

# Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police

## Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program

# *PROGRAM MANUAL*

Program Information, Regulations and Procedures  
for the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards



# **PROGRAM MANUAL**

## **PROGRAM INFORMATION, REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (herein after referred to as the Program) provides law enforcement agencies of the State with an avenue to demonstrate that they meet commonly accepted minimum Standards and best practices for efficient and effective operations.

Law enforcement executives who seek accreditation/certification under this Program will have every phase of their agency's operations reviewed as they pertain to Program Standards. They will make conscious decisions about policies and procedures, will have implemented those policies, and thoroughly trained their employees in their use.

Other disciplines such as medical and education accreditation programs served as the concept for law enforcement accreditation/certification. As with those widely accepted programs, law enforcement accredited agencies must meet or exceed an established set of professional standards and best practices.

The Program is endorsed by the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET), the Oklahoma Municipal Assurance Group (OMAG), the Oklahoma Municipal League (OML) and the City Management Association of Oklahoma (CMAO).

### **MISSION**

To assist candidate agencies by providing the framework for a voluntary, low cost accreditation/certification/verification program that is comprehensive, obtainable, and based on professional standards that reflect best practices within law enforcement.

### **VISION**

Every law enforcement agency that desires to attain accreditation or certification will do so.

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## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Program Definitions

**Accreditation Program** – The bestowing of credentials symbolizing approval from a professional organization upon practitioners or specific institutions. Complying with specific accepted Standards established for an institution or occupation.

**Agency Accreditation Manager (AAM)** – The individual appointed by the CLEO to coordinate the accreditation/certification process. The accreditation manager usually serves as the contact person regarding any accreditation/certification issue.

**Appeal** – A resort to a higher authority for an alternate decision on an issue.

**Assessment, On-Site** – The process of reviewing standard file folders, conducting interviews and observations at the candidate agency to obtain proofs of compliance.

**Assessment Team (AT)** – The group of individuals responsible for reviewing Standards, conducting interviews, and observing to determine compliance.

**Assessor** - An individual who is assigned to an on-site assessment team. The responsibilities of the assessor are, but not limited to, reviewing Standards, conducting interviews, and observing to determine compliance.

**Assessor, Lead (LA)** - An individual who is assigned to manage the on-site assessment team. In addition to the responsibilities of assessors, the lead assessor is also charged with on-site visit logistics that may include assessor lodging, meals, incidental expense arrangements, site-visit agenda, assigning team member responsibilities, managing the assessment log, handling on-site assessment related issues that may arise, serving as the spokesperson for the on-site assessment team, and writing/drafting the assessment report.

**Assessor, Apprentice (AA)** - An individual who is assigned to an on-site assessment team but has not previously served in that capacity. The Apprentice Assessor Program is an on-the-job training plan to cultivate new assessors and provide accreditation managers with a hands-on view of the assessment process.

**Audit** - The examination of records and activities to ensure compliance with established controls, policies, and operational procedures and to recommend any indicated changes.

**Candidate Agency** - An agency that has completed the enrollment process and paid applicable fees.

**Certification Program** – Accreditation designation for agencies with less than 30 FTE officers.

**Chief Law Enforcement Officer (CLEO)** - The chief of police, sheriff, director or commissioner of public safety, etc. that is designated as the chief administrator of the agency.

**Code of Conduct** - Specific guidelines for behavior, including prohibitions, of Commissioners, assessors and apprentice assessors.

**Complaint**- An allegation of misconduct, violation of law or agency directives, against any member of the agency. This does not include a complainant's misunderstanding or disagreement with the application of law or agency policy or procedures.

**Content** – As it pertains to the Program, content is any document, photo, video, audio recording or any other similar communication medium that can be used as a proof of compliance for standards.

**Directive** - A written document used to guide the actions of members and establish agency policy and practices issued by a person of high authority. Examples of written directives include, but are not limited to: policy statements, standard operating procedures, general orders, memoranda, union contracts, laws, written orders, instructional material.

**Electronic Standard File Submission** – The process of submitting standard files, proofs of compliance and related items using an approved electronic submission program.

**Major Repair** - Corrective action to an agency written directive or procedure that is required of an agency to come into compliance with a Standard in which a serious error or errors appears to violate constitutional guarantees. A repair of this category requires the involvement of the CLEO of the candidate agency or other authorized policy maker to enact correction(s) or effect change.

**Member** - A generic term utilized in this manual to describe all agency personnel, including volunteers, auxiliary officers, and part-time personnel.

**Minor Repair** – Correction to an agency written directive or procedure but does not meet the seriousness of a major repair. Repairs of this nature are consistent with inaccurate or insufficient proofs of compliance and/or minor revisions to a written directive or procedure.

**Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP)** – The parent organization of the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program.

**Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (OLEAC)** – The Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission is a body of individuals from accredited agencies and at-large entities. The Commission possesses voting powers and is a decision-making body in matters approve by the OACP Board of Directors.

**Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (OLEAP)** – The subordinate program of the OACP that operates and generally administers state law enforcement accreditation and certification.

**Oklahoma Municipal Management Services (OMMS)** – The organization that manages the operations of the Oklahoma Association of Chief of Police.

**Oklahoma Police Accreditation Coalition (OPAC)** - The Coalition is a group of individuals from accredited and certified agencies, agencies that are actively pursuing

accreditation/certification through the Program, or those who are interested in learning about the accreditation/certification process. Coalition members do not have voting power.

**Standards** – Best practice, model, benchmark, or criterion that addresses life, health, and safety issues; legal matters; or essential law enforcement practices. Every agency is required to meet all applicable Standards.

**State Program Manager (SPM)** – The individual designated by OACP or the Commission to administer the Program. Sometimes referred to as the Program Director,

**Verification Program** – Represents the significant professional achievement beyond simple compliance with Oklahoma Statute.

**Wet Ink** - Wet ink is used to describe an agency's abrupt enactment of policy or official change in practice as a requirement for compliance.

## **Program History**

In 2001, the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) Board of Directors established an informal Professional Standards Commission to support the growth and enhancement of the Program and to train assessors and agency accreditation managers. The Commission is a decision-making body in matters approved by the OACP Board of Directors. A quorum of Commission members must be present to vote on official business. Although Coalition members are encouraged to attend, the Commission Chair may assemble a meeting of Commission members only.

The Commission became concerned that smaller agencies, of which there are many in Oklahoma, did not have the resources to meet the accreditation Standards. A committee was formed to investigate this concern. In 2007, the Commission developed a tiered program that would recognize smaller agencies that implement written directives that addressed certain high liability issues.

The OLEAC organized the Oklahoma Police Accreditation Coalition (OPAC), an informal association of individuals involved in one stage or another of their agency's accreditation process. The members are appointed by the Chief Law Enforcement Officer (CLEO) of each eligible agency. The intention is for appointees to be individuals who have demonstrated support for the Program by acting as agency accreditation managers, assessors or expressing a sincere desire to become knowledgeable about law enforcement accreditation. Additionally, others who have demonstrated knowledge related to law enforcement accreditation and a desire to promote the Program objectives may be appointed to the Coalition as at-large members.

