

# Crime Fighters

By Michael Soloy

**L**ock your doors. Be aware of your surroundings. Shoplifters will be prosecuted. Reminders of crime seem to surround Americans as they go about their everyday lives. Most of the crimes people hear about in the news tend to be the more serious violent crimes, such as assault, rape, and murder, because those crimes tend to be thought of as the most newsworthy. However, according to statistics from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, most crimes committed are actually property crimes. In 2005, U.S. residents 12 and older experienced 23 million crimes, according to findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey. Of these 23 million crimes, approximately 77 percent were property crimes, while 22 percent were violent crimes. The remaining one percent were personal thefts. With the U.S. population aged 12 and older in 2005 at about 240 million, this amounts to almost one crime per every ten people on average.

It is no surprise that many workers are employed in occupations directly related to fighting crime. These occupations range from those associated with crime prevention, such as security and fire alarm systems installers, to those related to punishing the offender, such as judges and correctional officers and jailers. This article uses May 2005 Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) estimates to examine the occupations directly related to fighting crime.

## Overview of the crime-related occupations

Almost any occupation can be involved with crime prevention and enforcement if the profession is in a crime-related industry. For example, an accountant working in the security systems monitoring services industry would be involved in the crime prevention process. However, this article focuses on those occupations that are directly related to fighting crime, such that most workers in the given occupation would be forced to work in a different occupation if crime were to disappear completely. The 27 occupations selected as being directly related to crime are shown in table 1 and will be referred to as *crime-related* occupations for this article. This table

also shows the national employment and annual mean wage for these occupations, along with their corresponding relative standard error. In addition, table 1 has a column called *Group* which contains *M&C* if the given occupation is mostly related to monitoring for crime or catching the criminal and *T&P* if the occupation is mostly related to trying the criminals or enforcing the punishment. These two group breakdowns will be used in analysis presented later in this article. It should be noted that not all workers in the 27 selected occupations are directly related to fighting crime. Many lawyers and other legal workers are involved in activities, such as tax or contract law, that are not directly related to crime. However, because the OES program does not classify each type of lawyer separately, all lawyers are included together as a crime-related occupation.

The 27 crime-related occupations collectively employ about 3.9 million workers nationally, with an average wage of \$22.94 per hour. The national average wage for all other occupations—other than these crime-related occupations—is \$18.11 per hour. The smallest of the 27 occupations, in terms of employment, is transit and railroad police with a little over 5,000 workers. The largest occupation, in terms of employment, is security guards with close to 1 million workers. The range of wages is also quite large, with lawyers earning the most—on average at slightly over \$53 per hour—and security guards earning the least—on average at slightly under \$11 per hour. These 3.9 million workers account for approximately 3 percent of the total U.S. employment.

## Private versus public industry

Fighting crime is generally considered the job of the federal, State, and local government.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, only the government can arrest people, convict them of a crime, and jail or fine them. However, private industry still employs many workers in crime-related occupations. Approximately 51 percent of the employment in crime-related occupations is in private industry. Table 2 shows the private industry versus public industry percentage break-down for each of the 27

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<sup>1</sup> The OES estimates do not include data from the Federal Judicial Branch.

