


POLICY 128.1	HIRING POLICE OFFICERS	
	REVISED: 12/02, 12/07, 04/08, 08/08, 04/09, 03/10, 04/11, 08/12, 04/13, 08/13, 06/18, 03/20, 04/22, 11/24	RELATED POLICIES: 128
	CFA STANDARDS: CHAPTERS 8 AND 9	REVIEWED: AS NEEDED THIS VERSION EFFECTIVE DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2024

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide management decisions relative to proper risk assessment throughout the hiring process, and to establish the various protocols, guidelines, and standards used for selecting police officers for employment with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department to maintain an efficient, diverse, and effective work force by selecting qualified and capable applicants through a fair, proactive, and non-discriminatory selection process. The selection standards utilized shall be job related, uniformly applied and provide equal opportunity for all applicants and employees. It is the policy of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department to reward employees for referring Certified and Certifiable Police officer candidates for employment with the City.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

To identify qualification and evaluation factors for employment and to outline the procedures in the selection process and to establish eligibility and guidelines for the Police Officer Referral Bonus Program.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The City of Fort Lauderdale Human Resources Division (City Hall) is responsible for:
 - a. Reviewing employment applications and ensuring that applicants meet the minimum qualifications for the position of police officer with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. Because application screening is considered to be a critical component in the recruiting program and because timeliness is critical for hiring purposes, the Background Investigations Unit Sergeant or designee will assist with application screening.
 - b. Establishing and maintaining an eligibility list for the position of police officer that is certified by City Hall Human Resources.

2. The Background Investigations Unit (BIU) Sergeant is responsible for:
 - a. Maintaining a computerized applicant tracking system that documents each application selected for processing, throughout the selection process. This system shall identify the stages each applicant successfully completes or fails in the selection process. The Background Investigation Unit Sergeant shall also identify those applicants that have been removed from the selection process and document the reason(s) for removal in the applicant's file and the tracking system.
 - b. Ensuring that a file is created on each applicant processed by the BIU and that the completed application and supporting documents are maintained according to the Florida Records Retention Schedules, and § 943.133, Florida Statutes.

E. BASIC REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

1. The Police Department has adopted the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission minimum requirements; however, some standards have been increased in order to meet the needs of the agency.
2. The City of Fort Lauderdale minimum standards for police officer certification requires that a candidate must:
 - a. Be at least 21 years of age upon application.
 - b. Be a United States citizen (U.S. born or naturalized) upon application.
 - c. Be a high school graduate or equivalent.
 - d. Have completed at least sixty (60) college semester credit hours toward a 2 year degree or higher from an accredited private or public institution that is accepted by the City with at least a 2.0 GPA.

The college semester credit hour requirement may be waived for U.S. military personnel who served two (2) years of active duty with an honorable discharge. The college semester credit hour requirement may also be waived for certified police officers with two (2) years of police service.

3. Not have been convicted of any felony, or any misdemeanor involving perjury, false statement, or domestic violence. Any person who, after July 1, 1981, pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, or is found guilty of a felony, or of a misdemeanor involving perjury, false statement, dating violence, stalking, or domestic/family violence (including abuse of the elderly or disabled), shall not be eligible for employment or appointment as a police officer, regardless of whether they received a suspension of sentence or withholding of adjudication.

In addition, any person who pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, or is found guilty of a felony, or of a misdemeanor involving any bias-motivated crime including

harassment or intimidation of a person or group because of that person's or group's actual or perceived race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, age, gender variance, or identity, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability, shall not be eligible for employment as a police officer, regardless of whether they received a suspension of sentence or withholding of adjudication.

