

The future of public sector hiring

**Missouri Department of Correction's data-driven,
people-first approach**



Table of contents

Case study executive summary	1
The challenge: Navigating an evolving workforce landscape	2
The solution: A bespoke, candidate-centric approach	4
The result: A dramatic turnaround in hiring efficiency	8

Case study executive summary

Customer: Missouri Department of Corrections

Sector: State Criminal Justice

Location: Missouri

When: Feb 2025

Number of employees: Over 10,000

Challenges

- Facilities located in rural areas where it is difficult to attract sufficient applicants
- High turnover and low retention rates
- Lengthy hiring process
- Competition with private sector for talent

Solutions

- **Smart Sourcing:** Instantly match and connect with quality candidates from Indeed’s pool of millions of job seekers.
- **Hiring Events:** An all-in-one, pay-for-results hiring solution with built-in talent attraction and recruitment automation.
- **Employer Brand Ads:** Ads targeted to specific job seekers with compelling messages.
- **Employer Branding Hub:** A comprehensive suite of solutions to manage brand image on Indeed and Glassdoor.

Results

- **Over 300%** increase in correctional officer applications.
- Correctional officer staffing levels rose from **62% to nearly 90%**.
- Application processing in **minutes rather than weeks**.



The challenge

Navigating an evolving workforce landscape



When Missouri's prisons were built in the 1970s and '80s, nearby agricultural communities provided a steady workforce. But as farming evolved and younger generations moved to metropolitan areas, staffing correctional facilities became increasingly difficult. These challenges, compounded by high turnover, lengthy hiring processes and private sector competition, left the Missouri Department of Corrections (MO DOC) facing a critical staffing shortage.

By 2021, correctional officer levels across 19 institutions had dropped to 62%, noted Darin Gerke, Talent Acquisition Coordinator for the MO DOC.

"We were just coming out of COVID, and we were losing staff left and right," he said. "In December 2021, we only received 338 correctional officer applications, and we were down approximately 1,600 or 1,700 employees."

Staff shortages limited the MO DOC's ability to provide essential services such as recreation, reentry initiatives and educational programs that are critical to fulfilling its mission: Helping previously incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society. Gerke, having recently transitioned from assistant warden to recruiter, understood the impact first-hand and sought to quickly revamp hiring efforts.

"Being a state agency, we're not going to be the highest-paying employer," he said. "We decided to go where our strength is — building a connection with people. It's the family atmosphere you get from working in a prison and the feeling you get when you help an offender improve their life."



The solution

A bespoke,
candidate-centric
approach

As Gerke's team experimented with different recruitment tools, they saw promising early results by using Indeed and decided to invest modestly to test the platform's full capabilities.

Indeed worked with MO DOC to establish a customized hiring plan that prioritized the people-first approach both organizations share.

"We differentiate ourselves from other hiring platforms because we really focus on the candidate experience," said Vidisha Gadiraju, Director of Indeed's Enterprise Sales for the Public Sector. "That brings us a massive candidate and talent pool — we have over 595 million job seeker Profiles and 330 million Sourceable Profiles on our site."¹

Indeed helped the MO DOC implement a variety of in-platform tools that could accommodate both high-touch engagement and high-volume hiring.

¹Indeed data worldwide, job seeker accounts set to public that have a unique, verified email address.

“

We differentiate ourselves from other hiring platforms because we really focus on the candidate experience. That brings us a massive candidate and talent pool — we have over 595 million job seeker Profiles and 330 million Sourceable Profiles on our site.”

Vidisha Gadiraju

Director of Enterprise Sales for the Public Sector, Indeed

Finding quality talent with Smart Sourcing

To fill the large number of vacancies for correctional officers and other key positions, the MO DOC leveraged [Smart Sourcing](#) to expand the talent pool by proactively finding and contacting candidates.

“Our clients are able to receive notifications based on how well a candidate’s profile meets the job description,” Gadiraju said.

Smart Sourcing generates a list of quality candidates for recruiters that match their job description based on information collected from job seekers — skills, experience and preferences — then creates AI-powered summaries that highlight their strengths and experience, making it easier to evaluate potential hires. The tool also enables personalized outreach with AI-generated messages tailored to the job description and candidate’s resume, along with intuitive contact templates that allow recruiters to create and send customized messages.

Streamlining recruitment through Indeed Hiring Events

As the DOC’s applicant pool expanded, Gerke’s team simplified and accelerated the hiring process with Indeed’s [Hiring Events](#), virtual or in-person recruiting events that facilitate multiple interviews for a variety of roles at one time. Indeed provides end-to-end support, including talent attraction, as well as supplemental tools to preemptively screen applicants for key job requirements, track progress and automate communication.

