



226 Anne Dallas Dudley Blvd., Suite 508
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0760
Phone: (615) 741-3012
Fax: (615) 532-2443
www.tn.gov/tacir

MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Cliff Lippard
Executive Director *Cliff*

DATE: 16 September 2026

SUBJECT: Public Chapter 1121, Acts of 2026 (Salaries and Benefits for State and Local Law Enforcement Officers) – Panel

Law enforcement agencies nationwide, including those in Tennessee, face challenges maintaining sufficient staffing levels to operate effectively. These challenges are influenced by factors such as salaries and benefits that can affect an agency's ability to recruit and retain qualified officers. Officers may move from one agency to another in search of better pay and benefits. Differences in compensation among state and local law enforcement agencies can make recruitment and retention particularly difficult for smaller city and county agencies, which may have limited budgets. These smaller agencies may struggle to offer competitive compensation packages and attract and keep qualified law enforcement officers.

In response to these concerns, Senator Yager and Representative Williams introduced legislation that became Public Chapter 1121, Acts of 2026. It directs the commission to conduct a study of the salaries and other benefits paid to state and local law enforcement officers in Tennessee. The report is due January 31, 2027. The legislation requires the commission to study how

- current salaries and benefits paid to state and local law enforcement officers affect recruitment, staffing, and retention, particularly in smaller city and county departments, and evaluate potential alternatives for improvement; and
- state salary increases and adjustments for state law enforcement officers affect recruitment, staffing, and retention of local law enforcement officers.

Today, the commission will hear from a panel of law enforcement officials and experts who are knowledgeable about this topic:

- Sheriff Russell Barker, Anderson County, President, Tennessee Sheriffs' Association
- Chief Mark Gibson, Chief of Police, Cleveland, Representative, Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police
- Keith Lowery, Executive Director, Tennessee Sheriffs' Association
- Clint Shrum, Criminal Justice Consultant, Tennessee County Technical Assistance Service

Staff plan to present a draft report for review and comment at the commission's next meeting.