Introduction:

Research and evaluation, and the use of the findings that result from such efforts, are essential to informed decision-making and the development and effectiveness of correctional policies.

Policy Statement:

Correctional agencies have a continuing responsibility to promote, initiate, sponsor, and participate in correctional research and evaluation efforts, both external and internal, in order to expand knowledge about offender behavior and identify exemplary practices that can be used to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services. To encourage and support these research and evaluation efforts, correctional agencies should:

A. Establish clearly defined procedures for data collection and analysis that ensure the accuracy, consistency, integrity and impartiality of correctional research projects;

B. Conduct regular and systematic research and evaluation of correctional management policies, programs and procedures and implement necessary changes;

C. Review and monitor correctional research to ensure compliance with professional standards and regulations on human subjects research, particularly those relating to confidentiality and the protection of human rights;

D. Prohibit the use of offenders as experimental subjects in medical, psychological, pharmacological and cosmetic research except when warranted and prescribed for the diagnosis or treatment of an individual’s specific condition in accordance with current standards of health care;

E. Make available the information necessary for correctional research and evaluation, consistent with concerns for privacy, confidentiality and security;

F. Involve and train appropriate correctional staff in the application of correctional research and evaluation findings, including emphasis on evidence-based practices;

G. Encourage the dissemination of correctional research and evaluation findings; and

H. Develop performance outcomes for correctional programs to measure their effectiveness.
This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the Congress of Correction in New Orleans, Aug. 6, 1987. It was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the 2017 Winter Conference in San Antonio, TX, January 24, 2017.