



# National Association of Field Training Officers Indiana Chapter

## Compensation for Field Training Officers

*By Steven Kellams director IN-NAFTO*

One of the most common questions asked during a basic field training officer's school is about compensation. Many new FTO's and FTO managers are interested in the types of compensation offered by departments, and often compare the answers with their own programs. The idea of compensation for FTO's has not always been looked at favorably by departments and often the FTO is overlooked.

In this article I will discuss the differences between compensation and incentive. I will also look at ways in which departments may compensate the FTO. Finally I will list several FTO programs throughout the state and describe their compensation packages.

First let us look at two words associated with pay of FTOs; compensation and incentive. The term compensation means to give something in exchange for services. Incentive means to cause or encourage a given response. In common usage these terms appear similar, but they have a very different meaning when applied to FTOs.

The majority of field training officers understands the importance of the job and voluntarily takes on the added responsibility. The officers will be involved in the program whether or not any extra money is offered. These officers' motivations will vary. Some chose to be FTOs to ensure a quality officer will be there to back them up when needed. Others want to make sure that if an officer has to respond to their own home to handle a call that a qualified officer will arrive. And some officers have a truly altruistic goal of improving the overall professionalism of the department for which they work. These officers are dedicated to the concept of training and will be involved in the program for internal reasons. Some officers enjoy the extra responsibility the position offers and sees it as a challenge. These future FTO's need no encouragement to do the job. Any payment or reward they receive is compensation for a job well done. An agency that offers an incentive tries to encourage an officer to take on the extra responsibilities, but most FTO's don't need the incentive. Sometimes an incentive can lead to people taking on the responsibilities of the job for the wrong reasons which will often lead to training problems in the future.

The majority of officers become an FTO for reasons that are not addressed by money or opportunities, however, that does not mean that they wish to be overlooked. All people enjoy recognition for a job well done, and compensation is just that. It is the exchange of something for the service as a field training officer. That something is usually money, but it doesn't have to be.

Monetary compensation is the first form of reward for the FTO. The national average compensation for departments that pay their FTO's is 5% of the officer's yearly salary. That means that an officer making 30,000 a year would receive an additional 1,500 dollars a year for being an FTO. In some cases this compensation is paid as an up front sum. In others the money is spread around to come from different budgets. For example one department may pay their FTO's a \$1,500 rate for their services as FTO's. Another department may pay their FTO's \$500 plus additional hour and a half overtime for every day they train a recruit. A third department may pay their FTO's \$500 to be an FTO and another \$500 to be an instructor.

Money is not the only form of compensation for the FTO. In some instances, other more creative means of compensation must be found. Some departments are not capable of compensating their training officers as needed. This may be due to small budgets or city governments that do not understand the importance of the FTO. These departments may need to improve their compensation packages with something other than money. Departments should approve special designations for the FTO's uniform in the manner of pins, stripes, or patches. Departments may provide take home cars for field training officers. Special recognition can be given to the officers by providing them with medals or awards. Field training officers could receive priority in training requests. These are only a few examples of what might be done to compensate the FTO.

In conclusion, departments need to recognize the tremendous amount of responsibility an officer takes on when they elect to become an FTO. Not only must they be responsible for the training and development of the new officer, but they are also responsible for the future professionalism and effectiveness of the police department. In short, they are building the future of the department and should not be overlooked.

The following is a list of some FTO compensation packages in Indiana.

#### **Bloomington Police Department**

1. \$700 bonus a year
2. 1 and ½ hours of overtime a month for FTO meetings
3. Prioritized for Instructor Development (\$500 bonus a year as Instructor)
4. FTO Pin and collar insignia
5. Priority for training schools

#### **Evansville Police Department**

1. \$1200 bonus a year
2. A take home car
3. FTO Uniform Insignia
4. 4-8 hours of overtime per month for FTO meetings
5. 1 hour of overtime per day of training new recruit
6. Priority for training schools

#### **Vanderburgh County Sheriff**

1. \$1200 bonus a year
2. A take home car

3. Part time FTO's receive take home car and 1 hour of overtime per day while training.

**Fort Wayne Police Department**

1. \$200 bonus a year
2. 1 and ½ hours of overtime per day of training

**Indiana University Police Department**

1. Overtime for monthly FTO meetings
2. Priority for training schools

**Indianapolis Police Department**

1. \$500 bonus a year
2. 1 and ½ hours of overtime per day of training