



2027 CAPRA National Accreditation Standards



NATIONAL RECREATION
AND PARK ASSOCIATION

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Overview

The following document is broken down into four sections. Please review the following descriptions before moving forward.

1. Agency Pre-assessment Report (pages 9-13) – This information will be requested at the time of initial application. Agencies must meet Required Evidence of Compliance in this section before they are moved forward to Self-Assessment.
2. Accreditation Process (pages 14-15) – This information provides you with a quick reference on the difference between fundamental and non-fundamental standards, as well as the number of standards required for both new and reaccrediting agencies to achieve accreditation.
3. Accreditation Standards and Evidence of Compliance (pages 16-57) – This information is provided to assist you with preparations for your CAPRA Accreditation Self-Assessment and Visit.
4. Appendix A: Standard Rubrics (pages 58-79) – This information is primarily for the use of the CAPRA volunteers to assist with agency reviews.

Agency Pre-assessment 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 Advisor before an agency moves 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 volunteers 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.

Section 1: General Historical Information

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

Section 2: Source of Authority

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.

Required 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 describing how the source of authority defines how the agency operates to demonstrate staff understanding of the source of authority.

Section 3: Approving Authority/Governing Body

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

Required 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.

Section 4: Delegation of Authority

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

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

Section 5: Agency Leadership

There shall be a designated position, Agency Administrator/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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the agency's position description for the Agency Administrator/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 representative array of community members across dimensions such as language, income, urban/rural, gender, race, and age.
- In addition, if the agency administrator/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 well-being, equity, and environmental resilience.
- If the incumbent is a political appointment from outside the field, the agency may submit the job description and qualifications of executive team members.

Note - Agency's response may require Human Resources department engagement

Agency focus

Does the agency administrator/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 administrator/director is a political appointment in an organization with a strong mayor form of government, this does not apply.

Section 6: Jurisdiction

Agencies shall have jurisdictional boundaries clearly defined.

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

Section 7: Organization Structure

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.

Required 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.

Agency focus

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

Agencies and their staff shall celebrate successes.

Required 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.

Section 9: Agency Changes Since Last Accreditation (Reaccrediting agencies only)

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

Required 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.

Section 10: Periodic Timetable for Review of Documents

The following documents are required within the CAPRA Self-Assessment and shall be reviewed and updated as appropriate:

Fundamental Standards

1.2 - Strategic Plan; 2.5 - Adaptive Programs from which everyone benefits and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Services Accessibility Compliance; 3.3 - Parks and Recreation System Master Plan; 4.2 - Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual; 5.3 - Comprehensive Revenue Policy; 5.6 - Purchasing Policy; 6.3 - Recreation Programming Plan; 7.2 - Park and Recreation Land Acquisition and Disposal; 7.3 - Park and Recreation Property Development; 8.3 - General Security Plan, 8.8 - Emergency Management Plan, 10.3 - Systematic Data Analysis and Action

Non-Fundamental Standards

2.6 - Continuity of Operations Plan; 4.3 – Compensation Plan; 4.8 - Workforce Health and Wellness Program , 4.9 - Volunteer Management; 7.5 - Preventative Maintenance Plan; 7.6 - Fleet Management Plan; and 7.7 - Natural Resources Management, 9.4 - Communicating the Essentiality and Impact of Leisure Programs and Services (Advocacy)

Required 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.

Reaccrediting agency focus

Has the reaccrediting agency demonstrated adherence to periodic review requirements throughout the accreditation review period?

Accreditation Process

Accreditation is based on an agency's compliance with the **67** standards for national accreditation. To achieve accreditation, an agency must comply with all **37** Fundamental Standards, which are indicated in the color **teal** and with a star  in this publication, and **24** of the **30** Non-Fundamental Standards upon initial accreditation and **27** of the **30** 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: Adaptive Programs from which everyone benefits 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: Codes, Laws, Ordinances, Policies, and/or Rules
 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: External Marketing and Communications
Standard 9.5: Community Engagement
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Standard 10.2: Systematic Data Collection
Standard 10.3: Systematic Data Analysis and Action

Accreditation Standards and Evidence of Compliance

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 ★

Agencies shall have an approved 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.

Required 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 in the narrative how 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.

Standard 1.2: Strategic Plan ★

The agency shall have an approved 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.

Required 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.

Standard 1.3: Community Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning ★

Agencies shall solicit and 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 under-resourced communities and previously left out populations.

Required 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.

Standard 1.4: Personnel Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning ★

Agencies shall have 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 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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- 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 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

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.

