



**AACOP**

Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police

PRIDE • HONOR • INTEGRITY

# ACE and FOCUS Certification Programs



Accredited Chief | Command Executives

Foundations of Command for Unit Supervisors

July 13, 2025

# Introduction to ACE and FOCUS Certification Programs

The **Accredited Chief Executive – Advanced (ACE-Advanced)**, **Accredited Command Executive (ACE)**, and **Foundations of Command for Unit Supervisors (FOCUS)** certification programs were developed to raise the standard of leadership across all levels of Arizona’s law enforcement community. While grounded in the shared principles of 21st Century Policing—such as professionalism, accountability, and community engagement, each program is uniquely designed to serve a distinct leadership tier.

**ACE-Advanced** is the highest level of executive certification, tailored specifically for seasoned Chiefs of Police and top executives. This program recognizes those who demonstrate exceptional leadership, a legacy of community service, and a strategic vision for agency excellence.

**ACE** serves mid- to upper-level command staff—such as Captains, Commanders, and Deputy Chiefs—who are shaping agency culture and operations. This certification focuses on operational leadership, policy implementation, and accountability systems that drive measurable success.

**FOCUS** is an introductory leadership certification created for first-line supervisors and unit-level leaders. It provides foundational knowledge in supervision, communication, and team development, equipping emerging leaders with the skills to guide their teams with confidence and purpose.

Each certification program provides a structured pathway supported by mentorship, documentation, and performance-based benchmarks. Through verified assessment, successful participants are awarded ALEAP-sanctioned titles that symbolize their dedication to leadership excellence.

To sustain a culture of continuous improvement, all certifications include a Re-Certification Program, reinforcing long-term professional development and alignment with evolving best practices.

Together, the **ACE-Advanced**, **ACE**, and **FOCUS** programs form a comprehensive framework for cultivating principled, prepared, and progressive leaders within Arizona law enforcement.

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*We extend our sincere gratitude to the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) for their invaluable guidance and leadership in helping us establish the Accredited Chief/Command Executive (ACE) Certification Program in Arizona. Your commitment to advancing professional standards for law enforcement executives has served as an exceptional model, and we are honored to build upon your framework to support Arizona's police leaders in achieving accredited excellence.*

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# Why Certification Matters | Advancing Leadership in Arizona Law Enforcement

Strong leadership is essential to the success of any law enforcement agency. The Arizona Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (ALEAP) offers a tiered certification framework designed to support leadership development at every rank. Through the FOCUS program for Sergeants, the ACE program for Command-level staff, and the ACE-Advanced certification for Chiefs of Police, these initiatives provide a clear path for growth, accountability, and excellence. Each program is grounded in professional standards and tailored to meet the evolving demands of modern policing.

- ◆ **Develops Core and Advanced Leadership Skills:** *Each certification—whether at the supervisory, command, or executive level—builds essential competencies in communication, decision-making, strategic planning, and team leadership, tailored to the participant's rank and role.*
- ◆ **Verifies Professional Qualifications:** *Certification affirms a leader's combination of law enforcement experience, academic achievement, and completion of executive-level training, reinforcing readiness to take on greater responsibilities within their agency.*
- ◆ **Promotes Accountability and Operational Excellence:** *Certified leaders are equipped to model professionalism, implement policies effectively, and lead with integrity—strengthening agency performance and alignment with accreditation standards.*
- ◆ **Supports Career Growth and Advancement:** *Whether aspiring to command or executive leadership, these programs position participants as promotable, credible leaders committed to continuous improvement and organizational success.*
- ◆ **Expands Professional Networks Statewide:** *Through required AACOP membership and shared training experiences, participants across all levels join a statewide community of law enforcement leaders, fostering connection, mentorship, and shared best practices.*

Whether you're guiding a squad, leading a division, or steering an entire agency, the FOCUS, ACE, and ACE-Advanced certification programs help shape principled, prepared, and progressive leaders. By validating experience, promoting continual development, and expanding professional networks, these programs empower Arizona's law enforcement professionals to lead with confidence, integrity, and vision.

