



February 14, 2023

Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards
927 Centennial Way
Lansing, MI 48913

Request for Commission Authorization to Proceed with the Establishment of a Regional Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy at Grand Rapids Community College.

Dear Distinguished Commission Members;

Request: In compliance with Administrative Rule 28.14302, I am writing this letter in an effort to obtain your approval for Grand Rapids Community College to develop and establish a Regional Training Academy. If authorized to proceed, the Regional Training Academy will co-exist with our current Pre-Service Track Academy. The new Regional Training Academy at GRCC will help us to support West Michigan Law Enforcement by providing both per-service candidates and employed recruits during this unprecedented time.

GRCC Current Pre-Service Track Program: Since 1979, Grand Rapids Community College has operated a MCOLES approved pre-service track basic law enforcement academy. Over the years, our program has transitioned and developed into two concurrent academy sessions, one of which runs in the morning and the other which runs in the evening. Our half-time schedule has allowed for nontraditional students the ability to work while pursuing their law enforcement careers. We are currently operating our 92nd and 93rd academy sessions.

Our pre-service track academy at Grand Rapids Community College is set up as a two-year associate degree program with clear and distinct prerequisites and an MCOLES basic police academy. Students in the track program take two semesters of general education and criminal justice classes. Upon successful completion of these classes, they then apply to attend the 700-hour MCOLES Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy.

Our academy runs very similar to a regional academy except for its duration. As described above, those accepted into the MCOLES Basic Training Academies are assigned, by their request, to one of two sessions. Our morning session runs from 7 am to 12:30 pm, Monday - Thursday. Our evening session runs from 4 pm to 9:30 pm, Monday - Thursday. In addition to this weekly schedule, students attend Friday and weekend classes for Emergency Vehicle Operations, Tactical First Aid, and Firearms in order to meet all MCOLES requirements. In 2022, academy sessions started August 29, 2022 and will graduate on April 27, 2023. Our scheduling options allow for students to successfully juggle work, school, and family. Our academy runs through the fall and winter semesters, graduating at the end of April.

Our program also provides a certificate track for students who have already obtained a degree. Those students do not take the GRCC prerequisites but instead apply directly to the MCOLES Basic Training Academy. Those students attend the same academy as the degree seeking, two-year students. Also, GRCC's Basic Training Academy has been able to accommodate employed recruits, including Kent County Sheriff Michelle Lajoye - Young.

Only applicants who meet program and MCOLES requirements are accepted to the GRCC Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy.

Our intention is to always offer our track session program to continue our proud history of helping non-traditional students achieve their law enforcement dreams.

GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

143 Bostwick Ave. NE • Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503-3295 • ph: (616) 234-GRCC • grcc.edu

VISION • GRCC provides relevant educational opportunities that are responsive to the needs of the community and inspires students to meet economic, social, and environmental challenges to become active participants in shaping the world of the future.

MISSION • GRCC is an open access college that prepares individuals to attain their goals and contribute to the community.

Justification: Law enforcement is in unprecedented times. The hiring needs of policing far out way incoming recruits. In recent years, our applicants and enrollment in our pre-service academies has steadily and significantly declined. Just five years ago, in 2018, GRCC interviewed 61 applicants to our MCOLES Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy and graduated 41 students. For our current academy sessions, GRCC interviewed just 35 applicants and have just 22 students enrolled. That's a 42% drop in applicants and a 46% drop in enrollment.

MCOLES and the State of Michigan are aware of the staffing crisis and in an effort to help remedy the matter, they released the Public Safety Academy Assistance Program, a grant designed to assist police agencies pay tuition and associated costs for employed recruits attending regional police academies. This grant provides 30 million dollars through September of 2026 to accelerate new police recruits into the law enforcement arena. This grant also presents some concerns. One of which is that police agencies are unlikely to send employed recruits to a two-semester long program, preferring a 15 or 16-week academy. This was recently demonstrated when 3 GRCC students were removed from our program and sent near-by regional academies when hired as employed recruits. The second concern is the ability of current regional academies to handle the potential volume of employed recruits through the grant. In October, MCOLES asked regional academies if they could increase the number of recruits per session or add sessions.

Prospective students are aware of the opportunities employed recruitment offers. As the Director of our program, I often speak to first year GRCC students who are enrolled in Criminal Justice classes. In every class that I speak to, students express their interest in applying to police agencies who offer employed recruitment. In our region, employed recruits typically get sent to GVSU, a regional 15-week program which runs in the summer and fall semesters.