Required 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.

Standard 2.2: Agency Relationships

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a matrix outlining a list of 3 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) or ongoing cooperative projects or efforts with accompanying staff assigned. To include:
 - how this program fulfills the mission
 - identifies the staff and their relationship with the partner agency
 - start date and expiration date of agreement
 - performance measures
 - link to the agreement(s)

Standard 2.3: Technological Resources

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 staff to perform their appropriate functions efficiently and effectively.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a matrix illustrating the technology used by the agency. Including:
 - Dates of adoption/installation or latest upgrade
 - Description of how each resource is used to further the mission and goals
 - Link or screenshot of technology example
- 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.

“[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 2.4: Records Management

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the position description that reflects responsibility for records management for the organization and agency liaison if different.
- 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.

Standard 2.5: Adaptive Programs from which everyone benefits and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Services Accessibility Compliance ★

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 are welcoming to 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, welcoming, 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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide policy and procedures which address issues pertaining to ADA compliance, access, and adaptive programming either in a written or electronic format.
- Provide the position description that reflects responsibility for ADA compliance functions.
- Demonstrate that the agency's website is accessible.
- 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 provides adaptive programs or is cooperating with an agency or agencies who do provide such programming.
- Provide evidence of a publicly posted notice that communicates the dispute process in compliance with the ADA.
- Demonstrate how the policies and procedures are used to receive and respond to a complaint.

Standard 2.6: Continuity of Operations

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.

Required 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.

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 Agency Administrator/Director should be closely involved in the planning process. A direct relationship between planning personnel and the Agency Administrator/Director enhances the ability for the planning personnel to collect data and make recommendations, and the Agency Administrator/Director'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

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a narrative description of the overall community and park planning strategy utilized by the agency.
- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience for the position(s) involved in planning efforts on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/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.

Standard 3.2: Planning with Regional, State and Federal Agencies

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.

Required 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.

Standard 3.3: Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

The agency shall adopt and periodically review 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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the plan which shall include an analysis of current conditions through community needs assessment, list of agency-managed parks and facilities, level of service analysis, and current trends. As appropriate, the plan shall incorporate historical and/or cultural aspects of the community. Evidence of review periodically (within last 5 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.
- 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 results that can be applied community wide. This may include how collected community input was used to inform planning objectives.
- Evidence of initial or updated adoption

Standard 3.4: Feasibility Studies

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

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

Standard 3.5: Site Plans

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a representative sampling of 2 or more 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 a site plan is in alignment with Park Master Plan objectives and community input.

Standard 3.6: Sustainability and Environmental Resilience Strategy

Environmental 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 environmental resilience. 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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a narrative outlining the agency's sustainability and environmental resilience strategy and goals.
- Demonstrate how these are shared with the public.
- How the strategy address resilience equitably, particularly for communities most impacted by such concerns?
- Demonstrate how these were evaluated.

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 ★

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a narrative description of the overall human resource planning strategy utilized by the agency.
- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience 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.

Standard 4.2: Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual ★

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 a welcoming 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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual including
 - Date of adoption by the agency's approving authority, date of last review, code of ethics, standards related to the acceptance of gifts and gratuities by staff, benefits, equitable and diverse recruitment, selection and hiring with background investigation (unless prohibited by law), 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.

Standard 4.3: Compensation Plan

There shall be an established compensation plan that ensures fair 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.

Required 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.

Standard 4.4: Employee Performance Evaluation and Supervision

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.

Required 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.

Standard 4.5: Onboarding/Orientation Processes

The agency shall provide employee onboarding/orientation 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.

Required 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.

Standard 4.6: Employee Development and Training Program

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.

Required 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. If seeking initial accreditation, a minimum of one year of evidence is required.
- 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.

Standard 4.7: Professional Certification and Organization Membership

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.

Required 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 describing how opportunities are afforded to a wide 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.

Standard 4.8: Workforce Health and Wellness Program

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.

Required 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.

Standard 4.9: Volunteer Management

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the position description for the person(s) responsible for volunteer management functions. If the position description(s) does not have specific 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.

“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 ensure 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

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- There shall be a narrative description of the overall financial management strategy utilized by the agency.
- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience for the position(s) involved in financial management on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants)
- Describe how the agency incorporates fairness and accessibility management principles into these fiscal strategies, unless prohibited by state law or local ordinance.

