current staffing issue.
- **To embrace a disdain for the status quo and begin aggressively resisting the default position of that's how it's been done in the past.**

Fatigue has likely, and very understandably, compromised the team's ability to embrace these shifts. **Establishing a fresh start, a new day, and a new way will be key to reinvigorating the department and moving more as a collective team.**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE PATH FORWARD

Addressing staffing and recruitment challenges is never easy, never fast, and rarely without real discomfort.

But, like in previously daunting engagements, such as the Idaho Department of Correction, where the vacancy rates hovered around **45% — and reached under 5% at partnership's conclusion —** the Alaska Department of Corrections staffing and recruitment problems can be fixed, leading to a more stable, sustainable staffing model.

The pages in this report will go into greater detail on core issues and provide actionable recommendations.

The time to act is now.

Alaska DOC Recruitment SWOT Analysis





SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Desire/hunger to address issue
- Departmental pride
- Workable number of strong performers present

WEAKNESSES

- High-risk occupation
- Lack of awareness of both the department and the opportunities
- Deficient collaboration/connectivity with key stakeholders

OPPORTUNITIES

- Re-set with key/committed stakeholders to collectively address problem
- Deployment of lead generation program to build awareness and attract more candidates
- Development/strengthening of key partnerships and alliances

THREATS

- Increase of staff fatigue/disillusionment leading to spike in callouts
- Acceleration of turnover
- Friction with Union

Lead Generation



Foundational Needs

The Alaska Department of Corrections has four areas that need to be addressed to begin creating a more robust top-of-funnel recruitment effort, including:



A dedicated marketing campaign that can build awareness and drive candidate volume



Meaningful partnerships with key players that can serve as lead sources and referral mechanisms



More robust localized efforts involving various chambers of commerce, key community organizations, and appropriate educational institutions



Additional staff incentives, friendly competitions, awards and recognitions, reinforcing positive behaviors and engagement with the recruiting process



Digital Marketing Campaign

The Alaska DOC needs to more aggressively market front-line/CO positions. A digital marketing campaign highlighting the opportunities will help the department build greater awareness, allow for quick lead capture and response, and ensure measurability, offering:

Geographic, demographic, and psychographic targeting

The ability to capture and nurture candidates: securing email and cell phone data for automated, consistent communication via a CRM/Applicant Tracking System

The ability to test new ad messaging, targeting strategies, and real-time developments for ongoing optimization

Measurability: quantitative metrics that maximize ROI and ensure taxpayer dollars are deployed responsibly



AD EXAMPLES: IDAHO DOC CAMPAIGN



JOIN THE SIDE FOR SECOND CHANCES

START AT
\$55,328
AS A SENIOR PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICER

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

SECOND CHANCES



DISCOVER A CAREER AFTER GRADUATION

BECOME A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER AND BEGIN A REWARDING CAREER PATH

START AT
\$49,608/YEAR
+ \$1K SIGNING AND RETENTION BONUS

LEARN MORE

AFTER GRADUATION



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

NOW HIRING

Electrical Foreman

- ✓ Earn up to \$30/hr + a \$1,500 sign-on bonus with Idaho DOC
- ✓ Enjoy great benefits working for the state of Idaho

Learn More

ELECTRICAL FOREMAN



CALLING FOR LIFECHANGERS:
Make a difference in Idaho Falls

Start at \$55,328 as a Senior Probation and Parole Officer with IDOC.

LIFECHANGERS



STUDENTS, WHAT'S NEXT AFTER GRADUATION?

