

JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Recruitment and Retention Challenges for Pennsylvania Police, Corrections, and Prosecutors

Report of the Task Force

June 2026



***Serving the General Assembly of the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Since 1937***

REPORT

*2025 Senate Resolution 94
Recruitment and Retention Challenges
for Pennsylvania Police, Corrections, and Prosecutors*

Project Manager: Yvonne Llewellyn Hursh, Counsel

Project Staff: Abigail Gilson, Public Policy Analyst
Allison Kobzowicz, Public Policy Analyst
Lydia K. Ring, Legal Intern
Wendy L. Baker, Office Manager/Executive Assistant

The report is also available at <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us>
Podcasts are available at <https://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/podcasts.cfm>

JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION	
Room 108 Finance Building 613 North Street Harrisburg, PA 17120	Telephone: 717-787-4397 Fax: 717-783-9380 E-mail: jntst02@legis.state.pa.us Website: http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us

The Joint State Government Commission was created in 1937 as the primary and central non-partisan, bicameral research and policy development agency for the General Assembly of Pennsylvania.¹

A fourteen-member Executive Committee composed of the leadership of both the House of Representatives and the Senate oversees the Commission. The seven Executive Committee members from the House of Representatives are the Speaker, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. The seven Executive Committee members from the Senate are the President Pro Tempore, the Majority and Minority Leaders, the Majority and Minority Whips, and the Majority and Minority Caucus Chairs. By statute, the Executive Committee selects a chairman of the Commission from among the members of the General Assembly. Historically, the Executive Committee has also selected a Vice-Chair or Treasurer, or both, for the Commission.

The studies conducted by the Commission are authorized by statute or by a simple or joint resolution. In general, the Commission has the power to conduct investigations, study issues, and gather information as directed by the General Assembly. The Commission provides in-depth research on a variety of topics, crafts recommendations to improve public policy and statutory law, and works closely with legislators and their staff.

A Commission study may involve the appointment of a legislative task force, composed of a specified number of legislators from the House of Representatives or the Senate, or both, as set forth in the enabling statute or resolution. In addition to following the progress of a particular study, the principal role of a task force is to determine whether to authorize the publication of any report resulting from the study and the introduction of any proposed legislation contained in the report. However, task force authorization does not necessarily reflect endorsement of all the findings and recommendations contained in a report.

Some studies involve an appointed advisory committee of professionals or interested parties from across the Commonwealth with expertise in a particular topic; others are managed exclusively by Commission staff with the informal involvement of representatives of those entities that can provide insight and information regarding the particular topic. When a study involves an advisory committee, the Commission seeks consensus among the members.² Although an advisory committee member may represent a particular department, agency, association, or group, such representation does not necessarily reflect the endorsement of the department, agency, association, or group of all the findings and recommendations contained in a study report.

¹ Act of July 1, 1937 (P.L.2460, No.459); 46 P.S. §§ 65–69.

² Consensus does not necessarily reflect unanimity among the advisory committee members on each individual policy or legislative recommendation. At a minimum, it reflects the views of a substantial majority of the advisory committee, gained after lengthy review and discussion.

Over the years, nearly one thousand individuals from across the Commonwealth have served as members of the Commission's numerous advisory committees or have assisted the Commission with its studies. Members of advisory committees bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to deliberations involving a particular study. Individuals from countless backgrounds have contributed to the work of the Commission, such as attorneys, judges, professors and other educators, state and local officials, physicians and other health care professionals, business and community leaders, service providers, administrators and other professionals, law enforcement personnel, and concerned citizens. In addition, members of advisory committees donate their time to serve the public good; they are not compensated for their service as members. Consequently, the Commonwealth receives the financial benefit of such volunteerism, along with their shared expertise in developing statutory language and public policy recommendations to improve the law in Pennsylvania.