Standard 5.2: Legal Authority and Fiscal Policy ★

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

Required 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 and procedures have been established and are being followed. These items may reside in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Standard 5.3: Comprehensive Revenue Policy ★

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, and fiscal accountability.

Required 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 strategy procedures shall also be included.
- Scholarship policies should be included if applicable.

Standard 5.4: Grants and Alternative Funding Strategies

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. Policies and procedures should be established to guide the agency. Grants and alternative funding sought should be aligned with agency priorities and managed diligently.

Required 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.
- 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.

Standard 5.5: Financial Statements

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

Required 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.

Standard 5.6: Purchasing Policy

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

Required 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.

Standard 5.7: Independent Audit ★

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.

Required 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, if applicable.

Standard 5.8: Annual or Biennial Budget ★

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.

Required 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.

Standard 5.9: Supplemental/Emergency Appropriations

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide evidence describing 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 documentation of the approved process or policy to follow when necessary.

Standard 5.10: Capital Asset Management

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the capital asset depreciation and replacement schedule.
- Provide evidence that the replacement schedule has forecasted future expenditures to sufficiently fund future replacements.

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 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

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience for the position(s) involved in recreation program management on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants)

Standard 6.2: Program and Service Determinants (Components) ★

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.

Required 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:

1. Conceptual foundations of play, recreation, and leisure, e.g., identify how recreational experiences include the pursuit of joy, pleasure, excitement and challenge; provide examples from agency programs. These may be referenced in the CAPRA Accreditation Policies and Procedures document.
2. Organizational agency philosophy, mission and vision, and goals and objectives, e.g., identify 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 stated goals and objectives of respective programs.
3. Constituent interests and desired needs, including those of under-resourced communities and previously left out populations, e.g., identify how the agency gathers information on participants' interests and needs; describe what programs have emerged from the participants' suggestions.
4. Creation of a constituent-centered culture, e.g., provide evaluations of at least 5 programs from a variety of program areas which identify the program benefits received by participants and how these evaluations impacted decision-making.
5. Experiences desirable for clientele, e.g., describe what desirable outcomes the agency's programs provide; provide recent examples of programming for persons with disabilities, under-resourced communities and previously left out populations.
6. Community opportunities, e.g., document the cooperative events and programs the agency provides for both participants and volunteers to be involved.

Note: Items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 should be submitted in the form of a matrix.

Standard 6.3: Recreation Program Plan (RPP) ★

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide Recreation Program Plan including:
 - cover page, date of approval, table of contents, introduction
 - matrix of current programs indicating the target audience
 - annual action plans showing program objectives in SMART format (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) for each year
 - description or diagram of the processes used to plan, develop, assess and evaluate new and existing programs

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

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.

Required 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.)
- Provide evidence that programs conducted are making progress toward outcomes desired.
- Provide evidence that programmatic decision- making is informed by evaluation results.

Standard 6.5: Cooperative Recreation Programming

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.

Required 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.

Standard 6.6: Piloting New Programs and Services

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 shall be evaluated to understand participant outcomes, satisfaction, and interest for continuing participation in similar programs and services.

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.

Required 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.

Chapter 7 – Facilities and Land Use Management

Resource planning is a process focusing on natural and 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

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

Standard 7.2: Park and Recreation Land

Acquisition and Disposal ★

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the policy(ies) 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, if within the last 10 years.

Standard 7.3: Park and Recreation Property

Development ★

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.

Required 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.

Standard 7.4: Maintenance and Operations Management

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.

Required 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, if applicable
- Provide the most recent review or update of the standards, within the last five (5) years.
- Provide a narrative addressing implementation of the plan including, if applicable and available, quality assurance measures, reports and/or results.

Standard 7.5: Preventative Maintenance Plan

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the preventative maintenance plan and examples of detailed procedures 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 (i.e. work orders), recent inspections and safety checks for a minimum of 3 separate 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.

Standard 7.6: Fleet Management Plan

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide fleet management plan.
- Provide evidence of implementation of the plan, could be inspections, maintenance records kept, etc.

Standard 7.7: Natural Resource Management

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

Required 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.

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 ★

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience for the position(s) involved in risk management on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants).
- Provide a narrative describing how risks are identified, assessed, and managed/transferred, including but not limited to facility inspection systems and pre-program risk assessments.
- Provide the most recent risk assessment data report.
- Provide recent evidence of up to two changes to policy, procedure, or practice made as a result of the risk management process, if changes are made.

Standard 8.2: Codes, Laws, Ordinances, Policies, and/or Rules ★

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

Required 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.

