

Virginia Sheriffs' Institute  
**Certification Program**



**Guidebook for Virginia's  
Sheriffs and Deputies**



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## Program Purpose

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI), in cooperation with the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA), the Performance Management Group at the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and the Virginia Center for Policing Innovation (VCPI), has developed the VSI Certification Program to promote, recognize and elevate the continued individual professional development of Virginia's sheriffs and deputies.

The VSI Certification Program seeks to instill the ideals of professionalism that come with the wisdom of experience and tested judgment attained and demonstrated through standards of achievement, including education, work experience, training and professional development. Certification through this voluntary program provides recognition of the professional knowledge and commitment to excellence, life-long learning and advancement of public safety as a profession.

## Program Partners



The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI), Inc. is a 501(c) 3 organization that encourages charitable and educational activities among the sheriffs and deputies within the Commonwealth of Virginia.



The Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) gives a voice to Virginia sheriffs and deputies. Working on many levels and in cooperation with the various segments of the criminal justice system and state government, VSA guarantees unfailing representation for sheriffs and deputies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.



The Wilder School at VCU engages, teaches and inspires students and leaders to understand and solve challenges in our world and provides expertise in research, consulting and training, partnering with government agencies, nonprofits and private organizations.



VCPI is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to its mission to advance public safety by providing unparalleled training and services nationwide for law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve.

## Program Benefits

Sheriffs and deputies serving in the Commonwealth of Virginia carry immense responsibilities as the guardians of their communities, providing effective public safety services balanced with the fair and equitable treatment of every individual they encounter. Those seeking VSI Certification must demonstrate a deep personal commitment to exemplifying a level of professionalism and leadership that solidifies community confidence and trust in, and reinforces the legitimacy of, the public safety function. The success of any public safety agency truly depends on the quality and capability of its officials.

### ❖ For Our Sheriffs

Those individuals elected as sheriff assume a tremendous personal and professional responsibility for the safety and security of their communities and are granted extraordinary powers and opportunities to positively affect the community they serve. With these powers come the responsibility to foster a commitment to excellence for themselves, their personnel and throughout the community.

Developing trust and legitimacy within the community is an ongoing process. Participation in the VSI Certification Program demonstrates the sheriff's commitment to provide, through continual self-improvement, the exemplary service and implementation of the public safety best practices needed to support the effective public safety leadership expected by the community.

The certification program is also an excellent career development tool that the sheriff may use for their sworn personnel as the sheriff works toward enhancing and elevating the services and programs offered by their office.

### ❖ For Our Deputies

For deputies, participation in the VSI Certification Program provides the opportunity to develop new skills and enhance existing ones, while demonstrating the individual deputy's commitment to self-improvement, resulting in an enhanced level of safety and security for the community.

By continually striving to train and learn, deputies also prepare themselves to take on greater roles and responsibilities within their agencies and in the community.

### ❖ For Our Communities

Those seeking certification demonstrate a deep personal commitment and sense of accountability, which exemplifies public safety as a profession. By encouraging and recognizing dedicated service to the public and accomplishments such as furthering education, and completing leadership training and professional development courses, the VSI Certification Program promotes a commitment to professional standards that attracts highly qualified people to a career in public safety and provides the community with an assurance that those certified have met some of the highest standards in public safety.

## Certification Program Structure

The VSI Certification Program has been developed to promote, recognize and elevate the continued individual professional development of Virginia's sheriffs and deputies. The certification process requires applicants to meet several minimum eligibility requirements and a series of standards, which demonstrate a commitment to continual professional self-improvement.

The VSI Board of Directors appoints a Certification Committee (Committee) comprised of a diverse group of Virginia sheriffs. The Committee is responsible for ensuring the certification program represents the best public safety practices through:

- Continual review of the program requirements to ensure the requirements are relevant and represent the solid professional foundations of public safety service;
- Conducting the formal review of all applications and appeals submitted for consideration to ensure those individuals being awarded certification have met all program requirements.

The VSI Certification Program recognizes the life experience and career development activities of each applicant, as shown in the charts below and on the following page.

