

# An Update on ACA's Workforce Plan for the Corrections Profession

With funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), ACA has been studying the particular challenges that the correctional work force will face in the 21st century. As part of the BJA grant, ACA has been developing a Workforce Plan for the Corrections Profession to help corrections respond effectively to these challenges.

ACA completed phase 1 of the project in 2004, which focused primarily on security staff. Phase 1 addressed the recruitment and retention problems corrections can expect in light of the number of baby boomer workers who will begin to retire during the next few years. Phase 1 also included: the introduction of *Human Resources InfoLink*, an electronic newsletter; the creation of the Workforce/Human Resources Committee; and a dedicated track of workshops at ACA conferences that explore work force issues.

ACA received additional funding in

late 2006 from BJA for phase 2 of the Workforce Plan for the Corrections Profession. Phase 2 will examine 21st century work force challenges by looking beyond those of security staff.

A major goal of phase 2 is to create the Center for the Correctional Workforce of the Future. This resource center will house information on the recruitment, training and retention of correctional staff as well as productivity, quality of work and professional morale in corrections. It will act as a repository of information and include research and exemplary practices. The center will work toward establishing a "brand" recognition for corrections.

The ACA Workforce Project Committee and the Workforce/Human Resources Committee have already begun work on phase 2 of the project. At a meeting at ACA headquarters, Tracy R. Whitaker, director of the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Center for Workforce

Studies, provided valuable information about the structure and function of her organization's work force center and the surveys NASW used to define its objectives. The 2007 Winter Conference in Tampa, Fla., included five workshops dedicated to work force issues, and the feasibility of presenting webinars or podcasts between conferences has been explored. The publication of technical assistance bulletins has also been discussed. In addition, work on a marketing package for corrections to help attract more applicants is being organized.

As the only organization representing every facet of corrections at all levels, ACA is uniquely positioned to respond to the challenges of the 21st century. The Workforce Plan for the Corrections Profession will provide the corrections field with the information and resources it needs to meet these challenges. ♦