# Accredited Chief Executive – Advanced (ACE-ADVANCED)



## Certification Requirements and Eligibility

Certification is valid for one year from the date awarded and must be renewed annually by meeting all ongoing program requirements. Failure to meet annual requirements may result in loss of certification. All applicants must meet **all** the criteria outlined below to obtain **ACE-ADVANCED** Certification:

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### 1. Advanced Academic Achievement Standards

- Chiefs must hold a **master's or bachelor's degree** from an accredited academic institution (*Proof of Degree required*)

**OR**

- Must have served as **Chief of Police for at least two (2) years** and completed **at least three (3)** Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses listed in Section 3.
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### 2. Chief of Police Experience

Must have a **minimum of two (2) years of experience** serving as a Chief of Police.

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### 3. Executive Level Training

- Chiefs holding a master's or bachelor's degree must have completed **at least two (2)** of the following Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses (*Proof of Training Certificates required*)
  - Chief's without a master's or bachelor's degree must have completed **at least three (3)** of the following Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses (*Proof of Training Certificates required*)
    - FBI National Academy
    - FBI LEEDA
    - Northwestern University Executive Management Program
    - Southern Police Institute (SPI) Command Development Course
    - Police Executive Leadership Institute (PELI)
    - Other courses approved by the ALEAP Awards Committee\*
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### 4. Agency Accreditation Requirement

Must be the current Chief of an agency that is **currently enrolled\*** or has an existing **ALEAP accredited agency**.

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### 5. AACOP Membership

Must be an **active member of AACOP**.

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# Accredited Command Executive (ACE)



## Certification Requirements and Eligibility

Certification is valid for one year from the date awarded and must be renewed annually by meeting all ongoing program requirements. Failure to meet annual requirements may result in loss of certification. All applicants must meet the criteria outlined below to obtain **ACE**

### Certification:

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#### 1. Academic Achievement Standards

- Must hold a **bachelor's degree** from an accredited academic institution (*Proof of Degree required*)

**OR**

- Must have served in the position of **Command Executive for at least two (2) years**, and completed **at least one (2)** Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training course listed in Section 3.

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#### 2. Command Experience

Must have **at least two (2) years of experience** serving at the **rank of Lieutenant (or equivalent) or higher** at their **current law enforcement agency**.

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#### 3. Executive Level Training

- Command Executives holding a master's or bachelor's degree must have completed **at least one (1)** of the following Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses (*Proof of Training Certificates required*)
- Command Executives without a master's or bachelor's degree must have completed **at least two (2)** of the following Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses (*Proof of Training Certificates required*)
  - FBI National Academy
  - FBI LEEDA
  - Northwestern University Executive Management Program
  - Arizona Post Executive Leadership Program (ELP)
  - Southern Police Institute (SPI) Command Development Course
  - Police Executive Leadership Institute (PELI)
  - Other courses approved by the ALEAP Awards Committee\*

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#### 4. Agency Accreditation Requirement

Must be the current command executive at an agency that **currently enrolled\*** or has an existing **ALEAP accredited agency**.

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#### 5. AACOP Membership

Must be an **active member of AACOP**.

# Foundations of Command for Unit Supervisors (FOCUS)



## Certification Requirements and Eligibility

Certification is valid for one year from the date awarded and must be renewed annually by meeting all ongoing program requirements. Failure to meet annual requirements may result in loss of certification. All applicants must meet **all** the criteria outlined below to obtain **FOCUS** Certification:

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### 1. Academic Achievement Standards

- Must hold a **bachelor's or associate Degree** from an accredited academic institution (*Proof of Degree required*)
  - **OR**
  - Must have served in the position of **Sergeant for at least two (2) years** and have completed **at least two (2)** management level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses listed in Section 3.
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### 2. Experience

Must have a **minimum of two (2) years of experience** serving at the **rank of Sergeant** at an ALEAP accredited agency.

