

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS VIRGINIA

THE PATH TO BECOMING A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA: UNDERSTANDING THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS VIRGINIA ARE THE FOUNDATIONAL STEPS FOR ANYONE ASPIRING TO A CAREER IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM. THIS DEMANDING YET REWARDING PROFESSION REQUIRES A SPECIFIC SET OF QUALIFICATIONS AND RIGOROUS TRAINING TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES, STAFF, AND INMATES. ASPIRING OFFICERS MUST NAVIGATE A STRUCTURED PROCESS THAT INCLUDES MEETING AGE AND EDUCATIONAL PREREQUISITES, PASSING BACKGROUND CHECKS AND PHYSICAL ASSESSMENTS, AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING ACADEMY. UNDERSTANDING THESE VITAL COMPONENTS IS THE FIRST CRUCIAL STEP TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA. THIS ARTICLE WILL DELVE INTO EACH OF THESE CRITICAL AREAS, PROVIDING A DETAILED ROADMAP FOR THOSE SEEKING TO ENTER THIS ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE ROLE.

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UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA

THE ROLE OF A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA IS MULTIFACETED AND CRITICAL TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. THESE DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CUSTODY, SUPERVISION, AND CONTROL OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF CRIMES AND ARE SERVING SENTENCES IN STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES. IT'S A JOB THAT DEMANDS VIGILANCE, INTEGRITY, AND A COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING ORDER AND SAFETY WITHIN OFTEN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS. BEYOND MERE SUPERVISION, CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS PLAY A VITAL PART IN ENSURING THE REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF INMATES, PROVIDING A STRUCTURED AND SECURE SETTING FOR PROGRAMS AIMED AT REDUCING RECIDIVISM.

A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER'S DAILY DUTIES CAN RANGE FROM CONDUCTING CELL SEARCHES AND MONITORING INMATE MOVEMENTS TO RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES AND MEDIATING CONFLICTS. THEY MUST BE ADEPT AT DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES, POSSESS EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION SKILLS, AND MAINTAIN A CALM DEemeanOR UNDER PRESSURE. THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMANDS ARE SIGNIFICANT, REQUIRING OFFICERS TO BE PHYSICALLY FIT AND MENTALLY RESILIENT. UNDERSTANDING THE GRAVITY OF THESE RESPONSIBILITIES IS PARAMOUNT BEFORE EMBARKING ON THE JOURNEY TO MEET THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS VIRGINIA MANDATES.

VIRGINIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICER ELIGIBILITY: THE ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES

BEFORE EVEN CONSIDERING THE TRAINING ACADEMY, ASPIRING CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS IN VIRGINIA MUST MEET A BASELINE SET OF ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA. THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT ONLY THE MOST QUALIFIED AND SUITABLE CANDIDATES ARE CONSIDERED FOR THIS SENSITIVE POSITION. ADHERING TO THESE STANDARDS IS THE FIRST HURDLE IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

AGE AND CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS

TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER POSITION IN VIRGINIA, CANDIDATES MUST TYPICALLY BE AT LEAST 21 YEARS OF AGE. THIS AGE REQUIREMENT REFLECTS THE MATURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY EXPECTED OF INDIVIDUALS ENTRUSTED WITH THE CUSTODY OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS. FURTHERMORE, APPLICANTS MUST BE UNITED STATES CITIZENS OR LEGAL RESIDENTS

AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS IS A STANDARD REQUIREMENT FOR MOST POSITIONS WITHIN STATE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A MINIMUM EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND IS A CORNERSTONE OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS VIRGINIA ENFORCES. GENERALLY, APPLICANTS ARE REQUIRED TO POSSESS A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR A GED (GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT) CERTIFICATE. IN SOME INSTANCES, HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION, SUCH AS AN ASSOCIATE'S OR BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE, PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, OR A RELATED FIELD, MAY BE PREFERRED OR EVEN ADVANTAGEOUS, POTENTIALLY LEADING TO A FASTER TRACK OR HIGHER STARTING PAY. HOWEVER, THE DIPLOMA OR GED IS THE UNIVERSAL BASELINE.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FITNESS STANDARDS

