

Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission

Increasing Training Capacity: Final Report

Prepared by Precision Edge Performance LLC
WSCJTC Contract No. 2024-C101



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Executive Summary

The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) partnered with Precision Edge Performance LLC to conduct a feasibility study on increasing training capacity for local law enforcement agencies, representatives, limited law enforcement, and tribal law enforcement. The goals of this study were to:

1. Identify the demand for additional basic law enforcement academy courses to support law enforcement agencies and developing a proposal to meet any identified training needs, including basic law enforcement academy and advanced training needs;
2. Develop a plan for how to provide basic law enforcement academy training to limited law enforcement and tribal law enforcement officers, including providing additional capacity for training classes. The plan should also consider alternatives for distribution of costs for the training course; and
3. Develop a plan for providing at least two basic law enforcement training academy classes per year to candidates who are not yet employed with a law enforcement agency. The plan should, at a minimum, include the following:
 - a. A recruitment strategy that emphasizes recruitment of diverse candidates from different geographic areas of the state; diverse race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation; and candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences including nontraditional educational programs or work experience;
 - b. Pathways from training to employment with a law enforcement agency; and
 - c. Plans to address capacity for and the delivery of training.

To address these goals, data was collected and analyzed to identify and properly organize the requirements, current capabilities, and additional assets (i.e., training instructors and budgets) or components (i.e., scheduling of training classes) that must be taken into consideration when developing comprehensive, sustainable plans that allow for increased training capacity.

This Final Report details the results of the feasibility study that informs recommended courses of action for increasing training capacity. This report includes the following sections:

1. Introduction. Sets the foundation and context for the project.
2. Methodology. Details the approach and data collection methods used.
3. Analysis. Presents approach the taken.
4. Key Findings. Identifies results of data collection in the form of a thematic analysis.
5. Conclusion. Summarizes key insights and their significance.
6. Recommendations. Presents suggested courses of action (COAs).

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 2

Table of Contents..... 3

List of Tables 6

List of Figures 6

1. Introduction 7

 1.1 Purpose 7

 1.2 Context 8

 1.3 Problem Identification 8

 1.4 Objectives..... 8

 1.5 Project Milestones 9

 1.6 Project Limitations 10

2. Methodology 10

 2.1 Approach 10

3. Analysis 11

 3.1 Existing Documentation 11

 3.1.1 WSCJTC Provided Documents 11

 3.1.2 Documents from Other Sources 11

 3.2 WSCJTC Personnel Interviews..... 13

 3.3 Agency Online Survey 13

 3.4 Observation 14

4. Key Findings 15

 4.1 Agency Perspectives 15

 4.1.1 Gap from the Time New Recruits are Hired to the Time They Attend BLEA 16

 4.1.2 Consistent Communication from Agencies When Recruits are at BLEA..... 17

 4.1.3 Lack of Personnel Support at Agencies..... 18

 4.1.4 State Political Climate Impacts Law Enforcement Recruitment..... 21

 4.1.5. No Formalized Process and/or Tool for Tracking Peace Officer Vacancies 22

 4.1.6 Conflicting Views from Agencies Regarding the Common Hiring Pool..... 23

 4.2 WSCJTC Capacity..... 26

 4.2.1 Lack of Personnel to Meet Current and Future Needs..... 27

 4.2.2 Risk of Employee Burnout..... 30

- 4.2.3 Facilities Need Improvement to Support Increased Training Efforts32
- 4.2.4 Need for Process Improvement.....35
- 4.2.5 Lack of Clarity Regarding the Logistics of a Common Hiring Pool37
- 5. Conclusion40
 - 5.1 Staffing Challenges41
 - 5.2 Specialty Staffing Requirements.....41
 - 5.3 Facility Constraints41
 - 5.4 Facility Overload.....42
 - 5.5 Risk of Staff Burnout.....42
 - 5.6 Legal Challenges.....42
 - 5.7 HR Policy Adjustments42
 - 5.8 Employment Transparency43
 - 5.9 Recruit Salary Funding43
 - 5.10 Transition Plan to Agencies43
 - 5.11 BLEA Scheduling & Execution.....44
 - 5.12 Post-BLEA Engagement.....44
 - 5.13 Agency Cultural Fit44
 - 5.14 Agency Relationships45
 - 5.15 Exacerbation of Small Agency Needs.....45
- 6. Recommendations45
 - 6.1 COA 1: WSCJTC as Liaison for Agency Recruiting46
 - 6.1.1 Steps for Implementing COA 1.....47
 - 6.2 COA 2: Create Targeted Recruitment Campaigns49
 - 6.2.1 Steps for Implementing COA 2.....49
 - 6.3 COA 3: Temporary Training Surge at Regional Academies51
 - 6.3.1 Steps for Implementing COA 3.....51
 - 6.4 COA 4: Increase TAC Officer and Instructor Funding54
 - 6.4.1 Steps for Implementing COA 4.....54
- Appendix A57
 - Example Interview Protocol for WSCJTC Personnel57
 - General57
 - Structure & Processes Questions57
 - Resources Questions57

Information Exchange Questions.....57

Wellness Questions.....57

Closing Questions57

Appendix B58

List of Washington State Law Enforcement, Limited Law Enforcement, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies58

 Agencies with 10-24 Certified Peace Officers (CPO).....58

 Agencies with 25-49 Certified Peace Officers (CPO).....62

 Agencies with 50-99 Certified Peace Officers (CPO).....66

 Agencies with 100-249 Certified Peace Officers (CPO).....67

 Agencies with 250+ Certified Peace Officers (CPO).....68

Appendix C69

 Questions for Agency Online Survey.....69

 Survey Introduction69

 Demographic Questions for All Respondents69

 Questions Related to Recruiting70

 Questions Related to Human Resources.....71

 Questions Related to Training73

 WSCJTC Hiring Pool Questions for All Respondents74

 Final Questions for All Respondents.....74

List of Tables

Table 4-1. Summary of Key Findings Categories and Associate Theme Statements.	15
Table 4-2. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding BLEA wait times.....	17
Table 4-3. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding additional support.....	20
Table 4-4. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding staffing challenges.	20
Table 4-5. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding political climate.....	21
Table 4-6. Quotes from survey respondents related to a common hiring pool.	24
Table 4-7. Estimated breakdown of staffing costs to support a common hiring pool.....	29
Table 4-8. Sample of direct quotes related to staffing.....	29
Table 4-9. Sample of direct quotes related to burnout.	32
Table 4-10. Sample of direct quotes related to facilities.	34
Table 4-11. Sample of direct quotes related to process improvement.	36
Table 4-12. Sample of direct quotes related to common hiring pool logistics.....	39
Table 5-1. Summary of issues related to implementing a common hiring pool.	40

List of Figures

Figure 3-1. Job functions of respondents to agency online survey.	14
Figure 4-1. Average wait time for new recruits to attend BLEA.....	16
Figure 4-2. Frequency of agency communication with recruit and TAC Officers during BLEA. ...	18
Figure 4-3. Survey respondents reporting benefit from additional support.....	19
Figure 4-4. Survey respondents reporting a formalized tool and/or process for tracking vacancies.	23
Figure 4-5. Survey respondents reporting interest in a common hiring pool.	24

1. Introduction

The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission tasked Precision Edge Performance LLC to conduct a feasibility analysis from September 2023 to September 2024 to identify, analyze, and properly organize an overview and comparison of the requirements, current capabilities, and additional assets (i.e., training instructors and budgets) or components (i.e., scheduling of training classes) that must be taken into consideration when developing comprehensive, sustainable plans that allow for increased training capacity.

The data derived from this analysis can be used to help WSCJTC and the Legislature make effective decisions related to training capacity solutions and/or management interventions directed at increasing training capacity and decreasing the number of law enforcement vacancies within the state of Washington.

1.1 Purpose

This project seeks to assist WSCJTC in providing recommendations to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature for:

1. Identifying the demand for additional basic law enforcement academy courses to support law enforcement agencies and developing a proposal to meet any identified training needs, including basic law enforcement academy and advanced training needs.
2. Developing a plan for how to provide basic law enforcement academy training to limited law enforcement and tribal law enforcement officers, including providing additional capacity for training classes. The plan should also consider alternatives for distribution of costs for the training course; and
3. Developing a plan for providing at least two basic law enforcement training academy classes per year to candidates who are not yet employed with a law enforcement agency. The plan should, at a minimum, include the following:
 - a. A recruitment strategy that emphasizes recruitment of diverse candidates from different geographic areas of the state; diverse race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation; and candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences including nontraditional educational programs or work experience.
 - b. Pathways from training to employment with a law enforcement agency; and
 - c. Plans to address capacity for and delivery of training.

Based on current need, it was determined by WSCJTC that this effort would primarily focus on whether establishing a current hiring pool is feasible, and what resources would be required to move forward with plans to increase training capacity given the additional recruits added by establishing a common hiring pool. It was also determined that identifying advanced training needs was not applicable to this effort considering advanced training utilizes separate resources than Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) training. Thus, investigative efforts were focused

on resources required for conducting BLEA rather than advanced training.

1.2 Context

The need for law enforcement officers to be properly trained, placed within an agency, and supported as their career progresses, is a critical facet of public safety and community engagement. Job-specific training, agency human resource requirements, and training logistics limitations have a wide and nuanced scope, which can make developing sustainable, cost-effective law enforcement training programs challenging. With the additional requirements related to increasing diversity in hiring practices, accommodating budget changes, and fulfilling agency placement requirements, the equation for developing, implementing, and sustaining effective, high-quality training becomes even more complex! Some factors are obvious (i.e., training instructor personnel requirements, facility capacity limits, etc.), while others are not as clearly identifiable (i.e., the impact of employee union rights, employee transition to assigned agency, etc.).

If these factors are not considered when developing plans for training programs, the second and third-order effects can cause unwanted, costly problems in the future. For example, increasing training capacity to rapidly fill agency vacancies may provide an influx of more officers in the short term, but may cause a significant imbalance related to capacity for keeping up with annual training recertification requirements, budgets for technology and equipment needed for conducting training, or budgets for employee benefits and retirement pensions. To minimize unwanted negative complications in the future, a systems-based approach was used to identify law enforcement agency training needs with the goal of developing a recruiting strategy, designing efficient pathways from training to employment, increasing training capacity, and improving efficiency of training delivery.

1.3 Problem Identification

Primary problem areas were identified to establish the focus of the analysis. This step was critical for defining the specific objectives, strategy, and methodology for this project. The problem areas were noted, refined, and approved in collaboration with WSCJTC and serve as the foundation for this report. The primary problem areas are as follows:

1. There are many unfilled positions/vacancies at law enforcement agencies throughout the state.
2. There is a long waitlist for BLEA, limiting the number of certified Officers available to fill vacancies throughout the state.

1.4 Objectives

A review of the identified problem areas, RFP No. 2023 - Plan to Train, collaboration with WSCJTC representatives, and independent research were used to determine the objectives for this project. Identification of the current and desired state, plus current and future needs of agency recruitment, hiring, and training provided information that guided the development of

these objectives.

The following objectives were developed for this project:

- Determine if the current BLEA, facilities, equipment, and other supporting resources are sufficient to train the current number of BLEA enrollees that require certification and provide additional advanced training throughout their career.
- Assess the impact of establishing a common hiring pool and adding two additional BLEA courses per year on WSCJTC's current infrastructure, including the additional resources required for recruiting and hiring BLEA attendees that are not sponsored by state law enforcement agencies.
- Determine how the current structures, processes, resources, and other considerations associated with BLEA training can be optimized for increasing training capacity if a common hiring pool were to be established.

1.5 Project Milestones

There are four distinct phases of this analysis:

1. Project kickoff and identification of stakeholders.
2. Analysis of existing programs and development of data collection tools.
3. Collect and analyze data.
4. Development of training plans and final report.

During the first phase, an initial project kickoff meeting was conducted to determine the scope of the project and a plan was created for developing associated data collection tools. This project took a systems-based approach, allowing all aspects of the organization and human performance needs to be considered. During the second phase, WSCJTC's current programs were reviewed and analyzed from a training logistics and human resources (HR) perspective.

The third phase of this project focused on data collection and analysis. Interviews were conducted with WSCJTC personnel to better understand the wide-spread impact of increasing training capacity at the organizational and administrative level. Additionally, an online, agency-wide survey was distributed to law enforcement agencies throughout the state to gain a better understanding of the current state of recruiting, human resources, and training needs of agencies. Observation of BLEA training was also conducted to better understand the utilization of current resources and what the impact of increasing training capacity would be on the current state.

During the fourth phase, key findings from the analysis and recommended Courses of Action (COAs) were compiled into a final report. Non-training factors that potentially influence the effectiveness of the recruiting, hiring, and training process (i.e., resources and staffing, communication between WSCJTC and receiving agencies, contracts, training equipment, etc.) were included to better identify impediments to increasing training capacity.

1.6 Project Limitations

There is one notable limitation to be highlighted when interpreting the results of this study.

This limitation is that only 93 individuals responded to the agency-wide online survey sent out to Washington State law enforcement, limited law enforcement, and tribal law enforcement agencies. Despite multiple attempts to reach agency Chiefs and Sheriffs through direct email correspondence, by telephone, and through Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) leadership, there was still a very low number of individuals who participated in the agency-wide survey. This is a significant limitation considering that there are 245 agencies within the state, so the data collected for this feasibility study may not be an accurate representation of agency wants and needs. It is highly recommended that additional communication with agencies who did not choose to participate in this effort to better understand what their recruiting, hiring, and training needs are before executing plans for increasing training capacity and establishing a WSCJTC common hiring pool.

2. Methodology

A systems-based approach was used to examine the complex relationships and interdependencies within the current BLEA training system; the short-term and long-term needs of the WSCJTC, statewide agencies, individual officers; and any underlying assumptions that need to be considered while developing the data-driven plans for increasing training capacity. This systems-based approach allowed all aspects of both WSCJTC organizational needs and agency needs and performance requirements to be taken into consideration, to the greatest extent possible.

2.1 Approach

As part of the systems-based analysis, a standardized Human Performance Improvement (HPI) model was used to analyze six distinct and critical areas that would be impacted by establishing a common hiring pool and increasing training capacity:

- Structure and processes
- Resources
- Information exchange
- Knowledge and skills
- Motivation
- Wellness

Collecting and analyzing data in these specific categories ensured a thorough understanding of the factors impacting current BLEA training, as well as the needs and performance requirements for agencies throughout the state. Utilization of this model allowed for critical information to be identified, analyzed, and properly organized to give decision makers an overview and comparison of the of requirements, current capabilities, and what additional assets (i.e., training instructors

and budgets) or components (i.e., scheduling of training classes) must be taken into consideration when developing comprehensive, sustainable training plans.

3. Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis methodology to synthesize data into common themes to provide a comprehensive picture of the costs, benefits, and implications of increasing training capacity. This section provides details of the data components that were analyzed.

3.1 Existing Documentation

Analysis of existing documentation provided important insights into organizational strategic planning and values, current procedures and processes, and additional context related to factors that impact recruitment, hiring, and training methods and strategies.

3.1.1 WSCJTC Provided Documents

The following WSCJTC provided documents were identified, collected, and reviewed:

1. WSCJTC Strategic Plan 2023-2025
2. WSCJTC One-Pager Overview
3. WSCJTC Informal Plan for Recruitment
4. WSCJTC compiled list of Chiefs and Sheriffs in Washington State
5. A Report on the Job Task Analysis Study of Entry Level Law Enforcement Officers in the state of Washington, prepared for WSCJTC by Systems Design Group
6. Documentation related to Job Task Analysis methodology (i.e., email invitation to participate, participants list, etc.)
7. BLEA registration records (January to September 2023)
8. BLEA training schedule
9. FY 2024 Basic Training Academy Cost-Share
10. WSCJTC Capital and Functional Needs Study, prepared by Washington Department of Enterprise Services, Engineering, and Architectural Services Program
11. Feasibility Study—BLEA at USAF/Spokane CO SO Training Facility in Medical Lake, WA, and related contract agreements
12. Spokane BLEA Instructor Survey Results
13. WSCJTC New Hire and Separation Data (January 2019 to present)
14. Starling Whitehead Facility Master Planning Document

3.1.2 Documents from Other Sources

Documents from outside agencies and organizations help to provide additional contextual information, historical perspective, and best practices that can be used to inform plans to increase training capacity within WSCJTC. There are several documents from outside sources that were reviewed. These documents included:

- Revised Code of Washington (RCW)
 - Chapter 43.10. Criminal Justice Training Commission - Education and Training Standard Boards
 - RCW 43.101.080. Commission powers and duties - Rules and Regulations.
 - RCW 43.101.157. Tribal police officer certification.
 - RCW 43.101.200. Law enforcement personnel - Basic law enforcement training required - Commission to provide.
 - RCW 43.101.220. Training for corrections personnel.
- Washington Administrative Code (WAC)
 - WAC Chapter 139-05
 - WAC 139-05-200. Requirement of basic law enforcement training for officers.
 - WAC 139-05-210. Process for equivalency.
 - WAC 139-05-220. Backgrounding requirement for admission in the basic law enforcement academies.
 - WAC 139-05-230. Physical requirements for admission to the basic law enforcement academy.
 - WAC 139-05-240. Completion requirements of basic law enforcement academies.
 - WAC 139-05-242. Readmission to the basic law enforcement academy.
 - WAC 139-05-250. Basic law enforcement curriculum.
 - WAC 139-05-300. Requirement for in-service training.
 - WAC 139-05-920. Requirement of training for agriculture officers.
 - WAC 139-05-925. Requirement of training for railroad police officers.
 - WAC Chapter 139-07
 - WAC 139-07-010. Conditional offers of employment.
 - WAC 139-07-020. Background information.
 - WAC 139-07-030. Psychological examination.
 - WAC 139-07-040. Polygraph examination or other truth verification assessment.
 - WAC Chapter 139-10
 - WAC 139-10-210. Requirement of basic corrections training for correctional personnel.
 - WAC 139-10-220. Completion requirements for corrections officers.
- Information on the federal Police Corps initiative
 - Police Corps: Some Problems Solved, But Most Positions Remain Unfilled, prepared by the United States General Accounting Office
 - The Police Corps: A Report to the President, the Attorney General, and the Congress, prepared by the United States Department of Justice

3.2 WSCJTC Personnel Interviews

Interviews were an important data collection tool for this project because they provided valuable, detailed information related to optimal, actual, causes, and solutions. Interviews also allowed the interviewer to also ask follow-up questions to gain a deeper understanding of the interviewee's perspective and the impact a common hiring pool and increased training capacity would have on them.

