

North Vernon Police Department

General Order 20 HIRING SWORN PERSONNEL

Issuing Authority: Public Safety Board
City of North Vernon
Annual Review Date: March

Policy

The North Vernon Police Department strives to obtain the best law-enforcement officers possible to help achieve the department's policing goals. To that end, the department shall practice a regimented, rigorous selection procedure while simultaneously affording equal opportunity to everyone. The department does not discriminate against people with a protected status as detailed by federal and/or state law and affords all people equal access to employment. Where possible, the department provides reasonable accommodation to the known disabilities of qualified people. All personnel who participate in screening and hiring applicants shall be guided by fairness, equal opportunity, and consistency in applying the procedures set forth in this order.

Purpose

The purpose of this order is to outline hiring requirements for police officers.

Procedures

A. The minimum qualifications that all applicants for the position of police officer must meet include the following:

1. Must be a resident citizen of the United States.
2. Must be 21 years of age and must be less than 40 years of age by date of appointment, or be a veteran with 20 years of armed forces service with a maximum age of 40 years and 6 months.

*Service requirement will be confirmed by checking the DD Form 214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty(DD214).

3. Must have a high school diploma or GED certificate.

4. Cannot have a felony conviction.
5. Cannot have a misdemeanor conviction involving domestic violence under [18 USC § 922 (g)]
6. Must possess a valid driver's license from their state of residence.
7. Must be a resident of Jennings County, Indiana or one of the six adjoining counties at the time of appointment to the Department.
8. Cannot have been dishonorably discharged from the military.
9. Must successfully complete all phases of the hiring process to be considered for employment.
10. All applicants must disclose if any member of the North Vernon Police Department qualifies as a "Relative" as defined within I.C. 36-1-20.2-8.

B. The employee(s) assigned to investigate the applicant shall perform the following:

1. Obtain the applicant's driving record from BMV.
2. Have the applicant sign appropriate release forms.
3. If the applicant has recently lived outside Jennings, request records checks through agencies in the applicant's previous communities.
4. Obtain references from the applicant's current and past employers.
5. Obtain an NCIC/IDAC criminal history check.
6. Conduct a "home visit" with the applicant and interview all other residents of the home. (Children may be excluded.)
7. Conduct interviews of neighbors near applicant's residences over the past three years.
8. Provide a complete background investigation file to the chief of police.
9. Provide information to the applicant about the written examination(s).
 - a. The written exam includes a comprehensive reading/writing component. The applicant must achieve a score of not less than the minimum score established for the test.

10. Present the finding to the chief of police.

- a. The employee conducting the background investigation shall present information on the applicant to the Chief of Police with the objective of allowing the hiring board to form a view of the applicant's morality, integrity, reputation, honesty, dependability, qualifications, experience, associations, emotional stability, prejudice, and loyalty.
- b. Be of good moral character [*Good moral character is determined by a favorable report following the comprehensive background investigation. The interview shall be employed to help evaluate good moral character. Good moral character ensures compatibility with the department's community-oriented policing goals*]

C. The applicant must perform the following:

Note: The order of applicant processing and/or testing may be modified in the best interest of the North Vernon Police Department

1. Complete a written application and submit it to the records clerk.
2. Passing a physical agility test (will include Academy Standards).
[Note: According to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, "tests for illegal use of drugs are not medical examinations under the ADA and are not subject to the restrictions on such examinations." Similarly, "physical agility tests are not medical examinations and so may be given at any point in the employment application process." The medical screening (defined by the EEOC as "procedures or tests that seek information about the existence, nature, or severity of an individual's physical or mental impairment, or that seek information regarding an individual's physical or psychological health") shall not take place-nor shall the background investigation be completed (but can be started)- until after a conditional offer of employment has been accepted.]
3. Arrange with the North Vernon Police Department to take the written test.
4. Interview with hiring board.
5. Passing a background investigation which includes the following:
 - a. Personal and family history;
 - b. Credit history, including current creditors;
 - c. Education, including all schools attended and degrees or certificates obtained;

- d. Comprehensive employment history;
- e. A fingerprint-based criminal history search, including all arrests, locations, dates, and dispositions;
- f. Traffic summons and accidents
- g. An inquiry of family, friends, and associates as to character and reputation, plus an informal interview with the applicant's spouse or "significant other."

Note: The Chief of Police may at his/her discretion waive or alter specific portions of the applicant testing and evaluation.

- 6. During any phase of the hiring process, the total number of applicants progressing to any stage may be limited for the benefit of the North Vernon Police Department. This reduction process may not be used to discriminate against any applicant and must be regulated by time or funding constraints only.

