

CTE: THE KEY TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The LPSCS sector:

Employs more than
4.5 million
people¹

Incorporates the
\$46 billion U.S. security
market²



Includes emergency
first responders

What is the pathway to these
fulfilling and essential careers?

Career and Technical Education!



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Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security

The law, public safety, corrections and security (LPSCS) sector:

- includes corrections, emergency dispatch, emergency medical services, firefighting, forensic science, law enforcement, legal services, public safety, and security and protective services
- offers many jobs that pay family-sustaining wages
- requires highly skilled individuals

What jobs are available in LPSCS?

The law, public safety, corrections and security Career Cluster[®] incorporates many occupations that support the U.S. criminal justice system and the myriad of professionals who assist in emergencies such as natural disasters. Many careers in this sector have significant job openings. For example, more than 20,000 new firefighters³ will be needed across the nation, particularly in the west, as fire seasons lengthen.⁴ In addition, more than 40,000 police officers and detectives will be needed by 2029⁵ as individuals retire or resign.⁶ Demand for legal services will drive the need for paralegals and legal assistants, with job opportunities increasing by 10% through 2029 – much faster than average.⁷ The demand will be similar for court reporters who transcribe trials, depositions and other legal proceedings.⁸ The greater use of technology in legal and protective services will also fuel job growth for forensic science technicians and drone operators.⁹

Individuals in LPSCS can earn well above the national median wage, including those with postsecondary credentials beyond a high school diploma but below the bachelor's degree level. This includes average earnings of more than \$67,000¹⁰ per year for police officers, who typically also enjoy generous benefits; more than \$61,000¹¹ per year for court reporters; \$53,000¹² annually for firefighters; and more than \$66,000¹³ for paralegals who work in finance and insurance or for the federal government.

Many professionals in LPSCS have postsecondary credentials such as certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees and Juris Doctor degrees. In addition, emergency medical technicians, correctional officers, security guards and others employed in this field often need licenses or industry certifications, and background checks may also be required. These credentials verify technical, academic and employability skills for job responsibilities such as responding to emergencies, de-escalating tense situations, collecting evidence, preparing for hearings and trials, and more. In addition, many legal and public safety professionals increasingly use technology on the job. Examples of occupations in this sector include:

- police officers
- paralegals
- emergency medical technicians
- FBI agents
- bailiffs
- forensic science technicians
- emergency dispatchers
- firefighters



Endnotes

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How does CTE prepare the LPSCS workforce?

Career and technical education prepares high school, postsecondary and adult students for careers in law, public safety, corrections and security through:

- the national Career Clusters Framework—including Career Clusters and pathways in law, public safety, corrections and security as well as government and public administration—which outlines course progressions that help students explore career options and prepare for college and career success
- CTE courses in corrections, law enforcement, forensic science, criminal law and procedures, public safety, fire science and more, all integrated with rigorous academics
- work-based learning experiences, such as the Maryland Emergency Management Registered Apprenticeship, developed as a partnership among the Mid-Atlantic Center for Emergency Management at Frederick Community College, other postsecondary institutions, the state's Emergency Management Agency and employers¹⁴
- career and technical student organization experiences, such as SkillsUSA competitions in criminal justice, crime scene investigation and firefighting as well as Business Professionals of America and Future Business Leaders of America events in business law¹⁵
- opportunities to earn stackable postsecondary certificates and degrees as well as licenses and industry certifications, such as the emergency dispatcher credential from the National Emergency Communications Institute (NECI 9-1-1) and the Law & Public Safety Education Network¹⁶

What are promising programs in LPSCS?

The **Paralegal Studies** program at **Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)** in Cleveland, Ohio, prepares students to serve as paralegal professionals with American Bar Association-approved coursework in civil procedure, torts and evidence, drafting legal documents and performing computer-assisted legal research.¹⁷ Learning extends beyond the classroom to practicums where students gain experience in a legal office, corporate legal department or public defender's office. Tri-C's program offers courses in various paralegal specialty areas such as employment law, immigration law, criminal law and family law. Students can earn either a two-year associate degree or a one-year post-degree certificate, and many program graduates also pursue law degrees and find themselves well positioned for their first year of law school. Alumni and current students also receive support from the program's Paralegal Professionals Organization, which provides peer guidance, educational opportunities and career advice.

Waipahu High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, offers the **Law and Justice Administration Pathway** under its Academy of Professional and Public Services, which received the highest level of recognition from the National Career Academy Coalition in 2020.¹⁸ The program introduces students to careers in law enforcement, legal services and forensics through hands-on learning and coursework in criminal justice and public safety. In partnership with the FBI Honolulu Division's Adopt-a-School program, the academy provides a two-day immersive field exercise called PROVE – Practical Observation and Vocational Experience. PROVE tasks students with interviewing witnesses, sketching crime scenes and gathering comprehensive notes to solve a mock multi-jurisdictional criminal investigation. Students can take part in work-based learning experiences with the Honolulu Police Department and internships with Hawaii's First Circuit Court, the Lieutenant Governor's Office and the education department section of the State Attorney General's Office. Since partnering with the FBI, the school has experienced higher rates of academic achievement and on-time graduation and lower rates of disciplinary issues.¹⁹