There is no membership fee and the Coalition meets quarterly in conjunction with the Commission. Although Coalition members are encouraged to participate on ad-hoc accreditation committees and contribute in open discussion regarding accreditation issues, they are a non-voting body.

## **Program Benefits**

Accreditation or certification offers benefits to the community, the chief law enforcement officer and the agency employees. Some of the general benefits include providing:

- Quality management;
- Peer review of the agency;
- Agency transparency;
- Agency accountability;
- Opportunity for professional outside interaction;
- A lower susceptibility to litigation;
- An independent confirmation that the agency meets rigorous professional standards;
- Continual and automatic self-assessment;
- An enhancement of comprehension of agency policies and procedures;
- A broader perspective on behalf of agency employees;
- An increase to public confidence in the agency and services it provides;
- An enhancement of administrative and operational effectiveness;
- Greater credibility with the governing body;

### *A. Benefits to the Community*

Accreditation or Certification increases the law enforcement agency's ability to prevent and control crime through more effective and efficient delivery of law enforcement services to the community it serves. Accreditation/certification enhances community understanding of the law enforcement agency and its role in the community as well as its goals and objectives. Citizen confidence in the policies and practices of the agency is increased. Accreditation/certification, in conjunction with the philosophy of community policing, commits the agency to a broad range of programs (such as crime prevention) that directly benefit the public. Accreditation/certification creates a forum in which police and citizens work together to control and prevent crime. This partnership will help citizens to understand the challenges that confront law enforcement. Law enforcement will, in turn, receive clear direction from the community about its expectations. Thus, a common set of goals and objectives will be arrived at and implemented.

### *B. Benefits to the Chief Law Enforcement Officer*

The program increases cooperation and coordination with other law enforcement agencies and other branches of the criminal justice system.

The accreditation/certification process requires an in-depth review of every aspect of the agency's organization, management, operations, and administration to include:

- Establishment of agency goals and objectives with provisions for periodic updating;
- Re-evaluation of whether agency resources are being used in accord with agency goals, objectives, and mission;
- Re-evaluation of agency policies and procedures, especially as documented in the agency's written directive system;
- Correction of internal deficiencies and inefficiencies before they become public problems;

- The opportunity to re-organize without the appearance of personal attacks.

The Standards provide norms against which agency performance can be measured and monitored over time.

Accreditation/certification provides the agency with a continuous flow of Commission distributed information about exemplary policies, procedures, and projects.

Accreditation/certification provides objective measures to justify decisions related to budget requests and personnel policies.

Accreditation/certification serves as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of the agency's programs and services. The services provided are defined and uniformity of service is enhanced. Accreditation/certification streamlines operations, providing consistency and effective deployment of agency manpower.

### *C. Benefits to the Agency Employees*

Accreditation/certification requires that agency policies and procedures are in written form and are always available to all agency personnel.

Accreditation/certification assures employees that every aspect of the agency's personnel system is in accord with professional standards, and that the system is both fair and equitable.

The agency is compelled to operate within specific guidelines. It is accountable to the Commission. The agency must stay in compliance with the Standards set forth by the Commission to retain its accreditation/certification. The morale of the agency is enhanced by increasing the employees' confidence in the effectiveness and efficiency of their own agency. Operations become more streamlined and consistent.

Accreditation/certification written directives address officer safety issues and provide for adequate training and equipment of the officers.

Accreditation/certification is a coveted award that symbolizes professionalism, excellence, and competence. Employees will take pride in their agency, knowing that it represents the very best in law enforcement

### **Verification Program**

We understand that smaller agencies may not have the resources to attain accreditation. At the same time, it is imperative that even those agencies adopt and implement certain written directives to help protect the agency and its officers from litigation.

The Verification Program is designed to encourage smaller agencies to adopt and implement certain critical written directives. This program encompasses Standards that are compliant with Title 11 O.S. § 34-107 as well as Title 22 O.S. §§ 21 and 22.

The Verification Program represents a significant professional achievement beyond simple compliance with Oklahoma Statute and acknowledges the implementation and compliance of written directives that are identified as industry standard, conceptually sound, and operationally effective.

## **Development of the Standards**

Professional standards are specific requirements that must be met by an organization and its members through recognition of, and compliance with, written directives, policies, procedures and practices designed to support desirable professional objectives. A committee established by the OACP Board of Directors was charged with developing the law enforcement accreditation standards for Oklahoma. That committee considered and adopted many standards from other accrediting entities.

These are grouped into three major categories:

- Administration (ADM)
- Operations (OPS)
- Personnel (PER)

The committee submitted the Standards and Program operation plan to the OACP Board of Directors for consideration. The OACP Board of Directors quickly adopted the recommendation and the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program was officially launched.

Three new Standards were added in 2005 regarding disposition of evidence, agency computers, electronic and wireless messaging. This addition brings the number of Standards to 194.

In 2005, The Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission recognized that some law enforcement agencies are often not able to achieve accreditation due to a lack of financial or other resources. The Commission examined the 194 accreditation Standards and identified those essential for the development of professional law enforcement agencies in Oklahoma. The Commission recommended that a certification program be created utilizing the essential Standards as criteria for certification.

## **Eligibility**

All law enforcement agencies having a primary responsibility for the enforcement of Oklahoma criminal and/or traffic laws are eligible for accreditation or certification under this Program. Questions of eligibility are resolved by the OACP Board of Directors.

## **How Does My Agency Participate?**

The Chief Law Enforcement Officer or designee should contact the OACP State Program Manager for information about accreditation meetings, training sessions, coalition, and obtaining the Standards and documents.

The candidate agency may want to schedule a presentation to explain details of the process. Accreditation Commission representatives will travel to your community and make a

presentation that will explain the Program in detail. The presentation will also include a question and answer portion.

When the candidate agency decides to participate, they will complete and submit the Agency Participation Agreement along with the first annual fee. Before signing the Agency Participation Agreement, the CLEO should read the Program Manual and fully understand the conditions of the Agreement clause that states:

*“I, the undersigned, on behalf of my agency request enrollment in the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. I have read, understand and agree to comply with the Program participation provisions enumerated in the Program Manual.”*

## **Program Fees (effective January 1, 2016)**

Program fees are based on the total number of full time equivalent (FTE) commissioned and civilian personnel authorized for the candidate agency. FTEs include paid full and part-time personnel only. For the purposes of this Program, two (2) paid half-time employees are equal to one (1) full time employee. These are Program fees only and do not include applicable ancillary fees such as lodging and per-diem for on-site assessors.

