WISCONSIN LAW ENFORCEMENT HIRING AND TRAINING FACTSHEET

How does someone become certified as a Wisconsin law enforcement officer?

To be eligible for certification as a Wisconsin law enforcement officer, you must complete a 720-hour law enforcement academy program at an academy certified by the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Standards Board (LESB). You also must meet the following criteria to enroll in an academy:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Possess a valid driver’s license;
- Have no unpardoned convictions for a felony, or any offense that could be punished as a felony in Wisconsin;
- Have no convictions of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence as defined in 18 USC 921(a)(33), convictions of domestic abuse as defined in § 968.075(1)(a), Wis. Stats., or convictions of a crime subject to the imposition of the domestic abuse surcharge under § 973.055(4), Wis. Stats.;
- Per § 66.0501(2), no person may be appointed deputy sheriff of any county or police officer of any city, village, or town unless that person is a citizen of the United States;
- Be of good character; and
- Be free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition that might adversely affect the performance of the duties of a law enforcement officer.

Law enforcement academy students may self-sponsor or be sponsored by a law enforcement agency. To enroll in a law enforcement academy, a self-sponsored applicant must have completed 60 college credits (associate degree level or higher from a private or state college or university with current membership in good standing in a predominant, national or regional accrediting organization for private or state colleges or universities recognized by the United States Department of Education). Applicants sponsored by a law enforcement agency must complete the 60-credit requirement within the first 5 years of employment.

Academies are located at Wisconsin technical colleges. In addition, some law enforcement agencies have their own academies that are not connected with the technical college system. These agencies are:

- Dane County Sheriff
- Department of Natural Resources
- Madison Police Department
- Milwaukee County Sheriff
- Milwaukee Police Department
- Wisconsin State Patrol

All Wisconsin law enforcement academies use the same 720-hour curriculum approved by the LESB. The agency-run academies may have additional agency-specific curriculum.

Law enforcement officers who hold or have held employment as a certified or licensed law enforcement or tribal law enforcement officer in another state, or hold or have held military veteran status in a
Military Occupational Specialty as a law enforcement officer (Military Police/Security Forces/Master of Arms), full-time for a minimum of one year beyond completion of academy training, fully empowered and paid for all hours worked, who continue to hold or voluntarily left employment within less than three years, may qualify to complete a reciprocity examination administered by the Bureau of Training and Standards of the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

Certification is granted by the LESB following employment with a Wisconsin law enforcement agency and successful completion of the 720-hour law enforcement academy or reciprocity exam. Staff of the Bureau of Training and Standards recommend certification of officers who have met the minimum requirements for certification at quarterly meetings of the LESB held in March, June, September, and December.

What are the requirements for continuing as a Wisconsin law enforcement officer?

A certified law enforcement officer must retain employment with a law enforcement agency and complete at least 24 hours of recertification training each state fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th). Handgun qualification and vehicle pursuit training are the only required subjects. The state’s handgun qualification must be completed annually, and the state’s vehicle pursuit training requirement must be completed biennially. Agencies may require officers to complete training in additional subjects or more hours than the 24 required by statute.

Certified law enforcement officers also must maintain employment with a law enforcement agency in a sworn law enforcement position. A law enforcement officer who has been employed either full-time or part-time in a sworn capacity for at least 1 consecutive year has 3 years from the termination of employment to regain employment in a sworn capacity. Otherwise, the person will have to repeat the law enforcement academy to become eligible for recertification. In addition if an officer holds employment for less than 1 consecutive year, they have 3 years from their date of graduation from the law enforcement academy to regain employment in a sworn capacity or they will have to repeat the law enforcement academy to become eligible for recertification.

Who is responsible for the amount and content of training for Wisconsin law enforcement officers?

There are five types of training for Wisconsin law enforcement officers

- Academy training.
- Instructor/master instructor training.
- Field training.
- Recertification training.
- Specialized training.

**Academy training.** The LESB requires all recruits to complete 720 hours of academy training. The LESB sets the requirements for the subjects to be covered and the amount of time to be spent on each subject. The LESB also approves the academy curriculum, which is developed by staff of the Bureau of Training and Standards

**Instructor/master instructor training.** Only certified instructors may teach as a primary instructor at law enforcement academies. To be certified as an instructor by the LESB, an instructor must have a
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You can find Information about the individual law enforcement academy programs on the websites of the technical colleges and the agencies that sponsor their own academies.