To better understand the potential impact of establishing a common hiring pool and increasing training capacity, the perspectives of a wide variety of personnel sources (e.g., trainees, supervisors, subject matter experts, etc.) should be considered. Training instructors, training managers, support staff, and administrative leadership within WSCJTC whose job role and function are directly or indirectly impacted by increased training capacity, were contacted and interviewed to determine the implications of increased training capacity at an administrative and supervisory level. Twenty-three individuals were identified and contacted for interviews. Fourteen of those individuals responded and were interviewed.

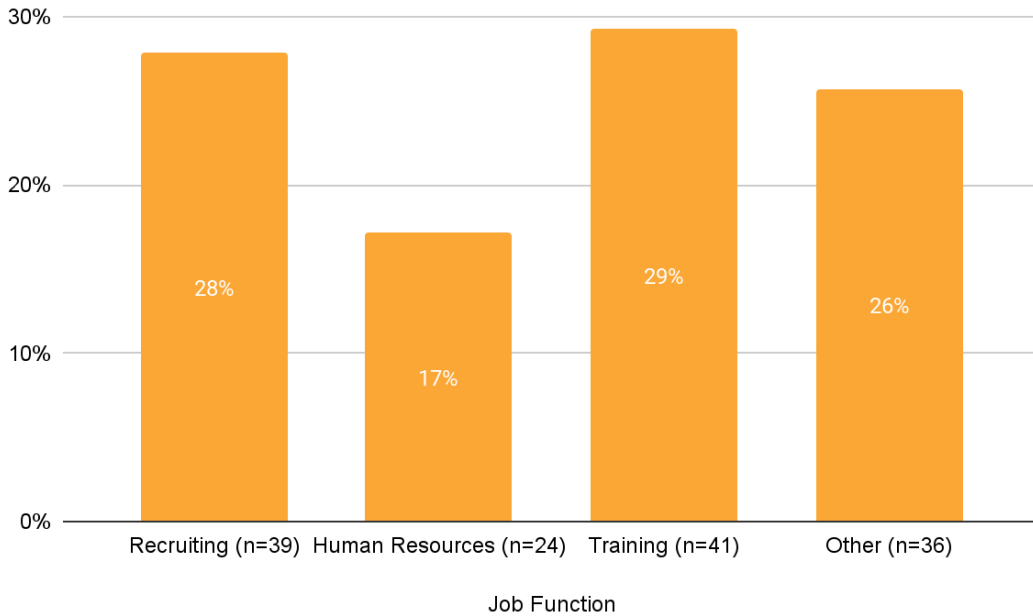
To standardize data collection methods, an interview protocol was created. This interview protocol included an introduction to ensure all interviewees received the same explanation regarding the scope of the project. Following the introduction, interview questions were grouped into the six distinct analysis areas that were being evaluated (Structure and Processes; Resources; Information Exchange; Knowledge and Skills; Motivation; and Wellness). Although some general questions were asked to each interviewee (i.e., What resources do you need to perform your job duties?), other questions were customized based on their role and area of expertise (i.e., What are the primary challenges you face when it comes to managing the facilities and infrastructure within WSCJTC?). These questions were provided to participants 24 hours ahead of their scheduled interview. For an example of the interview protocol, see Appendix A. All interviewees were asked to provide consent to being recorded so interviews could be transcribed to allow for additional review and analysis following the interview.

3.3 Agency Online Survey

Due to the large number of law enforcement agencies within the state, an online survey was developed to increase the amount of data that was able to be collected from these agencies. The survey was distributed via email directly to Police Chiefs and Sheriffs throughout Washington State, with the request that they forward the survey to anyone in their organization who had a job role/function related to recruiting, human resources, or training. Appendix B provides a list of all the Washington State Law Enforcement, Limited Law Enforcement, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies that were contacted, as well as the number of Certified Peace Officers (CPOs) in each agency. Additionally, Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) leadership was contacted, and it was requested the survey be sent out via WASPC distribution channels as well to ensure agency stakeholders had ample opportunity to participate. A total of 92 participants responded to the survey. Job functions of the survey respondents are shown below in Figure 3-1. Please note that the numbers in the figure below exceed the number of survey respondents as respondents had the ability to select multiple job

functions, as applicable to their role.

Figure 3-1. Job functions of respondents to agency online survey.



The survey included general demographic questions (i.e., How long have you worked in your current role?) and questions specific to recruiting, human resources or training (i.e., Do you have a formalized process for determining vacancies within your agency?). To increase relevance for survey participants and decrease completion time of the survey, a “display logic” function was used to ensure each target population (recruiting, human resources, training) was presented with survey questions that were most relevant to them. Survey questions are located in Appendix C.

3.4 Observation

Targeted observation of BLEA training provided an opportunity for real-time data to be collected about training facility usage, the learning environment, and the utilization of resources. Direct observation of training was primarily conducted at the Spokane Regional training facility due to ease of access and local proximity. A wide variety of training methodologies were observed in a variety of locations around the training facility, including classroom instruction, practical application, and mock testing. In addition to observation at the Spokane Regional facility, site visits to the Burien main training facility and Vancouver Regional facility provided additional insight into facility setup, usage, and utilization of resources. Minimal training was observed in both of these locations due to the primary goal of these site visits being facility familiarization tours.

4. Key Findings

This section presents the synthesized key findings of the analysis of data collected for this feasibility study. These key findings are organized into two categories:

1. Agency Perspectives
2. WSCJTC Capacity

The key findings within each category are structured around theme statements, supported by a variety of data sources including existing documentation, interviews, survey responses, and observations. Table 4-1 provides a summary of the two categories and their associated theme statements.

Table 4-1. Summary of Key Findings Categories and Associate Theme Statements.

Agency Perspectives	
Theme 1	There is a gap from the time new recruits are hired to the time they attend BLEA.
Theme 2	There is consistent communication from agencies when recruits are at BLEA.
Theme 3	There is a lack of personnel support at agencies.
Theme 4	There are significant recruiting challenges.
Theme 5	State political climate impacts law enforcement recruitment.
Theme 6	There is no formalized process and/or tool for tracking peace officer vacancies.
Theme 7	There are conflicting views from agencies regarding a common hiring pool.
WSCJTC Capacity	
Theme 8	There is a lack of personnel to meet current and future needs.
Theme 9	There is a risk of employee burnout.
Theme 10	Facilities need improvement to support increased training efforts.
Theme 11	There is a need for process improvement.
Theme 12	There is a lack of clarity regarding the logistics of a common hiring pool.

4.1 Agency Perspectives

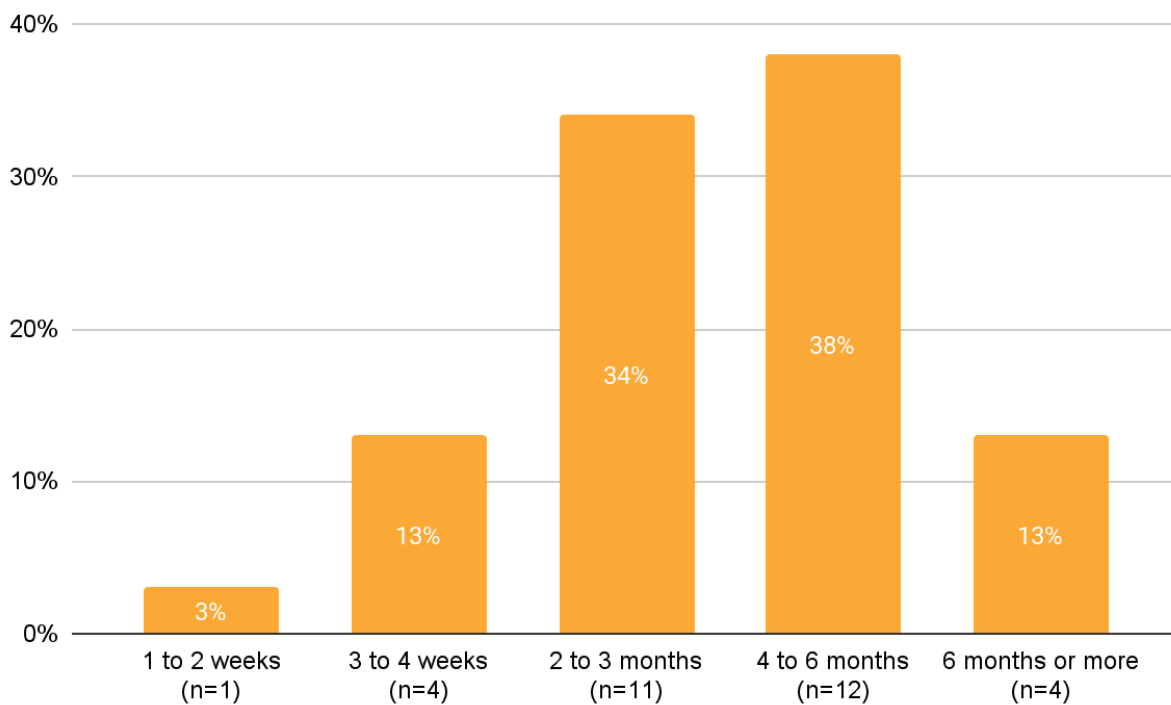
Agency perspectives are compiled from survey data and comments to illustrate the facts and sentiments that emerged as themes. While these responses are from 93 individuals (some from the same agencies) and not representative of all 275 agencies, it is important to note that these

are individuals who spoke up and provided insight and information that can effectively guide decisions, action plans, and necessary collaboration efforts.

4.1.1 Gap from the Time New Recruits are Hired to the Time They Attend BLEA

Survey data reveals a noteworthy lag between the hiring of recruits by their respective agencies and their enrollment in BLEA training. Illustrated in Figure 4-1, more than a third of respondents reported an average wait period of 4 to 6-months (38 percent), followed closely by 34 percent indicating a wait of 2 to 3-months. Moreover, 13 percent reported a wait of 6 months or longer, with an additional 13 percent noting a wait of 3 to 4 weeks. Conversely, only 3 percent of respondents cited a wait of 1 to 2-weeks. Overall, 83 percent of participating agencies concur that the initiation of BLEA training requires a minimum of 2-months, while 16 percent suggest that new recruits commence training within a few weeks.

Figure 4-1. Average wait time for new recruits to attend BLEA.



Additionally, various agencies stated that one of their most significant onboarding challenges is the delay recruits face in getting a BLEA spot. As referenced in Table 4-2, multiple law enforcement agencies stated the time ranges from 4 to 6-months. This delay in training leads to staffing shortages and creates a deficit in providing essential training, such as firearms and arrest tactics instruction, which are required to meet state standards. Additionally, agencies expressed a need to decrease the time it takes to enroll recruits in academy classes, and suggested solutions such as adding more classes and implementing a pre-academy program to prevent recruits from

waiting idle for extended periods. Survey respondents also highlighted the importance of allowing agencies to apply for academy spots at the time of recruit hiring, rather than waiting until the official start date, to streamline the onboarding process.

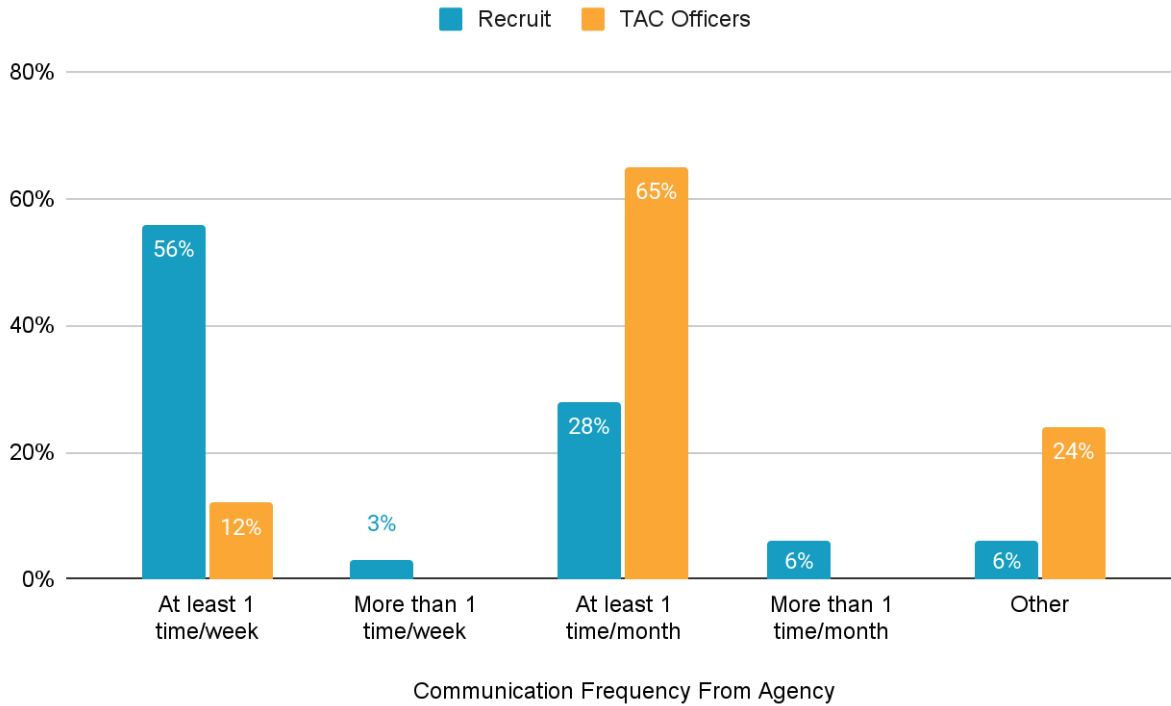
Table 4-2. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding BLEA wait times.

Source	Quote
Agency with 50 – 99 CPOs	<p>“The wait period between hire date and the start of BLEA has created a significant lag in staffing. The lack of firearms and integrated arrest tactics instructor training courses has created a deficit in-house for providing both training for new officers as well as ensuring officers meet WAC standards.</p> <p>WAC 139-05-300.1 (c) "The commission will publish guidelines for approved in-service training." I'm not clear where the guidelines are located.”</p>
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	<p>The amount of time it takes to get a recruit into an academy class [is a significant challenge my agency faces when it comes to onboarding new recruits].”</p>
Agency with 10 – 24 CPOs	<p>“The time gap between date of hire and BLEA start date [is a significant challenge my agency faces when it comes to onboarding new recruits].”</p>
Agency with 50 – 99 CPOs	<p>“There is a wait time of around 6-months to get someone into an academy class.”</p>
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	<p>“Recruits are waiting 4+ months for an academy class.”</p>
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	<p>“Decrease the amount of time it takes to get a recruit into an academy class. Add more classes. Right now, that is our biggest issue. We've had to develop a pre-academy program, which has required additional work, staffing, and supervision, so recruits aren't sitting around for months doing nothing before they can get into an academy class. Also, allow agencies to apply for an academy spot at the time the recruit signs the hire letter, and not have to wait until their official start date.”</p>

4.1.2 Consistent Communication from Agencies When Recruits are at BLEA

Although there are considerable delays in commencing BLEA, survey findings suggest that agencies maintain effective communication with recruits once they are enrolled. All participating agencies reported regular contact with their recruits during BLEA, with a majority (56 percent) indicating communication occurs at least once a week, and nearly a third (28 percent) reporting contact monthly (see Figure 4-2). Furthermore, 64 percent of agencies affirmed communication with Teacher, Administrator, Counselor (TAC) officers while their recruits are at BLEA, with the majority (63 percent) engaging in monthly exchanges.

