

Dear Prospective Peace Officer Applicant:

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One of the most frequent requests we get here at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy is from individuals like you asking how to become a Police Officer/Peace Officer in the State of Washington. This article will cover some of that information, resources, and links to helpful web pages.

First, it is important to note that, in Washington State, you cannot apply directly to the Police Academy. To be eligible to attend the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission's Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) you must **first be hired** by one of the 272 recognized law enforcement agencies in the State of Washington.

Generally the minimum criteria for becoming a Police Officer, Deputy Sheriff, Fish and Wildlife Officer, Gambling Agent, Natural Resource Officer, Tribal Police Officer, or Liquor Enforcement Agent in Washington is the following: (This pre-hire criteria is different for each agency, be sure to check with your local, county, or state hiring authority for minimum hiring criteria)

- 21 years of age
- Must be a US Citizen
- Possess a High School Diploma or GED
- Have a valid Washington Driver's License
- Very limited to no recreational drug use
- Able to proficiently read and write the English language
- Qualify to possess a firearm in accordance with Federal and State regulations (also a condition of continuing employment)
- No Felony Convictions, nor any history of domestic violence

Hiring Process (after conditional offer):

Physically fit and able to pass the PAT Test <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=139-05-230>

Able to pass a Background Investigation <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=139-05-220>

Able to pass a Medical Exam Statement of Fitness Form CJ-1251
http://www.cjtc.state.wa.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=39&Itemid=27

Able to pass a Polygraph Exam <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.101.095>

Able to pass a Psychological Exam <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=139-07-010>

Able to successfully complete the Basic Law Enforcement Academy
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=139-05-200>

Desirable Qualifications:

You are seeking a career in one of the most complex, dynamic and noble public service fields. A Peace Officer must be educated, physically fit, have good judgment, be a good communicator and act ethically. Communication skills (verbal and written) are *extremely* important. You must have a passion to serve others. Individuals who are primarily drawn to the power, prestige or excitement of the profession rarely succeed in the long term. Many of them do significant harm to their careers and to community trust.

The following lists are some suggestions which could give you the edge, or make you more desirable to a Chief of Police, Sheriff or Agency Director. Some agencies and communities may place a greater or lesser emphasis on these.

- **Additional Education:** Associates Degree, Bachelor's Degree, or Master's Degrees are great. So are certifications in any of a wide variety of knowledge and skills- such as IT, business/finance, mediation, photography, etc.
- **Military Service:** Military service enhances your experience, leadership, education, and gives you an appreciation for tradition and protocol. It is service at the highest level.
- **Community Service:** We suggest you get involved in one of the following: Police Explorers, Police Cadet Programs, Community Service Officers, become a Reserve Officer, join a community service club. Get involved in any volunteer service which gives you experience. Volunteer at the Boys & Girls Club, coach youth sports, or go through a Citizen Police Academy. Develop and demonstrate a service ethos.
- **Prepare Physically:** Our physical fitness standards are clearly posted on this web-site, however at the beginning of each Academy Class approximately 2 out of every 30 recruits fails the PAT Test. This is inexcusable for someone that really has a desire to be a Police Officer. We recommend that physical activity and fitness become part of your daily life. For more information on the qualifications of the PAT Test go to:
https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/images/docs/classes/blea/pat_website_info.pdf
- **Bi-lingual:** It is beneficial to be able to read and write another language. Some jurisdictions give incentive pay and desire bi-lingual candidates. This is not a basic requirement for selection. It will give you an advantage however.
- **Good Life Choices:** Part of the process outlined in the Washington State Law is that applicants for Peace Officer Certification pass an extensive background investigation. Background Investigators will be looking into your background history to see if you meet their agencies hiring criteria. Are you law abiding, ethical, drug free, and associating with responsible law abiding friends? Law enforcement officers are the first responders to the community's crises. It is critical for agencies that they hire only good, responsible, committed people. Life choices and behavior will be considered in the hiring process.

Additional Resources:

Public Safety Testing	http://www.publicsafetytesting.com/infodoc.cfm?id=9
National Testing Network	http://www.nationaltestingnetwork.com/
Washington State Patrol	http://www.wsp.wa.gov/employment/employment.htm
Learning for Life	http://exploring.learningforlife.org/
Boys and Girls Clubs	http://bgca.org/Pages/index.aspx

Frequently asked Questions:**1. Can I self-sponsor myself through the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Academy?**

No. Only recruits that are hired by one of the 272 recognized Law Enforcement Agencies in Washington are allowed to attend the Basic Law Enforcement Academy.

2. Does everyone take the same physical ability test or PAT Test?

Yes. The PAT test is the same for all applicants regardless of age or gender.

3. Where would I find information as to who is hiring Law Enforcement Officers in the State of Washington?

There are links above for Public Safety Testing and National Testing Network. Also go to your local city, county or state agency web page and view the employment opportunities available. Not all jurisdictions in Washington test through Public Safety Testing or National Testing Network. We also maintain a list of employment opportunities on our web page at

https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/index.php?option=com_jobs&view=applications&layout=jobs&Itemid=11

I hope this information is helpful. For more specific information I encourage you to contact the Human Resources division of the city or county you are considering applying to. I wish you the best in your career pursuit and hope someday we see you here at the academy.

Sincerely,

David Bales
Deputy Director
Washington State Criminal Justice
Training Commission
Basic Law Enforcement Academy
19010 1st Avenue S.
Burien WA 98148