Number of Authorized Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	Annual Accreditation Fee	Annual Certification Fee	Annual Verification Fee <sup>1</sup>
1 to 9	\$ 200	\$ 150	\$90
10 to 19	\$ 350	\$ 200	\$90
20 to 29	\$ 500	\$ 300	\$90
30 to 49	\$ 650	\$ 400	\$90
50 to 99	\$ 800	\$ 500	\$90
100 to 300	\$ 1,000	\$ 600	\$90
301 plus	\$1,250	\$ 700	\$90

The initial fee is due when the completed Agency Participation Agreement is submitted. After an agency obtains certification or accreditation, subsequent annual fees are billed in December of each year and are considered past due on February 1. If an agency is in process of obtaining certification or accreditation, they will not receive a bill until the assessment is complete.

## **II. CODE OF ETHICS**

The Code of Ethics governs relationships, professional conduct and practices among Commissioners, assessors, candidate agencies, and the public.

- Members and representatives of the Accreditation Commission will serve with appropriate concern for the integrity of the Program with no purpose of personal gain.

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<sup>1</sup> No cost to an agency where the CLEO has an OACP membership, the fee listed is for the CLEO to obtain an active OACP membership.

- Relationships between members or representatives of the Commission and the assessed agency will be of such character as to promote mutual respect within the police profession and toward the goal of improving the quality of police services.
- No member or representative of the Commission will act in an official capacity in any matter in which personal interest could impair objectivity.
- No member or representative of the Commission will use his/her position to promote any partisan political purposes.
- No member or representative of the Commission will accept any gift or favor of a nature to imply an obligation that is inconsistent with the free and objective exercise of their professional responsibilities. After the onsite assessment, assessors may accept a gift from the agency that is intended to serve as a remembrance of the assessment. The gift item shall be small in value and may only be presented on the last day of the assessment after the exit meeting. The assessment report will list any items given to the assessors.
- Members and representatives of the Commission will report without reservation any corrupt or unethical behavior, which could affect the integrity of the accreditation/certification process.
- Members and representatives of the Commission will maintain the integrity of private information and will neither seek personal data beyond that needed to perform official responsibilities, nor reveal information to anyone.
- Assessors agree to serve as representatives of the Commission and understand that their relationship with the assessed agency must remain professional and non-adversarial.
- Assessors will be diligent in their responsibility to thoroughly review an agency's compliance documentation and accurately report their findings to the Commission.
- Assessors will ensure that statements in the Final Report critical of the assessed agency will be made only as they are verifiable and constructive in purpose.
- Assessors agree that both during and after the assessment, not to disclose to any person, firm or entity or in any way use for personal benefit, or that of another, any information obtained about the assessed agency during their duties as an assessor. Assessors acknowledge that all information concerning the Commission and the agency to be certified or accredited is strictly confidential and not subject to any disclosure, expressed or implied.
- Conflicts of interest, especially those that are obvious or personal, will be avoided. Conflicts refer to those circumstances or relationships that might affect an assessor's objectivity, or the appearance of objectivity, if selected for the assessment.
- Site visitors (assessors and apprentice assessors) must remember they are official and primarily representatives the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police. Secondly, they are representatives of their respective agencies. Site visitors shall dress in business

or casual business dress as determined appropriate by the Commission and the candidate agency. Jeans, shorts, tee shirts, athletic type shoes are not appropriate.

- Alcohol consumption is discouraged while site visitors are in any public place. Site visitors shall not report for duty with the odor of alcohol about their person or while impaired by alcohol or other substance.

### **III. ROLE OF THE CHIEF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER (CLEO)**

The Chief Law Enforcement Officer (CLEO) of the agency seeking accreditation or certification has a critical role in the process. Their support and enthusiasm are essential if the agency is to become accredited.

#### **Preparing for the Accreditation Process**

Prior to applying, the CLEO should review the entire Program carefully. Specifically, the CLEO should:

- Become thoroughly informed about the Program Standards, policies and requirements. This information should be shared with all agency personnel in written form;
- Estimate the impact that the implementation of the Standards will have on agency administration, training and operations. This can be accomplished by comparing Program requirements with existing policies and procedures;
- Generate the necessary political interest and support;
- Calculate the expenses and budget accordingly. Potential costs including printing new policy/procedure manuals, purchasing a file cabinet or other office equipment, and purchasing items needed to comply with Program Standards (e.g., high visibility clothing for directing traffic), and in-service training, etc.;
- Typically, agency employees are skeptical and distrusting of most programs with which they have limited or no knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative that good two-way communication be established to address Program concerns. This step is critical to generate interest and support among the rank and file;
- Keep the process on track (i.e., set and enforce deadlines);
- Explain the benefits of accreditation or certification to your staff and direct them to cooperate with the agency accreditation manager in developing new or revised written directives;
- Keep command staff informed on the Program progress.

## **Selecting the Agency Accreditation Manager**

A good agency accreditation manager is essential and can greatly facilitate the agency's efforts to become accredited or certified. The CLEO should select an agency accreditation manager who has:

- A genuine and long-term commitment to the accreditation or certification process;
- The ability and time to serve as an assessor or commissioner;
- Sufficient experience in the agency to have a broad understanding of agency practices and capabilities;
- Excellent writing and communication skills;
- Good rapport with the CLEO and staff;
- Have authority to delegate assignments and enforce deadlines relating to accreditation.

Larger agencies may prefer to assign several officers to work on the process. One person should still be designated to serve as the overall agency accreditation manager.

Coordinating the process and drafting the necessary written directives (policies, procedures, etc.) is a very time-consuming task. The CLEO should relieve the manager of at least some of his/her other responsibilities whenever possible.

## **The CLEO's Relationship with the Agency Accreditation Manager**

The CLEO should:

- Provide direct supervision of the Program manager on all matters pertaining to accreditation;
- Meet with the agency accreditation manager frequently to discuss his/her progress;
- Provide the agency accreditation manager with timely feedback on draft written directives;
- Intervene if necessary to help the agency accreditation manager when he/she is requesting feedback from officers of a higher rank;
- Provide access to technical and secretarial support where necessary.

## **The CLEO's Relationship with Bargaining Unit Representatives**

The CLEO should:

- Seek bargaining unit support for the accreditation or certification process. Consider assigning a member of the bargaining unit to assist the agency accreditation manager;
- Assure members of the collective bargaining unit that their agreement is still binding and the Program will not conflict with it;

## **Procedural Duties**

The CLEO must:

- Co-sign the Accreditation/Certification Participation Agreement with the appropriate city manager, mayor, county commissioner, clerk or other individual authorized to sign document for the entity, and submit the form to OACP;
- Ensure that all written directives developed to meet Program requirements are fully implemented prior to the on-site assessment. All agency personnel must have access to written directives in a timely manner. Roll call or other methods of disseminating new or revised written directives are essential;
- Ensure that assessors have adequate working space and access to all necessary files and personnel during the on-site visit;
- Ensure that a formal mechanism to monitor compliance with all Standards is in place following accreditation;
- Submit Annual Compliance Report to the OACP on the first and second anniversary following accreditation/certification or renewal.

