

South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services Becomes First Agency of Its Kind to be Law Enforcement Accredited

The South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (SCDPPPS) has become the **FIRST probation agency** in the United States to be accredited by the leading national accreditation organization, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA).

“For South Carolina’s Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services to achieve this designation is an extraordinary testament to the professionalism and high standards held by its employees,” said SCDPPPS Director Jerry Adger.

At a time when law enforcement agencies are increasingly “under the microscope” and being held to higher and more professional standards, a national accreditation process is essential to this most critical public service that is literally a matter of life or death to our state’s citizens.

SCDPPPS becomes only the third law enforcement cabinet agency to achieve the designation in South Carolina, along with the State Law Enforcement Division and Department of Public Safety. Only one quarter of United States law enforcement agencies have undergone the rigorous review process necessary for accreditation.

Adger set a goal of CALEA accreditation when he took office in 2015. He determined that the agency needed a clear goal to standardize its policies and procedures. He knew from his years working with the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) that national accreditation would achieve that goal, improve morale and establish a clearer identity at SCDPPPS, which is sometimes considered a hybrid law enforcement and social service agency.

All of SCDPPPS’ 450 Agents have full law enforcement certification through the SC Criminal Justice Academy and must meet the same requirements as law enforcement officers in all of the state and local agencies, such as police and sheriff’s deputies. Agents wear badges and are certified yearly in weapons training, arrest techniques and changes in state law, as well as training in assisting offenders to re-integrate into the community.

As such, Adger determined that SCDPPPS was uniquely qualified to pursue accreditation as a **law enforcement** agency. A normal three-year process of bringing an agency up to CALEA standards was achieved in only 20 months.

“CALEA has remarkably high standards of professionalism for its member organizations,” said Adger, who has a 40-year career in law enforcement, including jobs at SLED, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Corrections.

In March of 2018, two professional assessors visited SCDPPPS and reviewed the agency’s files, activities, functional impacts and management strategies. The assessors determined the agency was in compliance with ALL applicable standards and the agency’s personnel were very supportive of the accreditation process.

Specifically, CALEA's goals are to:

- Strengthen crime prevention and control capabilities;
- Formalize essential management procedures;
- Establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices;
- Improve service delivery;
- Solidify interagency cooperation and coordination; and
- Increase community and staff confidence in the agency.

This accreditation program provides public safety agencies improved standards, professionalism and accountability.

CALEA was created in 1979 as the first independent, international law enforcement credentialing authority through the collaborative efforts of law enforcement's major executive associations:

- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP);
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE);
- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA); and the
- Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

CALEA's accreditation programs touch the professional lives of 25 percent of the nation's full time state and local law enforcement officers, and in just a little over three decades the organization has become synonymous with excellence in public safety standards.

The benefits to PPP have been remarkable - leading to improvements in:

- Documentation practices, evidence/property management systems and training curriculum.
- Officer safety, to include a full-time, statewide communications function, additional safety equipment and training, and the distribution of Narcan, an opioid overdose medication, to all sworn officers as part of DHEC's LEON program.

In South Carolina, 34 law enforcement agencies in total are CALEA-accredited. SCDPPPS will become the third law enforcement cabinet agency to be accredited.

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