

# ENTRY LEVEL POLICE OFFICER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (“FAQS”)

## APPLYING TO TAKE THE EXAM

### 1. What are the minimum qualifications for the Police Officer position?

- a. You must be the age of 21 at the time of hire and possess a current, valid State of Illinois driver’s license.
- b. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, no person may be appointed as a probationary Police Officer after the person’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. Candidates must be under the age of 40 to be accepted into the Police Academy.
- c. You must be a U.S. citizen or a legal resident at the time of hire.
- d. Also, at the time of hire, you must have at least 60 semester hours (or 90 quarter hours) from an accredited college or university.

#### **This educational requirement may be waived if:**

- You have served at least three (3) continuous years (36 months) on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

**OR**

- You have completed at least 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) from an accredited college or university **AND** have served at least one (1) continuous year (12 months) on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

- e. Please refer to the section “After the Exam Administration” for additional information about what happens after you take the written exam.

### 2. How old do I need to be to apply for the exam?

- a. **Applicants must be a least 18 years of age on the date of the exam; however, qualified applicants will not be selected for hire until they have reached the age of 21.**

### 3. How many times may I take the exam?

- a. Per the City of Chicago Sworn Hiring plan, you may take one exam in a 12-month period. The City of Chicago and the Office of Public Safety Administration will announce exams throughout the year. You may apply and select which of the upcoming exams you are interested in taking.

### 4. How can I apply?

- a. There is only one way to apply, and that’s online. When the application period is open you can find the application on the City of Chicago career website or on the Chicago Police website.

<https://home.chicagopolice.org/bethechange/>

or

[www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication)

- b. The online application requires you to create an account with a username and password. Please write your username and password down. That way, you can access your application anytime during the application period. If you are unable to log into your account, you can call (312) 744-4976 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and we can assist you.

**5. What if I don't own or have access to a computer?**

- a. All Chicago Public Libraries have computers with Internet access available for free, public use. To locate your nearest Chicago Public Library, you can call (312) 747-4300 or visit [www.chipublic.org](http://www.chipublic.org).
  - i. To access Chicago Public Library computers, you have to have a library card, which is free of charge. Please refer to [www.chipublic.org](http://www.chipublic.org) for the requirements for obtaining a library card.
- b. You can also check with your alderman's office to see whether other free computer resources might be available.
- c. You can also check out the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership resources for locations that offer computer access. Visit: <http://www.workforceboard.org/>

**6. The application is requiring me to provide an e-mail address. What if I don't have an email address?**

- a. You must have an email address, because that is the only form of communication the City will use to provide you with the status of your application and test information.
  - i. You can set up a free email address at various internet service providers. Two that we recommend are:

1. Gmail: [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com)
2. Yahoo: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

**7. While in the application system, I hit the back browser arrow and now the computer screen is showing me an error page. What should I do?**

- a. You should not use the back browser in the application system, as you may get an error page. If you receive an error page, you MUST start over. First close out of the error page, and then click back on the application link at [www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication), log in, and start over.

**8. Do I have to be a resident of the City of Chicago to apply?**

- a. No. You are not required to be a resident of the City of Chicago at the time of application. However, you will be required to be a resident of the City of Chicago if hired.

**9. What if I owe the City money (for example, through unpaid parking tickets or water bills)?**

- a. You must pay all debts to the City before you can enter the Police Training Academy. To prove that you have paid your debts, you must provide proof from the Department of Finance that either (1) the debt is not attributable to you; or (2) you have paid the debt in full.

**10. How will I know the status or result of my application?**

- a. The application will ask a few questions to assess whether you meet the requirements to sit for the exam. If any of your answers to those questions indicates that you do not meet those requirements, you will immediately be informed that your application is disqualified.

- i. If, during your attempt to submit your application, you are informed that your application is disqualified and you feel that your application was erroneously disqualified, please call (312) 744-4976 or email [police-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:police-application@cityofchicago.org) as soon as possible. Once the application period closes, we will be unable to correct any errors.

- ii. If your application is successfully submitted, you will receive a confirmation email.

- If you have not received any such correspondence within three (3) days of submitting your application, you should call (312) 744-4976 or email [police-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:police-application@cityofchicago.org) to check on the status your application. **Please be sure to check the spam filters on your email account first.**

- If you have any uncertainty about the receipt of your application, we strongly advise you to contact us at the above number or email address as soon as possible. You must contact us before the application period closes. **NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE APPLICATION PERIOD CLOSSES.**

- b. Once the application period has closed, approved qualified applicants will receive an **Authorization to Test** email directly from Pearson VUE that will include additional instructions on how to register for an exam. Once the exam registration opens selected applicants can register and schedule an examination online via the Pearson VUE website or by calling the Pearson VUE contact center.

