

Georgia Public Safety Screening Service

www.GPS3.net

APPLICANT INFORMATION PACKET

The Georgia Public Safety Screening Service (GPS3) provides applicant evaluation and background investigations to participating public safety agencies. After successful completion of the initial (Phase 1) process, eligible applicants are placed on a registry for a period of one (1) year; this registry is periodically updated and distributed to the participating agencies. Applicants may be called by the agencies for job interviews.

GPS3 is not an employer and your participation with our service does not guarantee that you will receive a job interview or job offer. GPS3 does not discriminate, nor do we remove applicants from consideration based on age, race, sex, religion, or national origin.

Upon receiving a “Conditional Job Offer” from the interviewing agency, additional screening will be required and administered by GPS3; this may include polygraph examination, medical examination, drug screening and psychological testing. The hiring agency may also require you to participate in additional screening processes to establish eligibility under their employment standards; e.g. physical agility test.

FEES

Applicants are required to pay a non-refundable fee after meeting eligibility requirements established by state law; eligibility will be established by GPS3 staff only after state mandated testing (ASSET or COMPASS) is completed. If you are determined to be eligible, payment is made when you provide supporting documents and the background process begins.

- **Registration/Phase 1 processing:** \$300.00 (Pre-service/Out-of-State) \$350.00 (Georgia Certified)
(covers costs associated with Phase 1 screening - eligible candidates will be placed on applicant registry pool)
- **“Conditional Job Offer”/Phase 2 processing:** \$400.00
(this fee is paid only after receiving a “Conditional Job/Placement Offer” from an agency)

All fees are paid by check or money order; no cash. Phase 1 fees are paid on the day of your initial pre-employment interview. Fees do not cover cost associated with the ASSET or COMPASS test adopted by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council for Pre-Service and Out-of-State applicants, or the cost associated with the Equivalency of Training (EOT) exam.

****REMINDER****

Georgia Public Safety Screening Service (GPS3) will make every effort to expedite your file for availability to our participating public safety agencies. We make every attempt to complete Phase 1 processing within 30-60 days however your cooperation is very important in making this a reality.

Submitting forms and other documents in a timely manner as well as being punctual for appointments helps us to efficiently use our resources.

- If we do not receive a response from you to our inquiries within five (5) business days OR if you fail to keep an appointment without prior notice of cancellation/rescheduling, we reserve the right to place your file in an “inactive” status.
- Inactive files will be placed in a “Cancelled Status” after thirty (30) business days.
- Additional fees may be required to re-activate your file.

Eligibility Standards

Georgia Law O.C.G.A. 35-8-8 establishes the minimum criteria for citizenship, age and education as it relates to police officers. The Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (GPOSTC) is charged by law with the responsibility to develop selection standards, certify training, provide technical assistance and conduct compliance inspections as it relates to the selection and training of police officers.

Requirements for appointment or certification of persons as peace officer:

(a) Any person employed or certified as a peace officer shall:

- (1) Be at least 18 years of age;
- (2) Be a citizen of the United States;
- (3) Have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- (4) Not have been convicted by any state or by the federal government of any crime the punishment for which could have been imprisonment in the federal or state prison or institution nor have been convicted of sufficient misdemeanors to establish a pattern of disregard for the law, provided that, for purposes of this paragraph, violations of traffic laws and other offenses involving the operation of motor vehicles when the applicant has received a pardon shall not be considered;
- (5) Be fingerprinted and a search made of local, state, and national fingerprint files to disclose any criminal record;
- (6) Possess good moral character as determined by investigation under procedure established by the council;
- (7) Have an oral interview with the hiring authority or its representative to determine the applicant's appearance, background, and ability to communicate;
- (8) Be found, after examination by a licensed physician or surgeon, to be free from any physical, emotional, or mental conditions which might adversely affect his exercising the powers or duties of a peace officer; and
- (9) Successfully complete a job related academy entrance examination provided for and administered by the Council in conformity with state and federal law. Such examination shall be administered prior to entrance to the basic course provided for in Code Sections 35-8-9 and 35-8-11. The council may change or modify such examination and shall establish the criteria for determining satisfactory performance on such examination. Peace officers who do not perform satisfactorily on the examination shall be ineligible to retake such examination for a period of six months after an unsuccessful attempt. The provisions of this paragraph establish only the minimum requirements of academy entrance examinations for peace officer candidates in this state; each law enforcement unit is encouraged to provide such additional requirements and any pre-employment examination as it deems necessary and appropriate.

