

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program was created and developed as a result of the report by the Governor's Alliance for Community and Law Enforcement Relations. That group made ten specific recommendations to the Governor's Office to improve community and law enforcement relations. One of those recommendations was the need for: "Creating a State Accreditation Program for Police Departments."

The Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association submitted a grant request to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to develop a police accreditation program within the Commonwealth. The Commission approved the grant. The staff of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency has provided invaluable guidance and assistance in the development of this program.

The CALEA® and the Commonwealth of Virginia accreditation programs and standards, as well as programs and standards from the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program and several other states, served as models in the development of this project. However, the process developed by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission reflects a program that is intended for Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies. Many of our accreditation standards are consistent with those developed by those other organizations, but our program is designed to be specific to Pennsylvania. This was only possible because of the interest, suggestions, and support of numerous police chiefs and other law enforcement professionals from throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The members of the Pennsylvania Police Accreditation Coalition have provided the Commission and the staff with timely and important assistance throughout the development of this Pennsylvania-specific accreditation program.

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DISCLAIMER

This manual includes voluntary accreditation standards for law enforcement agencies within Pennsylvania. These standards have been developed, reviewed, and approved by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission and the Executive Board of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. The standards are not intended as a substitute or replacement for any legal requirement that may apply to agencies involved in law enforcement services in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association recognizes that federal, state, and local laws; collective bargaining agreements; administrative regulations; and local ordinances take precedence over these voluntary law enforcement agency accreditation standards and the accreditation program.

Introduction

“This book is dedicated to you, the person who seeks to go to the next level. You can make it there. As you go, take somebody with you.”

—John C. Maxwell

Accreditation is the ongoing process whereby agencies evaluate policy and procedure against established criteria and have compliance with that criteria verified by an independent and authoritative body. The criteria, or standards, are policy development guidelines that represent a level of quality service delivery. The true indicator of compliance, however, lies with an evaluation of trained, independent professional peers. The establishment of meaningful and professional standards and an evaluation of compliance to those standards are, therefore, the two fundamentals of an accreditation program.

The Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, under the leadership of then President Thomas H. Staley, Jr., and Executive Director Amy K. Rosenberry, pursued the concept and development of a voluntary statewide law enforcement accreditation program for Pennsylvania. Their efforts resulted in the formation of a committee to begin work on the project. As a result, the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC) consists of a Commission appointed by the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, after nomination by the four Regional Chiefs of Police Associations. Personnel from the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association provide support services to the Commission. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency serves as the coordinating and funding agency for Commission activities. The Commission membership is tasked by their respective associations and agencies with developing and maintaining a formal accreditation process specific to the needs of Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies. This mandate requires the development of a comprehensive set of professional standards. The PLEAC program constitutes the first effort of this type in the history of the Commonwealth.

The attitudes, training and actions of personnel of Pennsylvania’s law enforcement agencies best reflect compliance with the standards contained in this document. Policy and procedure based on accreditation will not ensure a crime-free environment for citizens, nor will it ensure an absence of litigation against law enforcement agencies and executives. However, effective and comprehensive leadership through professionally based policy development directly influences the law enforcement program that is comprehensive, obtainable and based on standards that reflect professional service delivery. In developing the program, the Commission recognizes the somewhat limited financial and manpower resources of a great many law enforcement agencies and developed standards that would not place overwhelming demands on those resources.

The standards developed are the basis of an accreditation program that affects every component of the agencies involved. Through the dedication to service and professionalism evidenced by the attainment of accredited status, law enforcement

agencies can positively affect the communities they serve.

The development of department policy is the most significant duty of Chiefs of Police. Therefore, this manual contains no policies or procedures. The standards developed by the Commission are only guidelines for *what* should be done, not *how* it should be done.

Policies on many topics, for instance the use of force, may be very similar among most agencies. On the other hand, policies dealing with disciplinary actions may vary greatly. Policy development that complies with these standards, however, remains dependent on the judgment of the chief executive officer of the law enforcement agency.

This manual represents many hours of tireless effort by a large number of Pennsylvania law enforcement personnel. All of the standards have been reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC) and the PCPA Executive Board. The Standards Committee provided the Commission with a critical review of every standard proposed and it is responsible for the actual drafting and updating of standards for consideration.

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How to Use this Manual

This manual has been designed to guide you through the accreditation process. While this book may offer specific instruction, how you accomplish the end result, standards compliance, is up to you. What works in one agency may not be practical for another. Therefore, this manual is only intended to serve as a guide.

You will find that the manual is broken down into four sections.

The first section contains Acknowledgements, Commission Members, Disclaimer, and Introduction to the Pennsylvania Accreditation Program.

In the second section, the first two chapters are a review of the initial steps necessary to implement the program including your accreditation application, notifying personnel and file organization. The next chapter addresses the heart of the process, standards compliance, from what they are to how to record compliance. From there, the manual focuses on the On Site Assessment by preparing you for a mock assessment to test your agency's readiness and then explains the official On-Site Assessment process. Finally, a chapter is included on maintaining accreditation status.

The third section deals with the actual accreditation standards. This consists of four different chapters that deal with organization and role management, law enforcement function, staff support responsibilities and Pennsylvania legal mandates.

The fourth and final section explains the assessment process and was developed to explain the procedures required for the review and compliance verification of the Pennsylvania Accreditation Standards.

The members of the Commission and staff have worked diligently to insure a useful, easy to follow plan to ensure success for your agency's endeavor of accreditation. We wish you the greatest success!