Table 1. Employment and wage estimates for the 27 crime-related occupations

Occupation	Group <sup>1</sup>	Total occupational employment	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage	Mean wage percent relative standard error	Employment percent relative standard error
Security guards.....	M&C	994,220	\$10.91	\$22,690	0.3	0.6
Gaming surveillance officers and gaming investigators .....	M&C	8,730	13.82	28,740	3.2	4.5
Parking enforcement workers.....	M&C	10,140	14.72	30,620	1.5	4.6
Locksmiths and safe repairers.....	M&C	16,080	15.67	32,600	.8	2.7
Protective service workers, all other.....	M&C	141,480	15.90	33,070	.6	1.3
Security and fire alarm systems installers .....	M&C	49,470	17.06	35,480	1.1	3.7
Private detectives and investigators.....	M&C	33,720	17.78	36,980	1.9	3.9
First-line supervisors/managers, protective service workers, all other.....	M&C	49,330	21.95	45,650	.7	1.1
Police and sheriff's patrol officers.....	M&C	624,130	22.73	47,270	.9	1.0
Forensic science technicians.....	M&C	11,030	22.79	47,390	1.5	4.7
Transit and railroad police .....	M&C	5,090	24.20	50,330	3.1	11.0
Criminal justice and law enforcement teachers, postsecondary .....	M&C	9,880	n/a	52,930	1.1	3.2
Detectives and criminal investigators .....	M&C	85,270	28.24	58,750	1.0	1.2
First-line supervisors/managers of police and detectives....	M&C	91,320	32.33	67,240	.8	.9
Bailiffs .....	T&P	17,160	16.90	35,160	1.3	1.9
Correctional officers and jailers .....	T&P	411,080	17.60	36,600	.5	.7
Law clerks.....	T&P	40,620	17.78	36,980	1.1	4.0
Legal secretaries .....	T&P	265,000	18.78	39,070	.6	1.6
Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists ....	T&P	90,600	20.92	43,510	.7	1.1
Paralegals and legal assistants.....	T&P	217,700	20.92	43,510	.5	1.7
Court reporters .....	T&P	17,130	21.84	45,420	2.8	7.2
Legal support workers, all other .....	T&P	71,060	22.54	46,890	.6	1.0
First-line supervisors/managers of correctional officers .....	T&P	37,530	24.37	50,700	1.0	.7
Administrative law judges, adjudicators, and hearing officers.....	T&P	15,350	36.89	76,730	1.5	.7
Judges, magistrate judges, and magistrates.....	T&P	25,330	43.99	91,500	1.3	1.6
Law teachers, postsecondary.....	T&P	13,560	n/a	95,570	1.9	6.7
Lawyers .....	T&P	529,190	53.13	110,520	.9	.9

<sup>1</sup> M&C stands for monitoring for crime and catching the criminal. T&P stands for trying the criminals or enforcing the punishment.

occupations, along with the respective annual mean wages. The public industry estimates presented in this article include government-owned schools and hospitals unless otherwise noted.

Some occupations, such as police and sheriff's officers, bailiffs, and judges, are almost exclusively found in the public sector. Only nine of the 27 crime-related occupations have a higher percentage of workers in private industry than in the public sector. One of the occupations with a higher percentage of workers in private industry is lawyers, with 80 percent of lawyers employed in private industry. Perhaps it is the approximately \$30,000 extra that the average lawyer in private industry earns per year, compared to their public sector counterpart, that encourages more lawyers to choose a career in private industry.

The crime-related occupation with the highest employment in private industry is security guards, with almost 900,000 employed by private industry to go along with the nearly 100,000 security guards found in the public sector. The main role of security guards is to prevent crime through patrol and monitoring. Security guards are employed in a variety of industries and are found in more than three quarters

of the industries identified by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The investigation and security services industry, which contracts out security services, employs over half of all security guards. Security guards themselves cannot make official arrests, but must turn suspected criminals over to the police and other workers in the public sector for official arrests and possible punishment.

The two largest crime-related occupations in the public sector are police and sheriff's patrol officers, with employment of about 620,000, and correctional officers and jailers, with an employment of about 395,000. These two occupations are almost entirely confined to the public sector. The small percentage of police and sheriff's patrol officers in private industry work for private colleges and universities, and the small percentage of correctional officers and jailers in private industry work for private prisons that contract out their services to the government. Police and sheriff's patrol officers is the largest occupation in local government (not including schools or hospitals) with an employment of 532,370—about twice as high as the next largest occupation in local government—firefighters. Police and sheriff's patrol officers make up almost 10 percent of the total local govern-

Table 2. Private industry and public industry employment and wages for the 27 crime related occupations

