



# 2024 CAPRA National Accreditation Standards *Beta Test Version*



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# Accreditation Process

Accreditation is based on an agency's compliance with the **68** standards for national accreditation. To achieve accreditation, an agency must comply with all **37** Fundamental Standards, which are indicated in the color **teal** in this publication, and **25** of the **31** Non-Fundamental Standards upon initial accreditation and **28** of the **31** Non-Fundamental Standards upon reaccreditation.

## List of Fundamental Standards

Standard 1.1: Mission, Vision, and Values

Standard 1.2: Strategic Plan

Standard 1.3: Community Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning

Standard 1.4: Personnel Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning

Standard 2.1: Advisory Boards and Commissions

Standard 2.5: Inclusion and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Services  
Accessibility Compliance

Standard 3.1: Community and Park Planning Strategy

Standard 3.3: Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Standard 4.1: Human Resource Planning, Workforce Development, and Culture

Standard 4.2: Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual

Standard 5.1: Financial Management, Responsibility, and Accountability

Standard 5.2: Legal Authority and Fiscal Policy

Standard 5.3: Comprehensive Revenue Policy

Standard 5.5: Financial Statements

Standard 5.6: Purchasing Policy

Standard 5.7: Independent Audit

Standard 5.8: Annual or Biennial Budget

Standard 5.10: Capital Asset Management

Standard 6.1: Recreation Program Responsibility and Accountability

Standard 6.2: Program and Service Determinants (Components)

Standard 6.3: Recreation Programming Plan (RPP)

Standard 6.4: Program Evaluation – Staff Training and Use in Informing  
Programmatic Decision Making

Standard 7.1: Facility and Land Use Responsibility and Accountability

Standard 7.2: Park and Recreation Land Acquisition and Disposal

Standard 7.3: Park and Recreation Property Development

Standard 7.4: Maintenance and Operations Management

Standard 8.1: Risk Management Responsibility and Strategy

Standard 8.2: Protection of the Public's Health, Safety, and Welfare

Standard 8.3: General Security Plan

Standard 8.4: Personnel Safety Training

Standard 8.7: Accidents/Incidents

Standard 8.8: Emergency Management Plan  
Standard 9.2: Marketing and Communications – external  
Standard 9.5: Community Engagement  
Standard 9.6: Crisis Communications  
Standard 10.1: Community Needs Assessment and Trends Analysis  
Standard 10.2: Systematic Evaluation Program

# Chapter 1 – Agency, Mission, and Purpose

The mission establishes the organizational purpose, and goals and objectives establish the strategic direction. Organization values affect how the agency, through its leadership and staff relate to other governing bodies, agencies, organizations and how it incorporates input from citizens and staff. Strategic planning is vital to high performing organizations and involves organizational and community input to identify and come to agreement on vision, mission, and values that support and guide the systems, structures, and strategies as a framework for organizational progress to achieve results. Engaging the community and staff in the process provides buy-in on and a common understanding of the direction for the agency.

## Standard 1.1: Mission, Vision, and Values

### Description

Agencies shall have a documented mission statement prescribing the purpose of the organization, a vision that casts direction for the long-term future of the organization, and values that set a tone for the agency's culture.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the approved mission, vision, and values statements and provide evidence of regular review which may be via retreat, strategic planning, approving authority review, or the like; Provide a narrative describing how the mission, vision, and values were derived from the purpose and/or source of authority of the agency or from recent community input and engagement; Provide evidence that the mission, vision, and values are embedded in the culture of the organization, strategic plans, and master plans (PMP and RPP), and that the mission, vision, and values are communicated to the public.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Does the agency have mission, vision, and values statements properly approved by the appropriate approving authority? Are these statements aligned with the Agency's purpose or authority? Are these statements visibly posted in view of the public and evident in the culture and work of the agency?



## Standard 1.2: Strategic Plan

### Description

The agency shall have a strategic plan derived from the mission and vision that establishes goals and objectives to direct its actions and decision-making; The document shall guide the efforts of the agency for two (2) to five (5) years and shall be based on input collected from community outreach efforts.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the strategic plan approved by the appropriate authority within the last five years; Provide a narrative that demonstrates alignment among mission, vision, values, and other pertinent agency planning documents such as the overarching organization's strategic objectives; Provide evidence of annual review with progress updates on agency goals and objectives established by the plan.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Was the Agency's strategic plan developed following outreach to and engagement with the community either independently or during development of the Park Master Plan and/or Recreation Program Plan? Did outreach efforts reach a diverse and inclusive array of community members that is representative of the community's demographics? Did the Strategic Plan include an outreach focus on historically disinvested communities and disenfranchised populations? Was the input received considered meaningfully and used to inform strategic planning goals and objectives?

## Standard 1.3: Community Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning

### Description

Agencies shall solicit and meaningfully consider the needs of the service area's demographics with its adoption of strategic actions. Community involvement shall be the focus of a Master Plan and inform the creation of a Strategic Plan. The agency's Strategic Plan shall be developed after the community has been engaged. It is more internally focused on how to meet the needs of the public. The Strategic Plan should include an outreach focus for historically disinvested communities and disenfranchised populations.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide specific examples of how community outreach and input from the Master Plan and/or Needs Assessment have informed the agency's strategic planning goals and objectives. Describe how the Strategic Plan will help the agency support community needs and broader goals outlined in the Master Plan.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Was the Agency's strategic plan developed following outreach to and engagement with the community? Did outreach efforts reach a diverse and inclusive array of community members that is representative of the community's demographics? Did the Strategic Plan include an outreach focus on historically disinvested communities and disenfranchised populations? Was the input received considered meaningfully and used to inform strategic planning goals and objectives?

# Standard 1.4: Personnel Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning

## Description

Agencies shall have meaningful outreach and include input on strategic planning efforts from staff at multiple levels of employment and all divisions within the organization structure. Agency strategic planning efforts shall include extensive staff involvement because professional staff have planning and content expertise to create the park and recreation programs and manage the amenities on behalf of the public.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the strategic plan approved by the appropriate authority within the last five years; Provide a narrative that demonstrates alignment among mission, vision, values, and other pertinent agency planning documents such as the overarching organization's strategic objectives; Provide evidence of annual review with progress updates on agency goals and objectives established by the plan.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Provide a narrative description of the process used to collect staff input on Strategic Plan development from various levels within the organization. Provide evidence of staff input being used to inform strategic planning objectives.

# Chapter 2 – Administration and Organizational Resources

This chapter is all about capacity management. Advisory boards and commissions are utilized to influence, direct, and, often, approve policy, strategy, and financial decisions necessary for the agency to carry out its mission. The roles, responsibilities and structure should be clearly understood by staff and the public. An effective administrative reporting system ensures communications throughout the chain of command. An agency should make use of the many community organizations that exist in its jurisdiction and establish relationships with them. The park and recreation agency should play an active role in organizing community groups where they do not exist. By establishing such links with the community, the park and recreation agency learns of issues, needs, and opportunities and responds to them before they become problems. Engaging in the use of right-fit-to-the agency technological resources enhances efficiency and effectiveness. Agency transparency is not only the law, but also a key component in building trust and credibility with the public. Ensuring there is a process through which the community is able to report barriers to access under the ADA. Agencies should ensure continuity of operations and regularly review such plans.

## Standard 2.1: Advisory Boards and Commissions

### Description

The agency shall have at least one board, commission, and/or committee comprised of members of the public that influence, direct, and that may approve policy, strategy, and financial decisions of the agency. This body may be advisory, policy-setting, elected, or appointed.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a list of public boards, commissions, and/or committees. Provide evidence of input collected from each group that has influenced or directed policymaking, service delivery adjustments, or other changes to the organization.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated how input from boards, commissions, and/or committees has been used to inform decision-making related to policy-setting, service delivery adjustments, or other operational changes to the organization?

## Standard 2.2: Agency Relationships

### Description

There shall be collaborative and cooperative relationships that assist in fulfillment of the agency's mission and its measurable performance objectives. Collaboration and cooperation must be nurtured with strong relationships built on trust and mission alignment, which requires clear and effective expectations and communication. Best practice requires ongoing liaison roles with complementary organizations, such as nearby park and recreation agencies, social service organizations, and other governmental units and regulatory bodies.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide narrative description of cooperative efforts that support the agency's mission and objectives. This narrative information shall be evidenced through Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Cooperative Agreements, etc. Additionally, provide a list of no more than 3-4 recent or ongoing cooperative projects or efforts with accompanying staff liaison assignments. PLEASE NOTE: this standard is intended to reflect broad administrative agreements with other agencies or partners such as joint facility use agreements with school districts or other partners, cooperative agreements with similar entities that offer facilities/services within a geographic area shared with the agency, MOUs related to agreements on responsibility for shared spaces, collaborative efforts, etc. Programming specific partnerships with outside service providers are addressed in Chapter 6.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there evidence of ongoing collaborative and cooperative relationships on broad administrative responsibilities? Are those relationships governed by written IGAs, MOUs, or other types of agreements? Has the agency provided a list of 3-4 recent ongoing cooperative projects with specific staff assigned as liaisons that are providing assistance in fulfillment of the agency's mission and its measurable performance objectives?

## Standard 2.3: Technological Resources

### Description

Agencies shall engage in progressive research, adoption, upgrade, installation, and/or usage of technology in furtherance of the agency's mission and planning strategies. These goals shall be sufficiently supported with technological expertise and equipment to enable the professional staff to perform their appropriate functions efficiently and effectively.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a comprehensive matrix illustrating the technology used by the agency. Include dates of adoption/installation or latest upgrade. Provide a descriptive narrative that explains how each technological resource is used in furtherance of the mission and goals of the agency. Examples should include but are not limited to data management and sharing systems, work order and assignment applications, park maintenance activities, and activity registration systems.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated how the technology available to the agency is used in furtherance of its mission?

## Standard 2.4: Records Management

### Description

There shall be a designated position responsible for records management; There shall be a Policy in place that ensures public records are retained in compliance with open records laws intended to promote transparency; Such records shall be protected from loss through disaster by mitigation/ recovery strategies.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the position description that reflects responsibility for records management; Provide the policy and procedures; Demonstrate how a member of the community can access public records; Provide a narrative describing how the agency has planned to recover records in the event of a disaster or other threat to agency records.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there someone in charge of maintaining records either through paper filing or online. Are the documents backed up and well protected or locked in a filing cabinet?

