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# **BLUEPRINT FOR CORRECTIONS**



COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION FOR CORRECTIONS

Sponsored by the AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION



led by the Rehabilitation Division, Office of Regional Operas, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Dement of Justice

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#### Additional Information

# NCJRS

# JAN 31 1978

# ACQUISITIONS

The Commission on Accreditation for Corrections is sponsored by the American Correctional Association and funded through the Rehabilitation Division, Office of Regional Operations, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the United States Department of Justice (Grant Nos. 76-ED-99-0016 and 76-ED-99-0016-S1). Additional financial support is provided by: Alcoa Foundation; Bristol-Myers Company; International Business Machines Corp.; Lilly Endowment, Inc.; Richard King Mellon Foundation; United States Steel Foundation; and F. W. Woolworth Company.

The views and opinions in this document do not represent the policies or positions of the U.S. Department of Justice or the other organizations listed above.

The Commission on Accreditation for Corrections, sponsored by the American Correctional Association and supported principally by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, was established in 1974 to develop and apply national standards for the field of Corrections. Diversity of purpose, policy and practice required the development of separate sets of standards for distinct areas within the continuum of Corrections, such as adult community residential services, juvenile probation and parole field services and adult institutions and local detention facilities. In developing these standards, the Commission considered the work of such other national associations as the American Bar Association, the American Medical Association and the American Institute of Architects which have also developed corrections standards. In addition, the Commission designed a voluntary accreditation process to measure agency compliance with the standards.

The purpose of this publication is to explain the accreditation process in order to facilitate its use by corrections agencies in meeting the standards. By design, the material is presented in informational building blocks; each section aids the understanding of the next. Therefore, the reader is urged, at least initially, to study the material in its entirety in the order presented.

#### SELECTED TERMINOLOGY

Accreditation Manager is an agency employee designated by the administrator to supervise the planning and implementation of accreditation activities in the agency.

Agency Size is the number of full-time, paid administrative, supervisory and line staff in the units which will be audited for standards compliance.

Applicant Agency is an agency responding affirmatively to the Commission's invitation to participate in the accreditation process.

*Audit* is the process by which an agency's compliance with standards is verified.

*Candidate Status* is the designated time after an agency has completed its *Self-Evaluation Report* when the agency's standards compliance is verified and the accreditation decision is made.

*Commission* is used collectively to refer to the Board of Commissioners, the staff and consultants of the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections. When a distinction is appropriate, the specific is used (i.e., the Chairman of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director, the staff or a Field Consultant).

*Consultant-Examiner* is a Commission consultant who serves on a Visiting Committee for the purpose of conducting an audit to verify agency compliance with the standards.

*Contract* is the written, signed agreement between the Commission and the agency specifying mutually agreed upon responsibilities, activities and financial obligations.

*Correspondent Status* is the designated time, after an agency has applied for accreditation and completed the required entrance activities, when the agency evaluates its compliance with the standards and prepares a *Self-Evaluation Report*.

*Field Consultant* is a Commission consultant who, at an agency administrator's request, provides on-site assistance in helping the agency complete the self-evaluation phase.

Levels of Compliance are those which the Commission has set as necessary to receive accreditation. Three-year accreditation is awarded for compliance levels of 70% with all *Desirable* standards, 80% with all *Important* standards, and 90% with all *Essential* standards; five-year accreditation for 80% compliance with all *Desirable* standards, 90% with all *Important* standards, and 100% with all *Essential* standards.

*Plan of Action* is the agency's detailed statement of actions to be taken to achieve compliance with standards at levels appropriate for accreditation. Also included is a timetable for the achievement of the tasks leading to accreditation.

*Self-Evaluation Report* is the document prepared by the agency in Correspondent Status which includes basic descriptive information about the agency, the results of the agency's evaluation of its compliance with the standards, and, where appropriate, a plan of action to correct deficiencies.

Standard Compliance Checklist is a Commission form used to indicate: agency compliance with a standard, the identity of both the agency staff and the Consultant-Examiner verifying the compliance, the method of documentation, and, if necessary, a plan of action to correct deficiencies.

