

## Department of Corrections Training

### Overview

The Department of Corrections ([DOC](#)) and Community-Based Corrections (CBC) set training standards, and provide preservice, in-service, specialty, instructor certification, and on-the-job training. The CBC District Departments each have their own training policies and procedures, as approved by their local boards. Resources vary across the CBC District Departments. For example, the [Sixth](#) CBC District Department has a designated training officer that also has other duties. Some of the District Departments have staff that provide in-house training in addition to their other duties. All of the CBC District Departments rely on local and state resources and on management to assist with staff training. The CBC District Departments may attend Corrections Learning Center classes sponsored by the DOC, but are not required to do so. Refer to the *Fiscal Topic* [History of Community-Based Corrections](#) for more information regarding CBC administration.

The DOC oversees all statewide prison training through the Corrections Learning Center. Professional development training beyond the annual in-service mandatory training is dependent on funding availability. A limited amount of training is provided by other agencies, such as the Department of Administrative Services ([DAS](#)), in the areas of procurement and personnel management. This *Fiscal Topic* focuses on training provided to the DOC employees.

### Background

The Corrections Training Academy was established in the early 1980s at the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility. The Academy was created by the General Assembly and Governor Robert Ray in response to federal lawsuits regarding adequately trained staff in such areas as use of force continuum, sexual misconduct, suicide prevention, emergency response, and medical care. Properly trained staff reduces liability for the state and provides a safe environment for the community, staff, visitors, and offenders.

The Corrections Training Academy was housed in a lodge that provided on-site dormitory housing for new hires (trainees) plus on-the-job training for the DOC staff, since the lodge was located by a prison. Over the course of time, the lodge needed extensive repairs to meet building and fire code standards. The DOC moved the Academy to West Des Moines in the early 2000s and broadened the curriculum provided to the DOC and CBC staff.

In FY 2003, the line item appropriation for the Academy was combined with the Central Office appropriation. The Corrections Training Academy was moved to the current location in the DOC Central Office in Des Moines in 2005 and was renamed the Iowa Corrections Learning Center in 2007. There are five FTE positions in the Central Office dedicated to providing training to corrections staff. Another employee at the Iowa Medical Classification Center at Oakdale also provides statewide training. One goal for each institution is to have a training officer to mentor new staff, plus provide on-site training and documentation. However, due to budget restrictions, training officer duties have usually been combined with other functions, and one employee multitasks. Fort Madison, Oakdale, Clarinda, and Fort Dodge each have a full-time training officer that may have additional duties. Anamosa, Newton, Mount Pleasant, Rockwell City, and Mitchellville each have a half-time training officer that performs other duties as well, such as safety officer.

### Preservice Training

All newly hired staff members of the DOC are required to complete preservice training at the Corrections Learning Center within the first six months of the initial hire. All preservice training is conducted in a classroom setting and is hands-on training. The four-week training curriculum covers such items as evidence-based practices and offender reentry, gender responsiveness, first aid, professional issues and code of conduct, legal issues, management of security threat groups, offender supervision and interpersonal communication, use of force, hands-on personal safety, sexual misconduct and offender victimization, diversity training, federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) expectations, mental health and suicide prevention, emergency preparedness, report writing and offender rules and regulations, con games, substance abuse, and searches. The curriculum is reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated annually if necessary. Security staff members receive additional training regarding searches, personal safety, and escorts and restraints.

### More Information

Department of Corrections: <http://www.doc.state.ia.us/>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>

LSA Staff Contact: Beth Lenstra (515-281-6301) [beth.lenstra@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:beth.lenstra@legis.iowa.gov)

## Department of Corrections Training

All new staff members receive an additional minimum of 40 hours of on-the-job training at their hiring institution. Correctional officers receive additional training and mentoring by partnering with experienced correctional officers on various security posts. The minimum standard for this is an additional 80 hours.

### **In-Service Training**

Staff has ongoing training needs to minimize liability because all staff have some level of contact with offenders. Training needs vary by job class and offender contact level. For example, a correctional officer in a security tower has different training needs than a correctional officer directly supervising offenders. Administrative employees do not have the same training needs as kitchen staff or medical personnel. The goal is to provide necessary and mandated training annually to all staff to reduce liability and ensure continued staff development.

Examples of annual training provided to staff include: emergency preparedness, health services, staff and offender sexual misconduct, PREA requirements, specialty teams, code of conduct and work rules, health and safety including Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards, personal safety, firearms, electronics and chemical agents, treatment, instructor certifications, and security. Other topics are developed and presented as needed or as protocols change.

### **Training Delivery**

The DOC meets in-service training needs by classroom training or web-based Internet learning (eLearning). The eLearning method was implemented in January 2009 and is an interactive, asynchronous model. Staff developed the training modules in-house to comply with state and federal-mandated training while remaining within budgeted appropriations. The Learning Management System for eLearning was also developed in-house and is internally supported at no additional cost. The Learning Center provides all of the eLearning training statewide for the Institutions and the CBC District Departments. The modules include most of the training listed previously as well as topics specifically developed to meet current needs.

Approximately 52.0% of the training delivered in FY 2015 was provided by eLearning. The DOC has relied on eLearning to increase the number of hours of training provided while reducing costs. Approximately 25.0% of classroom hours are dedicated to preservice training with 75.0% of the time scheduled for in-service or new programming delivery. The implementation of eLearning has continued to reduce overtime costs.

In-service training via eLearning could be provided in a classroom but that option would likely increase overtime costs to meet staffing requirements at the Institutions while employees are in training. ELearning is flexible as employees can work through the modules while they are at work at their own pace. It is difficult to complete a training module while monitoring a security post, especially if there is only one employee on shift. The DOC has responded by providing shift relief (relieving the staff from the post for a specific time period to permit eLearning) and other staffing flexibility. However, this option may increase staffing costs and with ongoing budget constraints has become increasingly difficult.

The DOC continues to balance the need to deliver adequate training to reduce liability and providing a safe work and living environment in the Institutions while remaining within appropriated funds.

### **Related Statutes and Administrative Rules**

Iowa Code chapter [904](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [201 IAC](#)