

STATE OF NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Scott R. Frakes

Director



Pete Ricketts
Governor

NDCS Report on the Use of Retention Funds

Quarter 1: April-June 2016

Nebraska Revised Statute §90-559, adopted by the Legislature in 2016 as part of LB 956, provides \$1.5 million dollars in funding to the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) to be used for strategies to retain quality staff in resource shortage areas at institutions operated by the department. At least \$150,000 of the appropriation is to be used to retain staff within the Division of Health Services. The statute also 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.

1. How the funds are being used

The department has solicited input from staff, other stakeholders and policymakers on how best to utilize these one-time funds to help the department's retention efforts. Four primary areas have been identified for funding: Training and Professional Development, Stress Reduction and Coping Strategies, Work-Life Balance and Behavioral Health Training. Each of these four subject areas contain one or more retention initiatives which are described below:

- a. Training and Professional Development -Retaining staff includes providing opportunities for them to grow and promote. Below are several strategies being implemented to improve training and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels.

- i. Professional Development Bonus –The department is expanding its existing tuition reimbursement program to cover the cost of the employees attending an approved professional development course as well as provide a bonus to staff that complete the course. A description of the program, the reimbursement schedule based upon the number of hours of training completed, and the initial approved course list is attached to this report.
 - ii. Behavioral Health Symposium – The department is organizing a behavioral health symposium to provide professional growth opportunities for NDCS employees and interested community providers and highlight the work of NDCS behavioral health staff. We are looking at partnering with other behavioral health and criminal justice organizations to maximize participation in this event, which is being targeted for the spring of 2017. Planning has begun and additional information will be available in the next quarterly report.
 - iii. Health Care Staff Continuing Education– Pay for required continuing education requirements for licensed health care employees.
 - iv. Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor Certification – Pay for costs of behavioral health staff who acquire LADC certification outside of the normal tuition reimbursement program.
 - v. Staff Training Academy Technology Upgrades – Upgrade technology at the staff training academy to move to computer-based instruction.
- b. Stress Reduction and Coping Strategies. Correctional staff work under a heightened state of alertness in a stressful environment much of their workday. This level of stress 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, the issues specific to the prison environment.

- 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.

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.
- ii. Commuting Bonus for TSCI - Provide a monthly commuting bonus to TSCI employees based on how far they live from TSCI. Employees earning more than \$55,000 are not eligible for the commuting bonus. A detailed description of the commuting bonus is attached to this report.

d. Behavioral Health Training

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

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

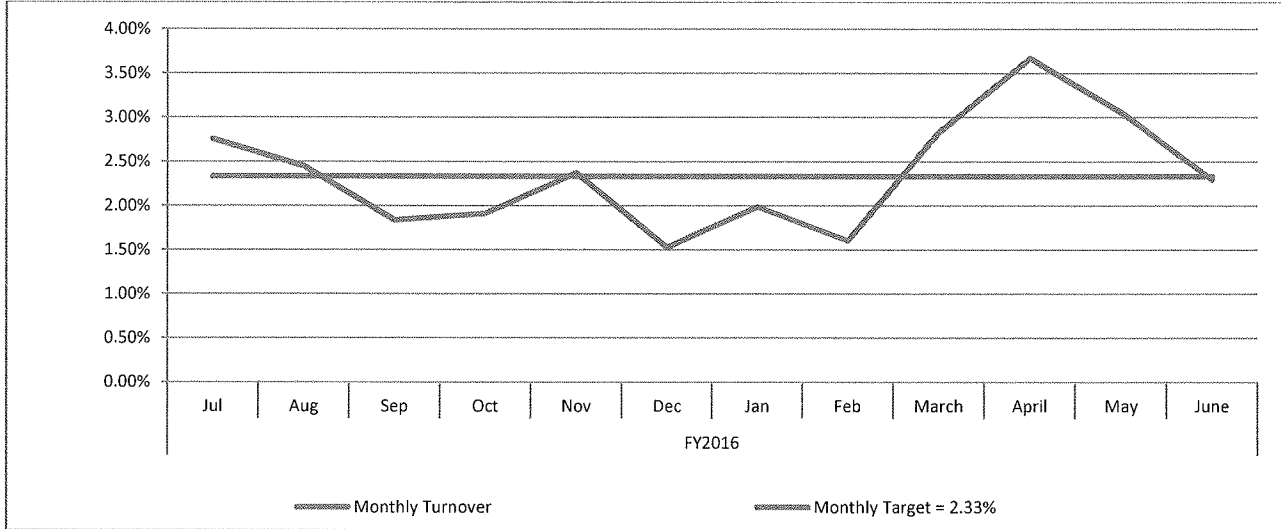
As the funds have only been available since April of 2016 and the department had to first determine how best to utilize these funds, there has not been enough time to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on staff retention. Future quarterly reports will include additional information on expenditures to date and the impact of the funds on retention as it becomes available.