### Initial Certification Requirements

All applicants must have a minimum total of 150 points (A+B+C+D)

### Life Experience

Column A and Column B must total a minimum of 40 points

| Column A - Public Safety Experience |                  | Column B - Education        |                     |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Years of Experience                 |                  | Degree/Diploma <sup>1</sup> |                     |
| 3 - 10 = 10 pts                     | 20 - 29 = 30 pts | H.S./GED = 10 pts           | Bachelor's = 30 pts |
| 11 - 19 = 15 pts                    | 30+ = 40 pts     | Associate = 15 pts          | Master's/+ = 40 pts |

<sup>1</sup> Degree or diploma may be in any field of study for initial certification. 40 points are awarded for a Master's, Ph. D., or other terminal degree.

| <b><u>Career Development</u></b>  |         |   |                   |
|---|---------|---|-------------------|
| Column C and Column D must each total a minimum of 40 points. <sup>2</sup>  |         |   |                   |
| All in-service or other training courses being claimed towards certification must be related to public safety, and must have been completed within the 4 years preceding the submission of an application for certification or recertification. |         |   |                   |
| <b>Column C - Training</b>  |         | <b>Column D - Professional Development</b>        |                   |
| Required Minimum Training:  |         | Multi-Month Courses                               | 30 pts/course     |
| Leadership  | 8 pts   | Multi-Week Courses                                | 15 pts/course     |
| Ethics  | 8 pts   | Public Safety Conferences                         | 5 pts/conference  |
| Cultural Diversity  | 8 pts   | VSA/VSI Annual Conferences                        | 10 pts/conference |
| Community Policing  | 8 pts   | Service as VSA and/or VSI President               | 10 pts            |
| Legal/HR Law  | 8 pts   | Instruction of Public Safety Courses <sup>4</sup> | 1 pt/hr           |
| Additional Training <sup>3</sup>  | 1 pt/hr |   |                   |

<sup>2</sup>. The remaining points needed for initial certification may be earned through additional training or professional development activities.

<sup>3</sup>. Basic skills training, such as firearms or defensive tactics training or qualification, RADAR or TASER training, or other training conducted to maintain minimum job/skill proficiencies and certifications cannot be claimed toward certification.

<sup>4</sup>. A maximum of 15 points may be claimed for instruction activities.

Applicants should submit copies of all required documentation. Applicants should not send original documents as all paper applications and documents will be destroyed after they are digitized.

An applicant receiving certification will then be designated as VSI Certified and may use the designation "VSIC" professionally.

VSI Certification remains in effect for a period of 4 years, beginning on the date an applicant is awarded their certification or recertification. Certified sheriffs and deputies may submit an application for recertification prior to their initial, and subsequent, certification expiring. Updated documentation supporting the applicant's continued eligibility in the program as well as demonstrating continued career development activities must also be submitted for evaluation.

- Lapse in Certification - All VSI Certifications begin and end on March 15. Certified sheriffs and deputies who do not meet the recertification requirements, or who do not submit an application for recertification, will lose their certified status.

If certification has lapsed, applicants must meet all the requirements for initial certification in order to become recertified.

## Recertification Requirements

All Applicants must have a minimum total of 100 points (Column C + Column D)

Note: Public Safety Experience (Column A) and Education (Column B) as shown on page 3 of the guidebook are not applicable for recertification.

### Career Development

Column C and Column D must each total a minimum of 40 points.<sup>1</sup>

All in-service or other training courses being claimed towards recertification must be related to public safety, and must have been completed within the 4 years preceding the submission of an application for recertification.

| Column C - Training                      | Column D - Professional Development               |                   |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Required Minimum Training:               | Multi-Month Courses                               | 30 pts/course     |
| Leadership 8 pts                         | Multi-Week Courses                                | 15 pts/course     |
| Ethics 8 pts                             | Public Safety Conferences                         | 5 pts/conference  |
| Cultural Diversity 8 pts                 | VSA/VSI Annual Conferences                        | 10 pts/conference |
| Community Policing 8 pts                 | Service as VSA and/or VSI President               | 10 pts            |
| Legal/HR Law 8 pts                       | Instruction of Public Safety Courses <sup>3</sup> | 1 pt/hour         |
| Additional Training <sup>2</sup> 1 pt/hr | College Coursework <sup>4</sup>                   | 1 pt/credit       |

<sup>1</sup> The remaining Career Development points needed for recertification may be earned through additional training or professional development activities.

