ICPA
International Corrections
& Prisons Association

ICPA FOUNDING STATEMENTS

The International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) developed 10 founding statements that were approved at the ICPA 2018 Annual General Meeting. The Founding Statements have since been updated for consistency and to modernise language. In 2025, a new founding statement on Community Corrections was developed, approved by the Board of Directors and tabled for noting at the 2025 Annual General Meeting.

The updated Founding Statement on Technology was approved by the Board of Directors in October 2025 and tabled for noting at the 2026 AGM. ICPA now has 11 Founding Statements.

Following the AGM, the Founding Statements will be made accessible on the ICPA website for members and non-members.

ICPA
International Corrections
& Prisons Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. Statement on the Management of Aged and Frail Persons in Custody 4

02. Statement on Prison Education 6

03. Statement on Healthy Prison Facilities 8

04. Statement on the Management of Young People in Custody 10

05. Statement on Occupational Health and Safety of Staff 12

06. Statement on Respect for Human Rights 13

07. Statement on Community Corrections 14

08. Statement on Training in Corrections 16

09. Statement on Vocational Training and Employment 18

10. Statement on the Management of Women in Custody 19

11. Statement on the use of Technology in Corrections 20

01. Statement on the Management of Aged and Frail Persons in Custody

Consistent with its values and international standards, ICPA recognises that aged and frail persons in custody or under supervision in the community have special needs that will vary according to their social, economic and health conditions.

The following principles for managing aged and frail persons in custody and in the community are recommended for consideration by correctional agencies for inclusion in agency policy. They are to:

- Treat aged and frail persons in custody humanly and in a manner which considers their specific needs as aged and frail persons.
- If necessary, due to physical or mental disabilities, place aged and frail persons in adapted cells and facilities to meet their most basic needs and stimulate social interaction.
- Keep aged and frail persons in smaller facilities or units to enable them to have an as normal life as possible and to protect them from violence, extortion and exploitation by other people in custody.
- Keep solitary confinement of aged and frail persons to the absolute minimum for use only in extraordinary circumstances with the objective to returning the individual to a normal management regime as soon as safely possible.
- Meet the nutritional requirements of aged and frail persons.
- Provide adequate medical care through appropriate health facilities and services with special attention to age-related medical conditions.
- As provided in legislation, consider petitions for compassionate release or medical parole for terminally ill or progressively disabled persons.
- Provide appropriate palliative care for persons at ‘end-of-life’ to allow autonomy as much as possible and death with dignity.
- Provide special programs, therapy, and counselling that address the needs of aged and frail persons.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate work and an adequate system of remuneration.
- Provide aged and frail persons with the rights to maintain contact with the family through correspondence and visits.
- Place age and frail persons as close as possible to home to help maintain contacts with family members.

- Improve the training of staff with reference to the special problems and needs of aged and frail persons.
- Improve close cooperation with organisations in the community to deliver a continuum of care in the community following release.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 25 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting

02. Statement on Prison Education

ICPA promotes humane incarceration with the provision of learning opportunities for people in custody, regardless of age and legal status, that supports the development of social, emotional, civic and economic capabilities. ICPA believes that engagement in education supports the wellbeing of people in custody and promotes dynamic security, supporting reductions in reoffending. Education should be available irrespective of age and legal status of the person in custody. The following principles should be implemented by in-prison education are recommended for consideration by correctional agencies and other organisations involved with the management of people in custody:

- Undertake an assessment should be conducted to determine the person in custody's employment history, educational experience, and aspirations.
- Develop a personalised plan for learning and development, leveraging the strengths identified in the initial assessment.
- Provide opportunity for people in custody to progress through primary and secondary education and, if appropriate, into post-secondary and higher education.
- Encourage and support people in custody to engage with education voluntarily.
- Provide guidance to inform decision-making on appropriate subjects with peer mentoring where possible.
- Wherever possible, the scope and quality of education available to people in custody should mirror the scope and quality of that outside of custody.
- Transition plans and activities should occur throughout a person in custody's sentence. Referrals to educational institutions for continuation of study should be available when a person in custody is nearing the end of their incarceration. If practical, probation and parole services should be involved in this transition.
- To the extent possible, program results and their impact should be tracked and reported based upon the level and type of education and amount of programming provided.
- People in custody should not be penalised for engaging in education and, where feasible, remuneration rates should be equivalent to participation in industries or other paid work.
- Education should be culturally appropriate and be delivered in the first language of the person in custody.

- Both formal and informal learning opportunities should be available. Informal learning enables people in custody to spend spare time productively.
- Education should be gender appropriate.
- Education staff should be appropriately trained and have ongoing professional development to keep abreast of emerging research and current best practice.
- Post release education support (including information, advice and guidance for continued study) should be available for people released from custody.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

03. Statement on Healthy Prison Facilities

ICPA promotes healthy prisons and institutional environments that meet the basic human physical and psychological needs of persons in custody.

