

You've already served your country.

Now you have a chance to serve your community.



COPS
COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE





Vets to Cops



Our military service members represent only 1% of our population, but they shoulder the responsibility of protecting our entire nation. The COPS Office is committed to supporting the men and women of the armed forces and military veterans entering a career in law enforcement.

Transitioning to civilian law enforcement one step at a time.

How does this apply to you?

A career in policing can be a rewarding experience, but the transition into civilian law enforcement can take time. The questions and content included here are suggestions to guide your future career decision.

Step 1: Decide

The rewards and demands of police officers are unique, but military skills and trainings will provide an advantage for a successful career. Your contribution to community policing can help advance public safety. Here are just a few reasons to consider law enforcement:

Service to your community

Your sacrifice servicing our country is a testament to your patriotism and personal courage. Being a police officer is an opportunity to continue servicing your community through collaborative partnerships and problem solving that few careers can match.

Challenging experience

The military experience tested your mental, physical, and emotional limits. Law enforcement is a career that will continue to challenge your potential.

Diverse tasks and responsibilities

Whether you are serving as a patrolman, detective, or part of a K-9 unit, the duties of a police officer are always evolving. There is enormous potential for professional development.

Step 2: Search Options

Many veteran resources and job search websites offer reliable employment information. It is recommended you research multiple sources.

Discover Policing is a nationwide initiative to market the benefits of a law enforcement career, offering a true-to-life view of policing and providing an effective means for candidates and hiring agencies to connect. Visit <http://discoverpolicing.org>.

The **Department of Labor Career One-Stop Centers** offers intensive employment assistance through their Gold Card Services to unemployed post-9/11 era military veterans. To find a **Career One-Stop Center** near you, go to www.careeronestop.org.

The **Department of Veteran Affairs Vet Success** equips veterans with resources to assist in the transition from military to civilian employment. With military occupation translators and job preparation tools, Vet Success helps find jobs that match abilities and ambitions of today's military veterans. For more information, visit www.vetsuccess.gov.

Additional resources may include:

- ★ **Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) On-Line:** www.acap.army.mil
- ★ **Hero 2 Hired:** <https://h2h.jobs>
- ★ **Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces:** www.employerpartnership.org

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes initiative and the Department of Veteran Affairs VA for Vets program host career fairs around the country to help veterans meet face to face with employers. For career fair information, please visit www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes and <http://vaforvets.va.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

Step 3: Preparation and Research

Your service provided you with numerous skills, but common application requirements such as a drug test, background check, and minimum age criteria should be expected. Additional requirements may include:

Citizenship: Most agencies require applicants to be U.S. citizens, or in some cases, permanent resident aliens who have applied for citizenship. Some agencies require officers to reside within their jurisdictions while others do not.

Education: A high school diploma or GED is the minimum requirement for law enforcement departments. Many agencies require a bachelor's degree or a minimum number of college credits. Police departments may offer credit for military training. Be prepared to present a copy and explain your military transcript.

Something to remember: The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days and received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. For more information, please visit www.gibill.va.gov/documents/pamphlets/ch33_pamphlet.pdf.

Contact the police department for a full listing of application requirements.



Community Policing: Translating your service and interview preparation

Articulating your service and applying it to law enforcement topics such as community policing, partnership development, or problem solving will highlight your military experience to police recruiters. Demonstrate, through examples, your **leadership** abilities and the value of **team-work** through your personal commitment to **duty, discipline, and physical fitness**.

Ask yourself questions about how your service could address community safety issues. Here are a few guiding questions that may assist you:

- ★ How did you work with communities to address safety concerns?
- ★ How did you develop partnerships in the areas you served?
- ★ What examples can you provide to demonstrate your abilities in times of crisis?



The COPS Office offers publications, resources, podcasts, and trainings that can help you understand police issues and the systematic problem-solving tools to solve them. Taking time to research the challenges facing police officers will help your future in law enforcement.

For more information on law enforcement topics and resources, visit the COPS Resource Information Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



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To obtain details on COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at
800.421.6770.

Visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

