



CLEVELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

SELECTION PROCESS

Chief of Police
Mark Gibson



City of Cleveland
TENNESSEE

CLEVELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYMENT SELECTION PROCESS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE 2026

Applicants that are seeking a waiver from the written test must include a copy of their college degree, DD214 and/or a law enforcement POST certificate enforcement when submitting their application. Failure to provide the required documents will result in the application being directed to the written test pool.

2026 Written Test Dates (Written testing will be held at the Cleveland Police Department):

February 2	9 a.m.
May 18	9 a.m.
August 3	9 a.m.
November 2	9 a.m.

Applicants that receive a waiver from the written test and/or pass the written test are required to provide a medical statement/note from a licensed physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner by the date selected by the training unit.

2026 Physical Agility Test Dates (PT testing will be held at the Cleveland Police Department range):

February 4
May 20
August 5
November 4

Questions pertaining to:

Written Test or Test Materials

Contact: City of Cleveland Human Resources at www.clevelandtn.gov or 423-472-4551

Questions pertaining to:

Application process

Salary

Benefits

Law Enforcement Lateral opportunities

Pre-employment Academy

Contact: Officer Jennifer Samples at jsamples@clevelandtn.gov or 423-559-3378



City of Cleveland
TENNESSEE

Selection Process
Revised 1/5/26

The Cleveland Police Department makes every effort to conform to all applicable state and federal hiring guidelines. The department is interested in recruiting, selecting and employing the most qualified applicants to serve as police officers for the City of Cleveland. Any individual applying for a police officer position must complete the following guidelines.

The selection process will apply to all individuals who are seeking to be a police officer, including present City of Cleveland employees who have a desire to transfer their current job into the police department. The Human Resources Department will accept applications through the website, email or in the HR office on a continual basis.

Applicants interested in applying for a police officer position must meet the statutory qualifications set out in the Cleveland Police Department's policy manual.

General Order 7-B-Selection, Section 111, Subsection B:

The minimum qualifications for sworn entry-level employment with the Cleveland Police Department are as follows. Applicants must:

1. Complete and submit the City of Cleveland Employment Application form.
2. Be at least 21 years of age.
3. Be a citizen of the United States.
4. Not have been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor involving "moral turpitude" as the term is defined by law and not have been released or discharged under any other than honorable conditions from any of the armed forces of the United States or convicted of an assault involving domestic violence.
5. Have their fingerprints on file with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.
6. Have passed a physical examination and drug test conducted by a licensed physician; provided at no cost to the applicant unless stated in a contractual agreement.
7. Have a good moral character as determined by a thorough background investigation conducted by the department.
8. Hold a valid motor vehicle operator's license or be eligible to obtain one.
9. Be free of all apparent mental disorders as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, of the American Psychiatric Association. Applicants must be certified as meeting these criteria by a qualified professional in the psychiatric or psychological fields.

The department will generally not consider requesting a waiver of POST rules which are allowable under the law for police applicants, but such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis when exceptional circumstances exist.

Individuals meeting the above-listed standards may apply at www.clevelandtn.gov or obtain an application packet from the City of Cleveland Human Resources Office, located at 190 Church St, NE, Cleveland, TN 37311, during regular business hours, or the Cleveland Police Department, located at 100 Church St, NE, Cleveland, TN 37311. The full application packet will contain a basic city employment application, a Personal History Form, Authority for Release of Information and Records Form, Federal Gun Control Act of 1968 Form, and information which provides the applicant with additional instructions and information about the hiring process.

Once the applicant has completed the full application packet, all supporting documentation (college degree, DD214, Law Enforcement POST Certificate) used as a waiver from the written test should be uploaded as an attachment to the application before submitting the application. Failure to attach the supporting documentation will result in application being directed to the written test pool.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibility of the Cleveland Police Department is to enforce laws related to the protection of life and property, direct and control traffic, prevent crime or disturbance of the peace and arrest violators.

As a police officer with the Cleveland Police Department, you will be required to perform a wide array of duties which include patrolling assigned sectors either by foot, bicycle, ATV or by patrol car to enforce laws, prevent and discover crimes, investigate crimes, maintain order and answer calls and complaints. Officers are required to answer radio dispatched and citizen requests for police services at the scenes of accidents, domestic disputes, law violations and peace disturbances. Police officers also investigate illegal and suspicious activities, persons and establishments, quell disturbances, locate, search, detain and arrest law violators, gather and preserve evidence, interview and question victims, witnesses and suspects, investigate causes and results of accidents, direct and control traffic, issue written citations for traffic and other minor violations, inspect public establishments requiring licenses to ensure compliance with rules and regulations, operate police communication and computer equipment to obtain, disseminate and report information, and write detailed incident, investigation, activity and other reports.

There are several specialized areas within the Police Department which include: SWAT Team, Traffic Team, Tactical/Special Operations Unit, Hostage Negotiations Team, Criminal Investigations Unit, Drug Unit, K-9 Officers, Bomb Unit, School Resource Officers, Housing Officer, Community Officer, Downtown Officer, Honor Guard and Crime Scene Technicians.

Officers will also have to complete a physical agility test on an annual basis.

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The written examination was developed by an independent firm and is administered by members of the HR Office and police department. The examination is designed to identify basic skills associated with the twelfth-grade level of education. The examination is the Fire and Police Selection - National Police Selection Test, which measures basic skills in math reasoning, writing ability, situational judgment/human relations and reasoning/analyzing. It also includes a reading comprehension section which requires a study manual for preparation.

