

6.4: Levels of Policing and Role of Police

Learning Objectives

After reading this section, students will be able to:

- Understand the various options for careers in the policing and law enforcement arena
- Discuss educational requirements are required for law enforcement positions with the federal government, state, county, municipal or city officer candidates
- Explain what a state police officer's main objectives are
- Describe the difference between commissioned and civilian
- List several divisions that a commissioned officer can promote to
- List several departments that a civilian can work within a law enforcement type agency
- Discuss why different police departments work with each other

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What education does a candidate need for jobs in federal law enforcement?
2. What education does a candidate generally need for city or county jobs as a police officer?
3. Is there a difference between a person who is considered commissioned and a person who is considered a civilian?
4. Does every law enforcement agency have the same opportunities for advancement?
5. Why do different police departments work together?
6. Can a person be a homicide detective without being a police officer?



Southern Oregon University Criminology and Criminal Justice student Christina Richardson volunteered to try on the Oregon State Police explosive unit bomb suit at the annual Lock-In Event.

Policing Types

It is an exciting time for those entering the policing or law enforcement field. The choices are endless, and one need not look far to find areas that draw the mind and excitement of the prospects in such a career field. All too often, candidates only think of local police departments; i.e., city or county agencies. The options available are genuinely multi-faceted. Whether one is looking for the stereotypical police officer role, or if it is the study of the criminal mind, possibly criminal forensics, or even crime analysis, or if one loves the forest or the water, the options are endless. While the below list is not all-inclusive, it does give a good detailed look at the array of careers one could have in the policing or law enforcement field.



ODOT partnered with the Ashland Police Department to raise awareness about unlicensed movers.

Federal Level: The federal arena of law enforcement careers is broad and vast. The options are almost endless, and the rewards outweigh most of the other local agencies. However, there is a catch, which centers on education and experience. Most law enforcement-related careers in the federal arena require a bachelor's degree, at a minimum plus three years of related full-time work experience before applying.

Candidates interested in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as a special agent, for example, are looking at the following educational requirements:

- A bachelor's degree in either accounting, computer science/information technology, foreign language (only a criminal justice major if the candidate is planning on working full-time for a law enforcement agency for at least three years before applying),
- OR a JD degree from an accredited law school,
- OR a diversified bachelor's degree AND three years of professional experience, OR a master's degree, or Ph.D. along with two years of professional experience.

Federal job possibilities (the list is not comprehensive)

- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Secret Service
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
- National Security Agency (NSA)
- United States Marshals Service (USMS)
- U.S. Park Police
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Department of Justice
- Federal Bureau of Prisons
- U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID)
- U.S. Army Counter Intelligence
- Dept. of Agriculture-Office of Inspector General (USDA-OIG)
- U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement & Investigations (USFS LEI)
- Department of Commerce-Office of Inspector General (DOC-OIG)
- Office of Security (DOC-OS)
- US Commerce Department Police
- Office of Export Enforcement (OEE)
- National Institute of Standards and Technology Police
- United States Pentagon Police
- Department of Defense-Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS)
- United States Pentagon Police (USPPD)
- Department of Defense Police
- Defense Security Police

- Defense Logistic Agency Police
- United States Coast Guard (USCG)
- Plus Many More ++

State Level: State police work for a state. For example, in Oregon, the state police work for the state of Oregon and the department is Oregon State Police (OSP). In Nevada, the state police are Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) and work for the Nevada Department of Public Safety. The commissioned (certified by the state with powers of arrest) employees are generally called **troopers** (a.k.a. police officers), their uniform is blue (except for California Highway Patrol who wear tan and dark brown uniforms), they wear round tipped hats, and their primary duty is to patrol the highways and interstates; however, many state police also investigate many different criminal crimes, run criminal forensic labs, along with divisions of fish and wildlife. The duties of each state agency are different and unique to each state. For example, OSP has an explosives unit (see photo below).



Oregon State Police (OSP) Trooper Greg Costanzo showing Southern Oregon University Criminology and Criminal Justice students the OSP explosive unit robot during the annual Lock-In Event.

County Level: There are 3,142 counties in the United States. ^[1] Each county has an elected Sheriff and **deputies** (a.k.a. police officers) work directly under the Sheriff. Deputies are no different from any other city police officer other than the Sheriff can be responsible for the courts and jails (a.k.a. correctional facility) in their respective county. But there are also many city police departments that are responsible for jails, so it just depends on the department.

Each state is divided into counties, and each county, depending on size, could have a sheriff's office. Examples of sheriff offices (county police) in Oregon:

- Jackson County Sheriff's Office
- Josephine County Sheriff's Office
- Douglas County Sheriff's Office
- Deschutes County Sheriff's Office



Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Sgt. DiCostanzo assisting during the Southern Oregon University Criminology and Criminal Justice annual Lock-In Event (for the K-9 patrol dog demonstration). Every year the CCJ Department along with the CCJ Crim Club puts on the Lock-In Event (February or March). During this event law enforcement agencies across the state participate and assist with spreading the word about law enforcement. For one afternoon students learn about such programs as: K-9 patrol dogs, explosives unit, defensive tactics, MILO (police officer simulator training), CSI, SWAT, DUI, and parole/probation. Students at SOU can enroll for 1 credit for this one day class and other students in the community can attend as well. Don't miss the Lock-In event if you are interested in law enforcement or in understanding the various facets of law enforcement.



