

JAIL ACCREDITATION

Accreditation Agency: American Correctional Association Accreditation

Benefits:

Assessment of program strengths and weaknesses.

An ACA audit involves assessments that cover administration and management, the physical plant, institutional operations and services, and inmate programs. It also assesses issues and concerns that may affect the quality of life at a facility such as staff training, adequacy of medical services, sanitation, use of segregation and detention, incidents of violence, crowding, offender activity levels, programs, and provisions of basic services that may impact the life, safety and health of inmates, as well as staff.

Establishment of measurable criteria for upgrading operations.

Through the standards and accreditation process agencies continuously review agency policies and procedures and have the ability to make necessary improvements when deficiencies are recognized.

Performance-based benefits.

Performance-based standards provide data that can be used in the day-to-day management of the facility reducing the occurrence of significant events. Accredited agencies, such as health care facilities, will find it easier to recruit and retain health care professionals. Not only does compliance provide agencies with a cost-effective, pro-active approach to offender health care, but it can be used to justify requests for additional funding.

Improved staff training and development.

ACA accreditation requires written policy and procedures to establish a training and staff development program for all categories of personnel. The training requirements address all pre-service, in-service and specialized training curricula with clear timelines, and considers the institution's mission, physical characteristics and inmate populations. The professional growth of employees is systematically developed through training plans that annually identify current job-related training needs in relation to position requirements, current correctional issues, new theories, techniques and technologies.

Improved staff morale and professionalism.

Accreditation is awarded to the "best of the best" in the corrections field. Staff have a better understanding of policies and procedures and this contributes to improved working conditions for staff.

Safer environment for staff and offenders.

Staff, as well as offenders, benefit from increased accountability, attention to physical plant issues and security procedures. Whether a facility or program, the accreditation process ensures a clear assessment of strengths and weaknesses

Defense against lawsuits.

Accredited agencies have a stronger defense against litigation through documentation and the demonstration of a "good faith" effort to improve conditions of confinement.

Reduced liability insurance costs.

As an incentive for agencies willing to participate in ACA's national accreditation program, insurance companies offer a reduction on liability insurance premiums to accredited facilities. Adherence to nationally recognized standards for fire, safety, health and training reduce claim expenses, allowing up to a 10 percent credit on liability insurance premiums. In most cases, the resulting savings on insurance premiums more than offset the actual cost of accreditation.

Types of standards

The Association currently publishes 22 different manuals of standards, including one for *International Core Standards* for international institutions, each of which applies to a specific kind of correctional facility or program. The standards cover programs for adults and juveniles housed in correctional facilities, detention centers and community correctional programs. There are also standards for probation and parole agencies, health care programs and electronic monitoring programs.

Contracts

Before officially entering the accreditation process, all facilities must complete an accreditation contract with the American Correctional Association. The contract includes all obligations of both parties, the type of accreditation to be completed, the relevant Standards Supplement, and the final price for accreditation services. While ACA staff is able to assist any facility interested in the process, no audit services can be rendered without a completed and signed contract between the parent agency and ACA.

Agencies that are prepared to enter into a contract with ACA are required to fill out the [Request for Contract form](#). This form will provide ACA with the information needed to format and finalize the contract. The agency will receive a copy of the contract for final approval/signature before it is completed.

Additional Resources:

Manuals & Supplements

Below is a list of each of the standards manuals published by the American Correctional Association:

- Adult Correctional Institutions, 4th Edition (ACI)
- Performance-Based Standards for Correctional Health Care in Adult Correctional Institutions- 1st Edition (PBHC- ACI)
- Adult Local Detention Facilities, 4th Edition (ALDF)
- Core Jail Standards, 1st Edition (CJ)
- Adult Residential Community Services, 4th Edition (ACRS)
- Adult Probation and Parole Field Services, 4th Edition (APPF)
- Adult Correctional Boot Camp Programs, 1st Edition (ABC)

- Adult Probation and Parole Authorities, 1st Edition (APA)
- Administration of Correctional Agencies, 2nd Edition (ACA)
- Correctional Industries, 2nd Edition (CI)
- Correctional Training Academies, 1st Edition (CTA)
- Electronic Monitoring Programs, 1st Edition (EM)
- Food Service Programs, 1st Edition (FSP)
- International Core Standards, 1st Edition (IC)
- Juvenile Community Residential Facilities, 3rd Edition (JCRF)
- Juvenile Correctional Facilities, 4th Edition (JCF)
- Juvenile Detention Facilities, 3rd Edition (JDF)
- Juvenile Correctional Boot Camp Programs, 1st Edition (JBC)
- Juvenile Day Treatment Programs, 1st Edition (JDTP)
- Small Jail Standards, 1st Edition (SJ)
- Small Juvenile Detention Facilities, 1st Edition (SJDF)
- Standards for Therapeutic Communities, 1st Edition (TC)

As changes to the standards are made at every ACA conference, the Association also prints a *Standards Supplement* on a bi-annual basis. Available every other year in January, the *Standards Supplement* contains changes to all ACA standards manuals since the printing of the most recent edition of that manual. For example, the 4th Edition ACI manual was printed in 2003; therefore, all changes to the manual from 2003 to 2011 will be contained in the *2012 Standards Supplement*. The 2014 Supplement (available in January 2014) will include all changes through 2013. For changes to the standards that occurred after the printing of the most recent Supplement, please consult the [Standards Committee Meeting Minutes](#) for each conference during that period. The Supplement is available in the [ACA Marketplace](#).