FROM CAMPUS TO CAREER: JOIN IDAHO DOC

START AT \$49,608/YR AS A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER
+ \$9,000 SIGNING AND RETENTION BONUS

BEGIN A REWARDING CAREER PATH **LEARN MORE**

CAMPUS TO CAREER



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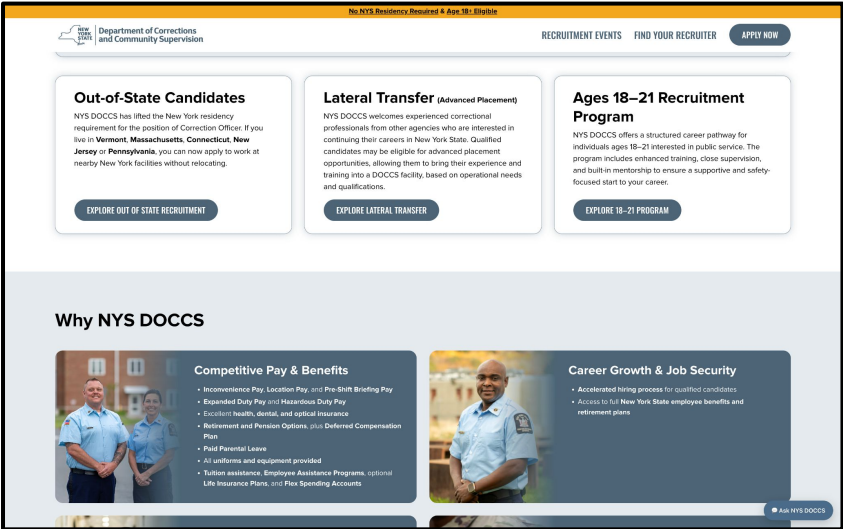
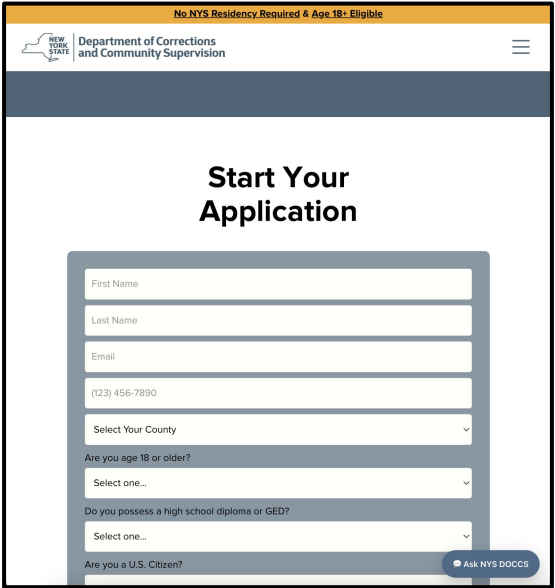
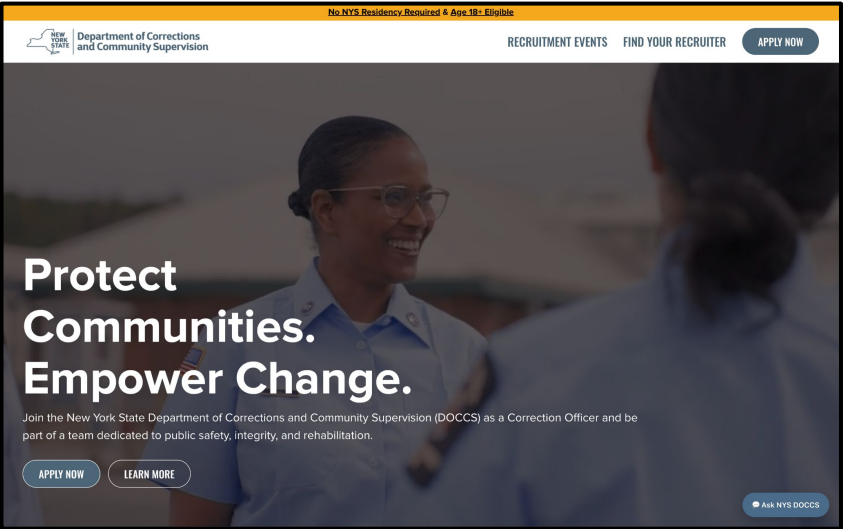
- ✓ Earn up to \$30/hr + a \$1,500 sign-on bonus with Idaho DOC
- ✓ Enjoy great benefits working for the state of Idaho

