



NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

Brief: January 2025

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OVERVIEW - The development of the American Probation and Parole Association's (APPA's) first National Standards for Community Supervision (Standards) began in 2020 with a workgroup consisting of active and former community supervision practitioners and leaders. The Standards were finalized in 2024 and introduced during APPA's 49th Annual Training Institute in June 2024. Development of the Standards was funded by a generous grant from the National Institute of Corrections.

The Standards are aspirational, setting forth definitions and protocols to be incorporated into daily supervision practices. The goal is for agencies to use the Standards as benchmarks for professional practice and to inform written policies, regulations, rules, statutes, or other binding authorities. APPA recognizes that full compliance with every Standard may not be possible for all agencies due to a variety of local factors. Nonetheless, they provide sound guidance for agencies and community supervision staff. Each Standard is followed by commentary that provides greater detail, explanation, and support it. The undergirding goal of the Standards is to enhance the overall professionalism of the field, as they are meant to serve as an operational blueprint for urban, suburban, and rural community supervision agencies. The Standards will help agencies use evidence-based practices in their everyday case management and serve as a resource when agencies are evaluating policies and measuring outcomes.

FEEDBACK - Recognizing the Standards are ever evolving, the field was provided with an opportunity to review the Standards and provide public comments. The comments were thoroughly reviewed by a sub-committee and relevant feedback will be incorporated within future publications of the Standards. APPA acknowledges the Standards are dynamic and fluid and may need to be revised to clarify ambiguities, reflect new evidence-based findings, incorporate future legislative mandates, etc.

Next Steps

- While the workgroup focused on generating the Standards, several topics were discussed that fell under the broader category of **Organization Development**. Upon completion of the Standards, subgroups were formed to address these over-arching, systemic issues which include *Strategic Planning and Mission; Staff Hiring, Retention and Promotion; Training for Staff and Leadership; Cross-Organization Collaboration;*

and Data-Driven Decision-Making/Performance Measures Process. Each subgroup will work to generate evidence-based recommendations regarding these topics, having a completion goal in spring 2025.

- APPA is strongly recommending agencies review and adopt the Standards. Agencies are being asked to examine how closely their current practices, policies, and procedures align with the Standards and to develop **adoption and implementation** plans of action.
- In conjunction with the completion of the Organization Development Standards, APPA looks to offer **regional training** in the field. The training will be designed to clarify Standards (to ensure correct interpretation of the written narrative); offer structured feedback related to the Standards; and assist agencies in developing realistic implementation plans and outcome measures. Ideally, regional training will take place from mid-2025 through mid-2026.
 - ✓ APPA is seeking funding for the training and encourages local counties and states to secure/budget funding for site-specific training.
 - ✓ APPA has composed a training delivery plan that includes identifying subject-matter experts, curriculum development, establishing a cadre of national trainers, train-the-training programming which includes a trainer certification process, and the development of pre- and post-training assessment tools.
- The Standards are the first step in achieving a long-term goal for APPA of developing a **probation accreditation** process for the field. The accreditation will serve to verify that an agency meets established standards of quality and effectiveness. Accreditation will provide assurance to key stakeholders that the agency is “competent,” and its daily operations and programming decisions are evidence-based. This accreditation process will also help agencies identify areas for improvement and serve as a mechanism to maintain quality work.

For additional information about the Standards, contact APPA’ Project Coordinator, Delores Johnson, at djohnson@csg.org.