Field Training Officer (FTO) Program Structure

Each circuit is required to have a FTO Coordinator and multiple line FTOs. Each new trainee should be assigned to a primary line FTO. This does NOT mean the trainee is prohibited from obtaining knowledge from other FTOs.

FTO Coordinators:
- Creating training calendars for new trainees
- Oversee attendance to Instructor-led courses
- Provide feedback on patterns identified in employee work habits and behavior
- Act as liaison between the circuit and Probation HQ

Line FTOs (strongly suggested to be senior JPOs):
- Must have an active caseload
- Conduct hand-on training for trainees
- Observe initial steps taken during Phase III
- Provide feedback on job specific tasks
- Provide feedback to FTO coordinator and JPO Supervisor on trainee’s performance
Juvenile Probation Officer Training Overview

Training for the juvenile probation officer (JPO) is broken into three parts: Phase I – academy preparation, Phase II – the academy, and Phase III – Beginning the Job. All three stages are designed to ensure the JPO is confident and has the competency to perform his/her job duties.

**Phase I - Four Stages**

Phase 1 is a six to seven-week training period in which the JPO candidate completes observations and tasks from the JPO Checklist that allows him/her to become familiar with circuit’s resources and his/her job responsibilities.

**Progress Reviews:** The Field Training Officer (FTO) will conduct at least three face-to-face meetings or conference calls with the JPO candidate and JPOS during Phase I to discuss overall progress including strengths and growth opportunities. The JPOS is expected to provide the ACPO and/or CPO with updates on the JPO candidate’s progress. ***Face-to-face meetings are preferred.***

**Stage I: Administrative/Orientation Training/New Employee Training**

**Average Timeframe:** 4 days

**Reading Materials:** The JPO candidate is provided reading materials that introduce him/her to:

- Department’s Employee Handbook
- Evaluation guidelines
- Benefits packages
- Confidentiality rules
- Child abuse reporting

**Online Courses**

The JPO candidate will take online courses that enhance his/her knowledge-base in:

- Organizational overview of the department
- Compensation
- Employee benefits
- Attendance and leave
- Safety and security
- Sexual harassment
- Quality customer service
- Information security awareness
- Performance evaluations

JPO candidates must obtain a 70% or higher on post-test provided at the end of each module.

**FTO Responsibilities:** The JPO candidate is assigned to a primary FTO. The FTO can be a SJPO or JPO that has been trained and assigned FTO duties. During this stage, the FTO must ensure the JPO has access to the reading materials above and the department’s learning management system (LMS). The FTO should provide guidance on LMS navigation and ensure the JPO candidate is placed on the Phase II (Academy) waitlist.
Daily observations of the JPO candidate will begin on day one. Candidates are evaluated in the following categories:

- Attitude Toward Work
- Personal Appearance
- Acceptance of Feedback
- Interaction with General Public and/or Staff
- Problem Solving and Decision Making

Candidates receive rating scores of 1 to 7 in each category. Ratings 1 – 3 are considered below expectations. A rating of 4 indicates the candidate meets expectation. Ratings of 5-7 indicate the candidate exceeds expectations. If the JPO candidate does not meet the standards set at this stage, remediation or termination may be recommended.

**The content of this stage of Phase I is not part of the Phase I Exam.

**Stage II: SkillPro Certification Courses, CPR/First Aid, and De-escalation Tactics**

Average Timeframe: Two weeks

Online Courses

The JPO candidate will take online courses that increase his/her knowledge of:

- History/purpose of the department
- Standard of ethics
- Educational system
- Legal/court system and common terminology
- Mental health and substance abuse
- Interstate Compact on Juveniles
- Disproportionate Minority Contact
- Juvenile sexual offenders
- Gang Awareness

JPO candidates must obtain a 70% or higher on post-test provided at the end of each module.

