

FY 2025-2026 Compensation



RUTHERFORD
COUNTY TENNESSEE

Background

- Every year employees gain a “step” on the pay scale, subject to budget approval.
- Rutherford County has a high attrition rate with employees employed less than five years.
- Changing market factors in Middle Tennessee has forced Rutherford County to examine our compensation strategy more closely than ever before.
- Rutherford County must “change our approach” to stop the high attrition rate and address turnover causes.

Background

1. Mid-Year Adjustment (Jan. 2025)
 - a. County Commission considered a 4% adjustment.
 - b. Mayor Carr requested additional funds.

County Commission adopted a 4.5% adjustment.

In April of 2025, the Public Safety Committee passed along a motion to examine:

- Adopting Longevity Pay Scale Proposal C: \$100 per year.
- Evaluate the cost of a market adjustment based on the January 2025 salary study.
- Consider increasing experience recognition from 5 to 10 years.
- Examine potential amendments to the current law enforcement pay table.
- Cost estimate of implementing the “military service retirement credit.”



Rutherford County will pay employees \$25 per year of service, after a three year vesting period, as a longevity bonus.

Longevity Increase

Currently the cost of our longevity bonus is
\$266,000.

Increasing to \$100 per year would cost an
additional \$800,000 per year.

Currently, Rutherford County will recognize up to five years of relative experience when assigning a step on the pay scale.

Experience Recognition

We currently spend around \$1,500,000 per year on experience increases on our compensation package.

Doubling from 5 to 10 years would allow us to remain competitive, compensate current employees for their knowledge, and retain valuable staff for \$1,500,000 more.

In January of 2025 a compensation study was done to examine Rutherford County Government pay structure to attain a 50th percentile target.

Mayor Carr has included these increases in his proposed budget.

70th Percentile Target

The compensation study's goal of 50th percentile falls short of competitors.

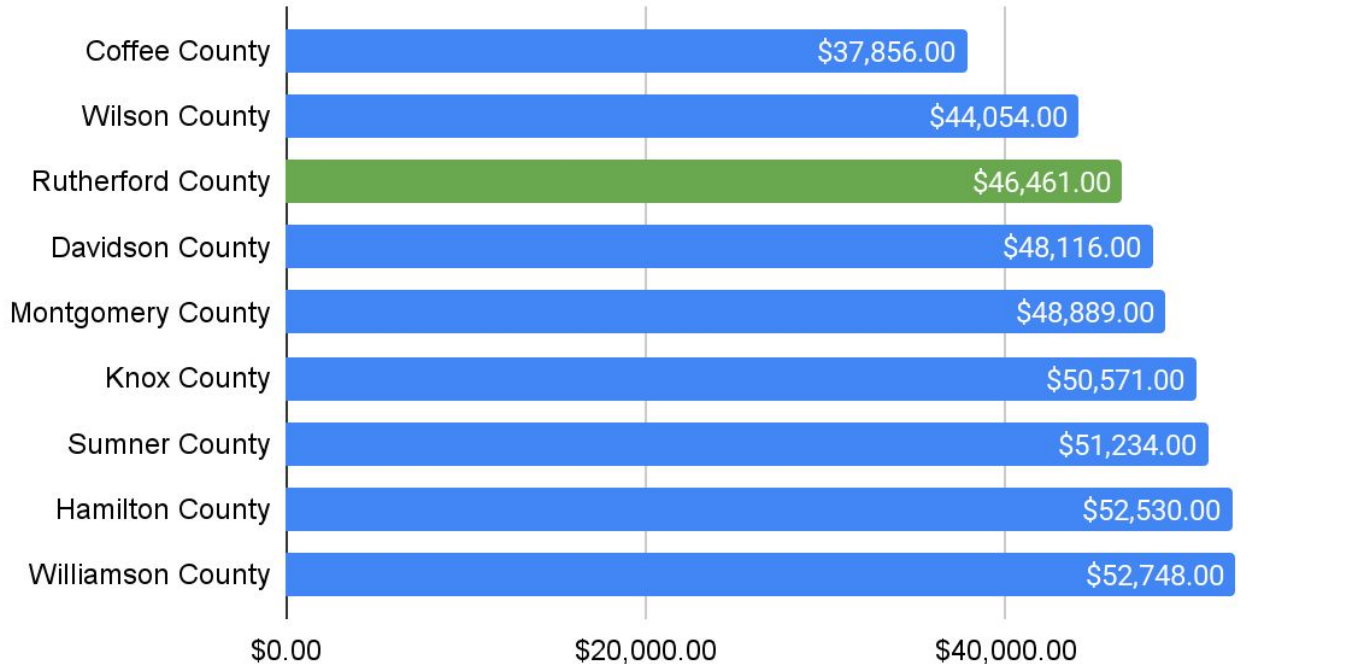
Area entities are targeting the 70th percentile in regard to first responder compensation.