Standard Weight is the designation of Essential, Important or Desirable, which is assigned to each standard.

*Visiting Committee* is one or more Consultant-Examiners who complete an on-site audit to verify an agency's standards compliance.

Visiting Committee Report is the document produced by the Visiting Committee which includes a description of the Candidate agency, results of the standards compliance verification audit, and the Committee's recommendation to the Commission regarding agency accreditation.

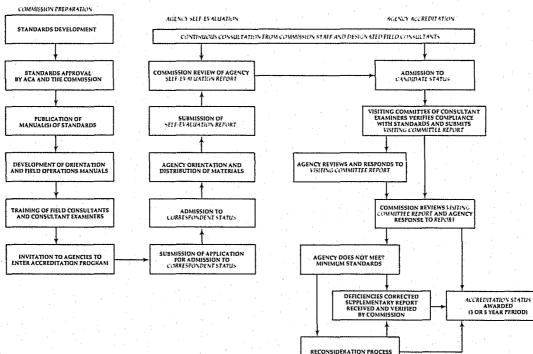
#### THE PROCESS

Notwithstanding the type of corrections agency involved in accreditation, the process remains constant. The following flow chart depicts the activities required of the Commission and the agency during the accreditation process.

In the best interest of public safety and humane and efficient correctional administration, standards development and accreditation activities will focus not only on those areas where standards have already been published, but also on adult local detention facilities and correctional institutions which are currently under court order to correct deficiencies in both their administrative practice and physical plant.

Accreditation processes will begin after the applicable standards have been developed, approved and published for particular agencies. The publication schedule for all manuals of standards is as follows:

Manual of Standards for Adult Parole Authorities	July, 1976
Manual of Standards for Adult Community Residential Services	April, 1977
Manual of Standards for Adult Probation and Parole Field Services	August, 1977
Manual of Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions	August, 1977
	October, 1977
Manual of Standards for Youth Community Residential Services	January, 1978
Manual of Standards for Youth Probation and Parole Field Services	May, 1978
	ptember, 1978
Manual of Standards for Youth Training Schools Do	ecember, 1978



The Accreditation Process

#### Invitation to Participate

The invitation to participate in the accreditation process will be extended to adult parole authorities and community residential services in August, 1977. Thereafter, invitations will be extended to other agencies approximately 90 days after the relevant standards are published.

When an agency affirmatively acknowledges the Commission's invitation to participate, the Commission will send the agency informational materials, determine a schedule of fees and activities, and confirm the agency's eligibility for participation in the process.

#### Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for accreditation an agency must be located within the United States, one of its territories or possessions. The agency may be either privately owned or owned and controlled by the United States, one of its states, territories or possessions. In addition, an agency must be part of a governmental entity or conform to the applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding corporate existence. Further, the agency must either (1) hold under confinement pretrial or presentence adults or juveniles who are being held pending a hearing for unlawful activity, (2) hold under confinement sentenced adult offenders convicted of criminal activity or juveniles adjudicated to confinement, and/or (3) supervise in the community sentenced adult or adjudicated juvenile offenders, including children placed in residential settings. Finally, to participate in accreditation, an agency must have a single administrative officer responsible for agency operations, who makes formal application for admission to the accreditation program.

#### Application to Participate

In order to confirm eligibility, determine appropriate costs and schedule accreditation activities, the agency must provide the Commission with such basic information as staff size, number of operating units and so on. The following *Organizational Summary* and *Fee Computation* forms will be provided to the agency for that purpose.

The basic cost item in the fee computation is the Commission's projected expense for accrediting an agency. This includes Commission staff time and expenses throughout the accreditation process and a one-day, on-site audit of the agency by one Consultant-Examiner to verify standards compliance. Agency size determines the basic cost.