“[CAPRA] is a blueprint for success to get us where we need to be, to make sure we were using best practices — not just updating our existing policies and procedures but identifying what our deficiencies are and enabling us to correct those.”

***Michael Wargo, CPRP, executive director, Willamalane Park and Recreation District, OR – CAPRA accredited since 2022.***

# Standard 2.5: Inclusion and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Services Accessibility Compliance

## Description

Providing accommodation processes for services and programs ensures that everyone has access to publicly funded essential services provided by park and recreation agencies. There shall be a policy or procedure available to all members of the public and staff which addresses issues pertaining to ADA compliance, access, and inclusive/adaptive programming either in a written or electronic format. Such resolution shall be adapted to strategies that promote inclusion for everyone. Agencies shall be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This standard requires that agencies appoint a person with overall compliance function fulfillment and services and programs compliance responsibility, publicly post notice per the requirements of the ADA and the process by which identified access barriers can be reported to the agency for removal or reasonable accommodation, conduct an ADA Policy Audit, provide website accessibility. As well, agencies shall conduct the ADA-required access audit for development of a Transition Plan. The agency shall regularly review and report on progress in remedying barriers to access identified in the Audit. Agencies are encouraged to exceed the minimum standards required by the ADA wherever possible. Agencies must provide accessible, inclusive, and/or adaptive programming, either standalone or through interagency collaboration. Agencies are required by federal law to offer face-to-face resolution of accessibility complaints.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the position description that reflects responsibility for ADA compliance functions; Provide evidence of a publicly posted notice that communicates the dispute process in compliance with the ADA; Provide evidence of a self-evaluation of public facing policies having been conducted within the last five years; Demonstrate that the agency's website is accessible; Demonstrate how the policies and procedures are used to receive and respond to a complaint. If applicable, provide an example from an actual complaint that was received (with appropriate information redacted) and how the issue was resolved. Provide the Transition Plan, including evidence of an access audit and regular review and reporting on progress in remedying barriers to access identified in the Audit. Provide evidence that the agency is providing inclusive and/or adaptive programs or is cooperating with an agency or agencies who do provide such programming.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there evidence of ADA compliance in both services and programming? Has the agency provided evidence of a staff person serving as ADA coordinator? Are ADA notices posted and available that outline the complaint process? Has the agency demonstrated review of its policies and procedures in the last five years? If a complaint has been received, has the agency demonstrated that it followed policies and procedures to find resolution? Does the agency have in place an ADA Transition Plan based on an access audit that shows what areas need to be made accessible? Has the agency demonstrated that the Transition Plan is regularly reviewed, and progress made to reduce barriers to access is documented? Is there evidence that the agency is providing inclusive and/or adaptive programs or is cooperating with other entity(ies) to provide such programming?

# Standard 2.6: Continuity of Operations

## Description

Agencies shall provide a procedure for the continuity of operations (COOP). The COOP is a plan designed to continue essential functions of an agency. Key elements of the COOP are a list of essential functions, orders of succession, delegation of authority, continuity of facilities, continuity of communications, vital records management, human capital, training and reconstitution. The desire is to provide continued operation during short term vacancies, emergency situations and other challenges that may impede normal operations.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a COOP plan that outlines the key roles for short term vacancies such as vacations, leaves or temporary vacancies and provides guidance for emergency situations and outlines the elements of "Viable Continuity Capability" as outlined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The COOP should provide date of acceptance and latest review date.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Does the agency have in place a COOP with all key elements included?

## Chapter 3 – Community and Park Planning

Planning activities are essential to effective agency management. Frequently, they are the responsibility of a permanent component of the agency; however, they may be performed by staff from various units or contracted to an outside professional consultant. Complex demands for services and limited public resources require that the park and recreation agency carefully research operational alternatives and plan future programs. Precise guidelines should establish the parameters of planning tasks and responsibilities. The strength of the planning unit's leadership is a major ingredient in a productive and effective planning effort. This competence may be reflected both in academic training and in prior professional experience. The chief administrator should be closely involved in the planning process. A direct relationship between planning personnel and the chief administrator enhances the ability for the planning personnel to collect data and make recommendations, and the chief administrator's ability to make informed decisions. Strategic planning is vital to high performing organizations and involves organizational and community input to identify and come to agreement on vision, mission, and values that support and guide the systems, structures, and strategies as a framework for organizational progress to achieve results. These standards examine the types of planning necessary for administrators to efficiently and effectively manage both day-to-day and long-term operations of a park and recreation agency.

### Standard 3.1: Community and Park Planning Strategy

#### Description

There shall be a designated position (individual) or team responsible for the agency's community and park planning efforts. This individual/team shall influence local planning and community development efforts that further the Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan of the agency.

#### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative description of the overall community and park planning strategy utilized by the agency. Provide the job description for the position(s) involved in planning efforts on behalf of the agency (staff or consultants). Provide evidence of involvement in local planning and community development with specific emphasis on influence in planning/development resulting in actions that support the Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan of the agency.

#### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that it has an individual or team assigned to community and park planning activities? Has the agency demonstrated that the individual or team assigned to community and park planning activities has been actively involved in planning and zoning, development review, and/or park planning processes during the period between accreditation reviews? Does this involvement result in actions that support the mission, vision, and strategic plan objectives? Has the agency demonstrated that it has an individual or team assigned to community and park planning activities? Has the agency



demonstrated that the individual or team assigned to community and park planning activities has been actively involved in planning and zoning, development review, and/or park planning processes during the period between accreditation reviews?

## **Standard 3.2: Planning with Regional, State and Federal Agencies**

### **Description**

The agency shall be involved with external agencies having jurisdictional authority over land use matters in regional, state, or federal planning efforts to represent the community's park and recreation interests.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Demonstrate the role of the agency in regional, state or federal planning through personnel assignments and documentation of involvement with external agencies having overlapping or adjacent jurisdictional authority over land use matters. Provide evidence of cooperative efforts that further the Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency demonstrated that assigned community and park planning staff have a role in community and park planning activities that are conducted in cooperation with regional, state, and/or federal agencies? Does this cooperation/involvement result in actions that support the mission, vision, and strategic plan objectives? Did the agency coordinate any of their plans with regional, state, or federal agencies? Did they describe how the outside agencies were included?

## **Standard 3.3: Parks and Recreation System Master Plan**

### **Description**

The agency shall adopt and periodically review and update a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan in alignment with its Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan that creates a basis for strategic investment in assets, property, facilities, and improvements.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide the plan which shall include an analysis of current conditions through community needs assessment, community inventory, level of service analysis, and current trends. As appropriate, the plan shall incorporate historical and/or cultural aspects of the community. Evidence of review and update within the last 10 years is required. The narrative shall describe how plan findings and recommendations are tied to Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan objectives to formulate a progression strategy from existing conditions to desired conditions. Additionally, the agency shall describe input/feedback efforts used that reach and/or include members of the community, users and non-users, to attempt to achieve statistically valid results that can be applied community wide. This may include how collected community input was used to inform planning objectives.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Does the agency have an updated up-to-date Parks and Recreation System Master Plan that includes all required elements listed in the EOC? Has the agency demonstrated that the Master Plan is a designed set of progressive steps that are in alignment with mission and strategic direction from the vision and strategic plan? Has the agency demonstrated that it engaged in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community engagement and input collection process? Has the agency demonstrated that community input collected was used to inform planning objectives?

## **Standard 3.4: Feasibility Studies**

### **Description**

The agency shall investigate current conditions and project impacts prior to initiating planned park or recreation projects.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide examples of feasibility studies such as: market, cost-benefit, site, transportation, environmental, diversity-equity-inclusion and economic analyses. Provide a narrative illustrating how a recent study was used to inform the decisions made related to a planned project.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency provided at least one example of a feasibility study used to inform decisions made related to a planned project? Feasibility studies can be created either in-house or by a consultant.

## **Standard 3.5: Site Plans**

### **Description**

Site plans shall be created with input from residents living within the service area of the agency's property and in alignment with Park Master Plan objectives. Site plans shall be maintained for ease of access by staff.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a representative sampling of the agency's area and facility site plans, which may be new park site plans or park / facility renovations. Provide a narrative describing how a recent site plan was developed using input from residents living within the service area. Demonstrate that the approved site plan is in alignment with Park Master Plan objectives and community input.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency provided a representative sampling of facility site plans guiding the development of parks in the agency's park system? Has the agency demonstrated that at least one recent site plan was created based on community input from a representative sampling of residents within the service area radius of the subject property? Has the agency demonstrated that the site plan is in alignment with Park Master Plan objectives and included community input?

# **Standard 3.6: Sustainability and Climate Resiliency Plan**

## **Description**

Climate resilience must be a conscious effort, planned and implemented with intention. Agencies shall set and implement goals, policies, procedures, and practices that promote sustainable practices and climate resiliency. A plan or strategy shall include a set of desired outcomes with specific indicators of success, describe and implement evaluation processes, and prescribe strategies for energy and resource conservation. Examples may include, but not be limited to product purchasing; reduction and handling of waste; wise use and protection of land, air, water and wildlife; sustainable design/construction of buildings and facilities.

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## **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a narrative outlining the agency's sustainability and climate resiliency strategy and goals, and how these are shared with the public, how the strategy addresses resiliency equitably, particularly for communities most impacted by such concerns, and are evaluated.

## **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency demonstrated that it has established strategies and/or practices related to sustainability and climate resiliency goals that it has shared with the public and evaluated? Has the agency demonstrated that resilience strategies are applied equitably?

# Chapter 4 – Human Resource Planning, Workforce Development, and Culture

To produce the level of quality that customers have come to expect, organizations must employ qualified employees. Qualified personnel bring to the organization the knowledge, skills, and abilities in specialized areas that are needed to design and deliver the benefits that customers seek from recreation and park experiences. Organizations that employ quality individuals who are capable of packaging and delivering experiences can attract and retain a strong and satisfied customer base; organizations that compromise on hiring quality may face difficulties in remaining competitive. Employing qualified individuals is not only one of the most important functions of recreation, park, and leisure services organizations; it is also one of the most expensive. Generally, more than half of the operational expenditures of recreation and park organizations are allocated to personnel salaries and benefits. Considering the vital importance of hiring quality employees and the associated expense, it is essential for management to have a working knowledge of the principles, practices, and procedures for employing personnel in the recreation, park, and leisure services field. A well-prepared personnel policies and procedures manual provides a consistent road map for human resources decision making as well as standardized procedures. The development of a personnel policies and procedures manual may include a systematic and comprehensive outline of how the organization administers the policies and procedures for both the professional and non-professional employees, fair employment practices, and how it communicates to all employees the specific expectations of employment and finally, how the organization deals with complaints, grievances, and morale problems.