- Pearson VUE will administer the City of Chicago entry-level Police Officer Examination in two test delivery options.

- **Option 1:** Take the Police Officer entry-level examination in a computer-based format via the Pearson VUE network of test centers located in the Chicagoland area and throughout the United States. Click on this link to see the currently available Pearson test centers.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JOgFBi0ApM0ndvx1SS-5puYmOjAEqgsz/view?usp=sharing>

- **Option 2:** take the Police Officer entry-level examination in the comfort of your home or office via the Pearson VUE Online Proctored solution – known as OnVUE.

11. **Is there an exam fee?**
  - a. No.
12. **Can I create multiple accounts and submit more than one application to increase my chances of being higher on the eligibility list?**
  - a. No. You can only have one application on file. We will delete all duplicates.
13. **How do I update my contact information if I move or change my telephone number or email address?**
  - a. You can update your contact information by logging into your account, which you can find at [www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication)
14. **What if I can't log into my account?**
  - a. Contact (312) 744-4976 or stop by City Hall, Room 100 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide your username and reset your password.
15. **What are the requirements for the Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy, and Line of Duty Preferences, and if I believe I qualify, how do I receive the preference?**
  - a. Please refer to the page titled "Information Regarding Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police and Fire training academy and Line of Duty Preferences" for details about those preferences and their requirements. This information is also detailed on the actual job posting.

**INFORMATION REGARDING VETERANS, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS,  
CHICAGO POLICE AND FIRE TRAINING ACADEMY, AND LINE OF DUTY  
PREFERENCES**

1. **What are the Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy, and Line of Duty Preferences?**
  - a. For information about the Veterans and Line of Duty Preferences, please refer to <https://bit.ly/36a09Jz> The Chicago Public Schools Preference, which is new, is similar to the Veterans Preference and is available to applicants who graduated from a Chicago Public High School.  
Qualified applicants that have successfully completed the Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy will be granted preference for an entry position for the sworn Police or uniformed Fire positions, providing the preference is not superseded by a collective bargaining agreement.

- b. When setting up your application profile, you will be asked if you qualify for any of these preferences. If you believe that you do, make sure you answer “yes” to the applicable question. Please remember, however, that in order to actually receive a preference, you must also provide the required documentation at the time of application. Preferences will not be applied without the required documentation.

**2. To qualify for the Veterans Preference, you must provide one of the following:**

- a. A letter from your Commanding Officer on official stationery verifying the applicant’s active duty, length of service and character of service thus far, if still on active duty, in the Armed Forces of the United States. This letter should also include a copy of the applicant’s Military ID; **OR**
- b. A DD214 for Veteran Status. The copy must include discharge status, which is traditionally known as the Member Copy 4.
  - i. If a copy of the DD214 can’t be obtained, then a letter from the U.S. Veterans Administration on official stationery indicating dates of service and character of service can be accepted in lieu of the DD214.
  - ii. If you have lost your DD214, you should contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at <http://www.va.gov> or (800) 827-1000.

**3. To qualify for the Chicago Public Schools’ (“CPS”) Preference, you must provide one of the following:**

- a. A copy of your diploma from a Chicago Public High School;
- OR**
- b. A copy of your transcript from a Chicago Public High School verifying that you graduated.

**4. To qualify for the Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy Preference, you must provide one of the following:**

- a. To qualify for the preference, the applicant must otherwise qualify for the job and must be eligible for the position. The preference granted under this section shall be in the form of preference in processing.

**5. To qualify for the Line of Duty Preference, please visit the link below for further instructions.**  
[http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dhr/supp\\_info/line\\_of\\_duty\\_preference.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dhr/supp_info/line_of_duty_preference.html)

- a. Qualified applicants who are immediate family members of sworn Police and uniformed Fire Personnel who died in the line of duty or who were immediate family members of individuals who have served on active duty of the Armed Forces of the United States, the Illinois National Guard, or any reserve component of the United States who died in the line of duty in a combat zone, will be granted preference for an entry sworn Police or uniformed Fire position, providing the preference is not superseded by a collective bargaining agreement. The definition of immediate family member, line of duty, and combat zone will be determined by the appropriate authorizing and governing bodies. To qualify for the preference, the applicant

must otherwise qualify for the job and must be eligible for the position. The preference granted under this section shall be in the form of preference in processing. Applicants who qualify under this section will receive consideration before other qualified applicants for approved, vacant positions unless superseded by a collective bargaining agreement.