Instructor-Led Courses

Ideally, JPO candidates will also become certified in CPR/First Aid and de-escalation tactics during this stage of the Phase I. Although the completion of Phase I is not final until this certification has been obtained, attendance in this training is based on the availability of the course.

**Course content related to CPR and First Aid is not part of the Phase I Exam.

Daily observations of the JPO candidate will continue. If the JPO candidate does not meet the standards set at this stage, remediation or termination may be recommended.

FTO Responsibilities: During this stage, the FTO will facilitate registration/attendance of instructor-led courses. The FTO should also conduct a one-on-one with the JPO candidate to review the information obtained in the online courses. The FTO should answer any question(s) the candidate has and provide insight on how the course information fits into the day-to-day tasks of a JPO.
Stage III: Job Observations and Activities

Average Timeframe: Four and a half weeks

During this stage, the JPO candidate will gain an understanding of job expectations, youth behaviors, and appropriate interactions with youth, public, and other staff.

***It is a best practice for circuits to have a resource guide that helps JPO identify community resources and gain an understanding of which programs are aligned with the specific program types (ex. Diversion, Prevention, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, etc.)

Instructor-Led Courses

JPO candidates will participate in instructor-led training to enhance their understanding and skills in the use of the department’s operating system, the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS). An evaluation of the employee’s basic computer skills will be conducted during this time. The JJIS training is subject to class availability, but is a mandatory part of Phase I. It is ideal for the JPO candidate to complete JJIS training prior to beginning the activities in the checklist.

Observations/Activities (See checklist)

JPO candidates will participate in a list of observations and activities that are designed to provide a general understanding of:

- Local resources
- Juvenile Justice Information System
- Detention screening process
- Intake process
- Detention facilities
- Courtroom procedures
- Supervision
- Staffings
- Commitment
- Specialized cases

The job observation/activities ensure candidates gain an understanding of job expectations, youth behaviors, and appropriate interactions with youth, staff and the public.

***Observations: Places, practices, or tasks the candidate must view to become familiar with

***Activities checklist: Tasks the candidate must perform under the supervision of a certified JPO

Trainee Expectations for Observations/Activities:

- Perform specific observations/activities the minimum number of times indicated on the schedule
- Demonstrate ability to maintain JJIS proficiency following initial JJIS training
- Complete all job specific documents under the supervision of a certified JPO
- Effectively communicate observations/perceptions to FTO and/or supervisor
- Ask questions, be proactive, and absorb as much information as possible

FTO Responsibilities for Observations/Activities:

- Coordinate/schedule observations/activities for candidates to ensure productive use of time
- Explain the purpose for each job skill experience and the process involved
- Ensure the candidate adheres to the specified number of hours allotted for each observation/activity set.
- Debrief with the candidate at the end of each set of observations/activities. It is highly recommended that the FTO meet with the JPO candidate weekly to answer any questions the JPO candidate may have about the process.
- Access the candidate’s comprehension and ability to perform specific tasks including the JPO candidate’s writing skills.
- Provide feedback/clarification to the trainee as needed.
- Document progress and/or issues with completion of job observation/activities in LMS.
- Debrief with trainee on overall Phase I performance and provide insight on the daily observation outcomes.
- Provide an overview of the JPO candidate’s progress to the JPOS at least once a week.
- Ensure completion of all observations/activities documented in the Department’s LMS prior to taking Phase I Exam.
- Review the ‘Academy Guidelines’ with the JPO trainee prior to the first day of the academy.

The JPO candidate must be accompanied by a certified juvenile probation officer or a staff member that is certified in Department approved de-escalation tactics during the completion of all observations.

**Daily observations** of the JPO candidate will continue. If the JPO candidate does not meet the standards set at this stage, remediation or termination may be recommended.