The Commission periodically reports its findings and recommendations, along with any proposed legislation, to the General Assembly. Certain studies have specific timelines for the publication of a report, as in the case of a discrete or timely topic; other studies, given their complex or considerable nature, are ongoing and involve the publication of periodic reports. Completion of a study, or a particular aspect of an ongoing study, generally results in the publication of a report setting forth background material, policy recommendations, and proposed legislation. However, the release of a report by the Commission does not necessarily reflect the endorsement by the members of the Executive Committee, or the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Commission, of all the findings, recommendations, or conclusions contained in the report. A report containing proposed legislation may also contain official comments, which may be used to construe or apply its provisions.³

Since its inception, the Commission has published over 460 reports on a sweeping range of topics, including administrative law and procedure; agriculture; athletics and sports; banks and banking; commerce and trade; the commercial code; crimes and offenses; decedents, estates, and fiduciaries; detectives and private police; domestic relations; education; elections; eminent domain; environmental resources; escheats; fish; forests, waters, and state parks; game; health and safety; historical sites and museums; insolvency and assignments; insurance; the judiciary and judicial procedure; labor; law and justice; the legislature; liquor; mechanics' liens; mental health; military affairs; mines and mining; municipalities; prisons and parole; procurement; state-licensed professions and occupations; public utilities; public welfare; real and personal property; state government; taxation and fiscal affairs; transportation; vehicles; and workers' compensation.

Following the completion of a report, subsequent action on the part of the Commission may be required, and, as necessary, the Commission will draft legislation and statutory amendments, update research, track legislation through the legislative process, attend hearings, and answer questions from legislators, legislative staff, interest groups, and constituents.

³ 1 Pa.C.S. § 1939.

2025 SENATE RESOLUTION 94 – MEMBERSHIP

Chairman

Honorable David W. Sunday, Jr.

Attorney General, Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General

Greg A. Rowe, Esquire

Senior Counsel to the Attorney General

John Benfield, Jr.

State Corrections Officer
SCI-Camp Hill
Cumberland County

Kirsten Kenyon

Executive Director
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime
and Delinquency

Omari J. Bervine

President/CEO
Fraternal Order of Transit Police
Lodge #109

Joshua Kilgore

Chief, Northern Lancaster Company
Regional Police Department

Kelly Callihan, Esq.

Executive Director
Pennsylvania District
Attorneys Association

Christopher M. King

Lieutenant Colonel
Deputy Commissioner, Administration
and Professional Responsibility
Pennsylvania State Police

Katie M. Charlton, Esq.

District Attorney of Armstrong County

Seán M. McCormack, Esq.

District Attorney of Cumberland County

Christopher de Barrena-Sarobe, Esq.

District Attorney of Chester County

Michael Ohler

President, Pennsylvania State
Corrections Officer Association

Travis N. Gery, Esq.

K&L Gates, LLP

Kristie Payne (served Aug.-Dec. 2025)

State Corrections Officer
Schuylkill County

Elizabeth A. Hirz, Esq.

District Attorney of Erie County

Stephen P. Polishan

President, Pennsylvania State
Troopers Association

Nicholas Hryniuk

County Corrections Officer
Wayne County

Joe Rechichar

State Corrections Officer
Greene County

Frank Irvin

County Corrections Officer
Blair County

Joseph Regan
President, Fraternal Order of Police
Pennsylvania Lodge

Dennis Reichert
Captain, Recruitment
and Retention Supervisor
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

Zollie L. Rayner, Jr.
Assistant Director
AFSCME Council 13
AFL-CIO

Samuel M. Sanguedolce, Esq.
District Attorney of Luzerne County

Kevin R. Steele, Esq.
District Attorney of Montgomery County

Daniel G. Zeigler, MPA
Sheriff, Carbon County Sheriff's Office



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Room 108 - Finance Building
Harrisburg, Pa 17120

717-787-4397
Fax 717-783-9380
<http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/>

June 2026

Executive Committee

Senate Members

Kim L. Ward
President Pro Tempore
Joseph A. Pittman
Majority Leader
Jay Costa, Jr.
Minority Leader
Wayne Langerholc, Jr.
Majority Whip
Christine M. Tartaglione
Minority Whip
Kristin Phillips-Hill
Chair, Majority Caucus
Maria Collett
Chair, Minority Caucus

House Members

Joanna E. McClinton
Speaker
Matthew D. Bradford
Majority Leader
Jesse Topper
Minority Leader
Michael H. Schlossberg
Majority Whip
Timothy J. O'Neal
Minority Whip
Robert Matzie
Chair, Majority Caucus
Martina White
Chair, Minority Caucus

Administrative Staff

Glenn J. Pasewicz
Executive Director
Yvonne M. Hursh
Counsel

To the Members of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania:

We are pleased to release ***Recruitment and Retention Challenges for Pennsylvania Police, Corrections, and Prosecutors*** as authorized by Senate Resolution 94 of 2025 to inform the General Assembly about current and recommended efforts to improve the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers. This document is a comprehensive report of information and analyses compiled by Commission staff and informed by a task force composed of members from around the commonwealth, including law enforcement officers, corrections officers, state government staff, district attorneys, and professional associations, and chaired by the Pennsylvania Attorney General.

