Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

FTEP Completion Rates

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Executive Summary

- Eighty-eight (88%) percent of officers that started the Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP) completed FTEP
- Eighty-five (85%) percent of officers that started Basic Police Academy completed FTEP and received their Basic Police Certification
- Over half of FTEP incompletes were categorized as employee resignations
- No statistically significant differences were found for both the FTEP completion rate and the BLET completion rate between men and women

Recommendations

- DPSST should continue to explore the benefits of offering more training and/or oversight over FTEP programs
- DPSST should explore ways to better collect data on FTEP programs
- DPSST should encourage agencies to offer realistic job previews to potential officers

Introduction

Few professions carry the weight of authority, risk, and responsibility quite like policing—making comprehensive training not just important, but essential. Law enforcement agencies in Oregon (LEAs) spend substantial time and resources on police training. Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) is the foundational phase of officer training. BLET provides the first level of technical training to prepare an officer for a career in policing, is an important part of an officer's formal and informal socialization into the profession and serves as a screening mechanism to identify officers that may be unsuitable for policing (Paoline & Sloan, 2023). BLET in Oregon primarily consists of the completion of Basic Police Academy at DPSST and an agency's Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP).

FTEP is described as one of the most important stages in an officer's career (Warners, 2010). During FTEP officers must apply the skills and knowledge learned at Basic Police Academy to real world applications and assimilate into the culture of an agency. Reflecting the importance of FTEP, field training programs are a requirement for agency accreditation and professional organizations like the National Association of Field Training Officers exist to support field training programs (Jenkins et al., 2021). Field training programs, according to Sun, "…have become the principal formal mechanism for transmitting the police culture and craft to new officers" (2002, p. 69). Likewise, the U.S. Department of Justice observed that "the field training officer is all important to the success of a department's training program as the FTO is the first person in authority who will orient a new officer to the job environment" (Department of Justice, 2003, p. 24).

Research has linked officer behavior to the field training they receive. Getty and colleagues found that field training officers (FTOs) had a statistically significant effect on later allegations of misconduct of their respective trainees (Getty et al., 2016). Similarly, an FTO's inclination to use force was associated with a substantial increase in an officers' inclination to use force—more aggressive FTOs result in more aggressive officers (Adger et al., 2022). The point is clear: FTEP is one of the most important phases of officer training.

This report discusses BLET in Oregon with emphasis on FTEP by tracking a group of officers through Basic Police Academy and FTEP and documenting how many ultimately completed their Basic Police Certification. To do so, the paper first discusses BLET in Oregon, then officer performance at Basic Police Academy and FTEP. The report concludes with a discussion of the policy implications and offers recommendations for DPSST leadership.

Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) in Oregon

Overview

Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) in Oregon primarily consists of a 16-week Basic Police Academy and the Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP). The length of FTEP programs can vary by agency, but officers must complete FTEP within 18 months of their initial hire date to receive their Basic Police Certification.[1] To complete FTEP officers must demonstrate acceptable knowledge of all the modules in the Field Training Manual (FTM)[2] under the guidance and supervision of field training officers (FTOs) employed by the hiring agency. The FTM "is designed to be a continuation of the mandated basic training course" (DPSST, 2019, p. 2). The officer, the FTO, and the department head attest to completion of the manual and the record of completion is documented with the FTM Completion Form (F33). The officer is awarded their Basic Police Certification after DPSST receives the F33.

[1] LEAs can request a 1-year extension.
[2] Employing agencies can use the DPSST FTM or use their FTM that is specific to their agency if approved as an equivalent.

Figure 1 Oregon Basic Law Enforcement Training



Attrition at Basic Police Academy

This sample consists of Basic Police (BP) Classes 385 through 394 and 413 through 423 for a total of 835 enrollments and 817 officers.[3] BP 385 started in November 2018 and BP 394 started in September of 2019; BP 413 started in February of 2022 and BP 423 started in December of 2022. The samples are roughly drawn from the years 2019 and 2022. The samples are limited because the data must be manually coded from *Skills Manager*. The inclusion of officers from 2019 and 2022 ensures there are observations before and after the tumultuous events of Spring 2020 and subsequent staffing challenges.

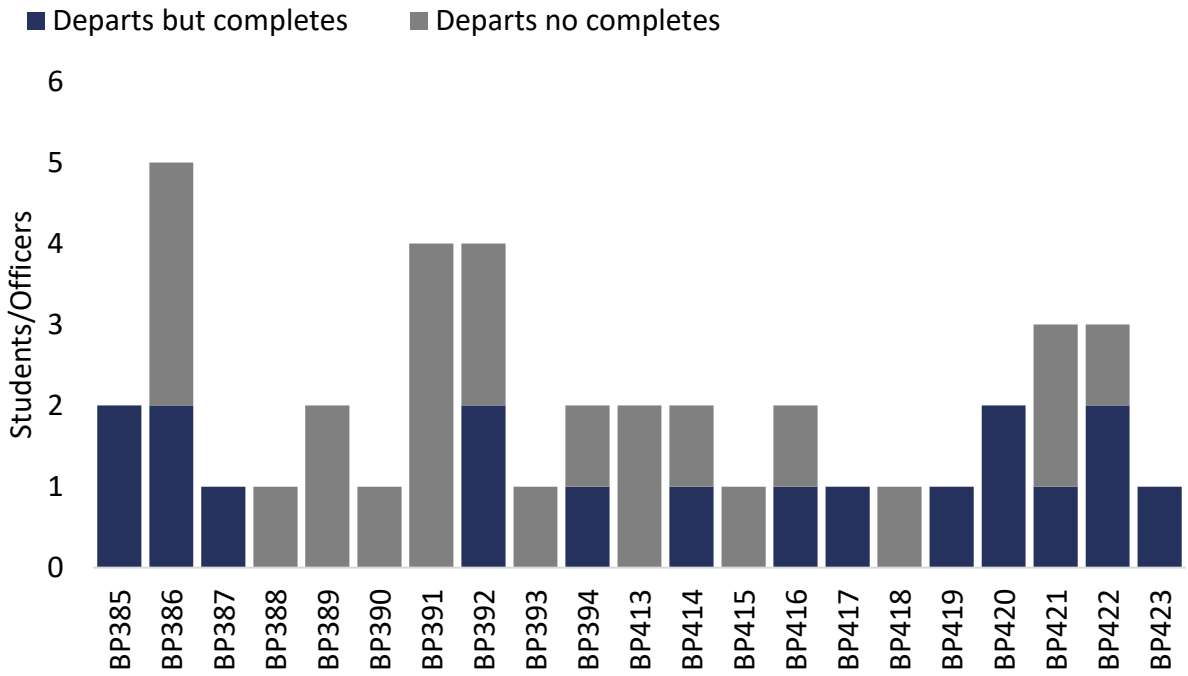
Table 1 Departure and Attrition Rates, BP 385-394 & 413-423

Departure Rate[4]	5.0 %
Attrition Rate[5]	2.9 %

[3] A distinction between enrollments and students is needed because one student can be in multiple Basic Police Academy classes if the student departs and returns with another cohort.
[4] The Departure Rate is all departures divided by all **enrollments.**
[5] The Attrition Rate is all **departures that did not return** divided by total officers/ students.

