

BASIC ACADEMY WAIT TIME

2023



Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission

Prepared By: Basic Training Division

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Legislative Mandates

ESSB 5187 (2023) requires the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) to submit an annual report on the average wait time for recruits starting training in a basic academy.

- RCW 43.101.200 requires all law enforcement personnel, except volunteers and reserve officers, to commence training during the first **six** months of employment, unless otherwise waived or exempted.
 - WAC 139.05.200 specifies this as the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) or the Basic Law Enforcement Equivalency Academy (BLEEA).
- RCW 43.101.200 requires all limited authority peace officers to commence training during the first twelve months of employment, unless otherwise waived or exempted.
 - WAC 139.05.200 specifies this as the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) or the Basic Law Enforcement Equivalency Academy (BLEEA).
- RCW 43.101.220 requires all corrections personnel to commence training during the first **six** months of employment, unless otherwise waived or exempted.
 - WAC 139.10.210 specifies which basic corrections academy must be completed by job function.

Introduction

The WSCJTC Basic Training Division (BTD) started 42 basic training academies in 2023, providing training to 1,214 recruits. These 42 academies consisted of the following number of academy classes:

- 26 Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA)
- 6 Basic Law Enforcement Equivalency Academy (BLEEA)
- 3 Corrections Officers Academy (COA)
- 2 Corrections Officers Equivalency Academy (COEA)
- 2 Juvenile Corrections Officers Academy (JCOA)
- 2 Juvenile Services Academy (JSA)
- 1 Misdemeanant Probation Counselors Academy (MPCA)

Law enforcement and corrections agencies are responsible for registering their personnel (recruit) for the appropriate training academy. While agencies may register their recruit before, or after, they are employed with the agency, the recruit must be employed to begin training. The WSCJTC tracks recruit wait times in the following manner:

Enrollment Wait Time: This is the length of time between when a recruit's registration is submitted and when their academy class began. Academy class placement is determined based on the date/time that their registration was submitted. Tracking this wait time allows the WSCJTC to monitor how long agencies must wait to get their recruit into an academy class after registering them. Tracking enrollment wait times also allow WSCJTC to evaluate the needs of agencies, projecting the volume of needed academy classes.

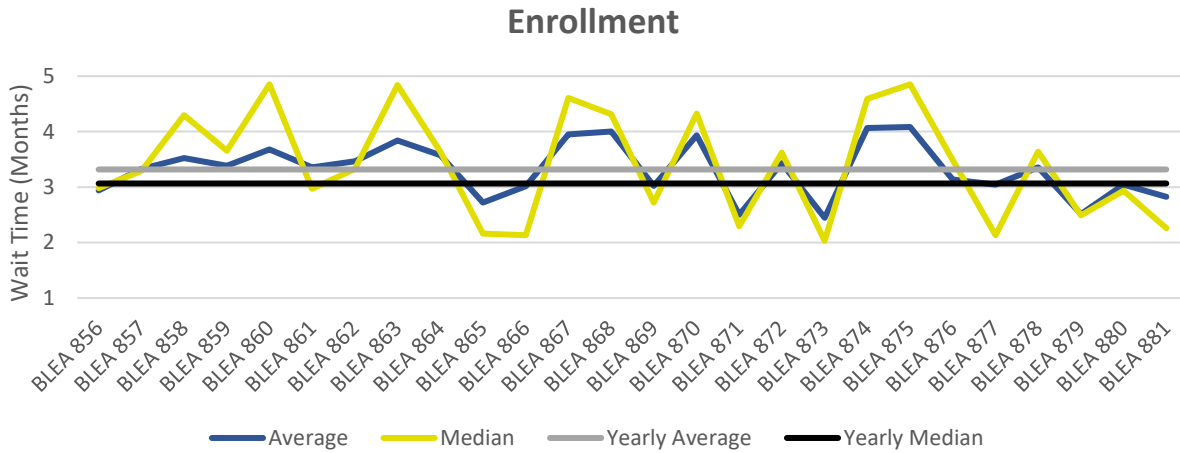
Employment Wait Time: This is the length of time between when a recruit is employed with their agency and when their academy class began. Tracking this wait time allows the WSCJTC to monitor state mandated timelines for recruits to begin required training from their time of hire.

This annual report includes data for classes between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023.

