



## ENHANCING SAFETY & EFFICIENCY NORTHAMPTON COUNTY (PA) DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

*The Northampton County Department of Corrections dates back to the 1700s, when a new county seat was established in Easton, PA, just northeast of Allentown. Today, the 700-bed facility provides a full range of inmate programs in a direct supervision model.*

### THE CHALLENGE

Like many public safety agencies, the Northampton County Department of Corrections (NCDOC) regularly updates policies to meet federal, state and local laws while maintaining the safety and security of the public, staff and inmates. But this is a labor-intensive process. “To develop a policy internally can be very time-consuming,” says NCDOC’s Director Daniel Keen, who is also the president of the Pennsylvania Prison Wardens Association. “This time takes away from other high-level or impending responsibilities that need to be met.”

Keen points to another policy challenge the NCDOC experienced: the need to ensure policies do not overlap with other departments or procedures while continuing to meet requirements. The facility’s policies had evolved over time, and the result was a complicated, sometimes contradictory set of intertwined documents that were difficult to update and maintain.

### THE SOLUTION

To address these challenges, the NCDOC subscribed to Lexipol’s Pennsylvania Corrections Policies and Training solution. Lexipol provides more than 155 policies written specifically for corrections facilities in Pennsylvania. Rather than muddling through the process of updating policies on their own, NCDOC administrators draw on the expertise of Lexipol staff, which has more than 2,000 years of combined public safety experience and has helped thousands of public safety agencies adopt new policy manuals. Lexipol also provides automated corrections policy updates.

“This is not Lexipol’s first rodeo,” Keen says. “This is a professional organization with expert attorneys that provides the solution we need.”

Another key component of the Lexipol service is training bulletins to help staff apply policies, with questions to test their comprehension. “You can require people to sign a policy, but you can’t make them read it,” Keen

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says. “When the individual is provided with training questions, this ensures management that first, they have fully read the policy and second, they understood the operational requirements.”

County Executive John Brown and Director of Administration Catherine Allen were supportive of the decision as soon as they saw the potential for increased efficiencies. Implementing Lexipol allows Keen and the other facility administrators to devote more time to overseeing day-to-day operations.

“It came down to three main factors for us: safety, time and efficiency,” Keen says. “We’ll be able to shift the administration’s focus on the operational needs to a more hands-on approach. This is a way to protect the staff, public and inmates in the best interest of all.”

### THE RESULTS

Although cost-effective use of resources drove the decision to contract with Lexipol, Keen underscores that implementing the Lexipol content also supports several long-term NCDOC strategic objectives. “Lexipol makes it easy to incorporate the American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, which will be critical

when we move forward with building a new facility,” he says. “We intend to seek ACA accreditation; lining our policies up makes the accreditation process that much easier for us.”

Lexipol’s policy and training content is also supporting cultural change within the NCDOC. “Our facility dates back to 1871,” Keen says. “As a result, we’re looking at putting a new face on corrections, toward a more treatment-based, reentry-based culture. Punishment isn’t medicine anymore.”

Lexipol’s policies help reinforce that cultural shift. “This is forecasting our future: to be a better facility, one where all staff are on board with the vision and we’re all following the same clear, commonsense policies,” Keen says. “No more ‘we’ve always done it that way’—we’re done with that. We are moving forward.”

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