## **IV. THE VERIFICATION PROCESS**

The process to a verified agency involves only a few steps. While these steps will require work and organization, they are not terribly labor intensive or time consuming. The following processes are essential in providing a successful outcome.

### *A. Application*

When the CLEO decides to pursue verification, they will complete the Participation Agreement and submit it to the OACP with the required payment. When signed, this agreement implies that the CLEO of the candidate agency agrees to the program rules and regulations to include payment of fees and submission of required documents in a timely manner, the code of ethics, the appeal and dispute resolution process, the liability limitation, the use of Program symbols and logos. The agency is now considered to be a “candidate agency”.

### *B. Self-Assessment*

The candidate agency seeking verification initiates a self-assessment process that includes educating agency personnel, other government officials, citizens, etc. of the verification process, and assembly of standard file folders in either a paper or approved electronic system for each Verification Standard. Each standard folder will each include:

- A copy of the applicable OACP Standard Documentation Worksheet
- A copy of the applicable written directive(s) fulfilling the requirements listed on the Standard Documentation Worksheet

Waivers are not available for verification standards.

#### *D. Verification*

Once a candidate agency has completed their self-assessment, they will notify the State Program Manager and may request either an on-site or off-site verification. The State Program Manager will appoint a Lead Assessor. The Lead Assessor will identify 2 additional Associate Assessors (but can also use Apprentice Assessors). The Lead Assessor is responsible for identifying mutually agreeable dates and related logistics for the on/off-site verification with the CLEO (or Accreditation Manager). At a minimum, the verification process itself will consist of the Lead Assessor and 2 Associate (Apprentice) Assessors along with the agency Accreditation Manager.

The verification will typically take less than ½ day. Re-verification will typically take the same amount of time. The verification team will review Standard files only to determine basic compliance with state law.

Standards that, in the opinion of the verification team, are not compliant will be discussed with the CLEO (or agency Accreditation Manager) as soon as they are discovered. The agency will have the opportunity to make corrections within 60 days of the on/off-site verification.

The Lead Assessor is responsible for completing a Verification Approval Recommendation form and each Assessor will indicate their independent recommendation. Only unanimous approvals will be forwarded for verification.

#### *F. Review and Decision*

The completed Verification Approval Recommendation forms will be forwarded to the State Program Manager and Commission for action at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The Commission requires a majority vote from its members to recommend or deny an agency for verification. If the Commission recommends the agency for verification, the endorsement will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for action. If the Commission recommends withholding verification status, the specific cause will be forwarded to the CLEO of the agency seeking verification. When the cause for denial is resolved, the Commission will re-consider.

If the Commission votes to recommend verification, the endorsement will be forwarded to the OACP Board of Directors for consideration. The Board of Directors will normally entertain a motion at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

Candidate agency representatives are encouraged to attend the Commission and Board of Directors meetings at which the verification report will be presented.

#### *G. Presentation of Credentials*

Presentations of verification documentation are most often conducted at city council meetings, county commissioner meetings, in conjunction with other events, etc. but can be held at almost any venue. The agency accreditation manager should contact the State Program Manager at least one month prior to the event with the date, time and place of the presentation. In addition to the entity guests, it is customary for the CLEO to extend invitations to the verification team, OACP Board of Directors, and the Commission.

## V. THE ACCREDITATION/CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The process to attain the coveted status of an accredited or certified agency involves only a few steps. Some of those steps, however, are labor intensive and time consuming. The good news is that once the initial process is complete, maintenance becomes much less involved. The following processes are essential in providing a successful journey.

### A. *Application*

When the CLEO decides to pursue accreditation or certification, they will complete the Participation Agreement and submit it to the OACP with the required payment. When signed, this agreement implies that the CLEO of the candidate agency agrees to the program rules and regulations to include payment of fees and submission of required documents in a timely manner, the code of ethics, the appeal and dispute resolution process, the liability limitation, the use of Program symbols and logos. The agency is now considered to be a “candidate agency”.

### B. *Self-Assessment*

The candidate agency seeking accreditation or certification initiates a self-assessment process that includes educating agency personnel, other government officials, citizens, etc. of the accreditation/certification process, assembly of standard file folders in either a paper or approved electronic system, compiling proofs of compliance, agency information dissemination and build proofs of determine compliance with the Standards. Assuming the candidate agency decides to proceed with the process, it will ensure compliance using the completed standard file folders and contents as proof of compliance.

The agency seeking accreditation/certification may apply for a waiver for Standards that may not be applicable. Waivers, however, will not be granted for economic reasons or the agency's inability to fund or permit a required change.

The OACP State Program Manager will tentatively grant or deny the waiver and notify agency seeking accreditation or certification of the decision. The decision of the OACP State Program Manager is tentative as the on-site assessment team may recommend reversal of the decision if sufficient supporting evidence exists.

The agency seeking accreditation or certification will be given the opportunity to comply with the Standard in question during the on-site assessment. Otherwise, the CLEO of the candidate agency may appeal the assessment teams recommended reversal to the OACP Board of Directors.

### C. *Mock Assessment*

A mock assessment, a process in which an experienced assessor reviews your files before scheduling the actual on-site assessment, is a valuable tool and mandatory for initial assessments. The assessor will review a few file folders to ensure that they are organized, marked, and complete. If the assessor discovers concerns that may interfere with normal flow of the actual on-site assessment, you must address those issues before scheduling an assessment date. Depending on circumstances, the State Program Director may opt to require a mock assessment for re-

assessments. The candidate agency may use a paper or approved electronic standard file submission system.

#### *D. The On-Site Assessment*

The on-site assessment team will be selected by the State Program Manager. The candidate agency may challenge the appointment of any team member with cause. Challenges should be in writing and addressed to the State Program Manager and include details of the cause. In addition, the candidate agency CLEO may request that assessors be only from an accredited/certified entity.

Mutually agreeable on-site assessment dates and related logistics are determined by conferencing between the State Program Manager and the candidate CLEO or accreditation manager.

The assessment team will typically be on-site for one or two days to conduct the initial accreditation. The re-accreditation process is typically one day. The assessment team will review all Standard files, make personal observations, interview employees, and conduct other like activities that will assist to confirm proofs of compliance with the Standards. The assessment team is typically comprised of two or three assessors. Apprentice assessors may accompany the team with approval of the candidate agency. Candidate agencies are not responsible for lodging, per diem or other costs associated with apprentice assessors.

Standards that, in the opinion of the on-site assessment team, are not compliant will be discussed with the CLEO and/or agency accreditation manager as soon as they are discovered. The agency will have the opportunity to provide the necessary proofs of compliance during the on-site visit or later by supplying the necessary documents or other proofs of compliance to the State Program Manager. The time to submit the proofs of compliance may vary but efforts should be made to complete the task within sixty (60) days of the on-site visit.

