

JORJA POWERS

Carson City, NV

July 26, 2023

Hunter Jones
Nevada Department of Sentencing Policy
625 Fairview Drive, Suite 109
Carson City, NV 89701
hunterjones@ndsp.nv.gov

Re: Powers/E.D. NDSP2023

Dear Nevada Sentencing Commission:

I am the right choice to fill the Executive Director opening at this time. It has been an amazing year for the Department of Sentencing Policy (NDSP). NDSP has seen tremendous progress in data collection, legislative involvement, and relationship building. We must now embark on a period of implementation to fulfill the vision and plans that drove these accomplishments.

I am the right candidate for this new era as I offer 14 years of progressively responsible criminal justice experience, most recently with NDSP as the Deputy Director/Policy Analysis Manager, acquiring knowledge directly relevant to reaching the goals set by our team.

I am a versatile and skilled professional who has been commended by my co-workers and supervisors for my hard work and exceptional knowledge of criminal justice processes and policies. Overall, I have consistently demonstrated dedication, adept communication, critical thinking, and organizational abilities in every aspect of my career.

I invite you to review my achievements, summarized in the attached resume, and find that I am the competent and forward-thinking candidate you seek. I look forward to elaborating on my specific skills and abilities.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jorja Powers

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Carson City, NV

Seeking Appointment to

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Nevada Department of Sentencing Policy

- ❖ Extensive understanding of the criminal justice process from arrest to discharge, including corrections, sentencing, and criminal justice policy through 14 years successful performance in the Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC).
- ❖ Subject matter expert and resource to the Sentencing Commission with 10 years hands-on experience interpreting Pre-Sentence Investigations, Criminal History Reports, Judgments of Conviction, Parole Documents, and Nevada Revised Statutes regarding sentencing.
- ❖ Strong collaborator and relationship builder across multiple criminal justice stakeholders. Liaised between NDOC and incarcerated persons, their families, victims, partner agencies, legislators, courts, public officials, and partner states' corrections officials.
- ❖ Data translator of insights and outcome forecasts for legislation drafts, weighing interests of diverse stakeholders—prosecutors, defense attorneys, bipartisan legislators, incarcerated persons, and victims.

Criminal Justice Career History

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF SENTENCING POLICY

2021–Current

Deputy Director/Policy Analysis Manager

Recruited to nascent department for in-depth knowledge of NDOC and Nevada administrative procedures, along with experience managing day-to-day operational functions. Reporting to Executive Director, managed 2 professional and 1 administrative staff.

- Facilitated creation of **NDOC Credit Guide**, used to assist judges, prosecutors, and public defenders in the application of the NDOC credit system. This document highlighted significant deficiencies in the system that helped inform recent legislative reform.
- Planned and implemented Parole Violator Project; presented at Nevada Sentencing Commission meetings.
- Worked with criminal justice stakeholders to analyze and revise criminal justice bills for **2023 legislative session**. ALL passed into law.
- Assumed executive operational responsibilities, enabling Director to pursue groundbreaking involvement in criminal justice reform legislation.
 - Oversaw department financial and human resources management operations.
 - Streamlined operational procedures and collaborated with internal agencies on operational matters.
 - Created internal legislative tracking document.

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

2015–2021

Administrator, Offender Management Division (OMD), 2020–2021

Provided hands-on direction for 2 supervisors and 17 individual contributors that organized, implemented, and controlled Nevada's inmate classification system, statistical information and planning system, the criminal justice records system, and central transportation services.

- **Maintained 0% staff turnover** during yearlong tenure—NDOC's only division to remain fully staffed amid COVID-induced upheaval and staffing shortages.
- Spearheaded project to apply COVID sentence credits to eligible offenders as required by AB 241.
 - Collaborated with Statistician and IT to design and test scenarios and minimize burden on staff.
 - Trained case workers and custody staff; reported discharge and parole impacts to Governor and Attorney General.

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Administrator, Offender Management Division *(continued)*

- Uncovered and corrected discrepancy between NRS and long-standing practice for application of *minimum-custody* classification of violent offenders. Met with Associate Wardens and provided written guidance for prison staff to immediately align practice with legal requirements.
- Answered lawsuits regarding inmate classification and placement, submitting relevant information to the Courts and Attorney General.

Correctional Classification & Planning Specialist, 2019–2020

Directed 9 institutional classification staff, from the Associate Warden level downward, on the application of inmate classification rules and regulations. Audited facilities' practices to ensure that inmates were properly classified. Served as community liaison on issues and citizen inquiries related to offender incarceration.

