



WASHINGTON STATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING COMMISSION

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Dear Prospective Applicant,

As commander of the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA), I receive many requests each week from people seeking information on how to become a police officer in Washington State. I have incorporated the most frequently asked questions into this letter in order to answer as many questions as possible. Most of these answers can also be found on our Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) website at <http://www.cjtc.state.wa.us/>. I hope you find this information helpful. Please feel free to contact me if you have other questions or comments.

Rex Caldwell, Commander

Can I self-sponsor (attend on my own) or do I have to get hired by a police agency first?

In order to attend the Basic Law Enforcement Academy, applicants must first be hired by a recognized Law Enforcement agency (you would be earning a salary from them). All such employees are required to undergo an extensive background investigation to include a polygraph, psychological exam and physical. Each agency has different qualifications for hiring; check with prospective employers for additional information.

Once the applicant completes the hiring process, the perspective agency will submit an application to us on your behalf. For more information regarding hiring practices, please contact the agency you would like to work for. Keep in mind that there is not a self-sponsored course offered in the state of Washington.

The only other agency in the state that trains peace officers is the Washington State Patrol at their academy in Shelton and one must be hired by WSP to attend.

Does everyone take the same Physical Ability Test (PAT)?

Yes. The PAT is the same for all applicants regardless of age or gender. All candidates must pass the physical tests listed on our website. The website www.publicsafetytesting.com has a good section on the PAT which lays out workout strategies over a period of time to help one meet the challenge.

The fitness standards to enter the academy as a basic recruit can be found on our website at https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/blea/PAT_Website_Info.pdf.

Additional information is in the Washington Administrative Codes under <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=139-05-230> regarding being medically able to enter.

Other CJTC classes that require a specific level of fitness to enter are post-academy classes such as Defensive Tactics; <https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/classes/dt.htm> and SWAT Basic; <https://fortress.wa.gov/cjtc/www/classes/0510.htm>.

Mission: The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission enhances public safety by establishing standards and providing education and training.

Values: Professionalism • Integrity • Accountability

How can I enhance my prospects of getting hired?

A great way to get training and get your foot in the door is to volunteer at your local police department or county sheriff's office if possible. You may also wish to become a reserve officer and attend a reserve academy hosted by a local agency. This is a good way to see the job first hand and experience on a smaller scale what the academy is like.

Having an AA or BA should help you stand out from the others who are submitting applications. Many agencies are requiring a minimum of a two year degree to apply and a four year degree to promote once on the job. Common police career degrees include Criminal Justice, Sociology, Psychology, Communications and many others. Police work is a very diverse field and practically any education applies. The key is showing that one is willing to seek the education and do well enough to graduate. This demonstrates one is willing to work hard putting in the time to study and better oneself and have a capacity for learning new things; which translates to an ability to apply that knowledge to solve problems.

Many people write asking for advice while in their early teens. A Police Explorer Post at a local police agency is a good place to start. These types of programs are a great introduction into policing and a good way to get valuable insight into what the career may be like. An excellent website is <http://www.learningforlife.org/exploring/lawenforcement/> where one can get detailed information on Explorer programs and find a program nearby.

Where can I find more information locally?

Another source of information on agencies is www.publicsafetytesting.com . There you can find dozens of agencies in one place and visit them directly to get information regarding what they have to offer.

An excellent resource is to simply reach out to an officer you know or an agency near you to find out what is going on in an area. The officer on the street is always a great resource. One may also visit your local police agency website to find information on hiring requirements.