Basic Law Enforcement Certification

Georgia Law O.C.G.A. 35-8-9 requires that in addition to the pre-employment standards set forth in O.C.G.A. 35-8-8, each candidate shall satisfactorily complete a basic training course prior to appointment as a peace officer. The basic course shall be completed at any school certified by the council which provides the course requirements and methods of instruction as established by council.

Recently, the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (GAPOSTC) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) implemented a new approach for delivering the basic law enforcement training course in the State of Georgia. This new training and delivery system allows individuals to apply to a Technical College certified by GAPOSTC and if accepted, participate in an academy environment that upon completion provides the Basic Law Enforcement Certification and college credit hours towards an associate degree in criminal justice; this is a 17-18 week course.

All of the Technical Colleges will conduct their own background screening of the student/applicant prior to allowing enrollment into the "Pre-Service" academy program; it is possible that some have contracted with GPS3 to conduct this part of the process.

In addition, Georgia law requires that ALL "non-certified" candidates successfully complete a job related academy entrance examination; as such, Georgia POST Council has adopted the **ASSET, or COMPASS test** as the official POST entrance examination. This test is administered at any Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) location and the Technical College administering the test may charge a fee of \$15-\$25 to take this exam. **Candidates who do not pass will be ineligible to retake the test for a period of six (6) months after an unsuccessful attempt.**

If an individual can prove successful completion of other college admission tests (SAT, ACT or CPE) they will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of the POST Entrance Examination.

You are strongly encouraged to talk with a representative at one of the College/University Academies to determine your eligibility; a list is found at <http://www.gapost.org/academies.html>

Equivalency of Training (EOT)

Eligible Federal Peace Officers, Military Peace Officers, and Out-of-State Peace Officers, may be eligible to take the Equivalency of Training (EOT) exam. You may be eligible for an exemption from the full basic law enforcement training course if you were an officer in another state or with the federal government and meet the following requirements:

1. You attended a basic law enforcement training course in another state or with the federal government;
2. Your certification as a peace officer in another state or with the federal government is valid; and
3. You have not had more than a three (3) year break in employment as a law enforcement officer.

The break in employment is measured from the separation date of the most recent qualifying employment to the time a complete application requesting exemption from training is received, by GAPOSTC. Once you document that you are eligible for EOT, a testing date will be scheduled. The examination consists of 200 multiple choice questions. The minimum passing score is 80%. **FEES:** The administrative fee for EOT and Application Processing is \$250.

Pre-Service Candidates (Georgia) who have graduated from a basic law enforcement training course within the last 3 years and Inactive Registered Georgia Peace Officers who are actively employed in law enforcement are eligible for Equivalency of Training (EOT). This process may also be used for those individuals who attended the basic law enforcement training course, in Georgia, and did not complete the certification process within three (3) years.

Those who fail the EOT will be required to successfully complete the entire basic law enforcement training course in order to be eligible for peace officer certification.

While it may seem reasonable to take the Equivalency of Training (EOT) Exam in hopes of reducing your training hours, our experience and dialogue with others have indicated that very few individuals have successfully passed this exam.

Be mindful you will be required to take the ASSET, or COMPASS test as discussed earlier, or provide documentation that shows successful completion of other college admission tests (SAT, ACT or CPE) necessary to satisfy the requirements of the POST Entrance Examination.

You are strongly encouraged to call GAPOSTC at (770) 732-5974 to discuss your eligibility prior to applying with GPS3.

