

# MEDIC FIRST AID®'s flexible training programs meet the wide-ranging needs of Washington state's correctional facilities

## Washington Dept of Corrections

Spokane, Washington

**Business type**

Public correctional institution

**Business size**

More than 9,000 employees throughout Washington  
Training program supervised by Jerry Young

**Primary MEDIC FIRST AID products used**

BasicPlus CPR, AED, and First Aid for Adults  
Pediatric CPR and First Aid for Children, Infants, and Adults

### Intro

The Washington Department of Corrections consists of 15 major facilities and 45 community correction facilities scattered throughout the state. Jerry Young — who works out of the Spokane facility — oversees all first aid training for statewide correctional employees, with a roster of

roughly 150 first aid instructors. Young's Organizational Development Department also trains employees in a number of other areas, including fire prevention, infectious diseases, back safety, and weapons handling. All Washington state agencies are required to meet OSHA and WISHA (the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act) standards and their own internal policies. The Department of Corrections also has to meet the training standards of the American Correctional Association (ACA), which advertises itself as the "worldwide authority in corrections."

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*— Jerry Young*

### Challenge

Like many public agencies, the Washington Department of Corrections faces a tightening budget situation and needs to stretch its spending dollars as far as possible. But while budgets contract, the agency's first aid training needs remain constant. "We pretty much train everyone," Young says. "All of our front line staff are definitely trained, but we

also train all of our food service workers and our counselors, along with most of our upper management. We probably offer the same training to 95 percent of all our staff." This includes staff from a variety of different social and educational backgrounds, including many employees who speak limited English.

### Solution

The department switched to MEDIC FIRST AID® in the late '90s, citing the organization's low-stress training environment and "seeing, hearing, doing, speaking, feeling" training philosophy. "Medic First Aid's student assessment is based on interaction and people's ability to reasonably perform the skills, not their ability to pass a written test," Young says, explaining that the tests required by other providers have proved to be more of a stumbling block than an



advantage. This is especially true of corrections employees with learning disabilities or with multilingual backgrounds, who often excel at learning CPR and first aid skills when working directly with an instructor, but are sometimes flustered by written exams. Medic First Aid's programs, by contrast, focus on positive coaching and hands-on practice, with the instructor evaluating each student's skills during the session. "And hands-on experience, not a written test by itself, helps students learn to act promptly and confidently during an emergency situation."

As important as the "seeing, hearing, doing, speaking, feeling" training philosophy is, so too is the affordability of the ongoing Medic First Aid program. Young wasn't the training coordinator when the department first transitioned to Medic First Aid; however, she says the maintenance costs of the Medic First Aid program are a bargain compared to the cost of creating an internal training program or switching to a different provider. "Medic First Aid produces all of the training materials we need, and they do it at a much lower cost than we could do internally," says Young. "All our facilities now have Medic First Aid equipment and training materials, and our instructors are Medic First Aid-certified. If we tried to create an internal program within the department, we might be able to save money in the long run, but there would be huge costs in the short run in terms of transitioning people and equipment." Young also believes that companies looking to switch from another provider to Medic First Aid would have trouble finding a more cost-effective option. "As a package deal, I think Medic First Aid offers a good value in terms of the cost of certifying instructors, buying classroom materials, and responding to your needs."

One of Medic First Aid's most popular attributes is the company's willingness to make its customers' needs a priority. Not only was Medic First Aid the first provider to eliminate the written test for trainees, but it's also been one of the leaders in promoting industry-specific training materials. In the case of Young's department, Medic First Aid encourages instructors to simulate real-life corrections scenarios when using the BasicPlus package. This may include training corrections employees on how to provide life-saving support to suspects and inmates without putting oneself at risk of HIV, hepatitis, or tuberculosis transmission, and how to treat inmates who may be carrying contaminated needles or sharp, weapon-like objects.

Young also cites Medic First Aid's home emergency card as a customer-friendly item that helps the department meet its training needs. The card — which is available on the Medic First Aid website — includes spaces for the student's address, doctor's name, current medications, and other important health details. Young says the card serves as a nice training aid, but also helps students think about using their life-saving skills when at home and in the larger community.

## Benefits

- "Seeing, hearing, doing, speaking, feeling" training philosophy works with students from different backgrounds
- Medic First Aid training packages are cost competitive both short and long term
- Industry-specific training materials appeal to professionals