

CTE: CORRECTIONS AND SECURITY

DEVELOPING THE LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND SECURITY WORKFORCE

Career and technical education (CTE) supports America's law, public safety, corrections and security needs by

preparing learners to enter this critical workforce, which employs about **5 million**¹ people nationwide.

CTE programs in law, public safety, corrections and security develop students' technical, academic and employability skills through work-based and hands-on learning, ensuring they are prepared to enter a **high-wage, in-demand** career in areas such as emergency medical and fire, legal services and law enforcement.

This infographic describes a small sample of the career opportunities available in the law, public safety, corrections and security workforce.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND FIRE

- Over the next decade, more than **18,000**² job openings for emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics and more than **26,000**³ job openings for firefighters are projected each year.
- The highest-earning EMTs make a median wage of almost **\$57,000**⁴ annually, while firefighters can earn more than **\$84,000**⁵ per year.
- These professionals can **transition** into emergency management director roles planning for and responding to natural disasters and other emergencies.
- State licenses, industry credentials, and postsecondary certificates and degrees can help individuals achieve **career success** in emergency medical and fire.



LEGAL SERVICES

- The legal services sub-sector employs more than **800,000**⁶ lawyers and more than **350,000**⁷ paralegals and legal assistants as well as court reporters, mediators and more.
- Openings for legal services jobs are expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations over the next decade, with almost **92,000**⁸ job openings projected each year.
- The median annual wage for paralegals and legal assistants is **\$59,000**⁹ with top earners making as much as **\$95,000** per year, while lawyers earn about **\$135,000**¹⁰ annually.
- Postsecondary certificates and degrees and state licenses can help individuals **succeed** in legal services careers.



LAW ENFORCEMENT

- In 2020 the law enforcement sub-sector included about **600,000**¹¹ full-time sworn officers and civilian personnel in local police departments and almost **137,000**¹² full-time federal law enforcement officers.
- Police officers earn a median annual wage of **\$69,000**¹³ up to more than **\$100,000** per year and receive generous benefits.
- Jobs for forensic technicians are projected to grow **13%**¹⁴ through 2032, much faster than average, and pay a median wage of almost **\$64,000** annually.
- State certifications, postsecondary certificates and degrees, and specialized training can help individuals **advance** within law enforcement.



MORE JOBS IN LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY, CORRECTIONS AND SECURITY

In addition to the careers already profiled, CTE prepares youth and adults for these further occupations in law, public safety, corrections and security:

- **Correctional officer**
- **Gaming surveillance specialist**
- **Animal control worker**
- **Probation officer**
- **Computer security specialist**
- **Bailiff**
- **Park ranger**
- **Public safety telecommunicator**
- **Victim services specialist**
- **Customs and border protection officer**

At Warren County Technical High School in New Jersey, students in the law and public safety pathway program learn about advanced first aid, crime scene investigation, forensics, the legal system and more. They take part in simulation exercises with local officers and have opportunities to earn certifications in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)/Automated External Defibrillator (AED), Bloodborne Pathogens, Incident Command 100 and 700 and Hazardous Materials, among other credentials.

HOW CTE PREPARES THE LAW, PUBLIC SAFETY, CORRECTIONS AND SECURITY WORKFORCE

CTE programs of study and career pathways prepare secondary, postsecondary and adult learners for the law, public safety, corrections and security workforce in many ways:

- **Courses** in criminal justice, corrections, crime scene management, public safety telecommunications, forensic science, fire science and more spanning secondary and postsecondary education.
- Opportunities to earn **postsecondary certificates and degrees** in paralegal studies, criminal justice, emergency medical services, fire science, public safety administration and more.
- Opportunities to earn state licenses and **industry credentials** from the Law and Public Safety Education Network, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Fire Academy and American Correctional Association, among others.
- **Work-based learning experiences** like job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships.
- Competitive events, service learning and leadership development through **career and technical student organizations** such as HOSA–Future Health Professionals and SkillsUSA.
- **Activities** that build technical, academic and employability skills such as teamwork, communication and problem solving.

Citations

- ¹ CareerOneStop. (N.d.). *Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security career cluster*. Retrieved from <https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Learn/CareerClusters/law-public-safety-corrections-security-career-cluster.aspx>
- ² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: EMTs and Paramedics*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/emts-and-paramedics.htm#tab-6>
- ³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, December). *Occupational outlook handbook: Firefighters*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/firefighters.htm#tab-6>
- ⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: EMTs and Paramedics*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/emts-and-paramedics.htm#tab-5>
- ⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, December). *Occupational outlook handbook: Firefighters*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/firefighters.htm#tab-5>
- ⁶ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Lawyers*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/lawyers.htm>
- ⁷ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Paralegals and legal assistants*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm>
- ⁸ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Legal occupations*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/home.htm>
- ⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Paralegals and legal assistants*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm#tab-5>
- ¹⁰ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Lawyers*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/lawyers.htm>
- ¹¹ Goodison, S. E. (2022, November). *Local police departments personnel, 2020*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/local-police-departments-personnel-2020>
- ¹² Brooks, C. (2023, September 29). *Federal law enforcement officers, 2020 – Statistical tables*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/fleo20st.pdf>
- ¹³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Police and detectives*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/police-and-detectives.htm#tab-5>
- ¹⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, September). *Occupational outlook handbook: Forensic science technicians*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/forensic-science-technicians.htm>

Learn More

This Sector Sheet highlights just a few occupations within the law, public safety, corrections and security workforce. To learn more, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor at www.CareerOneStop.org/ExploreCareers and MyNextMove.org.