

Estimated Costs for Advanced Investigative Training

Prepared for the Law & Justice Interim Committee

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Advanced investigative training provides law enforcement officers with the specialized knowledge and skills needed to investigate complex criminal cases and improve investigative outcomes. While these courses offer significant public safety benefits, their cost extends well beyond registration fees to include travel, lodging, meals, transportation, and overtime or backfill staffing to maintain minimum operational coverage.

Investigative training is also an ongoing investment. Employee turnover, retirements, promotions, and transfers regularly create vacancies in investigative positions, requiring agencies to continually train new personnel to maintain investigative capacity.

The following estimates illustrate the approximate costs associated with sending an officer to advanced investigative training or hosting a nationally recognized training course in Montana.

Advanced Training Tuition/Registration Costs

The following are the tuition costs of a sampling of nationally recognized trainings which would provide an officer with a foundational and advanced skillset for homicide and sexual assault investigations. These costs have been obtained from the Southern Police Institute, the International Homicide Investigators Association (IHIA), the International Association of Blood Pattern Analysts (IAPBA), and other accredited public and private forensic training organizations.

Course	Length	Estimated Tuition
Basic Bloodstain Pattern Analysis (BPA) ¹	40 hours (5 days)	\$729–\$1,500
Advanced Bloodstain Pattern Analysis (BPA) ²	40 hours (5 days)	\$839
Homicide Investigation Training ³	80 hours (10 days)	\$1,625
Sex Crimes Investigations ⁴	40 hours (5 days)	\$1,000
Advanced Crime Scene Photography ⁵	Varies	\$750

Hosting Advanced Training in Montana

While it is possible to reduce travel costs by bringing nationally recognized instructors to Montana, advanced training providers generally require the host agency to assume a minimum financial commitment before agreeing to conduct a course. These arrangements typically fall into one of two pricing models:

1. Minimum Registration Requirement

Under this model, the provider requires a minimum number of paid registrations before the course will be held. For example, a provider may charge \$1,600 per attendee and require a minimum enrollment of 30 participants, resulting in a required minimum revenue of \$48,000. If the minimum number of registrants is not reached, the provider may cancel the course unless the hosting agency agrees to pay the cost of the remaining registrations.

Example:

Registration Fee: \$1,600 per attendee

Minimum Enrollment: 30 attendees

Required Revenue: \$48,000

¹ Sirchie, *Basic Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Course* (course tuition generally ranging from approximately \$729 to \$1,500 depending on provider and location). Available at: <https://www.sirchie.com/training>.

² Ron Smith & Associates, *Advanced Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Course*, course registration approximately \$839.

³ National Forensic Academy, *Homicide Investigation Training*, approximately \$1,625 registration. Available at: <https://www.nationalforensicacademy.org>.

⁴ Southern Police Institute, University of Louisville, *Sex Crimes Investigations* course catalog. Registration approximately \$1,000. Available at: <https://louisville.edu/spi>.

⁵ Various providers, including the Law Enforcement Training Institute (LETI) and Ron Smith & Associates, advertise Advanced Crime Scene Photography courses with tuition generally around \$750.

If only 24 officers register, the hosting agency may be responsible for paying the equivalent of the remaining six registrations (approximately \$9,600) in order for the course to proceed.

2. Minimum Contract Guarantee

Some training providers instead require the hosting agency to guarantee a minimum contract amount regardless of attendance. Under this arrangement, the provider conducts the training, but if registration revenue does not satisfy the guaranteed minimum, the host agency is responsible for paying the difference.

Example:

Guaranteed Contract Amount: \$40,000

Registration Revenue Collected: \$31,000

Host Agency Responsibility: \$9,000

Financial Considerations

While hosting advanced training in Montana can reduce travel costs, minimum enrollment requirements and guaranteed contract amounts often make it financially impractical for a single agency to host independently. Partnerships among agencies, statewide organizations, or grant funding are typically needed to reduce financial risk and ensure adequate enrollment.