Occupation	Private industry employment	Public industry employment	Percent of occupational employment in private industry	Percent of occupational employment in public industry	Private industry mean annual wage	Public industry mean annual wage
Forensic science technicians.....	1,720	9,310	16	84	49,520	47,000
Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists ....	2,660	87,940	3	97	30,410	43,910
Lawyers .....	422,340	106,850	80	20	116,710	86,040
Administrative law judges, adjudicators, and hearing officers.....	0	15,350	0	100	n/a	76,730
Judges, magistrate judges, and magistrates.....	0	25,330	0	100	n/a	91,500
Paralegals and legal assistants.....	191,760	25,940	88	12	43,240	45,550
Court reporters.....	7,050	10,080	41	59	39,440	49,600
Law clerks.....	20,430	20,190	50	50	34,970	39,020
Legal support workers, all other.....	12,320	58,740	17	83	44,070	47,480
Criminal justice and law enforcement teachers, postsecondary.....	2,140	7,740	22	78	51,460	53,330
Law teachers, postsecondary.....	8,130	5,430	60	40	97,830	92,200
First-line supervisors/managers of correctional officers.....	1,220	36,310	3	97	42,260	50,980
First-line supervisors/managers of police and detectives.....	620	90,690	1	99	61,290	67,280
First-line supervisors/managers, protective service workers, all other.....	35,560	13,780	72	28	41,050	57,530
Bailiffs.....	0	17,160	0	100	n/a	35,160
Correctional officers and jailers.....	16,290	394,780	4	96	27,510	36,980
Detectives and criminal investigators.....	70	85,200	0	100	55,960	58,750
Parking enforcement workers.....	430	9,700	4	96	29,790	30,650
Police and sheriff's patrol officers.....	3,790	620,340	1	99	42,730	47,300
Transit and railroad police.....	1,350	3,740	27	74	50,270	50,350
Private detectives and investigators.....	29,690	4,030	88	12	35,890	45,040
Gaming surveillance officers and gaming investigators.....	4,140	4,590	47	53	27,900	29,510
Security guards.....	894,430	99,790	90	10	22,200	27,110
Protective service workers, all other.....	27,340	114,140	19	81	25,660	34,840
Legal secretaries.....	243,540	21,450	92	8	39,360	35,770
Security and fire alarm systems installers.....	49,030	440	99	1	35,440	40,100
Locksmiths and safe repairers.....	13,920	2,170	87	14	31,300	40,980

ment employment (not including schools or hospitals). Similarly, correctional officer and jailer is the largest occupation in state government (not including schools or hospitals), with an employment of 240,760. This is more than twice as high as the next largest employing occupation in State government: general office clerks. Correctional officers and jailers make up more than 10 percent of the total State government employment (not including schools or hospitals).

**Two occupation groups**

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the 27 crime-related occupations can be broken down into two groups: the M&C group of occupations involved in monitoring for crime and catching the criminals and the T&P group of occupations involved in trying the criminals and enforcing the punishment. It is likely that some of the duties of occupations in one group cross over to the other group. For example, police officers often also testify at trial or help in trial security. However, occupations are assigned to each group based on where a majority of work for the given occupation is normally done.

