



FACT SHEET

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

2019

TIMOTHY C. WARD COMMISSIONER

CLAY NIX DIRECTOR OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The mission of The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) is to protect and serve the public, employees, and offenders. This diverse office incorporates both administrative and criminal investigative functions in order to provide oversight for the leadership and staff of the GDC, while coordinating and collaborating with external local, state, and federal agencies and entities.

OPS is responsible for providing unbiased, uncompromising accountability, and results that reflect the highest professional standard. This office accomplishes its mission by recruiting the best and most qualified for the job, while promoting quality education and training. The office optimizes information, technology, and state of the art equipment and integrates it into the department's systems and processes.

OPS consists of six (6) main divisions: Criminal Investigations Division, Canine Operations, Fugitive Unit, Internal Affairs Unit, Intelligence Division, and Compliance Unit. Each OPS Division is comprised of subunits with varied functions.



CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

The Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is charged with investigating any criminal allegation with a nexus to the GDC. The Special Agents and Investigators assigned to CID possess police powers and have statewide jurisdiction. GDC Agents are empowered to arrest individuals violating the criminal laws of the State of Georgia and to serve and execute both arrest and search warrants. GDC Agents routinely investigate major crimes, such as: homicide, sexual assault, narcotics and contraband, gang activity, theft, fraud, corruption, and other felonies.

In 2013, the GDC partnered with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in a joint training initiative in order to ensure all GDC Special Agents receive the highest quality investigative training in the nation. In addition to the thirteen (13) week joint Basic Agent Academy, all GDC Special Agents are required to complete Basic Police Mandate Training, as regulated by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (P.O.S.T.).



CANINE OPERATIONS

The Canine Unit is responsible for enhancing public safety throughout the State of Georgia by providing prompt and effective canine support for the GDC, public schools, and local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The Canine Unit currently houses, trains, and deploys tracking and trailing canines, narcotic detection canines, cell phone detection canines, and explosive detection canines to support this diverse mission.



FUGITIVE UNIT

The Fugitive Unit's mission is to recapture escapees and absconded offenders from GDC facilities, to include State Prisons, Transitional Centers, and Probation Detention Centers. Each Special Agent assigned to this unit possesses police powers with statewide jurisdiction. Through the GDC's partnership with the United States Marshal Southeast Regional Fugitive Task Force (SERTF), these agents also possess Federal authority.



INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

The Intelligence Division is comprised of two subordinate units: the Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) and the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU).

CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT

The mission of GDC's Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) is to identify, reduce and prevent criminal activity by collecting, storing, assessing, and disseminating criminal intelligence information. CIU also provides criminal investigative support to all of the GDC Investigative Units, GA Information Sharing Analysis Center (GISAC), High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), and numerous outside law enforcement agencies. The CIU also utilizes Analysts to monitor the inmate financial systems for criminal activity. To contact CIU, email intel@gdc.ga.gov.

DIGITAL FORENSICS UNIT

The Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) is responsible for the acquisition and analysis of digital evidence, to include computers and cell phones. DFU Special Agents, Analysts and Technicians leverage state of the art technology and specialized training to conduct and support criminal investigations and intelligence operations. The DFU may be contacted at email address DFU@gdc.ga.gov.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

The Special Investigations Section (SIS) conducts intelligence operations and criminal investigations in league with other CID units. The SIS also supports our federal partners by managing and overseeing GDC Special Agents assigned as Task Force Officers to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Safe Streets Task Force, the FBI Public Integrity Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) STRIKE and the DEA HIDTA.

SECURITY THREAT GROUPS (GANGS) UNIT

The mission of the Security Threat Groups (STG) Unit is to effectively validate STG related persons, gather intelligence on STG related criminal activities, and provide investigative support in all STG related occurrences. The STG Unit is tasked with maintaining and supervising the department's STG program, which as of 2017 consists of 12,444 validated inmates in 315 different gangs.

The STG Unit maintains working relationships with the Georgia Gang Investigator Association (GGIA) and GISAC. The STG Unit is often called upon as subject matter experts and conducts quarterly statewide trainings.



INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

The Internal Affairs Unit is responsible for conducting administrative investigations into allegations of unlawful and sexual harassment, use of force incidents, worker's compensation claims, and other policy violations. This unit assists in drafting and updating agency policies, such as the Statewide Grievance Procedure and Offender Discipline policies and also conducts training related to any changes in policy and procedure.

OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsman Unit serves as the liaison between the community and the GDC. The unit provides families, friends, attorneys, and special interest groups a point of contact for concerns about the care and safety of an individual or group of offenders. The unit makes appropriate referrals within the agency of each inquiry. The Ombudsman may be contacted by telephone, email, or United States mail. The Ombudsman Unit may be contacted at: (478) 992-5358 or Ombudsman@gdc.ga.gov.



COMPLIANCE UNIT

The Compliance Unit consists of five sections: Audits, ACA Coordinator, ADA/LEPSI Coordinator, PREA Policy Administration. Collectively, this unit provides guidance, technical assistance, oversight, and on-sight support to assist facilities with maintaining alignment of operations with departmental standards, federal and state regulations, and ACA standards to guarantee safe, secure and efficient operation. Through regular internal and external assessments, the Compliance Unit evaluates and ensures quality assurance of operations and services.

AUDITS

The Audits Section evaluates the operations of GDC State and Private Prisons, Transitional Centers, Probation Detention Centers, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Centers, Farms, Distribution Centers; Private prisons are assessed annually and County prisons as requested. The primary focus of this unit is to ensure each facility is adhering to departmental standards and to support each facility's efforts toward ACA accreditation. Comprehensive instruments are used to assess all operational area with participation from every division.

PREA

The Federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was signed into law in 2003. The law calls for a "zero tolerance" and developed national standards to prevent incidents of sexual violence in prison. The GDC PREA Unit ensures the GDC is compliant with National PREA Standards at all GDC facilities. The PREA Unit conducts audits, provides case management, oversight & support, training, and data collection analysis.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

The Georgia Department of Corrections operates based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are maintained in a central Policy Management System/library called PowerDMS. Policy Administration governs the development and dissemination of GDC policies and provides a systematic and uniform process. All GDC employees have access to policies in PowerDMS.

ACCREDITATION SECTION

The Accreditation Section coordinates statewide efforts for the GDC to earn national accreditation thus improving the agency's operational effectiveness and efficiency by aligning policy, practice and procedures to established standards. The national accreditation and standards are continually revised to reflect best practices in corrections and law enforcement gathered from agencies across the United States. The GDC is currently in the process of obtaining national accreditation through the American Correctional Association (ACA), and has recently earned accreditation for Central Office and Central Training Academy. ACA establishes standards in the following five major areas: Administration and Management, Physical Plant, Institutional Operations, Institutional Services, and Inmate Program Audits

ADA/LEPSI COORDINATOR

Americans with Disabilities Act/LEPSI Coordinator (ADA) protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in services, programs and activities provided by State and local government entities. Title II extends the prohibition on discrimination established by section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C 794, to all activities of state and local governments regardless of whether these entities received Federal financial assistance. ADA focuses on making sure inmate housing needs are being met, creating access to programs and services, providing communication solutions, and providing training to staff.