

CITY OF FITCHBURG POLICE OFFICER APPLICATION: ESSAY QUESTION GUIDANCE

The essay question portion of the application is perhaps the most important component of your application. These essay questions provide an opportunity for you to relate your relevant life experiences to the position you are applying for. In a sense, your application serves as your true “first impression”, so make it count!

Furthermore, one of the most valued skills of a police officer is the ability to effectively communicate. Written communication in particular, is one of the most utilized skills of police officers. Your responses to these questions help to provide insight into your ability to communicate effectively in writing.

Remember applications are evaluated and scored by a panel of police department employees and serve as your introduction to the department. Invitations to the next step of the hiring process are based on your application score.

Past applicants with impressive employment and educational history have failed to move on to the next step in the hiring process due in part to poor responses to the essay questions.

We invite you to review each question and some examples of things the panel may look for in red below. Remember to use your unique life experience, work experience, education and other skills and abilities to answer these questions as best you can. There are no correct answers to these questions. Essay question responses are evaluated based on content, completeness, grammar and spelling.

We hope you take this opportunity to thoughtfully answer each question and we look forward to reading your responses.

1. Describe (in one or two paragraphs) any notable life experiences that may contribute to your ability to perform in this position.

This question is not narrowly asking for your experience solely related to law enforcement or police work. Even if you have experience in law enforcement, tell us how that experience would contribute to your ability to perform in this position.

Think of life experiences you have had that may relate to the role of a police officer or experiences that you think would help you be a successful police officer. Keep in mind police officers have many roles including: problem solver, counselor, social worker, mediator, law enforcer, observer, reporter, team member, etc.

Life experiences may include work, education, travel, study abroad, volunteer work, personal challenges you've faced, family situations, places you have lived or anything else you think would help contribute to your ability to perform in this position.

A key to this question is describing the experience and relating it to the work/your ability to work as a police officer. Do not simply list your experiences. Recent experience is a plus but feel free to use any experience you find relevant.

2.. Describe (in one or two paragraphs) any experiences you may have had in successfully interacting with culturally diverse groups (race, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion, etc.)

Successful police officers are able to relate to a wide array of individuals from diverse groups. Describe experiences you have had interacting with culturally diverse groups. If you don't have experience interacting with culturally diverse groups, describe experience you have working with groups or individuals who are different than you.

3.. Describe (in one or two paragraphs) any extracurricular involvement you have had in school, work, or the community.

Again, recent experience is preferred but you may share any involvement. Do not simply list the organization but also describe your role, responsibilities and accomplishments.

4. Describe (in one or two paragraphs) and give an example of the process you use to solve problems and make decisions.

Specifically describe how you solve problems and make decisions. Do not forget to provide an example.

5.. Describe (in one or two paragraphs) an effective team you have been involved with and what you think makes an effective team.

Ideally, your description of the team would include a brief summary of the type of team, your role on the team and why it was an effective team. Remember to include what you think makes an effective team (skills, attributes, roles, etc).

6. Describe (in one or two paragraphs) the range of your use of computer technology and software in your school, work, or personal life.

Feel free to include and describe your use of technology in school, work and/or your personal life. Are you proficient? Just beginning? Name specific software.

7. List any honors, awards, or commendations you have received.

Recent honors, awards or commendations you have received are likely most relevant but feel free to list any you have received. While the question asks you to list them, you may wish to offer a brief explanation of the award and why you received it.