POLICE APPLICANT SCREENING SERVICE

www.policestandards.org

File #

Office Use Only

SPC Public Safety Training Center
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St. Petersburg, FL 33712

Phone: 727-864-3822
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Office Hours: 7:30am to 3:30pm
Monday through Friday

Ensuring exceptional public safety candidates for Pinellas County's future

APPLICANT INFORMATION PACKAGE

Please read all this material carefully to successfully complete the PASS process and be eligible for employment as a law enforcement officer in the participating agencies of Pinellas County, Florida

The Police Applicant Screening Service (PASS) is operated by the law enforcement agencies of Pinellas County, Florida to provide candidate evaluation and background investigations for participating employers. Successful completion of the PASS process places applicants within an active pool of eligible candidates for one year, during which time they may be called for employment interviews by these agencies. PASS is not an employer and participation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an employment interview and/or employment offer. Individual agencies will conduct additional screening steps (such as medical examinations) to establish eligibility under their own employment requirements. Successful completion of PASS is also required for entry into the Police Academy at St. Petersburg College. ***All applicants are considered without regard to race, color, marital status, religion, national origin, gender, veteran status, age disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected status.***

REGISTRATION FEE

Applicants must pay a non-refundable fee that represents a small portion of actual processing costs.

Amount: $250.00 (includes the cost of Polygraph exam)

Re-Application/Update Fee: $200.00 (3 year time span)

Due: At time of registration for the screening process.

Payment: Money Order Only – Please make money order payable to: **Pinellas Police Standards Council**

Initial_____

SCREENING PROCEDURES

TIME IS IMPORTANT

By design, the PASS process is a very extensive and exhaustive background investigation. The PASS staff will make every effort to expedite your case, but your cooperation is essential. For instance, submitting an incomplete Personal History Statement will substantially slow and possibly eliminate your eligibility for successful completion. The demand for PASS services is substantial and to help allocate resources efficiently, inactive files will be closed and may require an administrative fee to re-open. This will include cases where the applicant fails to attend an appointment without calling in advance to cancel or reschedule or other cases where there is an unexplained lack of response on the part of the applicant.

STEP ONE:

Registration and payment of the required fee: Applicants must register in person by presenting a government issued identification bearing a photograph (such as a driver license or passport), pay the **registration fee by money order (ONLY)**, acknowledge that they have read this Applicant Information Package, and complete a brief questionnaire to determine eligibility for processing (please refer to the next page to learn about PASS processing eligibility categories).

Applicants will be assigned an Administrative Interview date and a Polygraph Exam date. Although time sensitive, PASS staff will make every effort to work with Applicants to accommodate potential scheduling conflicts. Assigned PASS dates are considered finalized unless an emergency arises. Applicants are required to make immediate contact with their assigned investigator should an issue occur negating adherence to the specified timeline. The assigned investigator shall work with the applicant to resolve any potential conflicts.

- Registration hours are Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- To expedite the registration process, we recommend applicants call ahead to schedule an appointment date/time to reduce possible waiting time.
- Please contact Robyn Weir by phone at 727-864-3822 Ext. 1 or email weir.robyn@spcollege.edu to confirm an appointment. Confirmation are only done via email.

STEP TWO:

Fingerprints: PASS provides a fingerprint sheet that has to be sent to the **Pinellas County Sheriff's Office** (Map and directions will be provided at registration).

Basic Abilities Test (BAT): Applicants are required to take and pass this exam prior to the law enforcement academy entrance. As part of the PASS Process, Applicants are required to take and pass this exam to successfully complete the PASS Background Investigation and gain PASS POOL status.

Exemptions: As of July 1, 2022, section 943.17(1)(g) states that any candidate wishing to enter a law enforcement academy that either (i) is a veteran as classified in section 1.1(14), F.S., or (ii) holds an associate degree or higher from an accredited college or university is not required to take the Law Enforcement Basic Abilities Test. Please note that veteran is defined as being honorably discharged from military service. No other discharge classifications qualify. Please note that this does not apply to candidates wishing to enter a corrections academy.

If an Applicant has already taken/passed the BAT (within a four-year time period – confirmed through ATMS), they are excluded from this requirement.

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PASS applicants maintaining active Florida Law Enforcement Certification or having successfully completed an FDLE approved EOT/Florida Re-Certification verification are by PPSC Standards excluded (waived) from taking the BAT as a requirement of the PASS Process. However, Council-affiliated agencies retain the authority to require any testing procedure to be performed as part of their individual agency employment.

