

Top 10 Reasons

Why Now is the Best Time to Obtain a Master's Degree in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership



Table of Contents

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| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction: Top 10 Reasons Why Now is the Best Time to Obtain a Master's Degree in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership | 3 |
| Acquire Leadership & Management Skills | 6 |
| Job Security | 10 |
| Police Community Relations Are in Need of Reform | 12 |
| Training in Cutting Edge Law Enforcement Technology | 14 |
| Gain a Deeper Understanding of Laws, Court Procedures and Decisions | 16 |
| Study Current and Future Industry Trends | 18 |
| Learn When You Want and Where You Want | 21 |
| Spend Less: Discounts for Military, Veterans and Members of Public Safety Associations or Unions | 23 |
| Increase Your Marketability and Stay in Demand in a Rapidly Evolving Field | 25 |
| Connect with Other Leaders in the Field | 27 |
| Conclusion | 29 |
| Resources | 31 |

America in the 21st century

America has seen a host of security threats from abroad and at home coupled with wide-ranging domestic crime issues and an expanding mistrust of law enforcement.

From street gangs to white-collar crime, transnational drug trafficking to recidivism and terrorist attacks, the issues facing law enforcement personnel today are extreme and far reaching.



As the world and issues facing law enforcement personnel have changed over the years many educational institutions have not kept up.

What was taught 20 years ago in traditional criminal justice programs is, in most cases, still being taught today, but it's outdated. And it's not just the education that's outdated, it's many of the police organizations themselves.

According to a National Institute of Justice article titled, Police Leadership Challenges in a Changing World:

“There is still a widespread tendency to adhere to outdated and ineffective management practices.

For example, even the way a department's overall effectiveness is traditionally measured and tracked — typically some aspect of response time or fulfillment of calls for service — lacks relevance to current expectations of and for police.”

This lag in both law enforcement education and workplace practices, coupled with an entire generation of baby boomers on the cusp of retirement and technological advances over the past decade, has created a tremendous opportunity for current and up and coming law enforcement professionals to drive change and improve the system.

In order to create this change and be most effective, law enforcement professionals need to be adequately prepared.

A master's degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership prepares law enforcement professionals for leadership positions through training in law, finance, communication, technology, conflict resolution and community engagement.

Students receive leadership and management training in today's issues, today's technology and for today's workplace. A degree in law enforcement leadership offers more than a traditional criminal justice degree by focusing on current issues and offering applicable, real world, 21st century skills.

This eBook will examine

Why now is an ideal time for law enforcement professionals to further their education and the top 10 benefits to obtaining a master's degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership.

Reason One

Acquire Leadership & Management Skills



Contemporary law enforcement is complex and requires a diverse skill set,

which many law enforcement professionals never received in their primary training, often due to outdated curriculums. Based on two years of research with law enforcement and public safety leadership and experts, the University of San Diego determined that many of the skills taught in criminal justice degree programs today were relevant 20 years ago, but failed to keep up with the evolving industry and world.

Additionally, according to policechiefmagazine.org, as well as many industry experts, there is a looming leadership crisis in the law enforcement industry. With the baby boomer generation entering retirement, law enforcement leadership positions are opening up more and more frequently and oftentimes being filled by officers without any formal training in management and leadership.



There is a shift happening.

Moving from one generation of leaders to the next. Unfortunately, many organizations have failed to adequately prepare the next generation.

As Gary Brown, former chief of police and current principle in a California based public sector recruitment firm, said in a policechiefmagazine.org article,

“If the law enforcement profession is serious about solving the current leadership crisis, and the crisis that looms in the future, agencies must begin targeting recruitment efforts at the most qualified workers today. Locally recruited leadership candidates should be identified early so that they may be afforded the time to be properly prepared for the police leadership positions of the future.”

The article went on to say,

“Today’s leaders must realize the traditionalist approaches to leadership transition will not prepare law enforcement to attract and retain the millennial generation members who will follow them into the workplace.”



A master's degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership offers the additional training necessary to fill these leadership roles and be successful while standing out amongst the competition.