## Standard 4.1: Human Resource Planning, Workforce Development, and Culture

### Description

There shall be a designated position (individual) or team responsible for the agency's Human Resource functions. This person/team shall provide planning strategy and technical expertise in relation to human resource functions, workforce development, and organizational agency culture. The agency shall engage their employees to evaluate their perceptions and perspectives of the quality of the agency's human resources, workforce composition, professional development and/or organizational culture, whether that be through surveys, focus groups, exit interviews, etc., to inform decision-making related to improving its quality of human resources, workforce development and/or organization culture.

## **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a narrative description of the overall human resource planning strategy utilized by the agency. Provide the job description for the position(s) involved in human resource efforts on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants). Provide evidence of data collection, analysis, and decision making related to human resource planning, workforce composition, professional development, and organizational culture that consistently improve service delivery as well as enhance employee work environment and job satisfaction.

## **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency demonstrated that it has an individual or team assigned to human resources activities? Has the agency demonstrated that the individual or team assigned to human resources activities collected and analyzed data that has informed decisions made related to human resources planning, workforce composition, professional development, and/or organizational culture? Has the agency demonstrated these efforts enhance employee work environment and job satisfaction?

# **Standard 4.2: Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual**

## **Description**

The agency shall have created and made internally available to staff a Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual that contains both legally required and agency-specific employment information. The Manual shall include specific and transparent codes of ethics or similar expectations consistent with the agency's mission and core values for which employees are responsible. It shall also reflect the organization's principles on the creation of an inclusive workforce that is representative of the community being served. The Manual shall be a 'living' and dynamic document that is current, accurate, and systematically and regularly reviewed with updates or revisions made as appropriate.

## **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide the Manual, including its date of adoption by the agency's approving authority, and date of last review. The Manual shall include a code of ethics, standards related to the acceptance of gifts and gratuities by staff, a salary and wage scale, benefits, and employment-incentive information. The Manual shall also include policies and procedures related to equitable and diverse recruitment, selection and hiring with background investigation, evaluation, dismissal, separation, grievances, and equal-opportunity employment practices. If appropriate, provide a narrative expressing changes made to the Manual since the last accreditation review.

## **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency provided a Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual that includes all the required elements listed in the EOC? If the agency has made changes to the manual since the last accreditation review, has the agency provided a narrative describing those changes? Has the agency provided evidence that background check procedures are in place and being administered in compliance with the policy?

## Standard 4.3: Compensation Plan

### Description

There shall be an established compensation plan that ensures fair and equitable compensation among units within the agency that is reviewed periodically. The compensation plan for an agency shall take into account agency employment standards, agency skill needs, and compensation levels offered by other local employers.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the compensation plan and a copy of its most recent review or update. Agencies may choose to participate in centralized compensation studies, utilize salary surveys from state associations, conduct internal reviews and adjustments of compensation, or other methods appropriate to the agency to satisfy this requirement.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided evidence that a compensation plan has been established that provides fair and equitable compensation among units within the agency? Has the plan been periodically reviewed?

## Standard 4.4: Employee Performance Evaluation and Supervision

### Description

Agencies shall implement a comprehensive system of employee supervision and performance evaluation that is designed to achieve agency goals and objectives. This system of performance documentation shall be based on job descriptions, team competencies, and actionable goals.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the policy and procedures outlining the systematic performance evaluation system. Detail how this system connects agency mission, vision, values, and strategic objectives, into the performance evaluation system. Provide evidence of implementation and communication to and with employees on performance review and improvement. If unionized, provide the agreed-upon performance evaluation system that applies to covered employees.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided evidence that a systematic performance evaluation system is in place and utilized? Has the agency demonstrated that the evaluation system is aligned with the agency's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan? If unionized, has the agency provided information related to the agreed upon performance evaluation system that applies to covered employees?

## **Standard 4.5: Onboarding Processes (Orientation and Training)**

### **Description**

The agency shall provide employee onboarding (orientation and training integration) processes and activities for new employees that include an introduction to the agency's Mission, Vision, Values, culture, and key performance objectives. Specific job-related responsibilities and expectations shall be shared in a group or individual setting, along with any pertinent safety expectations, policies, and procedures. Current and continuous job training, instruction, and mentorship efforts shall extend beyond the initial orientation to comprise a full-on-onboarding experience.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide outline of the onboarding-orientation program and a representative example of materials distributed. Provide a description of the onboarding process that extends beyond the initial orientation. Provide a narrative detailing an evaluation of the onboarding activities with examples of recent evaluation of trainings (qualitative and quantitative) completed by the agency, including curriculum content, training dates and participant lists.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency demonstrated that an onboarding/orientation program is in place and utilized? Does the implemented onboarding program extend beyond the initial orientation? Has the agency demonstrated that it evaluates its onboarding program?

## **Standard 4.6: Employee Development and Training Program**

### **Description**

Opportunities shall be provided to employees at all levels within the agency that continue to improve and enhance individual performance, leadership-succession planning and agency service delivery.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Describe the goals of the Employee Development and Training Program. Provide the scope and components of the Program, an outline of training offered (mandatory and discretionary), and a sampling of lists of participants for the previous five years to provide evidence of systematic implementation. Provide evidence of training for all employees including upper-level supervisors, support for ongoing education and achievement of workforce development, leadership-succession planning and certification objectives as well as evidence that the program design meets the goals of the program.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that it supports the professional development of its employees through the employment of a development and training program? Are the goals of the program explicit? Are the scope and components designed to active goals? Are training opportunities and participant lists provided as evidence of ongoing implementation? Has the agency demonstrated that its program offers development opportunities for employees in multiple levels of the organization structure? Has the agency demonstrated that the program supports leadership succession and certification objectives?

# Standard 4.7: Professional Certification and Organization Membership

## Description

Agencies shall encourage and, where possible, provide ‘time off’ or financial assistance, to enhance and develop employee acumen, ensure employees invest in a culture of lifelong learning, stay abreast of the most up-to-date best practices for the field, and create a network of high-performing peer professionals. Professional staff shall be active members of their professional organization(s) and pursue professional certifications within their respective disciplines. Holding continuous membership, valuing meeting attendance, making presentations, participating in committee work and achieving elected and appointed positions at the state, regional and/or national associations or organizations as well as participating in ongoing educational opportunities should ensure the viability of both personal and agency-related professional opportunities.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a comprehensive list of staff with professional certifications and, additionally, those who have actively participated in a professional organization during the prior accreditation review period, indicating the nature of participation that illustrates the agency's commitment to active participation in professional organizations. Provide a narrative illustrating how opportunities are afforded to a diverse array of staff from various levels within the organization. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following park and recreation professional certifications, e.g., Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE), Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS), Aquatic Facility Operator (AFO), etc.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided a comprehensive list of staff that includes their professional credentials and participation in professional development and association activities? Has the agency demonstrated that professional memberships and participation in professional associations are afforded to a variety of levels of staff within the organization?



# Standard 4.8: Workforce Health and Wellness Program

## Description

Agencies shall provide an employee health and wellness program. The program shall be periodically evaluated to ensure the program meets agency goals and objectives for the program.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide evidence of the agency's employee health and wellness program, level of participation, and most recent evaluation. Provide a narrative describing the goals of the program and any decisions made informed by results of the periodic evaluation.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided evidence of a workforce health and wellness program? Has the program been evaluated? Did the results of the evaluation inform changes (or no changes) to the program?

# Standard 4.9: Volunteer Management

## Description

There shall be a designated team or individual responsible for the agency's volunteer management functions. This person/team shall provide strategy and technical expertise in relation to recruitment, selection, training, management, evaluation, and recognition of volunteers. Policies and processes related to volunteer management, including background-check requirements, shall be documented, available to staff who utilize volunteer assistance, and provided to volunteers.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the position description for the person(s) responsible for volunteer management. If the position description(s) does not specify responsibility for volunteer management, a narrative description of involvement in volunteer management may be substituted. Provide a narrative describing the goals and objectives of the volunteer program. Provide the volunteer management manual used by the agency or the volunteer handbook provided to volunteers that includes: a list of functions in which the agency uses volunteers; outlines volunteer recruitment, selection, background investigation, orientation, training, and retention expectations; demonstrates processes used to supervise and evaluate volunteers; recognizes volunteer contributions. Provide evidence of recent evaluation of the program and adjustments made to the program that were informed by evaluation, in an effort to better meet volunteer program goals and objectives. Provide evidence of background-check administration in compliance with volunteer background-check policies promulgated by the agency and evidence of volunteer liability coverage provided by the agency. If unionized, provide a narrative demonstrating how the agency is addressing the division between union and volunteer responsibilities.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that it has an individual or team assigned to volunteer management activities? Has the agency developed goals and objectives for its volunteer program? Has the agency

provided a volunteer manual that includes all required elements listed in the EOC? Has the agency demonstrated that its volunteer program has been recently evaluated and adjustments made to the program informed by the data analyzed? Has the agency provided evidence that background check procedures are in place and agency staff administer background checks in compliance with policy? If unionized, has the agency demonstrated how volunteer responsibilities are distinguished from unionized roles?

“Being CAPRA Accredited gives us a strong step to our claim that we use industry best practices when we implement new policies or procedures. Having something to back up our professional stance on a variety of issues to show that we are professionals is critical in our efforts to get support and advocacy from our community partners, but also in helping the community to value our programs and services.”

***Allison P. Rankin, CPRP, Management Analyst – Fairfax County Park Authority, VA – CAPRA accredited since 2008.***

# Chapter 5 – Financial Management, Responsibility and Accountability

Financial management is the process of planning for, acquiring, and using funds to achieve predetermined organizational goals and objectives. The increasing demand for more and better services, continuing upward spiral of costs, increasing emphasis on fiscal responsibility and accountability, and emphasis in keeping taxes low, are all forcing park and recreation organizations to become more effective and efficient in all aspects of their financial operations. Parks and recreation managers must possess the ability to secure, organize, and control the financial resources of the organization to assure the success and survival of their organizations. Formal fiscal control and monitoring procedures enable an agency to establish accountability, to comply with funding authorizations and restrictions, to ensure that disbursements are for designated and approved purposes and to alert agency management to possible problems.