Standard 8.3: General Security Plan

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

Required 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; and Emergency evacuation procedures.
- Provide a narrative detailing how planned elements are trained. If you are unable to share plans due to security limitations, submit a redacted or summary version showing table of contents and core procedures.

Standard 8.4: Personnel Safety Training

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

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

Standard 8.5: Disruptive Behavior Policy and Procedures

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

Required 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.

Standard 8.6: Event Planning and Management

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

Required 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.

Standard 8.7: Accidents/Incidents

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

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide three accident/incident reports from each of the last five years. If seeking initial accreditation, a minimum of one year of evidence is required.
- Provide a narrative describing at least three examples that demonstrate how accident/incident data informs decisions made to reduce risk after an incident or accident.

Standard 8.8: Emergency Management Plan

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.

Required Evidence of Compliance

Please note: These plans are typically coordinated through an Emergency Management Office or Police/Fire and address high level emergency action planning as opposed to the general security plans/systems included in standard 8.3.

- 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 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 at least annually.

Standard 8.9: Crisis Response Management

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 a crisis.

Required Evidence of Compliance

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

“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

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 strategy related to this area of responsibility.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience for the position(s) involved in marketing, communications, and community engagement activities on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants).
- 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.

Standard 9.2: External Marketing and Communications

Communications and community engagement activities shall reach a wide 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.

Required 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.
- If applicable, provide a narrative describing the relationship with the media and in what ways the relationship impacts brand, image, and service reach.

Standard 9.3: Internal Communications

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

Required 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.

Standard 9.4: Communicating the Essentiality and Impact of Leisure Programs and Services (Advocacy)

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.

Required 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 wide array 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; providing 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.

Standard 9.5: Community Engagement ★

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.

Effective strategies include fielding citizen concerns and questions through accessible, timely, and responsive channels; maintaining organized communication efforts with neighborhoods through dedicated staff, advisory groups or liaison roles; and developing programs, services or projects as a direct result of community input-particularly input initiated or driven by neighborhood residents or local stakeholder groups.

Required 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 their needs for park and recreation services.
- Describe how engagement is adjusted based on the specific 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, advisory councils, hosting unique feedback events, implementing co-designed projects.

Standard 9.6: Crisis Communications ★

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.

Required 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.
- Provide three communication templates (e.g., press releases, staff talking points, public alerts, social media posts) and a timeline outlining how and when communication is delivered during various phases of a crisis (e.g., initial response, ongoing updates, resolution, and post-crisis follow-up).

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.

Standard 10.1: Evaluation, Assessment, and Research Responsibility

There shall be a designated position (individual) or team responsible for the agency's Evaluation, Assessment, and Research. This person/team shall provide strategies and technical expertise in relation to research, data collection, data analysis, and the development of action plans from the data collected. 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

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide the job description and relevant education/experience for the position(s) involved in evaluation, assessment, and research activities on behalf of the agency (municipal/agency staff and/or consultants).
- Provide examples of recent evaluation, assessment and research training completed by the individual and agency, including curriculum content, training dates and participant lists.

Standard 10.2 – Systematic Data Collection

Agencies cannot fully meet community needs without collecting data for programs, services and operations they manage. Data shall be collected that supports the day-to-day operational aspects of an agency (recreation, parks, aquatics, etc.) Data collected should be aligned with various planning documents such as the Recreation Programming Plan, Strategic Plan, or other Business/Operational plans.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide a description of recent needs assessments conducted (e.g., surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews).
- Provide documentation and examples demonstrating that needs assessments are conducted on a routine basis.
- Provide documentation of community demographic data and user population trends.
- Provide an inventory of existing parks, facilities, and services (including those provided by partners).
- Provide reports or tools used to track national and local recreation trends.

Standard 10.3: Systematic Data Analysis and Action

The agency shall at a minimum, no less than once every five years, evaluate needs assessment data with available assets (e.g. land, facilities, programs, funding), and trends, to identify existing and projected gaps in service or programming and determine/reassess priorities for land acquisition, facility development and service expansion.

When feasible, the agency should also benchmark its programs, services, and facilities using NRPA's Park Metrics database, comparing those benchmarks with community feedback, particularly in areas where gaps in service are present or perceived.