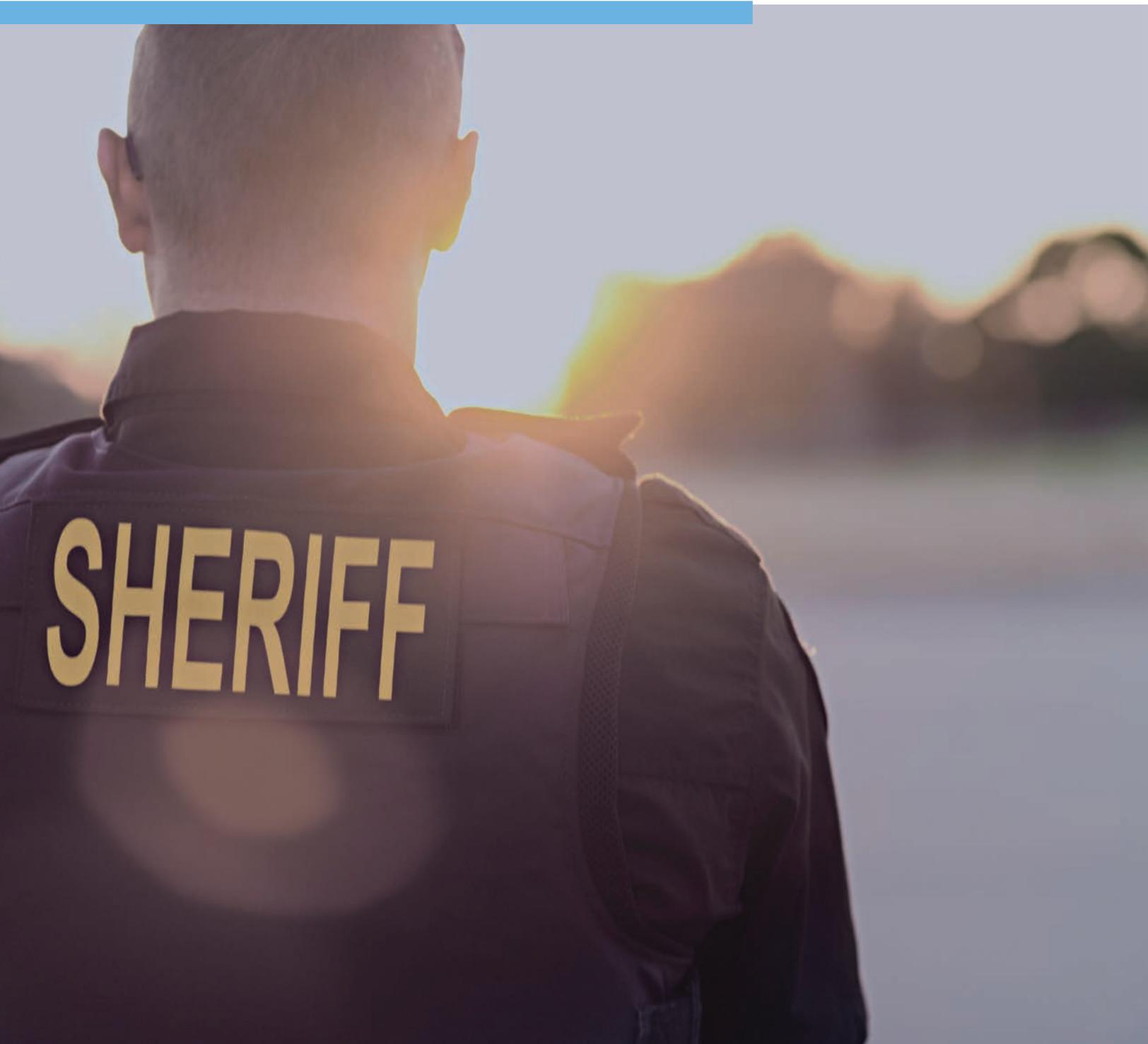
By focusing on what is relevant today

and providing skills-based learning in management, leadership, communication, conflict resolution, budgeting and organizational leadership, a law enforcement and public safety leadership degree is an invaluable tool for professionals during a time of transition and opportunity.



Reason Two

Job Security



Going back to school typically requires a large financial commitment as well as a time commitment;

two very important factors for anyone considering a secondary education.

It is important to determine if the payoff is worth the investment.

When it comes to the law enforcement field, the payoff looks promising-especially in the area of job security. A career in law enforcement means job security for three main reasons:

Crime is an ever-present reality

Besides the domestic public safety threats, international terrorism and drug trafficking are major sources of concern, requiring constant surveillance and policing, not to mention additional resources to monitor such vast networks and information.