3. Staff Vacancy and Turnover Data

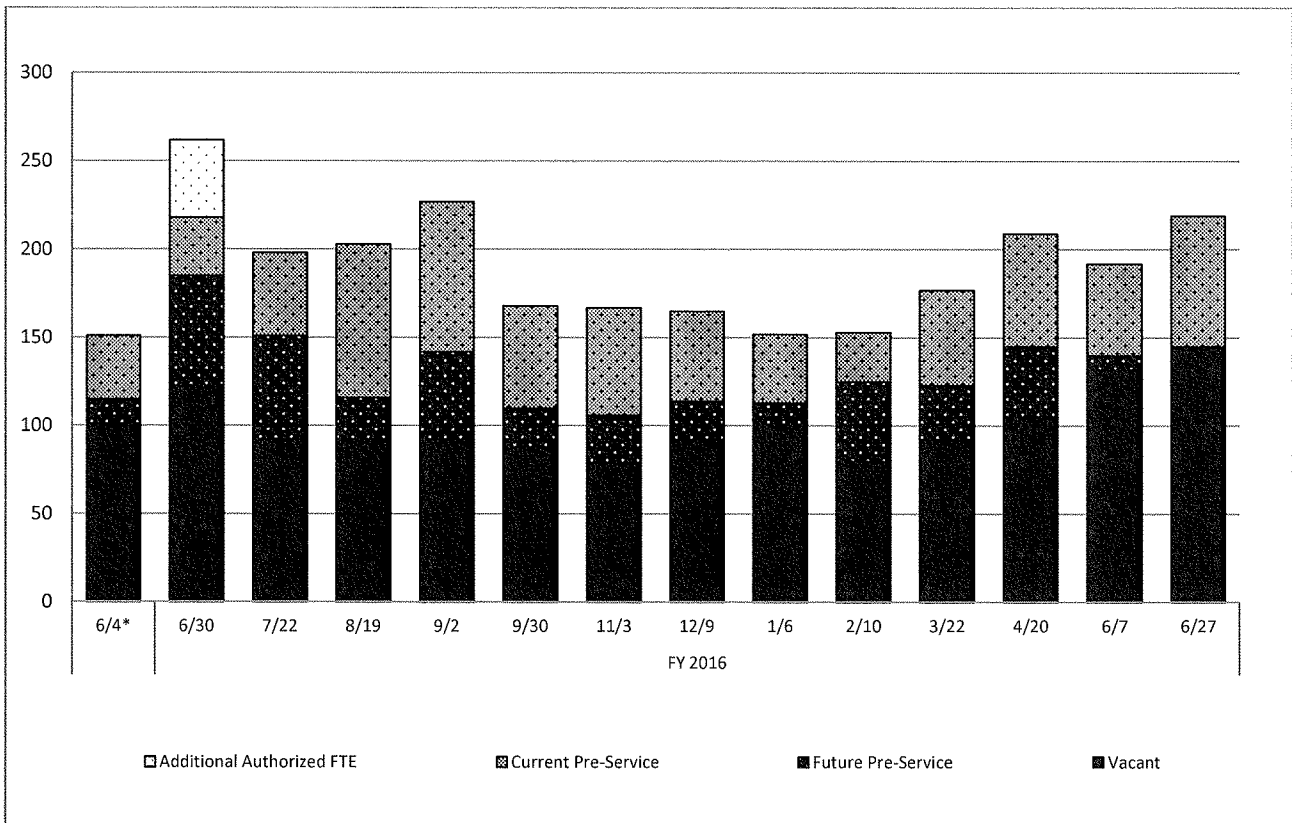
As there has not been enough time for the retention initiatives to impact employee turnover yet, this report will provide baseline turnover and vacancy data for the past 12 months. This information will be supplemented with the most recent quarter of data in future reports to help determine the impact of the new initiatives. Below you will find the turnover and vacancy information for the department's protective services employees for