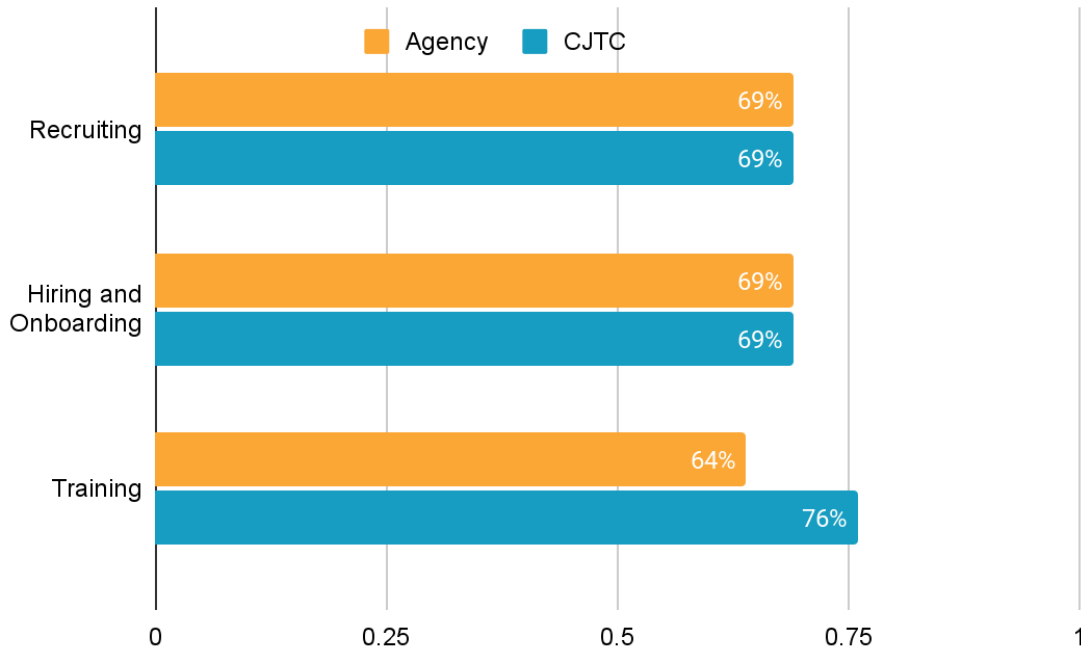
Figure 4-2. Frequency of agency communication with recruit and TAC Officers during BLEA.



4.1.3 Lack of Personnel Support at Agencies

The survey revealed a strong desire for increased personnel support among agencies. Figure 4-3 illustrates the percentage of respondents who agreed, "Yes, the agency would benefit from additional support." Notably, 69 percent of participants involved in recruiting, hiring, and onboarding indicated they would benefit from both agency and WSCJTC support. Similarly, respondents whose roles focus on training reported that 64 percent would benefit from agency support, while 69 percent would benefit from WSCJTC support.

Figure 4-3. Survey respondents reporting benefit from additional support.



A notable majority of survey respondents (71 percent) reported that no positions are specifically allocated for recruiting, with an additional 24 percent of agencies indicating they have only one to two positions allocated for this purpose. Moreover, 62 percent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current allocation, citing insufficiency. This sentiment was echoed in 10 qualitative comments within the survey, where recommendations for increased staffing were highlighted.

Table 4-3 provides examples of the type of recruiting support agencies stated they'd like to have both from their own agencies and WSCJTC.

Table 4-3. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding additional support.

Type of support	Preferred provider:	
	Agency	WSCJTC
County-commissioned personnel/full recruitment staff	X	
Staff to physically attend recruiting events	X	
Social media/videos/marketing	X	
Organizing recruitment events around the state.		X
Maintain a list of Post BLEA graduates who do not pass their initial FTO training and who are looking for another agency to work with.		X
Funding, training, and recruiting strategies (provide professional training for recruiters to learn best practices and programs on how to get our message out nationwide)		X

Along with recruiting support, survey results showed that agencies would benefit from increased hiring and onboarding support. This was supported by both quantitative and qualitative data, with 69 percent of responding agencies indicating they would benefit from additional support. One survey respondent stated it would be beneficial if WSCJTC could add more BLEA courses or offer pre-academy materials and instruction for recruits to prepare for their time in the academy. This individual stated that offering this type of support would "...potentially put [recruits] ahead of the game when it comes to actual classroom instruction, allowing instructors to go even further with their instruction because the recruits have already read/studied the basic materials." Table 4-4 details quotes highlighting staffing shortages as one of the primary hurdles encountered by agencies during the onboarding and hiring processes.

Table 4-4. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding staffing challenges.

Source	Quote
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	"Manpower to actually train them. Often they are having to jump right in due to low manning at the shift level."
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	"Administrative manpower to give attention to each new hire."
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	"More manpower. A larger workforce improves backup daily and opportunity internally to develop and promote."
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	"Right now it's hard to keep FTO's interested in doing the job and even harder to get new officers trained as FTO. This is due to low manpower and cost of training both in time and travel/training costs. As always money, time, and manpower."

4.1.4 State Political Climate Impacts Law Enforcement Recruitment

In Washington State, police reform efforts have been at the forefront of public discourse, which calls for increased accountability by law enforcement officers and agencies. These efforts often intersect with broader discussions about racial justice and equity, with many advocating for reforms aimed at addressing systemic biases within law enforcement agencies. Concurrently, community policing initiatives have gained momentum, emphasizing proactive engagement between police departments and local communities to build trust and address the underlying social issues contributing to crime.

However, political polarization has influenced debates surrounding law enforcement, with differing ideologies shaping perceptions of the role and responsibilities of police. This polarization has surrounded police funding, where divergent viewpoints clash over the appropriate allocation of resources between law enforcement and social services. While some advocate for increasing funding to support law enforcement agencies, others argue for reallocating funds towards community-based alternatives and social programs aimed at addressing the root causes of crime.

Although the survey did not directly probe the political climate, a recurring theme emerged regarding its influence on recruitment in Washington State. Notably, recruiters spontaneously commented on this issue, with many suggesting the need to reshape the perception of law enforcement within the state. Approximately ten recruiters cited the state's political climate, emphasizing its adverse impact on recruitment efforts. Moreover, they linked lower salaries to this climate, identifying it as another deterrent for potential recruits. Highlighted in Table 4-5, agency recruiters stressed the pivotal role of legislators in altering the public perception of policing and enacting policies that empower agencies to fulfill their duties effectively, including securing necessary funding for community protection and service.

Table 4-5. Quotes law enforcement agencies regarding political climate.

Source	Quote
County Agency	“Address the political climate and stand up and support police and the criminal justice system.”
Tribal Agency	“Public figures both private and political have so damaged the perception of the profession of Policing that we now are in crisis and finding qualified candidates that want to police is difficult. We have not and will not reduce standards to fill seats.”
City Agency	“Most LE officers have zero faith in Washington state’s political climate. One does not need to be overly involved to see what the most influential parts of Olympia think about law enforcement. They do not right openly display their disdain for law enforcement but their continued legislation is all one needs to know.”
County Agency	“They need to work with legislators and change the image of policing in our state. That comes from policy/law allowing us to do our jobs and funding us, so we are not last in the nation in staffing. If it looked like Washington cared about law and order and protecting law abiding citizens... the rest can be handled at a local level!”

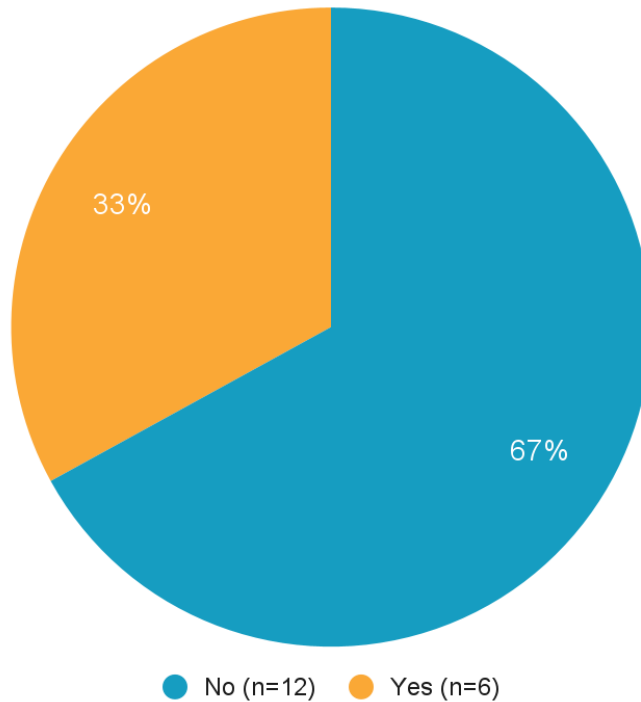
City Agency	“The problem does not lie with any one entity. The democrats anti police political climate has diminished the capacity to recruit people for a career that requires a calling. We have people applying that want a job, this career is not suited for that mindset.” – in a nutshell: it’s not a problem CJTC can fix, it’s a political climate problem...”
County Agency	“The political climate in this state towards law enforcement. Nearly the lowest pay in the county, lowest staffed agency in the state, lowest funded agency.”

These quotes highlight concerns within law enforcement about the negative impact of Washington State's political climate. For instance, criticism from influential figures damages public perception, making recruitment difficult without compromising standards. Legislative actions perceived as anti-law enforcement contribute to officer disillusionment, hindering recruitment efforts. Collaborative efforts are deemed necessary to reshape policing's image through policy changes and adequate funding, addressing systemic issues like low pay and staffing. The prevailing political environment dissuades individuals from seeking employment in law enforcement careers, exacerbating recruitment challenges. Overall, these challenges reflect a broader issue of strained resources and public trust, requiring proactive collaboration to enact meaningful reforms.

4.1.5. No Formalized Process and/or Tool for Tracking Peace Officer Vacancies

Most respondents (67 percent) confirmed that their agencies lack a formal process or tool for tracking vacancies (see Figure 4-4). Among the 33 percent of agencies equipped with a tracking tool, respondents detailed various methods utilized for vacancy tracking, such as PeopleSoft, weekly updates to a roster of filled and vacant positions, Civil Service/HR systems, and in-house data tracking.

Figure 4-4. Survey respondents reporting a formalized tool and/or process for tracking vacancies.



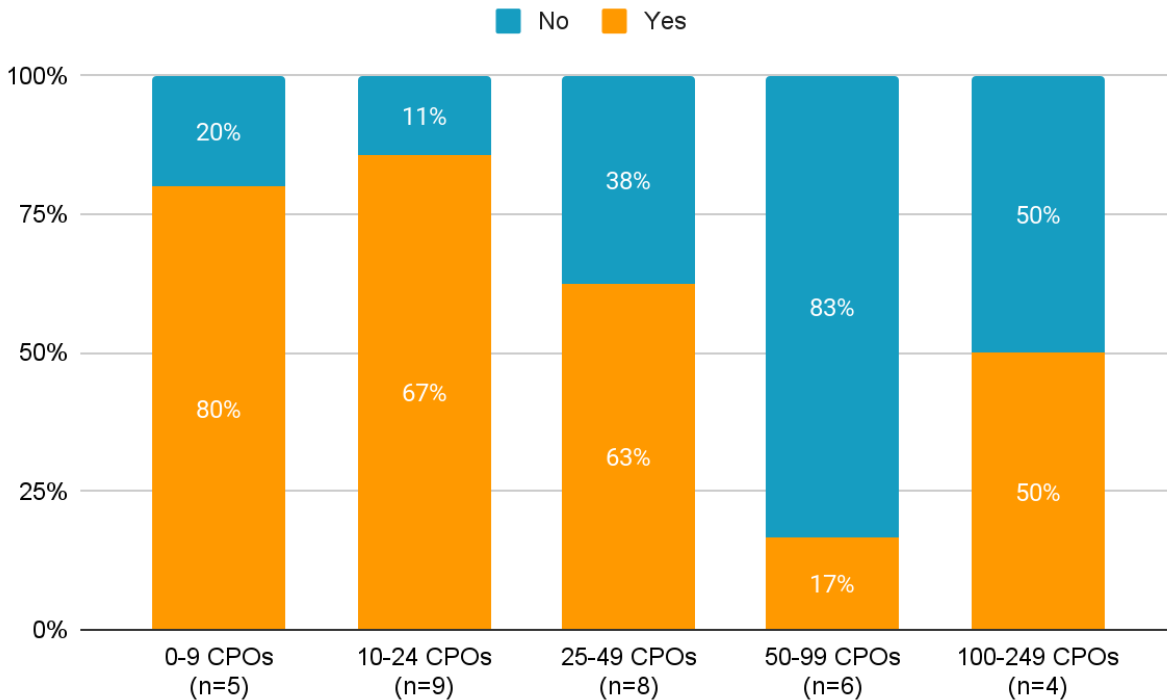
One of the major issues resulting from the lack of formal training tools is that there is an inability to forecast and plan hiring, training, and other related activities proactively. This lack of centralized data impedes WSCJTC's ability to accurately assess vacancies and plan future recruitment, hiring, and training initiatives, and suggests the necessity for a standardized system to quantify the impact of vacancies, considering factors like agency size and community needs. Additionally, there's a call for a broader understanding of trends over time and their correlation with community needs to ensure equitable allocation of resources and prioritize areas requiring immediate attention.

4.1.6 Conflicting Views from Agencies Regarding the Common Hiring Pool

At the end of the survey, all respondents, regardless of job function, were asked whether their agency would hire recruits from the common hiring pool. Overall, 48 percent of respondents indicated they would hire from the BLEA common hiring pool, while 52 percent indicated they would not. However, it's crucial to note that while over 300 agencies were approached, only 93 individuals responded to the survey, potentially leading to some agencies being represented multiple times within the aggregate percentages. Consequently, the analysis team recommends that a formal poll be conducted to include all agencies before deciding on the establishment of a common hiring pool and the implementation of the two additional BLEA classes annually for candidates hired under this common hiring pool, ensuring a more comprehensive and data-driven decision-making process.

Upon deeper examination, findings revealed that smaller agencies exhibited a greater interest in the common hiring pool in comparison to their larger counterparts, as illustrated in Figure 4-5. Additional data collection unveiled that this inclination likely stems from smaller agencies facing greater constraints in terms of resources and funding when compared to larger agencies.

Figure 4-5. Survey respondents reporting interest in a common hiring pool.



Agencies of various sizes expressed a strong preference for maintaining local control over law enforcement recruitment. Comments by agencies emphasize the unique needs and expectations of the community served, arguing against a centralized approach led by WSCJTC. Overall, the sentiment is that local agencies are best positioned to select candidates who align with their specific community culture and demands. Additionally, there's concern that recruiting from outside the local area may lead to higher turnover rates due to a lack of ties to the community. Overall, the message advocates for preserving agency autonomy in recruitment decisions to ensure candidates fit the geographical, cultural, and internal dynamics of the agency and community (see Table 4-6).

Table 4-6. Quotes from survey respondents related to a common hiring pool.

Source	Quote
Agency with 50 – 99 CPOs	It is a bad idea. I don't think the state (CJTC) controlling police selection is a good idea. I believe the state (elected officials) have already spoken poorly of law enforcement enough, and CJTC would be pushed by their political ideology in a

	direction many may not support. Let agencies hire those they want to represent their agency in their communities. Our community are all different, let those in the community recruit, hire and train the people they want.
Agency with 10 – 24 CPOs	“Because the current training at the state academy is not preparing LE candidates.”
Agency with 25-49 CPOs	“Candidates are chosen based on department needs and fit in our community. Law Enforcement agencies, based on community expectations, have different values. While the general "job" is similar, how you engage the community bases on those expectations is different.”
Agency with 50 – 99 CPOs	“I believe each agency has their own community and knows what is important to their particular community.”
Agency with 50 – 99 CPOs	“Without having taken the time to do the background investigation, get to know the subject, understand history, limitations and training style/needs we would have a hard time understanding who we were employing. We can recruit and hire the officers. It is our expectation that CJTC stays in their lane and trains them accordingly. Unfortunately, we have felt a significant degradation in that service in the last several years, which would also lend to a lack of trust for recruiting and hiring. Spend the time, energy and efforts on quality training please.”
Agency with 100 – 249 CPOs	“WSCJTC is perfectly positioned to screen applicants for positions in conventional law enforcement agencies. Our specialty brand of law enforcement demands a different approach that cannot be replicated by WSCJTC. Our applicant pools are oriented toward natural resources enforcement and compliance. This necessitates a focused process that screens applicants for specialized careers that have a biological dimension.”
Agency with 100 – 249 CPOs	“The quality of student officers that are being turned out of the academy currently is sub par to what the department would expect from our officers. Not to mention that there are ways that the city does things that are specific to the city.”
Agency with 0 – 9 CPOs	“Getting the right fit for our agency is more intricate than being an acceptable candidate for any other police agency.”
Agency with 25-49 CPOs	“We want to vet individuals to fit into our geography, community, and internal culture. Where we are located is not for everyone. We cannot take the time to train people who do not fit in or want to stay with our agency long-term. This may work better for the King County area but not us.”
Agency with 10 – 24 CPOs	“CJTC appears to have a difficult time recruiting and retaining instructors, updating curriculum, and providing officers with appropriate training. It will take some time (think procedural justice) for me to trust that CJTC has done as thorough of a job processing potential candidates as our agency does.”
Agency with 25 – 49 CPOs	“The biggest issue is culture and fit. We are looking for different attributes then another agency might be. It would be helpful if there was a selection process for the candidates to help the candidate and agency find good matches. Think of something like eharmony.”
Agency with 50 – 99 CPOs	“We want to be the first ones that talk to the recruit and determine based on test results if they are a good fit for Skagit County. Just because a new recruit is a good fit at another agency perhaps will not be for our culture.”