Rutherford County must adopt the 70th percentile as a goal for first responder compensation in order to remain competitive.

Case Studies

Detention Deputy Compensation

(Stephenson, 2024)



Case Studies cont.

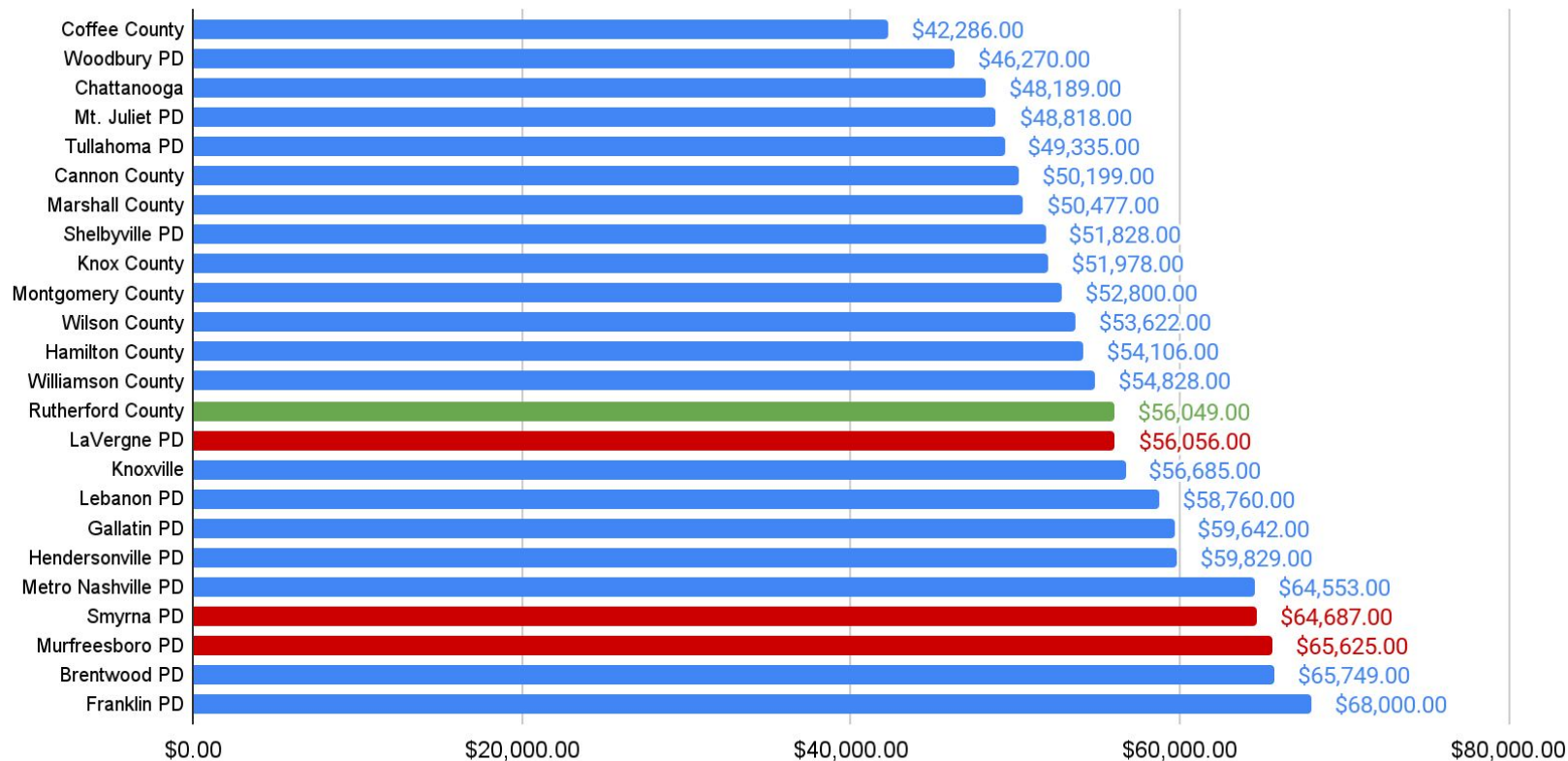
Booking Deputy Compensation

(Stephenson, 2024)



Patrol Deputy Compensation

(Craig & Stephenson, 2024)



Case Studies cont.

