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The Cost of Starting a K-9 Unit

According to the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA), insufficient public funding is the number one reason canine programs fail.



Melanie Basich · Managing Editor

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February 1, 2003

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According to the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA), insufficient public funding is the number one reason canine programs fail. So be sure you know what your costs will be and that you can adequately meet them before starting out.

It can cost \$20,000-\$29,000 to start a K-9 unit, according to figures given by K-9 officers. And then you have to account for maintenance training and general living expenses for the dog, including food and vet care.



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After initial training, maintenance training usually consists of either training at your own facility with equipment you purchase once for maybe \$1,000 all together and use for about five years, or paying a nearby agency a nominal fee to train with them. Food is relatively inexpensive. You'll probably need a 40-pound bag of kibble every five or six weeks. Vet bills can vary widely, however, from \$400 on the low end to more than \$1,000 a year. K-9s are in the line of fire with their trainers, and come in contact with the same hazards as human police officers. Depending on what you come across on the beat, your dog may need to be treated for walking on broken glass or being stabbed.

A dog is possibly the most important purchase for a K-9 unit. A single-purpose dog can cost \$2,500–\$4,000, without training, or very little. If you purchase a dog from a private vendor, they can be more expensive. A dog trained for dual purpose—for both patrol and narcotics, for example—can cost \$8,000–\$10,000.

Most K-9 officers and trainers suggest buying from a highly recommended private vendor who will provide the dog with some training and then having the K-9 handler go through most training with the dog. You can get discounts by going to training with local police departments that have their own training programs. Check out the possibilities in your area. Shorter training sessions might be available if your department can't afford to pay for a full 10- or 12-week course, although the more complete training for handler and dog is always best.

A car can be a big expense, especially because if you don't have extras lying around you might have to purchase a new one. It will have to be dedicated to your K-9 unit. Any car that you use for a K-9 will have to be converted. But you don't



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of cruiser make conversion much easier. An insert for the back of a cruiser can cost \$1,800, but it should last about five years. You can even use the same insert in a different model of car with the new adapter kits that are available. You can probably outfit a car with insert, temperature monitor, and door-popper for around \$2,000.

Whatever your costs, make sure you take into account everything that you will need so neither you nor your administration is caught by surprise down the line.



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Officer by Police Vehicle?

Time-sensitive injuries like penetrating trauma mean a wounded officer needs to reach a trauma center as soon as possible, and in some cases, that means transporting by police vehicle rather than waiting for EMS. What are the factors to consider in making that transport decision?

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5 Things to Know When Buying Backup Lights for Patrol Use

What is the value of a backup light, and what do you need to consider when selecting one? These smaller lights are invaluable as a secondary or special-purpose light and can be easily carried in a pocket or clipped to MOLLE gear, a key chain, shirt, or a vest.

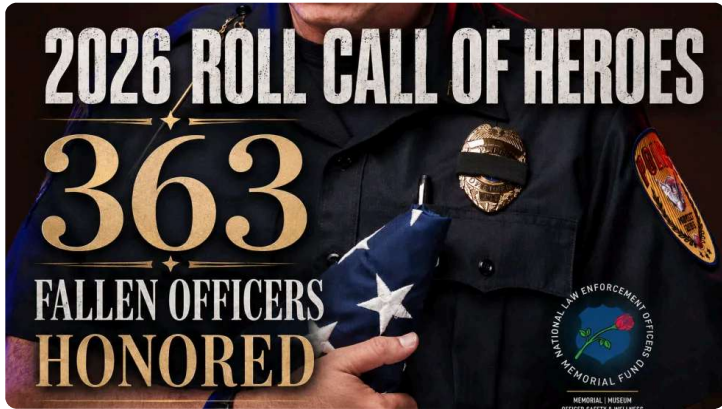
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363 Fallen Officers Honored During National Police Week

In case you missed NELOMF's annual Candlelight Vigil, here are all 363 names of the fallen officers whose names were added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial this year.

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NYPD Officers Who Responded Quickly During IED Incident Recognized as NLEOMF Officers of the Month

Chief Aaron Edwards and Sgt. Luis Navarro were recognized by NLEOMF as Officers of the Month for their response during an IED incident and their actions that helped prevent harm to the public.

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National Police Survey Reveals How Americans View Policing Today

A new national survey offers a comprehensive look at how Americans view policing. The study uncovers public sentiment toward local vs. federal police,



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Streamlight TLR-7 X Selected as Standard Issue Pistol Light by Canadian Federal Police

The Canadian Federal Police will be adding a new duty pistol system, which will include Streamlight's TLR-7 X and a Glock 45 MOS 7 pistol with a red dot sight.

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Fallen Law Enforcement Officers from Across the Country to be Honored During 38th Annual Candlelight Vigil on May 13th in Washington, D.C.

The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) will honor 363 fallen officers who have died in the line of duty as their names are added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial during the annual Candlelight Vigil on May 13.

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What should every officer include in an IFAK? Sydney Vail, M.D., a veteran trauma surgeon and former SWAT surgeon, explains which components are needed and which are not, and stresses training.

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Olight Releases 2 New Baton Variants & the ArkPro Ultra Onyx Black

Olight has added two new lights to the Baton Series, the Baton 4 and the Baton Ultra. One new Baton features up to 1,600 lumens on turbo, and the other 1,800.

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