Of the 835 enrollments, 42 departed from the Academy or did not graduate with their respective class. However, 18 or 42% of those departures ultimately returned and completed Academy with a different class, resulting in a total loss or attrition total of 24 students at Basic Police Academy. Said differently, 5% of students did not graduate with their original class—about 2 students per 40-person class— and 2.9 % of students—about 1 per 40-person class—who started Academy never ultimately completed Academy.

Figure 2 Departure and Attrition, Total Students, BP 385 to 394 and 413 to 423



No statistically significant differences were observed between the attrition rate for men and women. This is notable because nationally, according to the Department of Justice, women are less likely to finish preservice basic academy than men (Buehler, 2024).

Table 2 BP 385 to 394 and BP 413 to 423, Departure and Attrition Rates by Gender

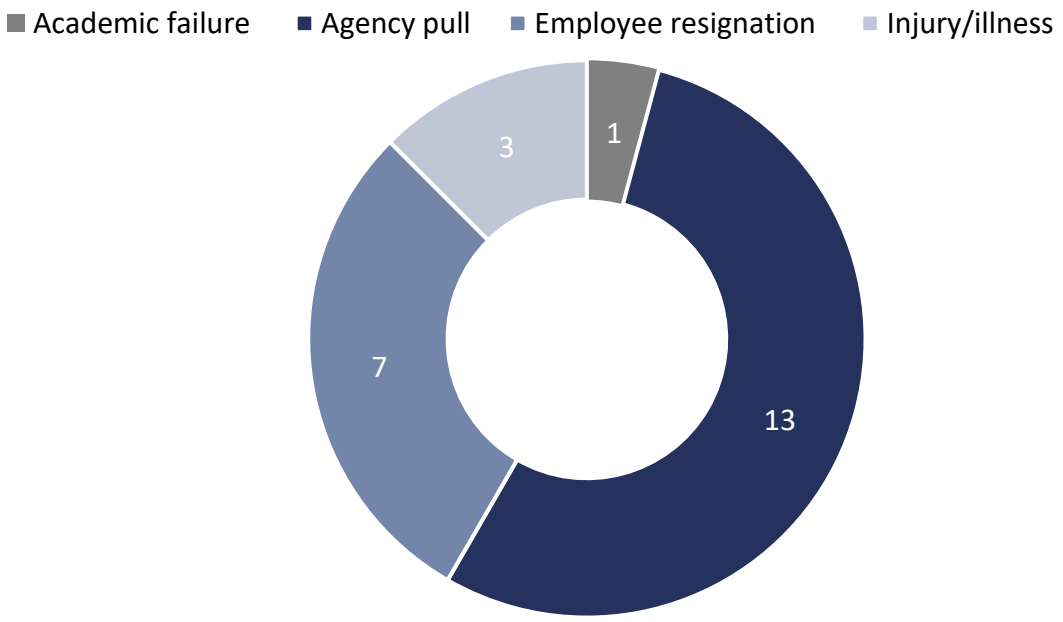
Departure type	Men	Women
Departure Rate	5.3%	5.6%
Attrition Rate	2.9%	3.0%

Table 3 shows the departures by type and if the officer eventually returned and completed the Academy. As the table shows, most departures for injuries return—nearly 80%—while the opposite is true for the departure type agency pull, with only about 30% of officers returning and completing Academy.

Table 3 Departures by type, BP 385-394 & BP 413-423

Departure type	Departs but completes	Depart and no complete	Total	Percent returns
Academic failure	1	1	2	50.0%
Agency pull	5	13	18	27.8%
Employee resignation	1	7	8	12.5%
Injury/illness	11	3	14	78.6%
Grand Total	**18**	**24**	**42**	**42.9%**

Figure 3 Attrition by Departure Type, BP 385-394 & 413-423



The departure types of agency pull and employee resignation account for over 80% of total attrition at the Academy.

Overall, for BP 385-394 & 413-423, 835 enrollments resulted in 793 students eventually starting FTEP; 18 enrollments were the same student returning post departure; and there were 24 departures that did not return.

FTEP Completion Rates

Why track FTEP completion rates?

DPSST should be concerned about how many officers graduate from Basic Police Academy *and* how many officers ultimately complete their Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) and receive their Basic Police Certification, which includes completing the Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP). Considerable cost is borne by DPSST and the hiring agency for an officer to attend and complete Basic Police Academy. The cost of Basic Police Academy is roughly $20,000 for DPSST and $55,000 for the hiring agency (DPSST, 2025). Aside from the cost, the considerable amount of time invested in the hiring and training process means that neither the public, DPSST, the officer, or the hiring agency benefits if the officer completes Basic Police Academy but does not complete field training. Tracking FTEP completion rates can help DPSST leadership understand the scope of this issue.

FTEP completion or incompletion could help serve as a feedback mechanism to improve Academy Training and strengthen partnerships between Academy Training and law enforcement agencies (LEA) in Oregon. If an agency has a high FTEP incomplete rate, DPSST could reach out to the agency to conduct more in-depth analysis. For example, if a specific lack of knowledge, skills, or abilities (KSAs) was tied to patterns of FTEP failures, Academy Training could review and revise instruction in the identified areas. More interaction with agencies may help better align Academy Training with the "real world" demands of policing and could help ensure that training is responsive to the needs of the LEA. The information gained could also identify the need for more training and/or credentialing for FTOs to ensure that all FTOs have the same foundational knowledge and employ similar evaluative standards.

Police training at DPSST should not end with graduation from Basic Police Academy. Academy Training should not just be concerned about getting the officer "across the stage" but with developing officers throughout their careers, supported via training and more robust systems of professional development. Better alignment of Basic Academy with FTEP encourages officers to see FTEP as a continuation of their

basic training as opposed to Basic Police Academy being "one and done" and unrelated to FTEP.

FTEP Completion Rates

Of the 793 officers that started FTEP, 695 ultimately completed FTEP and 98 officers did not, resulting in an FTEP completion rate of 87.6%.