<sup>2</sup> Basic skills training, such as firearms or defensive tactics training or qualification, RADAR or TASER training, or other training conducted to maintain minimum job/skill proficiencies and certifications cannot be claimed toward certification.

<sup>3</sup> A maximum of 15 points may be claimed for instruction activities.

<sup>4</sup> College coursework claimed must be related to public safety, or advancing the applicants job related knowledge/expertise, e.g., required coursework for a degree in criminal justice, public administration, etc.

Questions regarding the certification program and any of the eligibility or certification standards may be submitted to the following email address:

[vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org](mailto:vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org)

## Initial Certification Requirements

### ❖ Eligibility

VSA/VSI Membership - In order to be eligible to apply for VSI Certification, applicants must be members in both the VSA and VSI, as detailed below.

- **Membership with the Virginia Sheriffs' Association**

All applicants must be members of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) and must remain a member throughout their certification period.

The VSA, working in collaboration with various segments of the criminal justice system and state government, guarantees unfailing representation for sheriffs and deputies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

VSA membership provides opportunities for networking, camaraderie and career advancement. Additionally, the annual VSA Conference allows members to learn about new ideas, best practices, and key achievements within the public safety profession.

- **Membership with the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute**

Sheriffs seeking certification must be a member of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI) and must remain a member throughout their certification period. Deputies seeking certification must be a member of a VSI-member sheriff's office and must remain a member throughout their certification period.

VSI's mission is to encourage charitable and educational activities among the sheriffs and deputies within the Commonwealth of Virginia, and to assist these professionals with access to education and training opportunities to develop and advance their careers and thus more effectively serve the public.

Public Safety Experience - Only duly elected or appointed sheriffs or full-time deputies with at least 3 years of sworn public safety service with any sheriff's office in the Commonwealth of Virginia may apply for certification.

**All sworn public safety service listed and used for the purpose of certification must be with a sheriff's office within the Commonwealth of Virginia.**

- State or local law enforcement service in Virginia, federal or military law enforcement service, or prior experience in another state will not be accepted towards certification as the training, duties and responsibilities of each vary from the requirements and duties of the sheriff's offices in Virginia.
- Applicants who have worked as a deputy at more than one Virginia sheriff's office during their career will document that service on the application.



The VSI Certification Program provides a means to document and recognize the experience, education and training of those applicants seeking to become certified. For initial certification, the program standards focus on 2 primary areas: Life Experience and Career Development, as shown below.

| Life Experience                             | Career Development                         |
|---|--|
| A. Public Safety Experience<br>B. Education | C. Training<br>D. Professional Development |

Each of the 4 sub-categories has specific requirements which must be met or exceeded in order for an applicant to qualify for certification. Points are awarded in each sub-category, based on length of public safety experience, levels of education, training and professional development activities.

Applicants must have a minimum combined total of **150 points** to be eligible for initial certification.

- Public Safety Experience and Education combined must total a minimum of 40 points.
- Training requires a minimum of 40 points.
- Professional Development requires a minimum of 40 points.
- Remaining points may be acquired through any of the 4 sub-categories: life experience, education, training or professional development.

## ❖ Life Experience

### A. Public Safety Experience

Only duly elected or appointed sheriffs, or full-time deputies, with at least 3 years of sworn public safety service with any sheriff's office in the Commonwealth of Virginia may apply for certification.

Points for public safety experience are awarded based on years of service, as shown in the table below.

| Public Safety Experience |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Years of Service</i>  | <i>Points</i> |
| 3 - 10                   | <b>10</b>     |
| 11 - 19                  | <b>15</b>     |
| 20 - 29                  | <b>30</b>     |
| 30+                      | <b>40</b>     |

## B. Education

All sheriffs and deputies seeking initial certification must provide documentation of their secondary education and any post-secondary degree they submit for consideration. Any post-secondary degree being claimed for points must be awarded by an accredited institution of higher education in order to qualify.

Note: For initial certification, programs of study or degrees do not have to be specific to criminal justice/law enforcement.

