

Private Detectives and Investigators

SOC: 33-9021 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$52,370

Median Salary

43,600

Employment

+6.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: High school diploma

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 20.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

7.8/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.0/10	Investigative	6.4/10
Artistic	4.0/10	Social	7.8/10
Enterprising	6.6/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Attention to detail, Communication skills, Decision-making skills, Inquisitiveness, Patience, Problem-solving skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Private Detectives and Investigators gather information and conduct investigations **to uncover facts, resolve legal or personal matters, and support clients in decision-making**. They perform surveillance, interview witnesses, and analyze records. Their work is critical in law, insurance, corporate security, and private matters.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy problem-solving, investigation, and analytical work.

What Do Private Detectives and Investigators Do?

These professionals collect evidence, conduct interviews, and perform surveillance to solve cases.

Common responsibilities include:

- Conducting interviews and background checks
- Performing surveillance and gathering photographic or video evidence
- Researching public and private records
- Analyzing information to draw conclusions or support legal cases
- Preparing reports and presenting findings to clients or legal authorities
- Collaborating with attorneys, law enforcement, or corporate clients
- Maintaining confidentiality and following legal and ethical guidelines

Key Areas of Private Investigation

Investigators may specialize in certain types of cases or methods:

- Corporate Investigations: Identifying fraud, theft, or internal policy violations
- Legal and Civil Cases: Gathering evidence for lawsuits, custody cases, or criminal defense
- Surveillance and Monitoring: Observing subjects to obtain factual information
- Background and Records Research: Checking criminal, financial, and personal histories
- Cyber and Digital Investigations: Analyzing electronic data and online activity

Skills and Abilities Needed

Private investigators combine analytical, observational, and interpersonal skills.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Career Pathway

This role typically requires formal training and practical experience:

- High School Diploma or GED (minimum): Basic skills in research, communication, and observation
- On-the-Job Training or Apprenticeship: Learning investigative techniques under supervision
- Licensing: Required in most states to practice legally
- Continuous Learning: Staying informed on investigative methods, laws, and technology

Where Do Private Detectives and Investigators Work?

They are employed in organizations that provide investigative services:

- Private Investigation Firms
- Corporate Security Departments
- Legal and Insurance Firms
- Self-Employment or Freelance Investigation
- Government or Contract Investigations

Work environments may include offices, fieldwork, surveillance locations, and client sites.

Is This Career Difficult?

This career requires analytical ability, attention to detail, and discretion. Investigators must handle complex cases, maintain confidentiality, and sometimes work in high-pressure or unpredictable situations.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy problem-solving and investigative work
- Have strong analytical and observational skills
- Can handle sensitive or confidential information responsibly
- Are persistent, patient, and detail-oriented
- Want a career in law, corporate security, or private investigation

How to Prepare Early

- Take courses in criminal justice, law, or investigative techniques
- Gain experience through internships, law enforcement, or security work
- Develop research, communication, and observation skills
- Learn about relevant laws, regulations, and ethics
- Practice report writing and documentation skills

Private detectives and investigators uncover facts, gather evidence, and provide clients with actionable information, supporting legal, corporate, and personal decision-making.

*Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O*NET*

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/private-detectives-and-investigators.htm>