LEARN MORE

ELECTRONICS FOREMAN



LANDING PAGE EXAMPLE: NYS DOCCS





CANDIDATE COMMS EXAMPLE: IDAHO DOC

Bullhorn Automation Search To-Dos Brian (Warren Averett LLC Idaho Instance)

New in BH Intro - Boise Active View Metrics Pause Automation Automation Settings

Left Sidebar: DASHBOARD, AUTOMATIONS, ENGAGEMENTS, LISTS, CONTACTS, LIBRARY, SETTINGS

Automation Content:

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Correctional Officer with IDOC!

A member of the IDOC Recruitment Team will reach out to you soon to discuss the next steps in the hiring process.

In the meantime, check out our recruitment video to see what the Idaho Department of Correction is all about!

Congratulations again, and we look forward to speaking with you soon!

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER
A CAREER OF OPPORTUNITY

Edit This Email

Automation Steps:

- Add Note:** Sent email and text ...
- DAY 1**
- Send Email:** Thanks for your interest in the Idaho Department of Correction!
- DAY 1**
- Send Text:** %FIRSTNAME%, this is Kenzie with the Idaho Department of Correction...
- DAY 1**
- Wait:** 28 candidates in this step
- Wait 2 Days**
- DAY 3**

Branding/Marketing



Alaska DOC Branding Challenges

While the Alaska DOC articulates vision, mission, and values, there is a general absence of an overall brand message. Other areas related to branding/marketing that need to be addressed are:

A better balance of emotion with tactical offerings; right now, much of the branding currently defaults to state benefits and the week-on/week-off schedule, with little emotional pull

A better syncing of the job appeal to the state appeal; the two currently run as mutually exclusive messages, but connecting them would be far more compelling

More customized messages to particular groups; one generalized message gets lost in today's fragmented, over-tailored world





WHAT IT IS VS. WHAT IT NEEDS TO BE

PASSIVE

A centralized job board, untouched since 2022.

RELATIONSHIP-ROOTED

Proactively built through targeted outreach, out-of-state campaigns and real community presence. Not left to a static posting.

GENERIC

Could describe corrections in any state.

UNMISTAKABLY ALASKAN

Anchored in real Alaskan DNA, community and values. Unapologetically honest about the place and its demands.

INSTITUTIONAL

Reads like a recruiting brochure, not a person: wage tables, leave accrual charts, outdated figures. Entirely economic, when the decision itself no longer is.

HUMAN

Named people, real stories, inspiring evidence. Identity and lifestyle language that echoes why people actually choose a career, not just what it pays.

UNDIFFERENTIATED

Untargeted, wide-net messaging aimed at no one particularly.

PERSONA-GROUNDED

A strategy built around disciplined audiences, not a broad message aimed at everyone at once.

The one place where DOC channels a stronger voice: its internal staff newsletter — named officers, real incidents, 20-, 25-, and 30-year tenures celebrated routinely. These proof points aren't being pointed outward.



BRAND MESSAGING FOUNDATIONS: WHAT WE STAND FOR

OUR PURPOSE

Why this effort exists. To close the gap between the culture already inside Alaska DOC and the story that reaches the people who might join it.

OUR PROMISE

What we fiercely commit to — the candidate joining us, every officer already in uniform, and ourselves. Show up real.



OUR POSITIONING

Why you should believe it. Only Alaska DOC turns the resilience it takes to live here into a career and lifestyle as real as the place itself.

OUR BEHAVIORS

How we make sure we deliver. Say the hard part first. Keep voice consistent, everywhere. Tell real, human stories. Sound like you're from here.



