



Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs

To: Vermont Sheriffs
Fr: Timothy Lueders-Dumont, Executive Director, Dept. of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs
Re: Model Compensation and Benefits Policy for Sheriffs (pursuant to Act 30, 2023)
Issued: September 15, 2026

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Timothy Lueders-Dumont'.

Position Definition: Managerial work involving the administration of various work divisions and personnel within a county Sheriff's Department. As a constitutional and elected officer, a Vermont Sheriff is responsible for establishing policies and procedures and/or ensuring compliance with those established by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC); oversight and management of personnel, contracts for services, and multiple public and private funding streams and budgets; and providing law enforcement services in the county in order to ensure the welfare and safety of individuals and the general public.

Management and supervision is exercised over law enforcement officers, and other professional, technical, and administrative employees. A Sheriff is required to maintain professional and ethical standards as required by county, state and federal agencies including, but not limited to, the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (for certified Vermont law enforcement officers), the Vermont Ethics Commission, the Vermont State Auditor, the Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs (SAS or the Department), and other partners agencies.

Job Description: Under 24 V.S.A. 290. A Sheriff's Department is established in each county, consisting of the elected Sheriff and supporting staff. A Sheriff plans, organizes, directs and supervises the assignments of both law enforcement and civilian staff members. Must ensure compliance with State and federal laws, policies, rules and regulations of the State of Vermont, Vermont Criminal Justice Center, and the Department of SAS. Must be compliant with fiscal and auditing requirements for county, State and federal funds. Plans staffing and resource needs, reviews production standards and workflow processes. Reviews forms and procedures affecting assigned sections. Evaluates work of subordinates for adherence to department standards. Evaluates needs relative to staffing, equipment, and space; proposes necessary revisions or additions. Prepares budget that identifies work tasks, goals, staffing, and other resources needed. Assists in the development and publication of educational/informational materials to facilitate and improve user and public awareness of services, and of laws and regulations. Ensures necessary coordination with other Sheriffs, law enforcement agencies, community partners, the Department of SAS, and others. Must communicate and be responsive to the public and the media, and must comply with public records obligations and requests. May recommend statutory changes as appropriate. Directs and participates in initiatives which are legislatively, federally, or administratively mandated. Represents their Sheriff's Department at conferences, committees, and meetings. Engages in special projects that increase public safety. Performs a wide array of duties relating to the role of a Sheriff. A Sheriff must have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of all aspects of work performed by the Sheriff, Deputy Sheriffs, Transport Deputies, Dispatch, Fiscal, Administrative and MH Counseling staff. Must understand laws and procedures relating to civil process. Must have thorough knowledge of court security procedures. Sheriffs must reside in the State of Vermont. When working for more than three consecutive workdays outside of Vermont, the Sheriff must provide written notice to the Vermont Dept. of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs.

Examples of work and necessary knowledge, skills and abilities include, but are not limited to:

- Directs preparation of training programs, standards, and procedures.
- Thorough knowledge of international, federal, and Vermont State laws, rules and regulations.
- Considerable knowledge of the principles and practices of public administration.
- Considerable knowledge of management and supervisory practices and procedures.
- Knowledge of budget and fiscal management practices.
- Ability to interpret and apply laws, rules, and regulations of significant complexity.

- Ability to analyze problems and recommend solutions.
- Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- Ability to work independently and as a team.
- Ability to work independently and make effective and timely decisions.
- Ability to meet, communicate, and interact with the public in stressful situations.
- Ability to manage multiple but diverse assignments and meet deadline situations.
- Ability to plan, assign, supervise, and evaluate the work of subordinates.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships.