The quotes above underscore the crucial importance of community-specific factors in candidate selection, highlighting five distinct sub-themes within this realm:

1. Preferential Recruitment Pool: There is openness to expanding the applicant pool to enhance recruitment opportunities. However, it highlights that any adjustments to civil service rules would be necessary to accommodate this expansion. The reasoning behind this desire for a larger applicant pool stems from the recognition that having more candidates to choose from could be advantageous for the agency.
2. Localized Selection Criteria: There's a strong assertion against the idea of WSCJTC becoming the sole source for applicants, governed solely by their criteria. The respondents argue that the needs, standards, and expectations of the community served by the agency are unique and require a tailored approach to candidate selection. For example, the demographics, cultural nuances, and specific challenges of a community might differ significantly from those of other areas in the state.
3. Community Empowerment in Selection Process: Respondents emphasize the importance of community empowerment in shaping law enforcement recruitment decisions. The community, through elected officials and law enforcement leaders, plays a crucial role in ensuring that officers reflect the specific needs and desires of the local population.
4. Retention and Community Ties: This focuses on the significance of recruiting individuals who have ties to the community or are familiar with it. It suggests that officers with existing connections to the area are more likely to remain with the agency long-term. For example, officers who have grown up or lived in a given community may have a stronger commitment to staying with the agency compared to those recruited from outside the state.
5. Agency Autonomy: There is strong opposition to any attempt to centralize hiring decisions, asserting that local agencies are best suited to make these choices. It is argued that decisions regarding recruitment should remain within the purview of individual agencies rather than being dictated by external entities.

Overall, the agencies advocated for a recruitment and hiring approach that prioritizes local knowledge, community ties, and agency autonomy to ensure the selection of candidates who are best equipped to serve the specific needs of each distinct community.

4.2 WSCJTC Capacity

Insights from interviews with WSCJTC officials indicate significant challenges in accommodating two additional BLEA classes annually for candidates hired under a common hiring pool at the Burien campus. While not entirely implausible, the current lack of resources, inadequate facilities, increased costs of hiring more support, absence of standardized procedures, and concerns over employee burnout and turnover collectively present substantial hurdles. Moreover, numerous logistical uncertainties remain regarding the feasibility of hosting two additional classes per year.

The following section underscores remarks made by diverse WSCJTC representatives spanning multiple divisions.

4.2.1 Lack of Personnel to Meet Current and Future Needs

A common theme that emerged during all the interviews was that there is currently a lack of personnel for current WSCJTC operations and there is an immediate need for increasing staff across essentially all functions at WSCJTC. Additionally, all 14 interviewees acknowledged that adding a common hiring pool and increasing training capacity at WSCJTC would put a significant strain on current personnel and would require additional personnel resources. Human resources, facility management, lead trainers, and information technology were among the departments that would be most significantly impacted.

The WSCJTC staff, at large, is fully tasked given current demands, and adding two more BLEA classes would further exacerbate this issue. One individual stated their department is currently in the process of requesting more team members because they are so “under water” even though their department is currently leveraging the help of consultants from outside WSCJTC. They are simply not able to do all the work internally due to lack of personnel, but also cannot fully outsource the work either because it takes additional time and resources for WSCJTC staff to help outside consultants understand the tasks that need to be completed within the context of WSCJTC.

Another individual highlighted that with the required 20 classes run per year in Burien, the WSCJTC is very understaffed with only 12 instructors. Because of this, the WSCJTC has begun to utilize part-time instructors to help run scenarios, help with mock scenes, and in general, help continue training progress. They went on to say that “it is absolute mayhem,” but they acknowledge that the issue has gotten better since they began working for WSCJTC. When this person first arrived, they witnessed one TAC officer run into a classroom to play a video, run into another classroom to tell students to write a report, and then run into another classroom to teach criminal law. Because there were only six TAC Officers before, the workload was overwhelming. Though the competing demands are not quite as significant anymore, they are still so short staffed that if someone calls in sick, it cripples the team, and they have to pull support from mock scenes to run classrooms which can be detrimental to the experiential training students need to prepare for on-the-job training at their hiring agency.

One interviewee also highlighted that to effectively manage the BLEA training classes, there is a need for a specialized coordinator role, whose primary responsibility is to oversee the class dynamics and ensure smooth operation. This individual does not solely function as a trainer, but rather as a supervisor, providing guidance and support to the students while also potentially teaching occasional classes. Having such coordinators in place would help ensure that each class has proper supervision and direct oversight. However, even with MOUs in place for TAC Officers, the WSCJTC still does not have the amount of training staff they need to follow this ideal training supervision model.

The expansion of personnel also brings about operational costs, including the provision of equipment, uniforms, and firearms for the recruits. The WSCJTC must now procure, register, and maintain these resources, assuming full financial responsibility for their training and support. Additionally, the agency must cover expenses such as housing and ammunition, further straining its budget.

Currently WSCJTC staff includes employees, contractors, and "borrowed" instructors on Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) from law enforcement agencies across the state. Because of this, there are several repercussions that need to be considered if WSCJTC were to establish a common hiring pool and increase training capacity by adding the equivalent of two additional BLEA classes per year (60 trainees), to ensure there are no violations of contracted or MOU personnel's rights, roles, and responsibilities. New positions and job classifications within WSCJTC will likely need to be created to hire additional staff to recruit, hire, and manage the recruits within the common hiring pool. Additionally, the WSCJTC Human Resources department currently has a civilian hiring process for new employees, but the HR department's staffing, processes, and procedures are insufficient for managing the hiring and onboarding processes of law enforcement personnel. Because the WSCJTC is not a law enforcement agency and does not have the capability nor resources to conduct law enforcement-specific background checks and psychological evaluations for incoming recruits, additional higher-level internal positions would be required to oversee the development and implementation of these new hiring procedures given the complexity and nuances involved in the process of hiring law enforcement personnel.

One WSCJTC staff member expressed that to make adding a common hiring pool and the equivalent of two more BLEA classes in Burien feasible, their department would have to dedicate at least two full time employees to focus solely on recruitment, maintenance of job postings, and conduct interviews, while another group of employees would need to be hired to maintain the paperwork flow. This individual cited that one major challenge for WSCJTC would be running payroll for the individuals in the common hiring pool, since they would likely have to be employed by WSCJTC since they would not be sponsored by an external law enforcement agency. Because WSCJTC outsources their payroll as a state agency, they do all their internal paperwork then hand it over to the company to complete payroll. This would mean that there would be a significant increase in new payroll paperwork to process each pay period if there was a common hiring pool within WSCJTC.

Not including the current increased staffing needs, minimum cost estimates have been calculated for having to hire additional staff to support a common hiring pool and increased training capacity within WSCJTC. A breakdown of these cost estimates is displayed in Table 4-7, showing that two additional BLEA classes a year would cost at least \$1,872,229.

Table 4-7. Estimated breakdown of staffing costs to support a common hiring pool.

Position Type	Number of Full Time Employees	Cost (Annually)
Recruiter	6	\$630,000
Psychologist	1	\$122,553
Polygrapher	1	\$104,846
Background Investigator	4	\$437,148
TAC Officer	2	\$367,708
HR Specialist	2	\$209,974
Total	16	\$1,872,229

Additional considerations that were also highlighted regarding staffing were that WSCJTC utilizes interagency agreements to borrow instructors from other agencies and heavily utilized contractors. This can create problems with continuity or unexpected instructor shortages when agencies have vacancies to fill and cannot afford to support WSCJTC training efforts. Additionally, most “borrowed” instructor officers are retired or part-time and work only a few shifts. Thus, finding qualified instructors can be challenging due to the additional need to evaluate officer complaint histories and conduct rigorous screening and training processes. The added cost of living, lengthy commute to Burien, and low state-employee pay scale all act as deterrents to potential instructor candidates, making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Table 4-8 provides a sample of direct quotes related to current and future staffing concerns.

Table 4-8. Sample of direct quotes related to staffing.

Quote
“We’d need additional staff for outfitting [new recruits]. Ballistic vests take months to measure, order, reactive, etc. On day 1, all that stuff needs to be there. Not only for fiscal but also shipping and receiving.”
“The reason why we think we can't do it isn't because of our staff. It's because we don't have enough staff. It's because our facilities are sorely underwhelming for additional work. It's not because of the staff. We know that if asked, we can go find more staff like we have, not quickly, but we can, because I really believe in the people that are here.”
“If we own them, that’s now 60 orientations we have to do, 60 laptops. There would absolutely be a burden put on our staff. When you think about the equipment that your basic recruit has (uniforms, ballistic vest, boots, firearms), now you add laptops to that as well.”
“...if we own them, you have to think of the operational cost. I always, every 10 employees cost

like a half an FTE to be honest, now in the growth for a short time, because we were very, very far behind. So we need more IT people to maintain their classroom and their tech support. We now are going to be responsible for all of their equipment, all of their laptops, their uniforms, their outfit, like boots, all of those things are going to be up. They don't come here with them. Now we have to issue them. We're going to have to procure firearms for them. That means we're going to have to procure them. We're going to have to register them. We're going to have to track and be held responsible for them. The ammunition agencies would typically pay us for ammunition, but we have ammunition costs. They have to pay for that. The agencies pay 25 % cost recovery of the attendance of BLEA. Now then we'd have to pay the whole thing because we're the employer. Not even 25%. We pay... We pay 100 % because right now we pay so much for everybody else. The housing, just all of that."

"Moving forward, I need three other positions already. I need another higher level HRC, so like a four probably, to be a supervisor and oversee hiring and recruitment, because every single bit of that requires additional signatures and approvals. So my HRC too is like, she can do a posting, but then it has to be approved by her boss, who's a manager trying to run the entire operation, create procedure, create policy, engage with employees, train all the leaders. Like it's a lot."

"For Fiscal staff, there'd be an increase in the number of contracts that we would have to deal with, whether with individual contractors or with police departments to provide staff. It'll increase the number of payments made out to everybody for their work performed during a week... It just increased workload. So.. [my staff is] plenty busy. We'll leave with just with all the once we get all these new regions going, we're definitely going to be needing more staff...It'll be a significant fiscal impact."

"TAC officers running all day long" - from one thing to the other. Frustrating to see this, Frustrating to see all the scenarios scheduled but not enough instructors available to run them. So it's cutting a lot of the scheduled classes/practice sessions due to staffing issues"

4.2.2 Risk of Employee Burnout

If additional staffing support fails to be addressed or funded, WSCJTC employees risk burnout. Heavy workload, long hours, and excessive job demands are consistently identified as primary contributors to burnout, especially when individuals perceive a lack of control over their work environment. The consequences of burnout are far-reaching, impacting not only individuals but the organization as well. Individuals experiencing burnout are more prone to depression, anxiety, physical health issues, diminished job satisfaction, and performance. Organizational consequences include higher rates of absenteeism, turnover, and reduced productivity.

The sentiments expressed by various staff members highlight the pervasive issue of burnout within the organization. According to hiring data recorded between January 2019 to present 60 percent of employees have separated from WSCJTC, with 49 percent of those separations being employee resignations. From administrative roles to IT management and training staff, the workload and responsibilities have become overwhelming, leading to exhaustion and strained morale. Adding a common hiring pool within WSCJTC and the need to onboard 60 new recruits per year with orientations and equipment provisioning, coupled with the lack of relief factors such as vacations or downtime due to current staffing constraints, only exacerbates the situation. Staff members are already working long hours, sacrificing personal time and wellbeing to meet the

demands of their roles. Adding additional demands related to a common hiring pool will only expedite burnout if additional staff are not hired.

Additionally, the strain extends to HR, which is already behind in its tasks and would require additional resources to manage the hiring process effectively. The lack of relief and support contributes to a sense of fatigue and frustration among the workforce.

To underscore the importance of this issue, the following is an expert from an interview:

“They're burnt out. There's no doubt about it. When I first got here, we had an officer, probably the top TAC Officer out there; everyone loved him, hardest worker. He was doing crazy stuff like canceling, which we didn't know at the time. He'd have a vacation with his wife and kids. and he heard they needed an instructor out at [a regional campus].

We found out later, too late, that he was canceling vacations with his family, going out there doing two days and then flying to Disneyland or wherever the family was at and catching the second half of the vacation. He did this on a consistent basis. At the time, we were working five days a week. We work four days a week now at the Academy, four tens. Back then we did five eights and he was probably working 11 hours a day, five days a week. And then he was grading papers and doing stuff on Saturdays. So he may have been getting Sundays off and he did this for years. He was known as the best TAC Officer. The recruits loved him. The command staff loved him. Hardest worker I met.

Well, now he's out on a medical. And he'll never work again. He's totally undeployable. He's done. So he can't work in law enforcement, can't work anywhere.”

The toll of burnout is evident in personal anecdotes, such as the example of this officer who pushed himself to the brink, ultimately leading to medical retirement. Despite his dedication, over-tasking and inadequate support mechanisms took a devastating toll on his health and career.

Overall, WSCJTC faces a critical challenge in addressing burnout and ensuring the wellbeing of its staff while managing the demands of its operations effectively. Without proactive measures to alleviate workload and provide support, the risk of further staff exhaustion and adverse outcomes remains high. Therefore, it's important to highlight here that burnout significantly contributes to employee turnover, leading to the loss of institutional knowledge within the organization. As staff members become overwhelmed by their workload and responsibilities, the absence of structured procedures exacerbates the problem, ultimately impacting retention rates and the continuity of organizational knowledge. Addressing burnout and implementing formal processes are thus intertwined challenges that require attention to sustain organizational effectiveness and employee wellbeing. In a later section of the report, the lack of formal processes is addressed further.

Table 4-9 provides a sample of direct quotes related to burnout concerns among WSCJTC staff.

Table 4-9. Sample of direct quotes related to burnout.

Quote
“Admin office roles are the ones that are a little burnt out. When I know I’m tired or done, I stop but there’s always something here to be done. The office people (including TAC) can be burnt out.”
“I have such great people who work for me. I think the people who work for me will be able to do this but I think IT would be burnt out. If they have to outfit 30 additional computers, put the right programs on it, etc. Also, Fiscal due to the expenditure. To a lesser degree, facilities.”
It's just, it comes in waves... there was a month there where I was getting burned out just because I was getting bombarded from every direction all the time...”
“I can only imagine that's what our trainers are thinking. Hey, I can't live my life here, but they're doing it. But how long? I believe that it would be burnout for our instructors. I would be continuing to hire or try to hire. Working without enough staff for what we're doing is already a challenge. We already need at least five more TAC officers. And so we're pretty much treading water right now. And to add two more classes without two additional classrooms available, first of all. And then also without the space in Mock City, the firing range or the gym, we're just asking for trouble.”
“Whenever you're building a staffing model, you know, there's relief factors...Part of a relief factor is giving people relief, vacations, that kind of stuff. The fact that you could still be at work and not go at 100 miles an hour, that you could actually go to your office, maybe work on curriculum. maybe just sit back and have a nice conversation with one of your colleagues about a recruit that you guys are trying to work with on something. We don't have any of that. You get started, our official day starts at seven o'clock. I would say that a third of our staff is here by 5:30. Already in their offices doing work, contacting recruits and... and then they're usually walking out the door here, I'd say 5:30, 6 o'clock every day. And so there's no relief factor. So, you know, they're passionate people, but I think everyone has their breaking point.”

4.2.3 Facilities Need Improvement to Support Increased Training Efforts

Interview and archival data show that WSCJTC’s current facilities would require expansion in order to meet training needs if two additional BLEA classes are added annually. In April of 2022, WSCJTC conducted a Capital and Functional Needs Study to “define the scope required to fully replace/modernize/expand the existing training center through new construction and renovations.” The results of the study revealed that due to limitations on site, WSCJTC is not capable of supporting the full needs of the commission. In 2016, the WSCJTC completed a Facilities Condition Assessment (provided by Washington State University) on its existing facilities. The assessment identified an existing backlog of almost \$7M for repairs and improvements. It further projected that by 2036 that need would increase to more than \$21.6M. The assessment defined the costs to maintain the current program and did not include costs for program enhancements or growth. Without new investment, the continued aging of the facilities will impact the WSCJTC’s ability to serve Washington State.

Interviewees indicated that WSCJTC’s current infrastructure cannot support two additional BLEA classes. Cafeteria size, number of offices, classrooms, and showers, are among some of the

considerations that were mentioned. Additionally, there are competing demands with approximately four different classes using Mock City for training simultaneously.

A facilities representative emphasized the strain on operations and maintenance due to insufficient staffing levels. He highlights the results of a staff study conducted approximately a decade ago, which indicated a significant need for additional personnel to adequately manage the workload, especially given the volume of classes passing through the facility at that time. Despite the identified need, staffing levels have not been increased accordingly, even while the number of classes has significantly increased, leading to challenges in fulfilling preventative maintenance requirements and regular operational tasks. This individual underscored the impact of budget constraints and personnel shortages on the organization's ability to maintain facilities to standard, jeopardizing the training environment for students.

