



Police Licensing Fact Sheet

What Is Police Licensing?

Most states require police officers to have licenses to do their jobs. A license creates basic standards of conduct officers must meet to keep their jobs. It lets departments know that their officers who have worked in other New Jersey police departments have clean records and are qualified to serve and protect the community. Licensing keeps unfit officers from moving from department to department and makes sure officers who commit serious acts of misconduct cannot wear a badge in the state. New Jersey licenses over 200 professions, including nail technicians and food service workers, but not police officers.

Police Licensing: A Path to Justice

Forty-three states have established licensing or certification systems for police officers. Under these systems, licenses can be revoked when officers commit certain crimes or misconduct. States like Texas and Florida take away over 100 licenses each year because police officers violated their obligations. In studies analyzing revoked licenses in Missouri and Florida, most officers who lost their licenses were accused of sex crimes or abusing their power against women. With so many licensing programs nationwide and such high stakes in terms of public safety and citizens' rights, why hasn't New Jersey established police licensing?

New Jersey, Stand Up!

The time for New Jersey to take police professionalism seriously is now. Despite all of the talk about racial profiling and other problems with police in New Jersey, we're one of only seven states that don't professionally license our officers. Licensing systems work because they protect every person in a state. They permanently remove an abusive officer's license and prevent any police department in the same state from hiring him or her again. We need the governor and legislature to establish a strong and fair licensing system. New Jerseyans deserve high standards for professionalism in policing and public confidence in police officers, and even more, we demand them.

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