

Journey to City of Columbus Police Officer

Complete the following steps to become a City of Columbus Police Officer.

1. Application

- ✓ Apply to take the Police Officer with the City of Columbus.
- ✓ Meet the minimum qualifications and pass the abbreviated background review.

2. Police Officer Test

- ✓ Take and pass all three entry-level Police Officer exam phases: 1) Multiple-Choice, 2) Writing Sample, 3) Situational Response Assessment.
- ✓ Submit your Personal History Statement (PHS) and relevant documents.

3. Eligible List

- ✓ Pass the background standards review: Pre-Employment Investigation, review of the PHS, criminal and court records, and other documentation
- ✓ Polygraph Examination
- ✓ Take and meet Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) entry physical fitness standards.

4. Referral List

- ✓ Participate in a Job Interview.
- ✓ The Columbus Public Safety Director selects who receives a conditional offer of employment.

5. Conditional Offer

- ✓ Take and meet the standards for the medical and psychological exams: Medical exam and stress test, psychological assessment, and psychological interview.

6. Final Offer

- ✓ Complete the hiring paperwork and start the Columbus Police Academy.

7. Training Academy

- ✓ Complete Columbus Police Academy and meet all OPOTC & Columbus Division of Police (CPD) training standards.
- ✓ Take and pass OPOTC exit exam and meet OPOTC final physical fitness standards.

8. Sworn In

- ✓ Swear in as a Law Enforcement Officer in the State of Ohio.
- ✓ Participate in field training and complete the one-year probationary period.

Police Officer Selection Terms

The journey to becoming a Columbus Police Officer is unique. The City follows various laws and procedures to ensure that everyone who opts to complete the journey has the same path. We hope the following terms and descriptions are insightful as you reference them during your journey through the selection steps.

Police Officer: The city of Columbus hires Police Officers to serve and protect the community by performing crime prevention, criminal investigations, and law enforcement activities. Some other terms used for those who fulfill law enforcement duties throughout the state of Ohio include peace officer, law enforcement officer, and deputy sheriff.

Eligible List: Per the Columbus City Charter and Civil Service Commission (CSC) Rules and Regulations, to be considered for hire as a new Police Officer candidates must take and pass a competitive exam. All who pass the three phases of the police officer exam are placed on a list of eligible candidates which is known as the Police Officer Eligible List. City of Columbus Department of Public Safety may only consider candidates who appear on this list for hire as new Police Officers. The Police Officer Eligible Lists typically expire after one year and are replaced with a new list of eligible candidates.

Referral List: Once a city Department is interested in hiring individuals from an eligible list, the CSC provides what is known as a referral list or certification list. Per city, state, and federal laws, and guidelines individuals who commit certain acts cannot serve as law enforcement officers. As a result, the city conducts thorough background reviews of eligible police officer candidates to verify continued eligibility. For the job of police officer, the CSC only refers the names from an eligible list if they are not removed as a result of meeting a background removal standard. If you are on a Police Officer referral list and your name is 'certified' to the Department, this means you passed the background standards review.

Conditional Offer: After candidates are referred to the city Departments for consideration to hire, the Appointing Authority, typically Department Director or Department head, may select from the referred candidates and offer employment in that job. This job offer is called a Conditional Offer. Starting the job is now contingent on passing various post-offer hurdles. For Police Officer, once given a conditional offer, candidates must pass medical and psychological screens. If you have been given a conditional offer for Police Officer that means the city has selected you to begin an Academy class. However, starting is contingent on passing the medical and psychological exams.

Final Offer: After passing conditional offer screens candidates are given a final offer. If you have been given a final offer for police officer, this means you passed the medical and psychological exams and the Department of Public Safety should inform you of when to complete pre-hire paperwork and your start date and time for the academy.

Police Recruit: After hire and upon entry into the Police Officer Training Academy, Police Officers are referred to as Police Recruits until they are sworn in as law enforcement officers.

Sworn: Sworn law enforcement officers are those who have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, their state, and the laws of their agency's jurisdiction. In Columbus, individuals hired to serve as police officers participate in a thorough training program and receive an OPOTC certification to become law enforcement officers in the state of Ohio. Therefore, police officers become sworn officers after meeting these standards. At that time, they are 'sworn in' by taking an oath of office.

Field Training: After being sworn in, city of Columbus Police Officers participate in on-the-job training, referred to as field training. During this time, police officers are matched with seasoned police officers, known as Field Training Officers (FTOs), who provide oversight, mentoring, and coaching. While in field training, new Police Officers, rotate through three or four Field Training Officers. This rotation provides new officers with experience in different parts of the city, different shifts, and different perspectives from the various coaches. The goal of field training is to ensure that new Police Officers can successfully perform the functions of the job without close oversight.

Police Cadet: In the city of Columbus, a Police Cadet refers to a student intern, who was hired by the Division of Police to train and prepare for a career as a City of Columbus Police Officer. Police Cadets still need to participate in the same selection steps on their journey to becoming a Police Officer as other new Police Officers. Participation as a Police Cadet is optional toward a journey to Police Officer. In fact, most newly hired Police Officers do not work as Police Cadets. However, for some, the Police Cadet Program serves as an invaluable training ground to prepare themselves for the selection journey and life as a police officer.

Public Safety Corp or Police Explorer: The Public Safety Corp (PSC) was formerly known as the Police Explorers. PSC is a volunteer program open to anyone who is 14 to 21 years of age. The PSC is designed to educate, train, and mentor individuals through gradual and measured exposure to police operations. Participation as a PSC is optional on your journey to Police Officer. Most newly hired Police Officers do not participate as a PSC. However, through education and mentorship, the PSC program establishes an acute awareness of the complexities of police service that helps PSC participants on their journey to becoming Police Officers.

Lateral Transfer: CSC Rules allow for police officers to move "laterally" from a police officer position with another jurisdiction (in the United States) to the City of Columbus. Lateral Transfers would be required to complete all selection prerequisites on the journey to a Columbus Police Officer, except the three-phase test. Their previous, qualifying police officer appointment is considered as a passing score on the exam. Also, due to their previous experience as a police officer, their time in the Training Academy and in Field Training may be shortened.