- Identified gaps in **statewide case planning training** and recruited outside agency to implement case worker training based on offender education, type of offense, mental health status, and criminogenic need. Program was later converted to in-house and remains in use.
- Taught Peace Officer Standards & Training (POST) classes—5 hours of NDOC cadet training regarding inmate classification, grievances, and recordkeeping.
- Visited prison facilities throughout Nevada to foster two-way communication and facilitate productive relationships between OMD and institutions.

Correctional Casework Specialist III, 2019

Promoted twice, from Correctional Casework Specialist I and II, 2015–2019

Authorized all classifications involving intake, movement, or custody change. Built weekly manifest for prisoner transfer. Processed all inmate lawsuits and performed casework dealing with complex legal issues, sentencing framework, or multiple problem inmates, in accordance with State laws, court orders, consent decrees, and department regulations.

Early Career Progression, 2006–2011

Progressed through increasingly responsible roles as Correctional Casework Specialist, from Trainee through Level II at NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (5 years). Returned to NDOC after a 5-year break to raise children and pursue other professional roles.

Education & Training

Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Studies and Education, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, Chico

Basic Instructor Development (BID)

Certified Moral Reconciliation Therapy Co-Facilitator



Joe Lombardo
Governor

James E. Dzurenda
Director

Kirk Widmar
Offender Management
Administrator



Northern Administration
5500 Snyder Ave.
Carson City, NV 897010
(775) 977-5500

Southern Administration
3955 W. Russell Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89118
(725) 216-6000

Date: July 26, 2023

To: Members of the Nevada Sentencing Commission

Subject: Letter of Recommendation

It is my distinct honor to recommend Ms. Jorja Powers for the position of Executive Director of the Nevada Department of Sentencing Policy.

I have had the pleasure of working with Ms. Powers for the past several years in various roles. Her understanding of sentencing laws and the real-world impact is second to none. It is this understanding of the Nevada criminal justice system that will serve her well in this new role. Ms. Powers has demonstrated her ability to research and provide data reflective of daily life here in Nevada without the influence of agenda. It is this moral compass that is required of the Director of such a critical department within our state's government. One that will provide the critical data needed to make informed recommendations and decisions to the elected officials of our great State.

Ms. Powers has already demonstrated these skills and character and I consider her a mentor and the leader Nevada needs. It is with no doubt she will continue to move the momentum forward in the direction that will best serve all of Nevada. It is truly a pleasure to make this recommendation for your consideration.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Kirk Widmar", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Kirk Widmar
Chief
Offender Management Division

Joe Lombardo
Governor

James E. Dzurenda
Director

Harold J. Wickham
Deputy Director of Programs



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To: Nevada Sentencing Commission

Jorja Powers is currently employed by the State of Nevada Department of Sentencing Policy as the Deputy Director.

I have had the pleasure of working with Jorja since 2006. Her work ethic and professionalism were so impressive that she was hand-selected from a group of her peers to be the Statewide Offender Management Administrator. Jorja was responsible for numerous Supervisory duties in addition to being the Offender Management Administrator, which acts as Coordinator for Offender Classification in all areas of the State, Supervisor for Data collection and processing, Offender credits and sentence administration, and Supervisor of all Correctional Caseworkers in the Department of Corrections. Her position entailed coordinating numerous tasks, Division and Agency administration, managing agency resources, management of the Budget for Offender Management, and assessing and defusing potential situations. Jorja is simply an outstanding Leader that has had more responsibilities than I can list. She excelled and set new standards across all areas of responsibility. Because of her obvious leadership abilities, on several occasions Jorja was appointed as the Acting Deputy Director of the agency. These results were achieved because Jorja executed every task with competence and foresight, which guaranteed consistently flawless execution. Ethical, motivated, and able to maintain a balance between mission and welfare of people, she is truly a talented Leader.

Jorja was directly responsible for relationships, coordination, and data analytics with Parole and Probation, the State Legislature, Governors Finance Office, State Supreme Court, Federal Courts, and many other Government agencies.

Jorja's success is not accidental; she is intelligent, dedicated, and displays a sense of responsibility and maturity that inspires the same from her peers and subordinates. She is mentally flexible, easily grasps new concepts, and is committed to excellence. Because of these demonstrated qualities, she has my total trust. Her personal and professional potential is unlimited.

Jorja Powers is a substantial asset to any organization because of her strong character, dedication to excellence, and her genuine concern for others. That coupled with a great personality and enthusiasm also makes her a pleasure to work with.

Please feel free to contact me, should you have any questions or require additional information.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Harold J. Wickham". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "H" and a prominent "W".

Harold J. Wickham
Deputy Director
Nevada Department of Corrections