D. The chief of police shall perform the following:

- 1. Interview top applicants based on recommendations from the hiring board and those conducting background investigations.
- 2. Ensure that the applicant fully understands the selection process and the conditions and procedures for re-application.
- 3. Make a conditional offer of employment prior to the medical examination and psychological evaluation.
 - a. Further, no conditional offer will be considered final until after a satisfactory psychological and medical evaluation and approval from the mayor and safety board.
- 4. Ensure that the appointee understands job benefits, health plans, administrative matters concerning overtime and off-duty employment, plus conditions of employment, pension, and disability.

E. Lateral entry

The lateral employment program is for qualified full-time sworn law enforcement officers. This program recognizes the value of those applicants who have law enforcement experience by providing starting salary/pay incentives commensurate with an applicant's police/law enforcement experience.

In order to be considered for employment with this agency, applicants must meet all established pre-employment minimum requirements, as well as successfully complete all testing, screening and background components. To be eligible for consideration within the lateral entry program the applicant must have/had powers of lawful arrest and authorized to carry a weapon. We will accept applications on an open and continuous basis from applicants employed within any of the following listed categories of police/law enforcement agencies:

- Federal Police/Law Enforcement Agency
- State Police/ U.S. Territory Police/Law Enforcement Agency
- County Police/Law Enforcement Agency
- State/County Sheriff's Department (does not include those employed exclusively within the area of correction or detention)
- City/Police/Law Enforcement Agency
- University/College Police/Law Enforcement Agency

NOTE: All applicants wanting to be considered for the lateral entry program must possess an Indiana Law Enforcement Academy Certification or a State/Federal Certification accepted through the I.L.E.A. Waiver requirement.

The lateral employment program will provide up to a maximum of ten (10) years of starting salary/pay incentives for qualified candidates. The following information is provided regarding entry-level salaries and is based on the pay matrix:

- | <u>Certification & Experience</u> | <u>Pay Matrix</u> |
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| • <u>Academy Cert. & (no experience) =</u> | <u>Probationary pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 1 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, one (1) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 2 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, two (2) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 3 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, three (3) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 4 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, four (4) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 5 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, five (5) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 6 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, six (6) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 7 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, seven (7) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 8 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, eight (8) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 9 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, nine (9) years pay</u> |
| • <u>Academy Cert. & 10 yrs experience =</u> | <u>1st class, ten (10) years pay</u> |

The calculations for years of service **will not** include partial/seasonal years of service. Additionally, this does not and will not provide for the lateral transfer of rank or rights to any seniority status.

NOTE: Applicants wanting to be considered for the lateral entry program must meet the requirements of the

1977 Indiana Police and Fire Pension Fund (PERF), and be accepted into the Pension Fund.

Out of state applicants and other applicants not currently a member of this fund must have not reached their 36th birthday at the time of employment.

Another issue of significant importance to the applicants considering transferring from one law enforcement agency to another is what training requirements they will be required to complete. Recognizing the importance of this issue to both the applicant as well as the department, the following training requirements have been established for those applicants employed under our lateral program:

For those applicants possessing an Indiana Certificate and/or Waivers, we will be requiring the successful completion of our Field Training Program. In certain circumstances a candidate may advance to the accelerated Field Training Program. All applicants accepting employment through this lateral transfer program will be considered “**Probationary Officers**” for their first year of service and will be subject to “at will termination”.

All applicants accepting employment through the lateral transfer program will be entitled to vacation benefits described in General Order 23 and shall be based on the accepted years of service transferred to the police department. However, no vacation time off shall be allowable until the completion of 180 calendar days of service.

Note: The Chief of Police may at his/her discretion waive or alter specific portions of the applicant testing and evaluation process for lateral entry applicants.

G. Contract Buy Out

A contract buy out may be offered as an additional incentive for prospective lateral entry police officers. In the event that the officer is currently employed with a law enforcement agency AND that agency has a valid signed agreement with the officer to establish a minimum length of service following either initial employment or connected to police academy training, the North Vernon Police Department is authorized to “buy out” the contract. The chief of police will determine what if any amount may be expended to satisfy the lateral employee’s contract. Any expenditure under this section must be approved by the Public Safety Board of the City of North Vernon.

H. Higher Education Incentive

It is the desire of the police department to assist applicants that have made an investment in their education by providing a specific and limited financial incentive to those persons that have a college degree and are subsequently hired by the police department. All incentives will be paid out during the employee's anniversary month of initial employment and will cease after the first five years of employment. An employee with a documented bachelor's degree will receive \$1000 per year as a special education stipend. An employee with a documented associate's degree will receive \$500 per year as a special education stipend.