In the public police sector it's not about profit, it's about protection

As an employee of the public sector you are less likely to get laid off should hard times hit, because in good times or bad, protecting the safety of citizens is always a priority. Unlike the private sector, profit is not the main driver.

Baby boomers in leadership positions are retiring

As baby boomers in leadership positions retire from law enforcement, replacements with leadership skills will be needed.

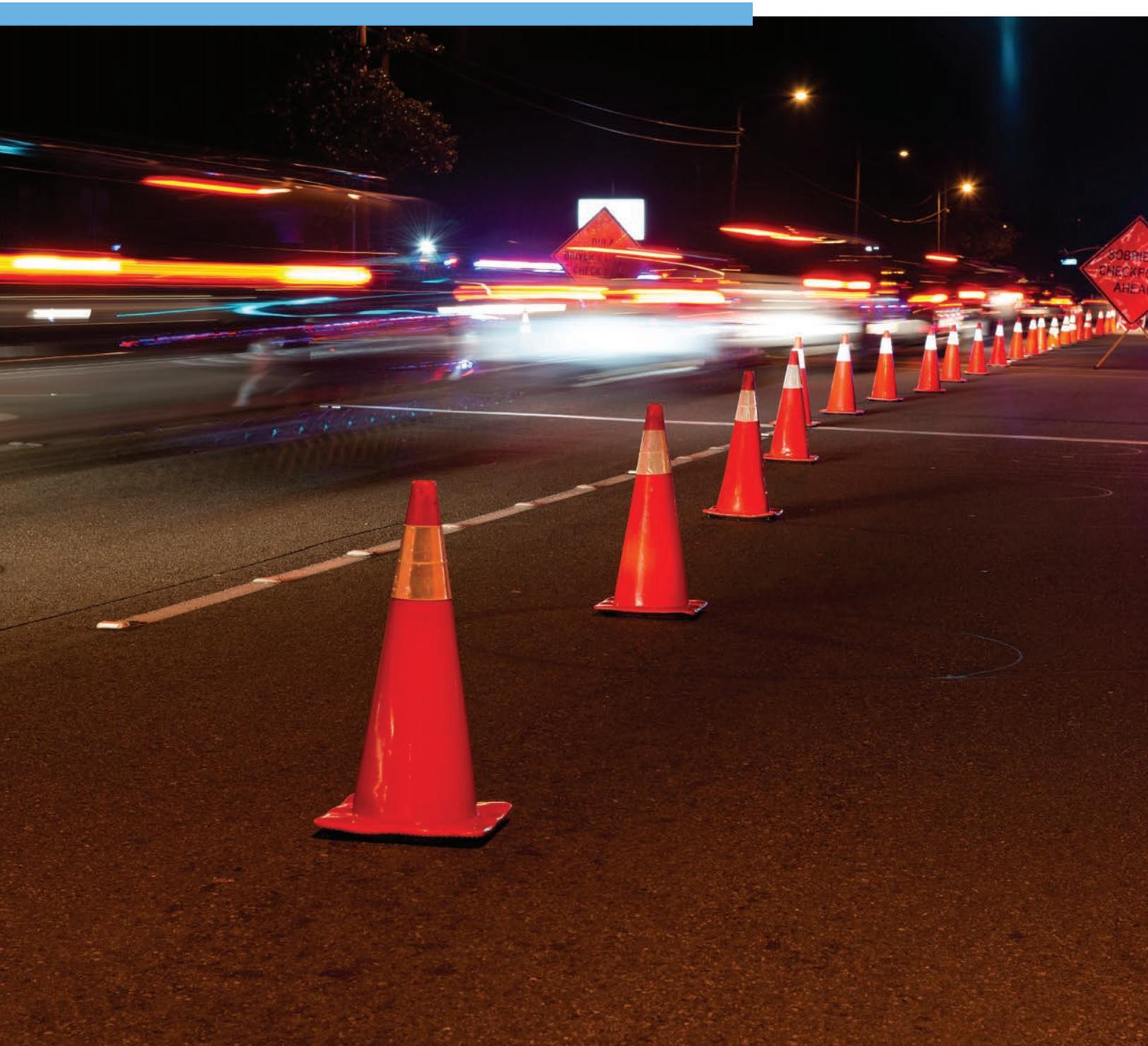
36,000
NEW JOBS

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics

there will be an estimated 36,000 new jobs available for first-line supervisors of police and detectives by 2022.