## Standard 5.1: Financial Management, Responsibility and Accountability

### Description

There shall be a designated position (person) or team responsible for the agency's Financial Management, Responsibility and Accountability. This person/team shall provide strategies and technical expertise in relation to financial management, accountability, and planning for and using funds to achieve predetermined agency goals and objectives.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

There shall be a narrative description of the overall financial management strategy utilized by the agency. Provide the job description for the position(s) involved in financial management on behalf of the agency (staff or consultants) and provide a narrative connecting technical needs to the experience of the person(s) responsible for financial management. In addition, describe how the agency incorporates diverse, equitable and inclusive management principles into these fiscal strategies, unless prohibited by state law or local ordinance.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Does the Agency denote specific individual(s) or teams which consistently review the financial documents including monthly or quarterly reports, income and expenditure logs, and other financial documents. If the Agency's organization submits an Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, are they involved and participatory?

## Standard 5.2: Legal Authority and Fiscal Policy

### Description

The agency shall have a defined legal authority for fiscal matters and fiscal policies approved by the body having legal authority. Both are understood and followed by the approving authority and staff.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative describing how legal fiscal authority is derived. Provide a summary of fiscal policies, such as those pertaining to segregation of funds, fund balance and reserve requirements, philosophical use of taxpayer funds, etc. Describe how policies are shared with new members of the approving authority and staff. Provide evidence that fiscal policies are being followed and ongoing improvements noted, e.g., meeting agendas, minutes, quarterly updates, sign-in documentation, etc. These items may reside in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Are local, state and federal fiscal policies being followed (and understood) as noted in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report or other relevant documents?

## Standard 5.3: Comprehensive Revenue Policy

### Description

There shall be an established fee policy, periodically updated, regarding fees and charges for programs, services, and admissions. The strategies and methodologies for fees/charges-setting and cost recovery shall be transparent and consistent with the agency's mission and core values. The policy shall be approved by the agency's approving authority and shall include provisions for staff and community input, social service responsibility, and fiscal accountability.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the policy and/or directing documents on fees and charges, the current fee schedules or cost-recovery procedures, and the most recent review or update. Provide evidence that the policy is administered, ensuring compliance with the approving authority's cost-recovery direction. Resource allocation strategies procedures shall also be included. Scholarship policies should be included if applicable.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is evidence provided that there is a definitive process for developing fees and vetting cost recovery processes on a regular basis? Are resources allocated according to procedures? Does the Agency's cost recovery process and philosophy take into account the Community's diversity (could be economic, cultural, and/or demographics)? Are fees approved by a designated body or authority?

# Standard 5.4: Grants and Alternative Funding Strategies

## Description

The agency may be able to leverage taxpayer dollars for the benefit of the community by seeking grants and alternative funding sources for projects and services. Grants and alternative funding sought should be aligned with agency priorities and managed diligently.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the policy and procedure for managing grants and alternative funding sources as well as evidence of compliance with grant management and reporting requirements. Provide the policy for solicitation and management of private, corporate and non-profit support. Additionally, provide evidence of the review and consideration of grant and alternative funding-source opportunities that result in received support which furthers the mission, vision, and strategic priorities of the agency.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there a defined process to keep abreast of grants? Is this process noted in procedure manuals? Is the grant process auditable and results recorded? Is there a process to ensure post-grant reporting is completed according to the grant requirements?

# Standard 5.5: Financial Statements

## Description

Agencies shall analyze financial statements throughout the fiscal year to inform decisions made that ensure the sustainable operation of the agency.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative describing how financial statements (could be monthly, quarterly, or annually) are available and used to manage the budget at all levels of the agency, systematically informing agency decision making throughout the fiscal year.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Are financial statements and/or reports available for review in accordance with the organization's procedures? Are they discussed and used as a decision-making tool?

## Standard 5.6: Purchasing Policy

### Description

The agency establishes and implements strategic levels of purchasing authority and procurement processes, inclusive of emergency purchasing, to ensure the highest and best use of taxpayer funds.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the policy and/or procedures. Provide a narrative outlining opportunities for staff to learn and train for best-practice procurement policies and procedures, e.g., reducing workload, increasing customer satisfaction, etc.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Are those who make purchases or part of the procurement process aware and trained on the purchasing policy?

## Standard 5.7: Independent Audit

### Description

There shall be an independent audit of the agency's fiscal activities conducted annually or at a time stipulated by applicable statute or regulation. The audit may be performed by the government's internal audit staff, e.g., city, county, state, as well as be external to the agency being audited, or by an outside certified public accounting firm. An independent audit assures taxpayers that agency funds are properly managed and tracked.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the most recent independent audit and management letter, or most recent Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and provide the response to the audit recommendations. Provide narrative evidence of adjustments made to accounting controls in response to audit recommendations.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Are the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and/or Audit available for review?

## Standard 5.8: Annual or Biennial Budget

### Description

A budget is a plan used to propose and approve use of funding to achieve the mission, vision, and key service delivery objectives of the agency. Staff and community input and/or review opportunities shall be provided.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide evidence that the annual or biennial budget is built in alignment with the mission, vision, and strategic priorities. This could be an artifact (collectible item) such as the budget message or transmittal letter that describes the connection between agency priorities and budgetary investment. Provide evidence of the opportunity for the staff and community to participate in the budget preparation process.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Does the narrative describe how the budget aligns with the Administration's priorities? Has evidence of public and staff involvement and engagement been established?

## Standard 5.9: Supplemental/Emergency Appropriations

### Description

When unforeseen events impact well-planned and executed budgets, supplemental or emergency appropriations may be required. The agency shall plan for these occurrences by developing and implementing policies to guide approval processes for changes to the approved budget.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide evidence illustrating a recent example of supplemental and/or emergency appropriations, which may have required budget amendment, followed by the approved process. If there has not been a need for such a budget adjustment, provide the documentation of the approved process or policy to follow when necessary.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the evidence been provided?

# Standard 5.10: Capital Asset Management

## Description

Agencies shall maintain capital asset depreciation and replacement schedules covering facilities, playgrounds, pavilions, fleet, etc., assisting the agency in efficiently maintaining continuity of operations and ensuring customer service standards are met.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the capital asset depreciation and replacement schedule; Provide evidence that the replacement schedule is sufficiently funded to ensure the viability of the public investment.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there a definitive process to make recommendations and priorities on capital replacement? Does the budget process include capital depreciation?



# Chapter 6 – Programs and Services Management

A program delivers recreation and leisure benefits to participants. High-quality programming is a dynamic process. Programming should be intentional and evidence-based to justify that resources are being used effectively and efficiently. A systematic and well-researched analysis determines what programs and services should be provided by the agency to deliver maximum coverage with a minimum of duplication, as well as to reduce competition. The public park and recreation program should be coordinated with related programs of other governmental, for-profit and non-profit organizations in the community, such as schools, voluntary agencies, and faith-based organizations.

The primary responsibility of the park and recreation professional is to provide programs by which leisure and recreation experiences and environments enhance the well-being, health and quality of life for participants. Certain program and service determinants give direction to what is provided and assessed. These determinants are conceptual foundations of play, recreation, and leisure; agency philosophy, goals and objectives; constituent interests and desired needs; and community opportunities for the public. Program and service objectives are benefits focused. Many agencies put objectives in “SMART” format (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timed) to assure that objectives are measurable, and they use logic modeling to focus their objectives on outcomes and impacts.

The Recreation Program Plan (RPP) includes all elements and services of the public park and recreation agency’s programming functions, including activity selection, type and scope of programs and outreach initiatives. While a master or comprehensive plan focuses on the equitable planning and development of parkland and recreation facilities, the RPP does the same for the planning and delivery of quality benefits-focused recreation and leisure experiences for the entire community. Programs cover the three (3) behavior domains: psychomotor (manipulation and coordination of physical skills and abilities), affective (interests, appreciations, attitudes and values) and cognitive (intellectual skills and abilities).

Park and recreation agencies should have a program that educates the public about the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of participation in self-directed and leader-directed recreation activities. A leisure education program consists of six (6) components:

1. Awareness of self in leisure;
2. Appreciation of leisure;
3. Understanding self-determination in leisure;
4. Making decisions regarding leisure participation;
5. Knowledge and use of resources for facilitating leisure; and
6. Promoting social interaction.

Examples include:

- Assuring that education and promotional efforts are inclusive, representative, and welcoming to all community residents.
- Cooperative agreements with local schools to develop classes, workshops or events to inform children and adolescents of leisure benefits.
- Community presentations regarding leisure benefits at libraries, senior-citizen centers, special recreation associations, and at business and industry meetings.
- Distributing a “benefits” website hyperlink to educate, publicize, and inform of agency programs and services through various social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and public cable TV channels.
- Organizing and categorizing agency publications and photos according to the benefits associated with targeted programs and services, e.g., benefits of nature walks for senior populations, benefits of outdoor play for children.
- Marketing and advertising the benefits message in agency telephone messages, email notices, employee newsletters and policy manuals, on staff apparel, facility and vehicle signage.
- Including benefit statements in brochures and program descriptions so that prospective participants will see what they can gain from participating in programs.

## **Standard 6.1: Recreation Program Responsibility and Accountability**

### **Description**

There shall be a designated position (individual) or team responsible for the agency's Recreation Programs and Services. This person/team shall provide strategies, community collaboration approaches, and technical expertise in relation to recreation programs offered to achieve predetermined agency goals and objectives.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide the job description and qualifications of the individual(s) in position(s) involved in recreation program management on behalf of the agency and provide a narrative connecting technical needs to the experience of the individual(s) responsible for programs managed.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Is someone assigned responsibility for managing all of the elements of the agency's recreation program?  
Has a job description with the qualifications of the current individual been provided?

# Standard 6.2: Program and Service Determinants (Components)

## Description

A strategic, systematic, and collaborative approach shall be taken in determining what programs and services shall be provided by the agency. This approach sees participants as partners and shall be reflected in the cooperation and trust the community has for the competence and responsiveness of the agency's staff in providing high-quality programming and services. Ensure staff are trained to develop programs and services using a determinants system that is based on the six program and service determinants AND informed by regular public engagement or a needs assessment.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Ensure staff are trained to develop programs and services using a determinants system that is based on the six program and service determinants AND informed by regular public engagement or a needs assessment. EOC documents should show how staff can access this information and demonstrate recurring staff training with an outline and dated sign-in sheet for the most recent training.

