



April 2025 Quarterly Newsletter

In this Issue:

- [Legislative Session Brings Uncertainty. Issues Remain Unresolved](#)
- [Updated Mean/Median Salaries for Deputy PDs Calculated by CCAA](#)
- [New Statutory Requirements for Public Meetings \(Including County Public Defender Board Meetings\) Set to begin July 1](#)
- [Lunch with Jessie: A personal tribute to Attorney Jessie Cook. By Mark Nicholson](#)
- [Highly Recommended Documentary: The Strike](#)
- [Reimbursement Request Reminder](#)
- [News Flash....](#)
- [Local Public Defender Board Appointments](#)
- [March 2025 Commission Meeting Draft Minutes](#)
- [Remaining 2025 Reimbursement Request Due Dates and Commission Meeting Dates](#)

Legislative Session Brings Uncertainty, Issues Remain Unresolved

Legislative Update...

Here is an update on the legislation the CCAA has been engaged with this legislative session. At this point, most issues remain unresolved. The legislature scheduled its final day (sine die) for April 24. We will send an update after that date explaining any changes that may result to county public defense operations.

HB 1001 - State Budget

Currently, this bill is being negotiated to hammer out differences between the Governor's Introduced Budget and the alternate versions passed by both the House and Senate. We are monitoring the potential creation of a new "Public Prosecution Fund" which is designed to increase base salaries for county-paid deputy public defenders and prosecutors.

The CCAA is attempting to guarantee that we receive proportional funding to allow for salary parity with deputy public defenders in Commission Counties. The House budget included this funding for both prosecutors and PDs, but the Senate's version removed both. Stay tuned.

HB 1006 – Prosecutors

This legislation has passed both the House and Senate and is currently pending for a concurrence or dissent in the House.

The original version of this legislation contained increases for non-capital, non-misdemeanor reimbursement for Commission Counties from 40% to 50%. It also contained a provision that would sunset the Public Defender Council and require the CCAA to assume the functions of IPDC. Currently, neither provision is contained in the current version.

There is language currently in the bill that would clarify which individuals are eligible to serve on the Commission to avoid conflicts of interests. There is also language to stagger the terms of the current members.

HB 1049 – Public Service Attorney Scholarships

Originating from the "Incentivizing Public Service Workgroup" of the Commission on Indiana's Legal Future, this bill will provide a \$20k/year Law School scholarship for students who agree to work as a deputy prosecutor or PD for 5 years post-graduation. An addition to the bill requires law schools to offer a curriculum track in Indiana law, and the students must take those classes to maintain the scholarship.

This bill passed the House unanimously and was funded in the House version of the state budget. However, it stalled in the Senate and was not funded in the version of the budget.

We expect the language of this bill to remain part of conference committee negotiations, and CCAA staff will work toward the passage of this critical legislation to address Indiana's lawyer shortage.

SB 416 – PD Participation in PARF

Legislation to allow Chief and Chief Deputy PDs to participate in the PARF retirement fund hit staunch opposition in the Senate and did not move in the legislative process this session. There were several coordinated efforts to encourage the legislators to consider this issue, but concerns that the account is currently closed continue to remain a hindrance.

CCAA staff will continue to work with the Chief PD Association to consider further options to achieve this goal, which we believe to be a critical aspect of retaining attorneys willing to serve as Chiefs or Chief Deputies.

