

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

APPLYING TO TAKE THE EXAM

1. What are the requirements to sit for the exam?

- a. You must reach the age of 18 by February 29, 2016
 - i. You will be required to present proof of your age on the day of exam. Failure to do so will result in your disqualification.

2. 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.
 - i. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, no person may be appointed as a probationary Police Officer after the person’s 40th 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.
 - i. This educational requirement may be waived if:
 1. You have served at least three (3) continuous years (36 months) on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States; **OR**
 2. 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.
- d. Please refer to the section “After the Exam Administration” for additional information about what happens after you take the written exam.

3. When can I apply to sit for the next Police Officer exam?

- a. You will be able to apply from Sunday, November 1, 2015 through Wednesday, December 16, 2015.
- b. If your application is successfully received, you will be notified of the date and time of the exam, which will be in February of 2016 You will be provided adequate time to study for the exam.

4. How can I apply?

- a. There is only one way to apply, and that's online. You can find the application at www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication starting Sunday, November 1, 2015.
- b. The online application requires you to create an account with a user name and password. Please write your user name and password down. That way, you can access your application anytime during the application period, which closes on Wednesday, December 16, 2015. 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.
 - 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 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.

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
 - 2. Yahoo: 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, log in, and start over.

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

- a. 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 as soon as possible. Once the application period closes on Wednesday, December 16, 2015, we will be unable to correct any errors.
 - ii. If your application is successfully submitted, you will receive an email within the next few days prompting you to submit payment of the exam registration fee. Please refer to the section titled “Exam Application Fee Payment Information” for more detail regarding payment.
 - 1. 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 to check on the status of your application. **Please be sure to check the spam filters on your email account first.**
 - 2. 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 on Wednesday, December 16, 2015. **NO APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER Wednesday, December 16, 2015.**

- iii. The next correspondence you receive from us will provide the date, time, and place of the exam. You will receive this information via email a few weeks after the payment period closes. If you have not received an email with this information by the beginning of January, please call us at (312) 744-4976 or email us at police-application@cityofchicago.org as soon as possible.

11. Is there an exam fee?

- a. Yes, it's \$30, which is non-refundable. Please refer to the page titled "Exam Application Fee Payment Information" for additional information.

12. What if I can't afford the exam fee?

- a. You can request a fee waiver. Please refer to the page titled "Fee Waiver Request Information" for instructions on how to submit a request.

13. Can I create multiple accounts and pay for each one 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, and you will forfeit any additional exam fees paid.

14. 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

15. 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 user name and reset your password.

16. What are the requirements for the Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, 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, and Line of Duty Preferences" for details about those preferences and their requirements.

**INFORMATION REGARDING VETERANS, CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND
LINE OF DUTY PREFERENCES**

1. What are the Veterans, Chicago Public Schools, and Line of Duty Preferences?

- a. For information about the Veterans and Line of Duty Preferences, please refer to http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dhr/supp_info/APPLICANT_PREFERENCE_1.pdf The Chicago Public Schools Preference is similar to the Veterans Preference and is available to applicants who graduated from a Chicago Public High School.
- 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. 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 and length of service 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 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 Line of Duty Preference, please visit http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dhr/supp_info/line_of_duty_preference.html for further instructions.

5. How do I provide the required documents for the Veterans and CPS 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
- b. You may also provide documents via email, US Mail, or in person.
 - i. You can email documents to 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.
 1. 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, 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. There is no cutoff date for the submission of documents showing eligibility for Veterans or CPS Preferences. However, the later you get them into our system, the later those preferences may become available to you.
- d. Some applicants will become eligible for a preference at a later time. For example, you may be a senior at a Chicago Public High School when the eligibility list is generated and thus ineligible for the CPS Preference at that time. However, upon graduation in the spring of 2016, you will qualify for the preference but must change your answer to the question about preferences in your profile and provide the required documentation to receive it. We advise updating your application as quickly as possible. As stated above, the later we receive the documents, the later the preference will be available to you.
 - i. Please remember to update your answer to the preferences question in your profile AND provide the required documentation. If one of these steps is not followed, you will not receive the preference.