The Task Force put forth 24 recommendations for the legislature's consideration that cover public safety personnel, direct law enforcement personnel, state and local corrections officers, and district attorneys.

We extend our thanks to the members of the Task Force for lending their expertise to this project. Moreover, we thank them and their comrades across the commonwealth for dedicating their lives to ensure a safe and secure society for all.

The full report is available at <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us>.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn J. Pasewicz
Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
RECOMMENDATIONS	3
<i>Recommendations for All Levels of Public Safety Personnel</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Recommendations for Direct Law Enforcement Personnel</i>	<i>5</i>
Statewide Law Enforcement	5
Local Government Law Enforcement	5
<i>Recommendations for State and Local Corrections Officers</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Recommendations for District Attorneys</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Other Discussions</i>	<i>8</i>
BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION	9
<i>State Funding Implications</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Understaffing and Overtime Hours</i>	<i>11</i>
Effect of Understaffing on Corrections Officers	14
<i>Prison Overcrowding</i>	<i>15</i>
Employee Volume and Overtime Hours	16
<i>Competitive Recruiting Between Different Law Enforcement Groups</i>	<i>17</i>
Impact of Federal Policing Efforts	17
Public versus Private Sector Attorneys	19
<i>Disparate Employee Benefits Across Law Enforcement Categories</i>	<i>19</i>
Benefits for Part-time Employment	19
Pension Benefits	20
Line-of-Duty Injury Benefits	21
Educational Benefits	22
Line-of-Duty Death Benefits	23
Training	24
Other Areas	26
<i>Stress, Fatigue, and Mental Health</i>	<i>26</i>
ABLE (Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement)	27
Culture of Silence	27
Vicarious Trauma	28
Burnout	28
Special Concerns Relating to Corrections Officers	29
Federal Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Program	31
<i>Social and Psychological Impact on Current Cops as well as Potential Recruits</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Societal Attitudes Towards Law Enforcement Personnel</i>	<i>35</i>

ONGOING RECRUITMENT EFFORTS BY STATE	
AND NATIONAL AGENCIES	37
<i>Role of Community Policing and Outreach</i>	39
Interactions with Individuals with Mental or Behavioral Health Issues	40
Pennsylvania's Crisis Intervention Training and Technical Assistance Center	41
Stepping Up Initiative	42
Individual County Responses	42
<i>Police Training Activities</i>	43
Act 120 Training Curriculum	43
Pennsylvania Certified Act 120 Basic Training Programs	45
<i>Secondary and Post Secondary Educational Institutions</i>	45
Secondary Education Programs	46
Post-Secondary Institutions	47
Other States' Law Enforcement Education Programs	47
Police Apprenticeships and Youth Law Enforcement, Public Safety, and Legal Experience Programs	49
Future Careers for Youth	49
Law Schools and Prosecutor Recruitment	50
<i>Online and Social Media Engagement</i>	50
<i>Veterans Transitioning to Civilian Law Enforcement</i>	52
STATEWIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT	57
<i>Pennsylvania State Police</i>	57
State Police General Government Operations Appropriations	58
Qualifications	59
Salary and Benefits	59
Recruitment Programs	60
<i>PSP Joint Operations</i>	62
Liquor Enforcement Officers	62
Motor Carrier Safety Inspectors	62
<i>Natural Resource Officers</i>	63
<i>Capitol Police</i>	63
<i>Transit Police</i>	64
<i>Other Statewide Law Enforcement Officers</i>	64
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW ENFORCEMENT	65
<i>Local Autonomy</i>	65
<i>Regional Police</i>	69
<i>Sheriffs</i>	70
<i>Deputy Sheriffs</i>	70
<i>Constables</i>	71
<i>County Detectives</i>	71
<i>Other Local Law Enforcement Officers</i>	72