SOUNDING LIKE ALASKA DOC: VOICE & TONE

WE ARE	WE ARE NOT
Direct. We name the real demands of the job before someone signs up.	Vague. We don't lean on nondescript recruiting language that could describe any department, anywhere.
Human-Led. We tell real stories of people who built fulfilling lives here, because this is an emotional, identity-driven decision, not just a practical one.	Benefits-Speak. We don't reduce a life-altering decision to wages and leave accrual.
Rooted. We lean fully into our Alaskan DNA. A candidate who isn't ready to embrace this place won't last here.	Generic. We don't sound like a Lower 48 template. That doesn't translate here.
Consistent. The same voice shows up on the recruitment page, a social post and a job fair table.	Fragmented. We don't let one site tell a different story than another.
Matter-of-Fact. We're forthcoming about the hard conditions. This is a career built for resilient people who want a life that's equally real and rewarding.	Sensational. Or, Sugarcoated. We don't dramatize the conditions, and we don't undersell them either.

Segmentation





WHO WE'RE TALKING TO

Four audience personas: three convert, one is cultivated. All four are pulled to the same place.

WATCHKEEPERS

- **Who they are.** Veteran and military-rooted talent; service members transitioning out of JBER, military spouses and veterans in Alaska's priority out-of-state corridors (Texas, Washington, Florida, California, Virginia).
- **What they value.** Duty, discipline, camaraderie.
- **Our angle.** Frame this as continuity, not a career change. The same structure and purpose they already know, in a new post.

STEADY HANDS

- **Who they are.** In-state workers from Alaska's volatile or shrinking industries (oil and gas rotational crews, seafood processing) who already know remote, physically demanding, shift-based work.
- **What they value.** Resilience, reliability, endurance.
- **Our angle.** Same rigor they already carry, in a career that doesn't run out with the season or the market.

FRONTIER SEEKERS

- **Who they are.** Out-of-state candidates in Alaska's proven migration corridors, moving for lifestyle rather than economics; drawn by landscape, pace of life and the pull of a place that still feels unclaimed.
- **What they value.** Adventure, authenticity, purpose.
- **Our angle.** Alaska is already the draw. The job is the door that gets them there, not the thing we have to sell separately.

THE HOMEGROWN

- **Who they are.** Young, entry-level Alaskans with no prior military or industry background; still early in their working life, already rooted in the communities DOC serves.
- **What they value.** Belonging, opportunity, roots.
- **Our angle.** A relationship built over years. Show up early, stay present and become the intuitive next step long before there's an opening to fill.



THE MESSAGING HIERARCHY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Build a differentiated pipeline of viable candidates across both Alaska's existing workforce and its priority out-of-state migration corridors.

COMMUNICATIONS CHARGE

Increase awareness and consideration with Alaskans already close to the decision, while building understanding with prospective Alaskans who don't yet know what the role, or the state, actually offers.

OUR POSITIONING

Only Alaska DOC turns the resilience it takes to live here into a career and lifestyle as real as the place itself.

OUR APPROACH

Deepen. In-state. Activate veterans and transitioning service members, military spouses and Alaskans between seasonal contracts; people already close to the decision.

Build. Out-of-state. Earn attention in the migration corridors where people are already choosing to relocate to Alaska: Texas, Washington, California, Florida, Virginia.

WHO WE'RE TALKING TO

Watchkeepers

Frontier Seekers

Steady Hands

The Homegrown

WHAT WE SAY

You already know how to lead under pressure and rely on your team. This work asks for exactly that.

A career that comes with an entire state: the wild, quiet, real Alaska life you're looking for.

The same hard work you already know how to do, in a career that doesn't run out when the season ends.

A real career, close to home, in the community you already know.

SAMPLE MESSAGE VEHICLES

Earned. Press releases, local Alaska/corridor-state media outreach, spokesperson interviews, tribal/veteran/public-safety partner channels.

Owned. Career site & job postings, organic social, internal newsletter repurposed for external candidates, staff referral activation.

