CALEA Accreditation Program Overview

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Benefits, Standards, Accreditation Process, and Commission History

Fort Smith Police Department
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The History

Four founding associations
The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) was formed in 1979 by four major police organizations that wanted to establish standards ensuring professional business practices within the law enforcement 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)

Purpose of the Commission
CALEA is not mandated by any governmental group but is a voluntary process sought by the Fort Smith Police Department (FSPD) as a commitment to professional business practices.

FSPD and CALEA Goals
The goals are simply to: (1) strengthen crime prevention and control capabilities; (2) formalize essential management procedures; (3) establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices; (4) improve service delivery; (5) solidify interagency cooperation and coordination; and (6) boost citizen and staff confidence in the agency.

The Benefits

According to CALEA, agencies that are accredited experience 17 percent fewer lawsuits than non-accredited agencies. Additionally, when agencies are forced into financial payouts as a result of a lawsuit, CALEA accredited agencies pay out 33 percent less than non-accredited agencies.

Stronger defense against lawsuits and citizen complaints
Accredited agencies are better able to defend against lawsuits and citizens complaints.

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.
Support from government officials
Accreditation provides objective evidence of an agency’s commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management, and service delivery.

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 crime.

Statement of Vision

The Fort Smith Police Department is recognized as a national benchmark in innovative and professional policing.

This quality is characterized by:

- Public Trust Through Partnerships,
- Uncompromised Integrity,
- Demonstrated Excellence,
- Exceptional Personnel.

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