



DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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SUMMARY OF REVISION

Policy Directive 025-015 incorporated

DEFINITIONS – I. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR. – Language updated. V. FACILITY PROGRAMS LOGISTICS COORDINATOR – Language updated. PROCESS – I.C. – Language updated. I.D. – Language updated. I.G. – Language updated. II. – Language updated. III. – Language updated. IV.A.5. – Language updated. IV.A.5.b. – Section deleted. IV.A.5.c. – Section deleted. IV.A.6. – Language updated. IV.C. – Language updated. IV.F. – Language updated. VI.A. – Language updated. VI.G. – Language updated. VI.H.1. – Language updated. VI.H.2. – Language updated. VI.I. – Language updated. VII. – Language updated. VIII. – Language updated. IX.A. – Language updated. IX.C. – Language updated. X.B. – Language updated. XI. – Language updated. XII. – Language updated.

APPROVED:

Rob Jeffreys
Rob Jeffreys (Nov 14, 2025 13:12:33 CST)

Rob Jeffreys, Director
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish rules and standards for community partnerships within the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services' (NDCS) facilities and program areas.

Partnerships with community members and organizations are vital to fulfilling the NDCS vision. Community partners transform lives as they bring hope and encouragement to the incarcerated population and augment the services provided by NDCS. Community members and organizations are offered multiple opportunities to serve, consistent with safety and security needs of NDCS facilities. Incarcerated individuals are made aware of community partner pro-social services scheduled at their facilities. (ACI-1G-06)

All community partners are subject to the provisions in this policy when required. In addition to this policy, those who provide religion services are also subject to the provisions in Policy 208.01 *Religious Services*. (ACI-1G-01)

DEFINITIONS

- I. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR** - A centrally located team member who oversees the community partner application process and provides vital support to the partnership program manager in the management of community partner services.
- II. **COMMUNITY PARTNER-LED PROGRAM** - A program facilitated by community members for residents of NDCS.
- III. **COMMUNITY PARTNERS** – Community members and organizations who provide programs, services and/or support within NDCS facilities and/or to the incarcerated population during or after release.
- IV. **FACILITY PROGRAMS LOGISTICS COORDINATOR** - A facility team member who coordinates all programming within their respective facility. This team member is responsible for the scheduling and rostering of programming, and coordinates team members and partners responsible for facilitating the programming.
- V. **PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER**– A centrally located team member who manages community partner-led programs throughout NDCS. The partnership program manager is responsible for developing and maintaining data collection regarding partner-led programming, and for identifying and filling any gaps in service.
- VI. **RELIGIOUS COORDINATOR** - A facility team member who oversees religion services and the community partners who participate in those services.

PROCESS

- I. **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT (ACI-1G-01)**
 - A. The partnership program manager is responsible and accountable for the operation of community partner-led programming and NDCS religious services.
 - B. The partnership program manager reports to the assistant deputy director-programs. See *Community Partner Organizational Chart* (Attachment A).

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- C. The partnership program manager provides guidance and support to each facility-based contact for community partner-led programs and services.
- D. The partnership program manager/designee is responsible for providing subject relevant training to team members across the agency, including but not limited to team members in facility front entrances, central controls, religious services, and facility programs logistics coordinators. This training shall include use of the community partner database and proper procedure for facility entry. This shall be accomplished with the support and direction of the facility security administrator. The partnership program manager and non-clinical program manager will hold an internal programs meeting at least quarterly to ensure that this policy and Policy 106.02 *Opportunities for Change* are followed in each facility and program area.
- E. The partnership program manager will hold a community partner meeting at least quarterly in support of building and maintaining positive working relationships with existing and future community partners. Attending these meetings allows community partners to provide input on policy and procedure development. (ACI-1G-07)
- F. The partnership program manager will receive and review non-clinical community partner program applications in accordance with Policy 106.02 *Opportunities for Change*. Collaboration with the assistant partnership program manager is necessary to ensure all community partnerships are processed according to the onboarding procedures detailed in this policy. The partnership program manager, in partnership with the respective facility program contact, shall facilitate the implementation of new community partner programming. Prior support from the assistant deputy director-programs and facility warden/designee is required.
- G. The community engagement coordinator and the partnership program manager provide input to the NDCS annual programs report, see Policy 200.02 *NDCS Agency: Administration, Organization & Management*. The partnership program manager will review community partner programming and processes at least annually and recommend changes for review and approval by the assistant deputy director-programs.

