

WVAPO Members and all other interested parties,

Here is an update on WVAPO Board activities:

The WVAPO store remains open. You can access the store via the WVAPO website (wvapo.org). You can contact the store provider if there is an item or name brand you would like that is not listed (Shirt Tales of Vienna, WV, 304-295-8221. Ask for Kristi). The store has different delivery options available.

The State Legislators proclaimed the third week of July as WV Probation, Parole, and Supervised Release Supervision Week. This was pushed by WVAPO. The hope is an increase in support with state recognition. Several board members had the opportunity to attend the proclamation and were able to meet with Keith Hoover and Justice Titus. Keith took us on a tour of the Supreme Court. Justice Titus spoke to us and expressed an understanding of probation officer responsibilities and acknowledged the risks of being a probation officer.

The probation conference will be September 14 through September 17, 2026, at the Embassy Suites in Charleston, WV. Chris Salmons made a valiant attempt to move the conference to Oglebay and Snowshoe. Quite frankly, we are too big.

Prior to COVID, the probation conference was held on the odd years while the magistrate court conference was held on the even years. The probation conference will be held this year and next year to get us back to the odd years. After next year, the conference will go back to every other year (odd years). Next year's (2027 Conference) will be held in September at Camp Dawson in Kingwood, WV.

The change in the conference schedule has raised other issues with membership dues and elections. WVAPO membership dues / renewal has always been done at conference. The dues help purchase conference gifts and awards. This is the association's largest expense. An email was sent allowing you to vote on how you wanted to pay membership dues. The options were paying dues for a three-year membership or paying a one-year membership this year and a two-year membership next year. The majority chose one-year dues (\$25) this year and two-year dues (\$50) next year. Years of Service Awards, beginning with ten years of service, will be presented at conference. WVAPO membership dues are used to purchase the awards and therefore are only presented to members. WVAPO membership dues are also used to purchase conference gifts. Therefore, conference gifts are only provided for members. You will receive an email when it is time to pay your membership dues.

Probation Officer of the Year (POY) will be awarded at conference. Membership dues are used for this award as well. All the awards are a way for us to acknowledge the devotion and dedication of our probation officers. The POY award is a way to recognize those who go above and beyond. I challenge every circuit to nominate one outstanding probation officer for this award. I know every circuit, every office, has at least one who deserves to be recognized.

The POY / Awards Committee is working on a new award for Lifetime Achievement. Again, we believe it is important to recognize the hard work, dedication, and differences each of us make.

A committee has been formed to update the association bylaws. The update will include changes to election of officers and membership dues when there are changes to the conference schedules. The current board has agreed to remain in office until the 2027 conference. This extends the two-year term to three years for the current board. New board members and officers will be elected to a two-year term at the 2027 conference. That means there will not be an election at the WVAPO business meeting on September 14, 2026.

The board is advocating for the elimination of multiple salary caps and creating just one salary cap. Longevity and loyalty should be rewarded with salary increases and not punished with a cap. We will author a proposal to present to the Administrative Office and the justices.

We also are working on salary increases for chiefs and deputy chiefs. The Chief's Committee has requested a meeting with the administrative office and Justices to discuss a proposed increase. All probation officers and probation secretaries are included in the pay increase passed by the legislators and signed by the Governor. The increase (\$1,794) will begin on July 1, 2026.

Your membership is your voice. The more members, the louder the voice. It is harder to ignore and dismiss 300+ West Virginia employee voices. There are 335 probation officers (11 vacancies), 88 probation secretaries (one vacancy). WVAPO membership is 292. Be a member, be a voice, volunteer on a committee, make suggestions...tell us what we can do to help you be a better probation officer or probation secretary.

As always, it is a great honor to serve as your WVAPO president! Thank you!
Jessie