

# Oregon Law Enforcement Accreditation Program

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<http://www.oracall.org/>

## Accreditation Concept

The accreditation concept, which has been in existence for over 200 years, has been described as unique to the United States, emphasizing a voluntary, self-motivated approach by which organizations seek to achieve, objectively verify, and maintain high quality in their operations through periodic evaluations conducted by an independent, non-governmental body that has established standards for its “clientele.”

For law enforcement, accreditation is a progressive and contemporary way of helping agencies evaluate and improve their overall performance and provides formal recognition that an organization meets or exceeds general expectations of service and quality in the field. The key to this successful system lies in the consensus of published and circulated standards containing a clear statement of professional objectives.

## Oregon Accreditation Alliance

### Accreditation Program

The Oregon Accreditation Alliance is a joint effort of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, Oregon State Sheriff’s Association, and the Oregon Association of Public Safety Communications Officers. Representatives from each association participate on the Professional Standards Committee, the body that oversees and administers the state accreditation program.



Law enforcement agencies choosing to pursue accreditation under this program will have examined all aspects of their operations. They will have made conscious decisions about policies and procedures that fit the law enforcement requirements of their jurisdiction and will have implemented those policies and trained their employees in their use. The award of accreditation reflects that the agency was carefully measured against the established set of professional standards and that the agency has met or exceeded those standards and their practices.

### The Standards

The 100 Standards used by the Oregon Accreditation Alliance, were developed and adopted by the Professional Standards Committee, and represent core issues relating to life, health, and safety. The standards are dynamic, that is, they are constantly being reviewed, updated, added to, or deleted as is necessary to ensure contemporary standards and practices. All 100 standards are mandatory for every agency except those that are not applicable because the agency does not perform that function.

It is the intent of the Oregon Accreditation Alliance that the standards speak to the “what” should be done and leaves the “how” to the agencies as they prepare for accreditation. All standards are designed to provide flexibility to all law enforcement agencies, regardless of type, size, or structure.

### Eligibility and Fees

All general law enforcement agencies in Oregon having primary responsibility for the enforcement of Oregon criminal and traffic laws are eligible to participate in the program.

**Fees:** The following fee schedule will apply to agencies seeking participation in State Accreditation (<http://www.oracall.org/join.html>).

<u>Total Personnel</u>	<u>Fee</u>
1-9	\$550/yr.
10-24	\$1050/yr.
25-74	\$1550/yr.
75 +	\$2050/yr.

There is a non-refundable \$125 application fee. This fee provides the agency with one Standards Manual, one Accreditation Process Manual, one Self-Assessment Manual, and other materials necessary to participate in the program.

## Accreditation Process

The accreditation process entails four phases beginning with the initial application and ending with the final review and decision for award of state accreditation.

**Application Phase:** The process begins when an agency requests information from the OAA Executive Director. Upon request, the agency will be sent information about the program. The package contains instructions, forms, profile questionnaire, and information concerning fees. The application, profile questionnaire, and application fee are then returned to the OAA Executive Director.

**Self-Assessment Phase:** When the agency receives all of the materials, they submit their first annual payment to the OAA and commence the self-assessment phase. During this phase, the agency will determine its compliance with the OAA standards. Proof of compliance will be provided through the agency's assessment documents, containing written directives or other verifying documents organized according to OAA guidelines.

**On-Site Assessment:** Details for the on-site assessment are worked out with the requesting agency. Once the on-site assessment plan has been evaluated and accepted by the OAA Executive Director, a mutually agreeable date for site visitation by the assessors will be made. The assessors will then conduct the assessment. At the completion of the on-site assessment, a report of the assessor's findings is prepared and forwarded to the Professional Standards Committee (PSC). The PSC will convene on the day before each quarterly scheduled meeting of the OACP Board of Directors to review all agencies presented for the award of accreditation. If the PSC finds all requirements have been met, a nomination to award accreditation will be made to the applicants' respective association's governing board, at their next meeting.

**Review and Decision:** The governing board of the respective association will receive and review all PSC nominations and enter a decision to award or defer accreditation. If accreditation is awarded, the agency is advised by the Executive Director and given the opportunity to arrange a date, time, and location where the award can be formally presented.

A formal accreditation ceremony will be conferred on the agency during the respective association's annual conference. The ceremony can also be arranged in the agency's jurisdiction if desired. In the event an agency is not granted accreditation, it may request the decision be reviewed.

## Re-accreditation

Agencies electing to continue accredited status must provide annual documentation of continued compliance and resubmit to an on-site assessment once every three years. Whereas initial accreditation is about systems in place, such as the written directive system, re-accreditation is about performance.

## **Benefits of Accreditation**

### **For the Community**

- Increases the law enforcement agency's ability to prevent and control crime through more efficient and effective delivery of services.
- Enhances community understanding of the law enforcement agency, its role in the community, and its goals and objectives.
- Creates a forum in which police and citizens work together to prevent and control crime through greater understanding of the challenges and impacts on law enforcement and the desires of the community.
- Enhances public confidence in the law enforcement agency.

### **For the Chief Executive Officer**

- Increases cooperation and coordination with other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies.
- Provides independent confirmation that policies comply with professional standards.
- Provides greater administrative and operational effectiveness.
- Insures continuous, systemized self-assessment of policies, procedures, and operational practices.
- Decreases exposure to civil liability and costly settlements, which leads to potential reductions in premiums for liability insurance.
- Provides state and local acknowledgement of professional competence.

### **For Law Enforcement Personnel**

- Enhances understanding of agency policies and procedures.
- Assures consistent recruitment, selection, and promotion processes and that employment practices are fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory.
- Increases morale within the agency.
- Increases pride and confidence in the agency and its operations.
- Ensures that agency policies and procedures are reduced to writing and available to all personnel.

#### **For more information contact:**

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