



**Division of Criminal
Justice Services**

Request for Applications

Law Enforcement Accreditation Program Assessors

OPS # LEAP-2015

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

PURPOSE

The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS or 'the Division') is seeking qualified individuals to conduct assessments of agencies seeking accreditation through the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. This Request for Applications (RFA) seeks to solicit applications from those qualified individuals. Sub-contracting is not acceptable.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

PLEASE NOTE: All currently active assessors MUST respond to this RFA to be eligible for continued consideration as an assessor. This also applies to those who have previously applied but have yet to be assigned to an assessment.

Applications must be submitted directly to the individual below to be eligible for consideration. Applications that are not submitted directly to the address below will be rejected pending the proper resubmission.

**Hilary McGrath, Program Manager
New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
Office of Public Safety
Alfred E. Smith Office Building, 3rd Floor
80 South Swan Street
Albany, New York 12210**

All inquiries concerning this RFA must be directed via e-mail to hilary.mcgrath@dcjs.ny.gov.

APPLICATION CONTENT

Submissions in response to this RFA **must** consist of:

- 1. The completed application (Attachment A);**
- 2. A current resume, and;**
- 3. A writing sample for NEW team leader and/or 'compliance auditor' applicants ONLY.**

ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

The Division will begin accepting applications immediately upon release of this RFA and continuously throughout the life of the RFA (a period of five (5) years) or until a new RFA is released in its place. Successful applicants will remain on the list of approved accreditation program assessors until a new RFA is released, provided no action is taken by the Law Enforcement Accreditation Council to remove them from the list with cause. Applicants that are approved as assessors¹ may request that their name be permanently removed from the list upon written request.

NOTIFICATION

The Division will notify all applicants via e-mail whether or not they have been placed on the list

¹ There are three different types of assessor positions; however, for the purposes of this RFA, the term "assessor" is often used as a means of referring to all three positions.

of potential assessors.

AGREEMENTS

The Division will enter into formal Consultant Services Agreements with applicants selected to provide assessor services. The agreement will list the positions the applicant is approved for, the specific responsibilities regarding each of those positions, and other pertinent legal and financial matters. The Division may contract with more than one applicant within each category of service. Likewise, the Division may contract with the same applicant within different categories of service.

All data, materials, and working papers developed during the course of providing services through this program will be provided to and become the property of the State and may not be copyrighted except by the Division.

Any negotiated agreement must abide by the laws of New York State and may be subject to approval by the Attorney General and the Office of the State Comptroller, as appropriate.

TERMINATION OF AGREEMENTS

DCJS' termination provisions will be delineated in any contract established pursuant to this RFA.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program** (LEAP) provides law enforcement agencies with formal recognition for having met or exceeded standards that have been established in the areas of administration, training, and operations. The program was established to ensure excellence and professionalism in the field of law enforcement.

The **Law Enforcement Accreditation Council** ('Council') is the established body that sets the direction for all aspects of the program through establishing policy, recommending rules and regulations, and developing the standards that are the core of the program. The Council has the sole authority to grant the status of accreditation (as per Title 9 of the Official Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, §6035.2 (b) as it pertains to New York State Executive Law Article 36, §846-h).

PROGRAM GOALS AND BENEFITS

The accreditation program was established to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement agencies; promote cooperation and coordination among agencies within the criminal justice system; ensure appropriate training of law enforcement personnel; and, promote public confidence in law enforcement. The NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program enables administrators to both strengthen existing departmental procedures and build the foundation for continual evaluation of the agency's practices. The benefits of accreditation include:

- Potential diminished vulnerability to civil law suits and costly settlements.
- Enhanced understanding of agency policies and procedures among staff.
- Greater administrative and operational effectiveness.

- Independent confirmation of the department's adherence to a professional standard.

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

To become accredited, agency staff must develop and implement policies and procedures that meet or exceed the program standards established by the Council. Agencies applying for accreditation must demonstrate compliance with those standards through an in-depth assessment of their policies and procedures conducted by assessors selected through this RFA.