BAT Testing Site: The St. Petersburg Public Safety Training Center offers the BAT and Applicants should directly contact the college at 727-641-7263 or 727-341-4760.

STEP THREE:

Personal History Statement (PHS): PASS utilizes POBITS (Peace Officer Background Investigative Tracking System) for applicant personal history information. POBITS is a web-base program that requires applicants to have access to a computer terminal and internet. Applicants will be provided admission to POBITS at the time of PASS registration. The staff member performing registration process will provide guidance and instructions for the use of POBITS and the applicant will be given 10 days for the completion of the PHS.

***Deliberate misstatements and/or omissions can and often result in your application being terminated, regardless of the nature or reason for the misstatements/omissions.** In fact, the number one reason individuals "fail" a law enforcement background investigation is because they deliberately withhold or misrepresent employment-relevant information from their prospective employer.

STEP FOUR:

Administrative Interview: ***Applicants must provide all required documents (see list on Page 6 and only original or certified copies will be accepted) by the Administrative Interview date.*** Additionally, applicants are encouraged to dress in business attire as their file photograph will also be taken.

Writing Sample: Applicants must write a brief un-graded essay on an assigned topic. PASS applicants maintaining active Florida Law Enforcement Certification or having successfully completed an FDLE approved EOT/Florida Re-Certification verification are by PPSC Standards excluded (waived) as a requirement of the PASS Process. However, Council affiliated agencies retain the authority to require any one or all of these testing procedures to be performed as part of their individual agency employment.

STEP FIVE:

Polygraph or Other Examination: All PASS candidates shall be administered a polygraph exam by a qualified polygraphist dictated by the PPSC. The initial polygraph exam cost is included within the PASS Process. *See Polygraph Procedures for additional information.

STEP SIX:

Background Investigation: The background of eligible applicants is investigated in detail. This is the most time consuming part of the process and usually takes several weeks. The polygraph exam and any associated material shall be completed prior to the PASS Administrative Case Review.

STEP SEVEN:

Entry into Candidate Pool: Applicants who successfully complete all steps of the process will be placed in the Candidate Pool for one year from the date of file approval/completion. Participating agencies may call upon pool applicants for interviews, medical or other screening procedures. Candidates in the pool are also eligible to enter the St. Petersburg College Law Enforcement and/or Corrections Academy. After expiration from the pool, files may be re-opened at the request of a participating law enforcement agency.

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***POOL CANDIDACY EXPIRATION:** Applicants may request a PASS UPDATE (discount fee assessed) within three years of their original PASS POOL expiration date. Upon successful completion of the PASS UPDATE, applicants will be placed back into the PASS POOL for an additional year.

ALL APPLICANTS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING SELECTION STANDARDS

To be employed as a Law Enforcement Officer and/or Correction Officer within the State of Florida (Florida Statutes 943.13) the following minimum qualifications apply:
INDIVIDUALS MUST

- be at least 19 years of age.
- be a citizen of the United States.
- have earned a high school diploma or equivalent (GED) for law enforcement and corrections applicants.
- not have been convicted of any felony or of a misdemeanor involving perjury or false statement. 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 or a false statement, shall not be eligible for employment or appointment as an officer, not-withstanding suspension of sentence or withholding of adjudication.
- never have received a dishonorable discharge from any of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- have documentation of processed fingerprints on file with the employing agency.
- pass a physical examination by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or certified advanced registered nurse practitioner.
- have good moral character as determined by a background investigation under procedures established by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission.

ELIGIBILTY FOR PASS PROCESSING
*** (LAW ENFORCEMENT APPLICANTS) ***

To be eligible for PASS processing, you must meet at least <u>ONE</u> of the following qualifying education or life experiences. (All college degrees or credits must be earned at a school that is regionally accredited, or approved for Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission [CJSTC] Salary Incentives.):

1. You have earned at least **<u>30</u>** semester hours of college credits (You must have been in good standing during your last attendance, with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 on a 4-point scale.); <u>OR</u>

2. You have received an Honorable Discharge from active duty in one of the armed services, having successfully completed a regular enlistment without early separation, or having completed at least 12 months of active duty within an 18-month period during a reserve enlistment without early separation; <u>OR</u>

3. You are currently certified as a Florida Law Enforcement Officer having successfully completed a one-year probation - not counting academy attendance; <u>OR</u>

4. You are currently certified as a Law Enforcement Officer in another state, the military or a federal law enforcement agency - meeting all requirements of a CJSTC Equivalency of Training (EOT) review, including having successfully completed at least one year of employment as a full time officer - not counting academy attendance; <u>OR</u>

5. You have earned a "Criminal Justice Practitioner Designation" from the Criminal Justice Academy at Pinellas Park High School. Upon successful completion of this processing (you meet all other standards); you may then attend the Police Academy at St. Petersburg College to earn additional college credits.