The following principles for the design of prisons and institutional environments are recommended for consideration by correctional agencies for inclusion in agency policy. They are to:

- Consider prison design, materials, furniture, and fixtures support normalization of the environment and reduce tendencies toward institutionalization.
- Provide cells and sleeping areas with sufficient space to be used appropriately, including basic facilities (bed, desk, etc.) and sufficient unencumbered space for movement and basic exercise.
- Design housing areas to support dynamic and direct supervision, and frequent contact and interaction between people in custody and staff.
- Design housing areas to provide opportunities for privacy (i.e. the ability to exert control over contact and interactions with others). Wherever possible, this should include being able to engage in personal functions out of public view (e.g. sleeping, studying, and utilizing the restroom and shower) without the need to request intervention from staff.
- Design prisons and institutional environments to allow people in custody to have at a minimum, access to:

    1. Conditions that promote good quantity and quality of sleep, including through privacy, low noise levels, and low levels of lighting.
    2. Natural light as much as possible during the day.
    3. Outdoors, including both views of and contact with nature (sky, grass, trees, plants).
    4. Safe and clean drinking water.
    5. Food that is nutritious and fits the cultural heritage of the individuals in custody.
    6. Opportunities for physical exercise.
    7. Medical care.
    8. Places where they can focus on work or study without disturbance.
    9. In-person visits.
    10. Good air quality and temperatures appropriate for the relevant activity and clothing.
    11. Access to means of coping with stress, including privacy and contact with appropriate staff.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

04. Statement on the Management of Young People in Custody

ICPA promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) as standard rules for the treatment of young people in custody. In that context, ICPA particularly highlights the following principles for the development of policies and procedures for the management of young people in custody:

- The minimum age of criminal responsibility be based on the emotional, mental and intellectual maturity of a young person and be at least 14, as per the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 10.
- Use the arrest, detention or imprisonment of a young people only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest period of time, including pre-trial detention. Always look for appropriate alternative measures first.
- Treat young people in custody with humanity, and in a manner which always and purposely considers the specific needs of children and young persons.
- Always house young people in custody separately from adult offenders unless it is considered in their best interest not to do so.
- Treat young people in custody consistently with the generally accepted requirements for their age.
- Keep young people in custody in smaller facilities or units and small groups, to enable individualized treatment, designed to support rehabilitation through the residential environment.
- Give young people in custody the right to maintain contact with their family through correspon dence and visits.
- Manage detention facilities and regimes with a well-balanced mixture of correction, protection and treatment, coaching and education, guided by evidence-based practice.
- Provide relevant formal education and an adequate access to the school system in the community.
- Provide medical care through appropriate health facilities and services in the community with special attention to age-related and development disorders.
- Provide reducing re-offending programs tailored to age and development stages.
- If appropriate, place different categories of young people in custody based on the provision of the type of care best suited to the needs of the individuals concerned and the protection of their psychical, mental and moral integrity and well-being.

- Keep solitary confinement of young people in custody to the absolute minimum for use only in extraordinary circumstances.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

05. Statement on Occupational Health and Safety of Staff

ICPA recognises that working in custodial environments and in community corrections (probationand parole) can be stressful and employees can be on sick leave for longer periods due to complex psychosocial problems and traumatic experiences.

To advance the health and safety of staff, the following principles are recommended for consideration by correctional agencies for inclusion in agency policy. They are to:

- Provide training for all staff supervising or working with people in custody or under community supervision prior to their corrections employment and are provide with regular refresher training.
- Provide training in communication skills, health protection, and the risks of working with special needs and high-risk people in custody or under community supervision, including mentally ill, addicted, violent, and radicalised justice-involved individuals.
- Support staff working with people in custody or under community supervision with serious medical or mental health problems through the provision of specialised training, coaching and supervision.
- Provide all staff working with people in custody or under community supervision with a clear understanding of the requirements and expectations of their roles.
- Undertake screening of all newly incarcerated persons for contagious diseases and infections as early as possible and separated, if needed, to avoid risk to staff and other incarcerated persons.
- Deliver a safe work environment and undertake regular risk assessments of the physical environment and work practices and procedures.
- Take actions that promote job satisfaction for staff and enhance staff resilience.
- Promote healthcare programs for staff.
- Promote research on workplace safety and staff health.
- Provide adequate support and compensation schemes in place for staff who are injured in the workplace.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

06. Statement on Respect for Human Rights

ICPA is committed to promoting and upholding human rights within correctional systems worldwide. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as the foundational reference point for developing and sustaining correctional practices that respect the inherent dignity and rights of all individuals.

This commitment is further guided by a comprehensive body of international standards, norms, and rules. These include key instruments such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules), the Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, guidance from regional frameworks, such as those provided by the Council of Europe, contributes to a shared understanding of rights-based correctional practice.