Once an assessment is complete, the assessor, or team of assessors will make a recommendation to the Council based on their findings. However, the Council has the exclusive authority to award accreditation. They can vote to award, defer, or deny accreditation; or award accreditation with enhanced monitoring, a designation that involves OPS program staff working with that agency throughout the period of accreditation to ensure they are compliant with program standards and maintaining program files.

Agencies that are awarded accreditation maintain that status for up to five years before undergoing another assessment to become reaccredited. The reaccreditation process is the same as the initial accreditation process, with the exception of the length of time the agency is required to demonstrate compliance with program standards (five years for reaccreditation versus three months for initial). In some instances, agencies that have been successfully reaccredited at least once will undergo a **compliance audit** in order to become reaccredited, while some agencies that have been reaccredited more than once may still be required to undergo a full assessment. The determination of whether to conduct a compliance audit or a full assessment is made by OPS program staff and depends on several different factors as outlined in the council policy entitled *Reaccreditation*.

ASSESSOR POSITIONS

The Division is seeking experienced professionals to serve as assessors for the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Assessors act as the on-site consultants for agencies seeking to become accredited, evaluating the agency's policies and practices as they pertain to compliance with the accreditation standards. Assessors represent both the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Council and the Division and, as such, are held to the same codes of conduct and ethics as employees of the State of New York, as outlined in the agreements successful applicants will enter into with the Division once they are assigned.

There are **three types of assessor positions**. They are:

ASSESSOR:

Successful applicants for the position of assessor will be part of a team of three assessors who will determine if an agency has taken the necessary steps to earn the distinction of being granted initial accreditation (accredited for the first time) or reaccreditation. Assessors will, with guidance from the team leader (see below) review agency policies, procedures and supporting documentation to assure that each program standard has been addressed in an appropriate manner. In rare instances, smaller agencies will be assigned a team of two assessors to conduct the assessment.

TEAM LEADER:

The team leader is essentially the supervisor of the assessment team. In addition to completing the same tasks as an assessor, the team leader is responsible for conducting a review of approximately ten files submitted to them by the agency prior to the actual on-site assessment; coordinating the work of the assessment team including assigning standards for each member to review; communicating with OPS program staff throughout the assessment; leading discussions with agency personnel such as the chief law enforcement officer and/or program manager; and preparing the assessment report that will be provided to the Council for their review and consideration. On rare occasions, a team leader may be asked to present information about a particular assessment to the Council.

COMPLIANCE AUDITOR:

Agencies that have been successfully reaccredited once may be eligible to undergo a **compliance audit** in order to become reaccredited again. The compliance audit will generally be conducted by one individual and will entail a full review of files for critical standards (pre-approved by the Council) and at least 20 additional files for other essential standards. It is anticipated that approximately two days will be spent off-site reviewing files that are sent either electronically or through the U.S. Mail; and one full day will be spent on-site completing the file review, observing the agency, and interviewing personnel.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be eligible to apply for a position as an assessor, applicants must meet **at least one** of the following:

1. Applicant has a minimum of three (3) years of experience as a sworn law enforcement officer, or five (5) years of experience as a civilian and has worked directly on the NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program for at least two (2) years; **OR**
2. Applicant has a minimum of one (1) year experience as the agency program manager inclusive of the time during which there was the successful assessment of the applicant's law enforcement agency; **OR**
3. Applicant has a minimum of one (1) year experience as the chief law enforcement officer or has direct supervisory/managerial oversight of the accreditation program; **OR**
4. Applicant is currently active on the DCJS assessor list and has been previously approved by the Council.

Both active and retired employees are eligible to apply through this RFA.

