

From 2011 to 2013, a total of 664 state and local law enforcement academies provided basic training to entry-level officer recruits in the United States.¹ During this period, more than 135,000 recruits (45,000 per year) entered a basic training program, and 86% completed the program successfully. This completion rate was the same as was observed for the 57,000 recruits who entered training programs in 2005.

Basic training models

The programs used training models that ranged on a continuum from completely stress-based to completely non-stress. Stress-based training was similar to military training, and it usually involved intense physical demands and psychological pressure. The non-stress model emphasized academics in addition to physical training and had a more relaxed, supportive relationship between instructors and trainees.

About half (48%) of recruits were trained by academies using a training model that was more stress than non-stress oriented in its approach. About a fifth (18%) of recruits were trained by academies that maintained more of a non-stress environment. A third of recruits (33%) were trained in academies that balanced the two approaches.

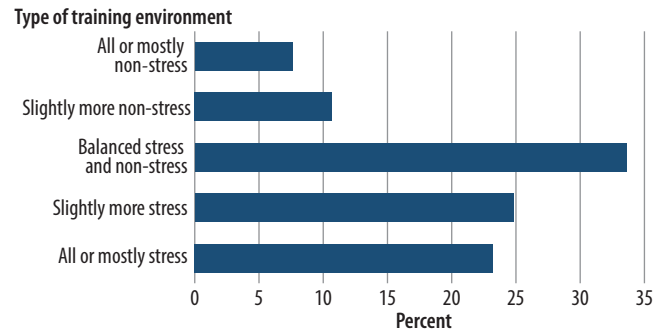
About the academies

Nearly half (46%) of training academies that provided basic training for new recruits were based at an educational institution. This included 33% at 2-year colleges, 6% at 4-year colleges or universities, and 6% at technical schools. Academies were also operated by municipal police departments (20%), sheriffs' offices (10%), state police or highway patrol agencies (6%), and State Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) agencies (5%).

Excluding field training, the length of a basic law enforcement training program was about 841 hours, or 21 weeks. Academies operated by agencies with special jurisdictions, such as parks or transportation systems, had the longest programs (averaging 1,075 hours), followed by county police academies (1,029 hours). Academies operated by state POST agencies (650 hours), technical schools (703 hours), and sheriffs' offices (706 hours) had the shortest training programs, on average.

¹This summary has been reissued alongside the report *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013*, which was updated using a different weighting methodology. See the report for more details.

Distribution of recruits in basic training programs in state and local law enforcement training academies, by type of training environment, 2011–13



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013.

Types of training

Academies required recruits to spend the most training time (more than 225 hours) on operations. The topics covered included patrol procedures (58 hours), investigations (47 hours), emergency vehicle operations (38 hours), and report writing (24 hours). Recruits were required to spend an average of 165 hours of training on firearms, defensive tactics, and the use of force. Nearly all (99%) recruits received reality-based use-of-force training, and 75% of recruits received this type of training on the use of non-lethal weapons. Additionally, about 9 in 10 recruits received training on firearm use at night, in reduced light, or under simulated stressful conditions.

Community policing

In 2013, 97% of academies provided training in this area, up from the 92% in 2006. Recruits were required to complete an average of more than 40 hours of this training. Additionally, a majority of recruits were trained on how to identify community problems (77%), the history of community-oriented policing (75%), interacting with youth (62%), using problem-solving models (61%), determining the environmental causes of crime (57%), and prioritizing crime and disorder problems (51%). More than 9 in 10 training programs addressed social issues, such as domestic violence (an average of 14 hours per recruit) and mental illness (10 hours).

The full report (*State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013*, NCJ 249784), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at bjs.ojp.gov.