Career Projections

(Craig & Stephenson, 2024)

\$125,000

\$100,000

\$75,000

\$50,000

POLICE OFFICER

DETECTIVE

POLICE SERGEANT

POLICE LIEUTENANT

POLICE CAPTAIN

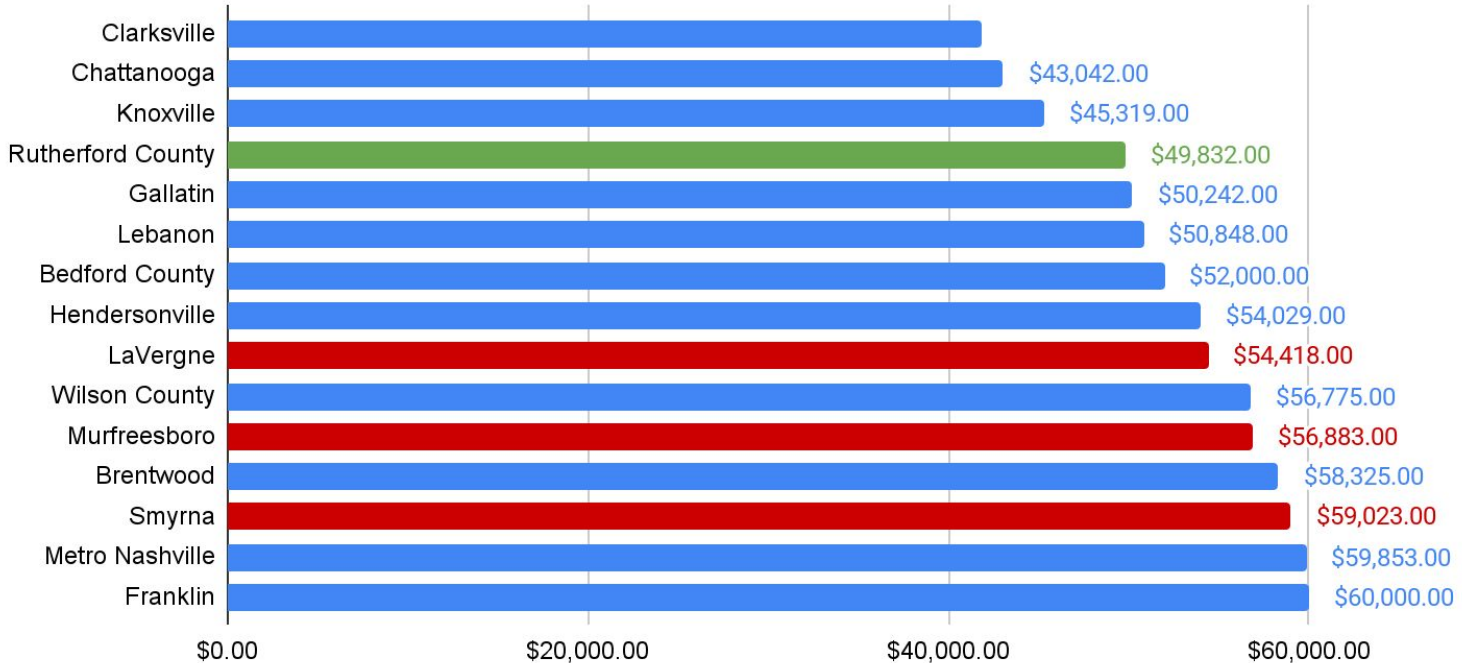
Smyrna Franklin Murfreesboro Brentwood Metro Nashville Lebanon Lavergne Gallatin Springhill Rutherford County

Rutherford County

Case Studies cont.

