

# FAQ: Portland Police Bureau Accreditation

January 8, 2025

## What is accreditation?

- Accreditation is a recognition or external “badge of achievement” common to certain industries, showing an organization’s commitment to, and compliance with, a set of best-practice, industry-recognized standards for quality and continuous improvement.
- By going through the process of accreditation, the Bureau has confirmed that it meets over 100 external, independently agreed-upon professional standards for law enforcement operations, management, and accountability.



## Why did the Bureau become accredited?

Accreditation enables the Bureau to comply with Oregon’s [statutory requirement](#) that all law enforcement agencies with 35 or more sworn officers become accredited by an agency designated by DPSST.



## What did the Bureau need to do to become accredited by the NWAA?

NWAA accreditation is a step-wise process:

1. PPB completed an internal “self-assessment” of its policies and practices, with the participation and input of PPB staff as well as other City of Portland bureaus.
2. NWAA completed an electronic review of our policies, procedures, and proofs of compliance.
3. NWAA reviewers conducted an in-person visit to view our facilities and ask questions of staff.
4. NWAA reviewers prepared a report of their findings, along with a recommendation on accreditation status.
5. The NWAA Board reviewed the report and took a vote on whether to grant accreditation to the Bureau.



## Why hasn’t the Bureau become accredited before now?

- PPB’s ability to carry out this effort relied on balancing multiple priorities against limited resources. However, the work supporting our accreditation was underway for some time.
- While reaching substantial compliance with the City’s Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, PPB performed extensive review of policies and procedures—creating, refining and enhancing many. This work became a launching pad toward balancing the extensive effort required for accreditation. This enabled PPB to meet the state’s statutory [mandate](#), passed in 2021, for Oregon law enforcement agencies of our size to become accredited by July 1, 2025.
- PPB began preparing to become accredited in 2022, when Bureau leadership approved hiring an analyst to support this effort. The Bureau’s self-assessment portion of our accreditation began in 2023. With the NWAA Board’s approval of our accreditation on January 8, 2025, we have become accredited over five months ahead of the statutory deadline.



## Who sets the accreditation standards?

- Accreditation standards are defined by an external accrediting body – in our case, the Northwest Accreditation Alliance (NWAA). The accrediting body also decides whether accreditation should be awarded to the applying organization. The DPSST [designated the NWAA](#) (formerly known as the Oregon Accreditation Alliance/OAA) as one of two possible accrediting bodies who can accredit Oregon law enforcement agencies.
- The NWAA was formed through a collaboration between the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police, Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association, and the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials.



## How long will the accreditation last? What’s needed to maintain the Bureau’s accreditation?

- NWAA accreditation is granted for a 3-year period. The Bureau will undergo a re-accreditation review process every three years.
- To maintain our accreditation status between the NWAA reviews, the Bureau will maintain its compliance with the NWAA standards.
- All of this will require ongoing collaboration across the Bureau, and with our City of Portland and BOEC partners, as well.
- NWAA’s standards are revised over time based on evolving best practices and legislation. As such, accreditation enables the Bureau to show its commitment to continuous improvement.



## Will accreditation affect how the Bureau serves the community?

- We anticipate accreditation will help us improve the quality of our service to the community for the following reasons: Accreditation will consist of a periodic evaluation of the Bureau that is conducted every 3 years - not only by PPB staff, but also by external NWAA reviewers who examine Bureau policies and proofs of compliance and conduct in-person evaluations at our facilities.
- As such, accreditation gives the Bureau a method to confirm it meets best-practice standards of quality in law enforcement, and in areas where improvement is needed, identify and make those improvements on a regularly recurring basis.



## Who can I contact for more information?

This project is being managed by the accreditation team, housed within the Bureau’s Training Division. For more information, contact:

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