In 2024 alone, MO DOC held 276 events and conducted 6,313 interviews that led to 1,317 hires — solidifying these campaigns as a central component of the organization’s hiring strategy.

“Seven to twelve days a month, we schedule interviews at each institution, and it really works well,” said Gerke, noting that his team now schedules around 1,400 interviews a month using Indeed Hiring Events. This success led to other beneficial initiatives for MO DOC, such as a shuttle service to transport potential hires from across the state to its facilities to further broaden the talent pool.

Maximizing efficiency with Indeed Hiring Events

Manually scheduling interviews for a high volume of candidates can consume significant staff time. Candidates attending a Hiring Event or following the standard application process can self-schedule interviews using **Opt-In Scheduling** — an automated tool that integrates organization and applicant calendars. Over 98% of job seekers get their interview within 10 days of their first RSVP with Indeed Hiring Events.²

Opt-In also sends automated interview reminders via email and text to reduce no-shows. Gerke noted that this feature raised attendance rates up to 70%.

²Indeed data US

Enhancing market presence with Employer Branding

To ensure consistent, positive and impactful messaging, the MO DOC displays [Employer Branding Ads](#) across hundreds of sites to reach targeted audiences. Additionally, the organization enhanced its Indeed and Glassdoor pages with [Employer Branding Hub](#), which unlocks marketing features like compelling imagery, videos, content and review management. Gerke noted that adding employee testimonials and stories to MO DOC's sites has helped personalize messaging and showcase why it is a great place to work.

"Being able to leave a review empowers all of our staff to help make the Department of Corrections better," Gerke said. This transparency helps attract candidates aligned with MO DOC's mission and increases employee engagement and morale, he added, contributing to a 5% decrease in turnover in the last six months.

"If you're working in the public sector, candidates want to understand the benefits, and why they would want to work there," said Gadiraju. "If you can get that to be in a story form, it builds authenticity."

“

If you're working in the public sector, candidates want to understand the benefits, and why they would want to work there. If you can get that to be in a story form, it builds authenticity.”

Vidisha Gadiraju

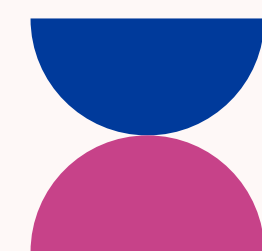
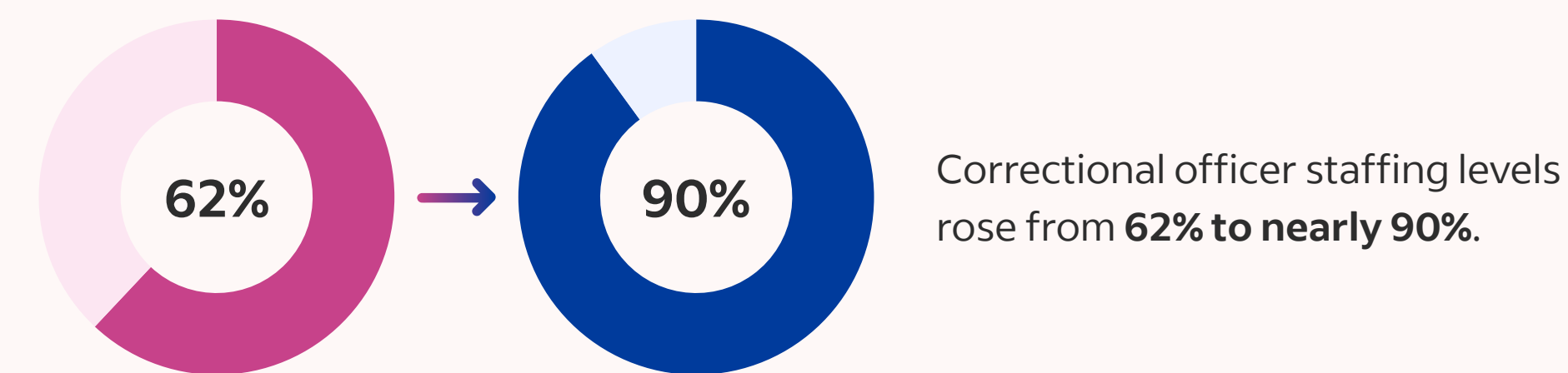
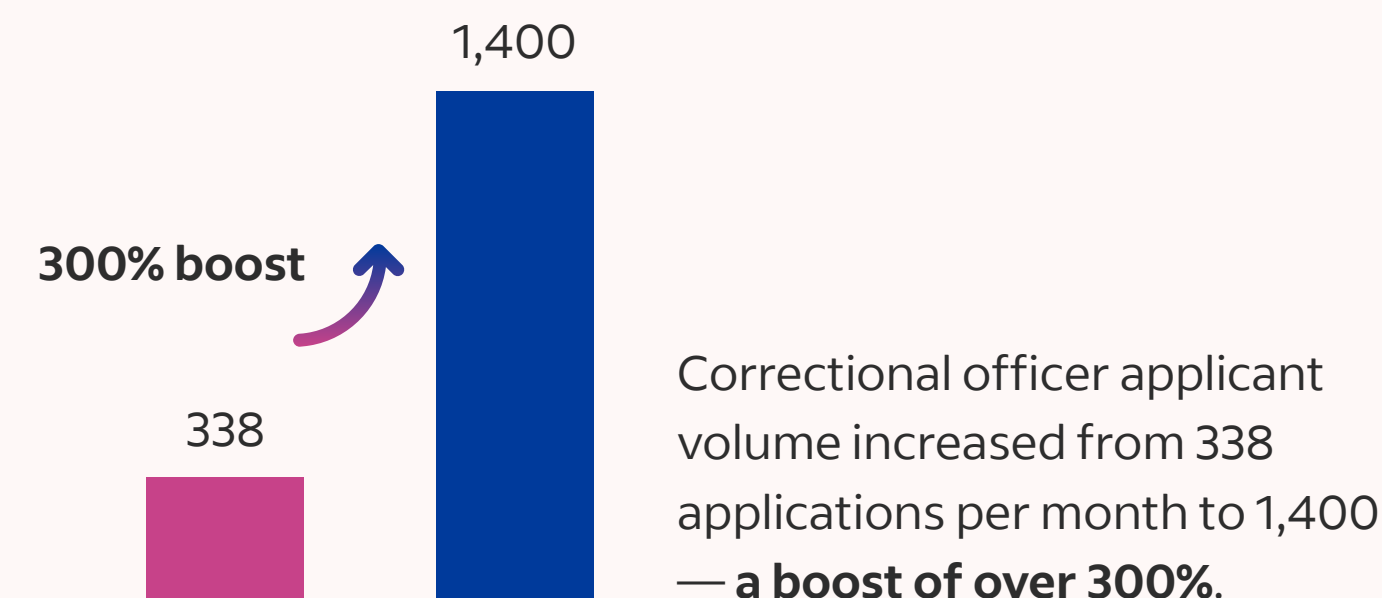
Director of Enterprise Sales for the Public Sector, Indeed