CORRECTIONS	73
<i>State Corrections Officers</i>	73
Corrections General Government Operations	74
State Correctional Institutions	75
<i>Local Corrections Officers</i>	76
<i>State and County Competition for Employees</i>	77
 DISTRICT ATTORNEYS AND PROSECUTORS	79
<i>District Attorneys</i>	79
<i>Assistant District Attorneys</i>	80
<i>Office of Attorney General</i>	82
<i>Public Defenders</i>	83
<i>Prosecutor Workload Impacts</i>	84
<i>Potential Solutions to Recruitment and Retention for Prosecutors</i>	88
<i>Pennsylvania Prosecutor Recruitment and Retention Efforts</i>	93
Allegheny County	94
Bucks County	95
Delaware County	95
Lehigh County	95
Montgomery County	95
Monroe County	97
York County	97
<i>Nationwide Prosecutor Recruitment and Retention Strategies</i>	97
Tennessee Summer Clerkship Program	99
San Diego District Attorney Recruitment	100
Fairbanks, Alaska Junior DA Program	101
<i>Funding for the Education of Future Prosecutors</i>	102
 APPENDIX A	
<i>2025 Senate Resolution 94</i>	105
 APPENDIX B	
<i>Pennsylvania Regional Police Departments</i>	109

INTRODUCTION

Public safety in Pennsylvania requires fully staffed law enforcement departments, corrections facilities, and district attorney offices. Recruitment and retention problems for all three professions are at unprecedented levels, presenting challenges for these public servants to do their jobs effectively, and vacancies in these professions result in delays of justice and fears of decreased public safety.

With these concerns in mind, the Senate of Pennsylvania adopted Senate Resolution 94 (Printer's No. 702) on May 12, 2025, recognizing that vacancies in these professions must be filled in a timely manner to ensure safe communities. The resolution directed the Joint State Government Commission to establish a Task Force consisting of the Attorney General, who served as chairman, and representatives of the State Police, the State Department of Corrections, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, the Fraternal Order of Police, State Troopers Association, the Chiefs of Police Association, the Sheriffs' Association, the Fraternal Order of Transit Police, the State Corrections Officers Association, state and county corrections officers and labor representatives, the Pennsylvania Bar Association, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, and district attorneys from various areas of the Commonwealth.

The task force was directed to:

- Examine the current state of recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, corrections officers, and prosecutors and make recommendations to assist local governments and the Commonwealth in staffing
- Identify necessary changes to state statutes and practices, policies, and procedures that would assist in improving recruitment and retention
- Consult local government entities
- Accept and review written comments from individuals and organizations

The Task Force met in person or online four times, on August 22, 2025, September 25, 2025, November 13, 2025, and March 19, 2026. Additionally, staff met in person and corresponded via email with various stakeholders during the course of the study.

It should be noted that the recommendations contained in this report represent the general consensus of the Task Force. However, they are not unanimously endorsed and should not be considered the official position of all the organizations represented on the committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for All Levels of Public Safety Personnel

Recommendation #1: All law enforcement agencies should maintain current eligibility standards for training and graduation. Lowering standards may result in more applicants but has the potential to increase expenses and liability for the agency, especially if candidates previously denied are allowed to enter the service. Additionally, more support should be allocated for training.

Recommendation #2: Establish a centralized clearinghouse for job postings as it may expand the likelihood that jobseekers will become aware of positions beyond their immediate vicinity or limited to a particular type of law enforcement agency. The Fraternal Order of Police Pennsylvania State Lodge received funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) that supported the creation of <https://www.partnersinpublicsafety.com>. While the grant funding ended in December 2025, the website actively continues to provide recruitment information and social media outreach efforts.⁴ Currently, four law enforcement entities participate in this program: the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association, Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police, Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, and the Attorney General's Office. The Task Force suggests that this program could readily serve as a law enforcement recruitment clearinghouse and encourage additional groups to join the coalition. Recurring funding to maintain this clearinghouse is also recommended.

Recommendation #3: Expand efforts by all levels of law enforcement to partner with educational institutions to establish school-to-service pipelines in vocational-technical schools and both community and four-year colleges.

Recommendation #4: Pennsylvania's institutions of higher education should offer educational benefits, such as tuition discounts, reimbursement programs, loan forgiveness or course credits to assist all levels of existing law enforcement. Benefits for the children of law enforcement personnel could include reduced tuition benefits based on parents' years of service. Pennsylvania currently provides financial assistance for children of police officers, National Guard members, firefighters and correction employees who are killed in the line of duty who wish to attend community colleges, or State-owned or State-related institutions of higher education. This benefit could be expanded to include all children of law enforcement, corrections, National Guard or firefighting personnel based on a minimum number of years of service.

⁴ Website verified as live and active as of May 1, 2026, by the Fraternal Order of Police.

