ASSEMBLY, No. 5696

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO
District 20 (Union)
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District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)
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District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblyman Johnson

SYNOPSIS

Expands modified basic training program to allow county corrections officers to be certified as county prosecutor's detectives or investigators, and county or municipal police officers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/20/2021)

AN ACT concerning the modified basic training program for county corrections officers and amending P.L.2019, c.247.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.2019, c.247 (C.52:17B-68.2) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. The Police Training Commission in the Division of Criminal Justice in the Department of Law and Public Safety shall develop a supplemental course to be known as the modified basic training program for county corrections officers. The program shall provide the additional training necessary to allow an eligible county corrections officer to be certified as a county sheriff's officer, detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office, or county or municipal police officer. The Police Training Commission shall develop the program within 180 days of the effective date of **[**this act**]** P.L.2019, c.247 and shall revise the program within 30 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (now pending before the Legislature as this bill).

b. A county corrections officer is eligible for the modified basic training program if the officer has:

(1) previously completed a basic training course administered by the Police Training Commission pursuant to P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-66 et seq.);

(2) been designated by the county sheriff as eligible to transition into the position of sheriff's officer or by the chief executive officer of the county or municipality, as appropriate, as eligible to transition into the position of detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office, or county or municipal police officer based on the officer's law enforcement examination test score and seniority;

(3) served in the county correction's officer title for a minimum of **[**36**]** 12 months in the facility under the jurisdiction of the county sheriff or the chief executive officer of the county, whichever is applicable; and

(4) a criminal history record background check of the officer has been conducted by the appointing authority and the officer has not been deemed ineligible to transition to the position of sheriff's officer, detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office, or county or municipal police officer on the basis of any conviction disclosed by the background check.

c. The modified basic training program shall, at a minimum, provide comprehensive and consistent training in law enforcement practices and concepts. Each course instructor shall be proficient and experienced in law enforcement practices and concepts.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

d. The modified basic training program shall be offered at an academy approved by the Police Training Commission to provide police training courses pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-66 et seq.).

e. The waiver rule set forth in N.J.A.C.13:1-8.4 authorizing the Police Training Commission to waive all or part of a basic training course shall apply to an eligible county corrections officer taking the modified basic training program developed pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

f. A county corrections officer who successfully completes the modified basic training program shall be eligible for a lateral transfer to the position of sheriff's officer, detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office, or county or municipal police officer in **[**the**]** any county or municipality, as applicable, in **[**which the officer serves**]** the State. An officer eligible for a lateral transfer shall not be denied a transfer to an available position without cause.

g. The Civil Service Commission shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to implement the provisions of this section.

(cf: P.L.2019, c.247, s.1)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill authorizes county corrections officers to take a modified training course to transition into a position as a detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office, or as a county or municipal police officer.

Current law authorizes a county corrections officer to transition to a position as a county sheriff's officer by completing a supplemental course known as the modified basic training course for county corrections officers. This abbreviated training course, often referred to as the "GAP program," allows an eligible county corrections officer to be certified as a county sheriff's officer without having to take the entire basic training course required of other candidates for county sheriff's officer positions. Successful completion of the GAP program makes the county corrections officer eligible for a lateral transfer to the county sheriff's office in the county where the officer serves. The officer is not to be denied transfer to an available position without cause.

To be eligible for the GAP program under current law, a county corrections officer is required to have: 1) previously completed a Police Training Commission (PTC) basic training course; 2) been designated by the county sheriff as eligible to transition into the position of county sheriff's officer based on the officer's law

enforcement examination test score and seniority; 3) served in the county correction's officer title for a minimum of 36 months in the facility under the jurisdiction of the county sheriff; and 4) passed a criminal history record background check.

This bill requires the PTC to expand the GAP program to similarly authorize county corrections officers to transition into positions as detectives or investigators in the county prosecutor's office, or county or municipal police officers. The PTC has 30 days to make the necessary changes to the GAP program to implement provisions of the bill.

Under the bill, the chief executive officer of the county or municipality is responsible for designating whether a county corrections officer is eligible to transition to a position as a detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office or county or municipal police officer based on the officer's examination scores and seniority. The county sheriff continues to be responsible for designating eligible officers to transition to county sheriff's officer positions. The bill also reduces the number of months that the county corrections officer is required to have served in a county correctional facility to be eligible for the GAP program from 36 months to 12 months. The bill acknowledges that there are instances in which the county correctional facility is under the jurisdiction of the chief executive officer of the county rather than the county sheriff.

Finally, the bill authorizes county corrections officers to laterally transfer to a position as a county sheriff's officer, detective or investigator in the county prosecutor's office, or county or municipal police officer anywhere in the State, not just the county in which they serve.