Estimated Agency Travel Costs

In-State Training (Within 60 Miles)

Expense	Estimated Cost
Meals	\$68 per day ⁶
Department Vehicle Fuel	\$0.22 per mile ⁷

In-State Training (More Than 60 Miles)

Expense	Estimated Cost
Meals	\$68 per day
Department Vehicle Fuel	\$0.22 per mile
Hotel	\$132 per night ⁸

Out-of-State Training

Expense	Estimated Cost
Meals	\$86 per day ⁹
Department Vehicle Fuel (to/from airport)	\$0.22 per mile
Hotel	\$175 per night ¹⁰
Ground Transport (Rental, Uber, cab, etc.)	\$100–\$170 per day
Commercial Airfare	\$440–\$1,955

⁶ U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), Fiscal Year 2026 Per Diem Rates, Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) for Helena, Montana: \$68 per day. Available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel>

⁷ Fuel cost estimate calculated using the EPA combined fuel economy rating of approximately 19 miles per gallon for a 2024 Dodge Durango Pursuit and an assumed gasoline price of \$4.25 per gallon. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Fuel Economy Guide: <https://www.fueleconomy.gov>.

⁸ U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), Fiscal Year 2026 Lodging Per Diem Rates for Helena, Montana: \$132 per night. Available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel>.

⁹ U.S. General Services Administration, *Fiscal Year 2026 Continental United States (CONUS) Per Diem Rates*. The General Services Administration establishes Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) reimbursement rates for official travel within the continental United States. FY 2026 M&IE rates range from **\$68 to \$92 per day** depending on the travel destination. An estimated **\$86 per day** is used in this memorandum as a representative planning assumption for common out-of-state law enforcement training locations. Available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

¹⁰ U.S. General Services Administration, *Fiscal Year 2026 Continental United States (CONUS) Per Diem Rates*. Lodging reimbursement rates vary by destination and season. This memorandum uses an estimated lodging cost of **\$175 per night** as a representative planning assumption for common out-of-state law enforcement training locations. Available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/lodging>

Personnel and Overtime Costs

For many agencies—particularly smaller and rural departments—the greatest expense associated with sending officers to advanced trainings is often the cost of maintaining patrol coverage during an officer's absence. To maintain minimum staffing levels, agencies frequently require another officer to work overtime while the attending officer is away. Estimated overtime costs assume a regular hourly wage of approximately \$32.00 for an early-career Montana law enforcement officer and an overtime rate of \$48.00 per hour (1.5 × regular pay). Actual compensation varies among agencies based on salary schedules, years of service, etc.

Training Length	Estimated Overtime Cost
40-hour (5-day) course	\$1,920
80-hour (10-day) course	\$3,840

Estimated Total Agency Costs

Typical Five-Day In-State Training

Expense	Estimated Cost
Tuition	\$729 - \$1,500
Hotel (4 nights)	\$528
Meals (5 days)	\$340
Mileage/Fuel	\$100 - \$250
Overtime Coverage	\$1,920
<i>Estimated Total</i>	<i>\$3,617 - \$4,538</i>

Typical Five-Day Out-of-State Training

Expense	Estimated Cost
Tuition	\$729 - \$1,500
Hotel (4 nights)	\$700
Meals (5 days)	\$430
Overtime Coverage	\$1,920
Airfare	\$440 - \$1,955
Ground Transport	\$500 - \$850
<i>Estimated Total</i>	<i>\$4,719 - \$7,355</i>

Typical Ten-Day Out-of-State Training

Expense	Estimated Cost
Tuition	\$1,000 - \$1,625
Hotel (9 nights)	\$1,575
Meals (10 days)	\$860
Overtime Coverage	\$3,840
Airfare	\$440 - \$1,955
Ground Transport	\$1,000 - \$1,700
<i>Estimated Total</i>	<i>\$8,715 - \$11,555</i>