6. 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 user name and reset your password.

EXAM REGISTRATION FEE PAYMENT INFORMATION

1. How do I pay the exam registration fee?

- a. You can pay the exam registration fee with a valid credit card that possesses a credit card logo such as American Express, Discover, Master Card, or Visa, as pictured here:

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------|
| i. |  | American Express |
| ii. |  | Discover |
| iii. |  | Master Card |
| iv. |  | Visa |

2. If I don't have a credit card, can I use my debit card to pay the application fee?

- a. Yes. Debit cards are acceptable as long as your debit card possesses one of the credit card logos depicted above.

3. Do you accept checks or money orders for payment of the application fee?

- a. Unfortunately, no. We are unable to accept checks or Money Orders.

4. Will my exam fee be refunded if I am not selected for the position?

- a. No. Application fees are non-refundable.

5. Will a receipt be available for printing after I make the \$30 payment?

- a. Yes. At the completion of the payment process, a confirmation page containing a confirmation number signifying your payment was successful and complete will appear. You should print a copy of this page and retain it for your records.
- b. You will also receive a copy of the confirmation page via e-mail once your payment has been submitted. You should also save this e-mail and retain it for your records.

6. I went to the payment website and entered my user name and e-mail address, but the system will not let me log in.

- a. The user name and e-mail address that you must use to enter the payment website is the SAME user name and e-mail address you used to enter your online application. Your username cannot contain any characters other than letters and numbers and no spaces.
- b. If you continue to have difficulties, please call our administrative support staff at (312) 744-4976 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, or e-mail us at police-application@cityofchicago.org

7. 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 user name and reset your password.

8. On the payment website, I noticed that my information was listed incorrectly on the summary page. Can I correct this information?

- a. Yes. You can update your contact information by logging into your account, which you can find at www.cityofchicago.org/PoliceApplication

9. While in the payment 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 payment 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 payment link, log in, and start over.

FEE WAIVER REQUEST INFORMATION

1. Who is eligible for a fee waiver?

- a. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 2-74-020 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, if you are presently receiving unemployment compensation, SSI, or general assistance OR your income is below the federally defined poverty level, you may be eligible to receive a fee waiver.
- b. To identify whether or not you meet the federally defined poverty level, please visit the following website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm>

2. How do I request a fee waiver?

- a. The online exam registration fee payment site provides the opportunity to request a fee waiver. You must log into this payment site when you receive the payment link via e-mail after your application has been submitted successfully.
- b. Your request for a fee waiver MUST be accompanied by at least one current document listed below. Please attach one of the required documents to the attachment tab of your application. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete request, and your fee waiver request will be denied and you will need to submit payment in order to sit for the exam.
 - i. IDES Wage Information Sheet
 - ii. IDES Benefit Payment Stub
 - iii. IDPA Medical Card
 - iv. IDPA Verification of Benefits Form / Grant Information Request
 - v. LINK Card and Receipt
 - The receipt must be from a recent purchase such as a grocery bill within the last month.
 - vi. Food Stamp Issuance Document
 - vii. Federal Income Tax Return (most recent tax year)
 - viii. Letter (on shelter letterhead) from the homeless shelter where you currently stay.
- c. If you have any questions about attaching your documents, please contact our administrative staff at (312) 744-4976 between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday or e-mail us at police-application@cityofchicago.org

d. You will receive an email indicating whether your fee waiver request was granted or denied.

i. If the extended payment period is nearing the end, which is Thursday, January 7, 2016, and you have not received a decision on your waiver request, please contact administrative staff at (312) 744-4976 between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday or e-mail us at police-application@cityofchicago.org as soon as possible. You MUST contact us before the end of the extended payment period, which is Thursday, January 7, 2016. Once the payment period closes, if you have not submitted payment or obtained a fee waiver, you will not be allowed to it for the exam. NO LATE PAYMENTS OR FEE WAIVER REQUESTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

e. Any falsification or omission of information that you provide in support of your financial status for the purpose of receiving this fee waiver may result in your disqualification and/or termination of employment; and may be punishable under laws governing perjury and/or a violation of Municipal Code of Chicago 2-74-020.

