



## New Jersey Department of Corrections

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### **NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WELCOMES 96 TRAINING ACADEMY GRADUATES**

**TRENTON, NJ** – On Tuesday, August 20, the [New Jersey Department of Corrections](#) (NJDOC) welcomed Class 256 – 96 graduates of the Training Academy – into the Department’s ranks of Correctional Police Officers. The graduation ceremony was held at Patriots Theater at the War Memorial in Trenton, where family and friends of the graduates were invited to attend the special event designed to honor Class 256’s hard work and to recognize their accomplishments.

“We are excited to welcome 96 new Correctional Police Officers into our ranks,” said **Governor Phil Murphy**. “Each Class 256 graduate has proven that they possess the work ethic, determination, and dedication required to join the ranks of our honored correctional officers. Congratulations and I wish you luck as you go forth and serve your state in the crucial work of protecting the safety and dignity of the public and incarcerated people here in New Jersey.”

“It is with great pride that we welcome Class 256 to the New Jersey Department of Corrections as they join a team of dedicated professionals who make a real difference in people's lives,” said **Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.** “Their commitment and service to protecting our communities is inspiring, and we are grateful for the determination of the graduates who completed the nation's most intensive and rigorous training academy.”

Class 256 joins the state’s largest law enforcement agency, where more than 4,300 custody staff members are responsible for the protection of more than 13,000 incarcerated persons in nine facilities throughout the state.

During their [Academy Training](#), Class 256 completed 17 weeks of intensive academic study and physical fitness training (State Basic Course), along with two weeks of immersive, on-the-job training in nine NJDOC facilities across the state. Coursework included instruction in firearms training and safety, defensive tactics, conflict resolution and de-escalation, criminal law, gender- and trauma-informed policing, emergency medical care, and more than 50 physical training sessions.

#### **Class 256 by the Numbers:**

- 96 total graduates, including 89 men and seven women.
- 22 graduates have earned various academic degrees – seven graduates with associate degrees, 12 with bachelor’s degrees, and three with a master’s degree.
- 8 graduates have military service backgrounds.
  - United States Army (5)
  - United States Marine Corps (3)
- 20 graduates come from families with a tradition of law enforcement service.
- Graduates hail from 18 New Jersey counties, as well as two counties in Pennsylvania:

### ***New Jersey***

- Atlantic (1)
- Bergen (4)
- Burlington (8)
- Camden (3)
- Cape May (5)
- Cumberland (9)
- Essex (12)
- Gloucester (5)
- Hunterdon (2)
- Hudson (6)
- Mercer (4)
- Middlesex (9)
- Monmouth (1)
- Ocean (9)
- Passaic (2)
- Somerset (1)
- Union (11)
- Warren (2)

### ***Pennsylvania***

- Northampton (1)
- Philadelphia (1)

Further recognizing exemplary efforts, several graduates of Class 256 and one of NJDOC's instructors were named award recipients at this year's graduation ceremony:

#### **Harry Ellifritz Leadership Award**

- Ofc. Samantha Sadler

#### **Stone/Ratajczak Professionalism Award**

- Ofc. Pierre Stokes

#### **Police Training Commissioner Merit Award**

- Ofc. Anthony Felice
- Ofc. David Hernandez
- Ofc. Brandon Pena

#### **Wayne Manstream Physical Fitness Award**

- Ofc. Franklin Checo Mercado

#### **Commissioner's Physical Fitness Award for Most Improved**

- Ofc. Sharae Francis

#### **Fred Baker Memorial Academic Award**

- Ofc. Christopher Alvarez

#### **Michael R. Pofahl Memorial Firearms Award**

- Ofc. Bryan Leigh

"Your career in public safety is one of the most rewarding in law enforcement, knowing that your work is contributing to safer communities and meaningful rehabilitation throughout New Jersey," Commissioner Kuhn said.

At NJDOC, Correctional Police Officers may serve in various roles and can pursue a variety of unique [career paths](#) within the Department, including positions within the nine NJDOC facilities, along with a variety of specialty tracks – including Special Operations Group, which specializes in K-9s, designated marksmen, and critical incident negotiation; Special Investigations Division, which specializes in special victims, fugitive and corrections intelligence; and the Office of Emergency Management, which provides advanced security for high-profile events; and more.

In November 2023, a new four-year agreement for NJDOC Correctional Police Officers was finalized providing an across-the-board salary increase of 3.5 percent each year, with the possibility of additional annual salary adjustments. In addition to annual salary increases, the new agreement also implemented a revised salary schedule that will allow for increased take-home pay. As of July 1, 2024,

starting [salaries for NJDOC Correctional Police Officers](#) now begin at approximately \$51,400 upon graduation from the Academy. Under the new contract, salaries for Senior Correctional Police Officers now range from \$70,500 up to \$123,000 annually.

In addition to a competitive salary, NJDOC Correctional Police Officers can also earn a wide variety of benefits – paid time off, excellent health benefits (including dental and vision), education reimbursement, maternity and family leave, disability benefits and leave, military benefits and leave, retirement benefits, and more.

Are you or someone you know looking to join New Jersey’s largest law enforcement agency? NJDOC is actively recruiting dedicated, highly-motivated, purpose-driven individuals to become Correctional Police Officers, adding to the Department’s growing force of elite corrections professionals. Class 257 begins training in September 2024, and recruitment for Class 258 is ongoing. For those interested in learning more about a career at NJDOC, visit [www.JoinNJDOC.gov](http://www.JoinNJDOC.gov) today for detailed information and to start the application process online.

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#### **About New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC)**

The mission of NJDOC is to advance public safety and promote successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, rehabilitative, and gender-informed environment, supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce, enhanced by community engagement. For more information, visit: [NJDOC.gov](http://NJDOC.gov).