Similarly, an IT representative provided insight into the cramped working conditions of the IT team. They emphasized the lack of physical space to accommodate additional personnel or equipment, which poses significant challenges to the team's ability to effectively carry out their responsibilities. The interview comments underscore the importance of adequate infrastructure and resources to support essential IT functions, including system maintenance, troubleshooting, and support services. Without sufficient space and resources, the IT team may struggle to meet the demands of the organization and maintain optimal performance.

Furthermore, multiple interviewees expressed concerns about the impact of overcrowded facilities and limited resources on training quality and student experience. They highlighted the potential risks of compromising instruction and learning outcomes due to inadequate space and staffing levels. Comments regarding challenges of scheduling and managing training sessions underscore the complexities involved in coordinating activities within constrained environments. They also highlighted the limitations of outdated infrastructure and the challenges of accommodating the diverse needs of training programs. The lack of space and proper facilities not only affects training quality but also impacts administrative and support functions, further complicating operations. Their insights underscore the urgency of addressing facility deficiencies and investing in infrastructure improvements to support the organization's mission effectively.

Overall, these comments collectively highlight the multifaceted challenges faced by the organization in managing facilities and resources. They underscore the critical importance of addressing these challenges to ensure the organization can effectively fulfill its training objectives and support the needs of its staff and students. Without adequate investment and support, the organization risks compromising the quality and effectiveness of its training programs, potentially impacting its ability to meet its mission and goals.

Table 4-10 provides a sample of direct quotes related to facilities improvement.

Table 4-10. Sample of direct quotes related to facilities.

Quote
<p>“We've got demand signals that are going to be going from now until perpetuity that we have to be able to tailor the training environment towards what's out there in the real world. And right now, our hands are severely constricted or tied on that subject because what we have to use, although we use every square inch of it, still is insufficient as far as space, as far as the infrastructure wraparound support, plus the staff to be able to provide that day in day out for the students to gain efficiencies to make sure that pipeline is still moving at a good rate.”</p>
<p>“We're like six of us cramped in this little room with a little hot or cold room, depending on what time of year it is... we wouldn't have enough room right now in our little space to even add one person.”</p>
<p>“I think that 60 students would be better to go to kind of the regional academies, just because our headquarters sometimes we've gotten up to about 10 classes at a time. And that's when our campus can get a little bit on the overflow side. So headquarters is primarily where people do go. But it is a very heavily trafficked campus.”</p>
<p>“Some of our classrooms on campus here right now are condemned and we can't really use them. So we're kind of working through a limited space availability.”</p>
<p>“Our biggest block of instruction is called Patrol Procedures Basic. It's basically where adults really learn how to apply what they've learned in the classroom, adult learning. It's in our mock city, it's scenario-based training. It's how we incorporate our classroom into simple to complex scenarios for them to work through. For those, you don't necessarily need the same ratios, but you do need a more robust instructor cadre so that people aren't just standing around. And so if you break the class up into even fifths, you're still talking about 30 people broken up...Again, it's not the two classes just in and of themselves. It's all the residual in terms of space, staff, and then administrative staff to support all of that. You know, obviously, the other thing that we don't talk much about, you know, is our cafeteria. Our cafeteria was not designed to have the number of recruits.”</p>
<p>“We have a limited facility. We're in old outdated buildings. We're doing the best that we can. We have very little office space. We don't have proper space for our professional instructional staff. We don't have space for our administrative staff because we've grown exponentially. This location and the academy previously 20 years ago trained and 12 Academy classes per year. So we start one every single month. And we had transitioned when I was here 20 years ago from a 440 hour Academy to a 720 hour Academy... We've converted classrooms into cubicle spaces for staff. We've got support staff doubled in spaces that should not be double spaces.”</p>
<p>“I think the only thing that I would add is something similar to the range with space is the gym. Although I focus heavily on the range, the same things slide down to the range. I think the harder part with the gym is that we actually share it with COA... Sometimes we are triple booked because COA needs one half of it, and then we have to go outside.”</p>
<p>“We have a couple of classrooms that are pretty big in size, but most of them are smaller classrooms. When you get 30 kids in there and one instructor, you can barely move... they're in their gear, you know, they got their pistol belts and their body armor, and then they have their patrol bag in the back on the shelf, which takes up room. So there's not much room in there at all. It gets pretty cramped.”</p>

4.2.4 Need for Process Improvement

There were several interviewees who helped identify processes that were lacking, which was causing inefficiency within their departments. Within the IT Department, a lifecycle management process for the provision of laptops does not exist. The department is currently working hard to develop and implement such processes. The current problem is that every task (e.g., issuing laptops, issuing IT equipment, machine updates, returning equipment) takes longer to complete, and there's a lack of consistency in how these tasks are handled. One issue mentioned is that IT does not always know when new employees start and when employees are terminated, thus delaying the process of account creation and deactivation, respectively. Delayed notifications to the IT department lead to inefficiencies and strains on resources as IT staff scramble to accommodate the influx of new employees. Also highlighted were discrepancies in employee counts between HR and IT systems, which further complicates resource allocation and tracking efforts. This would cause considerable issues if WSCJTC was to establish a common hiring pool and increase training capacity without first addressing these issues. These challenges underscore the critical need for streamlined and centralized IT provisioning processes to ensure timely and efficient onboarding of new staff members.

It was also identified that there are difficulties encountered in record-keeping and document management. One individual discussed the limitations of current systems regarding accessing and transferring physical records between locations, particularly in scenarios where documents need to be transported from one site to another. This individual emphasized the benefits of digital systems and electronic record-keeping, which would enable seamless access to information and streamline administrative processes. By transitioning to digital platforms and implementing electronic record-keeping solutions, the WSCJTC can improve data accessibility, enhance collaboration, and optimize workflow efficiency.

Additionally, challenges associated with managing applicant waitlists and forecasting training needs were discussed. One interviewee acknowledged the inherent unpredictability of application volumes and agency hiring practices, which pose challenges in accurately predicting training demands and allocating resources accordingly. The complexity of managing applicant waitlists was further highlighted, particularly considering fluctuating hiring trends among law enforcement agencies. This individual underscored the need for adaptive and flexible training strategies to accommodate changing demands and ensure optimal resource utilization.

These complexities and potential challenges will be further exacerbated if WSCJTC takes on the proposed common hiring pool. Several interviewees expressed concern regarding the significant increase in personnel of recruits that will further exacerbate the lack of formal processes.

These insights shed light on the operational challenges faced by WSCJTC, particularly in IT management, administrative processes, and resource allocation. By addressing these challenges through the implementation of standardized processes, digital solutions, and adaptive training strategies, the organization can enhance efficiency, improve data management practices, and better support its staff members in fulfilling their roles effectively.

Table 4-11 provides a sample of direct quotes related to process improvement.

Table 4-11. Sample of direct quotes related to process improvement.

Quote
<p>“We often don't get notice when new employees are starting. So sometimes we'll hear, ‘hey, there's a new employee starting in my department tomorrow.’ And we're like, ‘that's great. We didn't set up an account. We didn't provision equipment.’ And so we have to scramble sometimes for the hiring. There's no uniformity or process or provisioning system or personnel system that we can look to drive a process.”</p>
<p>“I got like six different numbers from people. So HR has no idea how many employees we have. And what I mean by that is they know how many full-time employees we have in the system that come out of the payroll system, but we have a ton of contractors that are also kind of employees. And so from my perspective, when I use the word employee, it's do they have a CJTC laptop? Do they have an email account which requires a license? So that may not be how the agency, what they call an employee, but we have to support them. And so I got numbers all over the map and the real answer is we've got to migrate about 160 of these accounts. But I got the HR report this morning that shows we have 105 employees... so we're reaching out to these hiring managers and saying, ‘hey, we need to talk to [Employee Name]. We need to get their laptop. And they're like, oh, well, they're a contractor, and this person lives [in another state or country]... So from an organizational standpoint, I would say there's no operational processes in place about how we hire, who we hire, requirements, kind of process to even drive it.”</p>
<p>“But there's always something brewing. It's not always at this effort or magnitude. There's like six other things we have to replace, migrate, mature, either to get within compliance or just because we should because it's risky. None of these are really nice to have. Everything on the list right now is a ‘must do.’ We just have to figure out how to prioritize them.”</p>
<p>“I have the internal mailing system that we can use...I've gone on several day trips where I've just brought all of the [hard copy records] with me, set it all up, took me about a half a day and then I was able to drive home that day... There's no real internal system for me to get the stuff that I need from [another location], say records wise, because it's a big box of records. They'd have to ship it out. They're just not going to do that.”</p>
<p>“A lot of our stuff already is electronic and the stuff that I have to hard copy in is mostly student records, test records, test scores; stuff like that. We are trying to develop a system that will allow us to take tests digitally. So we won't have to have so much paper. That being said, you know, the affidavits and everything that the students have to sign, you kind of have to do that on paper. I kind of have to scan it all in. So that is, it is what it is. If we could figure out some sort of DocuSign system or a digital system that that would help by all means, that would be helpful if we could go completely paperless that would help us out quite a bit because I mean it takes me a half a day to do student records and I know that doesn't sound like much but I can do a lot more and a lot better stuff with my time than scanning in student records and going through and trying to figure out if this is actually something you need.”</p>

4.2.5 Lack of Clarity Regarding the Logistics of a Common Hiring Pool

All interviewees brought up department-specific concerns about the significant number of unknown factors regarding how a WSCJTC common hiring pool would function.

All interviewees expressed significant concern about WSCJTC being responsible for a common hiring pool when resource limitations and constraints already exist within the organization, including staffing shortages, inadequate facilities, and financial limitations. It was noted that exacerbating these resource limitations would hinder WSCJTC's ability to effectively manage BLEA classes and consistently provide high-quality training. Taking ownership of recruits entails significant operational costs and logistical responsibilities. These include the need for additional IT and HR support, procurement of equipment and uniforms, issuance of firearms (which WSCJTC is not currently authorized to do) and tracking of issued equipment and other resources. A recruit's hiring agency currently shares a portion of the financial cost for a recruit to attend BLEA, covering expenses related to housing, ammunition, and other essentials needed to facilitate quality training. The WSCJTC would not only bear the full financial burden of these recruits, which would necessitate a substantial increase in operational expenditure, but they would also have to hire additional staff to recruit, hire, onboard, and transition recruits to agencies upon graduation.

Employing and managing recruits who are not immediately hired by agencies also poses challenges in terms of supervision, support, and resource allocation. Without clear processes for employing and managing these recruits, there is uncertainty about how to address their needs and ensure their success. Human resources related challenges would be significant and include management of benefits, retirement systems, and service credits for recruits directly hired by WSCJTC. Unlike local law enforcement agencies, WSCJTC does not currently have a defined system for managing these recruits because WSCJTC has not historically had that role, leading to concerns about recruit long-term career viability if they are not associated with an actual law enforcement agency, or even gaining recruit initial interest since they would likely only be a temporary employee at WSCJTC. Additionally, there is debate over whether to integrate WSCJTC-hired recruits into existing training classes or to create separate classes for them. Each option presents logistical, management, and social challenges, with some interviewees advocating for full classes of WSCJTC recruits for easier people management, while others suggest integrating them across multiple classes so they could benefit from gaining experience from recruits that are already hired by law enforcement agencies throughout the state. There are also questions that remain regarding insurance coverage for recruits in the common hiring pool, especially for situations in which recruits might get injured during training. The WSCJTC interviewees state that WSCJTC would need to ensure that recruits have adequate insurance coverage, which may be difficult considering the temporary nature of their employment. Overall, the details and complexities of employment support and benefits are essentially unknown for WSCJTC as agencies currently handle these details for their new recruits.

Additionally, several stakeholders also highlighted the legal constraints and regulatory requirements that impact recruitment and training processes. Currently, agencies are authorized and responsible for certain components of the hiring and training requirements, while WSCJTC

is not. Compliance with state laws regarding self-sponsorship, employment status, benefits eligibility, and other legal considerations is a significant concern when it comes to establishing a common hiring pool. Washington's legal framework prohibits self-sponsorship for BLEA attendance, meaning recruits must be hired by a law enforcement agency before enrolling in the academy. This requirement is governed by RCW 43.101.220 and WAC 193-05-200. These legislative measures would need to be modified for WSCJTC to remain in compliance with Washington State laws. Thus, there is a current lack and required need for clear protocols on handling recruits hired by WSCJTC who are not subsequently picked up by any agency, addressing how their skills and employment status will be managed during this interim period.

In parallel with legal concerns for the employment and management of recruits, concerns were raised from interviewees about logistical challenges of having WSCJTC establish a common hiring pool. Currently, agencies take the management and financial responsibility for logistical necessities of a recruit attending BLEA such as accommodation, travel reimbursement, and resource allocation. Should WSCJTC subsume these responsibilities, these challenges can disrupt training schedules, affect the training experience, and create administrative burdens for both WSCJTC and law enforcement agencies. For example, one major concern is whether recruits receive travel pay and if they are required to stay in dormitories, given that they are already employed by their respective agencies. This issue stems from the recruits' duty stations being considered their official workplace, thus affecting their travel reimbursements compared to those placed more than 50 miles away.

The human aspect of recruit employment, management, and training is also an important concern that was highlighted by interviewees. Currently, agencies hire candidates to their teams who will not only be able to do the job correctly and well, but who are also a "good fit" to the agency culture, existing local staff, and culture of the community they serve. Concerns were raised about communication, collaboration, and alignment of goals and processes between the WSCJTC and its partner agencies. Effective coordination between the WSCJTC and law enforcement agencies is essential for successful recruit management. There is ambiguity regarding how hiring and training would be managed if the state assumed control, potentially limiting the discretion that individual departments currently have in selecting recruits. This proposition is not clearly defined, raising concerns that departments might lose their autonomy in deciding whom to hire and retain.

Since a common hiring pool would be a completely new model of recruiting and hiring peace officers in Washington State, there are a significant number of unknown processes, policies, and procedures that will need to be developed and implemented to ensure this model effectively addresses agency needs throughout the state. For example, many agencies are reporting that larger agencies with more positions available, more resources, and higher salary offerings are "poaching" highly qualified candidates from smaller agencies who already struggle with adequately recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality staff members. If a common hiring pool is established, questions arise related to whether or not rules should be put in place for what size agencies are allowed to select candidates first. However, it is unknown whether rules such as this would adversely impact the recruit themselves. For example, if small agencies are given priority access to hiring recruits from the common hiring pool, recruits may be put at a disadvantage if

they are required to wait until a small agency makes a hiring determination even if a medium or large agency is interested in hiring that recruit.

If a common hiring pool were to be established, this lack of clarity related to how such an endeavor would actually operate will need to be addressed so that WSCJTC staff can effectively execute this additional WSCJTC requirement without significantly compromising the current work they are already committed to. Without clear and thorough guidelines of how a common hiring pool would operate it is possible that the problems the common hiring pool was intended to solve may in fact become much worse.

Table 4-12 provides a sample of direct quotes related to common hiring pool logistics.

Table 4-12. Sample of direct quotes related to common hiring pool logistics.

Quote
<p>“...do [BLEA recruits] get travel pay to come here? Like, would they all stay in the dorms? Would they be required to stay in the dorms? Because they're employed by us. So it's their duty station. So they have to drive on their own where other people, if they live more, if they're placed more than 50 miles, they get reimbursed.”</p>
<p>“I don't know how this would be completed. If the State took over the hiring and training pool, would the department have discretion on who to take? The proposition is not clear to me. It seems that the department would lose agency in who they want to hire / retain.”</p>
<p>“I've even had people who are shot agency shopping. So they're potentially getting hired with Everett PD, but they also are getting looked at by Bothell. They both submit registrations and then it's like a race to see which class they can kind of move up in. So a person could technically take up two spots, which is weird, but it's eventually going to cancel itself out because they're going to make their final decision with who they're hired for.”</p>
<p>“In Washington state, there's no self -sponsorship. So you can't say, oh, I'm going to be a cop, then sign yourself up for the BLEA Academy. It has to go through the agency department or a sheriff's department, sheriff county, county sheriff's office, that kind of thing. They do have to be hired to attend here, but they can not be hired yet... It's RCW and WAC. So it's RCW 43.101.220. And then the other one is a WAC and it's 193-05-200.”</p>
<p>“Say somebody didn't pass their polygraph or whatever happens, the agency decides not to hire them. I then go to my next class list, the first five who are listed in that submission date and time, and I move the next one who's available up into the class. So that kind of thing happens. That's a one off here and there, where people don't make it through the hiring process or they can't pass the PAT and they delay them so they can get their physical health in order. I've also had families go into labor early, so they've had to rearrange their lives. There's a lot of life factors I didn't think about until I was in this position and I'm looking at it and there's a lot of feasible reasons for it.”</p>
<p>“If we hire them, who owns them? Because if they don't get picked up by an agency, are they just going to be sitting at my conference table here, waiting to get hired and I'm looking at them every day? Like what do we do with them? We can't make police chiefs and sheriffs hire people, you know, just because we hired them and trained them.... Also, just because we hire them and train</p>

them doesn't mean the chiefs and sheriffs are going to hire them. I mean, there's no guarantee. And that's a big risk to take with people's career and with their profession. And what would make them not come to us? I wouldn't because I need guarantees if I'm going to leave my full-time, well-paying job or full-time not paying that well job. At least I have a job. So I just think, I think we have to work with the chiefs and sheriffs. We have to get their backing, their support.”

