



The Standard

Spring 2021



A message from our President



Chief Mark Ferguson, Glendale Police Department

Greetings,

It has been a while since we distributed our last newsletter, and this is a good opportunity to update everyone on all the changes that have occurred in the last several years. The WILEAG Board has been busy strengthening our organization and promoting policing excellence in Wisconsin.

The WILEAG Board has welcomed many new members who continue to provide expertise from a wide range of professional disciplines. A complete list of the WILEAG Governing Board can be found on our website. The Executive Board has also seen some recent changes. West Milwaukee Police Chief Dennis Nasci was elected to the vice president position after Anna Ruzinski stepped down upon her appointment as US Marshal for the Eastern District of Wisconsin. We revised the executive director position; Bob Rosch continues to provide leadership and expertise to the accreditation program as the treasurer and Katie Wrightsman has done an excellent job as our new executive director. I would like to commend all past and current members of the WILEAG Governing Board on their professionalism and commitment to the accreditation process, their contributions in promoting best practices are truly appreciated.

2020 was a challenging year for everyone. With a full calendar of scheduled on-site assessments, the Covid-19 pandemic presented some obstacles for both the agencies and assessor availability. Our executive director coordinated with the involved agencies to determine whether the on-site assessment should continue or be rescheduled and then implemented safety protocols. We were able to complete all the on-site assessments in a safe manner and I would like to commend Katie and all the assessors who made this achievement possible.

On June 16, 2020 President Trump issued an Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities. Part of the executive order required agencies to comply with mandatory requirements for use of force to receive Department of Justice discretionary grant funding and that the agency's use of force policy must be certified by an independent credentialing body certified by the attorney general. WILEAG was selected by the US Attorney General as the credentialing body for Wisconsin law enforcement agencies. WILEAG

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developed a certification process specific to the requirements and has currently certified use of force policies for 339 agencies.

As part of our mission to promote best practices in law enforcement, the WILEAG Board completes a review of the core and accreditation standards every three years. We began our review in 2020 and after extensive deliberations are proud to announce the introduction of the WILEAG 6th Edition Accreditation Standards and the WILEAG 3rd Edition CORE Verification Standards. Both sets of standards were approved on March 22, 2021 and continue to set the standard in best practices for Wisconsin law enforcement agencies. The Board of Directors has established that agencies must adopt the new standard editions by January 1, 2023.

WILEAG remains committed to providing a meaningful and affordable accreditation process to the law enforcement agencies of Wisconsin. We look forward to addressing the professional needs of police and sheriff's departments for many years to come.

Thank you,

Mark Ferguson



2021 Spring Training Dates

Accreditation/CORE Manager Training

April 27th, 2021

Available in person at: WCTC Firing Range

-or-

Via Zoom

To register contact WILEAG Executive Director Katie Wrightsman at

executive.director@wileag.info

Space is limited for the in-person option due to social distancing.

Fall training dates TBD

Featured Board Member



Melissa Zilavy
Assistant District Attorney
Waukesha County

I've served on the WILEAG Board since January 2019, and I am a proxy for Waukesha County DA Sue Oppen and represent District Attorneys.

I am currently an Assistant District Attorney with the Waukesha County District Attorney's Office, and have been since February 2015. I represent and prosecute cases on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. I currently have a misdemeanor/felony/traffic case load which includes all types of cases including OWI, theft, recklessly endangering safety, homicides, arson, robbery, burglary, threat/battery to law enforcement officers. Essentially everything EXCEPT delivery of controlled substances, sensitive crimes, child abuse/sexual assault, and domestic violence. My duties include charging and prosecuting cases, including jury trials. I also review various warrants and assist officers in the investigation of cases prior to them coming to our office. I am also the Drug Treatment Court prosecutor for our office, which includes screening defendants for possible admittance into DTC, and attending weekly staffings and court to assess participants' progress with maintaining sobriety and compliance with program rules.

Prior to the DA's office, I attended Marquette Law School and graduated cum laude in December 2014. I also graduated summa cum laude from UW-Milwaukee in May 2010 with a BA in Political Science. During summers of undergrad, I was a camp counselor and then camp director at the Tri-County YMCA in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. I attended my first two years of undergrad at UW-Madison, and interned at the Capitol with then State Representative Sue Jeskewitz. While in law school, and starting in May 2013, I was an intern with the Waukesha County District Attorney's Office and practiced law under a student practice law license. So, I've now been with the Waukesha DA's Office for almost 8 years.

My great-grandfather, John Zilavy, was a Captain and Detective for Milwaukee Police Department back in 1930s-1960s. I know my grandfather is proud to have a granddaughter continue his father's legacy in law enforcement as a prosecutor. When the opportunity to be part of WILEAG came up, I was excited for the opportunity considering my family's background in law enforcement. It's a great opportunity to work with police agencies across the State and ensure compliance with our standards of accreditation. Accreditation allows police agencies to show that they've gone beyond the minimum standards required by law, and are part of an elite group of agencies who abide by the highest standards. In a world where law enforcement is under a constant microscope by the public, the fact that an agency adheres to our high standards of accreditation gives the public confidence in that agency.