Recommendation #5: Permit personnel to transfer years of service for retirement and other benefits between different types of law enforcement positions, including between the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System and individual municipal systems. This would provide more flexibility for law enforcement employees to advance their careers. Allowing for portability of these years of service ensures that employees receive benefits for all years of service in law enforcement.

Recommendation #6: Increase the number of PTO days eligible for payout at retirement. This ability is subject to labor agreements.

Recommendation #7: Establish grant programs that assist all levels of law enforcement to purchase advertising and recruitment materials. PCCD administers the Local Law Enforcement Support Grant Program, but it is currently unfunded.

Recommendation #8: Create a referral bonus program for service members who refer a new applicant who successfully completes training or provides a specified number of years of service. New hire signing bonuses can also incentivize new recruits.

Recommendation #9: Permit counties to participate in the Pennsylvania Employees Benefit Trust Fund so their employees can receive health insurance benefits. This could help counties save on health benefit costs by joining a larger purchasing pool. Currently, active membership in the fund is limited to permanent full-time employees of the Commonwealth or permanent part-time employees who work at least 50 percent full-time hours for the Commonwealth. Also, extend health insurance benefits to retirees.

Recommendation #10: Offer part-time employees proportionally the same benefits as full-time employees. 2025 House Bill 1765 (Printer's No. 2174) is an example of legislation intended to provide part-time police officers with health, disability, and survivor benefits. The bill uses the definition of police officer found in the Municipal Police Education and Training Commission (MPOETC) statute, and includes law enforcement officers of municipalities, railroad police, campus security, Capitol Police, Harrisburg International Airport police, airport authority police, deputy sheriffs in second class counties, police and security officers of first or second class city housing authorities, and county park police. Consistent with recommendations 18 and 19, the bill should be expanded to include all sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and county corrections officers as well. This bill was introduced and referred to the House Local Government Committee on August 4, 2025.

Recommendation #11: Current law allows for partial waivers of Act 120 training requirements for law enforcement officers transferring from out-of-state, from federal law enforcement or military law enforcement. These candidates take an assessment test to determine what areas of training may be waived. Sheriffs and deputy sheriffs are subject to Act 2 training requirements. While a partial waiver may be granted to a municipal police officer or state trooper wishing to be certified as a sheriff or deputy, a similar waiver does not exist for sheriffs and deputies to receive partial waivers under Act 120. It has been suggested that partial waivers under Act 120 be extended to sheriffs and deputies wishing to be employed as municipal police.

Recommendation #12: Employers should provide reasonable restrictions on overtime, both in the overall amount per day, week, month, and year, as well as in the number of consecutive hours an employee can work. When excess overtime is required, provide higher hourly wages and hour-for-hour compensatory time. This recommendation acknowledges that minimum staffing needs must take priority for some jobs.

Recommendation #13: The Task Force expresses support for Congressional bill 2026 HR 7210, which excludes from federal income taxes the first \$100,000 of gross annual income from all categories of law enforcement personnel who worked full-time as law enforcement officers, and have done so for an aggregate of five years as a law enforcement officer. This act would be known as the Fuel the Force Act of 2026.

Recommendations for Direct Law Enforcement Personnel

Statewide Law Enforcement

Recommendation #14: Repeal the cap on the number of state police troopers in the Commonwealth. Currently set at 4,310, this cap can delay the Pennsylvania State Police's ability to be proactive in recruiting and training new officers, as these delays require the PSP to wait for a vacancy to occur to hire additional officers. With municipal police departments closing, the PSP is responsible for patrolling larger geographic areas and staff can frequently be spread thin or have longer response times due to the availability of officers. New specialized positions in computer crimes can reassign officers from patrol units, further placing greater demand on a limited resource.

Local Government Law Enforcement

Recommendation #15: Currently, there are disparities in reimbursement rates between those available to counties for sheriffs and deputy sheriffs training and those offered for training of municipal police officers. The law should be amended to require that municipal police officer training be reimbursed at 100 percent, and the amount of funding available to MPOETC for this purpose should be increased.

Recommendation #16: Provide incentives to encourage community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities to cooperate in incorporating Act 120 police training into their criminal justice curricula.

***Recommendations for
State and Local Corrections Officers***

Recommendation #17: Adjust the age of pension eligibility for corrections officers to 50 with at least 20 years of service or 25 years of service at any age. This eligibility would be consistent with provisions of the Internal Revenue Code that exempt retirement benefits of “public safety employees,” including state and local corrections officers from early withdrawal penalties.