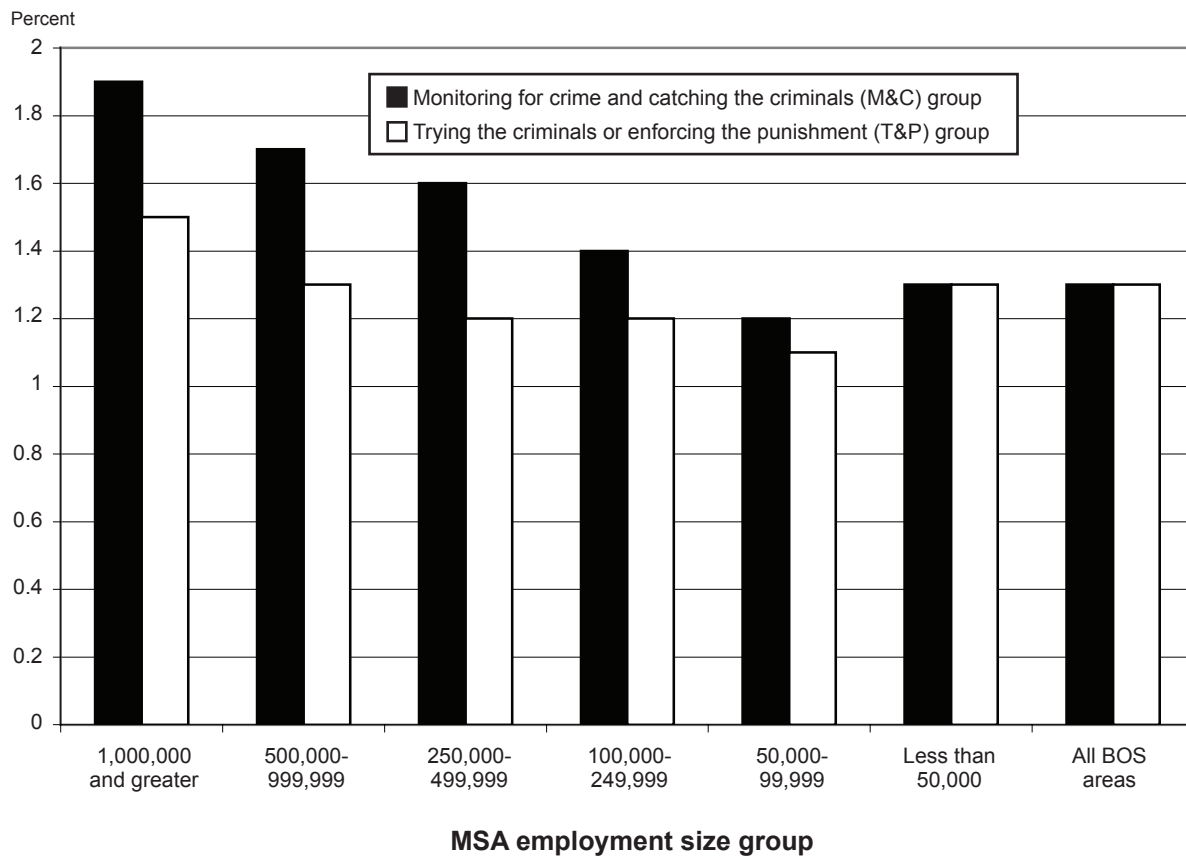
The groups where each of the 27 crime-related occupations are assigned are shown in table 1. The M&C group contains 14 occupations, with the T&P group containing the other 13

occupations. The M&C group contains approximately 55 percent of the total crime-related occupational employment, and as a group has an average wage of slightly more than \$17 per hour. The T&P group has a mean wage of slightly more than \$30 per hour—about 75 percent higher than the M&C group. However, as with the full crime-related occupational group as a whole, each of the two subgroups have a wide range of mean wages, when looking at the detail occupations making up each of the two groups. Detail occupations in the M&C group have mean hourly wages that range from a low of \$10.91 per hour for security guards to a high of \$32.33 per hour for first-line supervisors/managers of police and detectives—a difference of a little more than \$21 per hour. The P&E group has mean hourly wages that range from a low of \$16.90 per hour for bailiffs to a high of \$53.13 per hour for lawyers—a difference of a little more than \$36 per hour.