NOTE – No successful applicant will be assigned to a team before successfully completing the New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program Assessor Training, provided by DCJS. Likewise, applicants that apply for the team leader and/or compliance auditor position(s) must first participate as an assessor in a **minimum** of two (2) assessments before being assigned as a team leader or compliance auditor. Prior assessments conducted by applicants currently active on the DCJS Assessor list count toward this requirement. DCJS program staff has the discretion to determine the readiness of an assessor for a team leader or compliance auditor position despite the number of assessments conducted and in what capacity.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

The New York State Law Enforcement Accreditation Program is intended to be non-adversarial; however, accreditation is a status awarded only to agencies that have clearly demonstrated compliance with the program standards. Applicants for assessor positions must have the ability to conduct objective evaluations of an agency's policies and procedures *as they pertain to the accreditation standards*. An assessor's personal opinions about the quality of an agency's policies or the philosophy behind them may not factor into the assessment. Assessors must be open-minded and focus solely on whether the agency has met the standard.

Other necessary qualifications include:

- Computer skills;
- The ability to convey thoughts in a clear and concise manner both verbally and in writing.
- **Excellent interpersonal skills.**

All currently employed applicants must receive 'sign-off' by the agency's chief law enforcement officer (or designee) to be eligible for selection.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Council's *Assessor Selection* policy requires that the Accreditation Council approve all applications for assessor positions. The OPS Accreditation Program Unit will initially review all applications received to determine if the applicant has met the minimum qualifications and responded in full to the Request for Applications (RFA). All complete applications for first-time applicants who meet the minimum requirements shall be submitted to the Council for their review and consideration. The Council generally waives review of applications for previously approved assessors, but reserves the right to review those applications as well.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

Each of the following components will be given a "pass/fail" rating. A 'pass' in all areas will result in the applicant being placed on the active assessor list used to make assessment assignments. The components are:

1. Submission of a completed Law Enforcement Accreditation Program Assessor Application (Attachment A);
2. A current resume that demonstrates the applicant meets one of the minimum requirements outlined on pages 6 and 7 of this RFA;
3. A writing sample (NEW team leader and compliance auditor applicants only);
4. Approval by the Accreditation Council.

NOTE: OPS reserves the right to contact an applicant regarding minor omissions in information or to clarify information provided in the submitted application.

APPLICANT NOTIFICATION

The Council meets four times per year to conduct business: in March, June, September and December. All applicants will be notified via e-mail once the Council votes on their application. Applicants will also be notified via email if they did not meet the minimum qualifications to be considered by the Council.

ASSESSMENT TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

The Council has authorized OPS program staff to make all determinations regarding the individuals who serve on each assessment team and the role each team member will fulfill. The assessment teams are generally comprised of:

<u>Initial Assessments:</u>	1 team leader, 2 assessors (full assessment)
<u>Full Reassessments:</u>	1 team leader, 2 assessors² (full reassessment)
<u>Compliance Audits:</u>	1 compliance auditor³

The makeup of an assessment team is influenced by several different factors. The Council policy entitled *Assessment Procedures* contains guidelines for making assignments that OPS program staff must adhere to whenever possible including ensuring that:

1. The assessment team has an appropriate professional balance;
2. The team includes members with complimentary experience;
3. The team includes an assessor from an agency of the same approximate size and/or type as the agency being scheduled for assessment;
4. No more than one incumbent Chief of Police or Sheriff will be assigned to the same team, and;
5. No one on the assessment team will have had any affiliation with the department being assessed (see Restrictions on Assignments for more information).

The availability of active assessors with regard to the schedule of assessments can further affect the formation of a team. In addition, the chief law enforcement officer of the agency undergoing the assessment is provided with an opportunity to request disqualification of certain assessors (with sufficient cause), and that is also taken into consideration.

Finally, DCJS Accreditation Unit staff must carefully weigh the cost of conducting each assessment, taking into account the location of each assessor in relation to the agency undergoing an assessment and the cost of overnight accommodations.

Because all of these factors must be taken into consideration, being approved through this RFA and placed on the active assessors list does not provide a guarantee of selection for an assignment or guarantee a particular number of assignments.

RESTRICTIONS ON ASSIGNMENTS

In June 2011, the Law Enforcement Accreditation Council lifted all geographic restrictions on

² Occasionally a two-man team may be assigned if an agency is particularly small.