**Academy Prep:** A few weeks prior to the start of the academy. Each trainee will receive an email that includes information pertaining to:

- Phase I Exam Dates
- Uniform Orders
- Travel Arrangements
- Meals
- Training Materials

**Phase I Exam:**

The Field Training Officer (FTO) assigned to the JPO candidate must ensure that the JPO candidate has completed this six-week Phase I training in preparation for Phase I Exam, which is the entrance exam to Phase II, the JPO Academy. Each candidate should be provided a copy of the Phase I Exam Study Guide to prepare for the test.

**Successful Completion Attempts:** The JPO candidate will have three opportunities to take the JPO Phase I exam and must obtain a score of 75% or higher to attend Phase II, the JPO Academy. Two of the three opportunities will be provided prior to the next available academy. Students receiving a passing score on their first or second attempt will be awarded a seat in that academy. Students needing a third attempt will be placed back on the waiting list and awarded a seat in the following academy upon receipt of a passing score.

Updated October 2017
Stage IV(A): Blended Academy

Average Timeframe: One week

A one-week academy course that includes the legally mandated soft skills required for Juvenile Probation Officer certification. JPOs are provided the opportunity to learn alongside juvenile detention officers while forging positive working relationships. Students gain an understanding of the youth/families we serve and the philosophies implemented by the Department and review and practice of JPO job tasks and responsibilities.

Topics for this course include:

- Adolescent Development
- Suicide Prevention
- DJJ History
- Quality Report Writing
- Cultural Diversity
- Communication
- Balanced Approach to Restorative Justice
- Trauma Informed Care
- Professional Ethics

Blended Academy Attendance: New hires can attend this course at ANY time during Phase I.

Blended Academy Exam: Students will take an exam covering the topics of this course at the end of the week.

Successful Completion Attempts: The JPO candidate will have three opportunities to take the Blended Academy exam and must obtain a score of 75% or higher to attend Phase II, the JPO Academy. Two of the three opportunities will be provided prior to the next available academy. Students receiving a passing score on their first or second attempt will be awarded a seat in that academy. Students needing a third attempt will be placed back on the waiting list and awarded a seat in the following academy upon receipt of a passing score.

Stage IV(B): Motivational Interviewing

Average Timeframe: Two days

Motivational Interviewing is a directive, client-centered interaction style for eliciting behavior change by helping youth to explore and resolve ambivalence. The course provides staff with more effective communication strategies to utilize when interacting with youth.

Directly following the Blended Academy, JPOs will spend two days learning how to properly utilize Motivational Interviewing techniques

Course Review: There is a pre- and post-test for this course.
ALL stages of Phase I MUST be completed prior to Phase II admission.

**Phase II – The Academy**

Phase II is the three-week Juvenile Probation Academy that includes topics such as:

- Case Flow Process
- Courtroom Procedures
- Screening and Intake
- Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI)
- Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT)
- Probation
- Youth Empowered Success (YES) plan
- Commitment
- Aftercare
- Personal Safety

The academy provides JPO candidates the opportunity to gain an understanding of the youth/families we serve and the philosophies implemented by the Department. It also provides additional review and practice of JPO job tasks and responsibilities.

**Phase II Exam:** At the conclusion of this course, students will take an exam covering only the topics of this course.

**Successful Completion Attempts:** The JPO candidate will have three opportunities to take the JPO Phase II exam and must obtain a score of 75% or higher to attain JPO certification. The initial attempt will be provided during the last week of the academy. Additional attempts will need to be coordinated with SD&T in accordance with the guidelines provided in the Exam portion of this document.
Phase III – Beginning the Job

Upon completing the certification process, JPOs will begin to be assigned cases. This phase is designed to ensure newly certified JPOs are provided the necessary support as they begin to assume the responsibility for active cases.

Progress Reviews: The Field Training Officer (FTO) will conduct bi-weekly face-to-face meetings or conference calls with the JPO candidate and JPOS during Phase III to discuss overall progress including strengths and growth opportunities. The FTO must ensure the Phase III Observation Report is begun prior to the meeting. JPOS is expected to provide the ACPO and/or CPO a copy of the completed Phase III Observation Report after each Progress Review meeting. ***Face-to-face meetings are preferred.