ELIGIBILTY FOR PASS PROCESSING
*** (CORRECTIONS APPLICANTS) ***

To be eligible for PASS processing, you must meet at least ONE of the following qualifying education or life experiences. (All college credits must be earned at a school that is regionally accredited, or approved for Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission [CJSTC] Salary Incentives.):

1. You are currently certified as a Florida Corrections Officer having successfully completed a one-year probation - not counting academy attendance; OR
2. You are currently certified as a Corrections Officer in another state, the military or a federal law enforcement agency - meeting all requirements of a CJSTC Equivalency of Training (EOT) review, including having successfully completed at least one year of employment as a full time officer - not counting academy attendance; OR
3. For Corrections Academy entrance, you must have successfully completed/passed the PERT exam within the past two years or have attained College Level Reading and Writing course credit.

Grounds for Disqualification from the PASS Process:

- Deliberate omission or falsification of information provided to PASS that would materially affect screening or employment decisions, including, but not limited to, the Pre-Intake Questionnaire, Registration, Personal History Statement, Administrative Interview, or supporting documentation.
- Any detected or undetected felony crime committed while an adult. (Detected or undetected crimes committed while a juvenile may be grounds for disqualification.)
- Gambling that results in an arrest or conviction.
- Use, sale or possession of any felony drugs as listed by Florida State Statute to include the unlawful use, sale or possession of prescription drugs not prescribed to the applicant.
  For the purpose of the PASS Process, the use of prescription drug not prescribed to applicant more than one year from the date of PASS application shall not constitute a disqualification.
  For the purpose of the PASS Process, the use of anabolic steroids more than one year from the date of PASS application shall not constitute a disqualification.
- Unlawful use of marijuana, hashish or other derivatives on fifty (50) or more occasions during a lifetime is considered affecting moral character or demonstrating a substantial history of poor judgment.
- Use of alcohol that resulted in three or more alcohol related arrests or other alcohol related illegal conduct that affects moral character or demonstrates a substantial history of poor judgment.
- Having two or more driver's license revocations and/or suspensions within five years of date of PASS application for criminal violations, point accumulation, or failure to appear or pay a fine. This does not include suspensions for insurance or other administrative concerns. **(Law Enforcement Applicants ONLY)**
- Failure to achieve a passing score on required written examinations.
- Failure to successfully complete the administrative reviews conducted by PASS.
- Ineligibility to legally possess firearms or ammunition due to a prior criminal conviction (including any conviction for a qualifying offense related to domestic violence) or court order.
- Unlawful use of inhalants as described in FSS 877.111, with the exception of subsection (4), three or more occasions during a lifetime is considered affecting moral character or demonstrating a substantial history of poor judgment.
- Tattoos displaying obscene or vulgar wording/graphics, advocating for criminal activity, or that may provoke are prohibited. Tattoos must not state, imply, or depict hate speech or imagery targeting groups based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, national origin, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

Grounds for Deferment (processing delayed if any of the conditions are present):

- You do not possess a current driver's license.
- You have possessed or used marijuana, hashish or its derivatives within the past six [6] months.
- You have been convicted of a criminal traffic offense (DUI, Reckless Driving, etc.) within the last five years, notwithstanding withholding of adjudication. **(Law Enforcement Applicants ONLY)**
- Your driver license has been suspended or (FTA or FTP) revoked for point accumulation within the last three years, as measured from the date on which that penalty was imposed. **(Law Enforcement Applicants ONLY)**
- You have been convicted of three or more moving traffic violations within the last two years, notwithstanding withholding of adjudication or violations cleared by attendance at driver's education and/or courses. In such cases, processing will be deferred until a year has elapsed from the date of the last conviction or date of any resulting deferment. **(Law Enforcement Applicants ONLY)**
- Your driver license has been suspended for financial responsibility (uninsured motorist violations) within the last year, as measured from the date the suspension was imposed. You must also show proof of being an insured/insurable driver prior to resumption of processing. **(Law Enforcement Applicants ONLY)**
- Any outstanding warrant, pending criminal court case, unpaid fine or unresolved Failure to Appear in answer to a summons will cause deferment until cleared by the court in which the matter is pending.