The on-site assessment team leader is responsible for preparing the assessment report draft. The draft will be provided to each assessment team member who will have the opportunity to suggest revisions. The final report will be a product that meets the approval of a majority of the team.

#### *E. Major and Minor Standards Repair and Wet Ink*

Major repair is considered corrective action to an agency written directive or procedure that is required of an agency to come into compliance with a Standard in which a serious error or errors appears to violate constitutional guarantees. A repair of this category requires the involvement of the CLEO of the candidate agency or other authorized policy maker to enact correction(s) or effect change.

Minor repair is considered a correction to an agency written directive or procedure but does not meet the seriousness of a major repair. Repairs of this nature are consistent with inaccurate or insufficient proofs of compliance and/or minor revisions to a written directive or procedure.

Wet ink is used to describe an agency's abrupt enactment of policy or official change in practice as a requirement for compliance.

Major and minor repairs and wet ink documents may be acceptable on initial on-site assessments. Issues dealing with constitutional guarantees on re-accreditation/certification assessments, however, may be cause for a negative recommendation for accredited or certified status. Reasonable opportunity will be afforded to the candidate agency to explain and provide evidence in these circumstances.

#### *F. Review and Decision*

The completed assessment report will be forwarded to the State Program Manager and Commission for action at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The Commission requires a majority vote from its members to recommend or deny an agency for accreditation/certification. If the Commission recommends the agency for accreditation/certification, the endorsement will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for action. If the Commission recommends withholding accredited status, the specific cause will be forwarded the CLEO of the agency seeking accreditation/certification. When the cause for denial is resolved, the Commission will re-consider.

If the Commission votes to recommend accreditation/certification to the candidate agency, the endorsement will be forwarded the OACP Board of Directors for consideration. The Board of Directors will normally entertain a motion at their regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

Candidate agency representatives are encouraged to attend the Commission and Board of Directors meetings at which the assessment report will be presented.

#### *G. Presentation of Credentials*

Perhaps the most satisfying moment for the candidate agency and CLEO comes with the presentation of the accreditation/certification credentials. Presentations are most often conducted at city council meetings, county commissioner meetings, in conjunction with other events, etc. but can be held at almost any venue. The agency accreditation manager should contact the State Program Manager at least one month prior to the event with the date, time and place of the presentation. In addition to the entity guests, it is customary for the CLEO to extend invitations to the on-site assessment team, OACP Board of Directors, and the Commission.

A customary presentation program is as follows:

- The CLEO makes a few remarks regarding his/her agencies preparation for the accreditation/certification process, the on-site assessment experience from the agencies view, the support from his/her superiors, citizens, etc.;
- The CLEO then introduces a the OACP or Commission representative who will make a few remarks regarding the Program and this site visit, introduce the on-site assessment team, and other OACP and Commission representatives;
- The OACP or Commission representative will read and present the plaque to the CLEO
- The CLEO accepts the items and makes remarks or introductions as necessary.

## **VI. ASSESSORS AND ASSESSMENT TEAM**

### *A. Assessors*

On-site assessors are law enforcement professionals who are familiar with the Standards. They are fully qualified to review file folders, observe the operations of the candidate agency, and conduct interviews to determine whether compliance exists. Assessors shall be employees of an accredited or certified agency or at-large members of the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (OLEAC). Assessors and apprentice assessors are volunteers who are typically allotted time from their agency to perform their duties without cost to the candidate agency. Assessors must have attended the formal accreditation assessor training and served as an apprentice assessor on at least one assessment with satisfactory ratings.

If the standard file folders are submitted in an electronic format, the review will be performed by a member of the on-site assessment team.

### *B. Apprentice Assessors*

Apprentice assessors are members of the OLEAC and/or Oklahoma Police Accreditation Coalition (OPAC) who are training to be assessors. Apprentice assessors are assigned to an assessor to observe and shadow during interview, observations, and file reviews. Apprentices are encouraged to participate in the discussions but do not have decision making authority. The assessor with which the apprentice works will note the performance of the apprentice to help determine whether the apprentice is suitable for assessor responsibilities. The apprentice assessor is responsible for his/her expenses incurred during the assessment.

### *C. Assessor Selection*

The State Program Manager is responsible for selecting the on-site assessment team lead assessor. The Program Manager will coordinate with the lead assessor to construct the team including apprentice assessors. Apprentice assessors may be assigned only with the permission of the CLEO of the candidate agency. The candidate agency CLEO may challenge the appointment of any assessor with cause and may request that all assessors assigned to assess their agency be from an accredited/certified agency.

### *D. Lead Assessor*

Only experienced assessors who have served as assessors on two or more assessments may serve as lead assessors. The team lead assessor is selected by the State Program Manager to be the manager of the assessment team. The lead assessor is selected within a time frame that will allow them to coordinate the many aspects of the on-site assessment including pre- and post-activities.

Pre-on-site assessment responsibilities of the lead assessor and/or State Program Manager include:

- Contact the candidate agency and determine: (preferred minimum lead time is 30 days)
  - ◆ Lodging logistics (direct bill, reimbursement)
  - ◆ Meal logistics (submit receipts, sign tickets, reimburse, etc.)

- ◆ Miscellaneous expense payment arrangements
  - ◆ Prepare the site-visit itinerary with the cooperation of the candidate agency and forward it to each assessor and apprentice assessor.
  - ◆ Can the agency accommodate apprentice assessors and if so, the number? (The candidate agency is not expected to assume any expenses incurred by the apprentice assessors)
  - ◆ Forward a list of assessors and apprentice assessors to the CLEO of the candidate agency.
  - ◆ Afford the opportunity of the CLEO to challenge any of the assessors or apprentice assessors.
- Confirm the following is completed or scheduled:
    - ◆ The Agency Profile is up to date
    - ◆ The candidate agency has a participation agreement on file with OACP
    - ◆ The candidate agency has paid the required fees
    - ◆ The candidate agency CLEO and accreditation manager have reviewed the Code of Ethics
  - Develop a tentative assessment itinerary with the candidate agency. The preferred minimum lead time is 15 days;
  - Assemble assessment team to include assessors and apprentice assessors. Contact candidate agency CLEO to ensure that there are no conflicts with the assessment team;
  - Maintain communication with assessment team to ensure they have site-visit information to include itinerary, lodging and meal information, etc.;
  - Ensure that the lead assessor has current Standards, forms and documents necessary to conduct the assessment. Communicate with the candidate agency and assessment team 2 to 5 days prior to the site visit to ensure that everyone is up-to-date and that logistics are clear.