Each of the fourteen Vermont Sheriffs are responsible in varying degrees for the following work tasks:

- Direct the development and implementation of goals, policies, and procedures for their office.
- Represent the Sheriff's Department in government meetings and coordinate with other public services.
- Coordinate with other law enforcement agencies on the county, State and federal level.
- Represent the Sheriff's Department with community organizations and the media.
- Oversee all law enforcement functions in their agencies' jurisdiction.
- Develop and manage effective recruitment, interviewing, selection and training of all personnel.
- Oversee all business management and accounting to include payroll, employee benefits, retirement and earned holiday, overtime, sick and vacation time.
- Prepare and manage budgets and funds from the county for their department.
- Help Vermont courthouse security by contract with the Judiciary, and by providing support from State Transport Deputies when they are available to assist.
- Monitor and manage the transportation of prisoners, juveniles, and persons with mental health challenges.
- Help AHS by monitoring juveniles in DCF custody while awaiting transport or placement.
- Oversee the property maintenance and management of sheriff's department, county lockups and other sheriff's department properties.
- Provide law enforcement services to local communities.
- Complete required VCJC certification training and department training.
- Negotiate and manage all contracted services and projects and all related funds and personnel.
- Purchase and manage vehicles, uniforms and equipment. Manage local and regional emergency communications sites, PSAP's, equipment, personnel and mandatory training and certification(s).
- Responsible for implementing and overseeing state and federal mandates applicable to their department.
- Respond to Legislative questions and concerns, and provide testimony at legislative committee hearings.
- Conduct public education, engage with schools, churches, community and social service programs.
- Assist with the needs of the community members particularly those who are victims of crime, struggling with addiction, food insecurity, homelessness, mental health challenges, or other issues that may bring the person or their families in contact with the Sheriff department staff.
- As an elected official, a Sheriff must communicate in a timely manner to constituents.
- Must be available to assist the State of Vermont, the Governor, other law enforcement agencies and first responders during any calls for assistance during emergencies

In addition, a statutory review of the assignments given to the Sheriffs includes the following:

- 12 VSA 691: serving civil or criminal process
- 12 VSA 696: receive, execute and return writs or precept
- 13 VSA 4948: serving warrants
- 13 VSA 7554: electronic monitoring
- 15 VSA 800: child support enforcement
- 15 VSA 1105: serve abuse prevention orders
- 16 VSA 1125: ex officio truant officers
- 18 VSA 617: assistance to local health officer
- 20 VSA 27: auxiliary State police in emergencies
- 20 VSA 1847: assistance in missing persons and search and rescue missions
- 20 VSA 2053: assistance in supporting uniform criminal recordkeeping and checks
- 20 VSA 2221: governor-called assistance for preservation of public peace

21 VSA 225: serve VOSHA citations or WC misclassification citations
24 VSA 299: general reference to peace officer
24 VSA 296: transportation of prisoners
24 VSA 307: employment of deputy sheriffs

Sheriffs are included in statutorily-established councils, boards and panels:

- Racial Disparities in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System Advisory Panel
- Governor's Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council
- Vermont Criminal Justice Council
- Governor's Snowmobile Council
- Law Enforcement Advisory Board
- Vermont Enhanced E-911 Board

Model Compensation:

Vermont Sheriffs' salaries are established by the legislature and outlined in 32 VSA § 1182.

The Legislature determines annual increases for elected and appointed officials. While these increases often follow the annual cost-of-living-adjustments under the State Executive branch collective bargaining agreements, there is no obligation for the Legislature to extend pay increases to the elected or appointed officials. Further, the elected and appointed officials do not have a step system rewarding tenure and performance, and they have been left out of mid-year non-recurring bonuses, and "as if step equivalent percentage 1.9%, for several years now. The base compensation for the Sheriffs is not comparable to those law enforcement officers who are at equivalent 'rank and responsibility' to the Sheriffs. Unlike many other State of Vermont law enforcement officers, the Sheriffs receive no overtime, no compensatory time, no "as if worked hours" compensation each pay period, no clothing allowance, no on-call or call out pay, no tuition reimbursement; and because they are elected officials, they are ineligible for the State of Vermont, State Employee Group C Law Enforcement Retirement System.