A Deputy monitors Pleasant Creek Road in the early morning adjacent to the Garner Complex. Credit: Facebook – Jackson County Sheriff's Office – Oregon

Municipal/City Level: Municipal/City police work under a municipality or city. If a city has a government, i.e., mayor and city council members and a municipal code (misdemeanor laws for the city), then the city can have city police. If a person works for a city, the designator is a police officer. Some cities have a connected jail (a.k.a. correction or detention facility), while others are operated through the Sheriff and the county.

Most state, county, municipal/city police departments do not require future candidates to have a bachelors' degree. Currently, many of the candidates testing for such positions do have an associates or bachelor's degree, therefore although it is not required, the candidates are more desirable because they have a college degree. Generally, college degrees become a required educational background, when an officer wants to enter management, i.e., sergeant, lieutenant, captain. However, many Chiefs and Sheriffs have either a Masters or Ph.D. The following are municipal/city police departments in Oregon:

- Ashland Police Department
- Talent Police Department
- Phoenix Police Department
- Medford Police Department
- Central Point Police Department
- Eagle Point Police Department



CCJ students in the CCJ 387 Law Enforcement Test Prep Class take a field trip to Medford Police Department, where Sgt. Budreau gives instructions to Officer Josephson on how to properly pull the dummy during the ORPAT test.

Learn More about every law enforcement agency in the U.S.

For a complete list of law enforcement agencies (state, county, municipal/city) visit: <http://Discoverpolicing.org>

Miscellaneous Policing Jobs: There are many police jobs that may fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, state, county, or city or they are civilian positions (see below):

- Bailiff for a Court
- Animal Control or Animal Cruelty Investigator
- Computer Forensics
- Correctional Counselor
- Court Clerk or Court Reporter
- Criminologist
- Private Investigator
- Criminal Justice Administration
- Crime Prevention Specialist
- Protection Officer
- Forensic Accountant, Anthropologist, Artist, Hypnotists, Nurse, Pathologist, Psychologist, Scientist, Serologist, Toxicologist
- Judge
- Juvenile Probation Officer
- Latent Print Examiner
- Legal Secretary/Paralegal
- Loss Prevention Officer
- Mediator/Negotiator
- Pre-trial Officer
- Security Analyst
- Security Officer
- Social Worker
- Victims Advocate
- Plus Many More ++

Becoming an Officer Example

"I regularly get asked the following question: "Do I have to be a 'real cop'- you know, a cop that drives in a patrol car and answers calls for service, to be a homicide detective?" I understand this question because of a lot of the cop, and detective television shows out there today do not accurately represent this situation. I am so glad the television shows are available because they work as a recruitment tool for many departments. But, I have to disappoint many people, when I give the honest answer..."Yes, you have to be a 'real cop' before you can be a detective." And, I go a step further, in explaining that it can take years, or even decades, to test and promote to a homicide detective." I explain that many smaller departments that do not have

many homicides in a given year, have positions open in the detective bureau every two-five years. But, the larger departments that have hundreds to thousands of homicides a year, will only promote every ten-to-twenty years, because even though an officer could promote to the detective bureau within several years, the homicide detective is a glamorous position, therefore one must 'do their time' as a property detective, investigating vehicle burglaries, etc., before there is a retirement and they have proven themselves enough to take that position.

Divisions within Each Agency: Law enforcement agencies, whether they are federal, county, state, or municipal/city, generally have jobs available within two major areas: 1- Commissioned 2- Civilian. **Commissioned** is a term that describes an employee that has been through police training is certified as a police officer and has arresting powers in the state. **Civilian** is a term that describes an employee who has not been through police training and does not have arresting powers.

One of the fantastic parts of policing is the vast array of jobs available. Whether a person is looking in the commissioned or civilian arena, there are a plethora of choices. Once a candidate has gone through the testing process for a particular law enforcement agency and is hired after a certain number of years 'on the road' (length of time required on the road, is determined by each department) the seasoned officer can then test for many tantalizing individual divisions. Every department is different as to those specialized divisions. For example, the Ashland Police Department (APD) in Oregon is a smaller police department and offers its officers a chance to engage in community policing and problem-oriented policing at a one-on-one level, due to its smaller size (thirty-four officers).

On the other hand, because of its smaller size, the opportunities for advancement are minimal. Officers with the department can also promote to management. However, APD does have a few detectives but they do not offer its officers the more more glamorous divisions such as those offered by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB). An officer at PPB can promote to the following divisions: Drugs and Vice, Narcotics, Asset Forfeiture, Youth Services Division, Traffic, Family Services Division, Detective, K-9, Explosive Disposal, Gang Enforcement, Air Support Unit, Rapid Response, and more.