“There are things that need to be completed by the agency before the recruit or the new hire can begin training. And so, for the initial intake, all they need to complete is a liability form. And there's one other document, it's fairly simple, but ultimately to gain full admission into the academy, you have to complete the psychological, the polygraph and psychological polygraph, and there's in the background. So those things have to be completed before day one.

“There are some significant challenges and it really has everything to do with our HR. The fact that we're not a police agency; salaries, retirement system, there are so many things.”

“They would be hired. They would have to be hired as non -permanent employees. And their expectation was that they did not stay with CJTC for more than five months. But that means there are also not. So they wouldn't be retirement eligible. So they wouldn't have to pay in, but they're also not benefits. They're also not eligible for benefits. So that doesn't solve that either. They wouldn't have medical. I'm not doing that to somebody that's in a training environment.”

“Those employees won't have service credits or I mean, I guess for with their employer or whatever, compared to ones right now. All of our students are employed by a local law enforcement agency, they've already been hired to be police officers. So they're already receiving, getting their service credits for retirement and all that stuff. So let's say the ones that are under us, they'll have state employees for a few months.”

5. Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive analysis conducted in this feasibility study, there are several significant issues related to implementing a common hiring pool as a solution for filling police officer vacancies within Washington State. The reasons for this conclusion are multifaceted, involving substantial operational, financial, and logistical challenges. Table 5-1 provides a summary of these reasons, with additional details provided in the sections below.

Table 5-1. Summary of issues related to implementing a common hiring pool.

Staffing Challenges	Legal Challenges	BLEA Scheduling & Execution
Specialty Staffing Requirements	HR Policy Adjustments	Post-BLEA Engagement
Facility Constraints	Employment Transparency	Agency Cultural Fit
Facility Overload	Recruit Salary Funding	Agency Relationships
Risk of Staff Burnout	Transition Plan to Agencies	Exacerbation of Small Agency Needs

5.1 Staffing Challenges

Implementing a common hiring pool will necessitate a significant increase in WSCJTC staff. The current personnel are already stretched thin with their existing duties and cannot manage the additional workload required to hire and manage recruits. This expansion will require hiring additional HR staff to handle hiring and vetting processes, training coordinators and managers to oversee recruit management and mentorship, IT support to manage technological needs, and recruiters to attract potential candidates. These additions will lead to a substantial increase in staff salary costs. Failure to adequately staff would likely result in overwork, burnout, and turnover among existing employees, leading to a loss of valuable institutional knowledge and jeopardizing the WSCJTC's ability to fulfill its core training responsibilities.

5.2 Specialty Staffing Requirements

Vetting and hiring new law enforcement recruits requires additional specialty procedures. WSCJTC currently lacks the personnel needed for these essential functions such as psychological evaluations, polygraph tests, and background checks, as these are currently managed by individual law enforcement agencies. To accommodate a common hiring pool, WSCJTC would need to hire or contract professionals to perform each of these specialized services, leading to increased costs for the agency and a demand for additional office space since these vetting and hiring procedures would need to be conducted on-site. This expansion would place further strain on WSCJTC's already limited resources and facilities. Furthermore, agencies would still be required to carry out their own hiring processes to ensure that individuals would be a good fit based on organizational culture and community needs, leading to duplicated efforts and expenses, thereby undermining the efficiency and cost-effectiveness that the common hiring pool aims to achieve.

5.3 Facility Constraints

The current WSCJTC campus in Burien is already operating at or beyond its capacity in terms of office and training spaces. Implementing a common hiring pool would necessitate additional office space to accommodate the increased staff, including HR personnel, training coordinators, IT support, and recruiters. This expansion would significantly escalate maintenance and support costs. Although some staff functions could be performed remotely, many essential tasks—such as direct recruit management, training oversight, and facilities operations—require on-site presence. This increased demand would further strain the limited space and resources available, potentially compromising the quality and efficiency of the training and administrative processes. However, this risk could potentially be mitigated by acquiring or building a new facility, a project that is already in the planning stages, which would provide the necessary infrastructure to support the expanded operations.

5.4 Facility Overload

Increasing the number of trainees through a common hiring pool will place significant additional pressure on WSCJTC facilities, which are already operating at full capacity. This influx of trainees will require not only more physical space but also more intensive maintenance, repairs, and upgrades to keep the facilities in functional condition. To manage this increased demand, WSCJTC will likely need to expand its regional training centers, which entails considerable financial investment and logistical planning. Developing a comprehensive surge plan will be essential to accommodate the higher volume of trainees, ensuring that training quality is maintained, and operational disruptions are minimized. Such a plan would need to include detailed strategies for scaling up resources, scheduling additional training sessions, and potentially hiring more support staff to effectively handle the increased workload required.

5.5 Risk of Staff Burnout

The current WSCJTC staff are already operating under substantial workload pressures, placing them at high risk of burnout. Introducing a common hiring pool would require a temporary halt in training operations to onboard and train new staff, which is an unrealistic expectation given the current demands on the team. This pause would disrupt the existing training rhythm and exacerbate the existing workload. Additionally, the current staff would need to play a crucial role in guiding and managing the new recruits within the common hiring pool, further straining their capacity. This increased burden would heighten the risk of burnout, leading to decreased morale, higher turnover rates, and potential loss of experienced staff, all of which could severely impact the overall effectiveness and efficiency of WSCJTC operations.

5.6 Legal Challenges

Implementing a common hiring pool would necessitate amendments to existing laws since current regulations mandate that recruits be hired and sponsored by a law enforcement agency to attend BLEA. Drafting these legal changes would require precise language to designate WSCJTC as the sole entity authorized to sponsor recruits, ensuring no other organizations could claim similar rights. This specificity is crucial to avoid ambiguity and potential legal challenges from other entities seeking the same privileges. Additionally, new recruits sponsored by WSCJTC would be classified as temporary state employees, which means they would not receive credit for time in service at their permanent agency during BLEA, creating potential disincentives and complications for recruits. The legislative process would therefore become more complex, requiring extensive deliberation and consensus-building to navigate potential opposition and ensure the changes are both effective and enforceable.

5.7 HR Policy Adjustments

Current employment regulations would require a thorough review and potential revision to accommodate the temporary employment of recruits by WSCJTC. This would involve creating new job codes specifically for these temporary positions, ensuring they comply with state

employment policies, and addressing various conditions such as benefits, union considerations, and employment terms. Additionally, policies would need to clearly define the period recruits have to seek permanent employment with law enforcement agencies after completing BLEA. This process ensures that recruits are adequately supported during their temporary tenure and that there is a seamless transition to permanent roles, all while aligning with broader HR regulations and practices within the state.

5.8 Employment Transparency

If a common hiring pool is to be implemented, WSCJTC will need to explicitly communicate the temporary nature of employment under the common hiring pool to incoming recruits to avoid confusion and potential reputational damage. This plan should specify that recruits will be temporary employees, outline the purpose of their temporary role, and clearly explain the process for transitioning to permanent positions within law enforcement agencies. It is crucial to ensure recruits understand their employment terms with WSCJTC, including the timeline for securing a permanent position, if their time in service will be accounted for during their employment with WSCJTC, and any benefits and union considerations that need to be taken into account as temporary state employees rather than full time employees of a sponsoring law enforcement agency. Addressing these details will prevent misunderstandings and foster a positive reputation for the WSCJTC.

5.9 Recruit Salary Funding

Managing the salaries of temporary recruits in a common hiring pool will require meticulous budgeting and tracking to accommodate the fluctuating timelines of recruit hiring. The unpredictability of how quickly recruits transition to permanent agency positions could result in either surplus funds or budget shortfalls, complicating financial management. For instance, if recruits are hired by agencies quickly, the WSCJTC might find itself with unallocated salary funds, whereas slow transitions could deplete the budget more rapidly than anticipated. This financial uncertainty necessitates a robust monitoring system to adjust funding allocations in real-time, ensuring that the WSCJTC can sustain the common hiring pool without financial strain.

5.10 Transition Plan to Agencies

Developing a comprehensive hand-off plan to agencies is essential and must encompass legal, procedural, and logistical elements to ensure a smooth transition for recruits. This process, which currently does not exist, will necessitate extensive collaboration with law enforcement agencies to establish clear guidelines and protocols. Legal considerations will include employment termination from the WSCJTC and initiation at the hiring agency, while procedural elements must address the timing and requirements for background checks, psychological evaluations, and polygraph tests if the agency requires additional vetting of recruits. Logistical planning will involve coordinating the physical transfer of recruits and their records, managing any waiting periods, and resolving potential conflicts, such as multiple agencies expressing interest in the same recruit. This collaborative effort is critical to prevent disruptions and ensure that recruits move seamlessly

from temporary employment with the WSCJTC to their permanent positions within law enforcement agencies.

5.11 BLEA Scheduling & Execution

Integrating common hiring pool recruits into existing BLEA classes or creating separate classes presents significant logistical challenges. Adding common hiring pool recruits to the current roster could exacerbate already lengthy wait times, further straining the capacity of instructors, facilities, and resources. Conversely, creating separate classes exclusively for common hiring pool recruits would require additional scheduling, potentially leading to underutilized classes if recruitment numbers fluctuate. Determining the optimal class structure will necessitate careful planning and coordination to balance the training load, minimize delays, and ensure that both the common hiring pool and traditional recruits receive quality instruction without overwhelming the existing WSCJTC infrastructure.

5.12 Post-BLEA Engagement

If a common hiring pool is implemented, the WSCJTC would need to develop a robust plan to keep recruits engaged after completing BLEA but before they secure employment with an agency. This is crucial to prevent skill degradation, which can occur quickly without continued practice and application. The plan should include ongoing training opportunities, practical exercises, and potentially temporary assignments that keep recruits' skills sharp and relevant. Additionally, fostering a sense of purpose and continuity during this interim period will be critical to ensuring recruits remain prepared and motivated while waiting to become a permanent employee at a law enforcement agency. Without a comprehensive post-BLEA engagement plan, the risk of recruits becoming less desirable due to diminished knowledge and skill proficiency is high, undermining the effectiveness of the common hiring pool initiative.

5.13 Agency Cultural Fit

Recruits in a common hiring pool will miss out on valuable time immersing themselves in the specific culture and operations of individual law enforcement agencies, which could make them less prepared and less desirable to potential employers. Understanding an agency's unique environment, values, operational nuances, and the communities they serve is crucial for a recruit's effectiveness and integration into that organization. To address this gap, the WSCJTC will need to implement additional training efforts that simulate agency-specific scenarios to ensure that common hiring pool recruits are prepared to serve the agencies that would potentially hire them as permanent employees. This would necessitate partnering with various agencies to provide exposure to different working environments or incorporating comprehensive cultural competency modules into the training curriculum, so recruits are prepared for a wide variety of situations within diverse communities. Without these efforts, recruits might face a steeper learning curve when they eventually join an agency, potentially impacting their performance and the agency's willingness to hire them.

5.14 Agency Relationships

Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with law enforcement agencies to facilitate the successful transition of common hiring pool recruits will demand significant additional staff and effort from WSCJTC. This task will involve constant communication, coordination, and continuous relationship-building with various agencies to understand their specific hiring needs and timelines. Without a centralized system to track vacancies, the WSCJTC will need to create a new position dedicated to managing this information, further increasing administrative burdens. This new role would be responsible for tracking job openings, matching recruits with suitable opportunities, and ensuring timely placements, all while maintaining positive agency partnerships. The absence of such a system would lead to inefficiencies, miscommunications, and potentially prolonged recruit job searches, ultimately impacting the effectiveness and reputation of the common hiring pool initiative.

5.15 Exacerbation of Small Agency Needs

The implementation of a common hiring pool could unintentionally exacerbate the staffing challenges faced by smaller agencies. Recruits might be more inclined to seek positions with larger agencies, which often offer higher salaries, better resources and benefits, more opportunity for career advancement, and more desirable locations. This preference for larger agencies could leave smaller agencies struggling to fill their vacancies, further widening the gap in staffing levels. Consequently, the common hiring pool may fall short of its goal to address vacancies equitably across all agency sizes, instead deepening the divide between larger and smaller agencies in terms of recruitment and retention.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this feasibility study, it is not recommended that a centralized common hiring pool be established and managed by the WSCJTC to address the Law Enforcement Officer vacancy needs within Washington State.

This study indicates that only about half of the law enforcement agencies that participated in this study are interested in a common hiring pool, indicating that a mass recruiting and hiring approach will not be holistically effective. It is also important to note that only 25 percent of law enforcement agencies chose to participate in this study so there are a significant number of agencies whose needs are not represented, which could potentially increase the number of agencies who would not utilize a common hiring pool, putting Washington State and WSCJTC resources at risk if this approach were to be implemented.

If the key goals for implementing a common hiring pool are to increase the recruitment of qualified candidates—especially for small, tribal, and limited agencies; to fill officer vacancies across the state; and to reduce the backlog of BLEA trainees, then there are other viable solutions that exist

that should be examined. This section presents several courses of action (COA) that WSCJTC can take to meet these goals without having to implement a common hiring pool.

6.1 COA 1: WSCJTC as Liaison for Agency Recruiting

Rather than implementing a common hiring pool that may be grossly underutilized by agencies throughout the state, WSCJTC should consider assisting agencies with their recruitment efforts instead. This approach empowers and supports agencies to conduct their own recruitment and hiring, addressing significant issues such as finding the right fit for the agency culture, meeting salary and benefits needs and requirements, reducing the need for additional WSCJTC staff to manage recruits, and eliminates the complexity of handing off common hiring pool recruits to agencies.

To achieve this, WSCJTC would need to establish a recruitment liaison staffing position whose sole purpose would be to support and assist agency recruiting efforts. This position would help develop tailored recruitment strategies and assistance for each agency, helping them find candidates that meet their specific needs and cultural fit. Instead of hiring a full team of recruitment and HR staff to manage a common hiring pool (approximately 10 people), the WSCJTC could hire 2-3 people to assist agencies with recruitment matters. These liaisons would share and adopt best practices from agencies across the state and serve as points of contact to help direct candidates between agencies as needed. These individuals also would not necessarily require dedicated office space at WSCJTC either, they could utilize shared office space which would reduce the need for physical facilities on the WSCJTC main campus since physical space is already very limited.

Instead of allocating funds dedicated to establishing a common hiring pool managed by WSCJTC, these resources could be more effectively distributed by the recruitment liaison to better support individual agency recruiting needs. By doing so, WSCJTC can ensure that funding reaches areas of critical need, particularly small, tribal, or high-need agencies that may lack the resources for extensive recruitment campaigns. For example, funds could be used to support local recruitment events, enhance online recruitment campaigns tailored for specific communities, or develop marketing materials that resonate with diverse applicant pools. Additionally, agencies facing significant recruitment challenges can receive more substantial financial support as needed to implement innovative recruitment strategies, such as offering signing bonuses or housing grants, improving recruitment technologies, or participating in job fairs and community outreach events.

By relying on a recruiting liaison to assist agencies rather than establishing a common hiring pool, WSCJTC can create a more sustainable, equitable, and effective recruitment environment across the state, ensuring that all agencies, regardless of size or location, have access to the resources they need to attract and hire qualified candidates. This approach not only maximizes the impact of available funding, but also strengthens the overall capacity of law enforcement agencies to meet their staffing needs and better serve their communities.

6.1.1 Steps for Implementing COA 1

To implement this course of action, a series of targeted steps have been developed:

1. Establish WSCJTC Recruitment Liaisons

- a. *Hire 2-3 recruitment liaisons.* Recruit individuals familiar with law enforcement agency cultures, diverse cultures and communities within Washington State, and different agency types. These liaisons should be able to work remotely across the state and travel periodically to Burien.
- b. *Train liaisons.* Ensure liaisons are well-versed in the recruitment needs of various agencies and equipped to provide tailored support. This includes familiarization with common agency recruiting practices and processes; gaining knowledge of recruitment best practices; development of communication and outreach skills; understanding of strategies that promote diversity and cultural competence; resource and project management; and recruitment technologies and statewide vacancy tracking tools.

2. Conduct Agency Outreach

- a. *Create an outreach strategy.* Develop and implement a comprehensive outreach strategy to engage with all law enforcement agencies within the state to determine the type of recruiting assistance they need, providing them with the opportunity to “opt-in” to the support resources available through WSCJTC.
- b. *Communication and engagement.* Establish regular communication channels with agencies to understand their needs, challenges, and preferences for recruitment assistance. This includes direct calls, emails, and virtual meetings.
- c. *Relationship building.* Foster strong relationships with agency representatives to ensure ongoing collaboration and support. This includes regular check-ins and feedback sessions.

3. Create a Statewide Tracking Tool

- a. *Develop the tracking tool.* Create a statewide tracking tool using commercial-off-the-shelf or custom-built software to track agency officer vacancies and to monitor recruitment and hiring trends across all agencies. This tool will help the recruiting liaison quickly identify agencies in most immediate need of recruiting support.
- b. *Database management.* Capture all relevant information from agencies to build a comprehensive, real-time database that continuously collects, tracks, and updates information on recruitment, hiring, lateral transfers, officer longevity, etc. This helps create a sustainable solution that will help WSCJTC and law enforcement agencies better predict the type and amount of recruiting support required for agencies over time.

