

A career in service to the public offers good job prospects

by Heidi Riley

The **Atlantic Police Academy (APA)** in Slemmon Park trains future public safety officers in programs such as Police Science (Cadet), Basic Firefighting, Conservation Enforcement, Correctional Officer, and Sheriff and Public Safety Officer.

"The type of people who do well at these jobs are people who truly want to serve their communities," says **Forrest Spencer**, Executive Director, Atlantic Police Academy.

"Police Science graduates are sought after by agencies across Canada," says **Jeffrey Minten**, Deputy Director of the Atlantic Police Academy.

"Cape Breton has approximately a dozen openings. Over the past five years, 88 to 93 percent of APA police graduates found employment in a field related to policing.

"Many officers who are hired as part-time on PEI work full-time hours and gain a lot of experience. Moreover, if they are willing to travel, agencies across Canada are looking for our cadets."

Both Forrest and Jeffery explained that there are also opportunities to join the RCMP. Regular RCMP cadets must take a six-month program, but APA graduates only require six weeks of RCMP training.

"Conservation Enforcement jobs are also available in Atlantic Canada," says Forrest. "We are working on a partnership with Environment Canada to increase opportunities for possible federal government employment as well.

"Corrections Services are in demand on PEI and across the Maritimes," says Forrest. "Also, Public Safety Sheriffs are in very high demand in Newfoundland and Labrador right now. Jobs for graduates are also available in PEI and New Brunswick."

Basic Firefighting graduates are trained to an international standard and can work anywhere in the world.

"In Atlantic Canada, many will join volunteer fire services to protect their communities. Full time positions in fire services are less common in the region, but there are also firefighting careers available in private industry such as oil and gas. The training also opens doors to such positions as Industrial Safety Officer."

Women and minorities in policing

The APA encourages women to consider a career in public safety. "Police Services across Canada are seeking female officers," says Forrest.

"Two years ago, we had our largest graduating class of women, with 16 women out of a class of 56. Last year, 10 women graduated from the police science program.

"Every police service in Canada would like to see more officers representing the communities they serve. It is a bonus to speak French, and it is also great to have an officer on hand who can speak Mandarin, Punjabi, or another language."

Changes to the program and policy

"In the past two years, there have been a lot of enhancements to the Police Science program," says Forrest. "With the change in cannabis laws, students are trained in standardised field sobriety testing for drugs and alcohol.



From left, Forrest Spencer, Executive Director, and Jeffrey Minten, Deputy Director, Atlantic Police Academy.

Liam Jay from Charlottetown is a student in the Police Science (Cadet) program. He chose the program because a couple of his buddies went through the academy, and they spoke of their great experiences. "They are all employed now, and they found jobs relatively quickly after graduation.



"I made the decision to enter this career after working for an Island-based security company for four summers. The company gave me training, and we worked hand in hand with police during many events.

"After graduation, given the realities of employment I am totally willing to go to northern Quebec or to join the RCMP. The job market is smaller in Atlantic Canada, and as a fresh recruit I can't expect to get a full-time permanent job in my home town right away."

Spencer Morrison from New Brunswick took the Basic Firefighting program and graduated in January 2020.



"When I was in high school, I took a co-op program at the Oromocto Fire Department, and I loved the atmosphere and the idea of giving back to my community.

"There are always opportunities in western Canada and many other places in the world. I plan to take advantage of that, because I like to travel."

"All our students receive cyber investigative training," says Jeffery. "More and more crimes are borderless and happen over the Internet, which brings a ton of challenges, because suspects and investigations extend beyond our borders. We are continuously challenged to keep up with the changes."

"De-escalation training here at the Academy is second to none. Cadets have the opportunity to become more empathetic and understanding of how to interact with people suffering from mental health issues."

For more information about the **Atlantic Police Academy**, visit www.hollandcollege.com/apa For the full article, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Atlantic Police Academy**.

Trained Administrative Assistants are in short supply

by Gloria Welton

For many years, the job market for Administrative Assistants has been very competitive. Now, the situation has changed as more employers, both government and private, are looking to fill these types of jobs and the people trained for this career are in short supply.

Katherine McQuaid, Director of Training at **Academy of Learning College** in Charlottetown, sees the need for more trained Administrative Assistants. "We are getting calls from employers on a regular basis wanting to hire students from our Administration Assistant diploma program.

"More federal and provincial jobs are being posted than I have seen in a very long time. We can't keep up with the demand, and we need to attract more students to the Administrative field.

"Most administrative jobs advertised are full-time, and compensation has increased, but there appears to be a wage gap between government and private sector positions. Government positions require the completion of a recognized Office Studies program.

"People thinking of getting into the field should reach out to employers to find out what post-secondary programming they require to become employed. Private employers may not have the same requirement, and can offer a lot of work experience in a wide choice of sectors.

"Employers are experiencing staff shortages across all of our complement of programming, including accounting, business administration, office administration, and medical administration.

"Right now, most of the requests we receive from employers are for administrative assistants. For many years, this type of job was very competitive because of the large number of people trained with the required skillsets.

"But today, these positions are more in demand because retirements are increasing, and people are changing careers more often and are not staying with one employer for long periods of time."

Katherine says because of the demand, they are definitely looking to expand the number of people coming into the Administration Assistant program.

"In particular, we are focusing on attracting university graduates who might have an arts or a science degree and want to work in an administrative role. A university degree provides the theoretical background required for administration jobs today, and we provide the technology training.

"Along with keeping up with the latest technology, this career choice also requires the ability to assimilate new information, research, solve problems, and think critically, which are skills gained in university and are transferable to an administrative role.

"We have a lot more students taking medical administration because people have the impression that is where the opportunities are, and they are correct, but now there is a wide open door for office administration as well."

About the program

The 10-month Administration Assistant program at Academy of Learning can be taken on a full-time or part-time basis. Classes are available in the mornings, afternoons, evenings, and online. New students can begin at any time of year.

Students are given credit for skills they already have, which can reduce the time needed to complete the programs and the tuition as well.

All programs offer an on-the-job work placement. "The student identifies the employers they are interested in working with, and we set up the placement with the employer. We work together to meet the needs of the students."

For more information about **Academy of Learning College**, call 1-888-328-8973.

Visit www.aolpei.ca/how_we_teach.php

www.academyoflearning.com



Janine Ronney from Charlottetown started the Administration Assistant program in 2019. She was determined to succeed in the program, and now is preparing for her on-the-job placement.

"After 20 years in the hospitality industry, I decided to change my career. I have had many different positions that have given me many different skills, but taking this program has helped me expand on those skills to prepare me for my next career.

"It was scary to make the change, but this has been a great program with great support. When I was considering a career change I looked for a career that was in an office setting but still had that customer interaction. The Administrative Assistant diploma program fit that criteria.

"I used resources such as The Employment Journey website to make sure I was choosing the right career, and I noticed more and more job openings for administrative assistants, which helped solidify my decision. I am very excited to start my next career!"