Jails/Detention Centers in Virginia:

62 Local or Regional Jails are certified by the Department of Corrections.

14 of these jails are accredited by the American Correctional Association.

7 of the 14 jails accredited are regional jails including: Hampton Roads, Pamunkey, Henrico East, Western Virginia, Henrico West, Middle Peninsula and Riverside. There are 23 regional jails overall.

The most recent cost estimate for MRRJ to go through the ACA accreditation process was \$15,000, plus expenses for their auditors for travel, food and lodging. Re-accreditation takes place every three years.

JAIL MEDICAL FACILITIES ACCREDITATION

Accreditation Agency: National Commission on Correctional Health Care

Benefits:

Supports consistency of health services: NCCHC accreditation supports a consistent infrastructure for providing constitutionally mandated quality health care. In light of the changes in staffing, practices, and procedures that invariably occur in jails (and sometimes inadvertently creep into a jail), NCCHC standards provide a recognized framework for delivering quality health care. Further, NCCHC experts are available throughout the accreditation cycle to provide technical support and assistance as needs arise. This support from an independent, respected third party helps prevent the jail from becoming at risk for providing unconstitutional levels of health care.

Promotes morale and professional excellence: NCCHC accreditation supports high levels of staff engagement and morale. In addition to the levels of collaboration and teamwork that are required to manage an accredited health care program, the energy and enthusiasm generated within a facility as it prepares for and maintains accreditation have a significant positive effect on morale. Clinicians, administrators, and other professionals all benefit from performing their duties within a nationally accredited program and their professional pride pushes them to achieve consistently high levels of performance.

Reduces legal risk: Courts have consistently looked favorably upon NCCHC accreditation. Maintaining this respected status forms part of a solid defense against claims of deliberate indifference. In addition, accreditation helps prevent systemic lapses of quality that cause unacceptable patient care and adverse clinical outcomes. Securing and maintaining accreditation establishes a "good faith" effort to improve the health care system and affirms that institutions have a functional health care system through review by an independent, nationally recognized correctional health care authority.

Allows for participation in a national forum: NCCHC has promoted and supported quality correctional health care for nearly 40 years. We currently accredit nearly 500 correctional health care programs in 46 states. Accredited facilities range in size from very small to those with a population of nearly 10,000. The number of inmates residing in NCCHC accredited facilities approaches 500,000 on any given day. NCCHC survey teams have extensive experience with successful programs and best practices and share this knowledge with jail employees. Association with NCCHC provides access to national experts in every aspect of correctional health care as well as opportunities to share knowledge, develop innovations and promote best practices.

Integrates with other valuable correctional health care programs and services: Unique among accreditation programs, NCCHC is focused exclusively on correctional health care and as such is able to offer a wide variety of interconnected services. These include a certification program (CCHP)—in which individual correctional health care professionals obtain and are recognized for technical excellence in the field—as well as numerous educational opportunities offered through the year. Further, NCCHC provides a number of helpful resources such as clinical guidelines, position statements and other publications, all supporting constitutionally appropriate health care services.

Additional Resources:

Manuals and supplements

- Standards for Health Services in Jails
- Standards for Health Services in Prisons
- Standards for Health Services in Juvenile Detention and Confinement Facilities
- Standards for Mental Health Services in Correctional Facilities
- Standards for Opioid Treatment Programs in Correctional Facilities

Educational Programs

NCCHC conferences are renowned for their exceptional [educational programs](#), abundant networking and the best commercial exhibitions in this field. Since it began in 1977, the National Conference on Correctional Health Care has been the must-attend event of the year. Similar in format but smaller in scale, NCCHC's Spring Conference is popular for its content-rich program and cutting-edge topics. Each summer, the Correctional Mental Health Care Conference convenes practitioners and administrators seeking to improve mental health and substance abuse services, while the intensive Leadership Institute provides core training for specific groups such as medical directors and health services administrators.

Technical Assistance

Customized consultation and technical assistance are offered through [NCCHC Resources, Inc.](#), which assists correctional facilities with issues such as preparing for accreditation, developing policies and procedures, and assessing alternative solutions to problems.

Jails/Detention Centers in Virginia:

62 Local or Regional Jails are certified by the Department of Corrections.

The number of these jails that are accredited by NCCHC was unavailable at the time of this report.

The cost estimate for MRRJ to go through NCCHC accreditation was not available at the time of this report.