A Sheriff's compensation is also determined by their law enforcement certification, or lack thereof. The statute provides for a reduction in the salary of a Sheriff based upon VCJC law enforcement certification:

- Reduced by 10% for a Sheriff who has only Level II certification.
- Reduced by 20% for a Sheriff who has only Level 1 certification.
- Reduced by 30% for a Sheriff who has no law enforcement certification.
- Note: In order to supervise law enforcement officers, a Sheriff must have Vermont Criminal Justice Council certification.

By statute, it is contemplated that Sheriffs seek out funding for their operations from contracts that will support their work – including, but not limited to, operations, staff, training, equipment, etc. The Legislature established the Sheriff Departments in a "public-private model", encouraging entrepreneurial/commercial engagement for their operations. Failure to engage in contract work can seriously undermine the fiscal stability of a Sheriff's department since the Sheriffs rely upon those contracts help pay the salary, benefits and equipment for their staff. Given the difficulty in recruiting and retaining certified law enforcement officers here in Vermont and nationwide, the competition for staff is intense, and contract funds help to keep salaries and benefits at least, minimally in some cases, competitive.

Another important point regarding the use of funds from the Sheriffs' contracts is the "underwriting" that the Sheriffs do of the State Transport Program, see 24 V.S.A. 290 (b). The Sheriffs' specialized vehicles and the VCJC-certified officers' training, uniforms and firearms, and other equipment are not paid for by the State or the Vt. Dept. of State's Attorneys, but by the Sheriffs from their own department revenues.

The Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, under the directive and authority given to it under Act 30, is required to create a "model compensation and benefits policy" for the Sheriffs, to wit:

"Funds derived from charges for the administration of a contract, if used for sheriff, sheriff deputy, or other departmental employee compensation, bonuses, salary supplements, retirement contributions, or employment benefits, shall be expended in accordance with the model policy created and maintained by the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs. Willful failure to comply with this policy shall constitute Category B conduct pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2401(2); and,

Notwithstanding 24 V.S.A. § 291a (c), prior to a sheriff's department adopting the Sheriff's Departments' Compensation and Benefits Model Policy, a sheriff's department may use funds derived from contract administrative overhead fees to make supplemental salary payments to a sheriff of not more than 50 percent of the annual compensation for a sheriff, provided that the sheriff has been in office at least two years; and to any employee of a sheriff's department or a sheriff that has been in office less than two years of not more than 10 percent of the annual compensation for the employee. Funds derived from contract administrative overhead fees shall not be used for any other bonus or supplemental employment benefit payment".

Prior to Act 30, the statute permitted a Sheriff to retain up to 5% of the cost of the contract for the work and administration of the contract. These charges are analogous to the Indirect Cost Rate that State agencies and departments regularly charge to the federal government on contracts that the State agency or department is administering. Generally, those charges include but are not limited to fulfilling contract terms; training, supervision and performance of the staff assigned to the contract; liability costs (general liability, worker's comp); costs of vehicle and equipment utilized in the performance of the contract work; data collection and reporting; fiscal work relating to the contract; etc.

Sheriff's duties and responsibilities most closely align with a Vermont State Police Major's position. Thus, a Sheriff's salary should be equal to the total compensation of the highest paid Vermont State Police Major. The State of Vermont benefits for state employee positions – including the Sheriffs – are essentially the same in terms of health, dental, life, disability insurances. The State Police are in State Group C Retirement, while the Sheriffs are in a mix of State Group F and the newly-instituted State Group G which better compares to the State Group C. Sheriffs and Deputies* hired on or after January 1, 2025, will be in State Group G, with normal retirement eligibility with 20 years of service. Existing employees have the option of remaining in their current retirement plan. (*refers to the Sheriffs' non-State deputies). Since Sheriffs are elected officials, they are not permitted into Group C, which has a mandatory retirement age of 57.5 years of age. As elected officials, Sheriffs are not required to retire at any specific age which permits longer salary earnings if they choose to remain - and are successfully reelected.