Points for education are awarded based on the type of degree earned, as shown in the table below.

| <b>Education</b>                                    |               |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Type of Degree</i>                               | <i>Points</i> |
| H.S. Diploma/GED                                    | <b>10</b>     |
| Associate Degree                                    | <b>15</b>     |
| Bachelor's Degree                                   | <b>30</b>     |
| Master's Degree/Terminal Degree (Ph.D., J.D., etc.) | <b>40</b>     |

Note: Education points are not cumulative; they are awarded for highest earned degree being claimed toward certification.

## ❖ Career Development

### C. Training

All in-service or other training courses being claimed towards certification must be related to public safety, and must have been completed within the 4 years preceding the submission of an application for certification. One point is awarded for each hour of documented public safety-related training.

Note: Basic skills training, such as firearms or defensive tactics training or qualification, RADAR or TASER training, or other training conducted to maintain minimum job/skill proficiencies and certifications cannot be claimed toward certification.

The intent of the certification program is to document training that demonstrates advancement of the applicant's skills and knowledge, not the basic skills needed to function as a sheriff or deputy.

- **Required Training** - All sheriffs and deputies applying for certification must have completed a minimum of 8 hours of training, within the preceding 4 years, in each of the following topics: Leadership, Ethics, Cultural Diversity, Community Policing and Legal/Employment Law. Points for training are awarded as shown in the table on the following page.

| <b>Training</b>                                |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Training Topics</i>                         | <i>Points</i> |
| Leadership (8 Hours)                           | <b>8</b>      |
| Ethics (8 Hours)                               | <b>8</b>      |
| Cultural Diversity (8 Hours)                   | <b>8</b>      |
| Community Policing (8 Hours) <sup>1</sup>      | <b>8</b>      |
| Legal/Employment Law (8 Hours)                 | <b>8</b>      |
| In-Service/Other Training Courses <sup>2</sup> | <b>1/hr</b>   |

<sup>1</sup> Examples of Community Policing courses include, but are not limited to: interpersonal communications, de-escalation techniques, problem-solving, media relations, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Basic skills training, such as firearms or defensive tactics training or qualification, RADAR or TASER training, or other training conducted to maintain minimum job/skill proficiencies and certifications cannot be claimed toward certification.

**Required Documentation** - Applicants must submit documentation to support training being claimed towards certification. Acceptable forms of documentation include, but are not limited to, certificates of completion, DCJS Partial In-Service Credit forms or other training records that detail the date and length (in hours) of each training course.

#### D. Professional Development

There are six areas of professional development for which points may be claimed: multi-month, multi-week courses, public safety conferences, the VSA/VSI annual conferences, service as the VSA and/or VSI president and instruction of public safety training courses.

Note: All professional development activities being claimed toward certification must be public safety-related and must have been completed within the 4 years preceding the submission of an application for certification.

Points awarded for professional development are as shown in the table below.

| <b>Professional Development</b>                    |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Courses/Conferences/Other</i>                   | <i>Points</i> |
| Multi-Month Courses                                | <b>30</b>     |
| Multi-Week Courses                                 | <b>15</b>     |
| Public Safety Conferences                          | <b>5</b>      |
| VSA/VSI Annual Conference                          | <b>10</b>     |
| Current or Former VSA and/or VSI President         | <b>10</b>     |
| Instruction of Public Safety Training <sup>1</sup> | <b>1/hr</b>   |

<sup>1</sup> A maximum of 15 points may be claimed in this category.

Examples of professional development activities are depicted below:

- Multi-Month Courses include, but are not limited to: UVA/VSP Command College, FBI National Academy, SPI, NW, etc. Points awarded for each course attended.
- Multi-Week Courses include, but are not limited to: Harvard Leadership, PELS, etc. Points awarded for each course attended.
- Public Safety Conferences include, but are not limited to: NSA, IACP, ACA, FBINA, etc. Points awarded for each course attended.
- VSA or VSI Annual Conferences attended within the 4 years preceding applying for certification may be counted. Points awarded for each course attended. Applicants must provide PIC forms to document attendance at conferences. PIC forms required for both VSA General Sessions.
- Current/Former VSA and/or VSI President – Term of service must be within the 4 years preceding applying for certification.
- Instruction of Public Safety Training Courses – Count 1 point for each hour of in-service or other public safety training courses taught.