**6. How do I provide the required documents for the Veterans, CPS, and Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy Preferences?**

- a. The quickest and easiest way to submit the required documents is to scan them, log into your online application account, and upload them into your account. You can access your account at [www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication](http://www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication)
- b. You may also provide documents via email, US Mail, or in person.
  - i. You can email documents to [police-application@cityofchicago.org](mailto:police-application@cityofchicago.org), and you should keep a copy of the email you sent, making sure that it has the date and time stamp showing when you sent it.
  - ii. For U.S. Mail, we STRONGLY recommend that you use either certified mail or delivery confirmation.
    - If you choose to send documents via regular mail, you run the risk that the documents will be lost, and there will be no way for you to prove that you sent the documents. Without such proof, we cannot consider the documents received.
  - iii. If you wish to bring documents in person, you must come to Room 100 in City Hall, Monday thru Friday between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and a receipt will be provided to you.
- c. We advise providing the documents as soon as possible. The sooner they are in our system, the sooner we can apply the preferences.
  - i. These documents can be added to your account at any time. The cutoff date for the submission of documents showing eligibility for Veterans/ CPS/ Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy Preferences is when the posting period closes.
  - ii. Please remember to answer the questions regarding the preferences in your profile AND provide the required documentation. If one of these steps is not followed, you will not receive the preference.

**AFTER THE EXAM ADMINISTRATION**

**1. If I receive notification that I've passed the exam, what happens next?**

- a. All applicants who pass the exam are placed on an eligibility list, and that list is sorted in lottery order. You will be referred to the Office of Public Safety Administration in lottery order as vacancies become available.
- b. After receiving a passing letter, the Officer of Public Safety Administration will reach out to

you regarding the P.O.W.E.R. test (**Police Officer Wellness Evaluation Report**).

**2. What minimum qualifications must I meet if I am referred off the eligibility list?**

- a. You must be 21 years of age at the time of hire and possess a current, valid State of Illinois driver's license.
  - i. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, no person may be appointed as a probationary Police Officer after the person's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- b. You must be a U.S. citizen or a legal resident at the time of hire.
- c. Also, at the time of hire, you must have at least 60 semester hours (or 90 quarter hours) from an accredited college or university.

**This educational requirement may be waived if:**

- You have served at least three (3) consecutive years (36 months) on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States;
- OR**
- You have completed at least 30 semester hours (or 45 quarter hours) from an accredited college or university **AND** have served at least one (1) continuous year (12 months) on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

**3. What if I haven't reached the age of 21 when I am referred off the eligibility list?**

- a. You will be processed as you near the age of 21. So long as you meet the other hiring requirements, the Office of Public Safety Administration will make every effort to ensure that your application is processed expeditiously.
- b. **PLEASE REMEMBER:** in order to attend the Police Training Academy, you must have the required credit hours or one of the military equivalents detailed in Question #2 above. If you do not meet the educational requirement or have a military equivalent at the time of referral, your pre-employment processing for entrance to the Police Training Academy will be frozen until you do.

**4. If I meet the minimum qualifications and I am placed on the eligibility list in lottery order, howlong am I on the eligibility list? When does the eligibility list expire?**

- a. You remain on the eligibility list until it is either fully exhausted or retired.
- b. Please be sure to keep your contact information (*i.e.*, address, phone, and e-mail) up-to-date to ensure that we can reach you if you are referred from the eligibility list. Update your contact information as necessary by logging into your account to review and/or revise your contact information. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their contact information remains current and is accurate.

**5. If I am referred to the Office of Public Safety Administration, am I immediately admitted to the Police Training Academy?**

- a. No. Before you can be admitted to the Police Training Academy, you must undergo the following.
- **Background Investigation/Personal History Questionnaire/Polygraph**
  - **Medical Examination & Drug Screen**
  - **Psychological Examination**
  - **Final P.O.W.E.R. Test**
  - **Other criteria as required by the Office of Public Safety Administration**

**7. Can I prepare for the Final P.O.W.E.R. test in advance of being referred?**

- a. Yes.
- b. To find out more information on what the P.O.W.E.R exam entails please visit the link below.  
<https://www.ptb.illinois.gov/media/1320/power.pdf>
- c. Prep sessions will be offered by the Chicago Police personnel. Please visit the website to learn more:  
<https://home.chicagopolice.org/bethechange/pre-power-prep-sessions/>

**8. What happens if I fail any portion of the hiring process?**

- a. If you fail portions of the hiring process (background, drug, medical, etc.) the Office of Public Safety Administration personnel will request that your name be removed from the eligibility list and will cease to process your application.