Table 4 BP 385-394 & 413-423, FTEP Completion Rates

Received Basic Certification?	Total Officers	Percent
No	98	12.4%
Yes	695	**87.6%**
Total	793	100%

Combining attrition at Basic Police Academy and FTEP attrition provides a rate for Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) completion in Oregon. Of the 817 students that started Basic Police Academy, 24 did not complete Academy and 98 did not complete FTEP, resulting in a BLET completion rate in Oregon of 85%. Based on this sample, 34 officers of every 40-officer cohort will likely complete their Basic Police Certification and 6 will not, either due to not completing Academy or FTEP. Most attrition occurred during the FTEP phase of BLET because four times as many officers did not complete FTEP compared to Basic Police Academy.

Table 5 BP 385-394 & 413-423, BLET Completion Rates

BLET Outcomes	Total Officers	Percent
Attrition at Academy	24	2.9%
FTEP non-compete	98	12.0%
Completed BLET	695	**85.1%**
Total	817	100.0%

Table 6 lists the FTEP non-complete reason and the definition. Resignations and some reclassifications are technically voluntarily initiated by the officer; however, that does not mean that the officer did not face administrative pressure or that the resignation or reclassification was unrelated to performance issues. Agencies may allow an officer to resign or voluntarily reclassify to a previous or different position, allowing the officer to maintain a favorable relationship with the agency.

Table 6 FTEP Non-Complete Reasons

FTEP non-complete reason	Description of FTEP non-complete reason
FTEP Failure	An officer does not demonstrate acceptable knowledge of all the modules in the Field Training Manual (FTM) during the Field Training Evaluation Program (FTEP). This typically results from recurrent issues such as safety concerns, poor decision-making, lack of officer presence, or failure to demonstrate competence in core duties.
Probationary Discharge (PD)	The dismissal of an officer during their probationary period — the initial phase of employment where performance, conduct, and suitability for the role are closely evaluated.
Reclassification	The reassignment of an officer to a different classification, rank, or position, often due to administrative needs, disciplinary issues, or changes in qualifications. It can be voluntary or involuntary; may result in demotion, change in duties, or shift to civilian/non-sworn role depending on agency policy.
Resignation	A voluntary decision by an officer to leave their position. This can be for personal reasons, better opportunities, or dissatisfaction with the role. If not associated with disciplinary

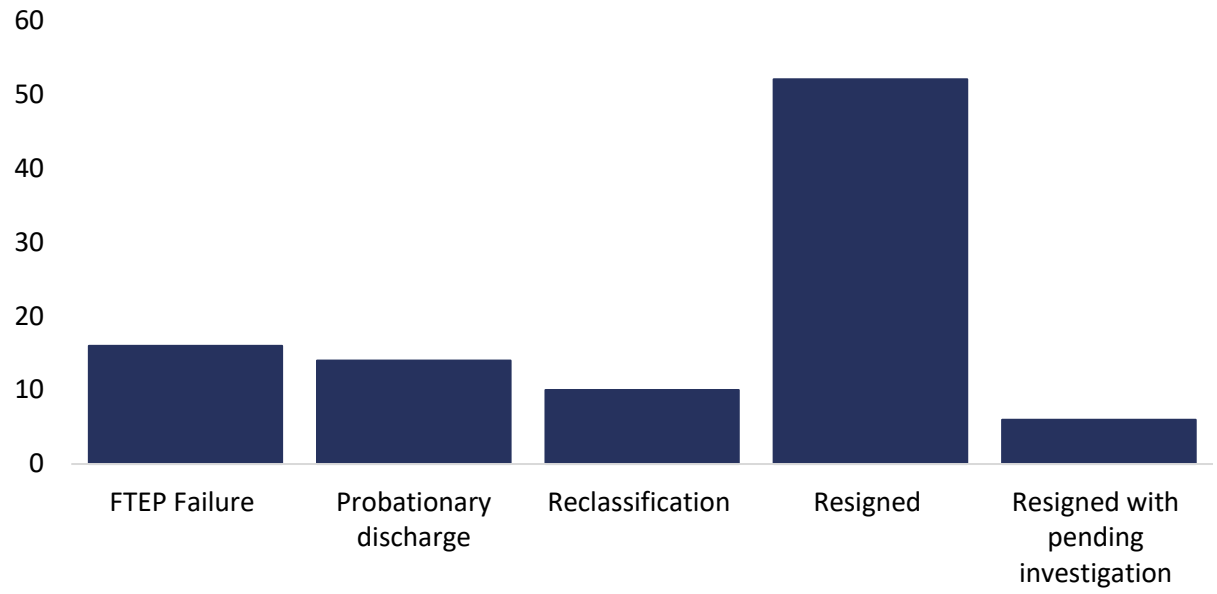
FTEP non-complete reason	Description of FTEP non-complete reason
	issues, resignation typically results in a neutral or favorable separation status.
Resigned with Pending Investigation	Occurs when an officer resigns while they are under internal or criminal investigation (e.g., for misconduct, policy violations, or use-of-force incidents). Resignation often halts the internal investigation, though the agency may continue or share findings with outside bodies.

Of the 98 FTEP incompletes, more than half are due to employee resignation. In fact, over 6 in 10 FTEP incompletes are a type of voluntary resignation, due to either employee resignation or a reclassification. The remaining 36.7 % are types of non-voluntary separations—FTEP failure, probationary discharge, or resignation pending an investigation.

Table 7 BP 385-394 & 413-423, FTEP Non-completions

Reason	Total Officers	Percent of FTEP non-completes
FTEP Failure	16	16.3%
Probationary discharge	14	14.3%
Reclassification	10	10.2%
Resigned	52	53.1%
Resigned with pending investigation	6	6.1%

Figure 4 FTEP Non-complete Reason



Both the FTEP and BLET completion rate was slightly higher for women, but the rate was not statistically significant. This is important considering gender representation in policing in Oregon. Women represented 11% of police in Oregon in 2024, trailing the national average of approximately 13% and well behind the aspirational goal of the 30x30 Project, which aims for 30% representation by 2030 (Goodison, 2022).[6] Women represented 16.4% of officers that received their basic certification in this sample, compared to 20% of recruits nationally were women in the latest CLETA data (Buehler, 2024). It is notable because, contrary to trends at the national level, women are *not* being filtered out at Basic Police Academy or during FTEP (Buehler, 2024). This means that if women stay in the profession, women's representation in policing in Oregon *should continue to increase* (Rexford-Boren, 2025).[7]

[6] See https://30x30initiative.org/ for more information on the 30x30 initiative.
[7] New officers are not the only source of police officers in Oregon. An officer can laterally transfer into Oregon from out-of-state and most of those officers do not have to complete Basic Police Academy. Rexford-Boren found that the percentage of women in policing in Oregon slowly increased over the past 20 years (2025).

