

## Accreditation Executive Summary

In 1994 three law enforcement associations came together and formed the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC)

1. **VACP** - Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police
2. **VSA** - Virginia Sheriffs' Association
3. **DCJS** - Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

VLEPSC consists of twelve Commissioners; six Police Chiefs and six Sheriffs that are:

- Responsible for the development of the accreditation Standards
- Responsible for revisions of the accreditation Standards
- Determines agency accreditation status
- Provide oversight

The mission of the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission is to advance law enforcement professionalism through the establishment of professional standards and the administration of a formal mechanism by which Virginia agencies can be systematically measured, evaluated, and updated. The Commission goals include:

1. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the delivery of services;
2. To promote cooperation and coordination among all components in the criminal justice system;
3. To ensure the appropriate level of training for law enforcement personnel;
4. To promote public confidence in law enforcement; and
5. To promote the professionalism of law enforcement agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**“Accredited Agency” what does it mean?** Accredited agencies are distinguished as an agency that follows an established set of professional standards and guidelines which measure performance in their service to the community, the criminal justice industry and their agency personnel. It is a process of adopting and following the best practices in service that can be provided.

**The Standards:** Standards are the rules and guiding principles developed by the VLEPSC in which to measure the quality of performance within best practices and within the law.

There are 190 Standards divided into 4 categories:

1. Administration- 78 standards
2. Operations- 69 standards
3. Personnel- 35 standards
4. Training- 8

**Compliance with Standards:** Meeting standard compliance is a two-fold process:

1. The agency must have written policies aka “directives” in place to address and meet the requirements of all the Standards and
2. Demonstrate compliance with policy with documentation of required performance.

State accreditation is the best measure of an agency's compliance with professional law enforcement standards, as determined by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission. The Commission consists of Virginia sheriffs and police chiefs selected for their expertise and knowledge. Adherence to an acknowledged body of professional standards may help protect an agency against a variety of potential liability problems.

### **Accreditation Benefits – Community**

- More effective and efficient delivery of all services to the community we serve.
- Defines for the community our roles as well as future goals and objectives.
- Creates opportunities for deputies and citizens work together to prevent crime.
- Partnerships are built which help citizens to understand the challenges that confront law enforcement.
- Citizen confidence in the policies and practices of the agency is increased.

### **Accreditation Benefits – Personnel**

- Provides consistent policy – rules, regulations and guidelines which govern work performance, eliminating any “guess work”, and minimizing personal liability by compliance of laws
- Assurance that the agency functions at the highest levels required by law and by industry criteria and best practices
- Recognized as distinguished professionals by affiliation with accredited agency
- Operations become more streamlined and consistent.
- Directives address officer safety issues and provide for adequate training and equipment.

### **Accreditation Benefits - Agency**

- Confidence from the community we serve and government that operations are conducted at the highest level of professional performance
- Accountability of agency management activities
- Minimizes agency and agency personnel liability against complaints and lawsuits
- Reduction of risk management costs
- Eligibility of Funding, Grants and free training

### **Accreditation Process - Steps:**

1. Application, agreement, agency profile questionnaire
2. Self -Assessment creation of policy Directives
3. On-Site Assessment and Commission Review of 100% of the new policy and procedure Directives to ensure compliance of all 190 required Standards
4. Accreditation Awarded
5. Re-Accreditation review of 4 annual terms (not automatic) a continual on-going yearly process.

**The cost:** The only costs for the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) program are those incurred for room and board for the assessment team at the time of the on-site assessment, and a \$250.00 application fee upon receipt and acceptance of the Agency Participation Agreement.