Melissa J. Zilavy

Featured Agency



West Milwaukee Police Department

Chief Dennis Nasci

Milwaukee County

Population: 4,200

20 sworn personnel

About West Milwaukee

The Village of West Milwaukee is located in Milwaukee County. West Milwaukee is surrounded by the City of West Allis, the City of Milwaukee, and the Veterans Administration Zablocki Medical Center and Historic Soldiers Home site. A geographically small village of 1.12 square miles, West Milwaukee's northern border running east/west is National Avenue. West Milwaukee has a second major east/west thoroughfare, Greenfield Avenue, bisecting the village, as well as a major north/south road, Miller Park Way. With a residential population of 4,200, and a demographic makeup of 47% white; 31% Hispanic; 17% Black; 3% Asian, West Milwaukee is uniquely situated geographically in the heart of the major metro Milwaukee area, and experiences a heavy influx of daily transient traffic. There is a redeveloped commercial corridor and several large industrial facilities, all adjacent to the Brewers stadium. Two of the large industrial facilities are in the process of redevelopment, projecting additional population growth.

Mission Statement

The primary mission of the West Milwaukee Police Department includes the protection of life and property; resolution of conflict; creating and maintaining a feeling of security in the community; proactively reducing the opportunities for the commission of crime; identification, apprehension, and prosecution of offenders of the laws; and the preservation of peace. We accept as part of our mission the responsibility to provide for a quality of life in our community.

BIO

Dennis Nasci, Chief, West Milwaukee Police Department

Chief Nasci earned his Bachelor of Science in Occupational Education, specializing in criminal justice, from Wayland Baptist University. He is a graduate of the 26th DEA Drug Unit Commanders Academy and

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190th FBI National Academy. He is currently working on his master's degree through American Military University.

Chief Nasci started his law enforcement career on November 26, 1985 with the New Mexico Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department. He was promoted to sergeant in 1985, lieutenant in 1996; he retired on February 8, 2002.

After retiring from the sheriff's department, he took a position as a lieutenant with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh Police Department where he served as the second in command from February 2002 to February 2, 2007. During this time, he was certified as a police officer with the State of Wisconsin through the Contingency Certification Program at the State Patrol Academy.

On February 2, 2007, Dennis accepted the position as assistant chief of police with the West Milwaukee Police Department and remained in that role through July 1, 2009 when he was appointed chief.

From CORE to Full Accreditation; In Chief Nasci's words...

I first heard about accreditation in 2009 during a conversation with West Allis Police Chief Mike Jungbluth. At that time, I knew little about WILEAG and was still settling in as chief. I began looking at accreditation standards and realized we, as an agency, were not ready to make the move.

However, I had several conversations with Rick Balistrieri (retired West Allis deputy chief) who had taken on the role of WILEAG program manager. When the CORE program was created, Rick sought four pilot agencies. I begged a bit and was given the opportunity to become one of those pilot agencies and in 2014 was lucky enough to be the third agency approved under the CORE Verification program. This was a learning curve since neither the accreditation manager, nor I, had been through assessor training or accreditation manager training.

My plan was to pursue full accreditation in 2017, 3-years after the Core award. That was pushed back due to key staff changes and training a new accreditation manager, so in 2017 we again went through the Core re-verification process (successfully).

With the help of the newly appointed accreditation manager, we set a goal to get fully accredited in 2019 and we did achieve that goal. Selling full accreditation to the staff, and getting them to help, was less problematic than anticipated because we had talked about accreditation openly for several years. We prepared our files and encouraged our staff to assist with compiling proofs. As the staff engaged in assembling proofs during their daily duties, they began asking if there were other proofs they could provide; they became a key part of our successful process!

As with the Core, we anticipated there would be areas of deficiencies in our policies or practices that would need to be fixed or tweaked. We made those changes and are proud to share that we achieved compliance with the 5th Edition accreditation standards. It was important to our agency to not just do our own thing, but to compare ourselves to the best law enforcement practices in the State of Wisconsin and to show that we met or exceeded the standards. In short, the Core Verification program was a great stepping-stone to help us prepare and move forward with achieving full accreditation.



WILEAG Executive Director

Katie Wrightsman

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE:

I wanted to take the opportunity in this newsletter to introduce myself.

My background includes serving as the WILEAG Administrative Assistant from 2015- 2019. During this time, I became familiar with accreditation and all that it entails. Additionally, I was a 911 dispatcher for the West Allis Police Department from 2009 – 2019. I left that position in January 2020 when WILEAG offered me the position as executive director.

My husband is a police officer for the Brookfield Police Department. I also have 5 kids under the age of 10; therefore, I typically enjoy working the third shift hours when I have some peace and quiet!

I personally want to thank the governing board for having the confidence in me to fulfill this position. I enjoy being a part of this process and being able to witness those hard-working agencies achieve their much-deserved accredited status.

Please let me know if I can help you in any way!

Katie

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