## Recertification Requirements

Certified sheriffs and deputies may apply for recertification every 4 years. The requirements for recertification are slightly different from those for initial certification, focusing specifically on the training and professional development activities completed from the date of the applicant's last certification award. Each category has specific requirements which must be met for an applicant to qualify for recertification.

### ❖ Eligibility

VSA/VSI Membership - In order to be eligible to apply for recertification, applicants must be members in both the VSA and VSI, as detailed below.

- **Membership with the Virginia Sheriffs' Association**

All applicants must be members of the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA), and must remain a member throughout their certification period. The VSA, working in collaboration with various segments of the criminal justice system and state government, guarantees unfailing representation for sheriffs and deputies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

VSA membership provides opportunities for networking, camaraderie and career advancement. Additionally, the annual VSA Conference allows members to learn about new ideas, best practices, and key achievements within the public safety profession.

- **Membership with the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute**

Sheriffs seeking certification must be a member of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI), and deputies seeking certification must be a member of a VSI-member sheriff's office and remain a member throughout their certification period. As a service to its members, VSI administers this certification program.

VSI's mission is to encourage charitable and educational activities among the sheriffs and deputies within the Commonwealth of Virginia, and assist these professionals with access to education and training opportunities to develop and advance their careers and thus more effectively serve the public.

Public Safety Experience - Change in Status

- If a certified deputy is elected sheriff during their initial certification period, their certification remains valid and transfers to that new position.
- If a certified deputy is appointed as a deputy with another sheriff's office in Virginia, or there is a change of leadership during their certification period, their certification remains valid.

Note: Any certified sheriff or deputy may only apply for recertification if they meet all the recertification eligibility requirements.

The recertification process focuses specifically on the continual training and professional development activities of the certified sheriffs and deputies. Points are awarded in each category, based on training/professional development courses and activities that have been completed.

A combined total of **100 points** are required to be eligible for recertification.

- Training requires a minimum of 40 points.
- Professional Development requires a minimum of 40 points.
- Remaining points may be acquired through additional training and/or professional development courses/conferences or other activities listed in the professional development category.

Supporting documentation, such as certificates of completion, college transcripts and other training records must be submitted with completed applications to verify all training and professional development being claimed.

Applicants should submit copies of all required documentation. Applicants should not send original documents as all paper applications and documents will be destroyed after they are digitized.

## ❖ Career Development

### A. Training

In-service or other training courses to be applied towards recertification must have occurred in the preceding 4 years and must be related to public safety. One point is awarded for each hour of documented public safety-related training.

- **Required Training** - All sheriffs or deputies applying for recertification must have completed a minimum of 8 hours of training, within the preceding 4 years, in each of the following topics: Leadership, Ethics, Cultural Diversity, Community Policing and Legal/Employment Law.

Points for training are awarded as shown in the table below.

| <b>Training</b>                                |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Training Topics</i>                         | <i>Points</i> |
| Leadership (8 Hours)                           | <b>8</b>      |
| Ethics (8 Hours)                               | <b>8</b>      |
| Cultural Diversity (8 Hours)                   | <b>8</b>      |
| Community Policing (8 Hours) <sup>1</sup>      | <b>8</b>      |
| Legal/Employment Law (8 Hours)                 | <b>8</b>      |
| In-Service/Other Training Courses <sup>2</sup> | <b>1/hr</b>   |

<sup>1</sup>. Examples of Community Policing courses include, but are not limited to: interpersonal communications, de-escalation techniques, problem-solving, media relations, etc.

<sup>2</sup>. Basic skills training, such as firearms or defensive tactics training or qualification, RADAR or TASER training, or other training conducted to maintain minimum job/skill proficiencies and certifications cannot be claimed toward certification.

### B. Professional Development

There are several areas of professional development for which an applicant may claim points: multi-month and multi-week courses, public safety conferences, the VSA/VSI annual conferences, service as the VSA and/or VSI president and instruction of public safety training courses.

All professional development activities being claimed must be public safety related and must have been completed within the 4 years preceding application for recertification.