II. COMMUNITY PARTNERS – DESCRIPTION AND ELIGIBILITY

Information pertaining to community partners is recorded in the community partner database. Information within the database includes but is not limited to a community partner's current status, service provided, approved facilities, level of facility access, completion of required training and background reviews. Additionally, community partners are identifiable by their purple NDCS identification card.

Community partners can be organized into three categories as identified by the level of facility access and security procedure noted on their purple NDCS identification card, which includes notation of how they will be processed into facilities:

- A. Unescorted – Randomizer Community Partner
- B. Unescorted – Search Community Partner
- C. Escorted – Search Community Partner

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Certain professional services may only be performed by a community partner who is certified or licensed to do so.

All community partners will be under direct escort and under regular visual observation unless specifically approved for unescorted access. Unescorted access requires the individual to have completed required training and annual in-service as directed, to include a minimum of Level II defensive tactics. Unescorted access does not grant the community partner the ability to escort other community partners within facilities unless authorization is given by the facility warden.

All community partners shall be provided a copy of *Staff Prohibited Items (Attachment A)* from Policy 203.13 *Security and Control – Staff Searches* during the community partner onboarding and training process and will adhere to the restrictions listed on *Staff Prohibited Items (Attachment A)*.

Community partners who provide a religious or faith-based service within a secure facility may be approved to visit incarcerated individuals for the sole purpose of providing clergy services. See Policy 208.01 *Religious Services* and Policy 205.02 *Visiting* for more information on clergy visitors.

III. SPECIAL GUESTS

An individual who is not currently an approved community partner with NDCS may be approved for escorted facility access for the purpose of a tour, specific event or service. Individuals wishing to become a special guest can request an application from DCS.VolunteerServices@nebraska.gov. All applicants must submit, at the time of application, the *Personal Information for Security Check* form (*Attachment B-2*) from Policy 112.03 *Team Member Selection Policy*.

With approval from the hosting facility's warden and the assistant deputy director-programs, the partnership program manager will indicate information pertaining to special guest access in the community partner database. Information must include the event date, time, location, title, equipment needed, and authorizing authority. Approval must be obtained, and information must be entered each time a special guest requires facility access. All special guests will be required to provide a State-issued ID or driver's license prior to entry and are subject to search.

Approval may be granted at the warden level or higher when the special guest does not meet eligibility for any other type of community partner and/or when a current security and background check has been completed and presents no notable concerns.

If a current community partner would like access to a facility they are currently not approved to enter, for the purpose of a special event, this request shall be processed according to the description above.

Special guests are not subject to training requirement associated with other community partners.

IV. COMMUNITY PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES (ACRS-7D-04)

- A. Community partners are expected to comply with all NDCS rules and regulations, policies, and procedures. Specifically, community partners shall not:
 1. Introduce contraband, as defined in Policy 203.13 *Security and Control – Staff Searches*, into any facility within NDCS. A list of prohibited items is included with *Staff Prohibited Items (Attachment A)* from Policy 203.13 *Security and Control – Staff Searches*.