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### 3. Executive Level Training

Must have completed **at least two (2)** of the following Executive Level or Advanced Police Leadership training courses (*Proof of Training Certificates required*):

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|---|---|
| ○ FBI LEEDA                                       | ○ Other courses approved by the ALEAP Awards Committee* |
| ○ Arizona Post Executive Leadership Program (ELP) |   |
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### 4. Agency Accreditation Requirement

Must be a current Sergeant at an agency that **currently enrolled\*** or has an existing **ALEAP accredited agency**.

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### 5. AACOP Membership

Must be an **active member of AACOP**.

*\*If the agency does not complete the self-assessment, becoming an ALEAP Accredited Agency, the Chief, Command Executive, and/or Sergeant **may not renew** their ACE or FOCUS certification.*

# Application & Fees for Initial Certification

## Application Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the **online application** along with all required proofs listed on the application.
  2. A **preliminary review** will be conducted, and applicants will receive an **eligibility notification via email**.
  3. **Fees:**
    - a. **Application Fee:** \$150.00 per participant
    - b. **Annual Program Fee:** \$100.00 per participant, per year
    - c. The annual fee includes administrative costs, assessment, certificate, awards, challenge coins, pins, and access to quarterly continuing education modules.
  4. **Payments must be made by Credit or Debit Card only.**
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## ACE Certification Program Committee, Meetings, & Assessors

1. The **ALEAP Awards Committee** is a standing body within the ALEAP Commission.
  2. **Committee Meetings**
    - a. The Committee meets quarterly, either virtually or in-person, before the ALEAP Commission meetings in January, April, July, and September. Meetings are coordinated by the ALEAP Program Director.
    - b. An annual schedule of meetings will be posted on the ALEAP website.
  3. **Meeting Objectives Include:**
    - Reviewing and approving or denying applications
    - Approving new training courses and removing outdated ones
    - Discussing and implementing policy updates
    - Conducting general program business
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## Annual Certification and Recertification Audits

1. The ALEAP Director will review each applicant's file and submit documentation.
  2. A **detailed assessment report** will be prepared, including a final recommendation explaining whether the applicant should receive certification or re-certification and provided to the ALEAP Awards Committee prior to each Committee meeting.
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## Awards & Award Ceremony

1. Applicants who meet all eligibility requirements will be awarded the **ALEAP Accredited Chief Executive (ACE) Advanced, Accredited Command Executive (ACE), and Foundations of Command Unit Supervisors (FOCUS)** certification following application review.
  2. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance **no later than 30 days before** the next scheduled award presentation.
  3. Approved certifications will be formally presented at the next **AACOP General Membership Meeting**, *following ACE Program Committee approval.*
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# Annual Certification Recertification Program Requirements

## Recertification Period and Overview

Re-certification is valid for the remainder of the calendar year following the initial certification, plus an additional three (3) years. **To maintain certification**, participants must meet the following requirements:

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## AACOP Membership

**All accredited and certified enrollees** must maintain an active AACOP Membership during the term of their certification.

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## Continued Leadership, Education, and Development

1. AACOP Meeting Attendance and Ongoing Training
    - Award members must attend **a minimum of two (2) AACOP Meetings per year**.
  2. In addition, participants are required to **complete two (2) yearly ALEAP-approved continuing education**.
    - Topics will include current trends, legal updates, and leadership content relevant to police executives.
    - Approved continuing education courses will be listed on the ALEAP website.
    - \*Other qualified training courses **may be submitted for review** for continuing education credit. Courses will be approved by the ALEAP Awards Committee. **Submissions must be sent a minimum of 30 days prior to the course being taken.**
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## ACE-ADVANCED Re-Certification | Accreditation Maintenance

Chiefs must ensure their agency maintains **ALEAP Accredited Status** throughout the re-certification period.

*To apply, visit our website at [www.azleap.org/ace](http://www.azleap.org/ace) or scan the QR code below*