THE DEMANDING NATURE OF CORRECTIONAL WORK NECESSITATES THAT OFFICERS BE IN EXCELLENT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CONDITION. CANDIDATES WILL UNDERGO A RIGOROUS PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT DESIGNED TO EVALUATE THEIR STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, AND AGILITY. THIS OFTEN INCLUDES RUNNING, PUSH-UPS, SIT-UPS, AND A TIMED OBSTACLE COURSE. BEYOND PHYSICAL PROWESS, A THOROUGH MEDICAL EXAMINATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION ARE MANDATORY. THESE ASSESSMENTS ENSURE THAT CANDIDATES CAN HANDLE THE INHERENT STRESSES OF THE JOB AND DO NOT HAVE ANY UNDERLYING CONDITIONS THAT COULD IMPAIR THEIR PERFORMANCE OR POSE A RISK TO THEMSELVES OR OTHERS.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND DRIVING RECORD

A CLEAN CRIMINAL RECORD IS NON-NEGOTIABLE FOR ASPIRING CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS. APPLICANTS WILL UNDERGO AN EXTENSIVE BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION, WHICH INCLUDES CHECKS FOR ANY FELONY CONVICTIONS, SERIOUS MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES, OR A HISTORY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. A GOOD DRIVING RECORD IS ALSO TYPICALLY REQUIRED, AS OFFICERS MAY NEED TO OPERATE STATE VEHICLES. ANY PAST INDISCRETIONS WILL BE THOROUGHLY REVIEWED TO DETERMINE SUITABILITY FOR THE POSITION, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.

THE COMPREHENSIVE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

THE JOURNEY TO BECOMING A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA IS A STRUCTURED AND COMPETITIVE PROCESS. IT EXTENDS BEYOND SIMPLY MEETING THE INITIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND INVOLVES SEVERAL STAGES DESIGNED TO THOROUGHLY VET EACH APPLICANT. UNDERSTANDING EACH STEP WILL PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD.

INITIAL APPLICATION AND SCREENING

THE PROCESS BEGINS WITH SUBMITTING A FORMAL APPLICATION, USUALLY ONLINE, THROUGH THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (VADOC) OR THE RELEVANT HIRING AGENCY. THIS APPLICATION WILL DETAIL YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION, EDUCATIONAL HISTORY, WORK EXPERIENCE, AND OTHER RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS. APPLICATIONS ARE SCREENED TO ENSURE THAT ALL BASIC REQUIREMENTS ARE MET BEFORE MOVING FORWARD.

WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

FOLLOWING THE INITIAL SCREENING, CANDIDATES WILL TYPICALLY BE REQUIRED TO PASS ONE OR MORE WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS. THESE TESTS ARE DESIGNED TO ASSESS BASIC SKILLS SUCH AS READING COMPREHENSION, WRITING ABILITY, AND LOGICAL REASONING. SOME EXAMS MAY ALSO EVALUATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF GENERAL APTITUDE AND YOUR SUITABILITY FOR A CAREER IN CORRECTIONS. STRONG PERFORMANCE HERE IS KEY TO ADVANCING.

INTERVIEWS

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES FROM THE WRITTEN EXAMS WILL PROCEED TO INTERVIEWS. THESE CAN INCLUDE ONE OR MORE ROUNDS, OFTEN INVOLVING A PANEL INTERVIEW WITH EXPERIENCED CORRECTIONAL PROFESSIONALS. INTERVIEWERS WILL ASSESS YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS, PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES, DECISION-MAKING CAPABILITIES, AND YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER. HONESTY, PROFESSIONALISM, AND A CLEAR ARTICULATION OF YOUR MOTIVATIONS ARE CRUCIAL DURING THIS STAGE.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION AND POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, A COMPREHENSIVE BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT. THIS INVOLVES DETAILED CHECKS OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT HISTORY, REFERENCES, CRIMINAL RECORD, AND PERSONAL LIFE. IN MANY CASES, A POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION MAY ALSO BE ADMINISTERED TO VERIFY THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED AND TO ASSESS HONESTY. THIS THOROUGH VETTING PROCESS IS ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY AND SECURITY OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

THESE EVALUATIONS ARE MORE IN-DEPTH THAN THE INITIAL SCREENING. MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS WILL CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION TO ENSURE YOU ARE FIT FOR DUTY. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION, OFTEN CONDUCTED BY A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, ASSESSES YOUR MENTAL STABILITY, EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE, AND YOUR ABILITY TO COPE WITH THE STRESSORS OF THE JOB. PASSING THESE EVALUATIONS IS VITAL FOR YOUR LONG-TERM SUCCESS AND THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.