In discussions with our advisory board, West Michigan Law Enforcement leaders support the concept of the additional regional academy concept at GRCC and believe it will significantly help support their hiring efforts. Letters of support from Wyoming Department of Public Safety, Kent County Sheriff's Office, and Muskegon Police Department included.

Implementation: If granted our request to establish a regional training academy, our program will add much needed capacity to the West Michigan Region. GRCC would offer multiple pathways for student recruits to enter the field. GRCC's regional academy would supplement GVSU regional academies, providing West Michigan with year-round MCOLES Basic Training opportunities. This would provide rapid and steady infusion of pre-service and employed police recruits.

GRCC's Regional offering would provide 700 hours of training over 17 weeks. Classes would begin at the start of the first week of January and conclude the last week of April. In 2024, classes would start on Tuesday, January 2 and graduation would occur on Friday, April 26. Typical class weeks would include 40 hours of instruction.

With MCOLES approval, we will develop a detailed program description and submit it in our 2024 Operations Plan due July 1, 2023.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David J Kok

David J Kok
GRCC Police Academy Director
davidkok@grcc.edu
(616) 234-3362

January 19, 2023



Michelle LaJoye-Young
SHERIFF

To whom it may concern,

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) is pursuing MCOLES approval to run a 16-week regional police academy in the winter months and the Kent County Sheriff's Office strongly supports them in this effort. As you know, there has been a significant gap in qualified candidates and the number of openings community wide. This has jeopardized the service level in our community and many others. With GRCC we have a great opportunity to provide an extra regional academy and a significant supply of both pre-service and employed recruits to our area.

Please feel free to contact me if I can do anything in addition to support the Grand Rapids Community College in their pursuit to obtain approval for a 16-week regional police academy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michelle T. LaJoye-Young'.

Michelle LaJoye-Young
Sheriff



Muskegon Police Department

Timothy E. Kozal
Director of Public Safety

980 Jefferson
Muskegon, Michigan
49443-0536

www.muskegonpolice.com

Phone: 231-724-6750
FAX: 231-722-5140

February 7, 2023

David Kok
Police and Corrections Academy Director
Grand Rapids Community College
143 Bostwick Ave. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

RE: 16 Week Regional Police Academy Letter of Support

Dear Director Kok:

On behalf of the Muskegon Police Department, please accept this letter of support to Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) in their pursuit for a MCOLES approved 16 week winter regional police academy.

The Muskegon Police Department has a long-standing history of partnering with the GRCC Police Academy. Several of our current and former police officers are graduates of the program. We also have officers who instruct in the academy and our Administrative Captain sits on the GRCC Police Academy Advisory Board. It is my opinion that this winter academy will fill a void in West Michigan and provide another viable option for training and education for future police officers. I fully support the efforts of GRCC as they seek MCOLES approval for a 16 week winter regional police academy and I intend to continue to partner and support the GRCC Police Academy for the foreseeable future.

If you require more information about the Muskegon Police Department and our relationship with the GRCC Police Academy, please contact me at timothy.kozal@shorelinecity.com.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Timothy Kozal".

Timothy Kozal
Director of Public Safety
Muskegon Police Department

City of **Wyoming** Michigan

Department of Public Safety | 2300 DeHoop Ave SW, Wyoming, MI 49509
616.530.7309 | Fax 616.249.3403 | wyomingmi.gov

February 9, 2023

Director David Kok
Police and Corrections Academy
Grand Rapids Community College

Director Kok,

Like most law enforcement agencies in Michigan, the Wyoming Department of Public Safety has been significantly impacted by numerous retirements over the last several years. During that time, and still today, GRCC has been invaluable partner in our effort to fill positions with quality candidates who are willing to serve our community.

It is my understanding that you are seeking MCOLES approval to create a 16-week regional police academy in the winter months. This would be an ideal solution for many of our potential applicants, some of whom will be sponsored through our agency.

Please know that the Wyoming Department of Public Safety is in support of creating more opportunities for those individuals who desire to serve the community in a law enforcement capacity.

Sincerely,



Chief Kimberly S. Koster
Wyoming Department of Public Safety
kosterk@wyomingmi.gov
(616)530-7323 (O)
(616)893-5122 (C)



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