Points for professional development are awarded as shown in the table below.

| <b>Professional Development</b>                    |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>Courses/Conferences</i>                         | <i>Points</i>   |
| College Coursework                                 | <b>1/credit</b> |
| Multi-Month Courses                                | <b>30</b>       |
| Multi-Week Courses                                 | <b>15</b>       |
| Public Safety Conferences                          | <b>5</b>        |
| VSA/VSI Annual Conference                          | <b>10</b>       |
| Current or Former VSA and/or VSI President         | <b>10</b>       |
| Instruction of Public Safety Training <sup>1</sup> | <b>1/hr</b>     |

<sup>1</sup> A maximum of 15 points may be claimed in this category.

Examples of professional development activities are depicted below:

- College Coursework claimed must be related to public safety, or advancing the applicant's job-related knowledge/expertise, e.g., required coursework for a degree in criminal justice, public administration, etc.
- Multi-Month Courses include, but are not limited to: UVA/VSP Command College, FBI National Academy, SPI, NW, etc. Points awarded for each course attended.
- Multi-Week Courses include, but are not limited to: Harvard Leadership, PELS, etc. Points awarded for each course attended.
- Public Safety Conferences include, but are not limited to: NSA, IACP, ACA, FBINA, etc. Points awarded for each course attended.
- VSA or VSI Annual Conferences attended within the 4 years preceding applying for certification may be counted. Points awarded for each course attended. Applicants must provide PIC forms to document attendance at conferences. PIC forms required for both VSA General Sessions.
- Current/Former VSA and/or VSI President - Term of service must be within the 4 years preceding applying for recertification.
- Instruction of Public Safety Training Courses - Count 1 point for each hour of in-service or other public safety training courses taught.

## Application/Submission Requirements and Instructions

Any sheriff or deputy wishing to apply for initial certification or recertification must submit an application and supporting documentation for review by the VSI Certification Committee.

The guidebook and program applications may be found on the VSI website at (<http://certification.vasheriffsinstitute.org/>). Completed applications and documentation may be submitted via email or mailed to VCPI.

Mail: VCPI  
Attn: VSI Certification  
413 Stuart Circle, Suite 200  
Richmond, VA 23220

Email: [vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org](mailto:vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org)

Note: Deputies wishing to apply for certification or recertification must have the approval of their sheriff to participate in the certification program. Their sheriff must sign the application package.

Questions regarding the certification program and any of the eligibility or certification standards may be directed to the following email address:

[vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org](mailto:vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org)

### ❖ Fees and Payment

- Initial Certification: A non-refundable \$250 administrative fee is due at the time of application.
- Recertification: A non-refundable \$150 administrative fee is due at the time of application.

Payments will only be accepted during the application submission period (October 1 through January 31). Payments may be made online via credit card through the VSI website (<http://certification.vasheriffsinstitute.org/>), or by check, made payable to the **Virginia Sheriffs' Institute** and mailed with the completed application package to:

VCPI  
Attn: VSI Certification  
413 Stuart Circle, Suite 200  
Richmond, VA 23220

Note: Separate payment is required for each application submitted.

These non-refundable fees provide for the administration of the certification program. No cash or phone payments will be accepted.



## ❖ Timelines for Application, Certification Review & Approval

- Application Submission Period

Applications for certification will be accepted **October 1 through January 31 every year.**

- Application Review

The review and approval process for submitted applications will begin once both the application and administrative fee have been received. All applications must be received by the established deadline of **January 31** to provide adequate time for a thorough review.

- Approval Process

Once reviewed and approved by VCPI, the applications recommended for approval will be submitted to the VSI Certification Committee. VSI will review the applications and submit a roster of applicants who have met the certification requirements to VCU no later than March 15 each year. VCU will issue certificates to VSI to then be presented to the applicant.

Applicants will be notified of the committee's decision after March 15. Those approved for certification will be invited to attend the annual conference in April to receive their award and be recognized as VSI Certified sheriffs and deputies. If an applicant is unable to attend the conference, they will receive their certification in the mail.

Along with providing an intrinsic sense of pride of professional accomplishment, those who achieve VSI certification are granted the designation of **Virginia Sheriffs' Institute Certified (VSIC)** and will be recognized publicly as exemplars of professional excellence.

