

Dear Prospective Law Enforcement 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 I would 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.

To be eligible to attend the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission's Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) you must 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;

Pre-Hire criteria: (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

Once Hired

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

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>

Additional nice to have resume filler:

Let us be honest with each other for a minute. You are seeking a career in one of the most noble public service fields. A Peace Officer must be educated, physically fit, have good judgment, be a good communicator and act ethically. Communication skills are extremely important. You must have a willingness to serve others. 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.

Additional Education: Associates Degree, Bachelor's Degree, or Master's Degree

Military Service: Going into the Service enhances your experience, leadership, education, and gives you an appreciation for tradition and protocol. It's 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.

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. You never know when a department may call you. You better be ready when asked to run a PAT Test. 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? I often address the new recruits that come to the academy and congratulate them for getting selected into this profession. I also make a point to tell them that I know they are good decent law abiding individuals because passing the initial tests to get in the door means you're an exceptional person. I believe you need to know that 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
Skagit Valley College	http://www.skagit.edu/

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. In the event I have not answered your questions, feel free to send me an e-mail and we will respond as soon as practical. I wish you the best in your career pursuit and hope someday we see you here at the academy.

Sincerely,

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