



Fact Sheet: Improving Law Enforcement Training in California

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The Little Hoover Commission released three publications in 2021 examining law enforcement training in California. Assessing and improving training is an essential step toward meaningful law enforcement reform, and the Commission urges California to take on this crucial work.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING: IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS FOR OFFICERS AND COMMUNITIES

California spends millions of dollars on law enforcement training each year, yet there is very little evidence to demonstrate which types of training actually achieve intended goals and positively impact officer behavior in the field—and which do not. We [recommend](#) California implement the following:

- Incorporate academic research into training to assess how well it is working in the field.
- Compare and evaluate the state's basic training academies to determine best practices.
- Right-size entry-level officer training to ensure relevancy and promote knowledge retention.
- Develop robust ongoing education to bolster learning throughout officers' careers.
- Create a more representative Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) by incorporating a variety of civilian voices, while maintaining a majority of law enforcement members.

ISSUE BRIEF: COMPARING LAW ENFORCEMENT BASIC TRAINING ACADEMIES

Basic training academies are administered differently across the nation and within California. Through a nationwide comparison and a California-specific analysis, the Commission [provides](#) critical context into how these academies are administered throughout the state:

- California ranks 41st in the nation for the most training academies on a per capita basis.
- Approximately two-thirds of the state's academies are administered by academic institutions.
- Half of students attending California's academies were trained by just eight academies.
- Over half of programs require 900-999 hours of training, far exceeding minimum requirements.

ISSUE BRIEF: CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT SURVEY

The Commission [anonymously surveyed](#) active-duty peace officers in California to learn more about the training they receive. Over 300 officers responded, and their answers provide critical insight into the strengths and shortcomings of police training in California:

- Over 80 percent of officers said training in California is better than training in other states.
- Officers overwhelmingly agree that all forms of training—basic, field, in-service—are valuable.
- More than half said training is lacking for mental health, de-escalation, use of force, and more.
- Nearly 70 percent said greater consistency is needed across departments and academies.

This research can help California strategically improve its approach to training for its nearly 700 law enforcement agencies and more than 87,000 full-time sworn and reserve peace officers.

SUPPORTED LEGISLATION

- [AB 2429 \(Quirk\), 2022](#): Among other things, would have required POST to partner with academic researchers to assess existing law enforcement officer training.

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