Provide documentation and examples demonstrating that six (6) program and service determinants are used in providing strategically managed programs and services. The actionable (practical and measurable) programs and services provided by the agency shall be based on (but not limited to) the following with some helpful examples:

- a. Conceptual foundations of play, recreation, and leisure, e.g., describe how recreational experiences include the pursuit of joy, pleasure, excitement and challenge; provide examples from agency programs.
- b. Organizational agency philosophy, mission and vision, and goals and objectives, e.g., describe how the agency philosophy, mission and vision are evidenced in the programs it produces; provide examples of how the agency ensures programs are meeting the expectations of residents and visitors.
- c. Constituent interests and desired needs, including those of diverse and underserved populations, e.g., describe how the agency gathers information on participants' interests and needs; describe what programs have emerged from the participants' suggestions; provide meeting minutes from staff trainings building service skills and helping communicate service priorities.
- d. Creation of a constituent-centered culture, e.g., provide a departmental evaluation of program benefits received by participants to involve community members in decision-making.
- e. Experiences desirable for clientele, e.g., describe what desirable outcomes the agency's programs provide; provide recent examples of programming for persons with disabilities and the underserved.
- f. Community opportunities, e.g., document the cooperative events and programs the agency provides for both participants and volunteers to be involved.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided examples demonstrating six (6) program and service determinants are cooperatively produced and used in managing their programs and services?

## Standard 6.3: Recreation Program Plan (RPP)

### Description

Leisure and recreation are integral to a community's health and wellness, and its social, cultural and economic development. The agency shall have a Recreation Program Plan (RPP) that furthers the implementation of the recreation and leisure objectives of the Park and Recreation Master Plan and Strategic Plan, that is reviewed and updated minimally every three (3) years, and that addresses the lifecycle (develop, assess, and improve or discontinue) of all leisure and recreation programs and services delivered by the agency.

An exemplary RPP may also reference and build upon the policies, procedures, information and findings from other program-related standards):

- Comprehensive Revenue Policy
- Community Engagement Relations Plan
- Marketing and Communications – External
- Program Objectives
- Establishing the Essentiality of Leisure Programs and Services
- Needs Assessment
- Community Inventory

At a minimum, the RPP shall contain the following:

- Cover page, date of approval, table of contents, introduction;
- Matrix of current programs indicating the target audience and level of cost recovery;
- Annual action plans showing program objectives in SMART format (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) for each year; and
- Description and diagram of the processes used to plan, develop, assess and evaluate new and existing programs.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the components listed in the standard. Include current RPP progress made in implementing annual action plans and specify which SMART objectives were achieved. The RPP shall address how the agency uses program determinants (6.2) to deliver programs and services to all persons regardless gender, racial/ethnic backgrounds, ages, abilities and socio-economic status and shall show how it develops and addresses the lifecycle program offerings (how programs are developed, assessed and evaluated, improved and/or discontinued). Provide evidence of how the RPP furthers the program objectives of the Park and Recreation System Master Plan (3.3) and the Strategic Plan (1.2).

At a minimum, the RPP shall contain the following:

- Cover page, date of approval, table of contents, introduction;
- Matrix of current programs indicating the target audience and level of cost recovery;
- Annual action plans showing program objectives in SMART format (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) for each year; and

- Description and diagram of the processes used to plan, develop, assess and evaluate new and existing programs.2).

An exemplary (though not required) RPP may also reference and build upon the policies, procedures, information and findings from other program-related standards):

- Participant involvement (1.3);
- Community and park planning (3.2);
- Comprehensive revenue policy (5.3);
- Communicating leisure outcomes (9.4);
- Community engagement (9.5);
- Community inventory (10.1);
- Leisure trends analysis (10.1);
- Outreach to diverse and underserved populations (10.1); and
- Park Metrics (10.1).

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Does the agency provide a completed RPP, with progress made in implementing annual action plans and achieved SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely) objectives? Has the agency addressed the RPP's minimum components called for by the standard? Does their evidence show how the RPP furthers the program objectives of the Park and Recreation System Master Plan and the Strategic Plan?

## **Standard 6.4: Program Evaluation - Staff Training and Use in Informing Programmatic Decision Making**

### **Description**

The agency shall provide training on how to evaluate programs, services and facilities for personnel involved in managing facilities and delivering programs and services. Agencies shall review evaluations and make programmatic decisions based on evaluation results.

### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide examples of recent evaluation trainings completed by the agency, including curriculum content, training dates and participant lists. Examples of training subjects could include but are not limited to qualitative and quantitative measurement, identification of applicable evaluation tools, data analysis, and use of findings, e.g., Describe how the agency incorporates its diverse, equitable and inclusive principles to evaluation of its services and/or services/management strategies. Provide evidence that programs conducted are making progress toward outcomes desired; Provide evidence that programmatic decision-making is informed by evaluation results.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Does the agency provide personnel involved in managing facilities, programs and services with training for program evaluation? Does the agency make their programmatic decisions based on evaluation results? Does the agency demonstrate progress toward its stated outcomes, including programming for diverse and traditionally underserved communities?

# Standard 6.5: Cooperative Recreation Programming

## Description

Agencies often partner with other organizations to deliver programs or services to the community, i.e., youth sports organizations. Such collaboration or cooperation shall be documented via formal agreement.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide current examples of cooperative programming with documentation, such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), or partnership agreements. These documents are generally associated with governance of relationships with groups such as youth sports clubs, non-profit affinity groups with a leisure focus, private for-profit program providers, YMCAs, YWCAs, and the like.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided current examples of cooperative programming services with official (formal) documentation?

# Standard 6.6: Piloting New Programs and Services

## Description

Agencies shall seek to understand the community's needs and preferences for recreational programs and services by piloting new or trial programs. These piloted programs can be promoted as free, introductory, or new programs or services and shall be evaluated to understand participant outcomes, satisfaction, and interest for continuing participation in similar programs and services.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide examples of new or trial programs or services employed by the agency. Provide a narrative describing the evaluative process, results, and subsequent decision making informed by ongoing evaluation results. Examples can range from an agency testing interest in a new cricket program where the south Asian population is growing to an agency piloting a new evidence-based health and wellness program for active older adults or running a trial overnight outdoor experiential education program for fourth graders as a part of the local school district curriculum.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency provided evidence of piloting programs? Has the agency implemented and utilized evaluation techniques to make informed decisions about the future of the programs tested?

# Chapter 7 – Facilities and Land Use Management

Physical resource planning is a process focusing on physical resources. The planning process conforms to the vision and mission statement of the controlling agency. Natural resources planning stretches across a continuum that has strict preservation at one end and complete modification at the other. The planning, development and management of physical resources are functions of all park and recreation managers, whether they are in the public, nonprofit, or for-profit sectors. Physical resources include natural undeveloped lands and waters, and developed areas including urban parks, special complexes (such as sports and aquatics), and buildings of various functions (such as fitness centers, community centers and interpretive centers). Ready access to accurate land and facility records is a basic requirement for program planning and facility management. Floor plans with square foot areas for each program space allow programmers and facility managers to determine how to use program spaces most efficiently. Building plans and specifications are invaluable for facilities management and capital programming because they provide insight into the design, materials, and equipment used in construction. Information from these documents is often used to determine the remaining useful life of building systems. Grants to purchase parkland and construct recreation facilities from such programs as the 1965 Land and Water Conservation Act (LAWCON) and the 1978 Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) place restrictions on use and disposition. High-performing maintenance operations organizations ensure quality experiences through well-managed spaces and places. Customized systems' approaches and solutions to operations management satisfy accreditation standards through the development, consistent use, and periodic review of management plans, policies, programs, and procedures as well as inspections and assessment schedules and records.

## Standard 7.1: Facility and Land Use Responsibility and Accountability

### Description

There shall be a designated position (individual) or team responsible for the agency's facilities and land use functions. This person/team shall provide planning strategy and technical expertise in relation to facilities and land use functions.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative description of the overall facilities and land use management strategy utilized by the agency. Provide the job description for the position(s) involved in facilities and land use management efforts on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants).

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that it has an individual or team assigned to facilities and land use management activities? Has the agency provided its approach/strategy toward managing facilities and

park land? Has the agency demonstrated that the individual or team assigned has the technical expertise necessary to achieve the agency's objectives?

## Standard 7.2: Park and Recreation Land Acquisition and Disposal

### Description

Agencies shall have established and implemented park land acquisition and disposal policies and procedures. These strategies for achieving park, recreation, conservation, and historical-cultural goals and purposes shall protect the public's investment in and enjoyment of public properties.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the policy(is) established that govern procedures followed to acquire or dispose of parkland, including citation of legal authority over final decision making. Provide a narrative describing how the agency acquires lands and facilities in conformance with the Park Master Plan and strategic objectives. The narrative shall include any public engagement opportunity requirements, bidding, etc. that may apply. Provide evidence that the most recent acquisition complied with these policies and procedures.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Do the documents describe how potential acquisitions or dispossessions tie into the master plan and community's needs? Has the needed documentation from the last acquisition been provided?

## Standard 7.3: Park and Recreation Property Development

### Description

Agencies shall have established and implemented park land development policies and procedures. These strategies for achieving park, recreation, conservation, and historical-cultural goals and purposes shall protect the public's investment in and enjoyment of public facilities.

---

### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the policy(ies) established that govern procedures followed to plan and develop parkland, including citation of legal authority over final decision making. Provide a narrative describing how the agency develops lands and facilities in conformance with the Park Master Plan and strategic objectives. The narrative shall include any public engagement opportunity requirements, post-acquisition timing requirements, bidding, etc. that may apply. Provide evidence that the most recent development project complied with these policies and procedures.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is the narrative descriptive enough to convey the full process including public involvement?



# Standard 7.4: Maintenance and Operations Management

## Description

Agencies shall set specific maintenance standards for parks, facilities, and special areas to ensure maintenance efforts reflect community preferences. Standards shall be used to develop maintenance and inspection schedules.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the established maintenance standards and plan for parks, facilities and specialty areas, including evidence of park maintenance classification according to the intended use of the area, ranging from heavily used and high developed areas to those that are lightly used and less developed; Aspects of historical/cultural areas shall be addressed as applicable. Provide the most recent review or update of the standards; Provide a narrative addressing implementation of the plan including, if applicable and available, quality assurance measures, reports and/or results.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Have the standards been updated and do the documents reflect measures and results?

