

Tribal Police Pilot Program (TPPP) FAQs

1. Is this a State of California sponsored pilot program?

The Tribal Police Pilot Program (TPPP) was created by the California Legislature through AB 134, codified as California Penal Code sections 830.83, 832.55, and 11073 et seq., and is administered by the California Department of Justice (CA DOJ), in coordination with the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). It provides an opportunity for up to three federally recognized Tribes to designate certain Tribal police officers as California peace officers under specified conditions.

2. What is the intended outcome of the TPPP?

The results of the TPPP will inform the State Legislature on whether granting peace officer authority to Tribal law enforcement agencies improves public safety outcomes, including crime reduction, case clearance rates, and community trust. CA DOJ is required to submit an interim report in 2028 and a final report in 2030 with recommendations for future action.

3. What happens when the TPPP ends?

The State peace officer authority granted to participating Tribal officers automatically ends on July 1, 2029, unless extended by future legislation. Tribes retain their inherent sovereignty and authority to operate their own law enforcement departments. Reporting and evaluation activities required by the TPPP will continue through January 2030. Although Tribal peace officer authority automatically ends on July 1, 2029, individual peace officers who have obtained peace officer certifications (i.e., Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, etc.) will retain their certifications in the same manner as any other POST certified California peace officer.

4. What needs to happen to make the TPPP permanent?

Continuation or expansion of the TPPP would require the State Legislature to pass new legislation.

5. What would this look like for the selected Tribes moving forward?

The selected Tribes will operate Tribal police departments with specified officers designated as California peace officers for the duration of the TPPP. Tribes must adopt and maintain Tribal laws required by the TPPP statute, ensure POST compliance, and meet State reporting and accountability standards while participating in the TPPP.

6. Under the TPPP, do officers who already completed a POST approved academy have to go through another screening, background, and field training?

All officers designated under the TPPP must meet all legislative standards and current POST standards for all California peace officers at the time of appointment. Prior POST-approved training may be accepted if it aligns with current requirements, but officers may be required to update background or training elements if outdated or incomplete under current POST rules.

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a. If a California peace officer has already undergone the background investigation, psychological screening, and field training programs (FTP), does that officer need to complete these requirements again to be certified under the TPPP?

POST will evaluate prior qualifications to determine whether the qualifications satisfy current standards. Updated or supplemental evaluations or training may be required if prior components do not fully meet current POST requirements.

b. Does a background investigation still need to be conducted for retired officers?

POST will evaluate each individual's prior background investigation to determine whether the individual satisfies current legislative and regulatory standards. All new officers must complete a current POST-compliant background investigation, among other requirements, prior to being designated as California peace officers under the TPPP.

7. As a federal officer, do I need to recomplete a POST background investigation requirement?

Federal experience does not replace POST requirements. Whether an individual officer must complete a new POST background investigation will depend on the facts and circumstances relating to that particular individual. All officers must be evaluated under current POST standards to confirm eligibility to exercise State peace officer authority.

8. Can only three federally recognized Tribes be selected?

The statute authorizes CA DOJ to select up to three federally recognized Tribes located within the State of California. This allows CA DOJ to select fewer than three Tribes if fewer apply or fewer meet the TPPP's requirements, but CA DOJ cannot select more than three Tribes under current law.

9. What does the Public Safety Context section of the TPPP Request for Proposal (RFP) mean?

This section of the proposal should describe the Tribe's public safety needs, including crime trends, service gaps, geographic challenges, and how participation in the TPPP may improve safety outcomes for the Tribe and surrounding communities.

10. How will CA DOJ and POST monitor the TPPP?

CA DOJ and POST will monitor compliance with statutory requirements, oversee required reporting, verify POST certification, and review data submitted by participating Tribes. CA DOJ and POST may conduct inspections, audits, or investigations as needed to support program integrity and evaluate outcomes.

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11. Will the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights (POBR) be extended to Tribal law enforcement agencies?

California Government Code section 3301 specifies the categories of peace officers who are covered by POBR. Whether and to what extent a Tribe may wish to enact a Tribal law that adopts the provisions of POBR for officers participating in the TPPP is the Tribe's prerogative and should be reviewed by the Tribal government and Tribe's legal counsel.

12. Do all officers have to be POST certified prior to the start of the TPPP?

No, not all officers have to be POST certified prior to the start of the TPPP. Up to three Tribes may be selected by POST and CA DOJ before all officers are fully certified; however, every officer that is subject to the TPPP must meet POST certification and appointment standards before exercising peace officer authority under the TPPP. Tribes may hire additional officers after the start of the TPPP, but to participate in the TPPP, the officer must meet POST's certification and appointment standards prior to exercising any peace officer powers pursuant to the TPPP.

a. What are the Tribal agency's deadlines for background checks?

The deadlines for a background check for each officer subject to the TPPP will depend on the facts and circumstances specific to that individual. Any individual that seeks to serve as a peace officer under the TPPP on July 1, 2026, must have their background check completed and approved by POST prior to July 1, 2026. As noted above, participating Tribes may hire additional officers after the start of the TPPP, but to participate in the TPPP, the officer must meet POST's certification and appointment standards prior to exercising any peace officer powers pursuant to the TPPP.

13. Some officers are currently deputized as level 1 reserve officers with local law enforcement agencies. Will these officers be eligible to participate in the TPPP?

Prior reserve experience may help support POST eligibility; however, POST will make final determinations regarding whether previous training and experience meet current standards for full compliance in the TPPP.

a. Would the Tribes who have deputation agreements and who participate in the TPPP still be active once the TPPP ends?

Deputation agreements are separate from the TPPP and remain governed by their own terms.

14. Are officers appointed through the TPPP able to transfer laterally to other agencies?

Lateral transfer eligibility is determined by the hiring agency and applicable POST regulations. Service under the TPPP may support lateral movement, but it is not guaranteed.