**9. I had some trouble with the law when I was younger but have since been a model citizen. Will I be disqualified for the police officer position?**

- a. You may be disqualified for engaging in certain activities or for exhibiting certain behaviors, whether or not you were ever arrested, convicted or questioned by police or other law enforcement agencies. The background investigation includes a thorough check of your character and activities over a substantial period of time. Evidence that you have engaged in certain activities that would constitute a felony will be disqualifying. Evidence of other activities may be disqualifying, depending on the circumstances.

**10. I used drugs recreationally several years ago. Must I disclose this information?**

- a. Yes, you must truthfully and completely provide answers to all questions asked. While current illegal drug use is grounds for disqualification, prior drug use is evaluated based on a variety of factors.



**11. Will a pre-employment positive drug screen for the use of marijuana, cannabis, cannabis related products and/or products containing cannabis and/or marijuana product disqualify me from becoming a Police Officer?**

- a. No, you will not be disqualified at the time of pre-employment processing for a positive cannabis drug screen. However, you will be tested for other illegal drugs that can disqualify you from the pre-employment process. Consequently, upon successful completion of the Pre-Employment Process as well as successful (pass) completion of the FINAL P.O.W.E.R. test, all successful candidates will submit to one final drug screen. During this final drug screen, any candidate who tests positive for marijuana, cannabis, cannabis related products and/or products containing cannabis and/or marijuana products as well as any other prohibited drug and/or narcotic will be disqualified and not permitted to enter the Police Academy.

**12. Can an employee of the Chicago Police Department use cannabis/marijuana?**

- a. No, although cannabis/marijuana use is now legal in the State of Illinois, its use is prohibited by law enforcement personnel.

**13. I used my friend's/spouse's/parent's/sibling's prescription drugs. Must I disclose this information?**

- a. Yes, unauthorized use of drugs includes using prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you and/or using prescription drugs in amounts and frequencies other than prescribed. You do not, however, need to disclose prescription drugs that were prescribed to you and used appropriately.

**14. If I'm admitted to the Police Training Academy, what kind of training will I receive?**

- a. CPD recruits receive over 900 hours of basic recruit training, which exceeds the Illinois State mandate by over hundreds of hours of training. Of the Illinois State mandated material, CPD recruits receive extra training in gangs, drugs, law, ethics, report writing, vehicle stops, control tactics, firearms, physical fitness, and law enforcement driving. Also, CPD recruits receive extra training that is not required by the State of Illinois with classes such as terrorism awareness, diversity, technology awareness, and building entry tactics.

**15. How long does it take to graduate from the Police Training Academy?**

- a. Approximately six (6) months. Probationary police officers must successfully complete all training modules in order to graduate.

**16. If I graduate from the Police Training Academy, where will I be assigned?**

- a. Assignments of graduates will depend on the operational needs of the Office of Public Safety Administration.

**17. When does the probationary period start? How long is it?**

- a. The probationary period starts when you enter the Police Training Academy, and the probationary period is eighteen (18) months.

**18. Do I have to graduate from the Police Training Academy in order to work as a Police Officer?**

- a. Yes

**19. I am a Police Officer in another jurisdiction. Do I still have to go through the Chicago Police training program?**

- a. Yes. Regardless of your current status, everyone hired for the position of Police Officer must attend and graduate from Chicago's Police Training Academy in order to hold that title.

**20. What is the salary of a Police Officer?**

- a. A Police Officer starts at an annual salary of \$54,672 which increases to \$82,458 after eighteen (18) months.

**21. What are the benefits that are offered with the Police Officer position?**

- a. There are many benefits, which include:
  - i. Starting annual salary of \$54,672, which increases to an annual salary of \$82,458 after eighteen (18) months
  - ii. Tuition Reimbursement
  - iii. Medical, Dental, Prescription and Vision Insurance
  - iv. Opportunity for Advancement
  - v. Paid Holidays and Vacation Days
  - vi. Retirement Plan
  - vii. Annual Uniform Allowance
  - viii. Home Purchase Assistance