The directives in 2023's Act 30 requires the Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, in consultation with VTDHR and VT Auditor's Office, to develop a Model Compensation and Benefits Policy for the Sheriffs (see above). This Compensation and Benefits policy, after first initiated, shall be reviewed annually, not later than September 15th, by the SAS Executive Director, the SAS Director of Sheriffs Operations, and the Chair of the Sheriffs Executive Committee, and may be adjusted by the SAS Executive Director in order to reflect fair and equitable compensation and benefits to the Sheriffs.

This policy shall be reviewed by the Vt Dept. of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, in consultation with the Chair of Sheriffs' Executive Committee, not later than September 15th of each year.

With the adoption of this policy by the Department of SAS, the statute again permits a Sheriff to retain up to 5% of the cost of the contract for the work and administration of the contract. A sheriff may retain contract administrative fees, up to 5%, from the period of January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026, for the following purposes:

Concerning the Sheriff's allowable allocation from the 5% toward their salary adjustment, during the calendar year 2026, SAS will continue to principally follow the guidance and policy established in the 2025 Compensation Policy,¹ with one change.

For 2026, Sheriffs will have options for determining their allowable salary adjustments from the 5% (OPTION 1 or OPTION 2). A Sheriff may also elect not to receive compensation from the allowable 5% (OPTION 3). See below.

2026 OPTION 1: A Sheriff may elect to use the total compensation figure for the highest-paid Vermont State Police VSP Major as of the first payroll period in September, 2026 (which will be produced by the SAS Fiscal Director), which the Department will provide. Under this option, in recognition of potential upward fluctuations in VSP Major compensation later in the fiscal year, Sheriffs may supplement the September figure by an additional ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for purposes of determining their own permitted salary level utilizing the 5% allowance.

2026 OPTION 2: Alternatively, a Sheriff may choose to wait until the final pay period of December, 2026, at which time the Department will publish the updated total compensation figure for the highest-paid VSP Major. If a Sheriff elects to wait until December the Sheriff may only utilize the 5% up to, but not greater than, the total compensation figure for the highest-paid Vermont State Police VSP Major. As such, under OPTION 2, the Sheriff is prohibited from collection of the \$10,000, only allowed under OPTION 1.

2026 OPTION 3: Elect not to receive compensation from the allowable 5%.

The Sheriff must inform the Department in writing no later than November 1, 2026 of which option they are electing. SAS will provide a worksheet with specific figures for Sheriffs to complete and submit. It is advisable for Sheriffs to complete this worksheet and submit to SAS-EDO staff. After November 1, the Sheriff may not change or substitute their election. If a Sheriff does not submit, in writing, their election for OPTION 1 or OPTION 2 by November 1, 2026, the Department will apply OPTION 2. As such, it is advisable for a Sheriff to inform the Department if they are electing OPTION 3 (not to receive compensation from the allowable 5%).

Pursuant to law, Sheriffs retain discretion in managing their contracts throughout the year, within the bounds of this policy. However, they must still notify SAS of their selected option by the required deadline (noted above).² Aside from the introduction of the more flexible election process, the 2026 compensation policy remains substantially unchanged from the 2025 policy.

The Vermont Legislature establishes elected officials' base-statutory salary figures before the end of the legislative session.

¹ The 2025 policy provided that a Sheriff's allocation from the 5% toward their salary adjustment is permitted to allow the Sheriff's total compensation to be equivalent to the total compensation for the highest paid VSP Major as of the date of the figure produced by SAS in September.