Taken together, these instruments provide a robust framework for ensuring safe, secure, and humane correctional operations. They establish the standards necessary for correctional systems to be legally sound, gender-responsive, culturally appropriate, and aligned with principles of fairness and dignity.
At the heart of these principles is the fundamental respect for the life and wellbeing of every person, which must be reflected across all correctional policies, programs, and activities. This includes a proactive commitment to supporting the physical, mental, and moral wellbeing of individuals in custody or under supervision, as well as those working within correctional settings.

ICPA is dedicated to advancing these principles in partnership with its members, collaborators, and correctional agencies around the world, striving to foster systems that are just, humane, and grounded in human rights.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

07. Statement on Community Corrections

Consistent with research and evidence informed practices, ICPA supports prison as a last resort and promotes effective supervision and support of people under community supervision. Concern for community safety, justice, desistance, and an opportunity for redemption is embedded in the noted principles.

The following principles are recommended for consideration by public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other entities managing or supporting people under community supervision. They are:

Public Safety and Accountability

- Prioritize community safety through evidence-informed supervision, rehabilitation, and reintegration strategies.
- Ensure transparency and accountability in decision making and operations.

Human Dignity and Respect

- Treat all people under community supervision with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of background, offense, or status.
- Promote trauma-informed and culturally competent practices.
- Ensure victims' voices are heard and considered.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- Blend healthcare, social services and community support to address the social determinants of health such as the conditions in which people live, work and interact. Success in these areas fosters stability and reduces recidivism.
- Support successful reintegration into society by addressing barriers such as housing, mental health, and substance use disorders. Develop partnerships between governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations and community volunteers to assist with reintegration efforts.
- Engage with, and listen to, the lived experience of people under community supervision to enhance the rehabilitation process.

Evidence-Informed Practices

- Use data-driven approaches, validated risk assessment tools, and evidence-based policies to guide supervision levels and interventions. Consider individual needs, circumstances, and risk levels when designing supervision measures and conditions.
- Continuously evaluate and improve programs based on outcomes and research.

Community Engagement and Collaboration

- Partner with local organizations, families, volunteers, and stakeholders to build supportive networks for individuals under supervision.
- Encourage community involvement in shaping correctional policies and practices.

Equity and Inclusion

- Address systemic disparities and ensure equitable access to services and opportunities.
- Promote diversity in staffing and leadership within community corrections agencies.

Professional Integrity and Development

- Uphold ethical standards and foster a culture of professionalism.
- Invest in initial and ongoing training and development for staff to enhance skills and resilience.
- Prioritize staff wellbeing to foster engagement, motivation, and long-term commitment.
- Develop strong communication capabilities, awareness and problem-solving skills as essential to ensure personal safety.

Global Learning and Innovation

- Share knowledge and best practices across borders to strengthen community corrections worldwide.
- Embrace innovation and technology to improve service delivery and outcomes.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

08. Statement on Training in Corrections

ICPA promotes correctional staff training based on modern, effective, humane, and ethical principles and the use of evidence-based training materials, methods, and working tools that meet the intent and spirit of international standards, including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) and the United Nation Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial measures for Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules).

In that context, ICPA particularly highlights the following principles for staff training in corrections, which are recommended for consideration by correctional agencies for inclusion in agency policy. They are to:

- Support all staff supervising or working with people in custody or under community supervision to receive training prior to corrections employment and regular refresher training with consideration to relevant national laws, international human rights standards, institutional policies, and modern operational practices.
- Deliver ongoing, evidence-based training to equip staff with skills in communication, de-escalation, conflict resolution, teamwork, ethics, accountability, and gender-responsive strategies.
- Support staff development through continuous learning that reinforces the rehabilitative goals of corrections and integrates the latest research and best practices.
- Provide training in communication skills, health protection, and the risks of working with special needs and high-risk people in custody or under community supervision, including young people in custody, people suffering from mental health and co-occurring disorders, violent and radicalized people in custody or under community supervision.
- Deliver correctional officer training that is comprehensive and balanced between security-related skills and competencies, and those relating to rehabilitation and reintegration of people in prison.
- Evaluate, review, and update training programs and training methods on a regular basis so that the training provided is standardized and reflects good practice, evolving research, and the local context.
- Develop relevant lesson plans to reflect the intent and spirit of applicable international standards and regularly review how the international standards can be met in line with required security, public safety, and the local and regional human resources and economic realities.

- Develop and offer targeted management training for first line, mid-career, and senior corrections professionals.
- Prioritize resourcing and funding for continuous training to ensure leaders at all levels are equipped to lead with competence, confidence and compassion.
- Deliver training that supports the rehabilitative mission of corrections by equipping staff with skills that encourage the personal development of people in prison with consideration to behavior change and reintegration into society.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

09. Statement on Vocational Training and Employment

The ICPA promotes the integration of vocational training and employment activities into sentence management in an ongoing manner that equips and prepares people in custody to be productive and self-sufficient members of society upon release.

