Introduction:

The effectiveness and efficiency of correctional staff in maintaining security and delivering services can be either enhanced or limited by the physical plant in which they operate. Quality design combines long-term cost efficiency with maximum programming flexibility, thus assisting a correctional system in accomplishing its mission.

Policy Statement:

Correctional architecture is unique, involving the design of facilities that are functionally and environmentally supportive of the needs and activities of a confined society. The design of such facilities is a multidisciplinary process. To improve the design quality and operational adequacy of new and renovated correctional facilities, correctional agencies should:

A. Define operations of correctional facilities prior to design, including written specifications of the facility's mission and functional elements, basic operating procedures and staffing patterns so the design can fully support intended correctional operations;

B. Ensure that the design of correctional facilities addresses the unique gender-responsive and special needs of offenders and provides appropriate space for all offender activities, including industrial operations, education and training, health care, recreation and other program and treatment services;

C. Select architects and engineers on merit, as demonstrated by either successful completion of prior correctional projects, or by successful completion of other projects combined with access to recognized correctional expertise;

D. Design correctional facilities through a multidisciplinary process that directly involves corrections professionals, criminal justice planners, architects and engineers, and that also
seeks the contribution of other groups and disciplines who have an interest in the facility’s design, including those involved in the facility's day-to-day operations;

E. Ensure that facility designs conform to applicable laws, rules, regulations and codes governing the jurisdiction. The design should conform to nationally recognized professional standards and should encourage direct interaction in the supervision of offenders, consistent with staff safety;

F. Maintain project oversight to ensure budget or cost containment and design objectives are met;

G. Recognize the need for early selection of key staff so they can participate in the design and construction process, and/or so they can coordinate initial activation of the facility. Initial activation activities include recruiting staff, transitional training, preparing equipment and supply orders, and documenting operational procedures;

H. Engage in an ongoing process of research and evaluation to develop, improve and recognize the most operationally effective and cost-efficient design features, equipment technologies and procedures; and

I. Support appropriate and cost-effective strategies that are resource-efficient and environmentally responsible.

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This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the Winter Conference in Orlando, FL on January 20, 1985. It was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the 2020 Winter Conference in San Diego, CA on January 11, 2020.