Policing can be multifaceted thereby keeping its officers engaged. Unlike many other professions, the daily job of a police officer, depending on the respective department, can change with divisions. One year a police officer may be writing a traffic citation from a patrol car, and the next year the same police officer may be driving an off-road motorcycle patrolling the local park or riding a mounted horse in the downtown area.

The choice to have a career in policing is enormous, but the candidate must go one step further and start researching to decide what type of policing and dig even further to pick which agency and what possible divisions the candidate would like to have the opportunity to join one day.



Jackson County Sheriff's Office demonstrates K-9 patrol procedures during the annual Lock-In Event at Southern Oregon University. During this K-9 class students get to learn how patrol dogs operate and they actually get to see a bite demonstration and learn how the K-9's are trained.

COMMISSIONED- Divisions within a Law Enforcement Agency:

- Detective/Investigations (Persons Crimes- Property Crimes-Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Burglary, Auto Theft, DUII, Domestic Violence)
- Motors

- Narcotics
- Human/Sex Trafficking
- VICE
- NCrime Scene Investigation (CSI)
- SWAT
- K-9 (patrol, drug, and search & rescue dogs)
- Crisis Negotiator
- Mounted Unit (horses)
- Air Unit
- Training/Range Master
- Academy/Tac Officer
- Bike Patrol
- Recruiting
- Internal Affairs
- Public Information Officer
- Gangs
- Search & Rescue
- Forest and Fish & Wildlife
- Marine
- Various Area Task Force (usually made up of various law enforcement agencies in the area- to sometimes include federal agencies too)
- Plus Many More ++

CIVILIAN- Divisions within a Law Enforcement Agency:

The civilian areas of each police department are also fascinating. Not every person is meant to go into law enforcement as a police officer. It is a strenuous and stressful job that attracts many but only made for a few elite. However, don't fret; there are many options in the law enforcement realm. Putting on a bullet-proof vest, filling a holster with a semi-automatic handgun, and continually training to be in tip-top condition does not appeal to everyone, so there are still many jobs available in the law enforcement arena. Civilians are the other half of the equation and are a much-needed commodity for every law enforcement agency. When a citizen dials 9-1-1, a dispatcher answers the phone, and that dispatcher is a civilian. When a police officer finds heroin on a suspect and takes custody of it and later books it into evidence at the police station, the evidence technician is the civilian that logs and follows through with the chain of custody for the heroin evidence. Civilians are just as important as the commissioned positions at a law enforcement agency.

Example civilian positions at law enforcement agencies:

- Dispatch/911 Operator
- Records
- Crime Analysis
- Forensic Unit/CSI
- Training
- Fleet Management
- Support/Facilities
- Human Resources
- Operations Support Unit
- Recruitment Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Administrative Support
- Plus Many More ++



Students at Southern Oregon University with a major in Criminology and Criminal Justice take the CCJ 321 CSI and CCJ 462 Forensic Criminal Investigation classes and practice crime scene investigation skills for a future career as a Crime Scene Investigator

Contact with Outside Agencies: It takes a team to accomplish policing. One federal, state, county, or city police agency cannot do it all alone. In order to succeed the agencies must work together. Whether a narcotics division works with the ATF or an entire SWAT team comprised of officers from various city and county departments, the team concept in policing is unwavering.

Oregon has a lot of examples of coordination between different agencies to make things happen. For example, in Jackson County (Oregon) there is The Medford Area Drug and Gang Enforcement (MADGE) Unit; there was a need in Jackson County, to work towards controlling the gangs and drugs in the valley, and one department could not complete the mission alone. Therefore, MADGE was created to engage the following agencies:

Medford Police, Ashland Police, Central Point Police, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police, Jackson County Community Corrections, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations Division, and the Oregon Army National Guard. Not only does the job get done more efficiently and more effectively but also the communication that occurs when nine different agencies converge is awe-inspiring.

In the News: MADGE is proactive in gang intelligence and gang prevention. In 2015, MADGE and Medford Police Department investigated 247 gang-related crimes; a strong majority of these crimes were graffiti cases. With the continued help of CSO Todd Sales, this graffiti is removed or painted over with the assistance of youth offenders completing their community service hours, for their part in graffiti. In 2015 there was a 140% increase in gang-related aggravated assault cases, from 5 in 2014 to 12 in 2015. Current numbers of documented gang members have leveled off from past years. In 2015, MADGE and Medford Police have identified 315 documented gang members and associates that participate in organized crime activities. This information is compiled for the furtherance of an investigation involving organized criminal gang activities <http://MadgeTaskForce> Retrieved from <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=2400> i City of Medford (2018, September 23). Madge Task Force Retrieved from <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=2400>

Finally, once one enters the policing field, the contacts made daily are numerous.

An officer who works for a city police department can have contact with:

- Jails/Correction/Detention Facilities and Employees
- Prisons
- Prosecutors Office
- Defense Attorneys
- Judges and Lawyers
- Various Social Services
- Educational Entities

These contacts are precious to every police officer and without them; the officer could not complete their job effectively.

1. U.S. Department of the Interior (2018, September 23). How many countries are there in the United States. Retrieved from <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-many-countries-are-there-united-states>. ↩

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