Paid. Not in current scope; amplifying message in priority corridors would be the natural next lever if DOC is ready to invest beyond owned and earned.

OUR OUTCOME

A recruiting presence that finally shows up the way Alaska DOC's officers already do.



IN TRANSLATION

You don't choose to live in Alaska because it's easy. You choose Alaska because it's **rugged, different, and exhilarating.**

You don't choose corrections because it's easy. You choose corrections because it's **demanding, challenging, and most importantly, rewarding.**

The Alaska Department of Corrections. **A career as real as the state itself.**

Digital Targets/Mix





This isn't a demand problem. It's a targeting,
conversion & measurement problem.

And the vertical expertise to solve it is rented — not built in-house.

Why Recruit By Cohort

Recruiting “everyone” converts no one — generic postings pull unqualified applicants who never finish the academy funnel, and burn budget doing it

We target defined pools by who they are and what moves them, then measure which pools actually convert to applications

Peer-state data and the labor-market study point to three pools worth testing first

Each cohort gets its own message, its own channel mix, and its own path into a single landing page — so every dollar is attributable





THE THREE PILOT COHORTS

#1: Military / JBER	#2: Women	#3: Out-of-state
The centerpiece. Discipline and mission-fit map 1:1 to corrections; the pool is larger than the entire vacancy gap.	The highest documented conversion rate (Missouri: 12% → 27% applicant share; ~1.5–2x academy completion). The surest path to the deliverable.	Targeted relocation, led by the oil-industry persona; a distinct third lane that scales where in-state can't.

Profile #1: Military / JBER

- **Who:** separating JBER service members and recent veterans, 25–45 — comfortable with structure, chain of command, and shift work
- **Emotional motivators:** continued service and purpose; keep the benefits (pension, healthcare); stay in Alaska; camaraderie
- **Message angles:** “Different uniform. Same mission.” “Your DD-214 is the credential — we'll teach the rest.”
- **Media:** Facebook + Google Search + YouTube (not TikTok). Geofenced to JBER; hyper-local within a 50-mile radius
- **Force-multiplier:** pair paid with a real JBER / TAP relationship — a pipeline, not a booth four times a year



Profile #2: Women

- **Who:** women in adjacent roles — healthcare support (CNA / med tech), hospitality, service — within a 50-mile radius
- **Emotional motivators:** stability and a real career; skills they already have (de-escalation, communication); total comp + pension
- **Message angles:** “Made for This.” “Stronger than the stereotype.” — real female officers, everyday framing
- **Media:** Meta (Facebook + Instagram), testimonial-led and representation-forward; Google Search to capture intent
- **Why prioritize:** highest-converting cohort in the study — the fastest, most defensible path to the number



Profile #3: Out-of-state

- **Who:** relocation-willing — led by the oil-industry persona (most transferable + frontier mindset)
- **Motivator:** the reset — no state income tax, the PFD, adventure. Message: “Move to Alaska.”
- They don't care which facility — they want Alaska; we capture statewide and assign at the landing page
- **Pilot focus:** ONE state at a time — real budget to move the needle, not a pebble in the ocean
- **3-month test:** Texas → California → Washington/Oregon, pivoting monthly; same creative, compare cost-per-lead, double down on the winner





AD SPEND ALLOCATION: BY PLATFORM X CREATIVE

An example of how a \$15K budget could be allocated — 100% deployed to ads. One campaign; the algorithm shifts budget to winners from week one.

Platform	Military	Women	Out-of-State	Total	% of \$15K
Indeed	\$700	\$500	—	\$1,200	8%
Facebook	\$2,400	\$1,500	\$900	\$4,800	32%
Instagram	—	\$1,700	\$600	\$2,300	15%
Google Search	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$600	\$3,100	21%
YouTube	\$1,200	—	—	\$1,200	8%
LinkedIn	—	—	\$1,400	\$1,400	9%
Reddit	\$400	\$200	—	\$600	4%
ChatGPT	\$300	\$100	—	\$400	3%
Total / creative	\$6,500	\$5,000	\$3,500	\$15,000	100%

Weighted to Military (centerpiece) and Women (highest conversion); out-of-state runs one focus state at a time. Indeed layered as a low-cost, monitored intent floor (in-state). Nothing in reserve — every dollar works, then rebalances to performance.