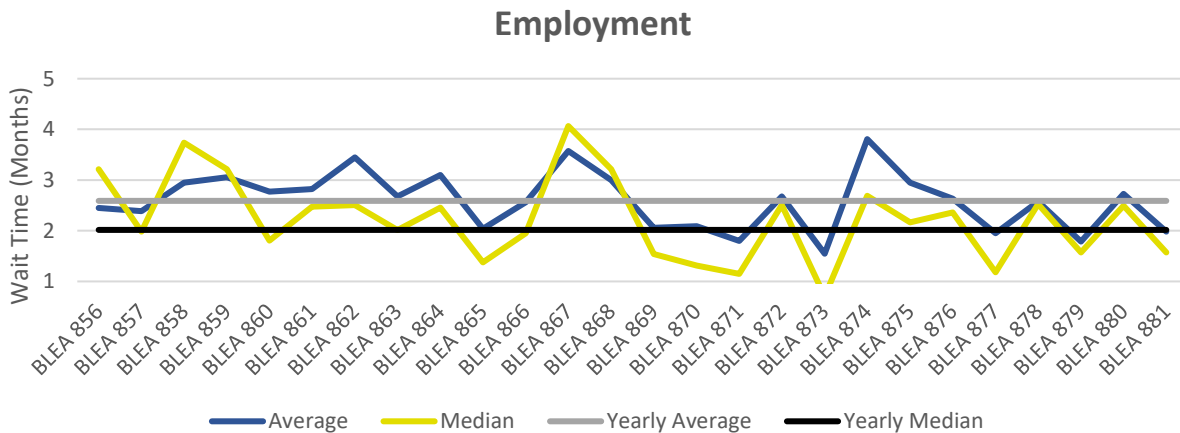
Basic Law Enforcement Academy

The Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) is a 720-hour training program for peace officers to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.200.

26 BLEA classes commenced in 2023, training 782 recruits. Eight of these classes were set to graduate in 2024. 21 classes were held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien, and five were held at regional campuses.



While enrollment times varied between two to five months, on average recruits were registered for BLEA three months before they started a class.



Employment times varied between one to four months. On average recruits waited three months after they were hired to start a BLEA class.

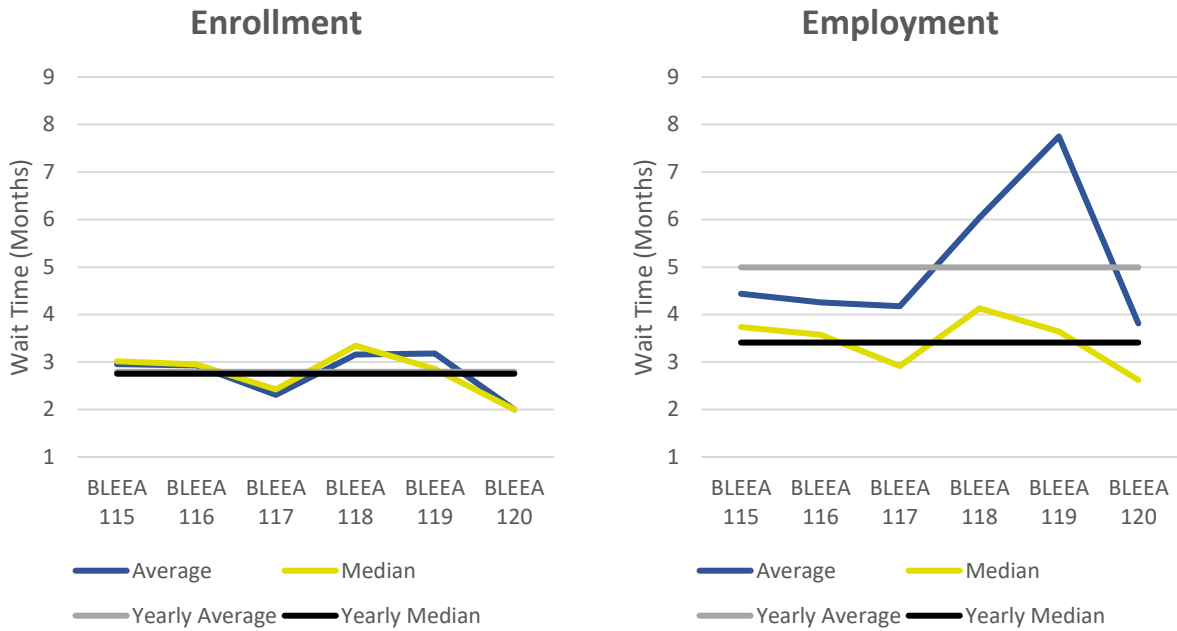
Synopsis

The parallel between the enrollment and employment wait times shows that agencies registered their recruits around the same time they were hired, with no significant delays. This timeframe meets legislative mandates for both general and limited authority officers to start training after hiring. In the interest of public safety, WSCJTC continues to look for ways to reduce this wait time for recruits and their agencies.