**MSA employment size**

Crime is usually thought to be a larger problem in the big cities than in the suburbs or rural areas. The most detailed estimates that the OES program produces are at the metropolitan statistical (MSA) level, which often includes larger cities, plus their surrounding suburbs. For this examination, MSAs were grouped into six size classes based on their total

Chart 1. Percent of employment in each crime-related occupation group by MSA size



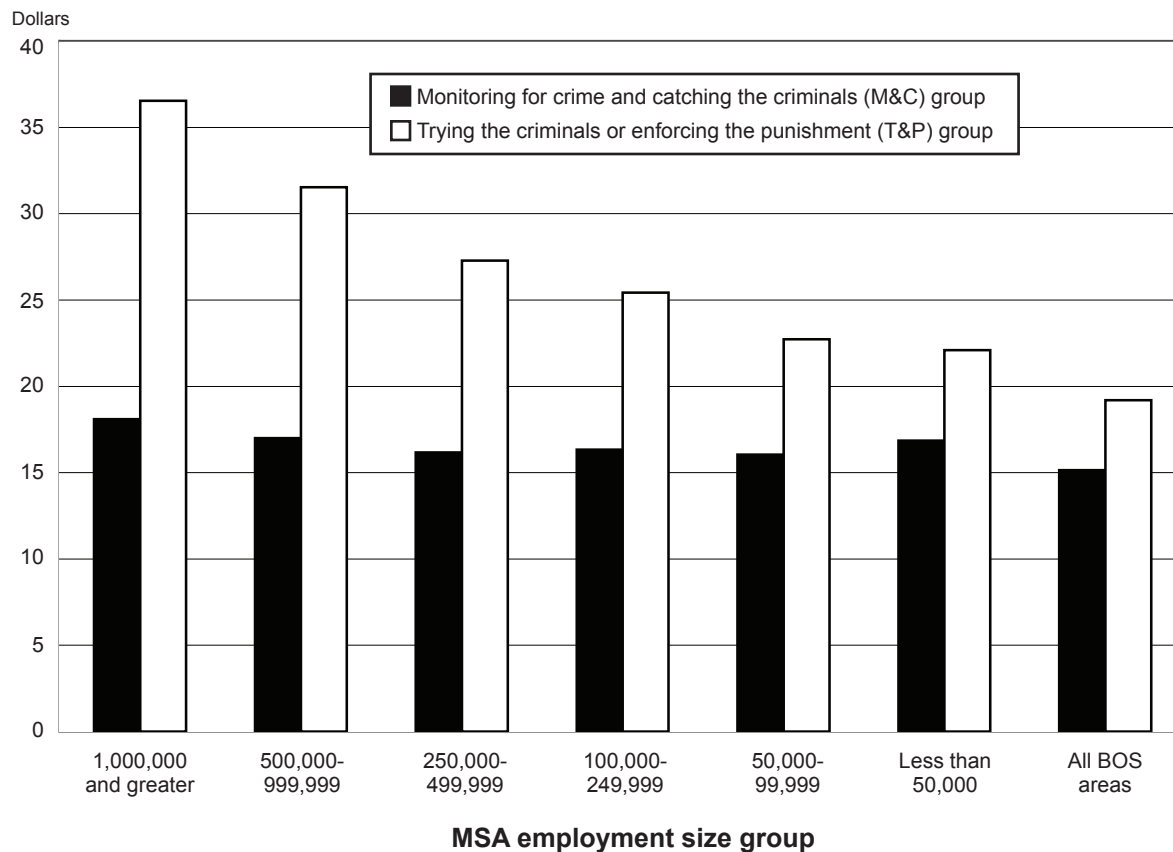
employment: MSA size group 1: 1,000,000 and greater; MSA size group 2: 500,000 – 999,999; MSA size group 3: 250,000 – 499,999; MSA size group 4: 100,000 – 249,999; MSA size group 5: 50,000 – 99,999; MSA size group 6: Less than 50,000 workers. In addition, data for all counties that are not part of a MSA, regardless of employment size, were put in their own group called the balance of state (BOS), or non-metropolitan areas. Chart 1 shows the percent of employment in each of the two crime-related occupation groups for each of the MSA size groups and the BOS. Generally, the percent of workers in each of the two occupation groups tends to increase as the size of the MSA increases. It is interesting to note, however, that the percent of workers in both groups is slightly higher in the smallest metropolitan areas and in non-metropolitan areas than in the second smallest areas. This increase might be due to the idea that a minimum number of crime-related workers might be needed, regardless of the area size.

