

Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy
Certificate | 19 credits

Campus: Vermilion

To be eligible to apply for admission to this certificate program, a student needs to have completed an associate degree or higher. Enrollment into the program requires application and approval by the program coordinator. The Academy is scheduled for Fall Semester each year, beginning one week prior to the start of the regular semester.

Required Coursework

FALL SEMESTER 2026 – 19 credits	Prerequisites	Credits	Hr Lc/Lb
CRJS 2285 – Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy	(acceptance into program)	19	13.25/11.5

Additional Recommended Courses:

NRT 1221 – Fire Training and Mechanical Skills 1 (1 cr)

NRT 1222 – Fire Training and Mechanical Skills 2 (1 cr)

Program Description

The Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy (PRLEA) is a certificate program designed for students who have already earned an associate's or bachelor's degree. Graduates of Vermilion's Wildland/Wildlife Law Enforcement AAS and Criminal Justice-Police Science AS degree programs may apply to enroll in this program the fall semester following graduation. Students transferring to Vermilion who have earned a two-year or four-year degree at an accredited college or university are also eligible to apply.

This hands-on, skills-based program prepares the prospective law enforcement officer to perform the duties required by law enforcement/peace officer positions at both state and federal levels. Structured in an academy style, this 19-credit certificate is scheduled once each year, fall semester.

Vermilion's academy is one of six specifically designed for the National Park Service (NPS) to provide the basic training required to prepare students for careers as NPS law enforcement rangers. Graduates successfully passing all PRLEA exams are eligible for a law enforcement commission and can apply for a seasonal position with the NPS.

Additionally, Vermilion Community College is certified by the MN POST Board to provide the professional peace officer education required for licensure as a police officer in the state of Minnesota. Graduates of the program meeting state minimum qualifications will be eligible to take the MN POST Board peace officers licensing exam.

Occupational Titles

Seasonal Park Ranger (Type II Law Enforcement Commission) with the National Park Service, United States Forest Service, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management; Police Officer, Minnesota State Patrol, Minnesota DNR Conservation Officer, and Deputy Sheriff. Note that additional experience may be required by some positions.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program:

1. Incorporate the United States Constitution and the State of Minnesota Constitution in police decision making process.
2. Understand and apply National Park Service and State of Minnesota regulations, laws, and statutes in scenario-based training.
3. Summarize policing in the United States both past and present.
4. Demonstrate culturally responsive approaches to diverse populations and groups with special needs.
5. Analyze and differentiate between illegal and unethical conduct in policing, integrating knowledge of criminal elements to mitigate bias, while also examining racial and other forms of profiling through understanding case law and in real-world scenarios.
6. Achieve proficiency in all requirements of basic law enforcement standards and training by meeting both standards of National Park Service and Minnesota POST.
7. Demonstrate the integration of empathy, compassion, and respect in scenario-based training to measurably enhance public trust especially in diverse communities.
8. Recognize the impacts of hate crimes in communities which could be based on sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation (Minnesota Statute 626.8451).
9. Explain proper community policing outcomes that build collaboration with diverse populations, community members, local businesses, and other stakeholders.

10. Apply anti-racist principles and culturally responsive approaches to understand and address behaviors, interactions, and crises across diverse contexts, demonstrating proficiency in reality-based scenarios.
11. Develop a personal assessment and critical reflection in cultural competency and policing practices framework, emphasizing lifelong learning as essential to effective law enforcement.

Program Faculty Contact

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