As the on-site assessment team manager, the lead assessor typically guides the initial pre- and post-meeting with the CLEO. He/she serves as spokesperson for the team, assigns team tasks, and keeps the on-site assessment on track for the scheduled completion. In addition, the lead assessor is usually most knowledgeable of the Standards and renders a decision on issues brought forward.

Upon completion of the post meeting, the lead assessor will provide the CLEO of the candidate agency with a site visit assessment critique and request it be completed and submitted to the State Program Manager.

#### *E. Post on-site assessment responsibilities of the lead assessor*

The lead assessor will prepare a draft of the on-site assessment using the approved report template. The draft will be forwarded to the other assessors for comment. Once the draft review is completed, the lead assessor will forward it to the State Program Manager for review and action. The State Program Manager may make minor changes to the draft to include formatting and spelling but may not change the draft content. Other responsibilities of the lead assessor

include preparing a written report to the Commission documenting concerns or issues with Standards, forms, the assessment process, etc. that should be addressed by the Commission.

#### *F. Pre-Assessment Meeting*

The candidate agency CLEO, accreditation manager, other appropriate agency personnel, and assessment team should meet for a formal pre-assessment meeting. The meeting is used for introductions, review of the itinerary, questions and answers and other Program or site-visit related issues. The team may be introduced to members of the jurisdictional governing group when this is feasible. If the city, town or county manager is available, try to arrange a brief introduction. However, remember that these are political positions and time at the on-site assessment is a premium.

#### *G. Facility Tour and Static Display*

Following the pre-assessment meeting, the assessment team should be provided with a tour of the main and other facilities that may be applicable to compliance with Standards. Optional static displays may be used and will provide the team with a jump start on many of the standard files through observational compliance. The static display should provide the team with the opportunity to observe compliance with several Standards. The personnel assigned to the display should be briefed on the teams' purpose and answer questions asked by the assessment team. Displays may include special equipment your department uses such as SWAT equipment, K-9, transport vehicles, watercraft, aircraft, motorcycles, animal control units, mobile dispatch vans, forensic vehicles, community relations units, bicycle patrol and, of course, a fully equipped patrol vehicle.

#### *H. Assessor Work Area and Provisions*

The assessment team will use numerous hours reviewing standard files. The candidate agency should provide a comfortable, private, and quiet room with ample work space for the assessors to work. If the agency is automated, a workstation with access to the website and other appropriate information will be helpful. Additionally, copies of all written directives such as policies, procedures, standard operating procedures, training manuals, bargaining unit contracts, local codes or ordinances, etc. should be available in the work area. This of course is in addition to the standard file folders. Clerical supplies such as staplers, post-it note pads, pens, pencils, paper clips, etc. should be placed at each workstation. Access to refreshments is also recommended.

#### *I. The Role of the Agency Accreditation Manager during the On-Site Assessment*

The candidate agency accreditation manager is typically the main point of contact for the assessment team and should be immediately available during the time assessors are working. The lead assessor should have contact with the accreditation manager after hours as well.

#### *J. The Role of the Assessment Team during the On-Site Visit*

The role of the assessor is to ensure compliance of the Standards in a professional and non-adversarial manner. To accomplish this, the assessment team will spend significant time reviewing files but will also observe and interview agency personnel in records,

communications, evidence and property, jail/holding facilities, etc. Assessors should have the prerogative to conduct interviews and ride-alongs with agency employees of their choice. Agency personnel should expect to see, and possibly converse with, assessors anytime of the day or night during the on-site assessment.

Occasionally assessors will discover a Standard that they believe is not in compliance. When this occurs, the issue should be discussed with the assessment team. If the consensus is that the Standard is not in compliance, it will be brought to the attention of the accreditation manager as soon as practical thereby affording the agency the opportunity to bring the Standard into compliance during the on-site assessment. Refer to the definition section of this manual for major and minor repair processes.

#### *K. Post-Assessment Meeting*

The post-assessment meeting is typically attended by the same personnel who attended the pre-assessment meeting. This meeting is conducted to brief the CLEO of the findings of the assessment team. The lead assessor will explain the overall findings and address positives as well as possible discrepancies. The lead assessor should also inform the CLEO of the assessment teams' recommendation to the Accreditation Commission if that determination is made. Individual assessors will also convey positive and negative points they discovered during the assessment. This is also a question and answer time.

#### *L. Gifts and Gratuities*

It is common practice to present assessors with gifts or gratuities as in appreciation of the work conducted. If such gifts or gratuities are bestowed, they must be minor in value and presented only after the post-assessment meeting. Assessors cannot accept cash in any amount or any other item of significant value. Typical gifts or gratuities are department coffee cups, challenge coins, patches, or promotional items from a local event, industry, convention bureau, etc. As mentioned in the Code of Ethics, the integrity of the Program is foremost and the slightest implication that assessors were biased due to expensive gifts is unacceptable.

#### *M. Complaints against Assessor or Apprentice Assessors*

Complaints against assessors or apprentice assessors that arise because of an on-site assessment should be documented on the On-Site Assessment Critique form. Complaints against assessors or apprentice assessors not because of an assessment should be forwarded to the OACP Executive Director. Such complaints must be in writing and signed and dated by the complainant.

### **VII. MAINTAINING THE STATUS AND PROGRAM INTEGRITY**

The initial undertaking to attain the status of accreditation/certification is labor intensive and time consuming. The accreditation manager will compile required proofs of compliance, conduct interviews with their own agency personnel and build each individual file folder. Once the initial process is complete and the agency attains accredited/certified status, the role of the accreditation manager becomes much less labor intensive and time consuming. It is to the benefit of the agency, CLEO, employees, government entity and the Program to maintain that status.

The maintenance of standard files is an ongoing endeavor. The agency accreditation manager should review each file on a regular basis, and constantly be on the watch for proofs of compliance that can be used for the accreditation/certification renewal process. The agency should always have a designated agency accreditation manager to ensure that all new written directives and practices adopted by the department are compliant with applicable Standards. This in turn provides for a successful renewal process.

As new or more recent proofs of compliance become available, they should be included in the standard file folder. The renewal assessment team will not accept documents or proofs of compliance that are dated before the previous assessment. Items to be placed in the file folders after the on-site visit include written directives that were adopted by the agency since the last assessment, updated rosters, organizational chart, etc.

The timely payment of annual fees, submission of required annual accreditation reports and membership in the OACP are required to sustain accredited or certified status.

The accredited/certified status is granted for four (4) years. During that time the agency must agree to abide by the published Program Rules and Regulations and be prepared for a re-assessment on-site visit before the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year. The initial and re-assessment process is similar.

## **VIII. EXTENSION REQUESTS**

For a variety of reasons, agencies may require additional time to prepare for initial or re-accreditation/certification. Extensions may be granted in ninety (90) day increments for a maximum of one-hundred eighty (180) days. Correspondence requesting an extension must be received by the OACP before the end of the current accredited/certified period. The request must include the specific reason for the extension. Agencies that request extensions are encouraged to request in ninety (90) day increments only and not the full one-hundred eighty (180) days on a single application.

