



New Jersey Department of Corrections

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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WELCOMES 157 TRAINING ACADEMY GRADUATES

TRENTON, NJ – On Tuesday, February 10, the [New Jersey Department of Corrections](#) (NJDOC) welcomed Class 259 – 157 graduates of the Department’s Training Academy – into the Department’s ranks of Correctional Police Officers, the largest class since 2017. 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 259’s hard work and accomplishments, as they begin their new careers at NJDOC.

“I am thrilled to congratulate this new cohort of correctional police officers on their graduation, and I wish them well as they enter the next stage of their careers,” **said Governor Mikie Sherrill**. “When I served as the Reentry Coordinator at the U.S. Attorney’s Office, I saw just how critical a role our correctional police officers play in the rehabilitation process. I commend these men and women for their dedication to creating a safe, stable environment for incarcerated individuals to pursue reentry.”

“It is both a privilege and honor to welcome these exemplary officers of Class 259 to the New Jersey Department of Corrections,” said **Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.** “Today, each of you become part of one of the country’s leading law enforcement agencies, and the largest law enforcement agency in the state of New Jersey. Our correctional police officers are the foundation by which our Department was built and operates – playing a vital role in preserving public safety, supporting meaningful rehabilitation and protecting communities throughout New Jersey. Each one of you reflects the core values of our Department, and we are honored to welcome you into our ranks.”

During their [Academy Training](#), Class 259 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 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 259 by the Numbers:

- 157 total graduates, including 133 men and 24 women.
- 41 graduates have earned various academic degrees:
 - Associate’s degree (10)
 - Bachelor’s degree (31)
- 19 graduates have military service backgrounds:
 - United States Air Force (3)
 - United States Army (8)
 - United States Marine Corps (4)
 - United States Navy (3)

- United States Coast Guard (1)
- 76 graduates come from families with a tradition of law enforcement service.
- Graduates hail from 20 New Jersey counties, as well as one county each in Delaware, New York and Pennsylvania, respectively:

New Jersey

- Atlantic (3)
- Bergen (6)
- Burlington (6)
- Camden (5)
- Cape May (4)
- Cumberland (22)
- Essex (14)
- Gloucester (7)
- Hudson (7)
- Hunterdon (1)
- Mercer (9)
- Middlesex (15)
- Monmouth (5)
- Morris (1)
- Ocean (18)
- Passaic (9)
- Somerset (5)
- Sussex (1)
- Union (14)
- Warren (2)

Delaware

- New Castle (1)

Pennsylvania

- Bucks (1)

New York

- Richmond (1)

Further recognizing exemplary efforts, several graduates of Class 259 and one NJDOC instructor were named award recipients at this year's graduation ceremony:

Harry Ellifritz Leadership Award

- Officer Eric Durkot – Instructor

Stone/Ratajczak Professionalism Award

- Officer Christopher Scales

Police Training Commission Merit Award

- *Alpha Platoon* – Officer Josue Dort
- *Bravo Platoon* – Officer Michael Janocko
- *Charlie Platoon* – Officer Nicholas Olan
- *Delta Platoon* – Officer Christopher Scales

Wayne Manstream Physical Fitness Award

- Officer Fednel Charly

Commissioner's Physical Fitness Award for Most Improved

- Officer Austin Davis

Fred Baker Memorial Academic Award

- Officer Dawson Coyle

Michael R. Pofahl Memorial Firearms Award

- Officer Makai Rodriguez

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; the *Office of Emergency Management*, which provides advanced security planning for high profile events; and more.

As of July 1, 2025, starting [salaries for NJDOC Correctional Police Officers](#) now begin at approximately \$53,200 upon graduation from the Academy. Under the new contract, salaries for Senior Correctional Police Officers now range from \$73,100 up to \$123,000 annually.

In addition to a competitive salary, NJDOC Correctional Police Officers 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 260 begins training in March 2026, and applications for Class 261, which starts in September 2026, are being accepted now.

To learn more about a career at NJDOC, visit [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](#).