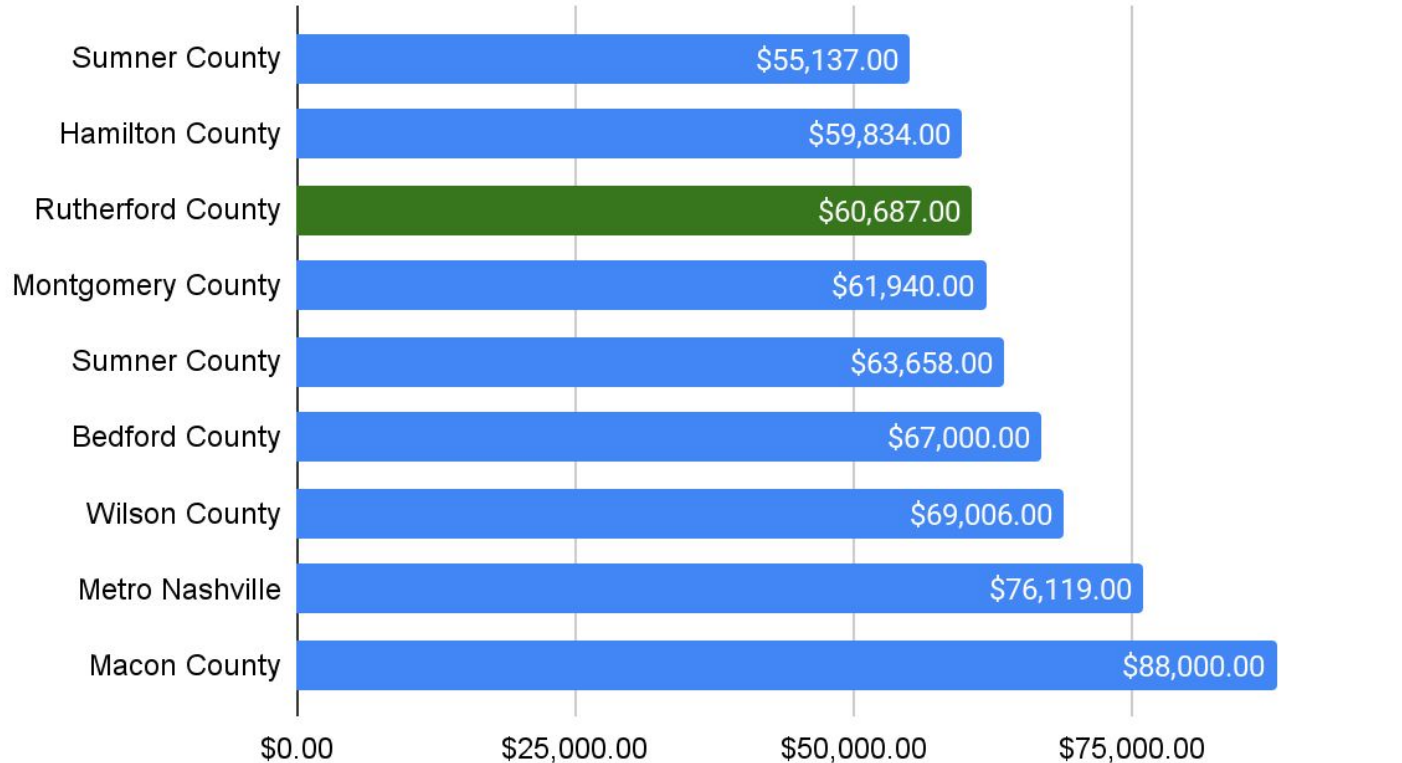
Firefighter Compensation

(Farley, 2024)



Case Studies cont.

Paramedic Salaries



A five year deputy will make around \$17,000 less than their counterpart at municipal agencies in Rutherford County.

Rutherford County Firefighters are paid a minimum of \$5,000 less than their peers at municipal fire agencies.

How much will this cost?

- Longevity Increase: \$800,000
- Experience Recognition: \$1,500,000
- 50th Percentile Target: Already Budgeted
- Military Service Retirement Credit: TBD

What is next?

If we fail to act, salaries at other entities will outpace Rutherford County.

Applicants will use us as “training wheels” to get their certifications and a small amount of experience before resigning to take the same position elsewhere.

This will leave us in a perpetual state of hiring/training with no end in sight.

Franklin Police Department calculated that every instance of turnover cost the city \$100,000.

What could we ask Budget to do?

Provide additional adjustments starting salaries of RCSO, RCFRD, and RCEMS.

- Starting Salaries
 - Patrol II (Certified): \$60,024
 - Booking/Detention: \$52,156
 - Firefighter II (Certified): \$58,630
 - Paramedic: \$68,091
- All other employees receive proportional increases to prevent compression.
- Total cost to 70th Percentile: \$5,900,000

One of many options...

- Longevity Increase: \$800,000
- Experience Recognition: \$1,500,000
- 70th Percentile Target: \$5,900,000

Total Increase to Budget: \$8,200,000

Thoughts?