



# VERMONT SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 4466 Bennington, VT 05201-4466

Here are several clear, well-framed arguments Vermont Sheriffs can use to justify a single, fixed hourly rate of \$75 across all state agency contracts. Sheriffs comprehend that the judiciary/legislation will ask, "Why should Vermont Sheriffs establish a standardized hourly rate of \$75 for Sheriff services?" Below are several reasons supporting our stance on why the Judicial contract should identify with our claim.

## Consistency Ensures Fairness Across State Agencies.

- When one state agency pays only \$57 while others pay \$75, it creates inequity across the law-enforcement system.
- Sheriffs provide the same level of professionalism, training, liability coverage, equipment, and staffing costs regardless of which agency they serve.
- A single standardized rate eliminates unfair disparities and sends the message that all state agencies value public safety equally.

## Recruitment and Retention Depend on Competitive Compensation.

- Law-enforcement recruitment is already a statewide challenge.
- Lower rates make it difficult for Sheriffs to hire or retain qualified deputies because:
  - Deputies expect consistent pay regardless of assignment.
  - Sheriffs cannot offer sustainable wages if reimbursements vary.
- A fixed rate ensures Sheriffs can offer stable, competitive wages, which keeps positions filled and strengthens statewide Judicial coverage.

## A Uniform Rate Reflects Real Operating Costs.

Sheriffs have fixed, unavoidable expenses:

- Mandatory training and certifications
- Insurance and liability coverage
- Vehicles, fuel, and maintenance
- Equipment (cruiser & portable radios, body cameras, uniforms, safety gear)
- Administrative and supervisory functions
- These costs do not decrease based on which state agency contracts the service. A \$57 rate does not fully cover these expenses, effectively requiring Sheriffs to subsidize the current Judiciary contract with other established contracts.

## Ensures Reliability and Quality of Service.

- A lower rate can result in:
  - Fewer available deputies
  - Less experienced personnel assigned
  - Delays in response or diminished coverage
- Standardizing at \$75 ensures equal access to high-quality, trained law-enforcement personnel.

#### Prevents Undercutting or Imbalance Between Agencies.

- When one agency pays significantly less, deputies may prefer assignments with the higher-paying agencies.
- This creates recruitment competition within the State of Vermont's own system, rather than focusing on broader public safety needs.
- A standardized rate ensures the state speaks with one voice and does not unintentionally incentivize staffing shortages.

#### The \$75 Rate Is Already the Established Standard.

- Most VT state agencies already recognize \$75 as the appropriate, market-based rate.
- Maintaining one consistent rate avoids renegotiation and preserves statewide continuity.
- The outlier \$57 rate is below market conditions and is inconsistent with Vermont's own established contracting norms.

#### Public Safety Requires Predictable, Sustainable Funding.

- Underfunded law-enforcement contracts create long-term risks:
  - Training cuts
  - Equipment delays
- Increased liability exposure
- A consistent \$75 rate is essential for maintaining a professional, well-equipped, dependable sheriff's service throughout the state.