Grounds for disqualification for acts committed while a law enforcement or corrections officer:

- Any theft from a crime scene, victim, offender or employing agency.
- Any illegal use of a controlled substance.
- On-duty consumption of alcoholic beverage, unless such consumption was permitted by the employing agency.
- Any falsification of an official report, record or document.
- Acceptance of any bribe, or accepting a gratuity in violation of the employing agency's regulations.

Other Qualifications:

- You must be able to meet the vision, hearing and medical requirements of the hiring agency and possess a valid Florida Driver License at the time of employment.
    - ❖ Failure to keep PASS notified of your current address and telephone numbers will result in deferment of processing, inactivation of your file, or removal from the Candidate Pool.

POLYGRAPH PROCEDURES

The polygraph exam shall occur no later than 10 days after the completion of the PASS Administrative Interview. The candidate is required to make immediate contact with their assigned investigator should an issue occur negating adherence to the specified timeline. The assigned investigator shall work with the candidate to resolve any potential conflicts.

Polygraph Examination Findings:

1). No significant physiological responses to relevant questions – PASS process continues

2). No opinion (inconclusive) or significant response(s) – PASS Process stops

3). Disqualifying information (known or revealed) – PASS Process stops

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A candidate possessing disqualifying information is **not eligible** for successful completion of the PASS Process. A disqualified candidate may request reconsideration through the PASS Appeal Process (see next section). If a candidate receives a polygraph exam signifying "No Opinion (inconclusive)" or "significant response(s)" the candidate shall be required to perform a follow up "specific issue" polygraph exam. The purpose of the additional exam is to seek a potential resolution to the identified exam issue(s). A candidate not electing to perform a follow up "specific issue" polygraph exam shall have their PASS file closed.

A candidate electing to perform a follow up "specific issue" polygraph exam shall be responsible for the cost of the exam but the polygraphist will still be dictated by the PPSC. If the follow up polygraph exam indicates no significant responses and no disqualifications are revealed, a candidate will resume the PASS Process. If a candidate reveals disqualification information or the follow up exam still indicates no opinion (inconclusive) or significant response(s) the PASS Process cannot continue. A candidate may request reconsideration through the PASS Appeal Process (see next section). A candidate electing not to proceed with the PASS Appeal Process shall have their PASS file closed.

PASS APPEAL PROCESS

Disqualification Appeal:

Any candidate disqualified from PASS processing may submit a written appeal to the Pinellas Police Standards Council, requesting reconsideration and reinstatement. PASS will provide the required forms and timeline procedures upon request. All decisions of the Council are final.

Deferment Appeal:

Deferment appeals shall not immediately require a polygraph exam for Council review and determination. Providing the deferment appeal is granted, the applicant shall submit to a polygraph exam in accordance with PASS Process Steps.

Polygraph Determined Appeal:

Any candidate's revealing disqualifying information within the polygraph may submit a written appeal to the Pinellas Police Standards Council, requesting reconsideration and reinstatement. PASS will provide the required forms and timeline procedures upon request. All decisions of the Council are final.

Polygraph Finding of No Opinion (Inconclusive) or Significant Response(s) Appeal:

The candidate is required to perform a follow up "specific issue" polygraph exam. The candidate is responsible for the cost of the exam but the polygraphist will still be dictated by the PPSC. If the follow up polygraph exam indicates no significant responses and no disqualifications are revealed, the candidate will resume their PASS Process.

If the candidate reveals disqualifying information or the follow up exam still indicates no opinion (inconclusive) or significant response(s) the candidate may submit a written appeal to the Pinellas Police Standards Council, requesting reconsideration and reinstatement. PASS will provide the required forms and timeline procedures upon request. All decisions of the Council are final.

PASS CANDIDATE POOL

Candidates successfully completing all aspects of the PASS background screening process (encompassing Florida Statute 943.13, Florida Administrative Code Rule 11B-27, as well as Pinellas Police Standards Council requirements) shall be placed in an eligibility pool for review and consideration by Pinellas County law enforcement agencies for a twelve (12) month period calculated from the date of the PASS Background Completion Letter. Candidates status within the PASS CANDIDATE POOL are subject to the following conditions:

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- Candidate acceptance and confirmation of employment offer by a law enforcement agency. The file will be closed but may be reopened for any remaining "pool" time available should the employment offer be rescinded or declined by the candidate.