The date listed on the certificate from VCU will serve as the official certification date. Those applicants attaining certification will be recognized during the annual VSI conference held in April each year. If an applicant receiving VSI certification is unable to attend the April conference, the certification will be mailed to the recipient.

- Incomplete Applications/Insufficient Documentation

If, during the initial review of any application, it is determined that the application is incomplete and/or does not meet minimum certification requirements, the applicant will be notified as soon as possible of the discrepancies and afforded the opportunity to submit a properly completed application, or additional supporting documentation.

Due to the time-sensitive nature of the application process, the applicant will be given a specific deadline date to submit any further application or supporting documentation.

## ❖ Appeals Process

Applicants who have had their applications rejected or held for additional documentation may submit a written appeal to the VSI Certification Committee.

Written appeals may be mailed or submitted electronically to:

Virginia Sheriffs' Institute - Certification Committee  
951 East Byrd Street, Suite 905  
Richmond, VA 23219

Email: [vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org](mailto:vsicert@virginiasheriffs.org)

The VSI Certification Committee will notify the applicant of the appeal determination. **All decisions made by the VSI Certification Committee are final.**

## ❖ Supporting Documentation

A key element of the VSI Certification program is the documentation applicants submit verifying their educational, training and professional development accomplishments claimed toward certification. Applicants must submit documentation demonstrating the completion of each degree, training course, conference attended or other professional development activity included in the application.

The level of trust required by VSI and the public leaves no room for misrepresentation of an applicant's experience, education, training or professional development accomplishments. By signing and submitting an application, those seeking certification certify that all the information and supporting documentation provided is truthful, accurate and complete. Applicants must understand that misrepresentation may result in denial, revocation or cancellation of the certification.

Once certification has been awarded, it is the responsibility of the certified sheriff or deputy to collect and compile supporting documentation for all training and professional development activities over the next 4 years. **It is highly recommended that applicants collect and store these documents with their personal records at the time they are earned to prevent any delays in submitting documentation for recertification.**

## ❖ Records Retention

Following the Library of Virginia schedules for record retention (General Schedule GS-103, Series Number 100501), applications, or any supplemental documentation collected by VSI, will be retained for a period of no more than 3 years beyond the last certification or recertification expiration date. (Library of Virginia, 2015)

VSI also requires that all applicants retain copies of any completed applications and all supporting documentation for at least 3 years beyond the last certification or recertification expiration date.

The VSI Certification Committee has a right to review applications and request submission of supporting documentation (e.g. training certificates, educational transcripts, conference agendas, employment records, etc.) at any time during the certification process and after certification has been obtained.

Note: Original paper applications received by VSI, once reviewed and either approved or rejected, will be digitized and stored electronically. All paper copies will be destroyed. VSI will not store paper documents.

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# Appendix A

## Certification Program Structure & Certification Process Flowchart



# Virginia Sheriffs' Institute Certification Program

INITIAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS: A+B+C+D MUST TOTAL 150 pts.

| <b>LIFE EXPERIENCE</b>                                  |  |
|---|--|
| Column A + Column B = Minimum 40 pts<br>80 pts possible |  |
| <b>A</b>  | <b>B</b>                                 |
| <b>PUBLIC SAFETY EXPERIENCE</b>                         | <b>EDUCATION</b><br>(Any Field of Study) |
| Years of Experience                                     | Degree/Diploma                           |
| <b>3 - 10</b> = 10 pts                                  | <b>H.S./GED</b> = 10 pts                 |
| <b>11 - 19</b> = 15 pts                                 | <b>Associate</b> = 15 pts                |
| <b>20 - 29</b> = 30 pts                                 | <b>B.A./B.S.</b> = 30 pts                |
| <b>30+</b> = 40 pts                                     | <b>Master's/+</b> = 40 pts               |