Why This Mix — the Reasoning Behind Each Dollar

- Veterans skew Facebook / YouTube, not TikTok — so their budget goes where a 25–45 vet actually is
- Women convert on testimonial creative — Instagram + Facebook carry it best
- Out-of-state corrections pros live on LinkedIn — we target by job title and employer, then retarget on Meta
- Google Search sits under all three to capture high-intent 'corrections jobs / DOC careers' queries
- Indeed is the cheapest cost-per-applicant and pure job-search intent — a low-cost floor under the cohort demand-gen (in-state)
- Reddit + ChatGPT are low-cost test channels — cheap signal on where else the audience hides
- This per-dollar reasoning is exactly what an in-house HR team can't produce



Operating Model



Structural Changes

The Alaska Department of Corrections should form a broader ecosystem of stakeholders to strengthen recruitment and retention — a responsibility that has fallen too heavily on Human Resources alone. A new approach would entail the construction of:

A task force that meets once a week to address staffing levels, recruitment tactics, and retention efforts

Cohort working teams, a military cohort team and a female cohort team

Facility-level working trinities, ideally involving the superintendent, a designated recruitment liaison (from that facility), and the ACOA regional lead

An expanded recruitment team beyond the current two-person team, probably 4-6 total members



Task Force

A multi-disciplined task force will help elevate recruitment and retention efforts. The group will be responsible for:

- Shaping and evolving staffing strategies
- Monitoring performance
- Ensuring effective communication and alignment

The group would ideally consist of the following disciplines:

- Member from the Office of the Commissioner
- HR representative
- ACOA delegate (ideally Randy McLellan)
- 3-4 superintendents that speak for their region (categorize facilities into 4 regions)
- Any related 3rd party specialists

The group would have a standing weekly meeting.



Cohort Working Teams

Initial cohort teams would focus on military and female recruits, each consisting of four members:

- **Military cohort:** team members with military backgrounds
- **Female cohort:** high-performing female employees

The task force would help curate and create both teams, with additional cohorts (e.g., out-of-state) added as the approach evolves. Responsibilities for cohort teams would include:

- Nurturing partnerships with endemic organizations
- Vetting recruitment materials and strategy against cohort targets
- Representing the department at appropriate endemic events



Trinity Working Teams

Each facility trinity ensures facility-level issues and nuances are properly weighed in the recruitment approach and overall staffing efforts. The trinity for each facility would consist of:

- Superintendent
- ACOA regional board member
- Designated recruitment liaison

The task force would work with superintendents to identify the optimal recruitment liaison for each facility. Each facility trinity would be responsible for:

- Updating the task force on the needs and realities of recruitment at the facility level
- Helping shape facility-centric strategies
- Forming relationships with appropriate local organizations (education, chambers of commerce)



Expanded Recruitment Team

The current two-person recruitment team should **extend to at least four members, and ideally six, to broaden and deepen coverage** — with two recruiters specializing in engagements with the cohort teams.

The remaining members would each hold a designated geographic/regional territory, building a deeper understanding of the local nuances at each facility.



Process & Systems



Process Changes

A few process shifts need to occur to improve the overall choreography and command of the recruitment efforts.

The most important addition is an applicant tracking system/CRM to improve data analysis, candidate communication, and overall accountability.

Additional process changes should include a more structured, consistent communication cadence with key stakeholders, and an evolved exit/intervention interview approach.