## Standard 7.5: Preventative Maintenance

### Description

Agencies shall consider employee and patron safety, continuity of operations, and life cycle costs of operating mechanical systems, facilities, and equipment and shall develop written plans outlining procedures, tracking, and decision-making tools it will use to ensure the most efficient and effective use of funding.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the preventative maintenance plan and examples of detailed preventative maintenance programs for identified parks, recreation areas and facilities with special attention given to playground equipment, aquatic facilities, pedestrian pathways, building infrastructure and other high impact assets; Provide evidence of completed, recent inspections and safety checks for a sampling of facilities/areas; Demonstrate how these inspections results are used by the agency in decision-making related to staff assignments, replacement cycles, allocation of resources, and the like.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is a full preventative maintenance plan included? Is evidence of ongoing inspections included and documented?

## Standard 7.6: Fleet Management

### Description

Fleet management planning results in efficient and effective use of taxpayer funding as well as safe operation of equipment by staff. Agencies shall have a plan for maintenance and replacement of vehicles and rolling equipment.

---

### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the fleet management plan, which may reside within a different division or department of the overall organization such as Public Works; Provide evidence of implementation of the plan. Evidence of implementation could be inspections, maintenance records kept, etc.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Fleet plan provided and complete?

# Standard 7.7: Natural Resource Management

## Description

Agencies managing parks and open space properties shall have implemented natural resource management plans that protect the environment.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the natural resource management plan(s) and procedures as applicable. Provide examples of outreach and education to the community on practices that protect these natural resources.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is the natural resource management plan included and complete?

# Standard 7.8: Waste Reduction and Sustainability Efforts

## Description

Best practices related to climate resilience include practicing waste reduction, sustainability, and recycling efforts, modeling these activities and their impact for the community. Agencies shall encourage sustainability efforts which may include recycling efforts throughout the community.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a description of the recycling and/or zero waste efforts (as appropriate) for facilities and administrative offices and provide the last review with statistics (if available) on the program and its outcomes. Provide examples of education and outreach that illustrate how the agency is modeling recycling behaviors for the community. An organization or city or county publicized report, such as one from Public Information Office, is acceptable.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Are there sustainable efforts present, focused toward specific outcomes, and tracked? Are the agency's efforts publicized to the community?

## Chapter 8 – Law, Risk Management, Safety & Security

Laws and ordinances provide the foundation for controlling activities and behavior within the jurisdiction of the agency. General municipal codes, laws and ordinances and state and federal laws are applicable to parks and recreation areas and facilities. However, these laws generally have broad application and lack specificity as they relate to the control and management of parks and recreation areas and facilities. Special laws and ordinances may be enacted to specifically address and guide public use and behavior and may delegate authority to issue and enforce permits, licenses, rules and regulations applicable to parks and recreation areas and facilities. Agency staff are first-in-line to gain compliance with ordinances, rules and regulations. Regardless of whether the agency employs law enforcement officers or contracts for law enforcement services, agency staff have a responsibility to educate patrons on the proper use of parks, recreation areas and facilities. However, when patrons fail to comply, enforcement becomes the responsibility of sworn law enforcement officers. For agencies relying on the services of law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions or departments, it is essential that formalized liaison relationships be established between agency staff and the official law enforcement organization. Particular attention should be given to national, state and local emergency plans and procedures. (CH 9 Risk Mgmt. starts here) A comprehensive risk management plan is essential to minimize legal liabilities and personal injuries. The agency shall implement approaches for identification and control of risks based on the specific needs of the agency. There is no prescriptive method for identification of all risks suitable for all entities; the method and tools used will vary. Risk management is an on-going process that must be systematically evaluated for effectiveness and adjustments made as appropriate. Responsibilities must be assigned, and structure set in place to implement an effective plan. The analysis shall include the direct costs (staffing, insurance, prevention) and indirect costs (time lost from work by injured employees, damage to equipment and facilities, failure to provide services and loss of income). In some cases, the risk management plan and function may occur outside the park and recreation agency by another government authority. Special cooperative arrangements should be in place with other public departments and agencies, private contractors, and community organizations. directed toward large-scale natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, forest fires, and floods. Plans should include evacuation procedures, inventories and locations of equipment and materials, displacement plans for facility residents and activities, and provision of psychological aid for staff affected by emergencies.

## Standard 8.1: Risk Management Responsibility and Strategy

### Description

There shall be a designated person or team responsible for the agency's Risk Management functions. This person/team shall provide strategy and technical expertise in relation to loss control. This position/team shall lead the agency in implementation of risk management strategies following a risk identification/strategy development/evaluation/repeat cycle.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the applicable job description or team charge (could be outside the agency); Provide a narrative describing how risks are identified, assessed, and managed/transferred; provide the most recent risk assessment data report; Provide a narrative describing how data collected is analyzed and informs decision-making processes utilized in the agency's efforts to reduce, contain, transfer, or mitigate risk; Provide recent evidence of a change to policy, procedure, or practice made as a result of the risk management process.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there a job description where risk management is a requirement of the job? Is the amount of time pertinent for the size of the department? Has the agency demonstrated collection of data, analysis, and resulting changes intended to reduce risk?

## Standard 8.2: Protection of the Public's Health, Safety, and Welfare

### Description

There shall be codes, laws, ordinances, or rules in place to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare while using agency's facilities or property.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide documentation of the codes, laws, and ordinances that pertain specifically to areas and facilities under the jurisdiction of the agency and describe how they are posted or otherwise readily available to park patrons.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

If applicable, does the agency have codes, laws, and ordinances that apply specifically to areas and facilities under the jurisdiction of the agency? If not a municipality, has the agency developed policies or rules that protect the public's health, safety, and welfare while using the agency's facilities or property? Has the agency demonstrated that these are posted and readily available to patrons?

## Standard 8.3: General Security Plan

### Description

Agencies shall have documented a general security plan and procedures to include how it intends to staff to manage lock and key systems, alarm systems, opening and closing procedures, fire alarm and fire suppression systems, and emergency evacuation procedures.

---

### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the agency's general security plan or compilation of security plans from each major area, building or facility with information on the most recent review or update. These plans may include Locking key systems and associated assignments; Alarm system and assignment of security codes; Opening and closing procedures; Fire alarm and fire suppression systems; Emergency evacuation procedures; and Critical incident response procedures. Provide a narrative detailing how planned elements are trained and practiced. If you are unable to share plans due to security limitations, please note that.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there a security plan and is it followed? It should have key and alarm systems, opening and closing procedures, evacuation and intruder plans, and is it practiced at least twice a year?

## Standard 8.4: Personnel Safety Training

### Description

There shall be ongoing and routine safety training employed by the agency and available to employees at all levels within the organization.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide evidence of staff training opportunities identified in the standard; Provide evidence of training.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Is there a schedule for safety trainings? Is there evidence of safety training for new employees?

## Standard 8.5: Disruptive Behavior

### Description

Agencies shall have established policies and enforcement procedures for the handling of disruptive behavior on agency property.

---

### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide current procedures regarding handling of disruptive behavior. Include a narrative describing the relationship with law enforcement and roles of both agency staff and law enforcement officers in managing incidents.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Do staff know what they are supposed to do if there is disruptive behavior? Is there a method to bring in law enforcement when necessary?

## **Standard 8.6: Event Planning and Management**

### **Description**

Agencies shall coordinate safety and security details for special events, facilities, etc. with local law enforcement, public works, and other appropriate agencies.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a recent example of coordination with other departments/agencies on traffic control, parking plans, crowd control, safety, and security for activities and events hosted or facilitated by the agency. If you are unable to share event security plans, please note that and describe outside agency engagement in the process.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

For major events are there plans for security to include parking plans, crowd control, emergency action plans, and supervision?

## **Standard 8.7: Accidents/Incidents**

### **Description**

Agencies shall document and analyze accident/incident reports as a part of the risk identification processes.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a sampling of accident/incident reports; Provide evidence that demonstrates how accident/incident data informs decisions made to reduce risk after an incident or accident.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Are there accident reports on file? Is there follow-up meetings to identify how future accidents are prevented and are minutes of the meeting available and is there evidence that changes are made to prevent future similar accidents?

## Standard 8.8: Emergency Management Plan

### Description

Agencies shall have in place and practiced a plan to manage emergencies or natural disasters as they arise. Staff shall be trained on the plan and will practice scenarios intended to ensure professional response when an incident occurs.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the applicable emergency management plan with the most recent date of approval. If, due to security concerns, the emergency management plan is not available for public review, provide the emergency management plan table of contents. Provide documentation of in-service training programs on general security and emergency management, including a dated outline of the presentation topics and a roster of participants. In-service training and/or drill practice will be considered met if conducted annually.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Are emergency action plans available for typical emergencies including injury, typical major weather conditions, fire, natural disasters, and intruders? Have all staff been trained for their role in an emergency and are there records for when they are trained and practiced annually? Are there directions and maps for each room? Do maps include where emergency equipment is stored, safe zones, and evacuation routes?

## Standard 8.9: Crisis Response Management

### Description

Crises are likely events, whether they are associated with larger emergency events such as natural disasters, man-made events, or tragic accidents like accidental drownings. Agencies shall have strategies in place and a practice to mitigate further stressors in the aftermath of crisis.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide evidence of crisis response management strategies employed by the agency. Examples of strategies may include an employee assistance program, trauma induced training, crisis response activities, partnerships with first responders, emergency management organizations, or counseling agencies, and the like.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

For people involved in significant emergencies, is there a record that a meeting or counselors were made available where they could discuss the incident? Is there communication with other city agencies that can be organized to help with issues related to the crisis?



# Standard 8.10: Prevention Activities (Risk Management)

## Description

In large part, many accidents can be avoided by employing prevention activities. Agencies shall develop and implement prevention activities to reduce risk to participants and employees while using agency facilities and engaging in programs. Prevention activities include but are not limited to facility inspection systems, pre-program risk assessments, and the like.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative describing prevention activities employed by the agency that are regularly reviewed and analyzed. Demonstrate that analysis of data informs decisions made in relation to reduction, acceptance, transfer, or avoidance of risk.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Are there records of inspections and corrections that show regular care and maintenance of facilities and equipment? Are policies and procedures added as new facilities or community changes occur?

