

**ACCREDITATION UNIT**  
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# ACCREDITATION

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- 90 percent of the accreditation “process” affects the agency’s command staff, management, and administration.
- James Robey, a retired Howard County chief of police, county executive, and state legislator, was a former CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) commissioner.
- Grant money – there is a great deal of competition for available grant funds. As such, and historically, accredited agencies are more successful in obtaining funds than non-accredited agencies.
- Individuals and groups CAN make a difference. Accreditation is an excellent opportunity for everyone to more actively participate in the management of this agency.
- Law enforcement accreditation is voluntary. Currently, there are only about 10 percent of all U.S. law enforcement agencies in the accreditation process.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- It is truly an international achievement. Agencies from the United States, Canada, Barbados, Mexico, and Bermuda take part in the accreditation process.
- Receiving accreditation sends an important message to students, faculty, staff, citizens, government officials, and colleagues in law enforcement that our agency has attained and maintains high standards.
- The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) Police Force completed its sixth on-site in August 2013 and received a meritorious reaccreditation award in November 2013.
- The accreditation process is very challenging. However, anything worth achieving is worth the effort it takes. If it was easy, every agency would be accredited!
- FINALLY, if there are any questions call or email the accreditation unit.

## WHAT IS LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCREDITATION?

Law enforcement accreditation is similar to other professional accreditation programs such as those in the medical and higher education fields.

Simply stated, it is a process whereby a law enforcement agency identifies specifically what it plans to do and then does it, by:

**1st** - writing clear and concise policies and procedures that all agency employees, both sworn and non-sworn, understand and follow.

**2nd** - ensuring all employees are trained in the policies and procedures that apply to their specific job or responsibility.

**3rd** - providing documentation that the UMB Police Force follows our policies.

**4th** - undergoing a thorough on-site inspection, every three years, by outside professionals from CALEA.

## WHY ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation is a tool to continuously evaluate ourselves against a set of recognized standards that ensure faculty, staff, students, and visitors to campus receive the best service possible.

## HISTORY

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. was established as an independent accrediting authority in 1979 by four major law enforcement membership associations: International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP); National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE); National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA); and Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). The executive directors of these four associations annually appoint members to the commission, which consists of 21 members. Each serves a three-year voluntary term. In 1979, CALEA originally drafted over 1,000 standards, covering ethics, patrol, traffic stops, searches, and more.

## THE ‘PROCESS’

The UMB Police Force was originally accredited in November 1996. After this initial accreditation, our department continues a self-assessment to ensure continued compliance with all applicable standards. Directives, policies, and procedures continue to be developed, rescinded when appropriate, and fine-tuned. Each subsequent year requires “proof of compliance” for the current 485 standards.

## THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

An on-site assessment is conducted by two specifically selected law enforcement officials from different areas of the U.S. or Canada. These assessors are on-site for four days to review our policies and procedures as well as documentation that proves we adhere to the standards. They conduct interviews with various agency members, non-police sections/units, and participate in ride-alongs in order to understand the operation of our agency.

They also walk with our officers on their rounds. They may speak with Human Resources, business owners, and citizens on the street. They attend a public hearing that gives individuals and groups an opportunity to speak about our department (good or bad). There is a “phone-in” session to allow assessors to speak with anyone who wants to call and speak about the agency. The assessors prepare a final report and based on the findings, the chief is questioned at a hearing at the CALEA conference.

## MAINTAINING COMPLIANCE AND REACCREDITATION

CALEA accreditation awards are for three years. After each reaccreditation on-site, the primary goal has been to ensure that our policies and procedures remain reasonable, enforceable, and practical. This requires rewriting identified directives, procedures, and/or policies. The statement often heard regarding accreditation is, *“An agency cannot ‘just talk the talk,’ it must also ‘walk the walk.’”*

**More information?  
Call 410-706-6389**



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