



Overview
Texas Police Chief's Association Foundation
Law Enforcement Agency Best Practices
Recognition Program

What is the Law Enforcement Agency Best Practices Recognition Program?

The Law Enforcement Recognition Program is a voluntary process where police agencies in Texas prove their compliance with over 160 Texas Law Enforcement Best Practices. These Best Practices were carefully developed by Texas Law Enforcement professionals to assist agencies in the efficient and effective delivery of service and the protection of individual's rights.

What does it mean to be "Recognized?"

Being "Recognized" means that the agency meets or exceeds all of the identified Best Practices for Texas Law Enforcement. These Best Practices cover aspects of law enforcement operations such as use of force, protection of citizen rights, pursuits, property and evidence management, and patrol and investigative operations. While being "Recognized" does not guarantee and an agency will not make a mistake, it does ensure that the agency has studied these critical issues, has developed policy and procedures to address them and has systems in place to identify and correct problems.

What are the benefits of "Recognition?"

Police Officers exercise government's most awesome powers – the power to stop and question a citizen, the power to arrest a citizen, to seize his person and property, and the power to use force in that process. Officers often operate alone without direct supervision. Police agencies direct and control officer's activity through supervision, training and written policies and procedures. Since supervisors cannot always be present, the training and the policies and procedures of an agency are critical to ensuring proper performance. Appropriate equipment is also necessary. The Recognition Program ensures an agency has addressed the most critical law enforcement issues in both policy as well as actual operation. The Recognition Program does not tell an agency what their policy must be, but rather it ensures that the policy, procedure, or operation addresses the critical aspects of an issue.

The Recognition Program assures both City Management and the citizens of a city that their Police Department is operating in a manner that reflects the current Best Practices of Law Enforcement. It can provide citizens with reassurance and improve community relations and cooperation – and also leads to improved performance within the department.

Will this process keep you from being sued? It will provide direction to officers that should prevent them from acting in a manner which could result in liability. But, as you are aware, agencies are often sued even when they do everything correctly. Should this occur, the Recognition Program can ensure your agency is better prepared to successfully defend a lawsuit.

Who “Recognizes” an Agency?

The Texas Police Chiefs Association Foundation (TPCAF) developed the Recognition Program to assist Texas agencies in meeting their professional obligations to the citizens of Texas. An appointed Committee of professional Police Chiefs from across the state developed the Best Practices for Texas Law Enforcement. This Committee now conducts the final review of an agency’s efforts and awards “Recognized” status.

How do you get to be “Recognized?”

An agency that has been awarded “Recognized” status has undertaken a careful internal review of its policies, procedures, equipment, facilities, and operations, and has then requested an outside review to prove their compliance with the standards. A Facilitator from a nearby agency is assigned as a resource to the Department in this internal review effort. After an independent review of their written documents and proofs, a team of assessors is sent to the agency to review their operations and facilities, and to interview the Department’s staff. A Final Report outlining the findings is sent to the TPCAF Recognition Committee. The Committee reviews the findings and votes whether or not to award “recognized” status.

How long are you “Recognized?”

The “Recognized” status is awarded for a four year period. During the four year period the agency must submit an annual report and show compliance with two performance related standards. These are reviewed as they are received and compliance verified. During the last year of the period the agency must submit updated documentation on all Best Practices and another on site review is conducted. The TPCAF Recognition Committee must then vote again to approve “Recognized” status for the next four years. If the agency does not submit the required annual proofs, or there is indication received by the Committee that the agency is not in compliance during the period, the Committee may vote to remove “Recognized” status. The TPCAF has contracted with an outside group to manage the recognition process and ensure integrity and accountability.

How does my agency participate?

The first step toward “Recognized” status is for the Chief of Police to attend a familiarization training program at one of the TPCA meetings. These meetings are held several times a year and regional training for this program is also anticipated. A schedule of upcoming training will be provided on the TPCA website. The individual assigned to manage the program within the agency is also required to attend this training as well as Facilitator/Manager training.

If the agency wishes to pursue Recognition after familiarization training, the agency should submit an application. The TPCAF Committee will review the application and if approved place the agency in line to enter into the program. A contract is also required prior to an agency starting the actual recognition process. The number of trained facilitators and Chiefs willing to volunteer to assist in the program may limit the number of agencies at any one time.

When the contract is approved by TPCAF, the agency has two years to complete its internal review, submit documentation and prepare for the final review visit. When all written documentation is complete and the agency is ready for the final review visit, the assigned Facilitator will visit the agency to ensure final review readiness. The Final review team, consisting of a Facilitator and Chief from another area, will typically conduct a two day on site Final Review.

The Chief conducting the Final Review prepares a report on the team's findings and the agency package is submitted to the TPCAF Recognition Committee for review. Agencies achieving "Recognized" status are highlighted at Texas Police Chiefs Association annual meetings. Local presentations of the award can also be arranged for appropriate news coverage in your local area.

How much does the program cost?

To participate in the program, the agency Chief must be a member of the Texas Police Chiefs Association. Current dues for membership are \$3.00 per \$1,000 of annual salary for the Chief of Police. Membership also provides numerous other benefits including legal updates, legislative representation on law enforcement issues, training, and access to Chiefs around the state to assist in solving problems.

Recognition program costs depend on the size of agency. Recognition Program annual fees depend on the size of agency as listed below:

Sworn Officers	Fee Amount
1 – 10	\$250
11 – 25	\$400
26 – 50	\$600
51 – 100	\$800
101 – 200	\$1,000
201 or more	\$1,200

After acceptance of the contract by the Committee, the agency will be billed for their first year's fees. The initial meeting and program kickoff for the Candidate will be scheduled upon receipt of the first annual fee. These annual costs will subsequently be billed each year.

The agency is also responsible for the expenses of the Facilitator's visits (only one required but others can be requested by the agency) and the Final Review team (This expense is

incurred every four years). Facilitators are generally located less than an hour away. If an over night is required, expenses are expected to be less than \$250. Final Review teams are from another area of the state but overnight travel expenses are not expected to exceed \$750.

What about Law Enforcement Accreditation?

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) was formed in 1979 and provides an international accreditation process for law enforcement agencies. The Texas Police Chiefs Association supports the Accreditation process for those agencies that wish to become CALEA accredited. The Accreditation process has up to 459 standards depending on agency size and complexity and is more expensive. Many agencies also find the Accreditation process is more administratively burdensome. For this reason, many Texas cities do not participate.

The Texas Recognition Program also includes a number of practices that are uniquely required by Texas law and not included in the CALEA accreditation process.

The Texas Recognition program was designed to address the critical issues in Texas law enforcement and to develop an inexpensive process that is easier to administer.