- Law enforcement certification employment confirmation through FDLE's Automatic Training Management System (ATMS) that officially tracks Florida law enforcement certification employment. The file will be closed but may be reopened for any remaining "pool" time available should the employment be rescinded or declined by the candidate.

- The discovery of information that would constitute a PASS disqualification event (whether new or old) as outlined within the Applicant Information Package (AIP). Upon investigative confirmation of the PASS disqualification event, your file will be closed. You may elect to appeal this decision and in such case shall follow the PASS APPEAL PROCESS and are subject to associated fees. Your file will remain closed pending the review of the Pinellas Police Standards Council Standards Review Committee.

- If, after twelve (12) months, the candidate has not been hired or received an employment offer by a law enforcement agency, the file will be closed. Candidates may renew (PASS Update) their file at the request of a participating law enforcement agency or by the candidate. An assessment fee for an up-to-date background screening of the original PASS application file is required.

- For those candidates receiving "Academy Only" exception, eligibility for official PASS CANDIDATE POOL law enforcement consideration shall only occur upon academy graduation. The expiration date of "pool" candidacy shall coincide with the date of the PASS Completion Letter as although not officially eligible your file has been available for review by Pinellas County law enforcement agencies.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FROM APPLICANTS

Be prepared to present the original or a certified copy of the following documents at the time of your Administrative Interview with the PASS Investigator conducting your background investigation. If you do not already have these documents on hand - begin gathering them <u>immediately</u> to avoid a delay in your processing. ***If available, we will accept any of the below required documents at time of registration.***

- Birth Certificate or Passport
- Social Security Card
- Driver's License
- High School Diploma or G.E.D. or Transcript
- College Diploma and Transcripts
- Naturalization Papers or Adoption Decree
- Marriage Certificate(s)
- Divorce Decrees or legal name changes
- Police or Corrections Officer Certifications
- Military Record - DD 214 and Discharge
- Certificate(s) for each completed service.
- Law Enforcement or Corrections Officers must submit copies of their certification documents and the last two regular evaluations they received from their most recent Law Enforcement or Corrections employer.
- Employment evaluation from most recent employer.
- IRS Paperwork visit local office ask for "unmasked" wage and income transcripts for the last 10 yrs. https://www.irs.gov/uac/contact-my-local-office-in-florida
- W-2 forms for the last 5 years.

- PERT Certification or College Level Reading and Writing course credit for **Corrections Officers.**

SCREENING PROCEDURES
IF YOU GET HIRED AS AN OFFICER IN FLORIDA

If you complete the PASS Process, please notify PASS if you accept employment as a Law Enforcement or Corrections Officer anywhere within the State of Florida. This will allow us to see that you are afforded certain protections provided to officers by law, such as removing your photograph or address from public record. It is important for you to inform us when you take such employment, even if you expect the employer to contact us.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS FROM OTHER STATES OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Equivalency of Training (EOT): If you are a law enforcement officer in another state, the military, or a federal agency and want to determine if you are eligible to obtain Florida certification through an accelerated program, PASS can provide an EOT review. Once completed, an EOT review is valid statewide. Please visit www.policestandards.org or email Robyn at weir.robyn@spcollege.edu. Equivalency of Training (EOT):

Advice to All Applicants

Please consider all aspects of the PASS Process as a test. Remember that potential employers will review your file to see if you:

- Read and follow instructions.
- Complete forms legibly and neatly. Provide e-mails for: Employers, Personal References, and Neighborhood References.
- On time for all appointments.
- Complete tasks without delay.
- Present a clean, neat and appropriately dressed appearance (particularly at the time of interviews or photographs.)

Good Luck!

Law enforcement and Corrections can be very rewarding careers. The PASS staff wishes you good luck with your application and job search. Please do not hesitate to ask us for any information or assistance you might need, such as scheduling to avoid conflicts with your present job or accommodate travel needs. Helping applicants understand and do well in the PASS Process is an important part of our mission. We like to help people succeed.

Acknowledgement

I have received a copy of this entire document and agree to the conditions set herein:

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant (Date) Signature of witnessing staff member