I. Relocation Incentive

A relocation incentive may be offered to employees that move from their current home residence to one that is more advantageous and beneficial to the City of North Vernon. Participation in this program is voluntary and must be approved by the Board of Works and Safety. Additional details of the relocation incentive may be found in G.O. 23 Employee Benefits.

J. Disqualification

1. In disqualifying an applicant following any test or examination, the chief must show that:
 - a. the applicant cannot perform the essential requirements of the job; and
 - b. that no reasonable accommodation would enable the applicant to perform the essential requirements of the job.
2. Applicants that are unable to attend any scheduled portion of the hiring process shall be eliminated from the hiring process.
3. Following a psychological and medical examination, an offer of employment may be withdrawn if the applicant poses a "direct threat" in the workplace (per EEOC guidelines, "a significant risk of substantial harm to the individual or others that cannot be eliminated or reduced...through reasonable accommodation"). The chief must base the threat on medical knowledge, not just speculation.

20.1 Validation of Selection Procedures

The department's hiring procedures meet standard tests of validity. The department must be able to validate any selection criteria by showing proof that the process either predicts job performance or detects aspects of prospective candidates' work behavior as related to the position of police officer. The chief in consultation with the Mayor and Safety Board of the North Vernon Police Department shall review selection procedures for their validity and utility at least every two years. Departmental hiring procedures meet the following tests of validity:

- A. Validity related to criteria: The selection procedure correlates written test scores with pre-determined criteria. A high correlation of the two demonstrates that the test scores predict job performance.
- B. Validity related to construct: The selection procedure measures the degree to which the candidate has certain required traits or characteristics important in law-enforcement work.
- C. Validity related to content: The selection process is validated by showing that it represents actual job behavior.
- D. Utility: The department's selection processes also demonstrate utility, which refers to the practical value of a component of the selection process based on validity, selection ratio, number of candidates to be selected, and the nature of the job.
- E. Adverse impact
 - 1. Adverse impact refers to a selection procedure that works to the disadvantage of a racial or ethnic group, or of a sex.
 - a. The department shall reduce adverse impact as much as possible in its hiring procedures.
 - b. The department retains records of hiring tests to monitor adverse impact.

20.2 Probation

- A. All newly hired officers shall be considered on probation for one year from the date of employment. The same probationary period applies to officers hired through lateral entry.
- B. The date of employment for officers generally never exceeds one year before the beginning of a basic academy class to which the appointee has been assigned. If the officer begins work before a basic academy, he or she shall be under the supervision of a Field Training Officer and meet State requirements of pre-basic certification.
- C. At the end of the Field Training Program, the Field Training Officer shall write a performance evaluation in which he or she must rate the appointee at least a minimum acceptable performance rating in each category or behavior. The chief reserves the right to extend the probationary period an extra 90 days because of an unsatisfactory rating. A second unsatisfactory rating, at the end of 90 days, in any category may provide cause for dismissal.

- D. The work performance of each probationary employee shall be evaluated using valid, nondiscriminatory procedures.
- E. Probationary employees who wish to protest their ratings have no grievance rights except to request an interview with the chief of police.
- F. Additional details concerning the Field Training Program can be found in G.O. 104 of this manual.

20.3 Records

- A. For each employee, the department maintains a personnel record which includes all forms completed during the hiring process, all evaluations, complaints, commendations, leave/attendance record, and assignments.
- B. The chief of police maintains and controls all personnel records. The department complies with the records retention schedule set by the state.
- C. Employees may review their records at any reasonable time upon request.
- D. All personnel records are considered confidential, sensitive information available for review to supervisory or investigative personnel who have a need, as determined by the chief of police.
- E. If the chief deems it necessary to include derogatory information in a personnel file, he/she shall notify the employee of the fact in writing. The employee may protest the inclusion of such information in writing to the chief. Probationary employees have no right of protest in such matters.
- F. Personnel records are permanent property of the department.
- G. Officers from the department may terminate employment and seek a lateral hire with another agency. Requests for employment information on these officers shall be referred to the chief.
- H. All applications for employment will be held for a minimum of one year from the date of submission. All records directly related to a hiring process will be held for a minimum of five years from the date the process began.

Authorization

Policy promulgated and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, May 12, 2008.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, March 25, 2013.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, April 28, 2014.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, June 22, 2015.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, May 23, 2016.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, May 22, 2017.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, March 26, 2018.

Policy amended and approved by the Common Council for the City of North Vernon, April 12, 2021.