Table 8 BP 385-394 & 413-423, FTEP and BLET Completion Rates by Gender

Rate	Men	Women
FTEP Completion Rate	87.4%	89.1%
BLET Completion Rate	84.8%	86.4%

Academy Performance and FTEP Completion

If training at the Academy mimics the real-world demands of policing, officers that do better at the Academy should perform better during field training and be better performers overall as officers. There is research linking performance at police academies to field training and performance in the field. Caro (2011) found that the final exam academy score and SFST (Standardized Field Sobriety Score) predicted the officer's overall field training performance score, linking academy performance to field training. Henson and colleagues (2010) found that officers' overall academy grade was positively associated with officers' first year evaluation and both the officers' 3- and 5-year evaluation averages—officers that scored better on exams in academy received better evaluations.

Table 9 BP 385-394 & 413-423, Class grade and Basic Certification

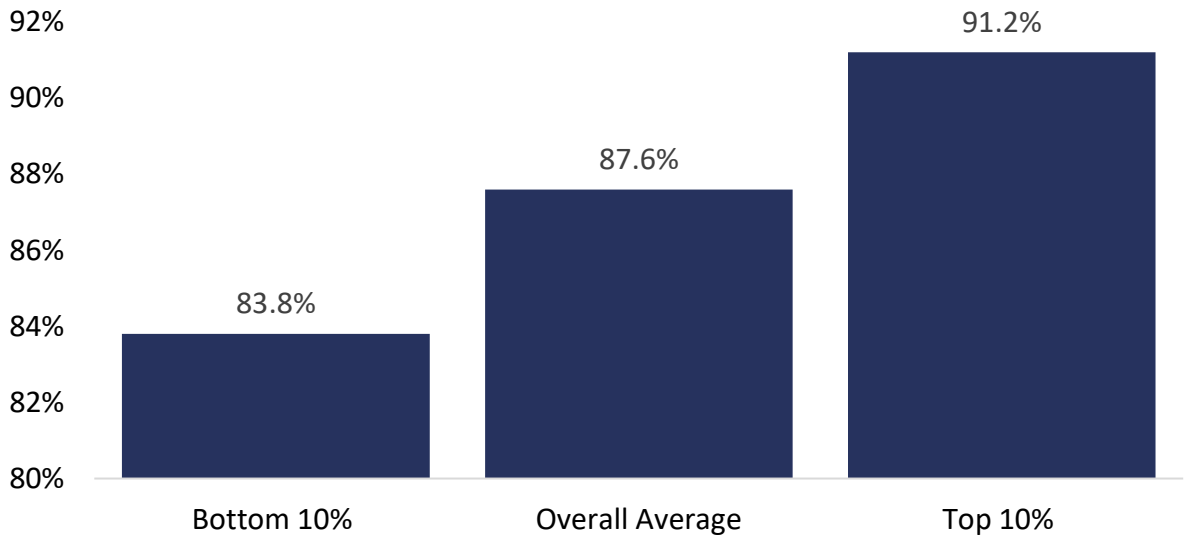
Received Basic Certification	Class grade
Yes	91.3
No	89.9

Is this the case in Oregon? One measure of Academy performance is class grade. A class grade is by no means the only or the most important metric of success at an academy. Nonetheless, those that do well academically at Academy *should* do better during field training. The average class grade for those that completed FTEP is about 1.5 points higher than those that did not complete FTEP. The result is statistically significant.[8] This means that those that complete FTEP are likely to have a higher class grade than those that do not and that result is unlikely to be the product of chance—meaning there is an association between class grade and FTEP completion.

[8] A two-sample Welch's T Test was conducted for a difference in averages for Yes (N=695, average=91.3, standard deviation= 3.498) and No (N=98, average 89.9, standard deviation = 3.65). The results were significant at the 0.05 level.

Another way to explore the relationship between class grade and FTEP completion rates is to see if the top performers at Academy complete FTEP at higher rates and vice versa. Note that 793 officers in this sample started FTEP. Ten percent of 793 officers is roughly 80 officers. Of the 80 officers that were the top academic performers at Academy in this sample, 7 did not complete FTEP, resulting in an FTEP completion rate of 91.2%, which is about 3.5 points higher than the overall rate for this sample of 87.6%.

Figure 5 FTEP Completion Rates by Academy Class Grade



Of the eighty officers in the bottom 10 %, 13 did not complete FTEP, resulting in an FTEP completion rate of 83.8%. In the bottom 10 % group, six fewer officers completed FTEP when compared to the top 10% of academic performers group at Basic Police Academy. Note that neither the top nor bottom 10 percent results were statistically significant, suggesting the result could be the product of mere chance.[9]

[9] Note that a lack of statistical significance could be due to small sample size. As more data is compiled into larger samples, we can be more confident that a relationship exists that is not the mere product of chance.

FTEP Performance by Agency

It is the responsibility of the local LEA to provide field training along with designated field training officers after Basic Police Academy. While all officers receive the same training at Basic Police Academy, field training varies by agency in Oregon. Key differences involve FTO selection, training requirements, incentives provided to FTOs, and evaluation methods.

Currently, DPSST provides *optional* training for FTOs.[10] The current Board Training Standards do not require any minimum standards to serve as an FTO. LEAs in Oregon may have their own requirements; DPSST does not possess or collect data regarding agency level requirements for FTOs selection in Oregon.

Research on the national level suggests agencies in Oregon are likely to have a mix of requirements for officers to serve as FTOs. The Center for Naval Research (CNA)[11] reviewed six large agencies'[12] field training programs and found that all agencies reviewed disciplinary records;[13] a majority required a supervisor recommendation; a majority required a written statement of interest. Three agencies reviewed had experience requirements—a minimum number of years served— and two agencies required panel interviews (Jenkins et al., 2021).

While DPSST does not know agency-level requirements to serve as an FTO, DPSST Research did include questions about FTO experience and FTEP in its Annual Staffing Survey in 2025. The survey asked agencies about the length of their FTEP programs and years of experience both as an officer and FTO. Table 10 shows the average, median (middle number in a set of data), mode (most common observation in a

[10] DPSST offers the following FTEP related training at DPSST and regionally: Field Training and Evaluation Program Basic (24hrs); Field Training and Evaluation Program Refresher (8hrs); Field Training and Evaluation Instructor Development Course (24hrs).
[11] The Center for Naval Research (CAN) is a nonprofit research organization. CNA's Institute for Public Safety focuses on public safety and policing.
[12] To use the convention for agencies size in Oregon, all these agencies would be considered Tier 1 because they have over 100 sworn officers.
[13] Several high profile officer-involved use of force incidence involved FTOs. The officer that killed George Floyd was an FTO. An FTO was present when Tamir Rice was killed in 2014; the officer driving Freddie Grey, who subsequently died in the back of a police van, was an FTO.

