



Office of the Governor  
JB Pritzker

## Gov. Pritzker Announces New Partnerships to Expand Education for Illinois State Police Troopers and Officers

*Four public Illinois Universities offering college credits toward bachelor's degrees for ISP cadet graduates and officers*

**SPRINGFIELD** — Today, Governor JB Pritzker and Illinois State Police (ISP) Director Brendan F. Kelly, alongside representatives from public Illinois universities, announced new partnerships that advance educational opportunities for troopers and officers and build an even stronger law enforcement agency. Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Western Illinois University will offer credit hours toward a bachelor's degree for troopers and officers who graduate from the ISP Academy.

"Investing in our Illinois State Police officers is not only the right thing to do – it is one of the most important things we can do for public safety," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Today, I am proud to announce a new initiative that recognizes their dedication and supports their continued growth. Through partnerships with our state's public universities, ISP cadet graduates will now earn college credit toward a degree for their rigorous training – an investment that equips our officers with the tools they need to succeed."

“The most important tools of our Illinois State Police officers are not their badges, or guns, or handcuffs, but their hearts, minds, and souls,” **said ISP Director Brendan Kelly**. “Partnering with these academic institutions strengthens their minds, their careers, and their ability to protect the people of Illinois.”

These partnerships with public universities make Illinois’ program one of the most comprehensive in the nation, providing ISP Academy graduates with some of the highest credit hours toward a degree. Troopers and officers can earn the following credit hours upon completing ISP cadet training:

### **Eastern Illinois University**

- 12 hours awarded toward the Interdisciplinary Program
- \$1,000 annual scholarship for two years

### **Governors State University**

- 33 hours awarded toward a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice
- 48 hours awarded toward a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice with 4 years of service and completion of Sergeant Exam
- 42 hours awarded toward an associate degree in criminal justice with 4 years of service and completion of Sergeant Exam

### **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**

- 11 hours awarded toward a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice
- 15 hours awarded toward a bachelor's in liberal studies
- Additional credits available for prior military service and community college attendance

### **Western Illinois University**

- 12 hours awarded toward an internship for fieldwork experience

Additionally, ISP has an agreement with American Public University System (American Public University and American Military University), which offers 39 credit hours toward a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. ISP is working with additional universities to implement similar programs. ISP also provides tuition reimbursement for troopers with at least one year of service who complete work-related courses.

In addition to these new educational partnerships, ISP has achieved major successes under Governor Pritzker's leadership, including a nearly [80% decrease](#) in guns stolen from firearms dealers in 2024 compared to 2023. Interstate shootings also dropped by 31% in 2024, marking the [third consecutive year of decline](#).

"A large part of EIU's mission is to expand higher education opportunities across and throughout Illinois," **said EIU President Jay Gatrell**. "This partnership augments those opportunities for ISP cadets who want to leverage their training for academic credit. This is just one of several real-world examples detailing how EIU and the Illinois Board of Higher Education collaborate to reinforce the Illinois workforce through a combination of scholarship dollars, academic programming, and career training."

"Governors State University is thrilled to partner with the Illinois State Police in this transformative educational initiative. This agreement not only acknowledges the rigorous training completed at ISP, but also provides troopers with the academic credentials to advance their careers and better serve our communities," **said Governors State University President Dr. Cheryl Green**.

"Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is committed to expanding access to higher education so that more members of our communities can realize the transformative possibilities and opportunities that come with higher education and a degree," **said SIUE Chancellor James T. Minor, PhD**. "Partnerships like this one, with the Illinois State Police, contribute to making this aspiration a reality."

"We are honored and excited to partner with the Illinois State Police Academy. This partnership with the WIU School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration and the Illinois State Police Academy allows us to work together to train the next generation of public safety officers," **said WIU President Dr. Kristi Mindrup**.

"Although it has been just a few weeks since joining the Illinois State Police Academy, I have come to the realization that law enforcement departments need a wide variety of educational backgrounds," **said ISP Cadet Danielle Pondel**. "From law to medicine, and everything in between, there isn't a subject that wouldn't have a place in the Illinois State Police. The program would aid me greatly financially and help me fulfill my dream of working in the Division of Criminal Investigation in the Illinois State Police."

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