Introduction:

In addition to recognizing the unique requirements of special needs populations including adolescents, the elderly, the mentally ill and the medically impaired, correctional systems must practice gender responsiveness in the development of services and programs for adult and juvenile female offenders. Programs must be designed and implemented to meet the needs of this population.

Policy Statement:

Correctional systems must be guided by the principle of gender responsiveness and recognize the physical, behavioral, social, and cultural differences between female and male offenders, and how those differences should be reflected in policies and practices. Female offenders must receive a full range of services that recognize the realities of their lives and address the specific needs of this population. Correctional agencies should:

A. Acknowledge that gender makes a difference in what is most effective for adult and juvenile female offenders and review all policies, programs and practices including classification systems to ensure they are gender responsive;

B. Provide both human and financial resources to create a system-wide approach to the provision of adult/juvenile gender-centered services that create a safe, nondiscriminatory, and supportive environment;

C. Ensure all staff, including contract employees and volunteers working with female offenders, are carefully screened and provided specific training in order to effectively provide services;

D. Provide a full range of integrated, age- and developmentally-appropriate, gender-responsive programs and services that address substance use treatment, trauma, physical and mental health to include prenatal care, relationships, spirituality, economic self-sufficiency, reentry and legal issues;

E. Facilitate the maintenance and strengthening of family ties;

F. Implement a full range of alternatives to incarceration, including pre- and post-trial diversion, probation, restitution, community residential and parole/aftercare services, designed to meet the needs of this population;
G. Develop gender-responsive conditions of confinement and implement humane, relevant security policies and practices to include proper nutrition, clothing, personal property, hygiene supplies, exercise, and recreation/wellness programs; and

H. Provide access to a full range of work and other programs designed to expand economic self-sufficiency.

This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the Congress of Correction in San Antonio, Aug. 23, 1984. It was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the 2019 Winter Conference in New Orleans, LA on January 15, 2019.