ATS/CRM System

An applicant tracking system/CRM system will provide an invaluable new tool for the department to more effectively manage the recruitment process. The system will allow for:

- Measurement of key conversion metrics and KPIs

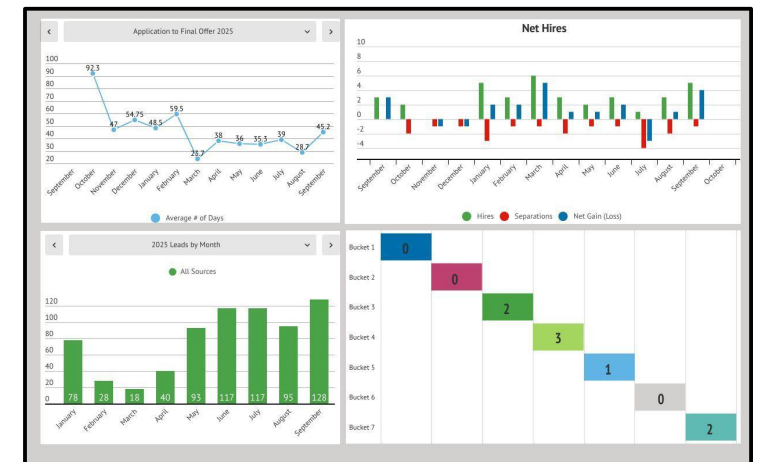
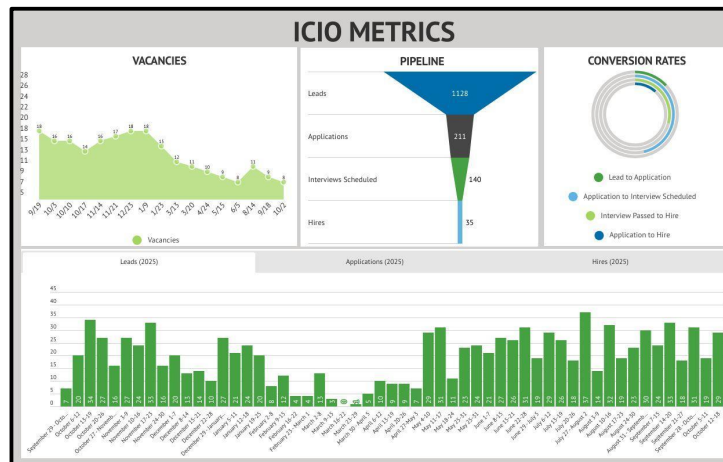
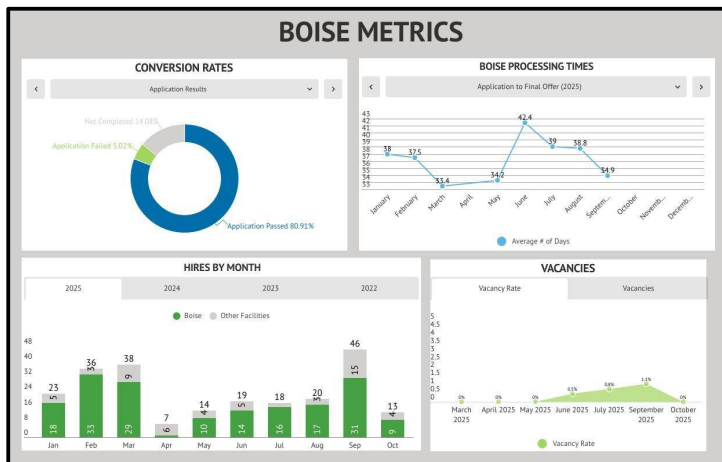
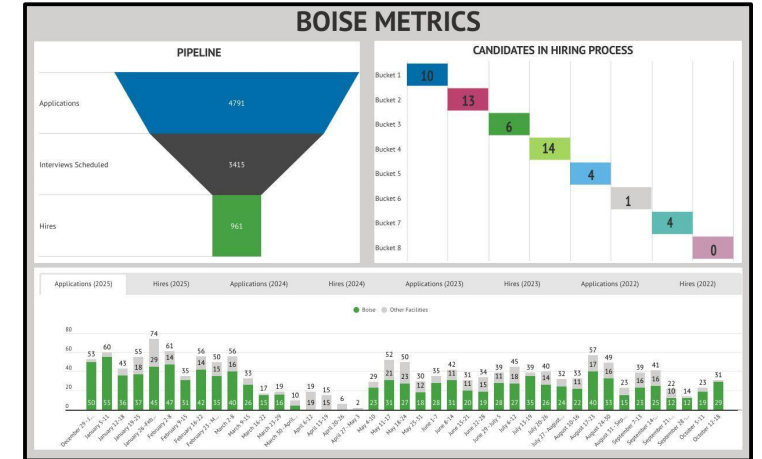
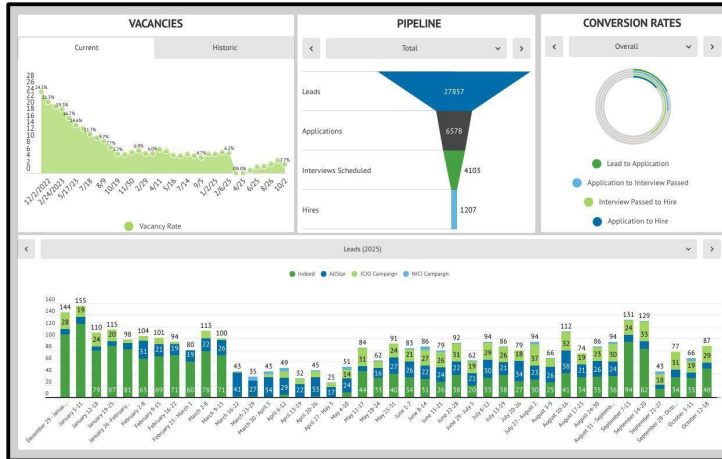
- A dashboard serving as a common recruitment scorecard for all to utilize and easily see performance