The result

A dramatic
turnaround in hiring
efficiency

In just three years of partnership with Indeed, success is measurable for the MO DOC:



Due to the automated screening and scheduling process with Indeed Hiring Events, applications are processed within **minutes rather than weeks**, reducing time-to-hire.

Harnessing data drives recruitment success

A key factor in MO DOC’s success was gaining access to measurable hiring data — an area where many public sector agencies struggle.

Indeed helps track hires by source, cost per hire and conversion rates, showing how many job seekers apply and advance to interviews. These insights allow agencies to assess their brand effectiveness, identify the most fruitful recruiting channels and allocate taxpayer dollars to achieve the maximum ROI.

“That way, we can navigate what type of budget to move towards any source that has the lowest cost per hire,” said Gadiraju. Cost per apply start is on average 49% lower for employers with Employer Branding Hub on Indeed and Glassdoor.³

³Indeed and Glassdoor data, based on a sample of 4.5K employers, US, January - May 2023 and excludes outliers. Outliers are employers with the highest 5% or lowest 5% of apply starts by EBH status. Results are based off the middle 90% of employers with regards to apply start volumes.



“

Today, Indeed is responsible for 65% of our applicants. By and far, Indeed is just blowing everybody else away.”

Darin Gerke

Talent Acquisition Coordinator, Missouri Department of Corrections



For the MO DOC, Indeed's impact extends beyond numbers. With a dedicated team of helpful representatives and a suite of innovative and effective solutions, Gerke and his team were able to hire the staff necessary to maintain essential programming for incarcerated individuals, strengthening rehabilitation efforts.

"Today, we're really just working on helping these folks come back to society," said Gerke. "96% of the offenders in prison in Missouri go back to our community and it's our job to help them prepare. Thank goodness for Indeed helping us improve our recruiting, because through it, we're making Missouri a safer place to live."

[Learn more](#) about how Indeed can help your organization transform recruiting and hiring processes.



This document is subject to copyright owned by Indeed, Inc. Any use, alteration, reproduction, retransmission, republication, in whole or in part, of all or part of the present document without Indeed's written consent is expressly prohibited. Indeed disclaims any liability from the use or application of the information contained herein or from the interpretations thereof.

Copyright © 2025 Indeed, Inc. All rights reserved.