Required Evidence of Compliance

- Provide benchmarking comparisons of the agency's programs, services, and facilities with local community assets, when feasible, using NRPA's Park Metrics.
- Provide analysis or summary of service gaps based on collective data and community input and documentation of action steps taken in response to findings.
- Provide prioritized list of improvements or investments based on gap analysis and an analysis of how these trends relate to the agency and its community (at minimum every five years).
- Describe the identification of outcomes and evidence of improvements or changes in service delivery made as a result of the needs-assessment and trends analysis process.
- Provide at least one report that summarizes 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 at least one report to approving authority/policy body.
- Provide evidence of evaluation process review to identify strengths and weaknesses of the process. Include documentation of the resulting action plan for improvement and status updates on improvements prescribed.

Standard 10.4: Investigation and Evidence Based Decision-Making/Educational Projects

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.

Required 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 the impacts of different levels of service across the community.

Appendix A: Standard Rubrics

Chapter 1 – Agency, Mission, and Purpose

Standard 1.1: Mission, Vision, and Values



Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide mission, vision, and values statements properly approved by the appropriate approving authority?
- Does the narrative describe how these statements aligned with the Agency's purpose or authority?
- Was the mission, vision, and values communicated with staff?
- Are these statements posted on agency website in view of public?
- Is the mission, vision, and values embedded in the culture and work of the agency?

Standard 1.2: Strategic Plan



Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide an approved strategic plan within the last five years?
- Did the narrative demonstrate how the agency's mission, vision, and values align with the overarching organization's strategic goals and planning documents?
- Has the agency provided evidence of an annual review?

Standard 1.3: Community Involvement in Agency

Strategic Planning



Rubric Questions

- Was the Agency's strategic plan developed following outreach to and engagement with a wide variety of community members that are representative of the entire community's demographics?
- Did the agency share examples of community outreach or engagement they conducted (like surveys, focus groups or public meetings)?
- Does the narrative describe how the strategic plan will support community needs?
- Does the agency describe how the strategic plan connects to the master plan?

Standard 1.4: Personnel Involvement in Agency Strategic Planning

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency's strategic plan include outreach/input with the staff?
- Did the staff outreach represent multiple levels and accessible within the organization?
- Was the input received used to inform strategic planning goals and objectives?

Chapter 2 – Administration and Organizational Resources

Standard 2.1: Advisory Boards and Commissions

Rubric Questions

- Has the agency provided a list of public boards, commissions, and/or committees?
- 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

Rubric Questions

- Has the agency provided a matrix of 3 ongoing cooperative projects (based on the Evidence of Compliance) 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

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a matrix (based on the Evidence of Compliance) with all of the required information?
- Has the agency demonstrated how the technology available to the agency is used in furtherance of its mission?

Standard 2.4: Records Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Records Management activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency provide policy and procedures?
- Did the agency provide the public records request process?
- Was a process or strategy for protecting records from loss provided?
- Did the agency describe how they plan to recover records in the event of a disaster?

Standard 2.5: Adaptive Programs from which everyone benefits and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Services Accessibility Compliance

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the ADA policies and procedures?
- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for ADA activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Is the agency's website accessible?
- Did the agency provide an ADA Transition Plan?
- 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 adaptive programs or is cooperating with other entity(ies) to provide such programming?
- Did the agency provide evidence that ADA notices are posted and available to the public outlining the complaint process?
- If a complaint has been received, has the agency demonstrated that it followed policies and procedures to find resolution?

Standard 2.6: Continuity of Operations

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a COOP with all key elements included (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?
- Did the agency provide the date of acceptance of the COOP and date of last review?

Chapter 3 – Community and Park Planning

Standard 3.1: Community and Park Planning Strategy



Rubric Questions

- Did the agency describe their overall community and park planning strategy?
- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Community and Park Planning activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Has the agency demonstrated that local planning and community development support the mission, vision and strategic plan of the agency?

Standard 3.2: Planning with Regional, State and Federal Agencies

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?

Standard 3.3: Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan that was reviewed periodically (within last 5 years) that includes all required elements listed in the Evidence of Compliance?
- Has the agency demonstrated that the Master Plan is a designed set of progressive steps showing the strategy from existing conditions to desired conditions?
- Are the Master Plan's findings and recommendations in alignment with the mission, vision and strategic plan?
- Did the agency receive feedback from both users and non-users to achieve a community-wide plan?
- Has the agency demonstrated that community input collected was used to inform planning objectives?
- Did the agency demonstrate evidence of initial or updated adoption?

Standard 3.4: Feasibility Studies

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide at least one example of a feasibility study used to inform decisions made related to a planned project?
- Did the agency describe how a recent study was used to inform decisions?