- a. If the offense(s) outlined above were committed and resolved as a juvenile those circumstances are to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
4. Never received a dishonorable discharge from any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. The Chief of Police or designee shall, on a case-by-case basis, review uncharacterized discharges (i.e. General Discharge Under Honorable Conditions).
5. Have been fingerprinted by the employing agency with prints processed by the FDLE and the FBI.
6. Be of good moral character. Upon review by the Chief of Police or designee, cause for disqualification may include various moral character issues, depending upon the type(s) of issues, evaluation of circumstances, frequency, and the age of the applicant at the time of the incident(s).
7. Have completed an Affidavit of Applicant form CJSTC-68.
8. Have successfully completed the Florida Basic Recruit Training Program or FDLE equivalent.
9. Achieve a passing score on the State Officer Certification Examination.
10. Have successfully completed the Candidate Selection Process as stated in this policy.

F. MORAL CHARACTER

The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is responsible for conducting a thorough background investigation in an attempt to determine the moral character of an applicant pursuant to § 943.13(7), Florida Statutes. The Police Department standards for evaluating a candidate's moral character shall include, but shall not be limited to, the candidate's use of controlled substances.

1. Drug Policy

The unlawful use of any controlled substances, as designated by Florida State Statutes and/or federal law, by an applicant shall be reviewed by police management to determine if the applicant is considered to be of good moral character. This determination shall be made based on all relevant facts, including the type of controlled substance used, the date of the last use, the frequency of use, and the age of the applicant at the time of use.

- a. After a management review of all relevant facts, an applicant shall either continue in the hiring process or if they fail to meet the police department's standards for past drug use, they will be classified as either Permanently Disqualified (DQ), which does not allow applicant to reapply for the position of police officer or Failed Background (FB) which allows an applicant to reapply as a police officer in one (1) year.
- b. If any of the following are indicated it shall result in an automatic permanent disqualification:
 - (1). Other than marijuana, Adderall XR or Mydayis, any past use of a Schedule I or Schedule II drug as defined by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, used in an illegal or recreational manner will result in an automatic permanent disqualification.

NOTE: Use of marijuana and Adderall XR or Mydayis (non-prescribed) within one year of application will result in a Failed Background (FB) which allows an applicant to reapply as a police officer in one (1) year. No exception to existing standards shall be provided for marijuana, or its derivatives containing THC, as a drug or substance that is prescribed, recommended or dispensed for medical purposes, when such is prohibited under federal law.
 - (2). Any use of illegal drugs while employed by a police or corrections agency.
 - (3). Past sale of any illegal drug as defined by Florida State Statutes or federal law will result in an automatic permanent disqualification.
 - (4). The Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau may grant an exemption to illegal drug use by an applicant, based on a totality of the circumstances.
- c. If any of the following are indicated, it will result in an automatic Failed Background;
 - (1). Abuse of any prescription drug within five (5) years of application.
 - (2). Any more than experimental use of steroids not prescribed by a doctor for a medical condition and not within three (3) years of application.
 - (3). Use of any illegal drugs within three (3) years of an application for employment as a police officer.
 - (4). Marijuana, whether it is used medically or recreationally used within 1 years of application, as long as it remains a violation of the Federal Controlled Substances Act.

- (5). Any use of products containing Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) within one (1) year of application may be grounds for a failed background.

2. Arrest History

- (1). Must not have been convicted of, plead guilty, or nolo contendere to any felony offense.
- (2). Must not have been convicted of, plead guilty or nolo contendere to any misdemeanor offense involving perjury, making a false statement, dating violence, stalking, or domestic/family violence (including abuse of elderly or disabled).
- (3). Must not be under criminal investigation or have criminal charges pending.

G. DRIVING HISTORY

The present driving history standards of the Police Department prevent an applicant from being considered for employment if any of the following are indicated:

1. Accumulation of eight (8) points or more within the past 36 months.
2. Suspension of driver's license within the past thirty-six (36) months (Non-traffic related suspensions, such as an insurance related suspension, shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).
3. Four (4) or more moving violations within the past thirty-six (36) months (regardless of adjudication withheld).
4. Accumulation of more than one (1) moving violation in the six (6) months prior to application.
5. Must not have any outstanding traffic warrants or pending citations.
6. Conviction or case pending for DUI, DWI, or Hit and Run (leaving the scene of an accident) within the last five (5) years.
7. Any significant negative driving history, which shall be determined by management review of all relevant facts

H. TATTOO POLICY

The tattoo standards of the Police Department prevent an applicant from being considered for employment if any of the following are indicated:

1. Are of a nature to bring discredit upon the Police Department. Examples include, but are not limited to, drug-related, gang-related, extremist, obscene, indecent, sexist, or racist.

