

Lincoln Police Department



POLICE OFFICER HIRING PROCESS INFORMATION

The Lincoln Police Officer application and hiring process is made up of four general steps. As an applicant, you will be assessed at each step of the process and must meet certain requirements to advance. Keep in mind that although meeting minimum scores will allow you to advance in the hiring process, it won't necessarily get you a job. Always strive to show us the best performance you are capable of, and remember that every interaction you have with us is like an interview. We'll do our best to be as flexible as possible and give you the best opportunity to participate in the hiring process.

Step 1: Application

Your first step toward becoming a Lincoln Police Officer is completing the online application. Applications are open year-round and are available on the City of Lincoln jobs website or joinlpd.com. Once we receive your application, we'll review it to make sure you meet the basic academy admission criteria established by the Nebraska Crime Commission (see <https://ncc.nebraska.gov/admission-criteriarequirements> for more information). We may also check your criminal history and driving record to make sure there's nothing there that would disqualify you. Everyone who meets the basic admission criteria will advance to Step 2. You will be contacted by a member of our staff and informed whether you are advancing.

Step 2: Assessment

When we contact you to let you know you're advancing to Step 2, we will schedule a date for you to participate in the three-part assessment battery. Assessments are typically held once each month, with a weekend option every other month. The assessment takes place over two days, and you'll need to be available both days unless there are extenuating circumstances. The assessment battery is progressive, meaning you must reach the minimum score on each part to advance to the next. The three-part battery consists of:

- **Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)**

The TABE is required by the State of Nebraska to measure your ability to read and write English. The test takes approximately 3 hours and includes two reading comprehension sections and a language section. If you have already passed the TABE at the 11th grade level or higher and can provide proof of your passing scores, we'll waive this part of the assessment and you'll automatically advance to the Physical Readiness Entrance Test. Sample TABE questions are available at https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_11_12_Reading_D.pdf and https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_11_12_Lang_D.pdf.

- **Physical Readiness Entrance Test (PRET)**

The PRET was established by the State of Nebraska to assess your physical fitness level and make sure you're physically capable of performing essential job tasks necessary for certification as a police officer. The PRET will take place immediately after the TABE. We

provide transportation to and from the testing location. More detailed information and training tips for the PRET are available at <https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/files/sharedassets/public/police/fitnesstest.pdf>.

- **Panel Interview**

The panel interview allows us to evaluate your potential for success as a Lincoln Police Officer. This is a business professional interview, so be sure to dress and act accordingly. The interview is structured, meaning you will be asked the same questions as every other applicant. We'll ask you a mix of general interview questions and scenario-based questions, and you'll be told some of what we're going to ask you about on day 1. Your answers will be evaluated by a panel of current LPD employees who will assess you on things like your character, problem solving, judgement, stress management, and understanding of LPD and the job of a police officer. You'll also be assessed on your overall performance. After the interview, the panel will make a recommendation on whether you should advance to Step 3 of the hiring process. We'll notify you of the final decision within 10 days.

Step 3: Background Investigation

After we notify you that you're moving to Step 3, we'll send you detailed instructions for the background investigation. You'll need to complete an online Personal History Questionnaire (PHQ) and gather the following documents:

- Birth certificate or other official proof of birth
- Social Security card
- Valid driver's license
- High school transcripts
- High school diploma
- College transcripts
- College diploma
- Marriage certificate (for each marriage)
- Divorce decree/annulment (for each dissolved marriage)
- Military DD214
- Any restraining or protection orders issued on your behalf or against you
- Driver's abstract from each state where you have held a license

You won't have to submit these documents until you advance to Step 3, but some of them may take time for you to find, so it's a good idea to start gathering them as soon as possible.

The PHQ covers all aspects of your life including education, work history, family history, past criminal activity, driving history, personal references, and more. On paper, the PHQ would be approximately 40 pages. *It is your responsibility to make sure the PHQ is complete before you submit it.* We aren't able to start your background investigation until we receive your

completed PHQ and all of the supporting documents, and we'll ask you to have them submitted within 14 days of our request.

