

Probation Officers Professional Association of Indiana

Recommended 2025 Minimum Salary Schedule for Probation Officers

May 15, 2024



Introduction

In 2021, the Probation Officers Professional Association of Indiana (POPAI) began evaluating concerns with the probation officer salary schedule. Since then, POPAI has been working toward fair and reasonable increases to probation officers' salaries in Indiana to keep pace with inflation and other professions that require a bachelor's degree to perform.

After collecting information from Chief Probation Officers and other sources, POPAI produced a proposal to amend the salary schedule in 2022. The proposal included five recommendations for adjusting the salary schedule: (1) raise the minimum annual salary with no experience; (2) add an additional step for 25+ years of experience; (3) modify the percentage increase between steps to 7.5%; (4) raise the administrative stipend for chiefs, assistant chiefs, and supervisors; and (5) add an additional step at five years of experience. Several revisions and addendums were produced in a [final proposal](#) published on September 22, 2023.

Throughout much of 2023, POPAI leadership had been engaging with a subcommittee of the [Probation Committee](#) for the Indiana Judicial Conference. We had several positive meetings with the subcommittee and our proposal gained the necessary support to move forward to the Probation Committee. Unfortunately, our proposal

remains with the Probation Committee and will not move forward to the Indiana Judicial Conference Board of Directors for consideration, in part due to the fiscal impact our requested increases will have.

Though we are tremendously thankful for the 7.8% increase to the salary schedule in 2024 and the recent increase of 3% in 2025, POPAI continues to advocate for higher salaries for our probation officer members.

In doing so, POPAI launched a new endeavor and engaged with [NFP's](#) Indianapolis Compensation Consulting practice to complete a compensation analysis for the probation officer position across Indiana. The information gained through this analysis provides the basis for the recommendations contained in this report.

The purpose of this document is to provide chiefs with tools and the necessary information that could be used at the local level to champion higher salaries for the probation officers working in their departments.

THE 2025 MINIMUM SALARY
SCHEDULE FOR PROBATION
OFFICERS INCREASED BY 3%
OVER 2024.

Background

Recruiting and retention of probation officers has been a significant issue facing Indiana jurisdictions.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates about 7,400 annual openings for probation officers across the nation through 2032. Much of the need to replace probation officers comes from officers leaving the profession, retiring, and growth which is projected at 3% over the same period.¹ On average, 170 openings are projected annually for Indiana through 2025 and an average of 150 each year through 2030.²

High levels of stress and burnout are challenges faced by probation officers due to the demanding nature of the job and other issues, such as rising caseloads due to vacancies. Burnout contributes to higher turnover rates.³

POPAI surveyed chief probation officers (CPO) in October 2021 to gather information about issues related to probation officer salaries, including hiring. The survey, sent to 121 CPOs, achieved an 85% response rate. In this survey, 60% of CPOs indicated that recent probation officer hires had to, or would have had to, accept a pay cut to work

as a probation officer in their jurisdiction. Almost 60% stated the number of well-qualified applicants has decreased and 63% believe low starting pay for probation officers is a factor.

In April 2023, CPOs were surveyed about vacancies and turnover rates for the year 2022. CPOs reported a vacancy rate of 6.3% with nearly two-thirds of CPOs responding to the survey, indicating at least one vacancy during the year. An average turnover rate of 12% was reported by CPOs for 2022. The highest percentage of probation officers leaving departments in 2022 had 4-9 years of experience.

CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS REPORTED A VACANCY RATE OF 6.3% AND A TURNOVER RATE OF 12% FOR 2022. THE MAJORITY OF PROBATION OFFICERS LEAVING DEPARTMENTS IN 2022 HAD 4-9 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists, at <https://www.bls.gov/oooh/community-and-social-service/probation-officers-and-correctional-treatment-specialists.htm> (visited May 12, 2024).

² Projections Management Partnership, *Short- and Long-Term Occupational Projections*, Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists, at https://www.projectionscentral.org/Projections/ShortTerm?AreaName=&AreaNameSelect%5B%5D=18&Name=&NameSelect%5B%5D=625&items_per_page=100 (visited May 12, 2024).

