

You can be a cop: CEI offering cutting-edge POST Academy law enforcement training in Idaho Falls

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David Pace, EastIdahoNews.com



A delegation from the College of Eastern Idaho meets at the Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy in Meridian. | Courtesy College of Eastern Idaho

IDAHO FALLS – New police officer and sheriff deputy recruits across eastern Idaho can now be trained in a brand-new Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Academy at the College of Eastern Idaho.

“For years now, Idaho Falls has been the biggest city in Idaho without a local academy,” Idaho Falls Police Chief Bryce Johnson said in a text. “Idaho Falls has been trying for years to get a POST Academy here, and CEI has been the best partner we could have ever hoped for to make this goal a reality.”

The State of Idaho POST Council unanimously approved the Peace Officer Standards and Training program to expand to the College of Eastern Idaho on March 6.

“This academy will benefit agencies across eastern Idaho by keeping new officers close to home for their POST training, and agencies across the state by opening up more space to train new officers,” Johnson said.

The POST Academy, located at 240 Technology Drive at CEI's Workforce Training Center, will provide "local, high-quality training for recruits," the college stated in a news release.

"Before, recruits had to travel for training, which meant higher costs for departments, time away from their families, and less local oversight," CEI's Vice President of Workforce Training and Continuing Education Trevor Elordi said in the release.

Between 80 to 100 officers and deputies will receive instruction annually.

"This will be the first time that the city of Idaho Falls and Bonneville County can actually have their officers and deputies get their training in the towns that they're going to be working in," Elordi told EastIdahoNews.com.

Previously, students traveled to Meridian or Idaho State University in Pocatello for POST Academy.

Sgt. Bryan Lovell, spokesman for the Bonneville County Sheriff's Office, said the new school program will streamline his department's hiring process. Currently, it can take up to a year from start to finish for a new recruit to complete the background checks, schedule training, and finish the required course and field training to be hired.

"This resource here will also be a huge benefit to us (with) some cost savings that way and a quicker turnaround likely to get people up and running and on the job in our community," Lovell said.

As a retired police officer, Elordi is excited about the scenario-based training CEI will offer new recruits.

"(The agencies) want their officers and their recruits, when they're in the academy, to understand the stresses of the job a little bit more," Elordi said. "So putting them in those scenarios that really induce a little bit of stress helps them understand what the job entails as they step onto the street."

From domestic violence cases to traffic stops to other investigations, the recruits will experience realistic training scenarios to prepare them for real-life police work.

"We really want to give them the opportunity to learn those things in a safe environment, in a controlled environment, and then to be able to translate that when they step onto the street," Elordi said.

Elordi served for more than 10 years as a police officer in California after graduating from an academy at a community college there.

"Understanding the training that officers need to go through and the ability to produce officers that are safe — that know how to do the job — is really important to me," he said. "I've had a lot of friends, you know, that have worked in law enforcement (and) unfortunately have lost a couple of friends as well. ... Being able to provide this training in this area is just something that's been a labor of love for us."

The POST Academy

The program will serve law enforcement agencies across eastern Idaho — including police departments and sheriff's offices in Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, Rexburg, Madison County, Shelley, Bingham County, Jefferson County, Rigby, Teton County and St. Anthony.

The program will host two academies to start:

1. **Detention Academy** starts April 28 and prepares individuals ages 18 and up to work in county jails. The course lasts eight weeks.

Recruits will learn "how to handle incarcerated individuals, arrest techniques, detention techniques," Elordi said.

2. **Patrol Academy** will begin in July and continues for 18 weeks. Students here must be 21 years of age.

This academy covers "firearms training, scenario-based investigations, first responder preparation, emergency vehicle operation, physical training and arrest techniques," the college shared in the release.

Local law enforcement organizations will provide the initial recruits for both programs, but general enrollment is expected to open up later, CEI officials project.

"Somebody that's been in the military, or that's kind of been through those stressful situations, it's a little bit easier for them to adapt," Elordi said. "But I think with the proper training, it makes it possible for anybody to be a good police officer."

Idaho Launch funds are also available to lower the cost departments pay for trainees and assist independent students in the future, the college shared.

Elordi advises future recruits who want to be police officers and sheriff deputies to come experience a career that will require their full dedication.

"If they're willing to get in and work hard and understand the rigors of being a police officer, (they can excel)," he said. "It is a mentality that you kind of have to take on because you're going into situations that are very dangerous a lot of the time. ... It takes somebody that is both physically and mentally tough to handle those situations."