THE RIGOROUS VIRGINIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY

ONCE YOU'VE SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATED THE SELECTION PROCESS, THE REAL INTENSIVE TRAINING BEGINS AT THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS' TRAINING ACADEMY. THIS ACADEMY IS WHERE RAW RECRUITS ARE MOLDED INTO COMPETENT AND CAPABLE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS. THE CURRICULUM IS COMPREHENSIVE, DESIGNED TO EQUIP OFFICERS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES EFFECTIVELY AND SAFELY.

CORE CURRICULUM TOPICS

THE ACADEMY CURRICULUM COVERS A WIDE ARRAY OF ESSENTIAL SUBJECTS. TRAINEES WILL RECEIVE INSTRUCTION IN CORRECTIONAL LAW AND POLICY, ENSURING THEY UNDERSTAND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THEY OPERATE. THEY WILL LEARN ABOUT INMATE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INMATE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION. SECURITY PROCEDURES, INCLUDING CONTRABAND DETECTION, SEARCHES, AND PERIMETER SECURITY, ARE HEAVILY EMPHASIZED. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, INCLUDING RIOT CONTROL, HOSTAGE NEGOTIATION BASICS, AND RESPONSE TO MEDICAL EMERGENCIES, IS ALSO A CRUCIAL PART OF THE TRAINING. FURTHERMORE, OFFICERS ARE TRAINED IN COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES,

CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES TO MANAGE INMATE INTERACTIONS EFFECTIVELY.

- CORRECTIONAL LAW AND POLICY
- INMATE SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT
- SECURITY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS
- EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS
- INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
- PHYSICAL FITNESS AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS
- CORRECTIONS ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

PHYSICAL TRAINING AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS

A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE ACADEMY IS DEDICATED TO PHYSICAL CONDITIONING AND DEFENSIVE TACTICS. TRAINEES ENGAGE IN STRENUOUS PHYSICAL TRAINING TO BUILD STAMINA, STRENGTH, AND AGILITY. THIS PREPARES THEM FOR THE PHYSICALLY DEMANDING ASPECTS OF THE JOB, SUCH AS RESTRAINING INDIVIDUALS OR PARTICIPATING IN EMERGENCY RESPONSES. DEFENSIVE TACTICS TRAINING TEACHES OFFICERS HOW TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS USING APPROVED TECHNIQUES, ENSURING THEY CAN HANDLE CONFRONTATIONAL SITUATIONS SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY.

PRACTICAL SCENARIOS AND SIMULATIONS

TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE AND REAL-WORLD APPLICATION, THE ACADEMY UTILIZES PRACTICAL SCENARIOS AND SIMULATIONS. TRAINEES WILL PARTICIPATE IN ROLE-PLAYING EXERCISES THAT MIMIC COMMON SITUATIONS THEY MIGHT ENCOUNTER IN A CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, SUCH AS RESPONDING TO FIGHTS, CONDUCTING SHAKEDOWNS, OR DEALING WITH NON-COMPLIANT INMATES. THESE SIMULATIONS PROVIDE INVALUABLE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT, ALLOWING RECRUITS TO PRACTICE THEIR SKILLS AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK BEFORE FACING ACTUAL CHALLENGES.

GRADUATION AND BEYOND

UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ACADEMY, GRADUATES ARE AWARDED THEIR CERTIFICATION AND ARE READY FOR ASSIGNMENT TO A CORRECTIONAL FACILITY. THE TRAINING, HOWEVER, DOES NOT END HERE. THE VADOC IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ITS OFFICERS.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

THE COMPLETION OF THE ACADEMY IS MERELY THE BEGINNING OF A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER'S CAREER. THE FIELD OF CORRECTIONS IS DYNAMIC, AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING IS ESSENTIAL FOR STAYING EFFECTIVE AND PROMOTING SAFETY. VIRGINIA'S CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT, ALLOWING OFFICERS TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS AND TAKE ON GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SPECIALIZED UNITS

CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS ARE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN REGULAR IN-SERVICE TRAINING THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS. THIS ONGOING EDUCATION REINFORCES CORE COMPETENCIES AND INTRODUCES NEW TECHNIQUES, POLICIES, AND TECHNOLOGIES. SPECIALIZED UNITS WITHIN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS TACTICAL TEAMS, K-9 UNITS, OR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING, OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR OFFICERS TO RECEIVE ADVANCED TRAINING AND DEVELOP EXPERTISE IN SPECIFIC AREAS. THESE ROLES OFTEN REQUIRE ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND RIGOROUS SELECTION PROCESSES.

PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE VADOC PROVIDES CLEAR PATHWAYS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT. WITH EXPERIENCE, DEDICATION, AND FURTHER TRAINING, CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS CAN BE PROMOTED TO SUPERVISORY ROLES SUCH AS CORPORAL, SERGEANT, LIEUTENANT, AND CAPTAIN. THESE POSITIONS COME WITH INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING MANAGING STAFF, OVERSEEING OPERATIONS, AND MAKING CRITICAL DECISIONS THAT IMPACT THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE FACILITY. EACH PROMOTIONAL STEP TYPICALLY INVOLVES FURTHER TRAINING AND A COMPETITIVE SELECTION PROCESS.

THE CAREER OF A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA IS ONE BUILT ON A STRONG FOUNDATION OF RIGOROUS TRAINING AND A COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE. FROM MEETING THE INITIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATING FROM THE ACADEMY AND PURSUING ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, EACH STAGE IS DESIGNED TO PREPARE INDIVIDUALS FOR THE CRITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ENSURING A SAFE AND SECURE CORRECTIONAL ENVIRONMENT. UNDERSTANDING THESE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS VIRGINIA SETS FORTH IS THE ESSENTIAL FIRST STEP FOR ANYONE ASPIRING TO THIS CHALLENGING AND VITAL PROFESSION.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WHAT IS THE MINIMUM AGE TO BECOME A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA?

A: THE MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT TO BECOME A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA IS TYPICALLY 21 YEARS OLD. THIS ENSURES THAT CANDIDATES POSSESS THE MATURITY AND JUDGMENT NECESSARY FOR THE RESPONSIBILITIES INVOLVED.

Q: IS A COLLEGE DEGREE REQUIRED TO BE A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA?

A: WHILE A COLLEGE DEGREE IS NOT ALWAYS A STRICT REQUIREMENT, MOST VIRGINIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICER POSITIONS NECESSITATE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR GED. HOWEVER, HAVING AN ASSOCIATE'S OR BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN FIELDS LIKE CRIMINAL JUSTICE OR PSYCHOLOGY CAN BE ADVANTAGEOUS AND MAY LEAD TO BETTER CAREER PROSPECTS.

Q: WHAT KIND OF PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTS ARE PART OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS IN VIRGINIA?

A: THE PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTS ARE DESIGNED TO ASSESS AN APPLICANT'S STRENGTH, ENDURANCE, AND AGILITY. THESE OFTEN INCLUDE A TIMED RUN, PUSH-UPS, SIT-UPS, AND SOMETIMES AN OBSTACLE COURSE, ENSURING CANDIDATES CAN HANDLE THE PHYSICALLY DEMANDING ASPECTS OF THE JOB.

Q: HOW LONG IS THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY IN VIRGINIA?

A: THE DURATION OF THE VIRGINIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY CAN VARY, BUT IT IS TYPICALLY SEVERAL WEEKS TO A FEW MONTHS LONG. THIS INTENSIVE PROGRAM COVERS A WIDE RANGE OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR THE JOB.

Q: ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON CRIMINAL HISTORY FOR ASPIRING CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS IN VIRGINIA?

A: YES, THERE ARE STRICT RESTRICTIONS ON CRIMINAL HISTORY. APPLICANTS MUST TYPICALLY HAVE A CLEAN RECORD, WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS AND CERTAIN SERIOUS MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES GENERALLY DISQUALIFYING AN INDIVIDUAL FROM BECOMING A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA.

Q: WHAT IS THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY IN VIRGINIA?

A: THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE ACADEMY IS TO EQUIP NEW RECRUITS WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND UNDERSTANDING OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES SAFELY, EFFECTIVELY, AND ETHICALLY WITHIN THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES TRAINING IN SECURITY, INMATE MANAGEMENT, EMERGENCY RESPONSE, AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE.

Q: CAN I BECOME A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER IN VIRGINIA IF I HAVE A MINOR DRIVING INFRACTION?

A: GENERALLY, MINOR DRIVING INFRACTIONS ARE LESS LIKELY TO DISQUALIFY YOU THAN MAJOR ONES OR A PATTERN OF POOR DRIVING. HOWEVER, EACH CASE IS REVIEWED INDIVIDUALLY, AND A GOOD DRIVING RECORD IS USUALLY EXPECTED. IT'S BEST TO BE UPFRONT ABOUT ANY SUCH ISSUES DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS.

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