“Pursuing CAPRA accreditation compelled our agency to revisit policies, procedures, and practices that had been established prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our world changed so much, and our way of conducting business needed to reflect those changes. CAPRA re-accreditation was a necessary and critical reset for our organization.”

***Aisha Panas Georgakopoulos, CPRP, Director, Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District, OR – CAPRA accredited since 2017.***

# Chapter 9 – Marketing, Communications, and Community Engagement

Public information, community relations, marketing, and community engagement are complementary functions within the agency. The functions overlap because they all deal with an organization's relationships and employ similar communication tools. While they have the same ultimate purpose of helping assure an organization's success, the purpose of each differs and each approaches the task from a different perspective. To operate effectively, a park and recreation agency must have the support of its community. An agency can obtain such support by informing the public and news media of events that affect the lives of citizens in the community. By providing the news media and the community with information on agency administration and operations, a relationship of mutual trust, cooperation, and respect can be maintained. A well-organized community relations effort can act as an effective means of eliciting public support and can serve to identify problems in the making. Effective market research, planning, product and program development, strategies, and objectives for delivering demand-driven, high-quality programs and services contribute to successful park and recreation operations. Marketing is a process for accomplishing agency mission and objectives by developing, pricing, making accessible, and providing accurate and timely information about recreational opportunities that satisfy the wants/desires of target markets. All park and recreation agencies perform certain marketing functions; the scope of their work, however, depends on their size and mandate.

## Standard 9.1: Marketing, Communications, and Community Engagement Responsibility

### Description

There shall be a designated position (individual) or team responsible for the agency's Marketing, Communications, and Community Engagement functions. This person/team shall provide strategies and technical expertise in relation to marketing, communications, crisis communications, and community engagement activities conducted to achieve predetermined agency goals and objectives related to this area of responsibility.

### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the job description and qualifications of the individual(s) in position(s) involved in marketing, communications, and community engagement activities on behalf of the agency (staff and/or consultants) and provide a narrative connecting technical needs to the experience of the individual(s) responsible. Provide a narrative description of marketing and communications strategy utilized by the agency. Describe how different communities are represented thoughtfully and intentionally in all aspects of marketing.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that it has an individual or team assigned to marketing, communications, and community engagement activities? Has the agency demonstrated that the individual or team assigned

to such activities has the requisite expertise necessary to serve in this capacity? Has the agency demonstrated that it has operationalized its goals and objectives related to this area of responsibility?

## Standard 9.2: Marketing and Communications – external

### Description

Communications and community engagement activities shall reach a diverse array of community members representative of community demographics; Changes to strategy shall be informed by evaluation of efforts.; Development of relationships with the media, where possible, may be utilized to advance the agency's brand, image, and service reach.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide evidence of data collection, analysis, and decision-making related to marketing and communications functions that result in improvements in external communications and community engagement efforts that reach an audience representative of the community. Provide a narrative describing the relationship with the media, if applicable, and in what ways the relationship impacts brand, image, and service reach.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that it has established systematic data collection, analysis, and decision-making that results in improvements to external communication efforts? Has the agency demonstrated that it has developed relationships with the media?

## Standard 9.3: Internal Communications

### Description

Agencies shall establish effective internal communications strategies and tactics to ensure key information reaches employees at all levels within the organization.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a communication matrix illustrating how internal communications are managed by the agency; Provide the most recent evaluation of internal communications efforts; Provide evidence of changes made to communications strategies in response to evaluation data.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated that internal communications reach employees at all levels, are evaluated, and results of evaluation are used to adjust internal communications strategies to improve reach?

# Standard 9.4: Communicating the Essentiality and Impact of Leisure Programs and Services

## Description

Promoting the essentiality of leisure participation, demonstrating the importance of all parks and recreation services and functions as well as promoting their positive impacts are central to marketing recreation programs and services. In addition to marketing recreation programs and services, the agency must continually educate about the many community-wide benefits of parks, recreation activities and leisure time. These include economic development, increased property values, and physical and mental well-being. Such educational activities provide community members with the rational basis for park and recreation programs and services to be included as governmental expenditures.

The agency shall have an ongoing and systematic process to educate the general population and elected officials about the benefits, values, outcomes, and positive impacts of leisure and recreation services provided. Educating the public about leisure and recreation shall be ongoing, systematic and should be done in cooperation with community agencies and organizations, e.g., schools, public health departments other leisure agencies, businesses, and commercial recreation establishments. Communication shall begin and continue to establish the essentiality of agency services and be periodically evaluated for effectiveness.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide examples of the methods utilized by the agency to educate and inform the community and/or elected officials on the benefits, values, outcomes, and impacts of leisure and recreation services to a diverse range of participants and non-participants. Examples may include but are not limited to, e.g., social media posts showing evidence-based benefits individuals are deriving from participation in leisure activities; inclusion of benefits-based information in the program catalog, brochures, or website; community presentations regarding leisure participation benefits in holistic health (mental, social, emotional) and well-being services and/or referrals at community locations; and/or conducting benefits-based program research studies with neighboring universities, community colleges or high schools. Provide the last review (qualitative and/or quantitative) of effectiveness of these advocacy efforts.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency demonstrated a commitment to educating elected officials and the community about the importance of parks and recreation as a government expense (seeking to establish essentiality)? Has the agency demonstrated a commitment to the review of effectiveness?

## Standard 9.5: Community Engagement

### Description

Community engagement techniques are used by agencies to invite the community to influence agency strategic direction, facility and amenity improvements, and programming. Engaging the community regularly builds relationships, trust, and helps ensure the agency is attuned to and addressing the needs of the community. Agencies shall have implemented thoughtful strategies to engage and involve the community on a regular basis.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative describing community engagement strategies employed by the agency to regularly connect with members of the community in an effort to better understand community needs for park and recreation services. Describe how engagement is adjusted depending upon the community the agency is trying to reach. Best practices go beyond traditional surveying and community input sessions and may include regularly meeting special interest focus groups, unique feedback events, co-designed projects, etc.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency developed and implemented unique relationship-building community engagement strategies that afford the staff insight into community recreation needs?

## Standard 9.6: Crisis Communications

### Description

Provide agency strategies and/or protocols developed for managing internal and external communications during a crisis situation. Provide evidence that appropriate staff have been trained on these strategies and/or protocols. If any elements are not permitted to be shared for security reasons, please indicate this in the self-assessment.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide agency strategies and/or protocols developed for managing internal and external communications during a crisis situation. Provide evidence that appropriate staff have been trained on these strategies and/or protocols.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency developed strategies and/or protocols for crisis communication? Has the agency demonstrated that these strategies and/or protocols have been shared with staff and practiced?

# Chapter 10 – Evaluation, Assessment, and Research

The skills to assess and evaluate are essential to compete successfully for external and internal resources, including monies for capital improvements and new programs, and for solicitation of corporate and foundation funding. It is also important for tracking and analyzing trends so that the agency can remain competitive in a changing environment. Evaluation, assessment or performance measurement, and research are systematic processes that park and recreation professionals use to better understand the impacts of their efforts on the communities they serve. What is learned through evaluation, assessment, and research is used to demonstrate the value of what is provided and to learn how to make improvements.

Establishing standards and measuring progress in attaining those standards is a basic business-planning tool. Analyses of reliable data and qualitative information are essential to track progress in implementing master plans and strategic initiatives. Products of evaluation, assessment, and research become important components to support planning, development and programming decisions. Agencies have limited resources to devote to evaluation and assessment. Therefore, it is important to decide how those resources can be most effectively and efficiently deployed. Agencies must be able to objectively determine which programs, services, and facilities need to be evaluated and what research, assessment and evaluation tools are best to use.

Benchmarking is the process of making comparisons to the processes, programs, and services of other providers. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed Park Metrics, which is a tool to capture uniform data information on park and recreation agencies across the nation. Park Metrics is the only national benchmarking tool for the park and recreation profession. As such, it can be successful as a reliable research tool only with broad participation from park and recreation agencies. Therefore, CAPRA has a standard that is intended to incentivize wide participation in Park Metrics.

# Standard 10.1: Community Needs Assessment and Trends Analysis

## Description

Agencies cannot fully meet community needs without understanding the market in which they operate. An appropriate needs assessment includes identifying local needs, which may vary greatly based on the specific agency, as well as the demographics and dynamics within each community.

Agencies shall engage in a strategic, systematic, and collaborative approach to assessing community assets and needs as they relate to park and recreation services. The agency shall periodically assess societal and local recreation and leisure trends and determine how those trends impact existing and projected user populations.

In assessing community assets, the agency shall compile a complete and current inventory of parkland, recreation facilities, recreation programs and services in its service area, including those provided by other public, private, and non-profit providers. The agency shall periodically assess needs-assessment information against available assets (resources and funds) to identify existing and projected gaps in service and programming while determining/reassessing land, facility and service priorities.

When feasible, the agency should also benchmark its programs, services, and facilities with NRPA's Park Metrics database comparing and contrasting benchmarks with community feedback, e.g., particularly when gaps in service are present or perceived in traditionally underserved communities.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative describing the identification of outcomes and evidence of improvements and/or changes in service delivery made as a result of information gathered through the community needs-assessment and trends analysis process.

Provide documentation and examples demonstrating needs assessments are performed on a routine basis,

- An analysis of park and recreation trends as they relate to the agency and its community not less than every five years;
- A comprehensive review of the community's park and recreation inventory including for profit, non-profit and other governmental parks and recreation providers not less than every three years;
- Benchmarking segments of the agency's programs, services and facilities with local community assets and when feasible, NRPA's Park Metric database annually;
- Implementation of community needs-assessment data-collection efforts not less than every five years.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

Has the agency engaged in needs assessment data collection consisting of a minimum of the four components specified (trends, community inventory, benchmarking, and needs assessment) within the last five years? Has the agency demonstrated that it has analyzed the information and used results to inform changes to its service delivery strategies?

# Standard 10.2: Systematic Evaluation Program

## Description

An evaluation program shall be implemented to ensure programs, services and facilities meet their stated needs/objectives and to facilitate an overall commitment to continuous improvement. The agency shall systematically evaluate programs, facilities and services provided by the agency for operational efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and customer service. Examples include but are not limited to customer comment applications, secret/mystery shopper surveys, user satisfaction surveys, social media accounts, and post-occupancy facility surveys.