the past year. Protective services is one of the highest need areas in the department from a staffing perspective and is the primary focus of these retention efforts.

Protective Services Turnover – FY 2016



Protective Services Vacancies – FY 2016



4. Expenditures to date

Several of the retention strategies which have been identified are in process but not yet underway, with vendors being identified and contracts under development. The professional development bonus and continuing education programs are underway and staff are taking courses, but we have not reimbursed any employees to date. The commuting bonus is also underway and the first pay period has been completed and \$16,290 was paid out to 375 employees.

5. Plans for the future use of the funds

The initiatives currently underway represent the department's plans 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. We will evaluate the rate of expenditures quarterly to ensure that we use the funds as appropriated and reallocate funds if necessary depending on the popularity of the various retention initiatives. The department is in the process of hiring a coordinator to oversee implementation, data collection and reporting for the retention program. The second quarterly report in October 2016 will include an analysis of how the Department would use these funds in the future if the appropriation was renewed as required by Nebraska Revised Statute §90-559.

RETENTION FUNDS – PLAN OVERVIEW

The Legislature allocated \$1.5M to NDCS for FY 2015-2016 which “shall only be used for strategies to retain quality staff in workforce shortage areas at institutions operated by the Department. At least \$150,000 of this appropriation shall be used in the retention of staff within the Division of Health Services.” To carry out our mission and goals we must retain quality staff.

We have listened to valuable feedback from staff, other stakeholders and policymakers on this topic to identify and prioritize options for use of these funds. Below is a brief summary of the NDCS retention strategies.

1. Retaining staff includes allowing them the opportunity to grow and promote. We need to provide better training and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels:
 - a. **Professional Development Bonus** – Cover the cost of the course(s) and provide a bonus to staff who complete selected online training courses.
 - b. **Behavioral Health Symposium** – Host a behavioral health symposium to provide professional growth opportunities for NDCS employees, and highlight the work of the NDCS behavioral health department.
 - c. **Health Care Staff Continuing Education**– Pay for required continuing education requirements for licensed health care employees.
 - d. **Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor Certification** – Pay for costs of behavioral health staff who acquire LADC certification outside of the normal tuition reimbursement program.
 - e. **Staff Training Academy Technology Upgrades** – Upgrade technology at the staff training academy to move to computer-based instruction.
2. Correctional staff work under a heightened state of alertness in a stressful environment much of their workday. This level of stress 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.
 - a. **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, the issues specific to the prison environment.

- b. **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.
3. Work-life balance is important in maintaining a work force that can also deal with the challenging work environment of corrections. We have heard we don't offer the amenities needed given the long hours correctional officers spend on the job. For TSCI staff, in particular, the need to commute adds hours to an often already-lengthy work day.
 - a. **Staff Wellness Centers** - Develop wellness centers to provide staff access to exercise equipment, relieve stress and promote engagement.
 - b. **Commuting Bonus for TSCI** - Provide a monthly commuting bonus to TSCI employees based on how far they live from TSCI. Discretionary positions (the warden), psychologists and medical staff are not eligible.
4. To effectively manage the diverse behavioral health needs of our population, behavioral health staff need education and training in best practices.
 - a. **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.
 - b. **Trauma-informed care training** – Training for clinicians, which informs treatment approaches to recognize the trauma their clients have experienced.