Screening Procedures

GPS3's screening procedures were developed in cooperation with our participating public safety agencies. As such, these procedures meet or exceed the minimum criteria established by law and are in compliance with the professional standards established by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement (CALEA) and the State of Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program.

Certain portions of our screening procedure may have been completed during your "Pre-Service" processing with a Technical College (e.g. ASSET or COMPASS test) in order to enroll and complete the Basic Law Enforcement Certification course. Consideration will be given to those areas as you progress through our process.

To be eligible for placement in the Applicant Registry, successful applicants must complete all of the following steps within **Phase 1** of the Background Investigation process:

- **Registration and Payment of Fee:** While you completed an on-line registration, you must confirm your registration by appearing in person (at a scheduled date/time) at which time you must provide a government issued identification (drivers license or passport).

Applicants are required to pay a non-refundable fee after meeting eligibility requirements established by state law; eligibility will be established by GPS3 staff during our initial contact with you following your registration. If you are determined to be eligible, payment is made when you provide supporting documents during your initial appointment with one of our staff and the background process begins.

- **Pre-Employment Questionnaire:** This document can be completed on-line OR if that is not possible, you may print and complete it prior to the interview. **DO NOT SIGN THE QUESTIONNAIRE; you will be required to sign it during the interview in the presence of a Notary of Public.** This is a detailed document that will require you read and fully respond to all questions. Separate instructions are provided on the document.
- **Pre-employment Interview:** This interview is conducted by one of our investigators. The screening/background investigation process will be discussed and various waivers, consent forms and other similar documents will be reviewed and your signature required. If not previously submitted, the Pre-Employment Questionnaire will be submitted along with ALL of the required documents needed to create your file; (See Required Documents List). A photograph will be taken of you (similar to a drivers license photo) that will be placed with your GPS3 file. **You should anticipate a minimum of 2 hours for this part of the process.**
- **Writing Sample:** You will be asked to write a brief essay on an assigned topic. This sample will be used to assess your ability to write since many aspects of public safety work is dependent upon the employee's ability to prepare reports that are legible and provide understanding.
- **Social, Listening and Observation Assessment:** These skills are a critical for a peace officer since the job requires both interpersonal and professional interaction with people.
- **Background Investigation:** This is the time consuming part of the screening process as we will conduct a comprehensive investigation into your background. Information obtained will be evaluated against the information you provided in the Pre-employment Questionnaire and the interview. Public safety agencies are looking for people who are honest, ethical, and reliable – that said, it is our job to find best candidates for eligibility on the applicant registry.
- **ASSET or COMPASS test:** Georgia POST Council pursuant to Georgia law requires that ALL “non-certified” candidates successfully complete a job related academy entrance examination. As such, Georgia POST Council has adopted the ASSET or COMPASS test as the official POST entrance examination. This test is administered at any Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) location and the Technical College administering the test may charge a fee of \$15-\$25 to take this exam. You will be provided details on how to schedule an appointment to take this examination. **Candidates who do not pass will be ineligible to retake the test for a period of six (6) months after an unsuccessful attempt.**

If an individual can prove successful completion of other college admission tests (SAT, ACT or CPE) they will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of the POST Entrance Examination.

- **Criminal-Driving Histories/Fingerprinting:** A comprehensive search of all available files will be completed and you may be fingerprinted prior to being placed on the applicant registry.
- **Placement on Applicant Registry:** You will be notified in writing that you have been placed on the Applicant Registry for a period of one (1) year. The registry is sent to participating agencies once a month for review and your file may be reviewed at our location by any participating agency representative. Participating agencies are responsible for calling you to schedule an interview or any other screening

procedure (e.g. physical agility test) that may be needed by their agency. In the event your placement on the Applicant Registry expires, the file may be “re-activated” following payment of a nominal fee.