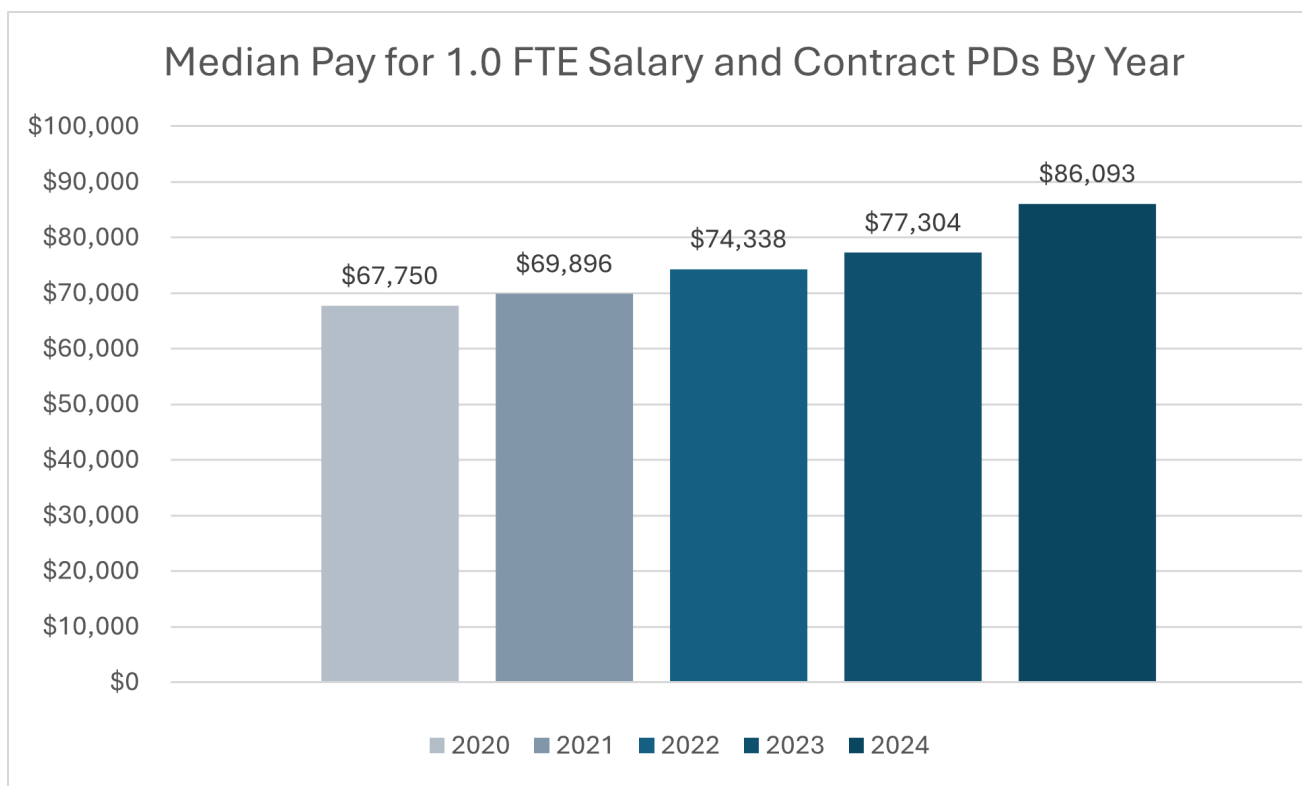
Questions about legislative matters may be directed to [Andrew Cullen](#) or [Derrick Mason](#)

Updated Mean/Median Salaries for Deputy PDs Calculated by CCAA

Contract and Salary Public Defender Pay Continues to Increase

Using compiled pay data from the end of 2024, Commission staff have found that median pay for public defenders in Commission Counties continues to increase. This includes all contract and salary attorneys in Commission Counties, normalized to full-time status. The median pay for fourth quarter was \$86,093, an almost 5% increase over the similar number for 2023. The Commission expects this median to have increased again in 2025, and will provide updated information later in the year.

With attorney compensation continuing to increase throughout the state, county systems should ensure they are budgeting sufficiently to attract and retain attorneys as well as maintain parity with deputy prosecutors in their county.



New Statutory Requirements for Public Meetings (Including County Public Defender Board Meetings) to begin July 1

PD BOARDS: New Statutory Public Meeting Transmission and Recording Requirements

In 2023, the General Assembly passed legislation requiring some agencies and governing bodies to provide live transmissions of their meetings. The legislation requires these entities to archive the recorded transmissions along with agendas, minutes, and related memoranda. See Ind. Code § 5-14-1.5-2.9(c).

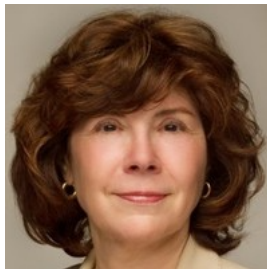
The Commission has been asked whether county public defender boards are subject to this requirement. Our interpretation of this statute is that, with the exception of county public defender boards, all public bodies are subject to open door laws but are exempt from these new requirements. The Commission, however, is not the final authority on this topic, and boards, if they have a different opinion or concern, should confirm with their county attorney or the state's public access counselor.