Standard 3.5: Site Plans

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a representative sampling of 2 or more facility site plans guiding the development of parks in the agency's park system?
- Did the agency describe how a recent site plan was developed using community input from residents living within the service area?
- Has the agency demonstrated that the site plan is in alignment with Park Master Plan objectives and community input?

Standard 3.6: Sustainability and Environmental Resilience Strategy

Rubric Questions

- Has the agency demonstrated that it has established strategies and/or practices related to sustainability and environmental resilience goals?
- Did the agency demonstrate how these have been shared with the public?
- Did the agency demonstrate how these address resilience equitably?
- Did the agency demonstrate how these were evaluated?

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

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

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency explain their human resource planning strategy?
- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Human Resources activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency provide evidence of collected and analyzed data that has informed decisions made related to human resources planning, workforce composition, professional development, and/or organizational culture?

Standard 4.2: Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual that includes all the required elements listed in the Evidence of Compliance?
- If the agency has made changes to the manual since the last accreditation review, has the agency provided a narrative describing those changes?

Standard 4.3: Compensation Plan

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence that a compensation plan has been established that provides fair compensation among units within the agency?
- Has the plan been periodically reviewed?

Standard 4.4: Employee Performance Evaluation and Supervision

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide policy and procedures outlining the systematic performance evaluation system?
- Has the agency demonstrated that the evaluation system is aligned with the agency's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan?
- Did the agency provide evidence of implementation and communication with employees?
- 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)

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide an outline of the onboarding/orientation program is in place and utilized?
- Did the agency provide representative example of materials distributed?
- 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

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency describe the goals of the employee development and training program?
- Did the agency provide the scope and components of the program, including both mandatory and optional training?
- Are training opportunities and a sampling of participant lists provided as evidence of ongoing implementation? Sampling requirements are based on initial (evidence within the previous 1 year) or reaccreditation (evidence within the previous 5 years).
- Has the agency demonstrated that its program offers development opportunities for employees in multiple levels of the organization's structure?
- Has the agency demonstrated that the program supports leadership succession and certification objectives?

Standard 4.7: Professional Certification and Organization Membership

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a comprehensive list of staff that includes their professional credentials and participation in professional development and association activities?
- Did the agency describe how opportunities are provided to a variety of levels of staff for professional certification and participation in organization memberships?

Standard 4.8: Workforce Health and Wellness Program

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of a workforce health and wellness program?
- Has the program been evaluated?
- Did the agency describe how the program has goals and objectives?
- Did the agency describe how results of the evaluation informed changes (or no changes) to the program?

Standard 4.9: Volunteer Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Volunteer Management activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency describe the goals and objectives for its volunteer program?
- Did the agency provide a volunteer manual that includes all required elements listed in the Evidence of Compliance?
- Did the agency provide recent evaluation of the volunteer program?
- Did the agency describe how the results of the evaluation were reviewed to better meet volunteer program goals and objectives?
- Did the agency provide 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?

Chapter 5 – Financial Management, Responsibility and Accountability

Standard 5.1: Financial Management, Responsibility and Accountability ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a narrative that describes its overall financial strategy?
- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Financial Management activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency explain how fairness and accessibility principles are incorporated into their financial strategies?

Standard 5.2: Legal Authority and Fiscal Policy ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a narrative that explains how its legal fiscal authority is established (e.g. charter, ordinance enabling legislation)?
- Was a summary of fiscal policies requested in the Evidence of Compliance provided?
- Did the agency describe how fiscal policies are shared with new members of the approving authority and staff?
- Did the agency provide evidence verifying that policies and procedures are in place and being followed?

Standard 5.3: Comprehensive Revenue Policy ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide policy and/or directing documents on fees and charges, the current fee schedules or cost-recovery procedures?
- Did the agency provide evidence of the most recent review or update of fees and charges?
- Did the agency demonstrate that the cost recovery policy is being implemented based on approving authority direction?
- Did the agency provide procedures for resource allocation strategy?
- If applicable, did the agency provide its scholarship or financial assistance policy?

Standard 5.4: Grants and Alternative Funding Strategies

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a policy and/or procedure that outlines how grants and alternative funding sources are managed and reported?
- Did the agency provide a policy for solicitation and management of private, corporate and nonprofit support?
- Has the agency demonstrated a process for reviewing and considering grant and alternative funding opportunities that supports the priorities of the agency?

Standard 5.5: Financial Statements

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency describe how financial statements and/or reports are available for review?
- Did the agency describe how financial reporting supports informed decision-making throughout the fiscal year?