In that context, ICPA particularly highlights the following principles for the provision of training and employment in custodial settings:

- Vocational training be made available to sentenced people in custody and, where practical, to people in custody on remand.
- Assessment be conducted to determine the individual's employment history, educational experiences, and aspirations and a personalized plan be developed.
- Accredited vocational training that is integrated with employment initiatives be offered on a voluntary basis.
- Vocational training opportunities be provided that align with labor market trends and incorporate industry recognized credentials and job readiness training.
- Pathways to employment on release be considered in the vocational training and prison employment offered to persons in custody.
- Literacy and numeracy skills needs be addressed.
- The diversity and interests of people in custody be considered.
- Learning resources be made available at education and training facilities in classrooms, libraries, and where practical access to computer labs or in-cell technology.
- Pre-release transition plans with referrals to job placement services and post-release employment and training support be made available to persons in custody.
- Program results and their impact on recidivism rates be tracked and reported based.
- In-prison industries employment be delivered accordance with human rights obligations and include the provision of appropriate remunerated.
- Initiatives be supported to provide incentives to businesses to employ prisoners upon release and remove barriers for people with criminal records.
- Recognize that obtaining employment post-release may be challenging for imprisoned persons and appropriate support be provided to manage unemployment post-release.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

10. Statement on the Management of Women in Custody

ICPA promotes the United Nation Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial measures for Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules) and The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) as standard minimum rules for the treatment of women in custody.

In this context, ICPA particularly highlights the following principles for the development of policies and procedures for the management of women in custody:

- Women have unique sociological, psychological, and medical needs which must be recognized and addressed through evidence-based, gender-responsive correctional procedures and practices.
- Women in custody should be provided with opportunities for work and training to improve their future employment prospects.
- Assessment, programs, therapy and counselling for women in custody need to be designed based on their unique needs.
- Women in custody generally are a lower security risk than men which should be reflected in prison design and daily routines.
- Women are often primary caregivers for children and consideration should always be given to allow very young children, particularly infants, to stay with their mothers in custody.
- Where children are allowed to stay with their mothers in prison, cells, and other facilities should be adapted considering the best interests of the children to enhance their psychological, social, and emotional bonding with their mother.
- As much as practicable, women in custody should be placed close to their home to help maintain contact with family members, especially their children, and to enhance the preparation of their return to the community.
- Staff training and development must be structured with reference to both evidence-based and gender-responsive principles surrounding the unique needs of women in custody.

This founding statement of ICPA was updated and approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 23 July 2025 and tabled for the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting on 28 October 2025. This Founding Statement is due for review prior to the 2030 ICPA Annual General Meeting.

11. Statement on the use of Technology in Corrections

ICPA promotes the use of technology to assist with the management of people in custody or under community supervision, to support efficient and effective and individual education and skill development. ICPA believes that the use of technology can enhance the quality of life for staff and people in custody or under community supervision, enhance security in custodial environments, prevent incidents, and contribute to improved community safety. The effective use of technology can also further improve collaboration and co-ordination within the criminal justice system.

ICPA acknowledges that countries vary in their capacity to access and implement technology. Regardless of these differences, technology should enhance the effective delivery of correctional services. ICPA actively includes the private sector in its membership base to support and promote the development of human-rights aligned, innovative, practical solutions to the challenges facing corrections today.

In this context, ICPA particularly highlights the following principles for the development of policies and procedures for use of technology in corrections:

- Use and implement advanced technology solutions in corrections to optimize the balance between people in custody or under community supervision's control and self-responsibility.
- Modernize supervision by replacing static or repetitive tasks with technology, while maintaining effective oversight.
- Ensure technology enhances, not replaces, meaningful, pro-social interaction between staff and people in custody or under community supervision.
- Use electronic monitoring and other technologies to safely manage people under community supervision in the community as an alternative to custody.
- Apply evidence-based practices and international good examples across the entire justice-involved individual management lifecycle, supported by effective information systems.
- Enhance access to education and communication for people in custody through secure use of technology, including internet and email where appropriate safeguards are in place.
- Increase digital self-service options that promote autonomy and reduce staff workload. These may include activity scheduling, visit registration, canteen purchases, health requests, and access to entertainment.
- Expand the use of video conferencing technology for court appearances, healthcare, visits, pre-release preparation, and in any other relevant areas.

- Use technology for identification, substance use testing and offender location control of people in custody or under community supervision to improve safety and accountability.

This founding statement of ICPA was approved by the ICPA Board of Directors on 25 October 2025 and ratified by the members of the Corporation on the Annual General Meeting .....