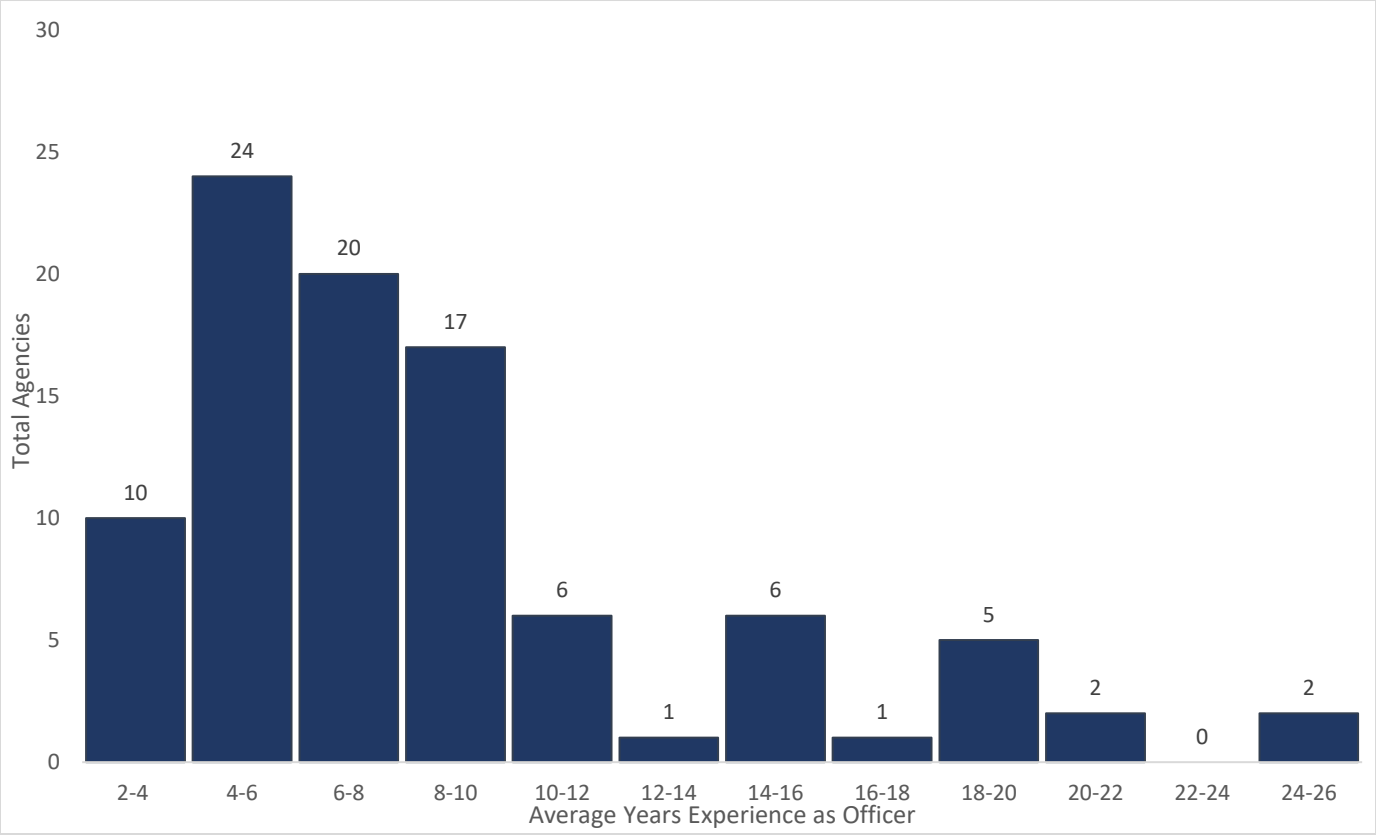
set of data), and the minimum and maximum number of weeks (for FTEP length) or years (years' experience.)

Table 10 FTEP Length and FTO Experience

	FTEP Length (in **weeks**)	Total **years** of experience as officer	Total **years** of experience as FTO
Average	18	9	5
Median	16	8	4
Mode	16	5	2
Minimum	4	2	1
Maximum	52	26	24

In terms of FTO experience, the average years' experience as an FTO was 5 years and the average years of experience as an officer was 9 (Table 10). However, as Figure 5 shows, 10 agencies that responded to the DPSST Annual Staffing Survey indicated that their FTOs have between 2 and 4 years' average total experience as officers (DPSST, Annual Staffing Survey, 2025). This finding mirrors reports from practitioners noting that staffing challenges have resulted in some LEAs having officers that have just completed their probationary period serving as FTOs (DeSully, 2025).

Figure 6 Number of LEAs and average FTO total years' experience as officers



CNA's review of FTEP programs across the U.S. found variation in terms of training preparation requirements to become an FTO. One agency, after selection, required FTOs to complete a weeklong course, with topics on the FTEP program and adult learning strategies. Three of the six agencies had "multiple days" of training to become FTOs. One agency requires completion of a 4-hour course. Agencies in Oregon are likely to have a similar mix of training requirements for FTOs after selection (Jenkins et al., 2021).

As for incentives, all agencies CNA reviewed provide increased pay to serve as an FTO. Two agencies equip FTOs with special insignia. One agency provided FTOs with "comp time"—extra paid time to complete paperwork. Agencies in Oregon are likely to have a mix of incentives (Jenkins et al., 2021).

Field training programs can also differ in terms of the evaluation model employed. Agencies in the U.S. generally use two models of FTO training: the San Jose or the Reno (PTO) model; most agencies in the U.S. use the San Jose Model (Chappell,

2006) . The San Jose Model uses a form of behavior modification and the Reno or PTO model uses problem-based learning as a learning strategy (Groppi, 2021). The Table below summarizes the major differences with the models.

Table 11 FTEP Evaluation Models—Reno and San Jose Compared

Feature	**San Jose Model**	**Reno Model (PTO Program)**
Origin	San Jose, CA (1970s)	Reno, NV (2000s) COPS DOJ Office
Focus	Evaluation of performance	Development through critical thinking
Approach	Traditional, paramilitary	Adult learning, coaching/mentoring
Evaluation Method	Numerical ratings	Narrative feedback and self-assessments
Learning Style	Structured, directive	Problem-based learning
Officer Role	Evaluator	Coach/Mentor
Community Policing	Limited emphasis	Heavy emphasis

Source: Groppi (2021)