Wages for the two crime-related occupation groups also vary for the different MSA size groups. For most occupations overall—not just the crime-related occupations—wages tend to be higher in MSAs with larger total employment than in MSAs with smaller employment, as shown in a previous

published in the 1999 OES bulletin entitled *An analysis of the correlation between occupational mean wage levels and the employment of a MSA*. Chart 2 shows the mean hourly wages for the two crime-related occupation groups for each of the six MSA size groups and the BOS. The T&P group average wages generally tend to decrease as the employment size of the MSA decrease, as would be expected. Average wages for the M&C group did not show this same type of relation, however. Although the largest MSA group—those with more than 1,000,000 workers—has the highest mean hourly wage for the M&C group; and the BOS group has the lowest mean hourly wage, there is no statistically significant wage difference between the other five MSA size groups.

One problem with looking at wages by occupational group is that the average wage can be influenced more by the share of each detailed occupation in the group than by the mean wages of individual detailed occupations. For example, if one MSA group has many more bailiffs relative to lawyers, this MSA group might have a lower average wage for this occupational group than another MSA group with a relatively high proportion of lawyers, even if the occupational wages for both bailiffs and lawyers are higher in the first set of MSAs.

**Chart 2. Hourly mean wages for each crime-related occupation group by MSA size**



Therefore, it might be more interesting to examine some of the larger occupations at the detailed occupational level to see how they vary by MSA size group. Hence, the two occupations with the largest employment from each of the two crime-related occupation groups were selected for further examination. The occupations are police and sheriff’s patrol officers and security guards from the M&C group, and lawyers and correctional officers and jailers from the T&P group.

Chart 3 shows the percent of MSA size group employment for each of the four detailed occupations. Lawyers and security guards generally increase as a percentage of the total area employment as the employment size of the MSA increases. Conversely, the percentage of correctional officers and jailers tend to decrease as the size of the MSA increases. The percent of employment of police and sheriff’s patrol officers does not seem to correspond to MSA size as do the other three occupations. The differences in the employment percentage among the different MSA sizes for this occupation are not statistically significant.

