

DETENTION ACCREDITATION (DETENTION)

OBJECTIVES

- Staff will be introduced to the New Mexico Adult Detention Accreditation Program
- Staff will understand the significance of an accreditation program

The NMAC, the Detention Affiliate and the New Mexico Municipal League (NMML) developed professional standards and incorporated them into an accreditation program for New Mexico adult detention operations. Currently, the program includes 208 standards encompassing administration, physical plant, safety/sanitation, security control, medical, and inmate programs. These standards are consistent with national standards including the American Correctional Association (ACA) but are less burdensome; they focus on professionalizing New Mexico detention operations.

The standards developed are the basis of an accreditation program that affects every component of an agency. Through the dedication to service and professionalism evidenced by obtainment of accredited status, detention facilities can greatly affect the communities they serve. The program became effective July 1, 2010.

Accreditation is on-going process whereby agencies evaluate policy and procedures against established criteria, and have compliance with that criteria verified by an independent and authoritative body. The criteria or standards are policy development guidelines that represent a professional level of quality service delivery. Being accredited will not prevent you or your agency from being sued or civilly challenged, but it will greatly enhance your ability to cope with the threat of successful litigation.

Generally, when an agency is challenged legally, department policies and practices come into question. If your policies and practices are not consistent with national or state standards, you have to justify how or why your actions were reasonable.

The cost of accreditation is very reasonable; it's based on inmate population. Departments interested must submit an application to the New Mexico Adult Detention Accreditation Board for approval. Once approved subject matter experts will assist the department in becoming accredited over the next two years.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about this presentation and the benefits of becoming an accredited agency.*