The statute requires transmission by, among others, the county executive, legislative, and fiscal governing bodies. Ind. Code § 5-14-1.5-2.9(b)(2)(A). The and fiscal governing bodies under which county public defender boards could fall would be the “governing body or budget approval body, for any other *political subdivision* that has a governing body or budget approval body” (emphasis added) (Ind. Code § 36-1-2-6(6); *see also* § 36-1-2-9(7)). Indiana Code Section 36-1-2-9(7) defines a “political subdivision” as a “municipal corporation or special taxing district.” The only other category that would apply to county public defender board governing body that conducts the governing body’s regular meetings in the same meeting room” as a local executive, legislative, fiscal, or school board governing body regular meeting room.

In summary, because a county public defender board does not meet the definition of a political subdivision, we conclude that Indiana Code Section 5-14-1.5-2.9(b)(2)(A) apply to county public defender boards so long as they do not meet in the regular meeting room of a local government’s governing body (as discussed above).

Nothing stops a local public defender board from following these requirements in the name of transparency. As always, follow the advice of your board’s legal counsel or that of the state access counselor, should their opinion be inconsistent with that of the Commission.

Lunch with Jessie: A personal tribute to Attorney Jessie Cook. By Mark Nicholson



The Commission on Court Appointed Attorneys extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Attorney Jessie Cook. Ms. Cook was a valued member of the legal community, as Attorney Mark Nicholson wrote in his touching tribute to her life of service.

[Read Mark Nicholson's Tribute Here](#)

Highly Recommended Documentary:



The Strike is a feature documentary about the Pelican Bay State Prison hunger strikes against long term, indefinite solitary confinement. The film follows the lives of solitary survivors who both experienced decades of isolation and organized themselves across history to forever transform the California prison system. The film also features powerful interviews with the survivors' families, in addition to journalists, former prison wardens, architects, and administrators, and incredible archival footage of the opening of the supermax prison.

You can learn more at the film's [website](#), watch the [trailer](#), and follow the film on [Instagram](#).

Reminder: Always use the correct form.

When submitting your 1Q2025 Reimbursement Request, please make sure you are using the newest version of the form. **Older versions will not be accepted**. When looking at the updated form, look at the top of the Financial Overview tab and make sure it has the CCAA logo and the [@ccaa.in.gov](mailto:information@ccaa.in.gov) email address.

Next, go to the Self Insurance Worksheet tab and verify it has the 2025 rates at the top.

The maximum allowed rate per employee for 2025 is:				
Single	\$	8,817.12	Family	\$ 25,119.12

If you do not have the latest version of the form, please email us at information@ccaa.in.gov to request a copy.

News Flash....



[County prosecutors could get less discretion over local decisions under proposal](#)

By: Staff, *Indiana Capital Chronicle*

[Senate Committee Advances Bill to Reform Prosecutor Oversight and Funding](#)

By: AP

[State considers incentives to lure attorneys to 'legal deserts'](#)

By: Alexa Shrake *The Indiana Lawyer*

Local Public Defender Board Appointments

The Commission welcomes the following new and/or re-appointed members to local Public Defender Boards. Their 3-year terms were approved at the prior Commission meeting.

- David Hadley, Montgomery County

At the next meeting, the Commission will consider appointments or re-appointments to the following local boards:

- There are no appointments expiring in the next quarter.

[Click HERE for more information regarding local boards](#)

If you have any questions about this or any matters regarding local public defender boards, contact [Andrew Cullen](#) or [Linda Hunter](#).

March 2025 Commission Meeting Draft Minutes

[Click HERE to read the draft minutes](#)

Remaining 2025 Reimbursement Request Due Dates and Commission Meeting Dates

Reimbursement Requests Due Date

May 15
August 14
November 14

Commission Meeting Date

June 18
September 24
December 17

Commission meetings begin at 2 p.m. Eastern and comply with the Indiana Open Door Law (IC § 5-14-1.5). Meetings are held at the Commission Office (101 W. Ohio, Indianapolis, IN, 46204) unless otherwise stated on the meeting notice and agenda. The public is invited to attend in person or via electronic means permitted under IC § 5-14-1.5-6.1. To view the Commission's Electronic Meeting Policy, click [HERE](#).

Notice of Executive Sessions & meetings will be posted at the entrance to the Commission Office (101 W. Ohio St., Suite 1800, Indianapolis, IN, 46204) and will be posted on the [page of the Commission's website under "News & Announcements"](#) at least 48 hours in advance. Meeting materials and agendas will be posted at least 24 hours in advance.

If you have any questions about the Commission meetings, contact [Derrick Mason](#)