We believe the strategies identified will provide greater opportunity to retain quality staff and, in turn, relieve some of the stress employees face due to vacancies. In order to ensure all strategies are implemented and impact data is tracked, it is necessary to create a temporary position to manage these projects. NDCS will work with State Personnel to develop an SOS position to complete this work.



SCOTT FRAKES, NDCS DIRECTOR

Media Release

June 15, 2016
For Immediate Release

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Andrew D. Nystrom, Communications Director
402-479-5713; andrew.nystrom@nebraska.gov

NDCS Releases Plan for Use of Retention Funds

LINCOLN, Neb. – The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services announced, today in an internal memo to staff, the plan to use \$1.5 million in one-time funds to retain quality staff.

NDCS must use the funds during fiscal year 2015-2016 and they “shall only be used for strategies to retain quality staff in workforce shortage areas at institutions operated by the Department. At least \$150,000 of this appropriation shall be used in the retention of staff within the Division of Health Services.”

“The most successful and enduring organizations in the world are those that not only have a common sense of mission and respect for their employees, but who also devote time, energy and money into retaining those employees,” Scott Frakes, NDCS director said in the memo.

Areas receiving funding include better training and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels; resources, specific in nature and tailored to our work, to help in coping with the challenges and stress unique to the correctional environment; better wellness amenities; a bonus acknowledging the costs required to commute to Tecumseh State Correctional Institution; and augmented educational benefits for behavioral health staff.

“We have listened to valuable feedback from staff, other stakeholders and policymakers on this topic to identify and prioritize options for use of these funds,” Frakes said.

“This agency cannot, and will not, lose sight of the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan,” he continued. “We will continue to Transform Corrections; be Transparent and Accountable; develop Collaborative Community Relationships and a Culture of Reentry and Rehabilitation; and work toward attaining One Team – One Vision. These funds will help get us there,” he concluded.

An overview of the plan is attached to this email.

Professional Development Bonus

Concept: Reimburse NDCS staff for completing approved online training. Reimbursement will cover the cost of the online training as well as a bonus based upon completion of authorized courses.

Who: All NDCS staff are eligible and encouraged to participate in this program.

What: A compensation bonus for completion of approved online professional development courses.

How: The agency is amending policy to establish program criteria and a process to apply for reimbursement and bonus compensation.

Timeframe: The funds will be utilized during FY 16-17 as this was a one-time appropriation. The program begins immediately. Proof of successful course completion must be provided by July 25, 2017 to qualify for reimbursement and bonus compensation. Additional course offerings will be identified and communicated to staff as the program expands.

Summary: NDCS has an existing tuition reimbursement program, and it remains unchanged. The Professional Development Bonus program includes both reimbursement for the cost of the course and bonus compensation for successfully completing the course. You are able to select from a list of approved online professional development opportunities, and complete them on your own time. Upon successful completion you will be reimbursed for the cost of the course and you will receive a compensation bonus. The list of courses currently authorized for the program, and the compensations bonuses are on page two of this memo. The total amount of compensation bonuses is limited to \$250 per employee for the fiscal year in order to ensure all staff has an opportunity to participate. The agency is currently identifying additional courses to add to this program. The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the American Correctional Association (ACA) offer a variety of online training options covering a number of specialized functions within corrections. Additional information laying out specific procedures will follow shortly.

Professional Development Bonus pay schedule:

<u>Length of Course</u>	<u>Bonus</u>
6-11 Hours	\$150
12-20 Hours	\$200
20+ Hours	\$250

<u>Initial Approved Course List (6-15-2016)</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Course Length</u>	<u>Provider</u>
Communication Skills with Offenders	Free	10 hours	NIC.
Evidence-Based Practices in Corrections	Free	7.5 hours	NIC
Basic Correctional Officer: - :	\$208	23.5 hours	ACA
Correctional Supervision:	\$171	16 hours	ACA
Mental Health Correctional Officers	\$69	6.75 hours	ACA
Prison Rape Elimination Act	\$63	7 hours	ACA
Suicide Prevention in Corrections	\$120	13.25 hours	ACA



SCOTT FRAKES, NDCS DIRECTOR

DATE: June 15, 2016
TO: All TSCI Staff
FROM: Scott R. Frakes, Director
RE: Retention Funds/Commuting Bonus

Senator Dan Watermeier worked with the Nebraska Legislature this year to provide \$1.5 million for retention of quality employees in staff shortage areas. These are one-time funds and must be used between now and June 30, 2017. The legislation requires we measure the impact the strategies have on increasing staff retention, and report the results.