Basic Law Enforcement Equivalency Academy

The Basic Law Enforcement Equivalency Academy (BLEEA) is an 80-hour training program for peace officers to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.200. These recruits are officers who have previous law enforcement experience or training but are not certified by the state of WA.

Six BLEEA classes were held in 2023, training 181 recruit officers. All these classes were held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien.



While enrollment times varied between two to three months, on average recruit officers were registered for BLEEA three months before they started a class.

While employment times varied between five to seven months, on average recruit officers waited five months after they were hired to start a BLEEA class.

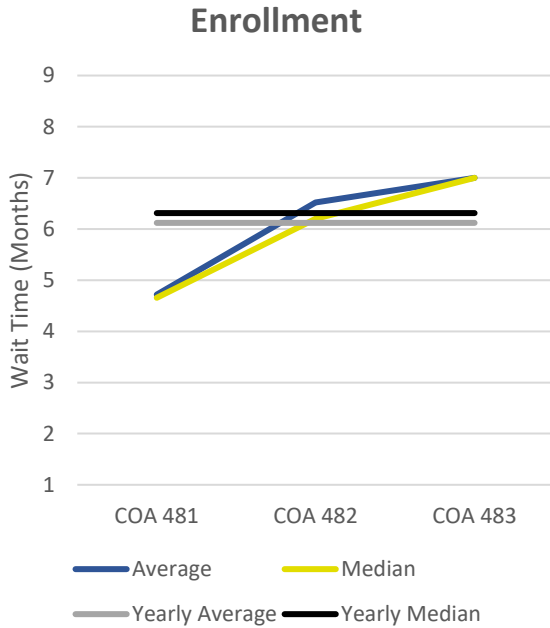
Synopsis

The data shows that while recruit officers are being registered roughly three months prior to starting a class, they are being hired on average five months prior to their class. This indicates that agencies are registering their recruit officers two months after hiring them. Agencies can commission their recruit officers during this time, though they would not be certified as WA state peace officers until they successfully complete BLEEA. The delay in registering these recruit officers also impacts the ability for them to be admitted to the first available academy class, and therefore potentially increase their wait time. However, the overall wait time for recruits to attend BLEEA still met the legislative mandate in 2023.

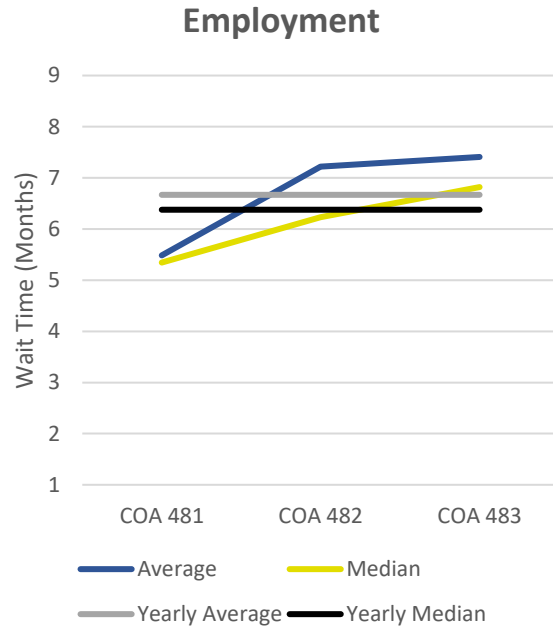
Corrections Officers Academy

The Corrections Officers Academy (COA) is a 400-hour training program for corrections officers to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.220.

Three COA classes were held in 2023, training 108 recruits. All these classes were held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien.



While enrollment times varied between four to seven months, on average recruits were registered for COA six months before they started a class.



While employment times varied between five to seven months, on average recruits waited six months after they were hired to start a COA class.