# ORGANIZATION SUMMARY

I Co	Please provide the following information and return with the ntract to the Commission.
1.	Name of applicant agency
	Address
	Telephone ()
2.	Chief Executive Officer Telephone ()
	Accreditation Manager Position Telephone ()
	Number of units for which you are seeking accreditation: Central office and First Facility Additional Units
5.	Location of Additional Units
	Full-time staff in Central Office, First Facility and Additional Units
7.	Age range of clients
	The agency is: Governmental (Federal State County City ) Private, not for profit Proprietary (Privately owned)
	You have included or previously forwarded to the Commis- sion a statement of knowledge and/or support from your Gov- ernor or parent agency? Yes No
	If no, please indicate the date when this statement will be forthcoming
Da	te Signature of Respondent
÷.,	

#### FEE COMPUTATION

1. Agency size: \_\_\_\_\_ small \_\_\_\_ medium small \_\_\_\_\_ medium large \_\_\_\_\_ large

 Number of additional units, if any (other than central office and first location);

3. Basic cost: \_\_\_\_\_ small @ \$1000 medium small @ \$2000

\_\_\_\_\_ medium @ \$3000

\_\_\_\_\_ medium large @ \$4000

large @ \$5500

4. Additional unit fees: Adult Parole Authority

ority \$200 x number

. Je biene na state trans a spiritie serve

\_\_\_\_\_

7

Adult Community Residential Services \$200 x number Adult Correctional Institutions \$300 x number

Estimated additional Consultant days: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 Average cost of \$170 per day

6. Total Estimated Cost

7. Average Cost Per Unit:

Agency size is determined according to the number of staff as follows:

Agency Size Small Medium Small Medium Medium Large Large Number of Staff

1 to 14 15 to 49 50 to 199 200 to 499 500 or more For the purposes of accreditation, an *agency* is the governing authority which has direct administrative responsibility for the execution of a corrections program.

The following examples illustrate the two models which the Commission will use in determining accreditation cost. One example applies to residential agencies and the other to field service agencies.

Example One: A state department of corrections' administrative headquarters and one institution would constitute an agency requesting accreditation. If the department is responsible for more than one institution, each remaining institution in the system would be considered an additional unit. This is necessary because a separate evaluation is required for each unit in order to audit its compliance with the standards. Therefore, in a state system which includes five adult corrections institutions, the basic cost would be determined by the total number of full-time, paid staff within the entire system, and would include the central administrative facility and one institution. Additional unit cost would be charged for the other four institutions. Because one Consultant-Examiner could not complete the standards verification audits of all the facilities within the system in one day, additional consultant days would be required and charged to the agency at cost. Each institution would be accredited according to its individual compliance with the standards.

*Example Two:* A state department of probation with 35 field offices would be considered an agency, and would pay a basic cost calculated on the total number of full-time, paid staff in the department. Only the central office and a stipulated number of field offices would be audited. No additional unit cost would be charged. However, all of the field offices would have to meet minimum compliance levels for the agency to be awarded accreditation. Therefore, non-compliance by one field office would mean that the entire department would not be accredited. Because one Consultant-Examiner could not complete the necessary compliance audits in one day, additional consultant time would be required and charged to the agency at cost.

Additional time or personnel needed to conduct an audit or to provide orientation or assistance during the accreditation process is charged to the agency in addition to basic cost. Pursuant to the information supplied by an applicant agency, the Commission will determine the total costs for accreditation.

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An agency's application for accreditation is accepted when a contract is executed with the Commission, the agency submits

one-third of the stated accreditation cost, the Commission confirms the agency's eligibility for accreditation, and the agency's governing authority has indicated its official position concerning the application. The Commission has 30 days from receipt of the completed application to render its decision regarding the agency's acceptance into the process.

#### Correspondent Status

When the application is accepted, the agency enters into Correspondent Status—a phase in the accreditation process that continues until the agency submits a *Self-Evaluation Report*. The agency has a maximum of six months to conclude the evaluation and complete the *Report*.

The Commission and agency decide mutually whether the agency needs an on-site staff orientation and/or a Field Consultant to assist the agency in the preparation of the *Self-Evaluation Report*. Agency size and familiarity with the standards and accreditation process are factors in determining the need for these services, which are provided the agency at cost. In addition, the Commission designates a Commission staff member as a permanent liaison and resource to the agency. Concurrently, the agency appoints an Accreditation Manager to organize and supervise agency resources and activities to achieve accreditation, including completion of the *Self-Evaluation Report*.