[me=&NameSelect%5B%5D=699&items_per_page=100](https://www.projectionscentral.org/Projections/LongTerm?AreaName=&AreaNameSelect%5B%5D=18&Name=&NameSelect%5B%5D=625&items_per_page=100) & https://www.projectionscentral.org/Projections/LongTerm?AreaName=&AreaNameSelect%5B%5D=18&Name=&NameSelect%5B%5D=625&items_per_page=100 (visited May 12, 2024).

³ Alward, L. M., & Viglione, J. (2023). Individual characteristics and organizational attributes: An assessment of probation officer burnout and turnover intent. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X23115988>.

Compensation Analysis

At the end of 2023, the POPAI Executive Board decided to seek a compensation analysis for probation officers in Indiana after our proposal failed to move from the Probation Committee to the Board of Directors for the Indiana Judicial Conference. To achieve this endeavor, the Executive Board engaged with [NFP](#), a company with an office and experience in Indiana creating compensation strategies that align with market and industry benchmarks.

NFP's experience in creating a compensation analysis in Indiana includes an analysis for judicial employees in one Indiana county. Additionally, NFP completed a [compensation analysis](#) for Executive Branch positions in Indiana, [including family case managers and parole officers](#), who experienced significant pay increases over the past several years.

To complete the analysis for probation officers, NFP evaluated data on salaries from 50 local jurisdictions in Indiana. Salaries of all probation officers employed in these

jurisdictions were examined to create benchmarks and to determine a market rate for an entry-level probation officer. According to NFP, the market rate salary for an entry-level probation officer in 2025 is \$49,899 annually based on a 35-hour work week.

Using this information, the POPAI Executive Board recommends a probation officer salary schedule that differs from the one provided by the Judicial Conference of Indiana and combines some of the recommendations made in our [previous proposal](#) published on September 22, 2023.

Only the entry-level salary was determined by NFP. The remaining levels of experience recommended below were created by the POPAI Executive Board by building upon the entry-level salary determined by NFP. No changes in the administrative stipend or any other area of the salary schedule are included in this document but can be found in our previous proposal.

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Recommended 2025 Minimum Salary Schedule for Probation Officers

The POPAI Executive Board recommends determining probation officer salaries using an hourly rate to appropriately compensate probation officers required to work more than 35 hours per week.

Other recommendations below include creating a uniform percentage increase between steps (7.5%) and adding a step of 25+ years of experience to reward those probation officers remaining in the profession.

Years of Experience*	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary Based on 35 Hours per Week	Annual Salary Based on 37.5 Hours per Week	Annual Salary Based on 40 Hours per Week
0	\$27.42	\$49,899	\$53,464	\$57,028
1	\$29.47	\$53,642	\$57,474	\$61,306
2	\$31.68	\$57,666	\$61,785	\$65,904
3	\$34.06	\$61,991	\$66,419	\$70,847
4-9	\$36.62	\$66,641	\$71,402	\$76,162
10-14	\$39.36	\$71,640	\$76,758	\$81,875
15-19	\$42.31	\$77,013	\$82,514	\$88,015
20-24	\$45.49	\$82,789	\$88,703	\$94,616
25+	\$48.90	\$88,999	\$95,357	\$101,714

Conclusion

At the end of 2021, nearly 3.7 million people, or 1 in 69 adults, were on probation or parole in the United States.⁴ At the end of 2022, Indiana probation officers were supervising nearly 110,000 adults and juveniles.⁵ The population outnumbers the people in jails and prisons combined. Thus, probation officers provide the vast majority of correctional supervision in the United States and Indiana. This essential public safety function must be appropriately funded to attract and retain well-qualified people who make a positive impact in our communities by intervening in the lives of justice-involved individuals.

⁴ Pew Charitable Trusts. (2023). Number of U.S. Adults on Probation or Parole Continues to Decline, at <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2023/12/14/number-of-us-adults-on-probation-or-parole-continues-to-decline#:~:text=Nationwide%2C%20nearly%203.7%20million%20people,at%20the%20end%20of%202021>. (visited May 12, 2024).

⁵ Indiana Supreme Court, *2022 Indiana Probation Report: Summary & Statistics*, at <https://www.in.gov/courts/iocs/files/2022-Indiana-Probation-Report.pdf>, (visited May 12, 2024).



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