Considering inclusion efforts in evaluation are crucial for ensuring all appropriate voices are heard. Agencies shall demonstrate efforts/procedures for including all appropriate diverse voices have been included in the process and also that accommodations, including languages, visual/hearing aids, physical accommodations, etc. are considered important elements.

Agencies shall appoint a person or persons dedicated to the oversight of the evaluation program, train staff on evaluation processes and techniques, report results to the approval authority/policy body, and utilize the results to inform decision-making. The systematic evaluation program shall be reviewed regularly for effectiveness.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a narrative and evidence of documents or reports demonstrating that a comprehensive evaluation program for programs, services and facilities exists. Include a description of the evaluation plan that details what facilities, services, and programs are being evaluated, assessed, and measured and why they were selected. Describe the evaluation and assessment tools and methods being used for each and the frequency of the measurement, or assessment.

Agencies shall provide a narrative demonstrating efforts/procedures for including all appropriate voices have been included in the process and also that accommodations, including languages, visual/hearing aids, physical accommodations, etc. are considered important elements.

A comprehensive evaluation program includes, but is not limited to:

- A person or persons dedicated to the oversight of the evaluation program (may provide job description(s))
- Training provided to staff responsible for elements of the evaluation program (may provide examples of recent trainings including content, training dates, and participant rosters)



- Reports that summarize the data collected and action taken because of the results found, i.e., where action steps were considered, implemented, and documented for each project.

Provide evidence of presentation of reports to approving authority/policy body and of implementation of changes made informed by the results. Provide evidence of periodic evaluation of the systematic evaluation program itself to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program. Include documentation of the resulting action plan for improvement and status updates on improvements prescribed.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Has the agency demonstrated that a systematic evaluation program exists that is supported by (1) a person or person(s) appointed to oversee the program, (2) staff training on evaluation for those involved, and (3) compilation of reports that outline the results and findings of the evaluation conducted? Has the agency demonstrated that key facilities, services, and programs are scheduled systematically for evaluation? Has evidence been provided that demonstrates the agency presents results to the approving authority and that decision-making occurs informed by results? Has the agency demonstrated that the evaluation program itself is reviewed for effectiveness?

## **Standard 10.3: Investigation and Evidence Based Decision-Making/Educational Projects**

### **Description**

The agency shall conduct or participate in research projects that help develop, evaluate and test new programs, processes or facilities, or may collaborate with educational institutions (e.g., high schools, community colleges, universities, etc.) to advance the park and recreation profession through student-learning projects and/or evidence-based programs. Where feasible, agency decision-making shall be informed by results of the project or evidence-based program. This standard requires a project to be completed once every five (5) years.

### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

The agency shall participate in at least one research or student-learning project within the past five (5) years. Summarize each investigation or project within the narrative. Provide a report outlining the research or project goals, process, and outcomes for each investigation, project or evidence-based program. Where feasible, data-informed decisions made by the agency shall be described. There should be some documented effort to examine diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the plan for any evaluation or research project.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

Did a qualifying research investigation or educational project occur within the last five years? Was there a report provided outlining, at minimum, the project goals, process, and outcomes? If appropriate, did the project's results inform decisions made by the agency?

# Appendix A – Agency Application and Annual Report

These sections are included in the accreditation application for agencies seeking accreditation or re-accreditation and shall be required to submit prior to completing the self-assessment and visit processes. All elements of the application must be deemed complete responses by the CRT prior to authorization to move forward in the accreditation process. Understanding the history, source of authority, jurisdiction, and recent changes impacting the agency provides insight to agency team members and CAPRA visitors alike as the self-assessment and visit processes begin. Delineation of jurisdiction and authority are the foundation upon which the park and recreation agency is organized. Policy and rule-making functions define the organizational framework. The organizational structure provides alignment of responsibility and delegation of authority to enable an agency to carry out its mission. The roles, responsibilities, and structure should be clearly understood by staff and the public. Annual reporting between accreditation reviews ensures the agency has incorporated CAPRA into agency culture.

## Section 1: General Historical Information

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Please provide a narrative describing a general overview of the founding of the agency and key points in its history and governance. Please include impactful events that shaped the agency's development, services, community, etc., such as major governance changes, natural disasters, social movements, and the like.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## Section 2: Source of Authority

### Description

The source of agency authority or legal basis of operation and the extent of powers shall be identified in a legal document such as the state statute, local charter, city ordinance, or park district code. The agency and its executive staff should have an understanding of the agency's legal basis for authority.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide legal citation and, if appropriate, date of resolution by local governing entity or legal authority (i.e., enabling act, support documentation, ordinance; if permissive state authority, provide charter). Provide a narrative illustrating how the source of authority defines how the agency operates to demonstrate staff understanding of the source of authority.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## **Section 3: Approving Authority/Policy Body**

### **Description**

The agency shall have clearly documented organizational powers of authority. Executive level staff shall have an understanding of these powers and authorities.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a chart or diagram and narrative description of the organizational structure, interrelationship of organizational components and powers of authority over policymaking; show the relationship of the agency to its approving authority and provide the approving authority bylaws or charter. Provide examples that illustrate how agency staff work in compliance with the established approving authority structure and/or bylaws/charter to demonstrate compliance with and staff understanding of the delegation of authority.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## **Section 4: Delegation of Authority**

### **Description**

There shall be a clear and documented delegation of authority between the approving authority, advisory body (if applicable), and the agency's chief executive and staff.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide documentation of the delegation of responsibilities among approving authority, advisory body, chief administrator, and staff regarding development and implementation of policies, rules, regulations, and operational procedures.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## Section 5: Agency Leadership

### Description

There shall be a designated position, Agency Director, responsible for the roles and functions of agency leadership and management. The incumbent shall possess the necessary qualifications and experience needed to successfully lead and manage the organization. This person shall be responsible to the approving authority for the direction and control of the operations and administration of the agency with authority to perform such responsibilities. The incumbent shall be employed full-time, year-round, and be qualified by experience, education, certification, and/or training in park, recreation, leisure services, tourism, or related disciplines. These qualifications shall be verified and demonstrated specifically relating to park and/or recreation management.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide the agency's position description for the Director, including resume with proof of required and preferred certification and qualifications for the position. Provide a descriptive narrative linking the qualifications of the position to the needs of the agency. If the incumbent is not CPRP or CPRE certified, provide a descriptive narrative connecting the incumbent's experience to the listed qualifications as well their experience delivering services to a broad and inclusive array of community members across dimensions such as language, income, urban/rural, gender, race, and age. In addition, if the director is from a related or non-related discipline, provide a summary of how the person's qualifications relate to park and/or recreation management and the NRPA's three pillars (fundamental precepts) of health and wellness, equity, and conservation. If the incumbent is a political appointment from outside the field, the agency may submit the job description and qualifications of executive team members.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only - Does the agency director have the necessary qualifications and experience needed to successfully lead and manage the organization based on organizational needs expressed in the narrative? If the agency director is a political appointment in an organization with a strong mayor form of government, this item is not scored.

## Section 6: Jurisdiction

### Description

Agencies shall have jurisdictional boundaries clearly defined.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a map with geographical boundaries of jurisdiction and service areas, including location of facilities identified.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## Section 7: Organization Structure

### Description

The agency's structure (departments, divisions, staffing) shall support efficient and effective delivery of services in fulfillment of the agency's mission, methods of operation, relationship to the community, and the relationships among its different organizational components.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide an up-to-date organizational chart with a narrative description explaining how the structure is suited to the agency's mission, vision, strategic plan, methods of operation and relationship to the community. Identify and explain how adjustments to the structure were made in the past five years to create greater efficiency and/or effectiveness in the interrelationships among organizational components and the function of each component in the delivery of key services. Illustrate where responsibility for certain accreditation required administrative functions lie outside the agency if applicable. Indicate how this information is made available to staff and the public.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only - Does the agency's organizational structure support the mission and strategic objectives expressed? If changes in structure or staffing have occurred since strategic plan adoption, are those changes in alignment with strategic direction or toward operational effectiveness? Is information about the organization's structure available to staff and the public?

## Section 8: Agency Awards and Citations

### Description

Agencies and their staff shall celebrate successes.

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### Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide a list of both agency and agency staff awards at the local, state, and national level received in the last ten years as well as any important accomplishments or successes.

### Scoring Rubric Questions

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## **Section 9: Agency Changes Since Last Accreditation**

### **Description**

Agencies shall have a solid understanding of organizational changes and how those changes impact service delivery and compliance with accreditation purpose.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide a narrative that describes changes in leadership, new major facilities, added or dropped programs/services, staffing levels, wildfires, floods, pandemics, etc.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only.

## **Section 10: Periodic Timetable for Review of Documents**

### **Description**

The following documents are required within the CAPRA Self-Assessment and shall be reviewed and updated as appropriate: Strategic Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, Parks and Recreation System Master Plan, ADA Transition Plan, Personnel Policy Manual, Volunteer Manual, Comprehensive Revenue Policy, Purchasing Policy, Recreation Program Plan, Park Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy, Park Land Development Policies and Procedures, Preventative Maintenance Plan, Fleet Management Plan, Natural Resources Management Plan, Environmental Sustainability Plan, General Security Plan, and Emergency Management Plan.

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### **Suggested Evidence of Compliance**

Provide the agency review schedule for the document, program, policy or procedure referenced in the enumerated standards including the Authority responsible for approving each document in the timetable.

### **Scoring Rubric Questions**

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only. For reaccrediting agencies - have they demonstrated adherence to periodic review requirements throughout the accreditation review period?

# Section 11: Annual Reporting Requirement(s)

## Description

Previously accredited agencies are required to submit annual reports to the CAPRA Commission. In addition, participation in data collection efforts for the betterment of the industry is required.

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## Suggested Evidence of Compliance

Provide proof of Annual Accreditation Report submissions for each year of this reaccreditation cycle. Provide evidence of participation in the NRPA Park Metrics data collection program.

## Scoring Rubric Questions

NOT SCORED BUT REQUIRED - for visit team information and assurance of proper agency preparation only. Has the reaccrediting agency submitted complete and timely annual reports to CAPRA since the last accreditation review? Has the Agency participated in NRPA's Park Metrics annually since the last accreditation review?



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