The Self-Evaluation Report includes a completed Standard Compliance Checklist for each standard in the applicable manual of standards; a brief historical perspective on agency development; a statement of agency goals and purposes; detailed descriptions of agency programs, types of services, and numbers and types of offenders served; a compliance tally (i.e., percentage calculation of standards compliance by category— Essential, Important, Desirable); and a plan of action to correct noncompliance. In addition, the agency is invited to evaluate the accreditation process and Commission activities, and recommend revisions of the standards.

The following sample Standard Compliance Checklist illustrates the work required for each standard.

Compliance with a standard is rated *yes*, *no* or *not applicable*. A *yes* response means the agency complies completely with the content or substance of the standard. Written documentation is necessary to support compliance. A *no* response indicates less than complete compliance. A plan of action is submitted to correct the deficiency. A *not applicable* response requires the concurrence of a Consultant-Examiner. Written justification is

## STANDARD COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

2005 The agency has a policy manual which specifically describes its purpose, program and services offered. (Essential)

DISCUSSION: The agency manual must clearly define the purpose of the agency, the programs available, and the specific services offered. It must also encompass all approved agency policy. The manual must be available to all staff, as well as the general public and residents, if requested.

SELF-EVALUATION Agency Personnel	STANDARDS COMPLIANCE AUDIT Visiting Committee					
Evaluator's Signature(s):	Auditor's Signature(s):					
Compliance □ Non-Compliance □ Not Applicable □ (Check one)	Compliance □ Non-Compliance □ Not Applicable □ (Check one)					
Documentation:	Documentation:					
Plan of Action:	Comments:					
*Comments:						
*Note: Comments will be used in fu- ture revisions of standards and will not be considered grounds for re- questing reconsideration of an ac- creditation decision.						

available which clearly indicates that the standard is not relevant or suited to the situation being audited.

The Commission staff has a maximum of 60 days after receipt of the *Self-Evaluation Report* to review it for completeness and to accept it. The *Report* is considered complete when:

- Compliance with each standard has been determined;
- Each checklist has been completed;
- Percentages of compliance have been calculated;
- A plan of action has been included which states the method of bringing the agency into required compliance within 12 months;
- The process evaluation has been completed;
- All requested agency descriptive material has been provided; and,
- The second third of accreditation cost is included with the *Report*.

#### Candidate Status

The agency enters into Candidate Status with the Commission's acceptance of the *Self-Evaluation Report*. Candidate Status continues until the agency meets the required levels of compliance, has been so certified by a Visiting Committee of Consultant-Examiners, and has been awarded or denied accreditation by the Board of Commissioners. Candidate Status does not exceed 24 months.

An agency in Candidate Status requests a standards compliance audit by a Visiting Committee at any time the administrator believes the agency has met or exceeded the 70-80-90 percent compliance required for accreditation. That request may or may not be coincident with the completion of the agency's *Self-Evaluation Report*. If the *Report* includes a plan of action to bring the agency into required compliance, the request will occur when the necessary deficiencies have been corrected and compliance is achieved. The final third of the accreditation cost must be submitted with the audit request.

The Accreditation Manager is responsible for making standards compliance documentation readily available to the Visiting Committee. All personnel, records, documents, programs and facilities required to document compliance are organized for presentation prior to the scheduled arrival of the Committee.

#### Standards Compliance Audit

The Commission has 90 days from receipt of the request to conduct an on-site standards compliance audit. A Visiting Committee composed of one or more Consultant-Examiners completes the audit and prepares a *Visiting Committee Report* for submission to the Commission. The size and composition of the Visiting Committee, determined by the Commission, depend on the type and size of agency, number and location of units to be audited, types of deficiencies corrected, if any, and so on. The Commission designates a Visiting Committee Chairman to organize and supervise the Committee's activities.

The Committee completes an audit of each standard on the same Standard Compliance Checklist used by the agency in preparing its *Self-Evaluation Report*. The preliminary results of the audit are discussed with the agency administrator and Accreditation Manager prior to the Committee leaving the agency at the conclusion of the audit.