4. Develop a Recruitment Toolkit

- a. *Establish collection of resources.* Create a comprehensive repository of recruitment tools and resources that law enforcement agencies can access to enhance their recruitment efforts. This collection should include a variety of materials, such as templates for job postings, marketing materials for recruitment campaigns, guidelines for conducting effective interviews, and resources for assessing candidate fit.
- b. *Create a digital repository for resources.* Establish a user-friendly digital platform where recruitment resources can be easily accessed and downloaded by agencies. This platform should be organized in a way that allows agencies to quickly find the resources they need based on their specific recruitment challenges or objectives.
- c. *Advertise resources.* Share information about available resources, best practices, and successful recruitment strategies from other agencies to help them improve their recruitment efforts. Make sure that agencies know where, when, and how to access resources.
- d. *Provide ongoing support.* The toolkit should be updated regularly to ensure that all resources remain current and relevant. Training sessions and webinars should be provided to agencies to help familiarize them with the tools that are available to them and best practices for leveraging the tools within their organization.
- e. *Implement a feedback mechanism.* Create a process that allows agencies to share their experiences with the toolkit, suggest improvements, or request additional resources. This collaborative approach will help ensure that the bank of recruitment tools evolves to meet the changing needs of law enforcement agencies

5. Monitor and Analyze Data

- a. *Initiate targeted microstudies.* Track and analyze specific data trends related to recruitment, hiring, and retention of peace officers across various agency sizes and types. These microstudies should focus on key metrics such as time-to-hire, candidate demographics, turnover rates, and recruitment source effectiveness. Examining these trends will help WSCJTC gain valuable insights into the factors influencing recruitment success and identify areas of improvement.
- b. *Maintain continuous improvement.* Use the collected data and subsequent analysis to continuously refine and improve recruitment strategies and support services. Regularly reviewing data and creating action plans will ensure that recruitment practices remain responsive to changing needs and conditions and are evaluated for fair and equitable hiring practices.

By following these steps, WSCJTC can effectively assist agencies in their recruitment efforts, ensuring that all agencies, especially those with specific needs, receive the support necessary to

attract and hire qualified candidates. This approach not only maximizes the impact of available funding but also strengthens the overall capacity of law enforcement agencies to meet their staffing needs and better serve their communities.

6.2 COA 2: Create Targeted Recruitment Campaigns

In today's law enforcement recruiting landscape, agencies face significant hurdles in attracting qualified candidates who not only possess the necessary skills but also reflect the diverse demographics of the communities they serve. This is particularly true for small, tribal, and limited law enforcement agencies who may have limited resources to devote towards recruiting efforts, making it challenging to compete with larger departments that may have more robust recruitment budgets and initiatives. As a result, there is an urgent need for innovative and focused strategies to enhance their recruitment efforts.

By partnering with law enforcement agencies and tailoring recruiting initiatives to address the unique cultural and operational needs of law enforcement agencies, more effective recruitment strategies can be created that account for societal shifts in workforce priorities. Through carefully crafted messaging that resonates with diverse populations, these campaigns can help dismantle barriers and foster interest in law enforcement careers.

Additionally, community outreach plays a crucial role in this strategy. By engaging local organizations, schools, and community centers, WSCJTC recruitment liaisons can help create meaningful connections with others that promote law enforcement as a viable and rewarding career path. Hosting informational sessions and career fairs can provide potential candidates with direct access to information about job opportunities and the benefits of working within their communities.

Ultimately, the goal of these targeted recruitment campaigns is to enhance the capacity of small, tribal, and limited agencies by attracting qualified candidates who are reflective of the communities they serve. This approach not only addresses immediate recruitment challenges but also lays the groundwork for building a more inclusive and effective law enforcement workforce in the long term.

6.2.1 Steps for Implementing COA 2

To implement this course of action, a series of targeted steps have been developed:

1. Determine Agency Needs
 - a. *Compile a list of agencies requesting assistance.* Based on the agency outreach conducted in COA 1, compile a comprehensive list of small, tribal, and limited law enforcement agencies who are interested in receiving recruitment assistance. Research the community demographics and needs, collaborating closely with the agency and other community partners.

- b. *Conduct a needs assessment.* Conduct in-depth needs assessments with each agency to identify specific recruitment challenges and the qualities they seek in candidates to tailor support accordingly. Evaluate agencies' current recruitment strategies to determine what is working and what is not.
- c. *Investigate the impact of influential factors.* Examine how elements such as political climate and state-wide diversity initiatives are impacting the recruitment and hiring of law enforcement officers throughout the state. Assess how current recruitment and hiring practices address, attract, and retain diverse clients. Review existing diversity metrics and retention rates to identify gaps and areas for improvement so that more effective strategies can be developed to attract and retain a broad range of qualified candidates.

2. Develop Targeted Recruitment Strategies

- a. *Develop a tailored recruiting strategy.* Create targeted recruitment materials that resonate with the cultural and operational contexts of the agencies. Highlight the unique benefits of law enforcement careers, emphasizing community impact and personal growth. Additionally, incorporate hiring incentives to attract and retain top talent. For example, for smaller agencies that cannot afford to offer competitive salaries, WSCJTC could create a grant program to assist these agencies in offering signing bonuses or annual spot bonuses to help draw in high-quality candidates.
- b. *Design multilingual recruitment materials.* Design multilingual recruitment materials to engage non-English speaking communities, enhancing inclusivity and reach. By ensuring that brochures, flyers, and digital content are translated accurately and culturally appropriately, WSCJTC can help agencies enhance their inclusivity and demonstrate a commitment to diversity while attracting an applicant pool that is representative of the communities served.
- c. *Utilize social media platforms.* Meet potential recruits where they are by leveraging social media channels to share recruitment messages and employ targeted advertisements to reach diverse demographics. Engage potential candidates through interactive content, such as live Question and Answer sessions and informative webinars.

3. Community Engagement

- a. *Establish community partnerships.* Partner with local organizations, community centers, and schools to promote law enforcement as a viable career path. The WSCJTC recruiting liaison should help agencies organize events like informational sessions and career fairs, facilitating direct interaction between candidates and agency representatives.
- b. *Establish partnerships with educational institutions.* Collaborate with community colleges and universities to create programs that facilitate a pipeline into law

enforcement careers. Offer internships or apprenticeships that provide students with practical experience, enhancing their understanding of the profession and increasing their desire to become a peace officer.

Targeted recruitment campaigns can ensure a more robust and effective approach to attracting candidates, especially for small, tribal, and limited law enforcement agencies. This comprehensive strategy not only addresses the specific needs of these agencies but also fosters deeper community engagement and builds sustainable pathways into law enforcement careers. Ultimately, this initiative will help cultivate a diverse and qualified workforce that reflects the communities served, strengthening the overall efficacy of law enforcement across the state.

6.3 COA 3: Temporary Training Surge at Regional Academies

Implementing a temporary BLEA training surge effort at the regional academies is essential for addressing the current backlog of BLEA trainees. This initiative should include additional surge classes with space specifically allocated for limited and tribal law enforcement. A critical aspect of this plan involves evaluating staffing needs to determine whether the current TAC officer and instructor staff can handle the increased training load or if additional staff needs to be recruited and hired temporarily for the surge effort.

Additionally, it is important to establish a clear and realistic timeline for the training surge. This timeline should be flexible enough to adjust based on ongoing assessments and feedback from the academies. By strategically increasing training capacity in regional academies, WSCJTC can effectively manage and reduce the trainee backlog while supporting broader law enforcement training needs across the state.

6.3.1 Steps for Implementing COA 3

To implement this course of action, a series of targeted steps have been developed:

1. Conduct a Training Needs Analysis
 - a. *Evaluate the current backlog.* Gather data from all agencies regarding the total number of trainees currently on waitlists, differentiating between those who have completed preliminary requirements and those who have not. Evaluate the current training capacity of each regional academy, including class sizes, frequency of classes, and any physical and logistical constraints that may impact the ability to accommodate additional trainees.
 - b. *Identify specific agency needs.* Collaborate with agencies, including small, limited authority, and tribal agencies, to determine their specific training needs based on their staffing levels, anticipated retirements, and projected growth. Engage in discussions with agency leaders and staff to understand their operational challenges and priorities.

- c. *Create customized recruitment and training plans for agencies.* Work closely with each agency to develop tailored recruitment strategies that address their specific needs, including required skill sets or cultural competencies. Incorporate BLEA as a core component, but also focus on customizing both pre- and post- BLEA training to enhance overall training efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, coordinate with tribal agencies to incorporate federal training opportunities that are available for free, ensuring these resources are utilized effectively to supplement the surge effort.
- d. *Establish prioritization criteria.* Establishing prioritization for trainees in surge classes is crucial for ensuring that the most urgent and strategically important training needs are addressed first. Rather than using a “first come, first served” model which may be exacerbating the vacancy issue throughout the state, determine the community impact of those vacancies and create a prioritization model that considers agency size, staffing levels, geographical coverage, community impact, and specialized skills. A prioritization formula should be created to score each agency to ensure a fair and transparent process for allocating training slots during the surge effort.
- e. *Ensure affordability for agencies.* With the implementation of a training surge, agencies may have more trainees attending BLEA which may put strain on their agency’s financial resources. It will be important to explore alternatives for cost distribution to ensure that agencies have more flexible and equitable options, facilitating broader access to training. There are multiple cost distribution options that are feasible, such as sliding scale contribution, tiered cost sharing, shared funding models; cost reimbursement; incentive-based cost reductions; or grant opportunities.

2. Provide Staffing Support

- a. *Evaluate staffing needs.* Review the current workload and availability of TAC Officers and instructors to determine their capacity to handle additional surge classes. Identify any staffing gaps that may exist and decide whether these can be filled by existing personnel or if external hiring is necessary. Be realistic about the workload that each staff member can handle to avoid burnout and high turnover.
- b. *Develop a staffing plan.* Create a detailed staffing plan that identifies the number of additional TAC Officers and instructors that are required for the surge effort. If hiring additional staff is required, develop a recruitment strategy for hiring temporary staff if the current staffing is insufficient. It may be necessary to implement exceptions to existing policies that govern work hours, pay structures, and other operational limitations for TAC officers and instructors (see COA 4).
- c. *Recruit and train additional staff.* Provide comprehensive onboarding and training for new staff to ensure they are well-prepared to meet WSCJTC’s standards and handle the increased training load. New TAC Officers and instructors should be

familiar with the BLEA curriculum and instructional sequencing, as well as be well-versed in teaching techniques, classroom management, and student engagement strategies. If possible, pair new instructors with experienced mentors to provide guidance and support.

3. Optimize Training Timeline and Scheduling

- a. *Establish a training surge timeline.* A detailed timeline for the surge effort should be developed that “zeros out” the current BLEA backlog. This plan should include start and end dates for each additional class at the regional campuses and include contingency plans for if a class is unable to start or end on schedule. Additionally, it is crucial to establish a clear end date for the training surge to prevent continuous strain on staffing and resources.
- b. *Implement pre-academy training.* To shorten the required time trainees will need to be on campus, it is highly recommended that a pre-academy curriculum be designed to prepare trainees for BLEA prior to attending. This curriculum should be focused on creating a foundation of general knowledge so that trainees are prepared to start practical exercises immediately upon arrival at the BLEA training site. Online modules, in-person workshops, or a hybrid approach would allow trainees awaiting BLEA to begin training sooner.
- c. *Optimize resources and scheduling.* Get creative with class scheduling to ensure all logistical resources, such as classroom space and training materials, are being utilized most effectively. Ensure that all logistical details are planned and communicated well in advance, including classroom assignment, distribution of training materials, and TAC Officer and instructor schedules. Incorporate flexible planning into this process to enhance resource utilization and adaptation. For example, consider alternative schedules, such as evening or weekend classes, to accommodate more trainees without overburdening existing resources. Additionally, develop protocols for addressing unexpected logistical challenges, such as classroom unavailability or material shortages.

4. Frequently Evaluate Effectiveness

- a. *Establish a schedule for regular review.* Gather data on established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as trainee completion rates, instructor workload, and overall trainee or agency satisfaction, on a regular basis. Create a systematic review process to ensure that the training surge remains on track and can adapt to emerging needs.
- b. *Collect feedback from stakeholders.* Actively gather feedback from all stakeholders, including trainees, TAC Officers, instructors, agency representatives, and training academy support staff. This will help the WSCJTC remain flexible and responsive to the needs of trainees and staff, ensuring long-term success and sustainability of the training surge initiative.

By taking this approach, WSCJTC will be well-positioned to effectively manage the implementation of a temporary BLEA training surge at regional academies that will efficiently address the current backlog of trainees. This approach will not only alleviate the existing backlog, but will also enhance overall training capacity, providing long-term benefits for law enforcement agencies across the state. Ultimately, this initiative will build a more robust and responsive training framework, strengthening the readiness and effectiveness of the WSCJTC's responsiveness to providing quality law enforcement training.

6.4 COA 4: Increase TAC Officer and Instructor Funding

To effectively address the current backlog of BLEA trainees and to avoid future backlogs, it is imperative to prioritize increased funding for TAC officers and instructors to ensure that there is enough training staff available. This financial support is essential for preventing burnout and turnover among these vital personnel, who play a critical role in training future law enforcement officers. By ensuring that TAC officers are adequately compensated and resourced, WSCJTC can build a more sustainable training environment that encourages long-term commitment and job satisfaction among training staff.

Furthermore, during periods of heightened demand for training, it may be necessary to implement exceptions to existing policies that govern work hours, pay structures, and other operational limitations for TAC officers. Such flexibility would allow these professionals to respond effectively to surges in training needs without compromising their health and well-being. By adapting these policies, WSCJTC can create a more responsive training system that can scale up to meet increasing demands while maintaining quality and effectiveness.

In addition to these funding and policy adjustments, it is vital to conduct a thorough assessment of the current availability of TAC officers. This assessment should focus on understanding how many officers are currently engaged in training duties and their capacity to take on additional responsibilities. By projecting the potential hours needed for a training surge, WSCJTC can better plan for resource allocation, ensuring that there are enough qualified instructors available to facilitate training cohorts.

Overall, by enhancing funding for TAC officers and instructors and instituting flexible policies during peak training periods, WSCJTC can significantly reduce the backlog of BLEA trainees. This proactive approach will not only strengthen the training infrastructure but also support the broader goal of recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce within Washington State's law enforcement agencies.

6.4.1 Steps for Implementing COA 4

To implement this course of action, a series of targeted steps have been developed:

1. Assessment of Available Resources

- a. *Assess current resources.* Evaluate the current number TAC officers and instructors that are available to participate in a training surge. Consider their current workloads, existing commitments, and capacity to take on additional training responsibilities. This assessment will help determine how many officers are currently available to participate in a training surge without overwhelming them.
- b. *Project training surge hours.* Work with data analysts to estimate the total hours required for a training surge. This project should be based on historical training data, anticipated trainee numbers, and the availability of TAC officers and instructors. This information will help guide the allocation of resources and scheduling to more efficiently plan for and meet training needs.

2. Policy Review and Development

- a. *Conduct a policy review.* Examine current policies related to TAC officer and instructor work hours, pay, and operational limitations. The focus of this evaluation should be to identify restrictive provisions that hinder TAC officers' and instructors' ability to meet increased training demands.
- b. *Draft policy exceptions as needed.* Develop proposals for necessary policy adjustments, such as adjusted pay rates during surge periods. The purpose of these changes should be to allow TAC officers and instructors to take on additional responsibilities without compromising their well-being. The goal is to create a supportive environment that addresses both the needs of TAC officers and instructors as well as the urgency of reducing the BLEA trainee backlog.

3. Implementation and Monitoring

- a. *Implement approved changes.* Once funding and policy approvals are secured, promptly execute the changes to support a training surge. Ensure all affected personnel are informed and trained in a timely manner to facilitate a smooth transition.
- b. *Monitor and evaluate impact.* Set up clear metrics to monitor the impact of the funding increase and policy changes on reducing the BLEA trainee backlog. Regularly review these metrics to assess effectiveness, adjusting as needed to improve outcomes and continuously support TAC officers and instructors.
- c. *Plan for future surges.* Develop a flexible plan to handle future training surges, incorporating lessons learned from current implementation. Use recruiting and hiring data trends identified in COA 1 to inform this plan. This plan should include scalable policies and adaptable resources to efficiently manage fluctuating training demands based on law enforcement agency needs.

By implementing these steps to increase TAC officer and instructor funding and support, WSCJTC can adopt a systematic approach that will enhance training capacity, address the backlog of BLEA

trainees, and provide a sustainable framework for managing future surges. Ensuring that policies are flexible, resources are adequately assessed, funding is meticulously planned, and impacts are continuously monitored will collectively strengthen WSCJTC's ability to support law enforcement training across the state.

Appendix A

Example Interview Protocol for WSCJTC Personnel

General

- Please describe your job role and function within WSCJTC.
- How does your role relate to BLEA?

Structure & Processes Questions

- Describe the current intake and hand-off processes for BLEA graduates to law enforcement agencies.
- What are the most significant challenges you see related to running the equivalent of two additional BLEA classes per year (60 total students)?
- What existing or emerging technologies do you believe could assist with addressing these challenges and increase training capacity?