Reason Three

Police Community Relations Are in Need of Reform



In the wake of Freddie Gray, Michael Brown and Eric Garner, community and police relations are strained to say the least.

Not since Rodney King has there been so much public distrust and discord with law enforcement.

So what's the answer for an industry in desperate need of reform and a major image overhaul?

According to many the answer is education.

William Terrill, a Michigan State University criminologist and co-author of a recent study on police attitudes in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, stated in an MSUtoday article,

“College educated officers are less likely to use force on citizens.”

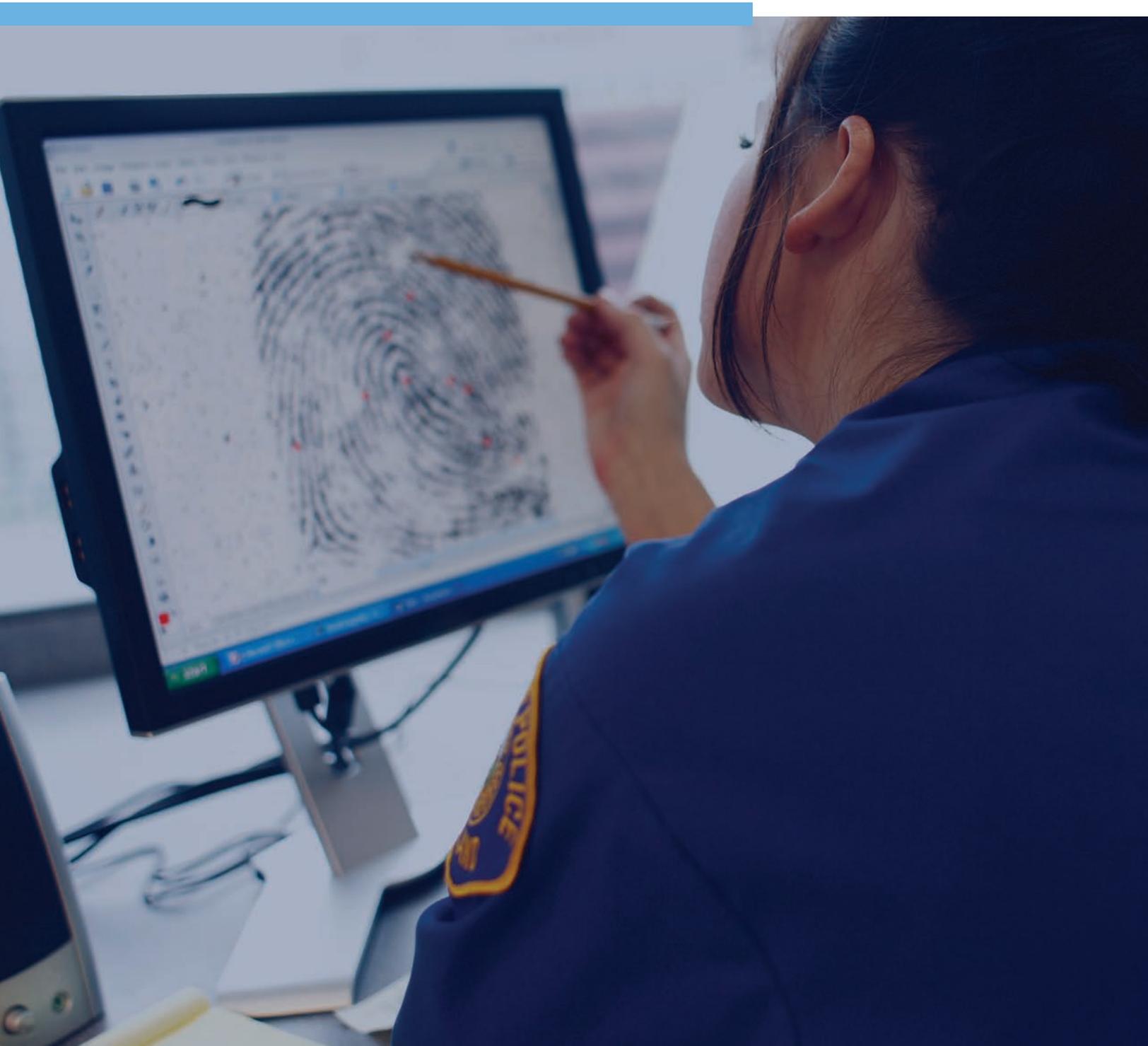
And in a paper titled *The Impact of a College Educated Police Force: A Review of the Literature*, Dr. Rebecca Paynich remarked, “In summary, a better educated police force has been a primary component of every reform movement since key activists such as Sir Robert Peel in England in the 1800s and August Vollmer in America in the 1900s began studying and writing about law enforcement. Having college educated officers has also been a strong recommendation of nearly every

national commission and is of such importance, many agencies nationwide offer a variety of incentives to its officers to pursue higher education.”

A degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership takes a criminal justice education a step further by taking into account the pressing issues of today such as police brutality and community relations. A strong program in law enforcement will focus on ethics and integrity with conflict resolution and evidence-driven decision making as key components.

Reason Four

Training in Cutting Edge Law Enforcement Technology





Technological innovations have been changing the law enforcement landscape.

From drones to body cameras to GPS tagging systems and thermal imaging technology, law enforcement officials now have the ability to enhance public safety through the use of cutting edge technology. But just like any technology, it is only useful if the operator knows how to use it and maximize its potential. A degree in law enforcement will train students in the latest technological advances and field applications.

In the article *Police Leadership Challenges in a Changing World*, it was stated, “In an era where technology, financial institutions and terrorist threats are constructed on global landscapes, a greater awareness and knowledge of global history, and connectivity to global issues and their impact on crime, will all be necessary in that crime of the future will also be global and supported by a strong technological base.” (Clarke and Knake, 2010)

Not only will it be important for law enforcement professionals to understand how to use technology for their own good, but they will also need to understand how others are using technology to commit crimes.

Reason Five

Gain a Deeper Understanding of Laws, Court Procedures and Decisions



Many law enforcement professionals obtained a degree in criminal justice or perhaps just received training through a private agency or their department.

Whatever the case, most professionals today never studied legal theory or took a class in court procedures, never mind learning about budgeting and hiring. As roles change and the industry evolves, leaders in the field will need to know more than the criminal justice basics. In order to be the most effective leaders, law enforcement professionals will need to understand how the criminal justice system works as a whole, beyond just their duties as a police officer. Furthermore, as leaders are often managers as well, business and employee relations skills are crucial.



Reason Six

Study Current and Future Industry Trends

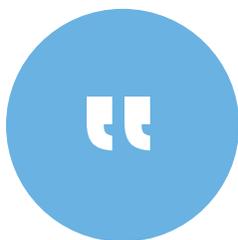


POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS



A strong master's program in law enforcement will emphasize study based around current societal concerns and trends of the 21st century.

Today's trends deal with police community relations, technology advances, regulation and mental health issues to name a few. Oftentimes many of these issues are inter-related and presented to officers who were never trained to respond to such situations or individuals.



As a recent *Washington Post* article said,

“Criminal justice experts say police are often ill-equipped to respond to such individuals (mentally ill) — and that the encounters too often end in needless violence. ‘This a national crisis,’ said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, an independent research organization devoted to improving policing. ‘We have to get American police to rethink how they handle encounters with the mentally ill. Training has to change.’”

Not surprisingly then, the trends of the 21st century deal largely with police response.

According to the investigation, risk and security management company Hillard Heintze, the top 4 trends in law enforcement in 2015 are:

Community Oriented Policing
as a Strategic Priority for Every Single
State and Local Law Enforcement Agency

Increased Federal Oversight
of Police Accountability

The Use of Social Media
in Law Enforcement Investigations

Body Cameras
Increasing pressure on agencies to use them

For those who aspire to leadership positions,

Understanding current trends and being able to think differently in order to create solutions is vitally important. By honing and developing critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration skills – all objectives of a strong law enforcement master’s program-law enforcement professionals are better prepared to react appropriately in any given situation, without using undue force or wielding

extreme displays of power. As anyone in the field already knows, a day in the life of a police officer or law enforcement professional can be unpredictable. Gaining the skills to deal with a diversity of high-stress situations in an efficient and appropriate manner, and understanding the major issues and trends facing the industry, is a major asset and a benefit to any department, not to mention the first sign of a great leader.

