

**WAYNE COUNTY**

# Wayne County prosecutor raising starting salaries 15%, offering paid parental leave

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The Wayne County Government Bar Association has ratified a new contract with the prosecutor's office, which brings a 15% increase in starting salaries, retention bonuses and paid parental leave, Prosecutor Kym Worthy said Monday.

Worthy said the prosecutor's office has been working on some of these changes for years, and she feels great knowing the county can finally be a natural competitor in attracting attorneys. She called the changes, including the paid parental leave, "historic and transformative" during a Monday press conference.

Wayne County Executive Warren Evans announced the collective bargaining agreement earlier this month as part of three labor deals that included Wayne County Sheriff's Department through the Police Officers Association of Michigan as well as police captains, lieutenants and sergeants represented by the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3317.

Wayne County has been struggling to fill vacancies in its staff since the COVID-19 pandemic began and the prosecutor's office is no exception.

These bar association changes should make it easier to recruit and retain attorneys for the county.

Starting salaries will increase 15%, going from \$60,000 to \$75,000 a year, Worthy said. The prosecutor's office will offer retention bonuses when assistant prosecutors stay with the office, and they will be \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$15,000, based upon years of service, according to Evans' office.

The county also will offer six weeks of paid parental leave.

"In close collaboration with dedicated union representatives, Prosecutor Worthy and the Wayne County Commission, we maintain our focus on bolstering public safety throughout Wayne County," Evans said in a prior statement. "Through these agreements, our unified vision is clear: to safeguard our 43 communities by retaining and attracting the brightest talent."

Wayne County Government Bar Association President Amanda Morris Smith thanked Worthy for "her staunch and unwavering support for our members" as she hailed "these necessary and long overdue contract improvements."

"The GBA is hopeful that these positive and unprecedented changes to our collective bargaining agreement will help attract and retain attorneys to serve the citizens of Wayne County," Morris Smith said in a previous statement. "The GBA strives to make the positions of assistant prosecuting attorney and assistant corporation counsel an attractive, sustainable, and rewarding career choice, and these contract changes will meaningfully advance that goal."

This contract makes Wayne County assistant prosecutors among the highest paid in the state, Worthy said Monday, as they should be, considering they handle the heaviest caseloads and do the most work of any county prosecutor's office.

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