2. Depict intolerance or discrimination against any race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identification.
3. Tattoos, body marking, or scarifications not described above should be concealable in a long sleeve shirt and long pant police uniform.
4. Any other tattoo, branding, or scarification will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

I. VISION REQUIREMENTS

1. Applicants must be free from color blindness and have no permanent abnormality of either eye.
2. Applicants must have at least 20/100 vision in each eye without correction (glasses or contacts) and must have 20/30 vision in each eye with correction.
 - a. Successful long-term soft contact lens wearers shall not be subject to the uncorrected criteria. Lens wearers require a letter from an optometrist or ophthalmologist stating that they have been wearing long-term soft contact lenses successfully for more than two months.
 - b. A candidate who has undergone radial keratotomy or laser surgery, may not be examined until six weeks have elapsed from their last surgical procedure and must at that time meet the above stated vision requirements.

J. CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Application Process
 - a. Candidates interested in employment with the City of Fort Lauderdale must complete an online application through the City Hall Human Resources Department online hiring software that works in conjunction with GovernmentJobs.com.
 - b. Applications and questionnaires will be pre-screened by Human Resources Department employees, the Background Investigations Unit, and/or their designee to determine if the applications are complete and correct, and to determine if there is disqualifying information contained in the application.
 - c. With the exception of disqualified candidates, a candidate who is unsuccessful in the process for a failed background is not eligible to reapply for six (6) months after the date of removal from the eligibility list. A candidate that expires off of the list may reapply immediately after they have expired from the list.
 - d. Incomplete applications and the applications of candidates who fail to meet the minimum state and/or Fort Lauderdale Police Department hiring standards will be removed from the process and sent notice by the Human Resources Department listing the reasons for rejection. Once notice has

been sent, applications rejected as incomplete may be resubmitted as long as the position announcement remains open, under the following conditions:

- (1). After the first rejection, complete applications may be resubmitted at any time.
 - (2). If the application is rejected a second time as incomplete, candidates must wait 120 days from the date notice is sent to reapply.
 - (3). For subsequent incomplete submissions, candidates must wait one (1) year from the date notice is sent to reapply.
- e. Once the application is pre-screened and deemed acceptable, the applicant will be sent information about the testing process, including the time, date, and location of the available appointments.
2. Criminal Justice Basic Abilities Test (CJBAT)
- a. Only non-certified candidates are required to take the Criminal Justice Basic Abilities Test for Law Enforcement Officers (CJBAT). Non-certified candidates must submit a passing test score.
 - b. Candidates may take the test at any Florida state regional testing center. These testing centers are listed on www.flpd.org, in the recruiting office, and BCC/IPS. However, the regional testing center must have administered the same examination as the Criminal Justice Testing Center at Broward Community College, Institute of Public Safety.
 - c. The written portion of the CJBAT covers topics such as reading comprehension and written expression, inductive and deductive reasoning, information ordering, and visualization. The CJBAT study guide is on file in the reference section in all branches of the Broward County Library System and other locations.
 - d. The City of Fort Lauderdale will accept a passing CJBAT score four (4) years from the date an applicant has taken the examination.
3. Basic Motor Skills Test (Agility)
- a. BCC IPS will administer the Basic Motor Skills Test.
 - b. Candidates are responsible for all associated fees.
 - c. Agility test scores are good for six (6) months and must be submitted with the CJBAT scores and their application.
4. Swim Test

Swimming qualifications – swim 50 yards (any recognized stroke) in long pants and shirt. This test is administered by the Criminal Justice Testing Center. Results from any other agency/location will NOT be accepted; unless prior approval is provided by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. This test must also be submitted with their application.