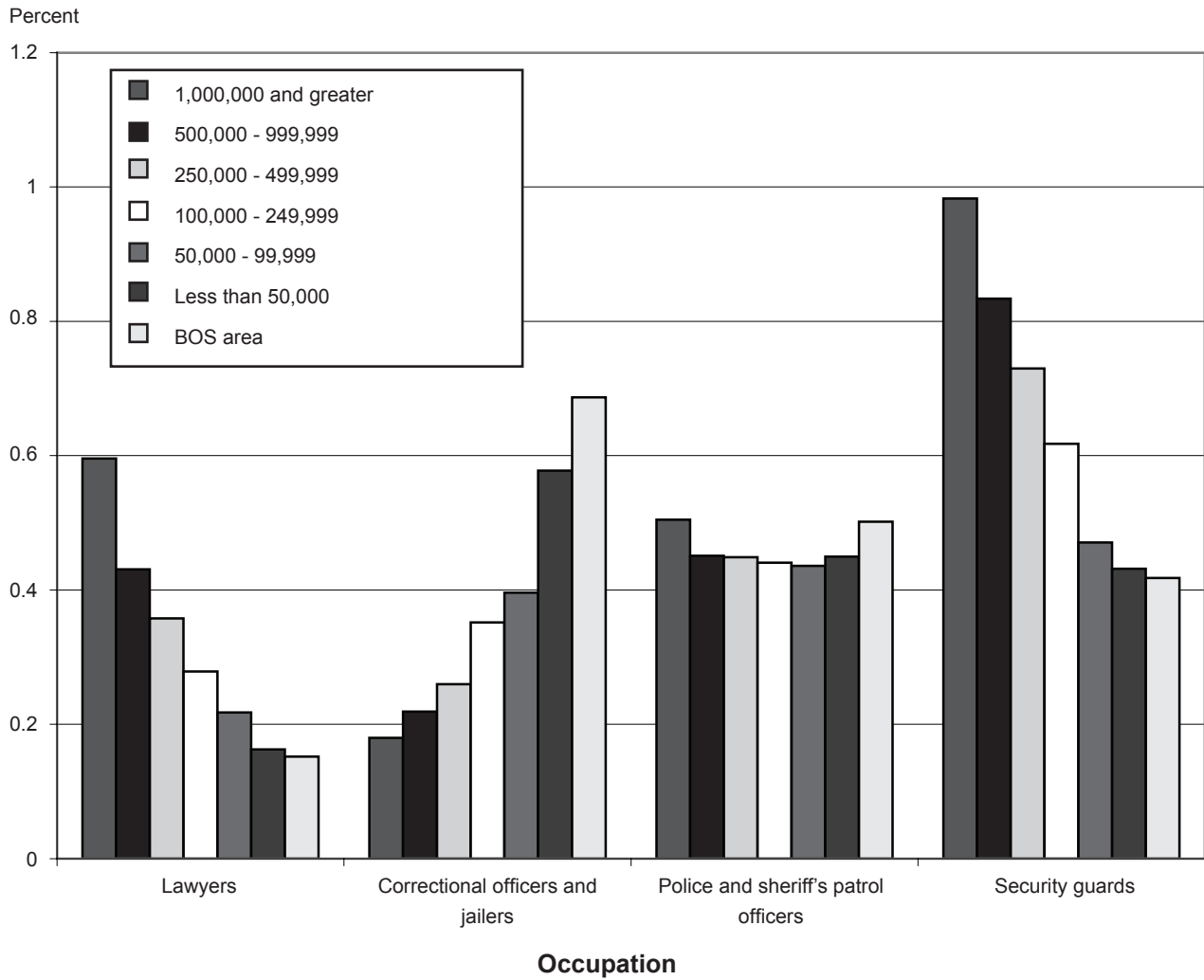
The mean hourly wages for each of the four detailed occupations are shown in chart 4. Wages for lawyers tend to

increase as the size of the MSA increases, although the wage difference between the smallest MSA size group and the BOS group is not statistically significant. Mean wages for police and sheriff’s patrol officers also generally tend to increase as the size of the MSA increases, although the relationship is not as strong as seen with lawyers. Other than the two largest MSA size groups, the wages are fairly similar for police and sheriff’s patrol officers across the other MSA size groups. The wages for correctional officers and jailers and security guards do not vary in a consistent manner according to the MSA size. This examination of the four detailed occupations shows that the characteristics seen in the two crime-related occupation groups as a whole do not always carry over to every detailed occupation in the group.

**Conclusion**

Crime prevention, prosecution, and punishment provides millions of jobs for Americans. The 27 crime-related occupations examined in this article together employ about 3 percent of U.S. workers. With a mean hourly wage of more than \$23 per hour, these crime-related jobs are also higher paying, on average, than other occupations.

Chart 3. Percent of MSA employment-size group for four detailed SOC occupations



*The Occupation Outlook Handbook 2006-07 Edition* estimates that most of the 27 crime-related occupations examined in this article will grow about as fast as average. The reason that most of these occupations will not grow faster than average is not because crime is expected to decrease dramatically, but instead, is because of taxes. Although the total employment for these 27 occupations as a group is similar between private industry and the public sector, a strong majority of individual crime-related occupations are primarily employed in the public sector, and public sector wages must

be paid by taxes. One thing that people perhaps hate more than crime is higher taxes.

Most of this article centered on summary examination of the 27 crime-related occupations at aggregate group levels. For more detailed information about these occupations, the OES program offers detailed wage and employment statistics at the national, 3-, 4-, and select 5-digit NAICS industry level, as well as at the State and MSA cross-industry. This detailed data can be found on the OES Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/oes/>.

**Chart 4. Hourly mean wages for each crime-related occupation group by MSA size**