- Automations for more consistent, effective candidate communication





CRM/ATS EXAMPLE: IDAHO DOC



Communication Cadence

Regular meetings will be key to coordinating and overseeing recruitment efforts:

- **Task force:** weekly
- **Cohort teams:** bi-weekly
- **Facility trinities:** weekly
- **Full ecosystem (all three groups + recruiters), with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners present:** monthly

This approach will ensure alignment and improve accountability.



Exit Interview/Intervention Interviews

We've generally found exit interviews to be largely ineffective and not particularly insightful. When they are completed, which isn't often, they tend to be done with an agenda.

Given this — and the fact that exit interviews haven't been a strength for this department — we propose introducing a new concept: **the intervention interview.**

These would be interviews with **underperforming or flight-risk team members**, aimed at understanding their pain points, identifying negative patterns, and ideally turning the person around.



Partnerships

Developing deeper, more impactful partnerships to help drive recruitment will be a key ingredient to the overall lead generation efforts.

Partnerships should be nurtured with key cohorts, starting with the military — a comprehensive, multi-faceted, customized alliance with JBER should be an immediate priority.

From there, partnerships in the educational space with the Community College System, and stronger local alliances with the appropriate chambers of commerce, should follow.



Proposed Pilot Program



Pilot Summary

A 90-day pilot program can test the recommendations in this report, providing meaningful data and, in most instances, proof-of-concept. The proposed pilot would focus initially on Anchorage Correctional Complex and Ketchikan Correctional Center.

The Gibraltar team would deploy digital advertising, import an applicant tracking system (CRM), provide dashboards and analytics, and begin collaborating with the proposed task force. In addition to a media buying team, two recruitment specialists would be deployed to work with the task force and broader team.

Timing could entail commencing the effort by the first week of October, with the pilot concluding shortly after the new year.