5. Oral Interview

- a. The oral interview is a formally structured process. The candidate appears before an interview panel consisting of a Lieutenant or higher rank, and a Sergeant or higher rank of the Police Department, and a City Human Resources Division representative. Candidates will be evaluated in six categories or dimensions.
 - (1). Command presence
 - (2). Integrity
 - (3). Initiative/interest
 - (4). Communicative ability
 - (5). Tolerance for stress
 - (6). Judgment/decisiveness
 - (7). Emotional intelligence/diplomacy
- b. The candidates are rated on a scale of 1 to 10 in each of the dimensions and must obtain a score of 30 or higher to pass. Candidates who fail the oral interview are classified as a failed background and are not eligible to reapply for the position of police officer for one (1) year.
- c. The oral board may pass, fail or disqualify applicants, based on the targeted selection interview process as outlined in this policy. Candidates who are disqualified in the oral board are ineligible to reapply for the position of police officer.
- d. The final oral interview grade accounts for 100% of candidates' overall score.
- e. For candidates who fail three (3) or more oral board examinations, upon the submission of a new application for employment, the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau shall review all relevant facts to determine whether the candidate will continue in the hiring process or be classified as either a Failed Background or Permanently Disqualified.
- f. Candidates who notify the department in advance or after missing their appointment for an oral board and present a valid explanation may have their oral board rescheduled.

- (1). Candidates who do not show-up for an oral board that has been rescheduled and do not notify the department in advance, will be classified as a failed background and not eligible to reapply for one (1) year. Any future failures to appear as scheduled will be reviewed by the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau to determine whether the candidate will be classified as either a Failed Background or Permanently Disqualified.

6. Eligibility List

- a. The Human Resources Division is tasked with compiling an eligibility list separately for certified and non-certified police officer applicants. The list remains valid for six (6) months for each test administered.
- b. As candidates from new tests are processed, their names are merged into the existing eligibility list according to their final score.
- c. The eligibility list is forwarded to the Police Department's Background Investigations Unit to begin background investigations on the candidates in accordance with City Personnel Rules.
- d. Candidates who are on an eligibility list for police officer may be offered a public safety aide position or a position in the same or lower job classification within the department if the list is deemed an appropriate list according to the provisions of the respective Collective Bargaining Agreement or Personnel Rules, there is a vacancy for the position being filled, and no valid list exists for the position being offered.

7. Polygraph Examination

CJSTC recommends the use of a polygraph examination as part of the background investigation of a candidate. The polygraph examination shall be viewed as a tool to assist management in proper risk assessment during the selection process. Should deception be indicated as a result of an initial polygraph, the number of specific polygraphs and the use of the results will be determined by the Support Services Bureau Assistant Chief or his/her designee.

8. Psychological Examination

- a. Candidates scoring a "Suitable/Acceptable" score will be considered for further processing.
- b. Only licensed professionals shall be used to assess the psychological fitness of candidates.
- c. Examinations administered during the Psychological Examination will be determined by the pre-employment Police Psychologist vendor(s) with the goal of providing a clear psychological profile of the candidate to determine their suitability for the position of police officer. Further, there is a

reasonable expectation that the tests administered by psychologists may routinely change as the result of the evolving science in this field. Revisions of the test or instrument schedule will be completed in consultation with the Support Services Assistant Chief.

- d. Candidates who score an unsuitable/unacceptable rating may reapply one (1) year after the date of removal from the eligibility list. Candidates who have an unsuitable/unacceptable rating and have been identified by the evaluating psychologist to have significant deficits in the three (3) areas of tolerance / social competence, impulse control, and emotional composure will be permanently disqualified, and will not be permitted to reapply.