TSCI has the highest level of staff turnover in our agency. You know better than anyone the staffing challenges TSCI faces. The rural location of the facility and the large number of staff required to operate the facility brings most of you from areas outside of Tecumseh. We know commuting has a financial impact. For the next year we will provide a commuting bonus for TSCI/NDCS staff with base salaries under \$55,000. The commuting bonus is not available for contract staff.

In order to ensure equitable distribution a plan has been identified for the amounts of the bonus based on the distance between the zip code of your home and the zip code of TSCI. For those who live in zip codes 30 miles or less from TSCI, the bonus is \$30 per month. For those who live in zip codes 31 miles or more from TSCI, the bonus is \$60 per month. The attached table (TAB B) identifies zip codes based on current employees, identifying the number of miles and the bonus amount.

The commuting bonus will begin with the last pay period in June, and be reflected in the July 6, 2016 paycheck. The bonus will end after the first pay period in June, 2017. Questions about the bonus may be directed to your facility HR contact. Information on additional agency retention strategies will be published in separate memorandums.



SCOTT FRAKES, NDCS DIRECTOR

ZIP Code	Distance to TSCI in miles	Stipend amount	ZIP Code	Distance to TSCI in miles	Stipend amount	ZIP Code	Distance to TSCI in miles	Stipend amount
51510	81	\$60	68301	22	\$30	68414	41	\$60
51551	81	\$60	68305	26	\$30	68417	34	\$60
51561	74	\$60	68307	37	\$60	68418	30	\$30
51601	75	\$60	68310	33	\$60	68419	31	\$60
51648	67	\$60	68317	34	\$60	68420	27	\$30
51652	68	\$60	68318	31	\$60	68421	37	\$60
64491	56	\$60	68320	24	\$30	68422	41	\$60
66534	66	\$60	68321	34	\$60	68441	13	\$30
68037	65	\$60	68324	24	\$30	68442	41	\$60
68046	66	\$60	68329	15	\$30	68443	20	\$30
68102	78	\$60	68331	33	\$60	68446	29	\$30
68104	78	\$60	68332	18	\$30	68447	23	\$30
68105	75	\$60	68333	64	\$60	68448	30	\$30
68107	76	\$60	68337	39	\$60	68450	0	\$30
68108	74	\$60	68344	19	\$30	68454	36	\$60
68116	78	\$60	68346	35	\$60	68466	41	\$60
68120	78	\$60	68347	47	\$60	68502	54	\$60
68123	72	\$60	68348	16	\$30	68504	63	\$60
68127	69	\$60	68355	62	\$60	68505	50	\$60
68128	68	\$60	68357	17	\$30	68506	56	\$60
68131	70	\$60	68358	28	\$30	68507	61	\$60
68134	70	\$60	68372	35	\$60	68508	55	\$60
68135	70	\$60	68376	30	\$30	68510	49	\$60
68136	70	\$60	68378	16	\$30	68516	54	\$60
68137	70	\$60	68381	26	\$30	68521	63	\$60
68138	70	\$60	68407	65	\$60	68522	56	\$60
68164	70	\$60	68410	42	\$60	68526	51	\$60

Strategy	Intended Target	How it Works	How it Impacts Retention	Potential Measure	Cost	Expenditures to Date
Agency						
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	
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	
Peer Support Training	All Staff	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	
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	
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. \$60 > 30 miles, \$30 <30 miles	Travel time and cost have been identified as two factors affecting recruitment and retention at TSCI.	TSCI retention rates	\$300,000.00	16,290.00
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	\$100,000.00	
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	
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	

Strategy	Intended Target	How it Works	How it Impacts Retention	Potential Measure	Cost	Expenditures to Date
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	
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	
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	
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	
Total					\$1,500,000.00	