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2. Give or send money to an incarcerated individual in a secure facility for any reason. Community partners who are providing religious or faith-based services within a secure facility and are additionally an approved clergy visitor may only send money with the warden's advanced approval, refer to Policy 208.01 *Religious Services*. Community partners with an immediate family member who is incarcerated within NDCS may receive special approval from the deputy director-rehabilitative services for an exception.
3. Accept or issue any bribe, gift, loan, or gratuity from or to an incarcerated individual.
4. Carry messages, written or verbal, from one incarcerated person to another incarcerated person or from one incarcerated person to any person in the community.
5. No telephone communication is allowed between community partners and incarcerated individuals at NDCS facilities. Exceptions to this policy are as follows:
 - a. Community partners who provide a religious or faith-based service and are authorized to visit incarcerated individuals for the sole purpose of providing individual clergy services as written in Policy 208.01 *Religious Services*
 - b. Community partners, with disclosures and prior authorization from warden/designee, may correspond with their immediate family members. Community partners may not provide services within the facility where their family member resides.
6. While community partners are not restricted from communication via written correspondence, community partners are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries with all members of the incarcerated population. Failure to maintain appropriate professional boundaries or misuse of communication may result in a suspension of facility access. Mail is subject to review at any time.
7. Engage in trading or trafficking with incarcerated individuals, including selling, buying from or delivering to any incarcerated individual any article or commodity of any description, except through authorized channels.
8. Bring articles of any kind into a facility for delivery to incarcerated individuals or take out an article of any kind for an incarcerated individual, except for dual status and clergy. (See Policy 208.01, *Religious Services*)
9. Act or speak in such a way as to put at risk the safety, security or good order of the facility.
10. Be permitted to perform their duties or enter NDCS facilities or offices while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, and/or controlled substances.

B. All community partners shall follow the same dress code established for visitors per Policy 205.02 *Visiting*; however, a coat/jacket is permitted to be worn inside the facility.

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- C. All community partners will generally be accountable to the facility programs logistics coordinator/religious coordinator within the facility in which the service is being provided. Community partners are accountable for their actions and services rendered in the facility or program.
- D. All community partners providing services in a discipline, which by law requires professional credentials, must hold such credentials and be able to produce verification of such.
- E. Any community partner who is arrested or issued a citation of the law, other than a minor traffic violation, must immediately notify the assistant partnership program manager of his/her alleged violation of the law. Failure to report may result in suspension or termination of facility access status.
- F. Playing video and/or audio recording, at an approved activity, shall be requested through the facility programs logistics coordinator/religious coordinator, who will notify the community partner of approval or denial. Generally, the request should be at least 14 days in advance. Recordings will be denied which advocate violence, have contents likely to incite violence (including inflammatory racist/ethnic content), illegal activity, sexual activity, describe plans for incendiary/explosive devices, alcohol/drugs, escape plans, or could be offensive based on race/ethnicity/gender/or any protected class. No audio/video recordings will be allowed for hearing/viewing when such would violate copyright laws.

V. COMMUNITY PARTNER RECRUITMENT (ACRS-7F-08)

The partnership program manager and facility contacts for community partners and religious services are responsible for the recruitment of community partners from all cultural and socioeconomic segments of the community. All community partners must be 19 years of age or older. For information on the recruitment of grant partners, see Policy 101.02 *Grants Administration*. For information on the recruitment of program contractors, see Policy 113.07 *Service Contracts*. (ACI-1G-02, ACRS-7F-08)

Individuals under 19 years of age may participate in a community partner program/service at the discretion of the facility warden, and with approval from the deputy director-rehabilitative services. These individuals must be supervised by the appropriate personnel. (ACI-1G-02)

VI. COMMUNITY PARTNER INITIAL APPLICATION AND TRAINING

All individuals wishing to become an NDCS community partner must undergo an initial application and screening process.

- A. To apply to become a community partner, individuals shall be instructed to go to the NDCS website at <https://corrections.nebraska.gov/rehabilitation/volunteer-services-partner-us>. Select 'Ready to Volunteer? Contact Us!' and then 'I'm Ready to Volunteer'. These selections will take interested individual directly to the online application.
- B. All applicants must submit at the time of application the following documents:
 1. Personal Information for the *Personal Information for Security Check* form (*Attachment B-2*) from Policy 112.03 *Team Member Selection Policy*

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2. Photo for use on the NDCS Identification Card
3. Copy of Driver's License or State Identification card

C. Individuals wishing to provide religious or faith-based services within a secure facility, such as leading worship, facilitating study groups, providing religious special programs shall be ordained, licensed, a recognized spiritual leader/advisor, or a lay minister and must submit, at the time of application, their credentials and/or a letter of good standing from their body of worship. Instances in which credentials or a letter of good standing are not able to be produced due to the organizational structure of the faith shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

D. Individuals wishing to provide services independent of an established NDCS partner organization or currently offered program must first submit a NDCS non-clinical program proposal to the partnership program manager with *Program Proposal (Attachment A)* from Policy 106.02 *Opportunities for Change*.