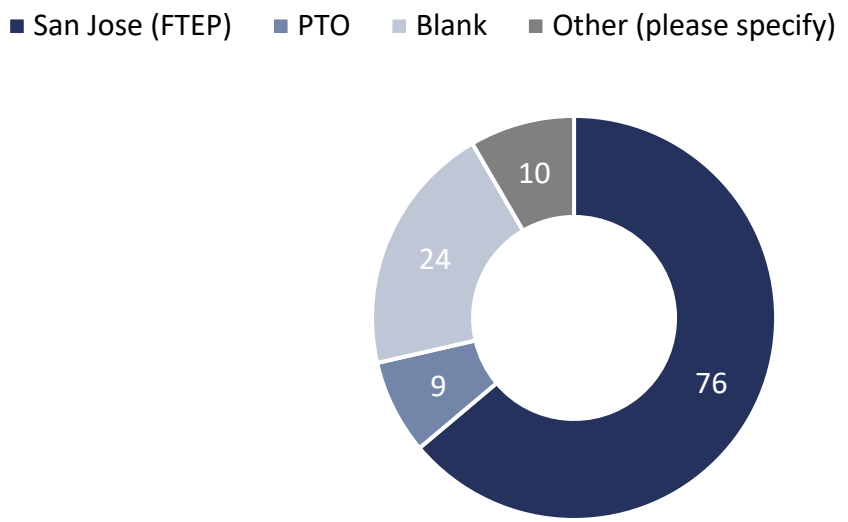
DPSST Research asked agencies what evaluative model they employed. Reflecting the national trends, most LEAs use the San Jose Model (DPSST, Annual Staffing Survey, 2025).

Table 12 Field Training Evaluative Model

Model	Total LEAs	Percent of responses
San Jose (FTEP)	76	63.9%
PTO	9	7.6%
Blank	24	20.2%
Other (please specify)[14]	10	8.4%

[14] In terms of the other category, 4 LEAs indicated that they use a hybrid approach; two said they use a "modified FTEP program" and two said they use a "In house FTEP program." The remaining two stated "DPSST" and "We have not been faced with this issue as of yet" respectively.

Figure 7 Number of LEAs by training model employed



The San Jose Model is criticized as being misaligned with the tenets of adult learning and models of community policing (Groppi, 2021). For instance, The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing was critical of the San Jose model due to the model's lack of emphasis on critical thinking and reliance on rote learning. The President's Task Force strongly encouraged agencies to shift toward a problem-based model that emphasized community engagement with adult learning teaching practice (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). The U.S. DOJ COPS office encourages agencies to adopt the Reno/PTO model to help officers build problem solving skills because models of community policing involve identifying and solving problems in the community (Pitts et al., 2007). [15] Practitioners in Oregon note that that the PTO program is more costly to teach, while the San Jose model does not have additional cost. Such costs have encouraged agencies that moved to PTO to go back to San Jose (DeSully, 2025).

[15] Thompson (2019) argues that the San Jose Model is flexible enough to incorporate change. Thompson surveyed LEAs in Florida and found that agencies using the San Jose Model made numerous adaptations and changes to the model based on agency needs, including dedicating more time and emphasis on building interpersonal and communication skills.

FTEP Completion Rates in Oregon

FTEP completion rates vary by agency. For instance, a third of officers did not complete FTEP at a police department (a municipal agency) while all officers completed FTEP at a sheriff's office; both agencies had the same number of FTEP students. Two county level sheriff's offices with a similar number of officers in FTEP (22 and 21 respectively), had differing rates; one agency had 5 officers not complete FTEP and the other had only one student that did not complete FTEP.

Note that these figures should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of officers per agency. Agencies that had 9 or fewer officers in FTEP were excluded from the table. In addition, FTEP completion rates can be affected by a variety of factors, such as differences in recruit selection and screening, program rigor and standards, FTO culture, agency size and call volume, support systems offered to officers, and the culture of the agency. Note that some factors may be unrelated to training at Basic Police Academy or their respective FTEP program.

Table 13 BP 385-394 & 413-423, FTEP Completion Rate by Agency

Agency	No	Yes	Total	FTEP Completion Rate
Agency A	0	12	12	100.0%
Agency B	0	10	10	100.0%
Agency C	1	21	22	95.5%
Agency D	1	14	15	93.3%
Agency E	2	17	19	89.5%
Agency F	2	15	17	88.2%
Agency G	3	22	25	88.0%
Agency H	11	66	77	85.7%
Agency I	5	29	34	85.3%
Agency J	9	50	59	84.7%
Agency K	3	15	18	83.3%
Agency L	3	14	17	82.4%
Agency M	3	13	16	81.3%
Agency N	2	8	10	80.0%

Agency O	4	15	19	78.9%
Agency P	3	11	14	78.6%
Agency Q	5	16	21	76.2%
Agency R	4	8	12	66.7%

Discussion

The major finding of this report is that 88% of graduates from Basic Police Academy complete FTEP and receive their Basic Police Certification. Only one in fifty or 2% percent (16 of 793) of Basic Academy Graduates do not complete FTEP due explicitly to FTEP Failure. About 1 in 12 (8% or 62 of 793)—the majority of FTEP incompletes— of Academy graduates do not complete FTEP due to a type of voluntary separation—either a reclassification or resignation. Roughly 1 in 40 (2.5% or 20 of 793) do not complete FTEP due to a probationary discharge or a resignation in lieu of termination. The overall FTEP completion rate –88%–and the fact that only 2% fail FTEP explicitly due to FTEP failure, strongly suggests that Academy Training succeeds in one of its major goals: to prepare officers to successfully complete FTEP.

Informal conversations with instructors at Basic Police Academy suggest that staff may be surprised by this figure. Often instructors and constituents would claim that "over half" or "a quarter" of graduates fail FTEP. This finding can help staff and policymakers have realistically grounded conversations about FTEP performance.

Officers that completed FTEP had a higher average class grade than the sample that did not complete FTEP. This finding suggests a relationship between the real-world demands of policing and the academic testing regime at Academy. Such a finding can inform policy discussions at the Academy regarding the importance placed on academic testing.

A 5% departure rate means that 95% of officers complete Basic Police Academy. This rate is higher than the national completion rate of 84.9% across all training academies in the U.S. and higher compared to similar State/POST or equivalent training Academies (85.5%) (Buehler, 2024). Oregon's Basic Police Academy is a mostly non-

stress academy[16] and shorter than the national average - 640 hours versus 804 hours - which may influence Oregon's higher rate.

There is no consensus regarding an appropriate rate and an overall Academy completion rate says little about the quality of instruction. However, the rate can be too high considering a major purpose of Basic Police Academy is to identify officers that may be unsuitable for the profession (Paoline & Sloan, 2023). Policing is unique as the job formally empowers officers with authority, discretion to use force, and control over citizens. While many officers are drawn into the profession for noble reasons – the desire to help others for example —individuals with authoritarian or aggressive tendencies may be attracted to policing for the wrong reasons (Kappeler et al, 1998). A completion rate that is too high could indicate insufficient screening at Basic Police Academy. DPSST should continue evaluating whether the screening and evaluation process during training is sufficiently rigorous. The fact that most officers complete FTEP is encouraging and suggests that Basic Police Academy is preparing officers adequately for the rigors and demands of the profession.[17]

The findings in terms of gender representation in policing in Oregon are interesting as well. As noted, nationally, women are less likely to complete preservice basic academy (Buehler, 2024). The concern was that women were being recruited into the profession only to leave at preservice basic academy (Paoline III & Sloan, 2022). This does not appear to be the case in Oregon, suggesting that the percent of women in policing in Oregon should continue to increase, as long as agencies continue retention efforts.

