CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Career opportunities in criminal justice are both numerous and diverse for individuals with the appropriate educational backgrounds.

**Careers in Law Enforcement**

Career opportunities in public law enforcement exist at the federal, state, county, and municipal levels. At the federal level, career opportunities exist, for example, in the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Internal Revenue Service; the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services; Customs; Postal Inspectors; Central Intelligence Agency; National Security Agency; Military Police/Investigations; the Drug Enforcement Agency; the Department of Health and Human Services; and the department of Agriculture, to mention just a few.

At the State level, positions are generally available in the state police or highway patrol, and in a variety of state regulatory agencies such as conservation, park services, motor vehicles, university police, drug enforcement, child/family services, and arson investigations.

Employment in law enforcement at the county level is generally with the sheriff’s department although opportunities in other areas involving regulatory functions sometimes exist.

Mobility and appropriate educational and personal background characteristics are perhaps the most important keys to securing employment in one of the more than 40,000 public law enforcement agencies. Although the majority of positions available are entry-level positions, requirements vary greatly depending upon the type (federal, state, or local) and location (urban/rural and geographic) of the agency. A variety of other positions are also available in law enforcement. These include dispatcher, clerk, and computer operator/technician.

Further information on careers in law enforcement can be obtained by writing to the following center:

National Employment Listings Services
Texas Criminal Justice Center
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX 77341

**Careers in the courts**

Opportunities for careers in the courts are somewhat more limited than in law enforcement, although they also exist at the federal, state, and municipal levels. Generally speaking, court personnel include court administrators; adult and juvenile probation officers, clerk, members of the prosecutors staff, members of the public defenders staff, judges, court reporters, and bailiffs. Some of these positions are filled through elections (prosecutors, judge, circuit clerk, for example), some through appointment. Careers as probation officers, investigators for the prosecutor or public defender, bailiffs, or court administrators typically depend upon both personal qualifications and political appointment.

The position of court administrator is a relatively recent addition to the ranks of court personnel and many jurisdictions still do not hire court administrators.

Both adult and juvenile probation officer positions may be found at the county level in most states and are sometimes available at the state level. Adult probation officer positions are also found at the federal level.

Court reporters are found in almost all courts. Similarly, bailiffs are found in court at all levels. Salaries at the county and state levels vary considerably by region.

Further information on careers in the courts may be obtained from:

Information Services
The American Bar Association
1155 East 56th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

**Careers in Corrections/Social Services**

Here again, a variety of positions are available at federal, state, county, and local levels. Correctional officer, caseworker, counselor, sociologist, social worker, psychologist, and parole officer are job titles of some of the positions available in the correctional field. Positions are also sometimes available in the administration of correctional facilities.

Caseworker positions may be available with a variety of public and private social service agencies such as Children and Family Services, Catholic Social Services, Public Aid, and Youth Service Bureaus or other diversionary or treatment programs.
Additional sources of information concerning careers in corrections include:
The American Correction
4321 Hartwick Road
College Park, MD 20740

**Careers Opportunities in Security**
Included among the career opportunities in this category are those in industrial and retail security and loss prevention as both line security personnel and security administrators. The security field is a rapidly growing one and opportunities in this area should continue to grow. Computer security, for example, is an area still in its infancy, antiterrorist security forces are a relatively new concept in the U.S., and prevention and detection of employee theft are now a major concern to many organizations. Some authorities estimate that for every public police officer hired, three people are employed in private security. Security personnel are employed in organizations such as banks, public utilities, retail stores, insurance companies, oil companies, hospitals, industrial companies, and telecommunications companies. Types of positions include personnel protection, computer security, guard forces, physical security, investigations, plant security, and counterterrorism to name a few. Salaries in many security positions have become very competitive and those in security administration are often very good. For further information about security careers, contact:
American Society for Industrial Security
2000 K Street N.W. Suite 651
Washington, D.C. 20006

**Careers Opportunities in Law and paralegal Services**
Individuals with law degrees or training and education in paralegal services may find employment in a variety of jobs. Most judges are lawyers, as are private attorneys and public prosecutors. Federal agencies such as the FBI, the Department of Justice, and the Treasury Department frequently employ lawyers. Some police departments hire lawyers as consultants. Opportunities for employment also exist for legal secretaries and other qualifies to provide paralegal services.

Employment opportunities in criminal justice in the legal profession appear to be best in the urban areas, and with federal and state governments. To qualify for attorney positions, the individual must have graduated from an accredited law school, and in general, must have passed the bar exam of the state in which he or she intends to practice.

Overall, employment opportunities in the criminal justice network for lawyers and paralegal professionals would appear to be somewhat restricted by virtue of the fact that there are a limited number of positions and an abundant supply of applicants. Nonetheless, starting salaries are usually relatively good with government agencies (less so in private practice involving criminal justice).

For additional information concerning careers in the legal profession, contact:
Association of American Law Schools
Suite 370, I DuPont Circle N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

**Careers in Teaching**
Teaching opportunities exist in a variety of institutions both in and out of the criminal justice network. There are literally hundreds of criminal justice programs in junior colleges and universities around the country. Employment in these programs generally requires at least a master’s degree (junior colleges) and may require a doctorate (most four-year colleges and universities). Those who meet the educational requirements and have some practical experience in criminal justice generally have an advantage when applying for these positions.

Within the criminal justice network, teaching positions may be available in police training institutes and academies; in correctional settings and other types of detention facilities (such as juvenile facilities); in some diversion and alternatives to incarceration programs; and, to limit extent, in law schools. Salaries vary tremendously with the type of position and the location of the job.

For additional sources of information on teaching positions related to criminal justice, contact:
National Employment Listing Service
Criminal Justice Center
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX 77431