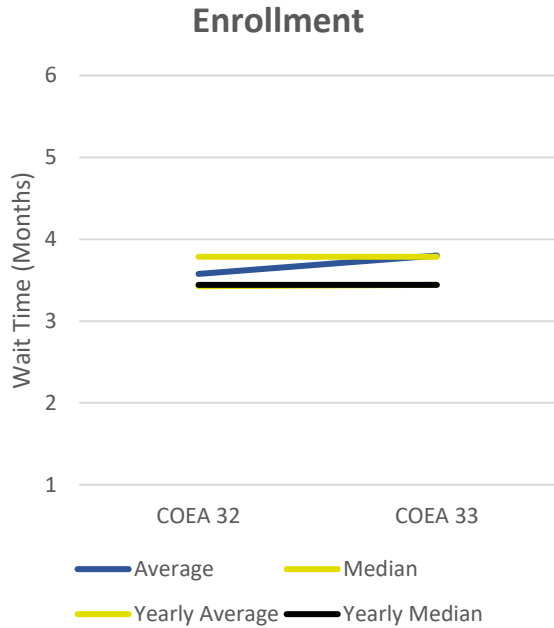
Synopsis

Data for COA depicts a rise in wait times for recruits over 2023. In January, there were roughly 63 recruits waiting to start an academy. By July this number had doubled to 123. In December, we had 209 COA recruits waiting to start an academy. As explained in the above charts, both the enrollment and employment wait times increased from five months for COA 481 to seven months for COA 483. This is due partially to the limited number of COA classes that can be held on the WSCJTC headquarters, which is impacted by the increase to the COA program from four weeks to ten weeks. Additionally, WSCJTC saw an increase in the number of COA registrations submitted compared to prior years. The Basic Training Division will be exploring whether this increase is related to attrition, retirements, or additional positions in the corrections field.

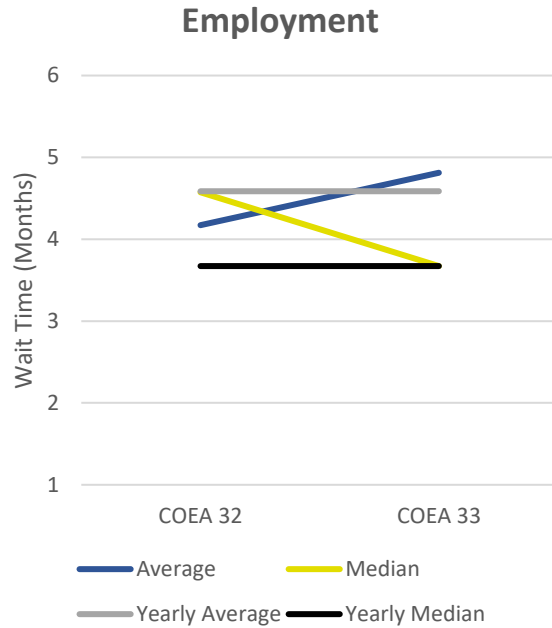
Corrections Officers Equivalency Academy

The Corrections Officers Equivalency Academy (COEA) is an 80-hour training program for corrections officers to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.220.

Two COEA classes were held in 2023, training 27 recruits. All these classes were held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien.



On average recruits were registered for COEA three months before they started a class.



On average recruits waited four months after they were hired to start a COEA class.

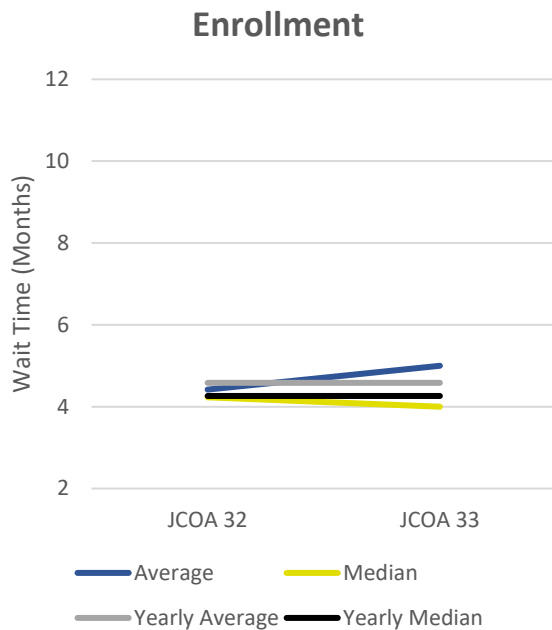
Synopsis

The data shows that while recruits are being registered roughly three months prior to starting a class, they are being hired on average four months prior to their class. This indicates that agencies are registering their recruits at least one month after hiring them, potentially impacting their ability to be admitted to the first available class. However, the overall wait time for recruits to attend COEA still met the legislative mandate in 2023.