E. A security and background check will be completed on all new community partners. This includes a criminal background check through the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and a review of current and/or previous contact with any current or former incarcerated individual by phone, facility visit or email. Authorization levels for approval or denial are detailed in *Levels of Authorization for Community Partner Approval* (Attachment C) (ACI-1G-04, ACRS-7B-03, ACRS-7B-05)

F. Individuals whose security and/or background check results in a denial of application to provide service shall be immediately notified via email. In accordance with Policy 010.06 *Teletype Operations*, information obtained from the NCIC/NCIS terminal may not be disclosed to the person under consideration. Community partners wishing to dispute the record may contact the Nebraska State Patrol. If the record is corrected/changed, the community partner is welcome to reapply.

G. Community partners may provide services across facilities and with multiple programs, clubs, activities, or faith groups with the appropriate approvals. Community partners who provide a service as an employee of a partner organization (i.e., vocational life skills) must receive authorization from their respective supervisor before approval will be given to provide services outside of the scope of their employment.

H. Following a favorable review of the security and background check, the community partner must complete the appropriate training in accordance with their approved level of access and before receiving final approval for facility access. (ACI-1G-05, ACRS-7F-09) Appropriate training is as follows:

1. Unescorted – Randomizer Community Partner:

Completion of Pre-Service training at the Staff Training Academy (STA) or NDCS facility, including TAP Level II. Authorization for attendance of Pre-Service training is given by the partnership program manager/designee, who will then facilitate the scheduling of training. See Policy 114.04 *Pre-Service Training* for additional information.

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2. Unescorted – Search:

Completion of Pre-Service training at the STA or NDCS facility, including TAP Level II. Authorization for attendance of Pre-Service training is given by the partnership program manager/designee, who will then facilitate the scheduling of training. See Policy 114.04 *Pre-Service Training* for additional information.

3. Escorted – Search:

Completion of Community Partner Orientation provided by the partnership program manager/designee. Community partner orientation is held at least twice monthly and can be offered in a virtual or in-person format.

Orientation for community partners with 'Escorted - Search' status will include the following:

- a. The criteria for being a community partner
- b. Policy 105.01 *Community Partnerships*
- c. The respective facility(ies) procedure(s) regarding community partnerships
- d. An overview of the NDCS' philosophy and operation, the criminal justice system, agency mission statement, vision and values.
- e. An overview of general characteristics and background of the incarcerated population
- f. Guidelines for working with incarcerated individuals specific to the facility
- g. Security and confidentiality of information
- h. Emergency situations (i.e. being taken hostage, severe weather, lockdown)
- i. Contraband
- j. Ethics (a copy of the American Correctional Association's Code of Ethics shall be given to each community partner)
- k. NDCS workplace harassment as defined in Policy 112.07 *Equal Employment Opportunity and Policies Against Discrimination and Workplace Harassment*
- l. Statutory provision regarding sexual conduct with incarcerated individuals, Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-101 R. S. Supp. 1998 (PREA)
- m. Victim Services

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I. All community partners shall sign the *Community Partner Pledge and Waiver Agreement* to abide by all facility/program policies, procedures, and regulations acknowledging that they assume the liability of engaging in contact with incarcerated individuals; the *Community Partner Training Record* acknowledging the completion and understanding of all relevant training provided; and the *Incarcerated Individual Sexual Abuse/Assault Agreement for Community Partners* acknowledging NDCS' zero tolerance standard for sexual abuse, harassment or retaliation.

Upon successful completion of required training, the partnership program manager/designee shall notify the community partner via email.

VII. COMMUNITY PARTNER I.D. CARDS (ACI-1G-03, ACRS-7F-10)

Approved community partners who deliver regular programs or services will be issued a purple NDCS identification card containing their picture, name, level of access, and expiration date. This card will be created by the partnership program manager/designee. The expiration date will be two years from the date of their NCIC. Only one ID card will be issued to a community partner, regardless of approved service(s) or facility(ies). Information related to the issuance of community partner ID is located in the community partner database.