Reason Seven

Learn When You Want and Where You Want



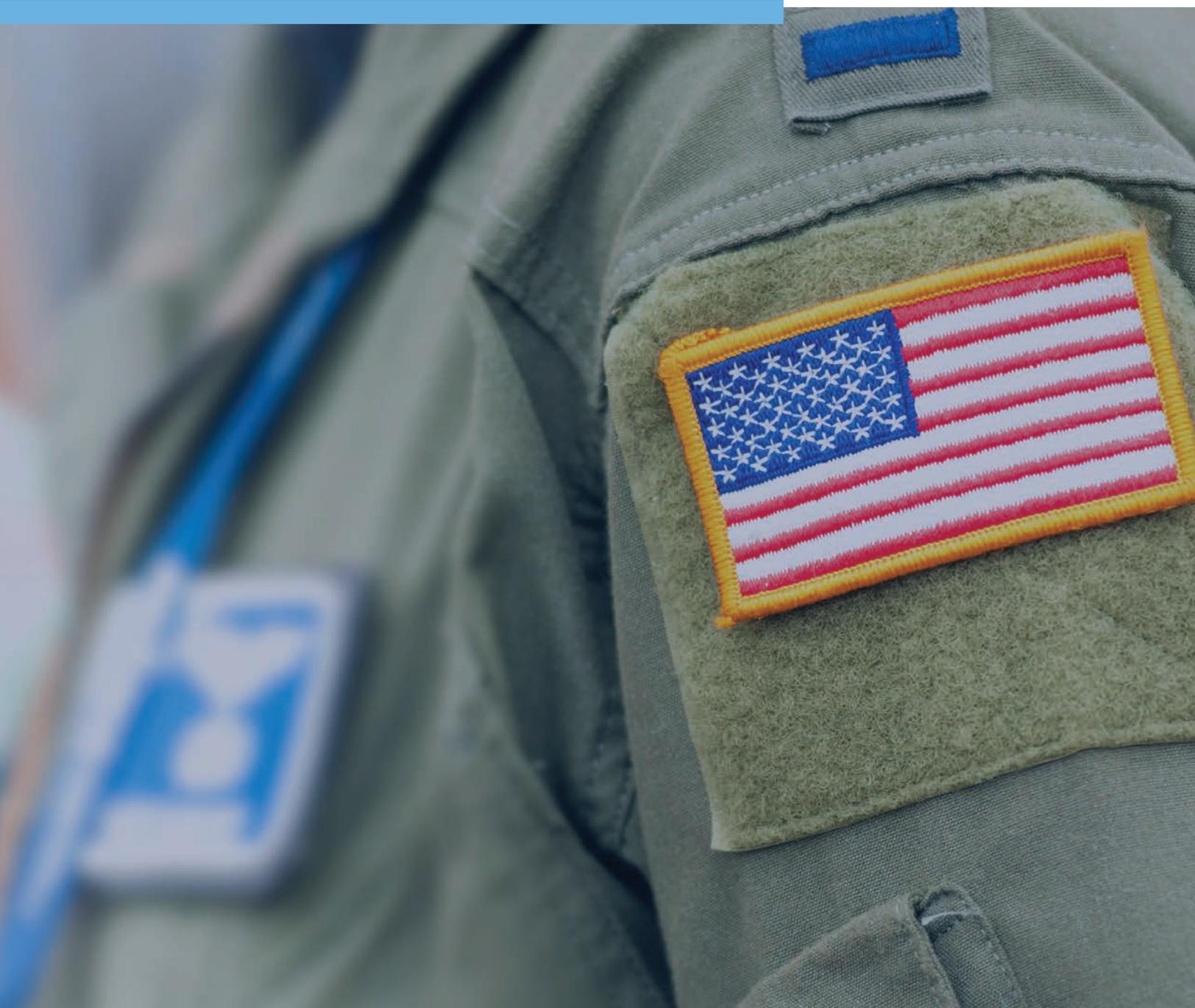
For busy professionals, finding the time for a secondary degree can be difficult.

Luckily, many law enforcement programs recognize this and offer flexible, part-time schedules that can typically be completed within two years. Some programs even offer 100% online degrees. For law enforcement professionals with full-time careers, possibly working different shifts from week to week, an online degree option can be ideal. With online learning, students get all the benefits of a typical classroom education but with the flexibility to study when and where is most convenient. For master's degree candidates in law enforcement programs this flexibility is key to maintaining a job and family life while simultaneously advancing their career.



Reason Eight

Spend Less: Discounts for Military, Veterans and Members of Public Safety Associations or Unions





Just as time can be an obstacle when it comes to obtaining a secondary degree, so too can money.