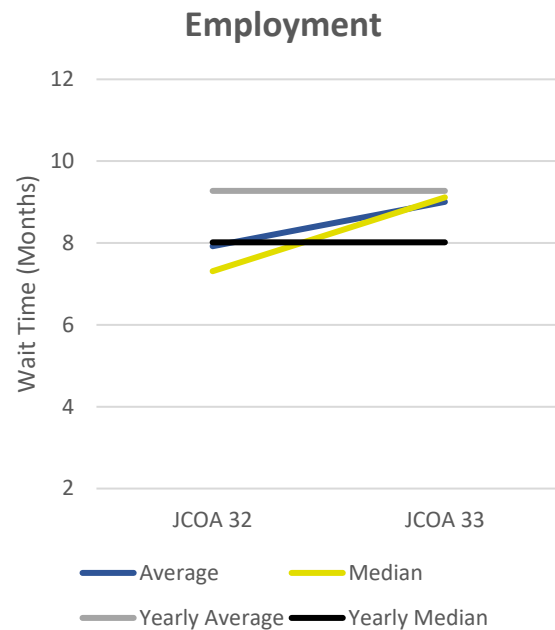
Juvenile Corrections Officers Academy

The Juvenile Corrections Officers Academy (JCOA) is an 80-hour training program for juvenile corrections/detention officers to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.220.

Two JCOA classes were held in 2023, training 60 recruits. All these classes were held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien.



On average recruits were registered for JCOA four months before they started a class.



On average recruits waited nine months after they were hired to start a JCOA class.

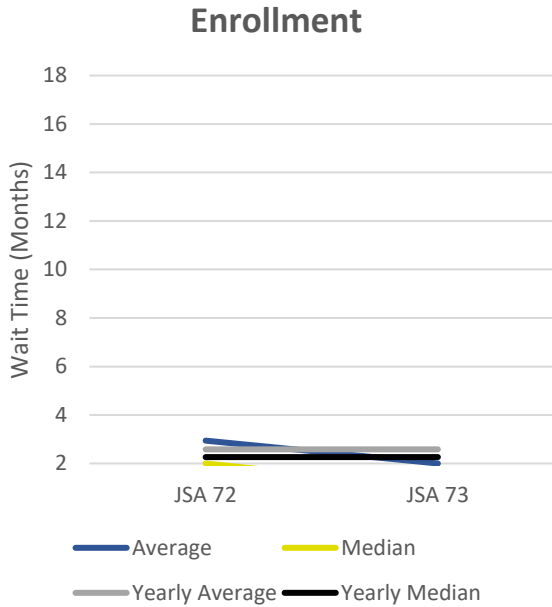
Synopsis

The data shows that while recruits are being registered roughly four months prior to starting a class, they are being hired on average nine months prior to their class. This indicates that agencies are registering their recruits around five months after hiring them. This delay impacts the ability for their recruits to be admitted to the first available academy class, and therefore can potentially increase their wait time. Furthermore, the agencies' long delays in registering their staff after they are hired often resulted in requests for extensions to the legislative mandate, which require JCOA recruits to begin training within six months of hire.

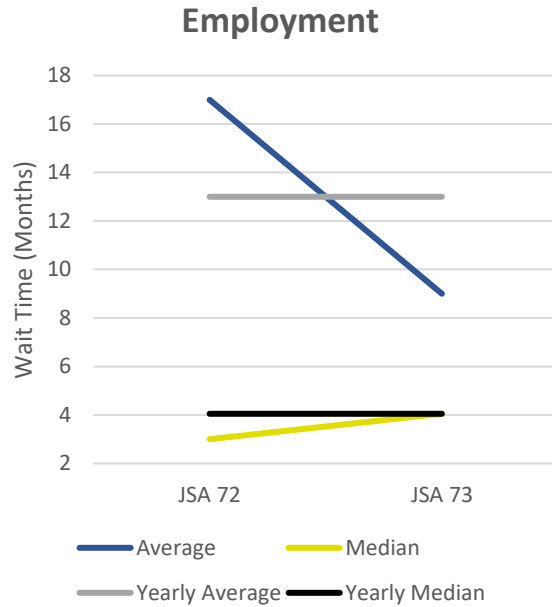
Juvenile Services Academy

The Juvenile Services Academy (JSA) is a 40-hour training program for juvenile probation officers, and other related personnel, to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.220.