Once we complete enough of your background investigation to make an informed decision about you, we'll review all the information from the hiring process and decide whether you're eligible to be hired. The Captain of the Education & Personnel Unit makes this decision. If we decide you're eligible for hire, you will move on to Step 4.

Step 4: Post-Offer Testing

Once you move to Step 4, we'll place you in the hiring eligibility pool and, if we have open positions, you may receive a conditional offer of employment. Receiving a conditional offer means we want you to work with us, but we have a few more tests for you. After you accept your conditional offer, you'll be scheduled for a medical exam with a drug test, a psychological evaluation, and a polygraph to verify that you've been honest with us throughout the process. Once you successfully complete these last three evaluations, the Chief of Police will review your entire file and make a final hiring decision. If you're approved, we'll add you to the list for our next academy class.

Tips for Success

1. First and foremost, **be honest with us**. The fastest way to get yourself removed from our hiring process is to lie. We know that people make mistakes, and we aren't looking for perfect people. We *are* looking for people with the integrity to acknowledge their mistakes and the ability to learn from them.
2. **Prepare for the PRET**. Don't expect to get up off your couch one day and magically perform well. Whether or not you choose to use our training tips, make sure you're doing something to prepare yourself physically.
3. **Do the best you're capable of**. While it's true that a minimum passing score will allow you to continue in the hiring process, we notice who gives their best effort and who is satisfied with "just enough." This is a competitive process, and that extra bit of effort could be the difference in whether the last seat in the academy is filled by you or someone else.
4. **Don't undersell yourself**. Experience comes in all shapes and sizes. Tell us how yours will make you a great Lincoln Police Officer. Worked at the same restaurant for 5 years? That takes commitment, and you've probably learned how to talk to people. Three-year captain on your high school soccer team? You probably picked up some leadership ability and know how to work as part of a team. If knowing how to be a police officer was a requirement to become one, there wouldn't be any police officers. We're more concerned with your character and your potential.
5. **Treat the entire process like an interview**. What you tell us is important, but we're also interested in how you act when no one is looking. There aren't any hidden tests, but we are watching and remembering things like how you interact with us, how you interact with the other applicants, and whether you follow instructions correctly. You have a limited amount of time to make an impression on us, so make sure it's a good one.
6. **Do your homework**. Spend some time learning about our department and policing in general. We have a lot of information publicly available, so look at it and make sure being a Lincoln Police Officer is the right fit for you.
7. **Be yourself**. There is no perfect police officer, and we don't need 300 carbon copies of the same person. Show us who you are and help us understand why you'll be a great addition to our team. In the interview, we aren't looking for a particular "right" answer, we're looking for *your* answer.
8. **Pay attention**. There are no trick questions in the interview. We want to get to know you and how you think, not see if we can get you to walk into a trap. In the scenario questions, we'll give you all the critical information you need to make the best decision possible, but it's up to you to put the pieces together.
9. **Explain your answers**. Oftentimes in the interview, we're just as interested in *how* you got to your answer as we are in *what* the answer is. Be confident in your answers, and take a few extra seconds to clue us in on your reasoning and thought process. If you can give us specific examples from your own life, even better.

Character

We can teach you skills after you get hired. After all, that's the entire purpose of a police academy. Because of that, our biggest considerations in the hiring process are character and talent, not skills. We've identified some traits that great Lincoln Police Officers have in common:

- **Integrity** – They understand and adhere to what's right.
- **Team Player** – They can work as part of a cohesive team, and can prioritize group needs over individual needs.
- **Drive** – They have a desire to grow and push themselves, a willingness to take appropriate risks, and they seek out new challenges.
- **Humility** – They're confident in their abilities, but understand they have more to learn and are willing to admit mistakes or ask for help.
- **Effective Intelligence** – They can apply their knowledge to real world scenarios and problem solve in a timely manner.
- **Emotional Strength** – They have a positive attitude, high empathy, and are able to appropriately regulate their emotions under stress.
- **Adaptability** – They're able to adjust to the situation, learn new things, and try new methods.
- **Resiliency** – They bounce back quickly from setbacks and persevere in the face of challenges.
- **Curiosity** – They want to learn new things and find better ways to solve problems and work more effectively.

Our best applicants are able to show us these same traits throughout the hiring process.

For more information contact:

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