3. I received an e-mail stating that my fee waiver request was denied. I checked my application and realized that I attached the wrong documentation for my fee waiver request. What can I do?

a. Please call our administrative support staff at (312) 744-4976 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday or e-mail us at police-application@cityofchicago.org, and we can assist you. You MUST contact us before the end of the extended payment period, which is Thursday, January 7, 2016. Once the payment period closes, if you have not submitted payment or obtained a fee waiver, you will not be allowed to sit for the exam. NO LATE PAYMENTS OR FEE WAIVER REQUESTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

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 based on a randomly assigned lottery number. You will be referred to the Chicago Police Department in lottery order as vacancies become available.

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 40th 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.
 - i. This educational requirement may be waived if:
 1. You have served at least three (3) consecutive years (36 months) on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States; **OR**
 2. 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 begin the pre-employment process as you near the age of 21; however you cannot start in the Police Academy until you have actually reached the age of 21. So long as you meet the other hiring requirements, the Chicago Police Department 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. If you do not obtain these requirements by the time the referral list is exhausted, you will no longer be considered and will need to apply and test, again.

- 4. If I meet the minimum qualifications and am placed on the eligibility list in lottery order, how long 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. A Police Officer eligibility list typically lasts between three (3) to five (5) years.
 - 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. To 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. 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 user name and reset your password.
- 6. If I'm referred to the Chicago Police Department, am I immediately admitted to the Police Training Academy?**
- a. No. Before you can be admitted to the Police Training Academy, you must undergo physical testing (known as the Police Officer Wellness Evaluation Report (P.O.W.E.R.) test), as well as a background check, psychological evaluation, drug testing, and other testing as required by the Chicago Police Department.
- 7. Can I prepare for the P.O.W.E.R. test in advance of being referred?**
- a. Yes. You can find information regarding what the P.O.W.E.R. test entails at <http://www.ptb.state.il.us/pdf/power.pdf>
- 8. What happens if I fail any portion of the hiring process?**
- a. If you fail any portion of the hiring process (pre-POWER, POWER, background, medical, etc.) CPD will request that your name be removed from the DHR 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. Failure to disclose any requested information is grounds for disqualification.

10. I was arrested before but I had my records sealed/expunged. Do I have to disclose this information during the background investigation?

- a. Yes, you must disclose all contacts with the police and/or judicial system as part of your background investigation. Law enforcement agencies are an exception to the general rule that an employer may not consider an expunged or sealed record with respect to employment matters. 20 ILCS 2630/12. Failure to disclose any requested information is grounds for disqualification.

11. 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 drug use is grounds for disqualification, prior drug use is evaluated based on a variety of factors.

12. 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.

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

- a. There is a wide range of training provided, including physical, practical, and academic training on areas such as, Chicago Police Department policies and procedures, the law, communication skills, strategies and tactics, professionalism, and the use of various equipment and technologies.

14. 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.

15. 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 Chicago Police Department at the time of graduation.

16. 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, unless extended due to injury, illness, or leave.

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

- a. Yes.

18. I am a Police Officer in another jurisdiction. Do I still have to go through the Chicago Police Department's 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.

19. What is the salary of a Police Officer?

- a. A Police Officer starts at an annual salary of \$47,604, which increases to \$72,510 after eighteen (18) months.

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

- a. There are many benefits, which include:
 - i. Starting annual salary of \$47,604, which increases to an annual salary of \$72,510 after eighteen (18) months
 - ii. Tuition Reimbursement
 - iii. Medical, Dental, Prescription and Vision Insurance
 - iv. Opportunity for Advancement
 - v. Attractive Work Schedule
 - vi. Paid Holidays and Vacation Days
 - vii. Retirement Plan
 - viii. Annual Uniform Allowance
 - ix. Home Purchase Assistance