Two JSA classes were held in 2023, training 26 recruits. All these classes were held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien.



On average recruits were registered for JSA two months before they started a class.



On average recruits waited 13 months after they were hired to start a JSA class.

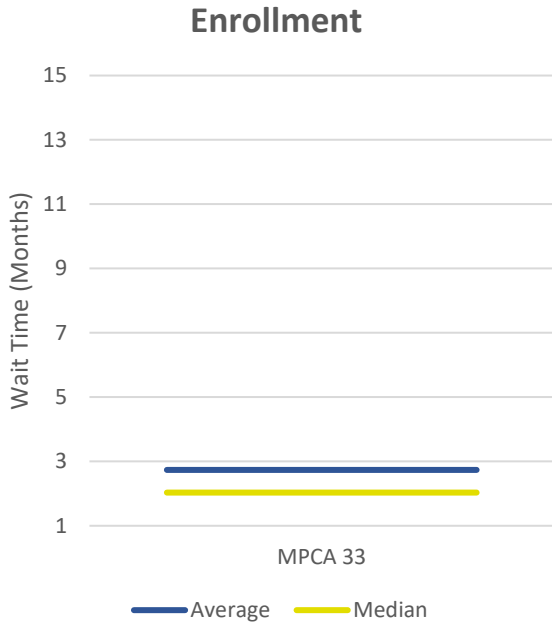
Synopsis

The data shows that while recruits are being registered roughly two months prior to starting a class, they are being hired on average thirteen months prior to their class. This indicates that agencies are registering their recruits around eleven months after hiring them. This delay indicates that most agencies are not complying with the state mandate for JSA recruits to begin training within six months of hire.

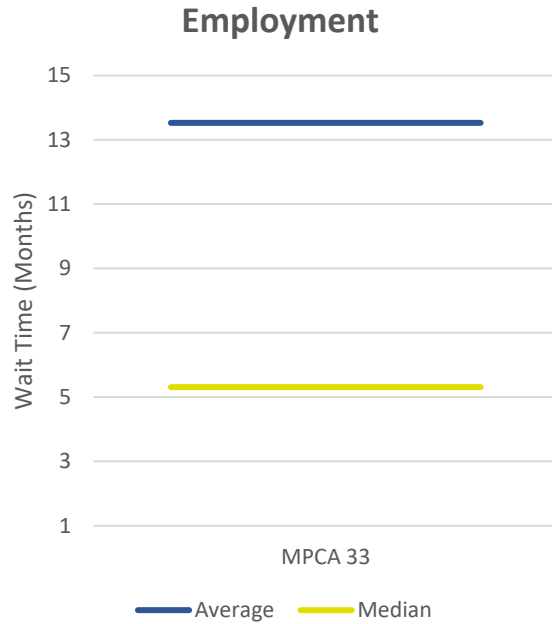
Misdemeanant Probation Counselors Academy

The Misdemeanant Probation Counselors Academy (MCPA) is an 80-hour training program for adult probation officers and counselors to meet the training requirements of RCW 43.101.220.

One MCPA class was held in 2023, training 30 recruits. This class was held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien.



On average recruits were registered for MCPA three months before they started a class.



On average recruits waited 13 months after they were hired to start an MCPA class.

