



Tulsa Police Department CALEA Accreditation Project



In December of 2002 the decision was made for the Tulsa Police Department to seek accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Initial accreditation was awarded on November 19, 2005. Reaccreditation will be awarded in December 2008.

CALEA was established in 1979 by the combined efforts of four major police organizations that wanted to establish standards ensuring professional business practices within the policing community. The founding agencies were:

- The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- The National Sheriff's Association (NSA)
- The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

WHY SEEK CALEA ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is not mandated by any governmental group but is a voluntary process sought by agencies wishing to distinguish themselves as being committed to professional business practices.

Benefits of accreditation include:

- **Stronger defense against lawsuits and citizen complaints**

Accredited agencies are better able to defend themselves against lawsuits and citizen complaints. Agencies report a decline in legal actions against them, once they become accredited. According to CALEA, agencies that are accredited experience 17% fewer lawsuits than non-accredited agencies. In those instances where liability is found, CALEA accredited agencies pay out 33% less than non-accredited agencies.

- **Greater accountability within the agency**

Accreditation standards give the Chief of Police a proven management system of written directives, sound training, clearly defined lines of authority, and routine reports that support decision-making and resource allocation.

- **Staunch support from government officials**

Accreditation provides objective evidence of an agency's commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management, and service delivery. Thus, government officials are more confident in the agency's ability to operate efficiently and to meet community needs.

- **Increased community advocacy**

Accreditation embodies the precepts of community-oriented policing. It creates a forum in which police and citizens work together to prevent and control challenges confronting law enforcement and provides clear direction about community expectations.

STEPS IN THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- **Application**

The initial step in the accreditation/reaccreditation process was the execution of an agreement between CALEA and the City of Tulsa. The original agreement was signed on March 5, 2003. After accreditation was originally awarded in November, 2005, a reaccreditation contract was executed. Accreditation is valid for 3 years. The Department will be reaccredited in December 2008 at the National Conference to be held here in Tulsa.

- **Self-Assessment**

After application, the initial step in accreditation is a rigorous evaluation by the agency of its policies and practices for compliance with the standards. The Tulsa Police Department completed the self assessment for reaccreditation and an on-site assessment was completed in August 2008 and is currently in the process of self assessment for the next reaccreditation cycle. Accreditation is good for 3 years so the next assessment will occur in 2011.

CALEA has established 460 standards which reflect the best practices in law enforcement. Of these, 384 are designated as mandatory for agencies the size of the Tulsa Police Department. The remaining standards are either not applicable by function (78 standards which address functions that we don't perform such as operating a holding facility) or are classified as "other than mandatory." To attain accreditation, an agency must comply with all of the applicable mandatory standards and at least 80% of the other than mandatory standards. During the self-assessment stage, the agency compares its practices with these standards and makes necessary adjustments.

• **On-Site Assessment**

After the self-assessment phase, an on-site assessment is scheduled. A team of three assessors come to Tulsa to inspect the CALEA files and the operations of the Department. Also during the on-site assessment, the assessors will:

- View a display of department facilities and equipment.
- Interview police officers, employees, and citizens.
- Ride along with officers to observe police functions.
- Staff a phone line for public comments.
- Conduct a public hearing regarding the Tulsa Police Department and the applicable standards.

• **Commission Review**

After the on-site assessment, the assessors prepare a report and make a recommendation to the Commission. If awarded reaccredited status, the award is presented at a national conference.

• **Maintaining Compliance and Reaccreditation**

To maintain CALEA accreditation, agencies must maintain on-going file updates. Assessors return every three years for on-site inspections. This ensures that the agencies continue to abide by CALEA standards.

PUBLIC ACCREDITATION FILES

As part of the accreditation process the Commission requires that agencies maintain a public accreditation file for review by any citizen or employee who wishes to know more about the standards and the agency's involvement in the accreditation process. This file has been created and is available for inspection during regular business hours at the Accreditation Work Group offices on the third floor of the Police-Courts Building at 600 Civic Center. In addition, selected portions of the public accreditation file may be accessed at the link below.

<http://tpd.cityweb.gov/calea/index.html>

The Accreditation Manager is Gerald W. Konkler who may be contacted at 596-1300.