² SAS will rely on the support of the SAS DOSO, the SAS Fiscal Director, and the Director of Labor Relations and Operations to obtain and advise on the total compensation figure for the highest-paid VSP Major as well as the state-paid compensation information for individual Sheriffs. If a Sheriff elects to wait until December rather than using the September figure plus the permitted \$10,000 supplement, SAS will provide the Sheriff with the updated total compensation information for both the highest-paid VSP Major and the individual Sheriff, consistent with the policy described above, at that time. Specific figures will be supplied in a worksheet provided by SAS.

Act 30 states: *"Funds derived from charges for the administration of a contract, if used for sheriff, sheriff deputy, or other departmental employee compensation, bonuses, salary supplements, retirement contributions, or employment benefits, shall be expended in accordance with the model policy created and maintained by the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs. Willful failure to comply with this policy shall constitute Category B conduct pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2401(2)."*

As such, the Department's policy relating to these other expenditures is as follows:

1. Permits the Sheriff to provide staff in their Sheriff's department an increase of not more than 35% of their annual salary. All payments must be through the Sheriff's formal payroll system.
2. If a Sheriff employs a State Transport Deputy (State employee) in a part-time role for the Sheriff's own department, the annual salary figure permissible for calculating the allowable increase outlined in #3 above shall be only those hours paid to the individual directly by the Sheriff's own department and payroll system, not the combination of the employee's State and Sheriff's Dept. salary.
Note: Any hours worked by a State Transport Deputy (State employee) for the Sheriff may not coincide with any hours for which the State Transport Deputy is compensated by the State of Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs for regular or overtime hours worked.
3. For annual costs that the Sheriff may incur for employer-sponsored programs for staff health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, retirement, and long-term disability insurance.
4. For recruitment of staff including sign-on bonuses, which shall be limited to the amount determined annually under this policy. Such determination shall be based upon a review by SAS Director of Sheriffs Operations of current Vermont state and municipal law enforcement agencies/departments sign on bonuses, as adopted in the SAS Compensation and Benefits Policy. This provision for sign-on bonuses must be reviewed each year, not later than September 15th of each year for the annual update and issuance of this Compensation and Benefits policy.
5. For recruitment of staff through the purchase of retirement time ("air-time") for an employee in their current retirement system, of not more than two years' time cost. Payments may be made to the employee for purpose of their purchasing retirement "airtime", and will require full and proper documentation presented to the SAS Executive Director and Director of Sheriff Operations before such funding to the potential employee is awarded. This provision for air-time purchase must be reviewed under this policy each year, not later than September 15th of each year for the annual update and issuance of this Compensation and Benefits policy.
6. For an employee emergency care fund, such as a house fire; a hospitalization of an employee or family member for a serious injury or illness to help with transportation or lodging costs; or other such emergency. In such situations, the amount of funds allowed to be granted may not exceed \$3,000, and must be paid through the Sheriff's department's payroll system.
7. The use of the 5% can be used for the Sheriff's department operational costs.

All such payments in this policy must be made through the Sheriff's department's formal payroll system with all federal and state payroll taxes deducted through that formal system. The use of the 5% contract fees earned by the Sheriff's Department shall not be used for any other payments to an employee except as provided for in SAS Sheriffs' Compensation and Benefit Policy, unless

the Sheriff requests and receives a waiver for a specific purpose from the SAS Executive Director and the Sheriffs' Executive Committee.

In accordance with Vermont statutory provisions (24VSA 291(d), the compensation must be awarded within the same calendar year in which the revenue was received by the Sheriff's department from the contracts.

Willful failure to comply with this policy shall constitute Category B conduct pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2401(2).

Recommendation to the Sheriffs' for Salary Compensation for the Sheriffs' "Other" Staff:

For the Sheriff's own staff (i.e. non-state employees), the State of Vermont's Classified Pay Plan can help provide the guidance for minimum and maximum salaries, relative to the individual's prior work experience, and in some cases, education and/or certification. These salary figures can be helpful in assessing deputies, dispatchers, fiscal and administrative support staff. The Department of SAS can guide a Sheriff in those salary determinations if requested.