A copy of the Visiting Committee Report is sent to the agency administrator for review and comment before the Report is submitted to the Commission. The agency's review implies no obligation on the part of the Visiting Committee to alter the Report. The Visiting Committee Report is completed by the Committee and submitted to the Commission within 50 days of the audit. The agency can submit a companion report to the Commission which will be considered in concert with the Visiting Committee Report and the agency's Self-Evaluation Report in determining accreditation.

#### Accreditation Status

The Board of Commissioners determines the agency's accreditation status during its next regularly scheduled meeting after receipt of the *Visiting Committee Report*. At least 30 days prior to that meeting, each member of the Board of Commissioners receives for review all documents resulting from the agency's participation in the accreditation process.

The Visiting Committee Chairman attends the meeting at which the agency's accreditation status is determined. The candidate agency may, at its expense, also be represented at the meeting.

Depending upon its level of compliance, an agency may be awarded a three- or five-year accreditation. Three-year accreditation requires 70 percent compliance with all *Desirable* standards, 80 percent with *Important*, and 90 percent with *Essential*. Five-year accreditation requires 80 percent with *Desirable*, 90 percent with *Important*, and 100 percent with *Essential* standards.

The Commission may require an accredited agency to submit annual reports demonstrating continued standards compliance at levels necessary for accreditation. In addition, the Commission may require accredited agencies to submit written responses to public criticism, notoriety or patterns of complaints about agency activity which suggest a failure to maintain standards compliance. Finally, the Commission, at its own expense, may, with advance notice, visit an accredited agency to ensure agency compliance.

The Commission denies accreditation for reasons of insufficient compliance. However, the Commission may extend an agency's Candidate Status if in its judgement the agency is in active pursuit of compliance. Those agencies denied accreditation but not extended in Candidate Status may reapply for accreditation as an applicant agency after 180 days.

#### **Reconsideration Process**

The goal of the Commission's reconsideration process is to ensure the equity and reliability of its decisions, particularly those that deny accreditation status. Therefore, an agency may request reconsideration of the denial of accreditation. However, the reasonableness of the Commission's standards, criteria and/or procedures for accreditation may not be the basis of a request for reconsideration.

Reconsideration requests are based on (1) substantial deviation or disregard of the criteria and procedures by any individual involved in the process as promulgated by the Commission, (2) incorrect facts or incorrect interpretation of facts, or (3) a lack of substantial evidence for the denial.

The agency may request reconsideration within 30 days of the Commission's adverse decision. The Commission's Executive Committee decides whether the agency's request warrants reconsideration. If the Board of Commissioners agrees to the reconsideration hearing, the hearing is scheduled within 90 days of that decision. The agency, at its option and expense, has the right of representation, including counsel, and a transcript of the hearing.

The costs of the hearing are divided as follows: the Commission will pay the expenses incurred by the Board of Commissioners, staff and consultants to prepare for and conduct the hearing; the agency will bear the expenses incurred by its staff, counsel or other representatives to prepare for and attend the hearing.

The Commission's decision, reflecting a majority opinion, is made known to the agency immediately.

An accredited agency which has had its accreditation status revoked for reasons of non-compliance may also use the reconsideration process.

#### Reaccreditation

Because standards will be revised at regular intervals to reflect changing practice and new knowledge, it is necessary that agencies seek reaccreditation to maintain standards compliance. Therefore, agencies in accreditation status will apply for reaccreditation 12 months prior to the expiration of their current status. The process is the same as completed to receive the initial accreditation. However, three-year accreditation is awarded only twice and in consecutive three-year periods. It is then necessary for an agency to achieve 80-90-100 percent compliance levels and be awarded a five-year accreditation. Once an agency has achieved the necessary compliance to receive a five-year accreditation, it is not eligible at any subsequent reaccreditation to be awarded a three-year accreditation at the 70-80-90 percent compliance level.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The preceding information has been provided as a detailed overview of the accreditation process. Additional information on specific procedures and elements within the process is available from the Commission.

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