A notable amount of attrition at both Basic Police Academy—29.1% of departures that did not return- and during FTEP—53.1% of the officers that did not complete FTEP

[16] Stress -based academies are modeled after military style – basic training—and are highly tactical and skill based. In such models, stress comes from instructors disciplining recruits, often with physical training—i.e. sit ups or pushups—if a recruit answers a question incorrectly (Bickel, 2013).
[17] Note that DPSST has a unique relationship with agencies: DPSST sets the minimum qualifications connected to the certification but is not involved in the hiring or selection process. This fact may result in DPSST seeing LEAs as the primary screening agents.

—were due to employee resignations. Said differently, nearly a third of attrition at Basic Police Academy and most attrition during FTEP are types of *voluntary separations*.

Limitations

The inferences from this report were from a sample of officers drawn from roughly the calendar years 2019 and 2022. Due to the sample being limited to two discrete timeframes, the findings reflect conditions in 2019 and 2022. Furthermore, the lack of historical data obscures how or if this rate varies over time or if the rate fluctuates with trends in the policing labor market.

For instance, while staffing challenges in policing emerge in 2015, according to the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), the staffing crisis intensified in April 2020 with substantial increases in resignations and retirements coinciding with the COVID pandemic and the nationwide protests in 2020 (PERF, 2023; Mourtgos et al., 2021). Acute staffing challenges could affect attrition rates both at Academy and during FTEP. Due to agencies' acute need for more officers, LEAs may overlook deficiencies in knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and/or less severe moral fitness violations that occur during training that in pervious eras would be disqualifying. Conversely, the attrition rate could increase because LEAs are hiring officers that would not have been hired in previous eras due to the dire need to fill vacancies combined with a decrease in applications. DPSST surveyed LEAs in Oregon in 2024 finding that 46% indicated that they had a failed search; 30.2% of agencies in Oregon indicated that they had at least one "no show," where a new job offer is offered but the newly hired officer does not start employment with that agency (Rexford-Boren et al., 2025).[18]

Tracking this rate by drawing samples from previous eras or tracking this rate by calendar or fiscal years would allow the research team to better understand how this rate varies or if there is an overall trend, and/or the rate's relationship to other factors—such as the policing labor market.

[18] Separating the rates by year does show that the FTEP completion rate is slightly lower in 2022 when compared to 2019. The difference is not statistically significant (p=.435), meaning that this result could merely be the produce of chance.

Another limitation of this report relates to how departures from Academy and FTEP incompletes are classified. Staff at DPSST provide a departure reason—such as academic failure, injury/illness, agency pull, and employee resignation—when a student departs from Academy. When an officer is separated from an LEA in Oregon the agency submits a Personnel Action—Separation form and is asked to provide a reason under Question 9. For this report, the separation forms were checked manually to ensure resignations were "true" resignations and not resignations in lieu of termination. The text descriptions in the box were vague—with little more narration than "officer resigned" or simply "PD" (probationary discharge) or "FTEP failure." However, it is likely that many resignations may not be purely voluntary separations and involve administrative pressure. The administrative pressure could come from a combination of factors, such as an officer not performing satisfactorily during FTEP, an investigation into wrongdoing but the officer resigns before an investigation begins, and/or a lack of fit between the officer and agency or the officer and the community. LEAs may encourage the officer to "voluntarily" resign so the officer is able to be rehired and laterally transfer to another agency. This informal practice may inflate the number of voluntary resignations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The overall FTEP completion rate masked variation by agency. The variation in rate by agency could be due to differences in recruit selection and screening, program rigor and standards, FTO culture, agency size and call volume, support systems offered to officers, and the culture of the agency.

More oversight over FTEP programs

To ensure more standardization and uniformity, DPSST should continue to explore the benefits and feasibility of exercising more oversight of field training programs. As noted in a Secretary of State Audit in 2021 and in the Governor's Police Training and Standards Taskforce Report, a lack of oversight over field training results in LEAs having tremendous discretion over FTEP. FTOs are supposed to follow the DPSST Field Training Manual (M11-19A), with the requirement that the officer, the FTO, and Department Head of employing agency sign a form attesting to completion. DPSST does not audit or spot check any of the manuals. Little is known about fidelity to concepts taught at Academy or if the concepts are taught in an adult learning style.[19] If LEAs do not teach the same concepts or the same concepts with the same fidelity, an officer's BLET training would be disjointed between Academy and FTEP. The disjointed nature could worsen the "forget everything you learned at Academy" pathology and undermine concepts taught at Academy, diminishing DPSST's legitimacy with officers and LEAs.

Research shows that the benefits of quality training will dissipate in an unsupportive environment. Haarr (2005) found, after surveying officers at four different times during training, that attitudes towards community policing improved after completing a police academy curriculum stressing community policing principals. However, the positive attitudes towards community policing diminished after field training because community policing principals were not reinforced during FTEP.

[19] This issue is discussed in a Secretary of State Audit of DPSST in 2021. See Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Additional Resources Needed to Strengthen Police Training and Accountability

These findings make sense because one of the most important factors affecting memory is repetition (Rohrer & Taylor, 2006). Research shows that distributed learning—learning spaced over longer periods of time—enhances learning transfer and retention. "If learners spread out their study of a topic, returning to it periodically over time, they remember it better," writes Brown and colleagues in *Making it Stick*. (Brown et al., 2014, p. x) DPSST could be missing opportunities to reinforce important concepts stressed in Basic Police Academy during FTEP; concepts not reinforced are likely to be discarded.

This is especially important in the context of reforming police training. A disjointed BLET could thwart reform efforts related to police training. Note that DPSST overhauled its Basic Academy curriculum in 2017 to better reflect the modern demands of policing. More time was dedicated to topics related to community relations—such as implicit bias and procedural justice and legitimacy training (Heintzman-Yutzie et al., 2021). Currently, there is no statewide requirement that FTOs have any background or training in the new curriculum (Oregon Audits Division, 2021). If those concepts are not taught in FTEP or reinforced throughout the officer's career, skills and knowledge in those areas will likely diminish.