Yet, when it comes to the law enforcement field, there are a number of options for discounted tuition and financial support. In addition to federal financial aid, many colleges and universities offer discounts to:

*Law Enforcement and
Public Safety Association/
Union Members*

*Active
Military*

Veterans

*Military
Spouses*

Plus, many law enforcement agencies and organizations offer tuition reimbursement and salary increases as a part of their benefits package.

Reason Nine

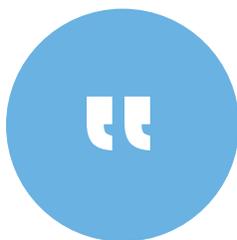
Increase Your Marketability and Stay in Demand in a Rapidly Evolving Field



While the law enforcement industry is facing a looming leadership crisis, the overall job market for law enforcement professionals is competitive and is projected to *remain* competitive for the foreseeable future.

While leadership positions will be more and more available as baby boomers retire, the competition for those positions will be high. Departments will be able to act fairly selectively, meaning candidates will have to set themselves apart from their competition if they want to fill these managerial leadership roles.

According to an article in bluesheepdog.com, James Henderson, who chairs the College of Criminal Justice and Security at the University of Phoenix Southern California Campus, stated:



“To set yourself up against the competition, you definitely want to try to get as much advanced education as possible.

Truly, employers within the criminal justice and security fields are looking for employees who can make an impact in their organization. The days of having an associate’s degree to set you apart are gone. The era of obtaining a bachelor’s or master’s degree is here.”

Reason Ten

Connect with Other Leaders in the Field



Obtaining a master's degree in law enforcement leadership has benefits that go beyond education.

The connections that are made over the course of a program—both with fellow students and faculty members—can be invaluable. For law enforcement professionals considering a master's degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership and in the process of comparing degree programs from multiple schools, it is important to factor in the quality of the faculty as well as your potential peer group. Many professors teaching law enforcement master's programs are also active members of the police force or were former law enforcement professionals. For students, these teachers can be excellent resources for potential job leads and help to broaden students' professional networks.

In addition to creating relationships with professors, the relationships students create with one another are unique in that the students all share a similar passion and goal.

Master's programs are made up of people who

generally are serious about the area of study they have chosen and are oftentimes already working in the field and members of industry groups and clubs. By connecting with other like-minded people through a master's program, student professionals grow their network and benefit from the diverse opportunities these connections present.

Online programs, which give students the flexibility to both work and study from anywhere in the world, require high participation and collaboration via web chats and calls. Students not only connect and build relationships with their professors, who are often local to the university, but also with students who could be from anywhere in the country or world, offering a valuable diversity of views and experience.

In addition, some online degree programs host meet-ups for students both on campus and online to allow networking in a traditional sense as well. Also, students are often clustered in geographic areas and meet on their own to not only study, but network.

The benefits of a master's degree in law enforcement are hard to understate,

especially as the industry goes through major change and departments look for strong leaders with fresh ideas and the skills to back them up. As the Council of Graduate Schools said in a Washington Post article,

“In the world that looms before us, increasingly, a bachelor’s degree is no longer sufficient for future success.

Individuals who earn a master’s degree will gain an edge in this increasingly competitive global marketplace, earn more money over the course of their careers and play a substantial leadership role in the evolving knowledge economy of the 21st century.”





The University of San Diego, ranked as one of the top 100 national universities by *U.S. News and World Report*, offers a cutting-edge Master's in Law Enforcement and Public Safety Leadership that is:

- 100% online
- Designed to be completed in just 20 months
- Taught by accomplished practitioner faculty and professors with extensive law enforcement and public safety experience
- Unique in its multi-faceted focus on law enforcement education that examines leadership, management, organizational theory, critical issues, community assessment, budget and finance, public safety law and conflict resolution

For more information on our program,
please visit CriminalJustice.SanDiego.edu or call (888) 832.0239

RESOURCES

[National Institute of Justice](#)

Police Leadership Challenges in a Changing World, 2012

[Police Chief Magazine](#)

Ready or Not Here They Come: The Millennial Generation Enters the Workplace, 2005

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

[Massachusetts Chiefs of Police](#)

The Impact of a College Educated Police Force: A Review of the Literature, 2009

[Hillard Heintze](#)

The Top 4 Trends in Law Enforcement That Will Dominate 2015

[Police Executive Research Forum.](#)

Future Trends in Policing, 2014.