If the extension request is granted, the candidate agency must remain current on payment of fees. Additionally, the original official accredited/certified date remains static and does not re-set because of a new assessment date. For example, if an agencies original accreditation/certification date was March 1, 2013, and a ninety (90) day extension was granted, the subsequent assessment month and day would remain as March 1.

Agencies that do not submit to the on-site assessment within the extension period may face revocation of their accredited/certified status.

## **IX. REVOCATION OF ACCREDITED OR CERTIFIED STATUS**

One of the major objectives is to ensure that agencies maintain their accredited/certified status while protecting the integrity of the Program. To help make sure this objective is met, the Commission will render reasonable, equitable and unbiased interpretations of Program Standards and rules. However, the OACP Executive Director or the Commission reserves the right to recommend revocation of accredited/certified status of any agency “for cause” which includes:

- The agency fails to fulfill conditions of the Agency Participation Agreement;
- The agency repeatedly fails to submit annual fees and reports as required;
- The agency fails to maintain membership in the OACP;
- Proof exists that an agency obtained accredited or certified status fraudulently;
- Proof exists that the agency deliberately violated any directive that is required by a Standard;
- Any other deliberate non-compliance with Standards.

If an agency is under consideration for status revocation, they will be notified in writing of the reason for the pending action and appeal process. Agencies whose accredited/certified status is revoked will be notified in writing. Such agencies may be eligible to apply as a new candidate agency after twelve months following the revocation date.

## **X. COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED/CERTIFIED AGENCIES**

Periodically, complaints from citizens or employees of an accredited/certified agency may be received. Only written complaints that are signed and dated by the complainant will be accepted. Complaints should be filed with the OACP Executive Director. If it appears that the complaint has merit, the OACP Executive Director may notify the subject agency CLEO of the complaint and request a written response to the allegations. If the response from the subject agency resolves the issue to the satisfaction of the Executive Director, the matter will be considered settled. If a response is not received or it does not satisfy the Executive Director, it may be forwarded to State Program Director for investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will submit a detailed written report to the Executive Director that addresses the complaint allegations. The Executive Director will submit the investigative report to the OACP Executive Board for a disposition of sustained or unfounded. After the Executive Board renders a decision, the Executive Director will issue a written response to the complainant that will include the decision. Any appeal may be made through the normal Dispute Resolution and Appeal process.

## **XI. DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND APPEAL**

Dispute resolution is a method designed to communicate clearly to resolve conflicts within the Program. The Accreditation Commission strongly encourages those with complaints or concerns regarding any Program issue to obtain resolution through this process.

If the conflict is realized during an on-site assessment, the recommended resolution would be to the on-site assessment team leader. The team leader may be able to discuss the issue with the assessment team and resolve the issue.

Otherwise progressive appeal steps are:

1. Appeal is to the State Program Manager.
2. Appeal is to the Accreditation Commission via detailed written communication. The Commission will discuss the issue at the next Commission meeting following receipt of the dispute.
3. Appeal the OACP Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

For denial of or revocation of accredited or certified status, the appeal shall be made directly to the Board of Directors. The decision of that body is final.

## **XII. WHISTLEBLOWER**

For the purposes of this directive, a whistleblower is a person who reports an activity that he/she believes to be unlawful, dishonest or contrary to a Program policy or procedure. The individual must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations.

All reports of activity that are believed to be unlawful, dishonest or contrary to Program policy or procedure should be reported to the OACP Executive Director. The Executive Director will initiate an investigation into the allegation. If the reported allegation involves criminal activity, the Executive Director should report it to the appropriate law enforcement authority. If the reported allegation involves any other non-criminal activity, the Executive Director may investigate or assign the investigation to another non-involved individual.

Whistleblower protections are provided in the form of confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as reasonable, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained but may have to be revealed to conduct a comprehensive investigation or to comply with the law. A whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against should contact the Executive Director.

If the investigation substantiates the allegation, the Executive Director will determine discipline which can include but not be limited to termination, suspension from Program activities or assignments, written or verbal reprimand.

Any individual who knowingly and intentionally reports a false allegation will be subject to discipline that may include but not limited to termination or suspension from Program activities or assignments.

## **XIII. STATE PROGRAM MANAGER**

The State Program Manager is subordinate to the OACP Executive Director and is responsible to ensure the efficient day-to-day operation, growth and success of the Program. (**NOTE:** In the absence of a State Program Manager, the OACP Executive Director will assume responsibility for the duties identified in this manual. The OACP Executive Director may, at their discretion, delegate all or parts of the State Program Manager's duties to members of the OLEAC.) One key component of this position is to ensure that logistics for assessments and re-assessments are timely. Other general responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Ensure that Program website is maintained to up-to-date status;
- Maintain contact with AccredNet and provide written documentation of activities;
- Attend Commission meetings as liaison to the OACP Executive Board;
- Ensure that accreditation/certification related articles are included in law enforcement periodicals;
- Maintain official standards, manuals, correspondence, meeting minutes, and other related

documents;

- Schedule training;
- Maintain official list of accredited agencies to include date of initial assessment and re-assessment;
- Maintain a list of qualified lead assessors, assessors, and apprentice assessors;
- Ensure that agencies are invoiced for accreditation/certification fees;
- Ensure that annual compliance reports are submitted and maintained;
- Maintain contact with candidate agencies and those indicating interest;
- Review and assign a status to Waiver Request forms that are submitted by candidate agencies;
- Maintain online or web based standards submittal program;
- Investigate or supervise investigations into allegations of misconduct against accredited/certified agencies, commissioners or assessors as they related to the Program;
- Be the lead for resolving all disputes within the Program community.

#### **XIV. ACCREDITATION COMMISSION**

##### *Composition*

The Accreditation Commission is comprised of up to thirteen (13) members from accredited/certified agencies and may include up to three at-large members. Commission members from accredited agencies shall be the CLEO of that entity. The Commission members are selected for three (3) year terms ending in October. If obtainable, the Commission will consist of at least one representative from each of the following agency categories:

- Accredited agency
- Certified agency
- University/College agency
- Tribal agency
- State agency
- Sheriff's Department
- Law enforcement agency with 49 or less commissioned officers
- Law enforcement agency with 50 or more commissioned officers
- Up to three (3) at large such as OMAG, academia and legal (attorney, judge, etc.)

##### *Responsibilities*

The Commission is responsible for the overall advancement of the Program by providing the necessary leadership. This includes but is not limited to the review and updating of Standards and Program processes, service as assessors, review and action on assessment reports and committee recommendations and other duties as directed by the OACP Executive Board. Commissioners are expected to attend and participate in Commission meetings, serve as assessors and serve on various committees.