Required Documents

These documents are required by GPS3 to begin the background process and must be submitted at the time of your Pre-employment Interview. Copies are acceptable unless otherwise indicated. ***Begin gathering them now to avoid delay in the process.***

- High School Diploma or GED
- **Certified** College Transcript (if applicable)
- **Certified** Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Driver’s License
- Naturalization Documents (if applicable)
- Legal name changes (if applicable)
- Military Record (DD-214) for each completed service
- Basic Law Enforcement or other certifications (if applicable)

Reasons for Disqualification from Process

(This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of the reasons for disqualification)

- Deliberate omission or falsification of information provided to GPS3 either personally or through electronic means. These deliberate omissions or falsifications are of such nature as to materially affect the screening process or future employment decisions as reflected on the Registration, Pre-employment Questionnaire, Applicant History, Pre-employment Interview or supporting documentation.
- Detection of any felony crime for which you were convicted OR any detection or admission to involvement in any felony crime for which you were not arrested or convicted as an adult. (Any felony crime committed while a juvenile may also be grounds for disqualification).
- Any pattern of misdemeanor offenses that shows disregard for the law, excluding motor vehicle offenses however there can be no convictions or nolo contendere pleas in the last five (5) years for the following serious traffic offenses: Driving Under Influence, Reckless Driving, Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Police Officer, Habitual Violator, or Homicide by Vehicle.
- Use of alcoholic beverages that has resulted in five or more alcohol related arrests or similar illegal misconduct that would reflect on your moral character and/or use of poor judgment.
- Use, sale, possession or distribution of any felony drug listed in the Georgia Criminal Code.
- Unlawful sale or distribution of marijuana, or other similar derivatives, any use or possession within the within the past three (3), and/or any pattern that would reflect on your moral character and/or use of poor judgment.
- Two or more suspensions of a driver’s license issued by any state, territory or other governmental entity in a lifetime due to point accumulation, failure to appear, payment of fines.
- Any discharge from military service with less than honorable conditions. General discharges under honorable conditions and any disciplinary action initiated while serving in the military will be investigated.
- Active Probation or Parole.
- Any conviction that would make you ineligible to legally possess a firearm or ammunition.
- Failure to pass the ASSET or COMPASS test.

Reasons That May Cause You to be Removed

- Failure to keep appointments and/or follow instructions necessary to complete the process.
- Failure to possess a valid driver's license.
- Failure to provide required documents in a reasonable period of time
- Determination of outstanding warrant, pending criminal matter or other legal matter before any local, state or federal court having jurisdiction, OR failure to report any arrest, charge or indictment within five (5) business days while in the screening process.

Notice of Disqualification/Temporary Removal

In the event you are disqualified, or there are reasonable grounds to “temporarily” remove you from the process, Georgia Public Safety Screening Service will notify you in writing within ten (10) business days. The letter will be sent using the United States Postal Service to the address provided by you and reflected in the file.

The letter will inform you of the reasons for the disqualification or “temporary” removal and if you believe the information obtained through the investigation is inaccurate, incomplete or in error, you may notify GPS3 in writing explaining why you believe the information is inaccurate, incomplete or in error. At that time you may request a re-examination or re-evaluation of the information. Supporting documents that may assist with the re-examination or re-evaluation should be sent with your request.

Upon receipt of your request, a review will be conducted by three (3) members of GPS3 (including the investigator handling your file) within five (5) business days. You will be notified of the panel's findings; the panel's decision is final and fees paid are not refundable.

Acknowledgement

You are placed on notice that you will be asked to review and sign acknowledgement of this document during the Pre-employment Interview.

Acknowledgement of Application Information Packet

I, _____ do hereby acknowledge that the Applicant Information Packet has been thoroughly reviewed with me during the pre-employment interview by a member of the Georgia Public Safety Screening Service. I further acknowledge that I was given ample opportunity to ask questions regarding the content of the Applicant Information Packet and/or other aspects of the services provided by Georgia Public Safety Screening Service.

I fully understand that Georgia Public Safety Screening Service is not an employer and that my participation with this service does not guarantee that I will receive a job interview or job offer from a public safety agency.

Signature of Applicant

Date