

# Hot Jobs 2010 Briefs

## Protective Services



### JOBS

Correctional Officers and Jailers

### VACANCIES

Correctional Officers and Jailers = 164

### REGIONAL INFORMATION

All regions in the Commonwealth should have increased hirings in the corrections industry, according to the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development.<sup>i</sup> The three areas of the state projected to experience the highest increase in hiring for 2009 are the Cape and Islands with a 17% expected increase, the northeast with a 16% increase, and Greater Boston with 13%.<sup>ii</sup>

### SALARY AT THE 75<sup>TH</sup> PERCENTILE OF THE JOB'S WAGE RANGE (meaning 75% of people are paid at or below the represented wage):

Correctional Office and Jailers = \$62,290

### BENEFITS

Typical benefits include paid vacation, sick leave, health insurance, and a retirement plan. Although the retirement age is 50 for those who have worked for 20 years, those with 25 years of service may retire at any time. Employees also typically receive uniforms or a clothing allowance.

### WORK SCHEDULE

40-hour weeks on rotating shifts (including day, night, weekend, and holiday shifts). Employees also may have the opportunity to earn overtime pay.

### IS THIS JOB FOR ME?

Correctional officers enforce rules and keep order in jails and prisons by monitoring the activities of inmates, inspecting cells and other areas for signs of illegal items, and reporting on inmates' behavior. This position involves day-to-day contact with inmates, overseeing them and serving meals to them. Rather than carry weapons, correctional officers are equipped with communication devices in case they need help.

***Individuals who have had any felony convictions are NOT eligible to be hired in this industry.***

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Correctional officers typically receive training in regional/police academies. Correctional officer applicants must pass a physical exam, criminal background check, written exam, and be screened for drug use. Training programs require a high school diploma or GED for entry. A minimum of two years of work experience or military training is needed to demonstrate job stability. The Federal Bureau of Prisons requires a bachelor's degree or three years of work experience in a related field to work in a federal prison.

A two-year and four-year college education is another route to a career as a correctional officer or jailer. Colleges and universities throughout Massachusetts offer programs that can lead to these careers. Those who wish to advance professionally or who wish to have an educational advantage over other applicants can pursue a bachelor's degree in criminal justice or criminology. Some four-year programs will accept credits earned in relevant program from a community college.

## CAREER PATHWAYS

- Can be promoted to correctional sergeant and other supervisor and administrative positions after success in entry-level positions.
- Can transfer to related jobs such as parole officer.
- College education is not required for advancement.

## RESOURCES

- Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupation Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos156.htm>.
- Massachusetts Department of Correction:  
<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsagencylanding&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Public+Safety+Agencies&L2=Massachusetts+Department+of+Correction&sid=Eeops>.
- Education Portal: [http://education-portal.com/how\\_to\\_become\\_a\\_correctional\\_officer.html](http://education-portal.com/how_to_become_a_correctional_officer.html).
- Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, Career Information System:  
<http://www.masscis.intocareers.org>.
- Massachusetts Human Resources Division, Find A State Job: <https://jobs.hrd.state.ma.us/>.
- Indeed.com: <http://www.indeed.com/q-Correctional-Officer-1-Massachusetts-jobs.html>.
- Careerbuilder.com: <http://www.careerbuilder.com>.

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<sup>i</sup> The Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development projected the increase in hiring per industry in late 2008 but did not provide detailed statistics on individual occupations within these industries.

<sup>ii</sup> This data was taken from the *Massachusetts Business Hiring Expectations for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2009: As Collected in October and November 2008 as part of the semi-annual 2008 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Job Vacancy Survey*.