DPSST exercising oversight over FTEP could take many forms, such as a combination of credentialling and/or training for FTOs. Participants in the DPSST FTEP Workgroup, convened in May of 2021, indicated "unanimous consensus" that minimum standards should be established for training and certification for FTOs (DPSST FTEP Workgroup, 2021). The FTEP Workgroup recommended the following requirements for officers to serve as FTOs:

- Possess a Basic Police Certification
- Be employed by a public safety agency
- Obtain agency head approval
- Attend DPSST FTO mandated training or approved equivalent within one year of assignment as FTO

The FTEP Workgroup (2021) recommend the FTO mandated course be modular and delivered online covering the topics of adult learning, instructor development, diversity awareness, cultural interactions, and emerging topics. The FTEP Workgroup did not endorse mandating a minimum amount of experience to serve as an FTO because this requirement could be unfeasible at smaller agencies. The requirement to have a Basic Certification ensures officers have a minimum amount of experience and meet a moral fitness standard, according to the FTEP Workgroup.

The FTEP Workgroup noted that performance evaluation should remain an employer standard, meaning that LEAs should have discretion regarding what model to use—for example, the Reno or San Jose Model. Practitioners note that focusing on the formal evaluative model employed may be of secondary importance for a few reasons. One, LEAs in Oregon have developed hybrid models, combining parts of both programs as needed. Additionally, practitioners argue that both models do little to develop the FTO. Regardless of the model employed, DPSST should continue to help agencies incorporate critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills into either model. DPSST Regional Training has already helped many LEAs incorporate critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills into their FTEP models. For instance, DPSST Regional Team has added additional material into FTEP classes to help develop the FTO and added content to encourage critical thinking and problem solving (DeSully, 2025).

Implementing the FTO Workgroup's recommendation would support alignment with the two halves of BLET because the recommendations ensure that FTOs have received training in the new topics covered in the updated Basic Police Academy curriculum and FTOs have background in adult learning styles. Ensuring FTOs all have the same foundational training should bring more uniformity in the application of evaluative standards and encourage more alignment in terms of FTO culture between DPSST and LEAs in Oregon.

Increase the prestige and desirability of the FTO position

Aside from training and credentialing, CNA recommends LEAs increase the prestige and desirability of FTO positions. As noted, it is likely all or most agencies in Oregon

provide more pay for FTOs. LEAs in Oregon could be encouraged to make the position more desirable by:

- Offering additional PTO
- Promotional consideration for serving as an FTO
- Specialized insignia
- Recognition—both formal and informal

Discourage resignations via recruitment & realistic job previews

A substantial amount of attrition during BLET is due to a type of voluntary resignation. One evidence-based solution to this problem is for LEAs to provide realistic job previews (RJPs) for recruits. In a metanalysis of over 40 studies outside the field of policing, RJPs were associated with higher job performance and lower voluntary turnover (Phillips, 1998). In the field of policing, RJPs—tools like ride-alongs, structured internships, candid interviews, and job shadowing—can help establish realistic expectations of what policing entails (Gibbs, 2019; Wilson et al., 2010). If officers and their families have a realistic sense of what the job entails and appreciate the difficulties of shift work, exposure to trauma, and dealing with intoxicated and/or individuals that may be physically and verbally abusive, then officers may have a better understanding of their compatibility with the demands of policing (Scheer et al., 2022). While this may discourage a recruit from joining, it could save money and time in the long run via increased retention.

Research shows that unrealistic expectations can stem from how and where LEAs recruit new officers. If agencies recruit heavily out of the military and stress the crime fighting aspect of policing, new officers will think that most of the job is engaging in police pursuits, arresting bad guys, and using force. Such events are, generally, atypical and rare (Sloan et al., 2024). Most of the job involves problem solving, responding to routine calls, and completing paperwork. This mismatch in expectations results in disillusionment and dissatisfaction (Charman, 2017). Agencies instead should recruit out of other "serving" professions—like nursing, psychology, and education (Starheim,

2019)—and be upfront about the typical day in the life of an officer to avoid unrealistic expectations (Scheer et al., 2022).

Recommendations for Better Data Collection

As noted in this report, DPSST does not collect data on FTEP programs. To better understand current FTEP programs in Oregon, the CPE Research Team could continue to survey agencies to understand their current FTO requirements. As noted by the DPSST FTEP Workgroup (2021), agencies in Oregon may already have robust FTO programs. A survey could ensure that DPSST rule making is done with the best available information. The survey could gather the information to better understand current FTO training requirements and FTO selection criteria. The survey could seek information more generally about alignment between the two halves of BLET—Academy and FTEP—and their FTEP training needs and desires.

The research team could provide guidance for LEAs in Oregon on how to collect more accurate data on the Personnel Action - Separation form to document reasons for FTEP incompletion. LEAs may use the probationary discharge label interchangeably with FTEP failure and vice versa. If there is no difference between these reasons then this convention would be inconsequential. However, if a probationary discharge typically involves a moral fitness violation during probation and FTEP failure involves a deficiency in key knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required for FTEP completion, then the distinction is very consequential. The research team could provide rationale and guidelines to help LEAs apply consistent criteria for labeling FTEP incompletes.

The research team could explore ways to gather more information regarding FTEP incompletion. FTOs may be willing to complete a short questionnaire asking if the officer who failed FTEP lacked a particular skill taught at Basic Police Academy. If a skill was identified, Academy Training would know more about the training needs of the LEA.

Regarding better understanding attrition at Basic Police Academy, the research team could provide clear guidance for DPSST staff to better collect departure information in *Acadis*. For instance, the departure type “agency pull” is a broad category

that may include departures related to disciplinary action (e.g. officer commits a moral fitness violation at Basic Police Academy) or an officer leaves due to personal reasons (e.g. officer must take leave to care for family member). A moral fitness violation should be distinguished from a departure for personal reasons. Distinguishing between a departure due to injury incurred during training at Academy and injuries/illness unrelated to any activity at Academy is needed because injuries and illness incurred outside of Basic Police Academy are outside of Academy control. Guidance should make it clear that agency pull should *not* be used for employee resignation.

Conclusion

The Field Training and Evaluation Program (FTEP) completion rate for this sample was 88% and the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) completion rate was 85%. This means that roughly 34 of each 40-officer Basic Police cohort will likely complete FTEP and receive their Basic Police Certification.

Most cases of FTEP incompletion were categorized as resignations—voluntary separations. Completion rates varied across agencies, but there were no significant differences in completion rates for FTEP or BLET between men and women.

DPSST leadership should continue to assess the potential benefits of mandating and/or providing more training or oversight of FTEP programs. DPSST could encourage agencies to offer realistic job previews to potential officers to help reduce voluntary turnover. Agencies should also be encouraged to increase the prestige and desirability of the FTO position. Improved data collection efforts can help establish benchmarks for FTEP completion, allowing DPSST leadership to better understand how this rate has changed over time.

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