Resources Questions

- What resources (i.e., administrative staff, instructors, training equipment, etc.) are needed to run the current BLEA classes?
- Based on the current level of resourcing for current BLEA classes, what are additional resourcing considerations that would need to be taken into account if two more BLEA classes were added?

Information Exchange Questions

- Describe WSCJTC's current level of involvement with law enforcement agency recruiting efforts.
- Are there specific software or hardware solutions that you feel could streamline administrative tasks or enhance training delivery to support increased training capacity at WSCJTC?

Wellness Questions

- If two more BLEA classes per year are added, how would this impact your workload?
- Do you currently see any signs of burnout from the WSCJTC instructors and/or staff?
 - Are you noticing any staffing issues related to over-tasking?
- If additional BLEA classes were added, how would this impact the wellness of WSCJTC staff? Instructors? BLEA students?

Closing Questions

- What would the benefits of adding two additional BLEA classes be?
- What is the biggest issue or issues that will negatively impact the execution of additional BLEA training? Do you have any ideas for how to solve these problems?

Appendix B

List of Washington State Law Enforcement, Limited Law Enforcement, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies

Agencies with 10-24 Certified Peace Officers (CPO)

Agency Name	Number of CPOs	Type of Agency
Adams County Sheriff's Office	17	County
Asotin County Sheriff's Office	14	County
Bainbridge Island Police Department	22	City
Battle Ground Police Department	24	City
Black Diamond Police Department	13	City
Blaine Police Department	10	City
Buckley Police Department	11	City
Burlington Police Department	24	City
Central Washington University Police Department	11	University
Chehalis Police Department	17	City
Chehalis Tribal Law Enforcement	15	Tribal
Cheney Police Department	17	City
Clarkston Police Department	12	City
College Place Police Department	15	City
Columbia County Sheriff's Office	10	County
Colville Police Department	11	City

Cowlitz Indian Tribal Public Safety Department	16	Tribal
DuPont Police Department	14	City
Duvall Police Department	12	City
East Wenatchee Police Department	21	City
Eastern Washington University Police Department	11	University
Enumclaw Police Department	18	City
Ephrata Police Department	14	City
Ferndale Police Department	21	City
Fircrest Police Department	10	City
Gig Harbor Police Department	21	City
Grandview Police Department	17	City
Hoquiam Police Department	20	City
Klickitat County Sheriff's Office	18	City
Lake Forest Park Police Department	18	City
Liberty Lake Police Department	22	City
Lincoln County Sheriff's Office	17	County
Lower Elwha Klallam Police Department	10	Tribal
Lynden Police Department	18	City
Mill Creek Police Department	17	City
Milton Police Department	15	City
Nisqually Public Safety	21	Tribal

Normandy Park Police Department	10	City
Oak Harbor Police Department	23	City
Ocean Shores Police Department	11	City
Omak Police Department	11	City
Othello Police Department	16	City
Pacific County Sheriff's Office	15	County
Pacific Police Department	10	City
Pend Oreille County Sheriff's Office	15	County
Port Gamble S'Klallam Police Department	13	Tribal
Port Orchard Police Department	19	City
Port Townsend Police Department	14	City
Poulsbo Police Department	20	City
Prosser Police Department	10	City
Puyallup Tribal Police Department	22	Tribal
Quincy Police Department	19	City
Ridgefield Police Department	11	City
Ruston Police Department	11	City
San Juan County Sheriff's Office	18	County
Sedro-Woolley Police Department	19	City
Selah Police Department	16	City
Sequim Police Department	20	City

Shelton Police Department	14	City
Skamania County Sheriff's Office	13	County
Snoqualmie Police Department	18	City
Spokane International Airport Police Department	11	Airport
Steilacoom Department of Public Safety	12	City
Stillaguamish Police Department	11	Tribal
Sumner Police Department	17	City
Sunnyside Police Department	22	City
Suquamish Police Department	11	Tribal
Swinomish Police Department	12	Tribal
Toppenish Police Department	14	City
Union Gap Police Department	14	City
University of Washington Police Department	23	University
WA State Department of Natural Resources Police	14	Limited
WA State University Police Department, Pullman	17	University
Washougal Police Department	18	City
West Richland Police Department	22	City
Western Washington University Police Department	10	University
Whitman County Sheriff's Office	17	County

Woodland Police Department	12	City
Yelm Police Department	16	City

Agencies with 25-49 Certified Peace Officers (CPO)

Agency Name	Number of CPOs	Type of Agency
Aberdeen Police Department	33	City
Airway Heights Police Department	26	City
Anacortes Police Department	26	City
Arlington Police Department	30	City
Bonney Lake Police Department	29	City
Camas Police Department	28	City
Centralia Police Department	24	City
Clallam County Sheriff's Office	31	County
Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office	43	City
Des Moines Police Department	35	City
Douglas County Sheriff's Office	37	County
Ellensburg Police Department	28	City
Fife Police Department	29	City
Franklin County Sheriff's Office	29	County
Grays Harbor County Sheriff's Office	37	County
Island County Sheriff's Office	33	County
Issaquah Police Department	28	City

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	25	County
Kelso Police Department	25	City
Kittitas County Sheriff's Office	41	County
Lake Stevens Police Department	31	City
Lewis County Sheriff's Office	37	County
Mercer Island Police Department	30	City
Monroe Police Department	32	City
Moses Lake Police Department	42	City
Mount Vernon Police Department	36	City
Mountlake Terrace Police Department	25	City
Mukilteo Police Department	29	City
Okanogan County Sheriff's Office	25	County
Port Angeles Police Department	34	City
Pullman Police Department	31	City
Stevens County Sheriff's Office	33	County
Tumwater Police Department	31	City
Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office	30	County
Walla Walla Police Department	44	City
Wenatchee Police Department	44	City
Colville Tribal Police Department	27	Tribal

Kalispel Tribal Public Safety Department	23	Tribal
Tulalip Tribal Police Services	40	Tribal
WA State Gambling Commission	48	Limited
Aberdeen Police Department	33	City
Airway Heights Police Department	26	City
Anacortes Police Department	26	City
Arlington Police Department	30	City
Bonney Lake Police Department	29	City
Camas Police Department	28	City
Centralia Police Department	24	City
Clallam County Sheriff's Office	31	County
Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office	43	County
Des Moines Police Department	35	City
Douglas County Sheriff's Office	37	County
Ellensburg Police Department	28	City
Fife Police Department	29	City
Franklin County Sheriff's Office	29	County
Grays Harbor County Sheriff's Office	37	County
Island County Sheriff's Office	33	County
Issaquah Police Department	28	City
Jefferson County Sheriff's Office	25	County

Kelso Police Department	25	City
Kittitas County Sheriff's Office	41	County
Lake Stevens Police Department	31	City
Lewis County Sheriff's Office	37	County
Mercer Island Police Department	30	City
Monroe Police Department	32	City
Moses Lake Police Department	42	City
Mount Vernon Police Department	36	City
Mountlake Terrace Police Department	25	City
Mukilteo Police Department	29	City
Okanogan County Sheriff's Office	25	County
Port Angeles Police Department	34	City
Pullman Police Department	31	City
Stevens County Sheriff's Office	33	County
Tumwater Police Department	31	City
Walla Walla County Sheriff's Office	30	County
Walla Walla Police Department	44	City
Wenatchee Police Department	44	City
Colville Tribal Police Department	27	Tribal
Kalispel Tribal Public Safety Department	23	Tribal

Tulalip Tribal Police Services	40	Tribal
WA State Gambling Commission	48	Limited

Agencies with 50-99 Certified Peace Officers (CPO)

Agency Name	Number of CPOs	Type of Agency
Benton County Sheriff's Office	68	County
Bothell Police Department	66	City
Bremerton Police Department	54	City
Chelan County Sheriff's Office	54	County
Edmonds Police Department	52	City
Grant County Sheriff's Office	56	County
Kennewick Police Department	93	City
Kirkland Police Department	97	City
Lacey Police Department	56	City
Lakewood Police Department	96	City
Longview Police Department	54	City
Lynnwood Police Department	66	City
Marysville Police Department	70	City
Mason County Sheriff's Office	50	County
Olympia Police Department	71	City
Pasco Police Department	84	City
Puyallup Police Department	68	City
Redmond Police Department	70	City
Richland Police Department	53	City

Skagit County Sheriff's Office	53	County
Thurston County Sheriff's Office	81	County
Tukwila Police Department	62	City
Whatcom County Sheriff's Office	87	County
Yakima County Sheriff's Office	60	County
WA State Parks & Recreation	93	Limited

Agencies with 100-249 Certified Peace Officers (CPO)

Agency Name	Number of CPOs	Type of Agency
Auburn Police Department	103	City
Bellevue Police Department	157	City
Bellingham Police Department	113	City
Clark County Sheriff's Office	134	County
Everett Police Department	182	City
Federal Way Police Department	114	City
Kent Police Department	154	City
Kitsap County Sheriff's Office	119	County
Port of Seattle Police Department	116	Port
Renton Police Department	118	City
Spokane County Sheriff's Office	216	County
Vancouver Police Department	217	City

WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife Police	137	Limited
Yakima Police Department	118	City
WA State Liquor and Cannabis Board	100	Limited

Agencies with 250+ Certified Peace Officers (CPO)

Agency Name	Number of CPOs	Type of Agency
King County Sheriff's Office	697	County
Pierce County Sheriff's Department	288	County
Seattle Police Department	1049	City
Snohomish County Sheriff's Office	274	County
Spokane Police Department	337	City
Tacoma Police Department	323	City
WA State Patrol (WSP)	912	Other

Appendix C

Questions for Agency Online Survey

Survey Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this 15-minute survey. Please answer each question to the best of your ability. Your answers will remain anonymous.

Your insights will be considered in the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission's plan to determine the feasibility of increasing training capacity. The WSCJTC wants to better understand the impact this will have on law enforcement agencies throughout the state, as well as identify any additional resources and/or requirements related to recruiting, hiring, and training an additional 60 recruits per year.

Demographic Questions for All Respondents

- What is your agency type?
 - City
 - County
 - State
 - Limited
 - Tribal
- In which region of Washington State is your agency located? [[image of regional map](#) was included in the question stem]
 - Peninsula/Coastal
 - Northwest
 - North Puget Sound
 - South Puget Sound
 - Southwest
 - North Central
 - South Central
 - Northeast
 - Southeast
- How long have you been at your agency?
 - Year(s): _____
 - Month(s): _____
- What is your job role/function within your agency?
 - Recruiting
 - Human Resources
 - Training
 - Other _____
- How long have you been in your current role?
 - Year(s): _____

- Month(s): _____

Questions Related to Recruiting

- Describe the steps in your agency's recruitment process.
- Where does your agency look for new recruits? (check all that apply)
 - Citywide
 - Countywide
 - Statewide
 - Nationwide
- Describe the general recruitment strategies used within your agency.
- Describe the characteristics and/or qualifications that make a recruit most appealing to your organization.
- Describe the process of vetting potential recruits.
- What is the most significant factor that plays into a recruit's decision to join your organization? (select all that apply??)
 - Salary
 - Benefits
 - Gaining experience
 - Organizational Culture
 - Other: _____
- What are the most significant challenges you encounter as a recruiter? (select all that apply??)
 - Lack of recruit applications
 - Lack of qualified recruits
 - Lack of diverse recruits
 - Lack of support staff for recruiting efforts
 - Lack of funding for recruiting efforts
 - Other: _____
- Describe any regular/recurring factors that cause a potential recruit to decline a position at your agency.
- Do you use any specific technology platforms and/or softwares for recruiting?
 - Yes
 - What specific technology platforms and/or softwares is your agency using for recruiting?
 - No
 - Are there any specific technology platforms and/or softwares that you think would enhance your ability to recruit?
- What methods and/or metrics do you use to determine if your recruiting efforts have been successful?
- What would help your agency be more successful in recruiting high quality candidates?
- Based on your experience, what are some ways the recruiting process at your agency could be improved?
- Would your recruiting efforts benefit from additional support provided by your agency?

- Yes
 - What additional support would be helpful?
- No
 - Why not?
- Would your recruiting efforts benefit from additional support provided by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC)?
 - Yes
 - What additional support would be helpful?
 - No
 - Why not?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding recruiting at your agency?

Questions Related to Human Resources

- How many Certified Peace Officers does your agency currently have?
 - 1-9
 - 10-24
 - 25-49
 - 50-99
 - 100-249
 - 250 or more
- Do you know how many Certified Peace Officer vacancies there currently are within your organization?
 - Yes
 - How many vacancies are there? _____
 - No
- Does your agency have a formalized process and/or tool that is used for tracking the number of Peace Officer vacancies within your agency?
 - Yes
 - Please describe that process and/or tool.
 - No
 - Not sure
- How many total agency positions are allocated for recruiting?
 - 0
 - 1-2
 - 3-5
 - 5 or more
- Are the total positions allocated to support recruiting sufficient?
 - Yes
 - No
 - What type and how many additional positions are needed?
- How are the following positions staffed within your agency?
 - Physical Ability Testing Full time Part time Contractor

- Background Investigation Full time Part time Contractor
 - Drug Testing Full time Part time Contractor
 - Psychological Testing Full time Part time Contractor
 - Polygrapher Full time Part time Contractor
- Describe the HR steps involved in hiring and onboarding a new recruit as an agency employee.
- How long does it take to onboard a new recruit as an employee?
 - 1-2 days
 - 3-4 days
 - 5-7 days
 - 8 or more days
- How many total agency positions are allocated to support onboarding new recruit employees?
 - 1-2
 - 3-5
 - 5 or more
- Are the total positions allocated to support hiring and onboarding new recruit employees sufficient?
 - Yes
 - No
 - What type and how many additional positions are needed?
- On average, what is the starting salary for a non-certified recruit within your agency?
- Do new recruits within your agency get additional employee benefits? (such as health or dental insurance, etc.)
 - Yes
 - What additional benefits do they receive?
 - No
- On average, what is the starting salary for a new recruit within your agency?
- Are there employee benefits that Certified Peace Officers have that new recruits do not receive? (such as retirement fund, union, etc.)
 - Yes
 - What additional benefits do Certified Peace Officers receive that non-certified Officers do not receive?
 - No
- Based on your experience, what are some ways the hiring and onboarding process at your agency could be improved?
- Would your hiring and onboarding efforts benefit from additional support provided by your agency?
 - Yes
 - What additional support would be helpful?
 - No
 - Why not?
- Would your hiring and onboarding efforts benefit from additional support provided by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC)?

- Yes
 - What additional support would be helpful?
- No
 - Why not?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding the hiring and onboarding HR processes for new recruits at your agency?

Questions Related to Training

- Once a new recruit is hired, what is the average wait time before they attend BLEA?
 - 1-2 weeks
 - 3-4 weeks
 - 2-3 months
 - 4-6 months
 - 6 months or more
- Describe what tasks new recruits do within the agency while awaiting BLEA training.
- Is your agency in contact with a recruit while they are attending BLEA?
 - Yes
 - How much contact does your agency have with a recruit while they are attending BLEA?
 - At least 1 time per week
 - More than 1 time per week
 - At least 1 time per month
 - More than one time per month
 - Other (Please specify) _____
 - No
- Is your agency in contact with the TAC Officers while a recruit is attending BLEA?
 - Yes
 - How much contact does your agency have with the TAC Officers?
 - At least 1 time per week
 - More than 1 time per week
 - At least 1 time per month
 - More than one time per month
 - Other (Please specify) _____
 - No
- Describe the additional training process/pipeline a BLEA graduate goes through when they return to your agency.
- Are you satisfied with the time it takes to get a BLEA graduate trained up and transitioned into an unsupervised job role?
 - Yes
 - No
 - What would you do to improve the additional training process/pipeline at your agency for BLEA graduates?
- Based on your experience, what are some ways the training process at your agency

could be improved to help newly Certified Peace Officers become operationally deployable faster?

- Would additional support provided by your agency help to better prepare your agency's BLEA graduates for an unsupervised job role sooner?
 - Yes
 - What additional support would be helpful?
 - No
 - Why not?
- Would additional support provided by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) help to better prepare your agency's BLEA graduates for an unsupervised job role sooner?
 - Yes
 - What additional support would be helpful?
 - No
 - Why not?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding the training process for new recruits at your agency?

WSCJTC Hiring Pool Questions for All Respondents

[Section introduction text] As a potential solution for increasing training capacity, the Washington State Legislature is interested in determining the value of having a common pool of law enforcement candidates for agencies to fill Peace Officer vacancies throughout the state.

- If the WSCJTC recruited, selected, and trained a pool of law enforcement candidates for your agency to hire, do you think your agency would employ these candidates?
 - Yes
 - What are the reasons your agency would be interested in this?
 - No
 - What are the reasons your agency would not be interested in this?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding a common hiring pool for law enforcement officer candidates within Washington State?

Final Questions for All Respondents

[Section introduction text] Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated. If there is any additional information that you think would help the WSCJTC create a plan for increasing training capacity, we would like to contact you to schedule a short 30-minute follow-up interview.

- Are you interested in providing additional information in a follow-up interview?
 - Yes
 - Please provide your email address.
 - No