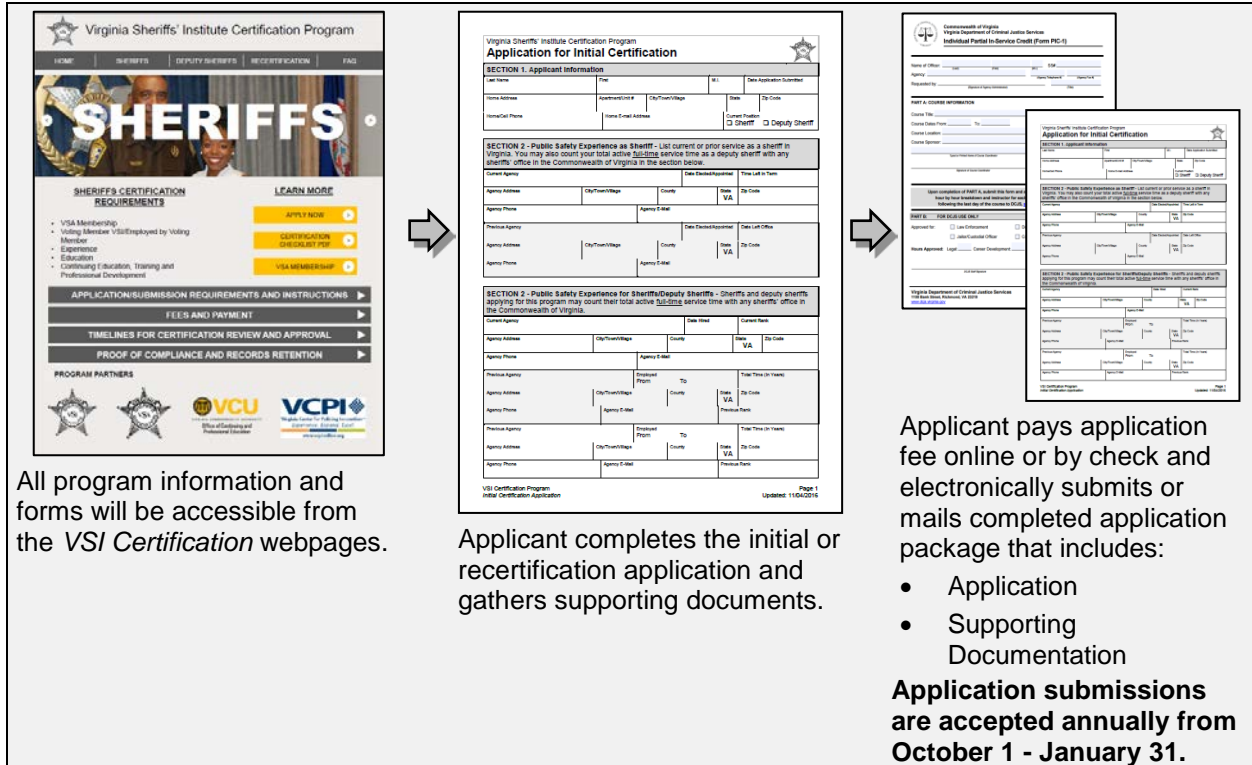
| <b>CAREER DEVELOPMENT</b>                                |  |
|--|--|
| Column C = 40 pts    Column D = 40 pts<br>80 pts minimum |  |
| <b>C</b>   | <b>D</b>   |
| <b>TRAINING</b><br>(Within last 4 years)                 | <b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b><br>(Within last 4 years) |
| Required Minimum Training*:                              | <b>Multi-Month Courses</b><br>30 pts/course              |
| <b>Leadership</b> 8 hrs                                  | <b>Multi-Week Courses</b><br>15 pts/course               |
| <b>Ethics</b> 8 hrs                                      | <b>Public Safety Conferences</b><br>5 pts/conference     |
| <b>Cultural Diversity</b> 8 hrs                          | <b>VSA/VSI Annual Conferences</b><br>10 pts/conference   |
| <b>Community Policing</b> 8 hrs                          | <b>Service as VSA and/or VSI President</b> 10 pts        |
| <b>Legal/HR Law</b> 8 hrs                                | <b>Instruction of Public Safety Courses</b> 1 pt/hr      |
| <b>Additional Training</b> 1 pt/hr                       |  |
| *1 hour of training = 1 pt                               | <b>For recertification only</b>                          |
|  | <b>College Coursework</b><br>1 pt/credit hour            |

**Program Partners**



|  |
|--|
| <b>RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b><br><b>Column C + Column D MUST TOTAL 100 pts</b> |
|--|

## Certification Process Flowchart



### Application Submission / Review / Award Process

