

How to Become a New Jersey

POLICE OFFICER *or STATE TROOPER*

Contains instructions for:



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NJ LAW ENFORCEMENT



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Introduction

How do you become one of New Jersey's roughly 40,000 police officers?

What should you do to begin the process of becoming a police officer in NJ?

What are the names, addresses, and hiring requirements for all of the agencies that employ police officers?

AS A CERTIFIED POLICE DISPATCHER and Class II Special Law Enforcement officer working in a municipal department, I had a million and one questions about the field of law enforcement, all pertaining to obtaining a full-time Regular Police officer position. The entire field seemed to be a mystery and I couldn't find any books like this one to answer all of my questions.

Between talking to many police officers, reading various materials relating to law enforcement, going through several steps towards becoming a regular full-time police officer, and taking many tests, I slowly learned the answers to the most important question: Which steps should a person take to get into the field of NJ law enforcement?

During this time, I continually fielded a great number of questions from aspiring young men and women about getting into the field. They all seemed to have a general feeling of confusion and had misconceptions about what steps to take.

As a result, I felt the need to publish a book covering the most important aspects of police recruiting. At the same time, I wanted to provide a general understanding of the field from the top, starting with the attorney general's office in Trenton, working downwards through all of the other state agencies and departments employing law enforcement personnel, and finally, continuing through county and municipal agencies.

One of my many goals with this book is to save each and every aspiring law enforcement candidate countless hours of time spent on research, as well as greatly increasing their chances and strategy for obtaining a position.

In several parts of the book, I added my own personal thoughts and opinions regarding issues that I observed during my experiences in law enforcement. I debated whether or not to include these personal observations and opinions or whether I should only stick to facts. I decided that although these are my experiences and opinions, they can only add to the benefits of this book, and not hurt it. While reading these areas of the book, realize that these "lessons" are not meant to preach, but rather to help you learn from the mistakes of others, or even myself in some cases.

As I studied the subject of law enforcement recruitment in an attempt to bring you the best information possible, I was surprised by some of the news headlines pertaining to recruitment around the country. As you will see here in the introduction and throughout the book, I've included supporting articles for some of the information I present. I found a few of them at [HTTP://WWW.OFFICER.COM](http://www.officer.com). I recommend visiting this website often for current information and quality law enforcement news. You can view and print these articles by entering each title in the search box. Another great

website for news and information specifically about NJ policing is
[HTTP://WWW.NJLAWMAN.COM](http://www.njlawman.com).

As a life long resident of New Jersey, I have always known law enforcement to be a highly desirable occupation, but one with few opportunities to enter the field. The truth is, only in New Jersey are positions so highly sought. The rest of the country seems to be starving for new recruits! In fact, these are just some of the headlines I came across during my research on recruiting:

"Police Nationwide Face Tough Hunt for Recruits" 12/28/2005
Lexis Nexis

"Washington Recruiters Go After Unhappy Hawaii Police" 3/29/2006
TheHawaiiChannel.com

"LAPD" Is Under the Gun on Recruitment" 7/03/2006 *Los Angeles Times*

"Little Rock Combating Officer Shortages" 8/15/2006 *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*

"Pittsburgh Set to Hire 45 Police Recruits" 8/30/2006 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

"Four-In-Five U.S. Police Forces Short On Applicants" 3/27/2006
UPI Lexis Nexis

"Baltimore Recruiters Draw Large Crowds in Puerto Rico" 7/07/2006
The Baltimore Sun

"San Diego Mayor Tries to Halt Officer Exodus" 7/10/2006
[HTTP://WWW.NBCSANDIEGO.COM](http://www.nbcsandiego.com)

"Cops Pay Big Price for 25G Salary" 1/8/2007 *NY Daily News*

The bottom line is that if you really want to become a police officer, there are plenty of departments that will need your service throughout the country. Some major cities, such as Phoenix, even instituted an expedited hiring process that you can complete during a 2 or 3-day out of state trip.

But if you want to be a New Jersey police officer, the story is quite different!