Average Timeframe:

Screeners: Four weeks
Field JPOs: Six weeks

Trainee Expectations:

~ Screeners ~

- Conduct initial screenings under the supervision of the FTO
- Participate in at least two Progress Reviews with the FTO and JPOS to discuss overall progress to include strengths and growth opportunities
- Continue to ask questions and seek advice when necessary
- Exhibit professional growth and an increase in knowledge/proficiency over time

~ Field JPO ~

Caseload Assignment Guidelines:

- Be assigned to no more than 20 active cases total across all legal status types: intake, probation, commitment, post commitment probation, and/or conditional release for the first six weeks. The make-up of the caseload assigned should mirror the typical caseload make-up of the other JPOs in the unit.

Example: If the JPO’s unit handles all legal status types, then the JPO in training should be assigned 20 cases consisting of all legal status types. If the JPO’s unit only handles commitment cases, then the 20 cases should all be commitment youth. The assigned cases must consist of all four risk-to-re-offend levels (low, moderate, moderate-high, and high).

Transition to Full Case Management Responsibilities

- Managers should base the decision on how to transition a new JPO into his/her full case management responsibilities should be based on the JPO’s Phase III Observation Reports.
- After four weeks of Phase III, managers may increase the number of cases assigned to no more than 40 active cases total across all legal status types for the next two weeks if the new JPO meets the following requirement:
  o Received an average of 2.7 or higher on each of the two Phase III Observation Reports completed by the end of the fourth week.
- Under no circumstances, should a new JPO be assigned more than 40 cases prior to successful completion of the six-week Phase III process.
Other Field JPO Requirements

- Conduct office, home, school visits and court appearance under the supervision of the FTO
- Complete a job task on his/her own (examples: PACT, YES plan, PDR, etc.)
- Participate in a debriefing with the FTO upon initial completion of activity to receive constructive feedback for improvement prior to submission to the JPOS
- Participate in at least three Progress Reviews with the FTO and JPOS to discuss overall progress to include strengths and growth opportunities
- Continue to ask questions and seek advice when necessary
- Exhibit professional growth and an increase in knowledge/proficiency over time

FTO Responsibilities:

~ Screeners ~

***FTOs for screeners must have shown proficiency in the administration of the DRAI.***

- Provide oversight/feedback to the newly certified JPO as he/she begins to conduct screenings.
- Mentor/coach until the JPO no longer appears to need this level of assistance.
- Review initial documents prior to supervisor review
- Provide constructive feedback designed to increase the JPOs proficiency in job tasks
- Communicate daily observations to the JPOS.
- Conduct at least two Progress Reviews with the JPO and JPOS to discuss overall progress including strengths and growth opportunities. Submit observation report to JPOS to document findings/acknowledgement of progress level by all parties.

~ Field JPO ~

- Provide oversight/feedback to the newly certified JPO as he/she begins to work on cases.
- Mentor/coach until the JPO no longer appears to need this level of assistance.
- Observe JPOs initial attempts at JPO task for newly assigned cases
- Review initial documents prior to supervisor review
- Provide constructive feedback designed to increase the JPO’s proficiency in job tasks
- Communicate daily observations to the JPOS.
- Conduct at least three Progress Reviews with the JPO and JPOS to discuss overall progress including strengths and growth opportunities. Submit observation report to JPOS to document findings/acknowledgement of progress level by all parties.
- Ensure any observations that lead to concerns of disabilities that affect the employee’s performance be brought the attention of the circuit administration.

Note: Field Training Officers simply provide input/observations of the trainee’s progress. The FTO acts as support for the staff and management. It is still the responsibility of the administration/management team of each circuit to use all the information available to them to determine the suitability of each new juvenile probation officer.
Exam- Review/Retakes

Required Remediation

Admin. Rule 63H-2.006 (5a)
Staff failing the certification examination are required to attend remediation, which must be documented in the department’s computer based tracking system.