Standard 5.6: Purchasing Policy

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide its purchasing policy and/or procedures?
- Did the narrative outline opportunities for staff to learn and train for procurement policies and procedures?

Standard 5.7: Independent Audit

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the most recent Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and/or Audit available for review?
- Did the agency provide the response to the audit recommendations?
- If applicable, did the agency describe any adjustments made in response to recommendations?

Standard 5.8: Annual or Biennial Budget

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence that demonstrates alignment of the budget with strategic priorities (e.g. budget message or transmittal letter describing the connection between agency priorities and budgetary investment)?
- Did the agency provide evidence of public and staff participation in the budget preparation process?

Standard 5.9: Supplemental/Emergency Appropriations

Rubric Questions

- If applicable, did the agency provide a recent example of a supplemental or emergency appropriation and the steps followed to approve it?
- Did the agency provide documentation of an approved process or policy for emergency appropriations to follow when necessary?

Standard 5.10: Capital Asset Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a capital asset depreciation and replacement schedule?
- Did the agency provide the replacement schedule that includes forecasted future expenditures to sufficiently fund future replacements?

Chapter 6 – Programs and Services Management

Standard 6.1: Recreation Program Responsibility and Accountability ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Recreation Program activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?

Standard 6.2: Program and Service Determinants (Components) ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of staff training on the six program and service determinants?
- Did the agency provide a matrix/spreadsheet answering the items identified in 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6?
- Did the agency provide evaluations from at least 5 programs from a variety of program areas and how the evaluations impacted decision-making?

Standard 6.3: Recreation Program Plan (RPP) ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a complete RPP (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?

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

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide recent evaluation trainings based on the Evidence of Compliance?
- Did the agency provide evidence that programs are making progress toward desired outcomes?
- Does the agency make programming decisions based on evaluation results?

Standard 6.5: Cooperative Recreation Programming

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide examples of cooperative programming services?

Standard 6.6: Piloting New Programs and Services

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of pilot programs?
- Did the agency describe the evaluation process, results and any decision-making from the pilot programs?

Chapter 7 – Facilities and Land Use Management

Standard 7.1: Facility and Land Use Responsibility and Accountability ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency describe the overall facility and land use management strategy?
- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Facilities and Land Use Management activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?

Standard 7.2: Park and Recreation Land Acquisition and Disposal ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a policy that governs the procedures of acquisition or disposal of parkland?
- Did the agency provide a policy that includes citation of legal authority over final decision making?
- Did the agency describe how potential acquisitions tie into the master plan and strategic objectives, including any requirements for public engagement opportunities, bidding, etc.?
- Did the agency provide documentation from the last acquisition, if within the last 10 years?

Standard 7.3: Park and Recreation Property Development ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a policy that governs the procedures followed to plan and develop parkland, including citation of legal authority over final decision making?
- Did the agency describe how the agency develops lands and facilities in conformance with the Park Master Plan and strategic objectives, including any requirements for public engagement opportunities, bidding, post-acquisition, etc.?
- Did the agency provide evidence that the most recent development project complied with these policies and procedures?

Standard 7.4: Maintenance and Operations Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the established maintenance standards (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?
- Did the agency provide the most recent review or update of the maintenance standards and was it within the past 5 years?
- Did the agency describe how they are implementing the plan?

Standard 7.5: Preventative Maintenance Plan

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the preventative maintenance plan(s) and procedures, including examples, as outlined in the Evidence of Compliance?
- Did the agency provide completed inspections and safety checks for a minimum of 3 separate facilities/areas?
- Did the agency demonstrate how the results of the inspections are used in decision making?

Standard 7.6: Fleet Management Plan

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the Fleet Management Plan?
- Did the agency provide evidence of implementation of the plan?

Standard 7.7: Natural Resource Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the Natural Resource Management Plan and procedures?
- Did the agency provide examples of outreach and education to the community on how they protect natural resources?

Chapter 8 – Law, Risk Management, Safety & Security

Standard 8.1: Risk Management Responsibility and Strategy ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Risk Management activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency describe how risks are identified, assessed and managed?
- Did the agency provide the risk assessment data report?
- If changes were made, did the agency provide evidence of changes to policy, procedure or practice as a result of risk management process?

Standard 8.2: Codes, Laws, Ordinances, Policies, and/or Rules ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide documentation of codes, laws, and ordinances that apply to areas and facilities?
- Did the agency describe how the codes, laws and ordinances are readily available to park patrons?