9. Background Investigation

- a. Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission Rule 11B-27.0022 (Background Investigations) requires police agencies to conduct background investigations on candidates applying for employment as a sworn police officer to determine if they meet minimum State qualifications for employment or appointment as specified in § 943.13, Florida Statute.
- b. The Background Investigations Unit and/or a contracted service provider will conduct investigations to ensure candidates meet City of Fort Lauderdale and Police Department requirements for employment.
- c. The focus of the investigation will include, but not be limited to verification of the following:
 - (1). Education and training information submitted on attendant applications, questionnaires, and forms associated with the hiring process.
 - (2). Previous employment, work history, and military record
 - (3). Driving history
 - (4). Arrest and conviction record
 - (5). Past or present use of drugs
 - (6). Credit
 - (7). Personal, neighbor, and business references
- d. Discrepancies found during the background investigation process may be grounds for “failed background” or disqualification from the police officer selection process.

10. Medical Examination

- a. § 943.13 (6), Florida Statute, mandates that all police applicants, before being approved for hire, “have passed a physical examination by a licensed physician.” The City of Fort Lauderdale employs an approved medical contract vendor to conduct pre-employment medical examinations. Based on the results of the medical examination, the candidate will be rated in one of five categories.
 - (1). Qualified
 - (2). Temporary or Correctable defect(s) not hindering immediate employment (Defect(s) must be corrected within specified time determined by Occupational Health Nurse).
 - (3). Temporary or Correctable Defect(s) which must be corrected prior to employment.
 - (4). Not qualified but may be considered for medical waiver under the handicapped worker provisions of the medical standards.
 - (5). Not qualified.
- b. Upon completion of the medical examination, the examining physician completes FDLE/CJSTC form 75 for submission as proof of the candidate’s passing/failing the required medical examination.

11. Eligibility Guidelines and Procedure for Police Officer Referral Bonus Program

- a. The employee and the Police Officer Candidate must meet the following requirements to be eligible for a referral bonus under this policy:
 - (1) Must be an active City of Fort Lauderdale employee or active member organization of the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations.
 - (2) All City employees must be employed by the City at the time of the bonus disbursement.
 - (3) Only one person is eligible for the referral bonus per applicant. Any disagreements as to whom the rightful recipient of the referral bonus is will be settled by the Support Services Bureau Assistant Chief.
 - (4) Newly hired Certified and Non-Certified Officers will be required to maintain employment as a Police Officer with the Fort Lauderdale Police Department for a period of 12 months from the date of hire. Failure to complete 12 months of continuous employment will require repayment of the hiring bonus.
- b. Exclusions to Eligibility:
 - (1) Elected officials and charter officers.
 - (2) Chief of Police.

- (3) Support Services Assistant Chief of Police and Major.
 - (4) Human Resources representatives.
 - (5) Background Unit personnel.
 - (6) Any employee directly involved in the hiring process.
- c. Procedure:
- (1) The applicant will be required to indicate the referring person on the police officer application in NEOGOV.
 - (2) The applicant will additionally be asked who the referring person is during the oral board.
 - (3) The Chief of Police reserves the right to amend or cancel the program at any point in time without notice.
- d. Referral bonus will be paid as follows:
- (1). In State Certified Officer: Bonus paid upon hire.
 - (2). Out of State Certified Officer / Non-Certified Officer: Bonus paid upon successful completion of the Florida State Officer Certification Exam.
- e. Referral Amounts:
- (1) Police Department employees (sworn and professional staff): \$2,500
 - (2) City of Fort Lauderdale employee: \$1,000
 - (3) City of Fort Lauderdale resident residing in an area recognized as a member of the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Association (Bonus paid to the respective HOA or Civic Association): \$1,000
- f. Bonus Amount for Incoming Officer:
- (1) Newly hired Non-Certified Police Officers: \$2500.00
 - (2) Newly Hired Certified Police Officers: \$5000.00