Training coordinators MUST maintain a record of remediation in SkillPro. Please see directions below:

1. Log on to SkillPro
2. Select “Remediation Log” under the Learning menu
3. Select the correct student name from the drop-down menu and click the Select button
4. Select the course exam from the drop-down menu; if the course is not listed, indicate the course on the first line of the Notes section
5. Complete the Notes section with any observations made by the person conducting the remediation
6. In the Description section, clearly indicate what topics were covered and how the remediation occurred (i.e., face-to-face meeting, individual study, etc.)
7. Indicate the date that the remediation took place
8. Indicate the name of the person(s) conducting the remediation
9. Indicate the total hours of remediation completed

To request a list of courses in which the candidate missed items, the training coordinator may email a request to C&E. Yes!!! All you need to enter in the “To” field of your email is “C&E”. This information could be helpful for remediation.

Optional Examination Challenge or Item Review

The second or third attempt to pass a certification exam shall occur no less than seven (7) calendar days after the Examination Challenge or Item Review.

- An examination challenge or item review is NOT a review of the academy content or remediation.
- Candidates who feel that examination items are unfair, confusing, or inconsistent with the content may challenge the examination by filing an objection.
- To be eligible to challenge answers to questions on the examination, the request must be received no later than 30 days from the date of the examination that is being challenged. If the request is received after 30 days, the examination items can only be reviewed and not challenged.
- Candidates who fail a certification examination have the OPTION to request a review of the items missed.
- Certification examination item reviews and challenges are only conducted at the DJJ headquarters office in Tallahassee in the presence of Office of Staff Development and Training staff.

NOTE: The candidate’s facility or program area MUST PAY any expenses incurred for travel to the examination review or challenge session.

To register a participant for an item review or to challenge an exam, the training coordinator or FTO should follow the directions below:

1. Log on to SkillPro
2. Select “Manage Rosters” under the Learning menu
3. Select “Certification Exam Item Review” from the drop-down Course menu
4. Select the desired session from the drop-down Session menu
5. Click the Add Participants button at the bottom of the window
6. Use the drop-down menus to indicate Agency Type, Branch, Region, Circuit, and Facility/Program

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7. Click the Search button to show a list of participants from your search parameters
8. Click the box before each name to select the people to be registered
9. After you have selected all the people to be registered for a session, click the Add Participants button
10. Click the Save button at the bottom of the screen

Examination Retake

Admin. Rule 63H-2.006 (4e)
Staff may be given up to three attempts to pass the certification examination within the 180-day timeframe.

Admin. Rule 63H-2.006 (5a-b)
Staff failing the certification examination are required to attend remediation, which must be documented in the department’s computer based tracking system.

Staff shall adhere to the following schedule for second and third attempts to pass the certification examination:
1. The second attempt shall occur no less than 7 calendar days after, and no more than 45 calendar days after, the first attempt.
2. The third attempt shall occur no less than 14 calendar days after, and no more than 45 calendar days after, the second attempt.

All certification examination retakes are administered at the nearest academy site (Broward College, Valencia College, Florida Public Safety Institute [Formerly Pat Thomas], or Hillsborough Community College).

To register a participant for an examination retake, the training coordinator or FTO should follow the directions below:
1. Log on to SkillPro
2. Select “Manage Rosters” under the Learning menu
3. Select “Certification Exam Retakes” from the drop-down Course menu
4. Select the desired session from the drop-down Session menu
5. Click the Add Participants button at the bottom of the window
6. Use the drop-down menus to indicate Agency Type, Branch, Region, Circuit, and Facility/Program
7. Click the Search button to show a list of participants from your search parameters
8. Click the box before each name to select the people to be registered
9. After you have selected all the people to be registered for a session, click the Add Participants button
10. Click the Save button at the bottom of the screen

NOTE: The candidate’s facility or program area MUST PAY any expenses incurred for travel to the certification examination retakes.