New Jersey has 479 municipal law enforcement agencies, 21 sheriff's departments, 21 college and university police departments, and 35 other state, county, and other types of law enforcement agencies. Out of the 479 municipal agencies, 182 of them are Civil Service or NJ Department of Personnel jurisdictions, meaning that they must follow strict state rules and guidelines for hiring, and in most cases, you must be a resident of a specific municipality or county to be eligible. The 35 state, county, and other types of agencies can be found on the partner website to this book, [HTTP://WWW.NJ-POLICE-RECRUIT.COM](http://www.nj-police-recruit.com). Just follow the link for the "Agency Profiles" page. There you will find listings of all NJ law enforcement agencies and the information to quickly locate and contact them. I suggest you research

these agencies when you have a free minute.

After breaking down the figures, you are left with 297 municipal police departments that can possibly hire you. Among those remaining, the list of requirements for employment eligibility is increasingly becoming more intense. Little by little, municipalities are adding more requirements to qualify for consideration during the hiring process. Most now require residency, written and physical exams, and four-year college degrees. Many seek candidates who are already police trained (Police Training Commission Certified) or are current law enforcement officers. In a lot of cases, the hiring process is private and by invitation only. Most police chiefs regularly receive resumes from job-searching candidates that they save and file away. This means that unless you qualify, or have a resume on file, you will never know when they've filled the position. As a result, the level of competition is increasing and the level of difficulty in obtaining a position is reaching new highs. The State of New Jersey Department of Personnel (DOP) estimates the number of people who registered for the last administered test in 2008 for the position of police officer and "other" law enforcement titles, including corrections, to be around 40,000!

In 2007, the Cherry Hill Police Department announced they were going to hire between five and fifteen new police officers. They administered a series of two written tests and one physical test, free of charge. Usually, police departments collect a fee, ranging from \$25.00 to \$100.00, to take the test. Over 1426 completed applications were received! These numbers clearly indicate the desire of many people to enter the field of NJ law enforcement. With competition this intense, your success will rely on a lot of hard work, planning, and career strategy.

If you want to become a municipal police officer, there are several things you will need to know in order to give yourself the best possible chance. This book aims at sending you in the right direction and also offers a free website, [HTTP://WWW.NJ-POLICE-RECRUIT.COM](http://www.NJ-POLICE-RECRUIT.COM) that you can refer to on a continual basis for updates on recruitment information and opportunities throughout the state.

I suggest you take specific interest in Section 9 of the Uniform Crime Report from the past few years. This section summarizes the number of police officers in New Jersey by the type of law enforcement agency and gender in each category. A short review of these pages will help you to get a perspective on the amount of jobs you can expect to become available each year and can give you a good sense of law enforcement staffing levels throughout the various counties in New Jersey.

I also suggest that you download and print all of the documents recommended in all of the chapters. If you cannot find the information or need additional help, visit [HTTP://WWW.NJ-POLICE-RECRUIT.COM](http://www.NJ-POLICE-RECRUIT.COM) and submit your questions via the Contact Page.

Again, what you need to remember is that unless you obtain a job through the Civil Service as a result of scoring high on the test and the municipality in which you reside is currently hiring, or you happen to have inside connections with a chief's municipality, or you are accepted into the Alternate Route Program (described in CHAPTER 6) and you do well, you will have to work extremely hard and display serious dedication to obtain a policing job. For the majority of jobseekers, this will be you! You will need to have a strong work ethic and show extreme diligence in your goal of becoming a police officer. This is not a position that you can

simply decide on a whim that you wish to pursue. You will have to know and follow the steps outlined in CHAPTER 6 and be willing to push yourself as you work through the process. If you commit to these steps, you will gain the experience and have the impressive resume to appeal to any department that is hiring. Keep in mind that it is not uncommon for an interested candidate to spend a few years in this process.

I hope this book and website prove to be a valuable resource for you and enable you to create a viable path to follow. Good luck with your preparation, and best wishes for success in obtaining the position you seek!

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