



COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES



2025 CAPRA Accreditation Standards FAQs

Q: Why are the CAPRA Accreditation Standards being updated?

A: The CAPRA Commission formed a Task Force in 2021 to re-imagine the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards and related processes for the future, as the standards were originally implemented in 1993.

Q: What steps did the Commission and NRPA take to create these standards?

A:

- **November 2021** - the CAPRA Commission Reimagination Task Force was created to complete a deep dive into the standards review based on the initial feedback
- **January 2023** – Internal Review of new CAPRA standards (NRPA staff and select CAPRA volunteers)
- **April 2023** – Public/External Review of new CAPRA Standards (entire CAPRA Community, along with State Affiliates)
- **September 2023** – Final version of new Standards approved by the CAPRA Commission
- **January 2024** – Roll-out plan and beta test departments were approved

Q: What are the primary Goals of the 2025 CAPRA standards update?

A:

- **Clarify standards** – remove ambiguity in Evidence of Compliance and identify duplicative standards
- **Identify best practices** – distill the standards to best practices for departments serving ALL population sizes
- **Interweave values** – ensure values of diversity, inclusion, equity, conservation, sustainability and improvement are throughout the standards
- **Establish Improvement** – identify ways to encourage accredited departments to improve every review cycle

Q: How was the rollout plan and timeline established?

A: Since the 2025 CAPRA Standards is the first major revision since 1993, the Commission wanted to provide all CAPRA Community members with a copy of the beta test version in a timely manner with the expectation that compliance would not be required until the 2027 review season. Steps to be taken over the next 2 years include the Training and Standards Committees working together to develop trainings and resources for 10 beta test departments and volunteers for the 2025 review season; the announcement of the final standards following beta testing; and preparation of the final version of the training for all departments and volunteers in fall 2025 to spring 2026.



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Q: How do the 2025 standards compare to the 2019 standards?

A:

2019 version of CAPRA Standards – Total of 154 Standards in 10 Sections

- Departments must meet all 36 fundamental standards and 90% (106) of the 118 non-fundamentals for new departments and 95% (112) for reaccrediting departments

2025 Beta-test version of CAPRA Standards – Total of 68 Standards in 10 Chapters

- Beta test departments must meet all 37 fundamental standards and 80% (25) of the 31 non-fundamentals for new departments and 90% (28) for reaccrediting departments.

Q: What are the changes to the beta test application form because of the new standards?

A: The beta test application form will contain **11 required components** in addition to the general information requested when applying for CAPRA: General Historical Information; **Source of Authority; Approving Authority/Policy Body;** Delegation of Authority; **Agency Leadership; Jurisdiction; Organization Structure;** Agency Awards and Citations; Agency Changes Since Last Accreditation; **Periodic Timetable for Review of Documents;** and Annual Reporting Requirements (reaccrediting departments only). The components in **bold** were part of the 2019 version of the CAPRA standards and are now part of the application only.

Q: Why is this information required on the beta test application form?

A:

- Understanding the **history, source of authority, jurisdiction, and recent changes** impacting the agency provide 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 to agency to carry out its mission.
- The **roles, responsibilities, and structure** should be clearly understood by staff and the public.
- **Annual reporting** between accreditation reviews ensures the agency has incorporated CAPRA into agency culture.

Q: When will the 2025 CAPRA Standards be required?

A: All new CAPRA applications received **after January 1, 2026** will be required to comply with the 2025 standards. All reaccrediting departments will be required to comply with the 2025 standards during the 2027 review year.