³ For very large agencies, additional assessor(s) may be assigned to assist with the on-site portion of the compliance audit. In those cases, additional assessors will be paid at the assessor rate.

assigning assessors. The elimination of geographic restrictions requires that successful applicants make good decisions about whether to accept or turn down an assignment.

Successful applicants MUST decline an assignment with a law enforcement agency if they:

1. Have ever been employed by the agency;
2. Have participated in a mock assessment for the agency in preparation for that particular assessment;
3. Were a member of the previous assessment team for the same agency;
4. Have a personal relationship with any member) of the agency that could lead to the appearance of impropriety;
5. Question their ability to objectively assess the agency;
6. Have provided consultant services of any type to the agency within 12 months prior to the assignment; or,
7. Expect to provide consultant services of any type to the agency within 12 months after the assignment.

Officials of law enforcement agencies seeking accreditation have the right and responsibility to request that any assessor be disqualified from assessing their agency for any of the same reasons listed above.

COMPENSATION

The chart below outlines the current compensation for assignments given to successful applicants.

ASSIGNMENT	COMPENSATION*	NUMBER OF DAYS**
Assessor	\$300.00 per day	3 Days
Team Leader or Compliance Auditor	\$400.00 per day	3 Days

*The compensation rate includes any additional time worked (above 8 hours) on each of the three allotted days.

**A comprehensive assessment, reassessment, or compliance audit generally takes three days to complete. In rare instances, a fourth day – or portion of a day - may be warranted. (In cases of partial days’ work, assessors will be paid a prorated amount per hour.) No assessor will be paid for an additional day or partial day of work without prior approval from DCJS.

In addition, DCJS will pay all necessary and reasonable travel costs as follows⁴:

- Hotel bills for overnight accommodations, the rate for which shall not exceed the rate established by the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) at the time of travel and for the county in which the assessors are working. (The hotel bill will generally be paid directly by OPS.)

⁴ Please note that receipts are now required for reimbursement of costs such as tolls, postage, public transportation, taxis, and parking.

- Meal expenses in accordance with the rates established by OSC at the time of travel.
- Necessary postage for reports sent by the team leader or compliance auditor.
- Toll Expenses
- Mileage in accordance with the rates established by OSC at the time of travel.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **The Division shall not be responsible for the payment of incidental expenses** (e.g. tips to hotel staff) as they are factored into the per diem amount.
- **The Division shall not be responsible for paying taxes on lodging.** Any assessor who fails to present the tax exempt certificate (provided by DCJS) to the hotel will be responsible for paying all resulting taxes applied to the bill.
- **In order to be eligible for an overnight stay and reimbursement for meals, the assessor must live or work (whichever is closer) at least 35 miles from the site of the assessment.**
- **Mileage costs for use of a personal automobile are eligible for compensation.**

A signed travel voucher documenting authorized travel expenses; a Statement of Automobile Travel; and a Standard Voucher documenting the service provided by the contractor is submitted by the assessor within 10 days following each assessment. Reimbursement will be made after DCJS Finance Office satisfactory review and approval of the submission of properly completed forms and accompanying documentation (e.g. receipts).

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Every new⁵ assessor approved by the Council will be required to complete a one-day training course before receiving their first assignment. All successful applicants will be trained in methods of verifying an agency's compliance with accreditation program standards including, but not limited to reviewing an agency's written directives and program files, interviewing agency personnel, and making observations while visiting the agency. This course will address such issues as program structure, the assessment process, and State accreditation rules and regulations. OPS will award a certificate of attendance to each individual who completes the training. Any cost associated with attending this training will be the responsibility of the successful applicant, although DCJS will make every effort to provide flexibility in scheduling in order to reduce or eliminate potential costs to the program assessors.

All assessors may be required to participate in additional training if DCJS determines it is necessary to strengthen the administration of the program. Any cost associated with attending training will be the responsibility of the successful applicant, although DCJS will make every effort to provide flexibility in scheduling, location, and use of web-based applications to deliver the training so as to reduce or eliminate potential costs to the program assessors.

⁵ New assessors are defined as those submitting an application for the first time.