Standard 8.3: General Security Plan ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a general security plan (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?
- Did the agency describe how employees are trained on the general security plan?

Standard 8.4: Personnel Safety Training ★

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of personnel safety trainings to all levels within the organization?

Standard 8.5: Disruptive Behavior Policy and Procedures

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide the procedure for handling disruptive behavior?
- Did the agency describe the relationship and roles with law enforcement?

Standard 8.6: Event Planning and Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency demonstrate examples of coordination with outside departments and/or agencies as discussed in the Evidence of Compliance?

Standard 8.7: Accidents/Incidents

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide three accident/incident reports per year (If seeking initial accreditation, over 1 year. If seeking reaccreditation, over 5 years.)?
- Did the agency describe at least three examples of data-informed decision-making to reduce risk after an incident or accident?

Standard 8.8: Emergency Management Plan

Rubric Questions

Please note: These plans are typically coordinated through an Emergency Management Office or Police/Fire and address high level emergency action planning as opposed to the general security plans/systems included in standard 8.3.

- Did the agency provide emergency management plan or the emergency management plan table of content (if the plan is not available for public review)?
- Did the agency provide documentation of emergency management plan annual training (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?

Standard 8.9: Crisis Response Management

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of crisis management strategies (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?

Chapter 9 – Marketing, Communications, and Community Engagement

Standard 9.1: Marketing, Communications, and Community Engagement Responsibility

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Marketing, Communications and Community Engagement activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency describe the marketing and communications strategy?
- Did the agency describe efforts to ensure community representation in marketing campaigns?

Standard 9.2: External Marketing and Communications



Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of established data collection, analysis, and decision-making process that extends external communication efforts to the community?
- If applicable, did the agency describe the relationship with the media?

Standard 9.3: Internal Communications

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide a communication matrix on how internal communications are managed?
- Was the most recent evaluation of internal communications provided?
- Did the agency provide evidence of changes made to communications strategies in response to evaluation data?

Standard 9.4: Communicating the Essentiality and Impact of Leisure Programs and Services (Advocacy)

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide evidence of 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?
- Did the agency provide the last review of these efforts?

Standard 9.5: Community Engagement

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency describe community engagement strategies (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?
- Did the agency describe how engagement is adjusted based on the specific communities being reached?

Standard 9.6: Crisis Communications

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide strategies, procedures and/or protocols for crisis communication (internal and external)?
- Did the agency provide evidence of staff training on the crisis communication strategies?
- Did the agency provide three communication templates and a timeline outlining how and when communication is delivered during various phases of a crisis?

Chapter 10 – Evaluation, Assessment, and Research

Standard 10.1: Evaluation, Assessment, and Research Responsibility

Rubric questions

- Did the agency provide job description(s) and the education/experience summary for the individual or team responsible for Evaluation, Assessment, and Research activities showing they are qualified to perform these duties?
- Did the agency provide examples of recent evaluation, assessment or research training (based on the Evidence of Compliance)?

Standard 10.2: Systematic Data Collection

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide recent needs assessments conducted (e.g. surveys, focus groups, interviews)?
- Did the agency provide documentation and examples that needs assessments are conducted on a routine basis?
- Did the agency provide documentation of community demographic data and user population trends?
- Did the agency provide an inventory of existing parks, facilities and services including those provided through partnerships?
- Did the agency provide examples of reports or tools used to track national and local recreation trends?

Standard 10.3: Systematic Data Analysis and Action

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide benchmarking comparisons of its programs, services and facilities with local community assets, using NRPA's Park Metrics when feasible?
- Did the agency provide an analysis or summary identifying service gaps based on collective data and community input and document the action steps taken in response to findings?
- Did the agency provide a prioritized list of improvements or investments based on gap analysis of how these trends relate to the agency and its community (at minimum every five years).?
- Did the agency describe the identification of outcomes and evidence of improvements or changes in service delivery made as a result of the needs assessment and trend analysis?
- Did the agency provide at least one report summarizing data collected and action taken based on results found?
- Did the agency provide evidence that at least one report was presented to the approving authority or policy body?
- Did the agency provide evidence of evaluation process review?

Standard 10.4: Investigation and Evidence Based Decision-Making/Educational Projects

Rubric Questions

- Did the agency provide documentation and description of a research investigation or educational project within the last five years?
- Did the agency provide a report provided outlining, at minimum, the project goals, process, and outcomes?
- If applicable, did the agency provide documentation of a change that resulted from the resulting project data?



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