The next two recommendations are intended to provide corrections officers with the same workers compensation treatment of traumatic events, and temporary disability as other law enforcement officers currently receive.

Recommendation #18: The Workers’ Compensation Act should be amended to clarify the eligibility of corrections officers for post-traumatic stress injuries benefits. Act 121 of October 29, 2024, amended the Workers’ Compensation Act to add post-traumatic stress injuries as eligible for workers compensation benefits for “first responders” under certain circumstances. First responders are identified as:

- An emergency medical services provider (EMS) provider, who is an active volunteer, employee or member of an EMS company.
- An active volunteer, employee or member of a fire company (relating to definitions) who responds to emergency calls.
- A Pennsylvania State Police officer.
- A peace officer as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 501 (relating to definitions) who responds to emergency calls.

A peace officer is defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 501 as any person who by virtue of his office or public employment is vested by law with a duty to maintain public order or to make arrests for offenses, whether that duty extends to all offenses or is limited to specific offenses, or any person on active State duty pursuant to 51 Pa.C.S. § 508 (relating to active duty for emergency). The term “peace officer” shall also include any member of any park police department of any county of the third class.

While state and county corrections officers are considered peace officers for limited purposes under the Prisons and Parole Code and would likely fall under the general definition of “peace officer,” they may encounter qualifying traumatic events in their work that are not the result of a response to an emergency call.

Recommendation #19: Pennsylvania's Heart and Lung Act, first established in 1935, is a temporary disability benefit program for law enforcement officers. It also provides disability benefits for persons who acquired tuberculosis during four years of continuous service in law enforcement. In 2023, the law was amended to add probation officers, campus police, transit police, housing authority police, and county corrections officers and jail guards to the Heart and Lung Act. The agencies and counties operating these types of entities were given the option to participate in the program. Participation is not mandatory, but once established, is irrevocable. Some Task Force members have recommended that at a minimum, counties be required to participate for the benefit of their municipal corrections officers.

***Recommendations for
District Attorneys***

Recommendation #20: Provide a temporary licensure process for attorneys recruited from outside of Pennsylvania to serve as prosecutors until they are formally admitted to the bar of Pennsylvania.

Recommendation #21: Establish a paid district attorney clerkship and internship programs in conjunction with Pennsylvania's law schools to provide opportunities for law students to work in district attorney offices.

Recommendation #22: The Task Force expresses support for Congressional bill S 3438, which provides federal grants to assist state and local governments in hiring prosecutors. This statute would be known as the Helping Improve Recruitment and Retention Efforts for Prosecutors Act of 2025, or HIRRE Prosecutors Act of 2025.

Recommendation #23: Provide funding for a comprehensive workload study of prosecutor offices to examine workloads, caseloads, and the underlying causes for high turnover.

Recommendation #24: Expand the scope of practice of certified legal interns to include appearing independently at magisterial district justice proceedings. Under current law, students who have completed their second year of law school may be certified by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to serve as interns under the supervision of a practicing attorney. This proposal would continue the practice of attorney supervision, but remove the requirement that a licensed attorney be present to oversee the intern's activities at the MDJ level.⁵

⁵ 204 Pa. Code Rule 322.

Other Discussions

The following potential recommendations were briefly discussed but not decided upon by the Task Force.

- Establish an employee assistance program to provide virtual financial assistance advice and wellness consultations for all public safety related occupations. Currently, state-employed police and corrections officers have access to the State Employee Assistance Program (SEAP) and attorneys have access to Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers. A similar wellness program should be available to municipal police and county corrections officers, as well as peer-to-peer support for prosecutors.
- Provide team building opportunities, like recreational sports teams, or public service activities to encourage public interactions in non-law enforcement related activities (e.g. Marine Corps Toys for Tots or Police Athletic Leagues).
- Establish minimum numbers of correction officers per county based on county classification (which is determined by population).
- Establish minimum salary ranges for local police and corrections officers based on national averages.
- Permit non-residents of Pennsylvania to be employed as corrections officers, while retaining a preference for Pennsylvania residents. This proposal can be found in 2025 Senate Bill 111, Printer's No. 1279. The bill passed the Senate on October 28, 2025 (50-0) and referred to the House Judiciary Committee on April 9, 2026.
- When making budget decisions for law enforcement agencies, consider the salaries and benefits of other law enforcement agencies to try to equalize salaries of similarly situated employees as much as possible across all law enforcement agencies. Otherwise, agencies that pay well may lure away individuals from lower-paying agencies, creating greater staffing shortages.