Once issued, the community partner is responsible for retaining the ID card in their possession and for showing the NDCS issued ID card to enter any facility. The community partner is required to wear the NDCS issued ID at all times when inside a facility.

VIII. COMMUNITY PARTNER EQUIPMENT ID CARDS

Community partners may request the use of a computer beyond the front entrance of a secure institution by submitting an *Equipment ID Card Approval Form (Attachment A)* from Policy 112.14 *Identification Cards*. For the purpose of this request, the computer must not have independent cellular or internet connectivity features. Any item that does include independent cellular or internet connectivity features is subject to Neb. Rev. Stat §28-936 and is governed by NDCS Policy 104.05 *Electronic Communication Devices*.

Equipment ID card approval forms may be requested at DCS.VolunteerServices@nebraska.gov and should be returned to this location. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval is dependent on a compelling business need. Authorization for issuance of equipment ID cards shall be given by the assistant deputy director-programs. All authorizations shall be noted in the community partner database.

IX. COMMUNITY PARTNER RENEWAL APPLICATION AND TRAINING

A. Annual Training Requirements

Existing community partners must meet annual training requirements to maintain an active/approved status as a community partner. Automatic training renewal reminders will be sent to the email address on file for the community partner (which was used during the initial online application process) at 45-days, 30-days, and 15-days prior to approval expiration. It is the responsibility of the community partner to notify the partnership program manager in the event contact information (including phone, address, and email address) is no longer relevant. Annual training requirements are determined by the community

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partner's approved level of access. Appropriate training is as follows: (ACI-1G-05, ACRS-7F-09)

1. Unescorted – Randomizer Community Partner:

Completion of In-Service training at the Staff Training Academy (STA) or NDCS facility, including TAP Level II. Authorization for attendance of In-Service is given by the partnership program manager/designee, who will then facilitate the scheduling of training. See Policy 114.05 *In-Service Training* for additional information.

2. Unescorted – Search Community Partner:

Completion of In-Service training at the Staff Training Academy (STA) or NDCS facility, including TAP Level II. Authorization for attendance of In-Service is given by the partnership program manager/designee, who will then facilitate the scheduling of training. See Policy 114.05 *In-Service Training* for additional information.

3. Escorted – Search Community Partner:

Completion of Community Partner Refresher training is provided by the partnership program manager/designee. Community partner refresher training is held at least twice monthly and can be offered in a virtual or in-person format.

B. Refresher training for community partners with 'Escorted – Search' status will include the following:

1. Policy 105.01 *Community Partnerships*
2. The respective facility(ies) procedure(s) regarding community partnerships
3. An overview of the NDCS' philosophy and operation, the criminal justice system, agency mission statement, vision and values.
4. An overview of general characteristics and background of the incarcerated population
5. Guidelines for working with incarcerated individuals specific to the facility
6. Security and confidentiality of information
7. Emergency situations (i.e. being taken hostage, severe weather, lockdown)
8. Contraband
9. Ethics (a copy of the American Correctional Association's Code of Ethics shall be given to each community partner)
10. NDCS workplace harassment as defined in Policy 112.07 *Equal Employment Opportunity and Policies Against Discrimination and Workplace Harassment*

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11. Statutory provision regarding sexual conduct with incarcerated individuals, Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-101 R. S. Supp. 1998 (PREA)
12. Victim Services

C. Biennial Security and Background Check Requirements

Existing community partners must meet biennial security and background check requirements to maintain an active/approved status as a community partner. Automated security and background check renewal reminders will be sent to the email address on file for the community partner (that which was used during the initial online application process) at 45-days, 30-days, and 15-days prior to approval expiration. It is the responsibility of the community partner to notify the community engagement coordinator in the event contact information (including phone, address, and email address) are no longer relevant.

To complete the biennial security and background check requirements follow the directions included in the automated renewal reminder email. This will include the completion and submission of a *Renewal Application* and a *Personal Information for Security Check* form (*Attachment B-2*) from Policy 112.03 *Team Member Selection Policy*.

It is the responsibility of the community partner to ensure completion of all renewal requirements. Failure to maintain annual training requirements and/or biennial security and background check requirements could result in suspension of facility access.