Synopsis

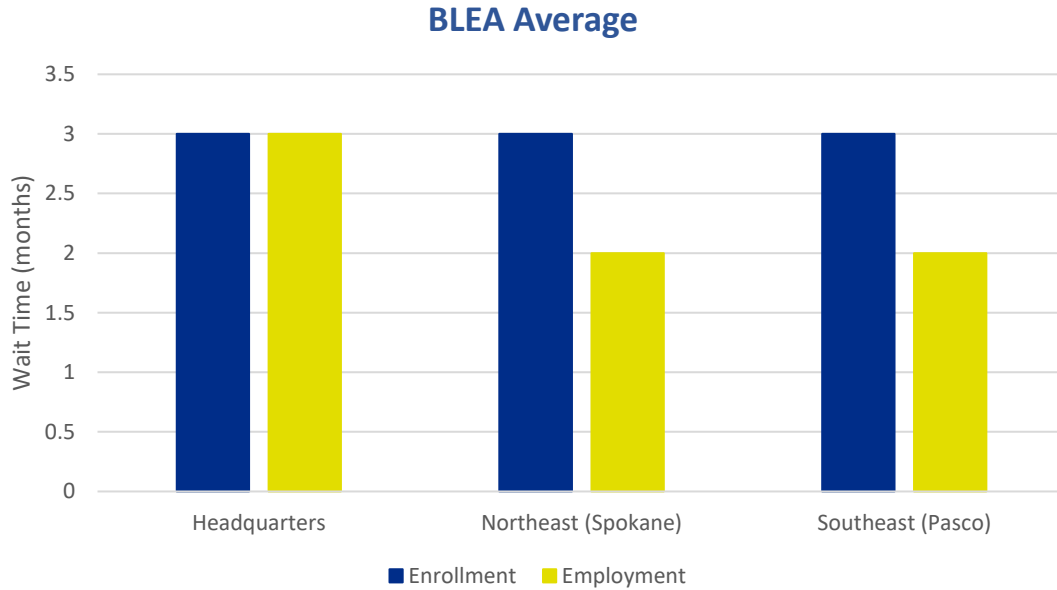
Given that WSCJTC is only funded to provide one MCPA class per year, meeting the state mandate for MCPA recruits to begin training within six months of hire is improbable in most cases.

The data shows that while recruits are being registered roughly three months prior to starting a class, they are being hired on average thirteen months prior to their class. This indicates that agencies are registering their recruits around ten months after hiring them.

Regional Campus Impact

While the majority of BLEA classes are held at the WSCJTC headquarters in Burien, historically at least two additional BLEA classes were held at the northeast campus in Spokane.

In 2023, three BLEA classes were held at the northeast campus, and for the first time, two additional classes were held at the new southeast campus in the tri-cities area.



The table above indicates that regional agencies registered their recruits earlier than agencies that sent their recruits to classes held at the Burien headquarters campus. The average wait time for recruits to attend a BLEA class was consistent across all the WSCJTC campuses.

It should be noted that the WSCJTC received around 60 additional BLEA registrations in 2023, from 2022. As such, adding the two new southeast classes, which also consisted of 60 recruits, ensured that the BLEA wait time did not increase despite the increase in recruit numbers.

Summary

In consideration of our stakeholder's needs, the WSCJTC Basic Training Division (BTD) continuously monitors and evaluates recruit's enrollment and employment wait times. While meeting legislative mandates is necessary, the WSCJTC recognizes the need for agencies to get their recruits through training and back to their departments as soon as possible, even earlier than legislative mandates require.

In support of this goal, we began expanding our operations by establishing additional regional campuses throughout the state. In May of 2023 we were able to open the first of these in the tri-cities region. This allowed local agencies to send their recruits to training closer to their homes. Data shows that this expansion also allowed WSCJTC to maintain BLEA wait times at an average of three months, despite an increase in the number of recruits registrations from 2022.

Due to facility constraints, the WSCJTC headquarters campus is unable to efficiently host additional academy classes. As such, any additional classes can only be held at regional training campuses. The WSCJTC plans to establish two more regional campuses in 2024, one in the southwest region and another in the northwest region.

In 2023, BTD noticed a sharp increase in the number of COA registrations and academy wait time. To address this, WSCJTC asked for funding to provide nine additional COA classes at regional campuses in 2024.

One of the challenges this report has highlighted is the delay of agencies to register their recruits. This was especially evident for corrections services academies (JCOA, JSA, and MPCA), with some agencies waiting as long as ten months to register their recruit. This delay impacts the ability for recruits to be admitted to the first available academy class, which may cause them to not be in compliance with legislative mandates. Since class placement is determined based on when a recruit's registration is submitted, the earlier a recruit is registered, the sooner they get to start a class. For example, if an agency registers their recruit three months after they are hired, the recruit will join the waitlist at least three months later than they could have. This will ultimately extend the time they wait to attend an academy. The WSCJTC continues to encourage early registration submission to decrease overall wait times for all academies.

The WSCJTC BTD is committed to serving stakeholder agencies and their recruits equitably and efficiently. We will continue to examine enrollment and employment wait times and implement data driven solutions aimed at reducing the wait time to attend all the basic training academy programs.