### *Officers*

The Commission will elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary to facilitate Commission meetings, maintain and update the OLEAP and associated standards, and to provide assessors for both accreditation and certification. Only a standing commissioner (or their proxy) may serve as an officer. The term of service will be for a period of one (1) year but no more than four (4) years in succession in the same position. Each officer is elected by a simple majority of the Commissioners present during a quarterly or special OLEAC meeting that has a quorum.

### *Chairperson*

The Commission Chairperson is responsible for scheduling Commission meetings and presiding over those functions in accordance with accepted rules of order. The Chairperson will facilitate discussion and voting on items that require such action. The Chairperson also assists the State Program Manager with scheduling and conducting on-site certifications and accreditation visits. Finally, the Chairperson is responsible for reviewing the **Program** and **Accreditation Managers** manuals at least annually and for conducting commissioner and accreditation manager training as needed.

### *Vice-Chairperson*

The Commission Vice-Chairperson is responsible for conducting Commission meetings and presiding over those functions in accordance with accepted rules of order when the Chairperson is absent. Additionally, the Vice-Chairperson is responsible for reviewing the **Assessors Standards** manual at least annually and for conducting assessor and apprentice assessor training as needed.

### *Secretary*

The Commission Secretary is a member of the Commission who is selected or appointed to call the roll and record minutes at Commission meetings. Additionally, the Secretary is responsible for reviewing the **Standards** manual at least annually.

### *Voting*

A majority (51% or more) of Commission members must be present or accounted for before a vote can be conducted on official accreditation/certification business. Although Commissioners are encouraged to be physically present at meeting, they may vote by appointing a proxy or via telephonic/electronic means. Those serving as a proxy for the Commissioner may be required to provide verification of their proxy authority.

## **XV. USE OF PROGRAM LOGOS AND SYMBOLS**

Official logos and symbols of the Program are for the use of the Program and the agencies that are officially accredited/certified. Any other use of those official logos and symbols is prohibited without written permission of the OACP.

If an agency allows its accredited/certified status to expire, voluntarily withdraws from the Program, or if the accredited/certified status is revoked, the agency is prohibited from using, displaying or referencing in any manner the official state accreditation/certification logos and symbols in any manner. This includes any written reference to the agency being state accredited/certified or the display of accreditation/certification certificates or plaques or the display of logos/seals on websites, letterheads or other media. Such agencies must surrender their current certificates/plaques.

Failure to comply in a timely manner with this policy may prohibit the agency from further consideration for accreditation/certification under this Program.

## **XVI. DATA RETENTION**

The objectives of this data retention directive are to maintain important information for future use or reference, historical significance, to organize information so it can be searched and accessed later and to dispose of information that is no longer necessary. It is preferred that data be retained in an electronic format but paper documents are acceptable. OACP shall ensure that data are retained in compliance with this directive.

### *Indefinite*

Commission meeting minutes, agendas and official attachments, official committee minutes and outcomes, accredited and certified agency files to include assessment and re-assessment reports, payments and invoices and related correspondence/electronic mail, etc. shall be retained indefinitely.

### *Ten (10) Year*

Accreditation Program documents to include but not limited to current and historic standards, Program forms, electronic standard file submissions, worksheets, forms and similar documents or other official items directly related to the Program shall be retained for at least ten (10) years from the production date.

### *Seven (7) Year*

Invoices, financial records and human resources records and correspondence shall be retained for at least seven (7) years.

### *Three (3) Year*

Administrative and general office correspondence that does not apply to a higher retention category and other similar documents shall be retained for at least three (3) years.

*Email:*

To decrease the risk of electronic security vulnerability, email should be retained only for the reasonable amount of time deemed appropriate by the receiver/sender. However, email is considered written correspondence and therefore must be retained longer if it applies to a higher retention category.

## **XVII. LIABILITY LIMITATION AND DISCLAIMER**

This liability limitation and disclaimer pertains to Program Standards, sample written directives and other directives.

The Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Program, a subsidiary of the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police, including but not limited to any individual member of the Association, makes no warranty, expressed or implied, for the benefit of any person or entity regarding any aspect of the Standards, sample policies and other directives, contained herein. These Standards, policies and other directives were adopted for the sole use of the Program for the exclusive purpose of their application to the agencies seeking to obtain or maintain accreditation/certification, there being no intended third-party beneficiaries hereof, warranted, either expressed or implied. Nothing herein shall be construed to create any duty, right, responsibility, cause, property interest, or entitlement on the part of any applicant agency or third party. These Standards, policies, and other directives shall in no way be construed to be an individual act of any commissioner, director, employee, agency, member, individual, or a legal entity associated with the Program or the Oklahoma Association of Chiefs of Police, or otherwise be construed to create any liability in an individual or official capacity on the part of any commissioner, director, employee, agency, member, individual, or a legal entity associated with the Program.

## **XVIII. STANDARDS AND PROCEDURE REVIEW**

The State Program Manager, accreditation managers and assessors sometimes discover minor discrepancies in the text of Standards. In addition, new or updated best practices, court decisions and legislative changes may require revision of Standards. Any coalition member or member agency may request a standard review. Except for minor punctuation or grammatical changes that do not change the scope or meaning of the Standard, the following process shall be used for revisions, additions or deletions.

The Commission Chair or State Program Manager will appoint a Standards Review Committee, on an as needed basis, that is comprised of members of the Accreditation Coalition. The Committee may be charged with reviewing one or multiple standards or other Program documents or forms. Once the Committee completes its assigned task, it will present findings to the Accreditation Commission and may or may not include a recommendation for action.

The Commission will discuss and vote on proposed changes. If the vote is affirmative for change, the proposal will be submitted to the OACP Board of Directors for consideration. An affirmative vote by the Board is required before the revisions can be implemented.

If a revision is implemented, agencies currently accredited/certified or enrolled are not required to comply with the newly adopted standard or other document if their on-site assessment is within one year of the official adoption date.

A similar process will be used to review an accreditation/certification process, procedure, form or document but it may not be necessary to convene a review committee.

## **XIX. TRAINING**

Appropriate accreditation manager and accreditation assessor classroom and on the job training will be provided by the Program. Additionally, the Program will introduce interested entities upon request.

## **XX. FORMS, DOCUMENTS AND OTHER MANUALS**

### **A. Accreditation Managers Manual**

The Accreditation Managers Manual is a comprehensive guide to help agency accreditation managers through the process including initiation, assembly of file folders, proving compliance, on-site visit preparation and visit, decision, presentation of credentials and program maintenance.

### **B. Forms Manual**

The Forms Manual contains all Program forms, documents and file folder labels necessary for the accreditation/certification process. The forms may be used in as a PDF and are available in an MS Word format.

### **C. Standards Manual**

The Standards Manual is a compilation of all accreditation and certification standards.

### **D. Standard Documentation Worksheets**

Standard Documentation Worksheets are available from OACP in PDF or MS Word formats.