X. VOLUNTEERING AS A TEAM MEMBER

A. Team members approved to volunteer will be issued a volunteer ID card and must wear such ID while they are performing as a volunteer. Team members may receive unescorted-randomizer community partner status upon completion of the community partner application and training process in accordance with this policy.

1. They will only be allowed to volunteer in areas that are different from their regular paid assignment.
2. Any team member who chooses to be a volunteer will be doing so on their off-time and are not considered as an on-duty team member.
3. Off-duty team members are not expected or permitted to perform work-related functions during their volunteer time.
4. Other team members shall not request any team members wearing a volunteer badge to perform any work-related tasks.

B. Team members will not be permitted to volunteer at a facility where they have a family member housed without the approval of the warden and deputy director-rehabilitative services.

C. Former NDCS team members who would like to return to NDCS as a community partner, must have left in good standing with the agency and must meet requirements for community partners. Additionally, it may be necessary for the former team member to have

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an appropriate length of positive separation between the end of their service as a NDCS team member and the beginning of their service as a volunteer. This request may include the review of this individual's exit from NDCS prior to approval or denial of the request. The approval or denial of the request will be given by the deputy director-rehabilitative services/designee.

XI. COMMUNITY PARTNER VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

NDCS observes volunteer appreciation in the month of April and will host a community partners recognition event. The number of community partners to be selected and recognized at this event is at the discretion of the partnership program manager/designee. The partnership program manager/designee is responsible for the management of the community partner recognition event with assistance from the facility program contacts as necessary.

XII. TERMINATION/SUSPENSION

The warden, assistant deputy director-programs or their designees, at such time they deem necessary may restrict access, and/or suspend facility activity for a community partner or group. When this occurs, notification will be made immediately to all relevant stakeholders which may include but is not limited to the deputy director-rehabilitative services, facility wardens, assistant deputy director-intelligence and investigations, and the community organization supervisory contact. The assistant deputy director-programs will work with the warden in collaboration with the deputy director-rehabilitative services to determine if termination or reinstatement is appropriate.

- A. Following the issue of such restriction, the community partner will receive written notification, which will include the reason(s) for the discontinuation of their services. The reason(s) shall be provided to the community partner(s) unless divulging such would be detrimental to the safety and security of the facility/program and/or the general public.
- B. At the direction of the assistant deputy director-programs, the suspended community partner may be required to attend any portion of the community partner training prior to reinstatement.

XIII. FUNDING

See Policy 113.01 *Fiscal Management* for funding relevant to volunteer and volunteer activities.

REFERENCE

- I. STATUTORY REFERENCE AND OTHER AUTHORITY
 - A. Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-101 R. S. Supp. 1998 (PREA); §28-936
- II. NDCS POLICIES
 - A. Policy 101.02 *Grants Administration*
 - B. Policy 104.05 *Electronic Communication Devices*
 - C. Policy 112.03 *Team Member Selection Policy*

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- D. Policy 112.14 *Identification Cards*
- E. Policy 112.15 *Internship/Externship/Practicum Programs*
- F. Policy 113.01 *Fiscal Management*
- G. Policy 113.07 *Service Contracts*
- H. Policy 114.04 *Pre-Service Training*
- I. Policy 114.05 *In-Service Training*
- J. Policy 200.02 *NDCS Agency: Administration, Organization & Management*
- K. Policy 203.13 *Security and Control – Staff Searches*
- L. Policy 205.02 *Visiting*
- M. Policy 208.01 *Religious Services*

III. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Community Partner Organizational Chart
- B. Communication Authorization Form

IV. AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION (ACA)

- A. Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institution (ACI) (5th edition): 5-ACI-1G-01, 5-ACI-1G-02, 5-ACI-1G-03, 5-ACI-1G-04, 5-ACI-1G-05, 5-ACI-1G-06, 5-ACI-1G-07
- B. Standards for Adult Community Residential Services (ACRS) (4th edition): 4-ACRS-7B-03, 4-ACRS-7B-05, 4-ACRS-7D-04, 4-ACRS-7F-08, 4-ACRS-7F-09, 4-ACRS-7F-10