Applicants are required to score 70% in each category. All applicants completing the written examination may contact the HR Office concerning the results of their score. Test results will be on a PASS or FAIL basis. Applicants who fall in the FAIL category will have to complete a new

application package if they desire to re-take the test in the future. In no event will an applicant be allowed to take the written examination more than four times in a twelve-month period.

Those applicants who possess an associate degree or higher, have at least two (2) years of full-time active-duty military experience with honorable discharge or have eligibility for honorable discharge, or who are currently POST certified officers will be waived from the written exam.

Applicants taking the written exam should dress accordingly. The dress should be no less than business casual.

Applicants must be on time; those who are tardy will receive a failing score.

PHYSICAL AGILITY

Applicants who have either passed the written examination or had the exam waived and choose to continue with the selection process will be notified of the date and time of the second phase of the process, which is a physical agility test. At this stage, applicants are required to complete an obstacle course. This course is as follows:

1. Starting from a seated position in a patrol vehicle, the participant (wearing a vest and duty belt) will exit the patrol vehicle and run one hundred and fifty (150) feet, take cover and dry fire a weapon.
2. The participant will then run one hundred (100) feet up a small hill.
3. The participant will then run one hundred (100) feet and scale a 4ft wall then run through six (6) tires.
4. The participant will then run fifty (50) feet and move three (3) buckets from one marked spot to another and then continue running and jump over a small ditch.
5. The participant will then run one-hundred and fifty (150) feet and go under a fence/barricade.
6. The participant will then run one hundred (100) feet to a sled/dummy.
7. The participant will then drag the sled/dummy fifty (50) feet past a marked finish line.

Applicants must complete the course in under 2:00 minutes. Applicants who do not pass the agility test due to a technical disqualification, will be allowed 1 re-attempt. They will be given a minimum of 10 minutes to rest before beginning a second attempt. Applicants who do not pass due to exceeding the time limit will be required to start the application process over.

Applicants must also provide a doctor's note, stating they are healthy enough to complete the agility test. The medical note must be turned in by the date selected by the training unit.

There is no specific uniform attire required for the physical agility test, however it is highly recommended that shorts and/or pants have belt loops.

ORAL BOARD

Upon successful completion of the written examination (if applicable) and physical agility test, applicants will participate in a structured panel interview process and will be placed on an active roster for two years. This interview panel is comprised of ranking members of the police department.

Applicants are asked a series of questions designed to observe the candidate's overall skills. Candidates are evaluated on their responses to specific questions with regard to poise, confidence, speech, sentence structure and ability to make proper ethical decisions. Additionally, the board has an opportunity to observe the total communication skill of the candidate as well as their dress and grooming habits. The board is not designed to be a stress test. Appearing before the board provides the candidate with enough apprehension for board members to observe the candidate under light stress conditions. Since law enforcement is a profession requiring officers to communicate with people on a daily basis, the board members have a chance to observe the interpersonal skills of each applicant to determine if they possess the skills necessary to perform as a competent officer. Candidates are scored by each board member.

Applicants participating in the oral board should dress accordingly. Dress should be business attire.

Applicants who fail the interview or are tardy for their pre-selected interview time will be required to start the application process over.

RIDE ALONG

Candidates who successfully pass the oral board will be notified of a date and time to report to the police department to spend a minimum of six-hours riding with an officer on patrol.

The purpose of this process is twofold. First, it provides the department with an opportunity to observe the candidate's potential for career success as an officer. Second, it provides candidates an opportunity to observe the duties and responsibilities of police officers and an opportunity to observe the types of calls officers deal with.

All candidates in the ride along program will be evaluated by the officer, who will complete a written report of their observations, which will be forwarded to the Professional Standards Division Commander for further consideration. The candidate will have two writing assignments to complete prior to leaving the station on the day of the ride along. The assignments are (1) your ride along experience and (2) your most memorable life experience.

Applicants participating in the ride along should dress accordingly. Dress should be business casual.

Applicants must be on time; those who are tardy will receive a failing score and be required to start the application process over.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION/FINAL SELECTION

Prior to being selected for a final interview with the Chief of Police, candidates who have successfully completed all areas of the selection process will undergo a complete background investigation. The background will include an NCIC computer check, neighborhood contacts and interviews with past employers, friends and acquaintances.

Upon satisfactory completion of all the above, and as positions become available, a candidate may be offered, "Conditional Employment" as a probationary police officer. At this stage of the process the candidate will be sent for a complete medical examination (including drug screen) and a psychological examination.

Upon the satisfactory completion of these items, the Chief of Police will interview the candidates. The following will be considered by the Chief of Police during the final selection stage: the numerical ranking of written test scores (if applicable), oral board scores, education, prior experience, unique skills and various certifications related to POST requirements. If the Chief of Police is satisfied with the candidate, the candidate will be hired and placed on probationary status for a period of one year. Probationary status may be extended for an additional ninety (90) days depending on completion of basic certification.

DURATION OF PROCESS

The process of becoming a police officer is a long process taking several months to complete. There will be multiple opportunities given each year to complete the steps in the hiring process. Applicants must successfully complete each step of the process to proceed to the next step. Applicants that pass the employment selection process shall remain in the eligible hiring pool for two years from the date of their oral interview.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

The Cleveland Police Department also employs part-time school crossing guards for traffic control as well as a part-time court liaison. Applicants that are seeking to become school crossing guards or court liaison must complete and submit a City of Cleveland Application form. A background check will be done on all qualified applicants prior to their hiring. Once hired, the applicant will be required to complete the Civilian Code of Ethics Training. The school crossing guard will also have to complete school crossing guard training before being placed at a school zone. School crossing guards are also encouraged but not required to work various events with sworn police officers throughout the year.

The City of Cleveland and the Cleveland Police Department are equal opportunity employers and do not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, religion, national origin or disability.