

COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

General Steps

As a brief overview, the general steps of the accreditation process follow:

1. At least one (1) person from the agency must attend a CAPRA-approved training on the current set of standards within the three (3) years prior to submitting the Application for Accreditation.
2. The preliminary applicant agency submits an Application for Accreditation, the required \$100 fee, and requested visit dates, to occur within two (2) years of the date of application. Visits are scheduled from January through July based upon date and visitor availability. The visit calendar is maintained by the accreditation manager.
3. Upon receipt of the Application for Accreditation, a Commissioner will be assigned to the agency as a Commission mentor to provide guidance to the agency as they proceed through the accreditation process.
4. The agency develops a self-assessment report and prepares associated supporting documents using CAPRA standards.
5. Approximately six (6) months prior to the anticipated visit, the accreditation manager will contact the agency contact to confirm the agency's visit availability and updated contact information via an online form. Visitors **MUST NOT** make any travel arrangements until the Commission reviewers have provided their official notification that the visit has been approved to be scheduled.
6. Once the accreditation manager has confirmed availability from all agencies with upcoming visits, a call for visitor availability will be sent out to the list of qualified visitors.
7. The Commission selects a visitation team who visits the agency to confirm information in the agency's self-assessment report. Initial accreditation visit teams usually comprise three (3) individuals, one of whom is designated visit chair. Reaccreditation visit teams usually comprise three (3) individuals, but some agencies may have the option for the modified two-person (2), two-day (2) visit. The decision regarding number of visitors and frequency of visits for specific cases rests with the Commission.
8. The proposed visit team and their resumes will be provided to the agency for their review to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

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9. The agency submits its self-assessment report and electronic evidence of compliance at least **10 weeks** prior to the visit to two assigned Commission reviewers (lead and second reviewers) and the accreditation manager who will review the report and determine if the visit team is approved to move forward with the visit. The accreditation manager will send an email to the agency and visit team when the visit is approved. In the event that an extension of time is required to complete the self-assessment, the agency must apply with extension request procedures – see **“EXTENSIONS – INITIAL ACCREDITATION APPLICANTS”** or **“EXTENSIONS – REACCREDITATION APPLICANTS,”** below.
10. The visitation team conducts its onsite review and submits a written report on its findings to the assigned Commissioners. The assigned Commissioners work with the visit chair to review, modify (if necessary), and transmit this report to the agency.
11. If the approved visitation report indicates unmet fundamental standard(s) and/or less than required compliance with the non-fundamental standards, the agency is required to submit a comprehensive response within thirty (30) days of receipt of the report that includes all required evidence of compliance. For reaccreditation reviews in this situation, the agency will appear before the Commission for a hearing via teleconference or in person at the NRPA Conference.
12. The Commission reviews the agency’s self-assessment, the visitation report, and the agency’s response (if applicable), and conducts a hearing at the next in-person meeting of the Commission, typically in the fall at NRPA Conference. The Commission may grant accreditation, establish conditions for accreditation, defer action, or deny accreditation. Attendance requirements at accreditation hearings vary depending on review year and visit outcome (see the **“COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETING AND HEARING”** section of this handbook for further details).
13. All initial agency accreditation applicants must appear in person before the Commission at the NRPA Conference.
14. The agency must submit annual reports and fees after the first, second, third and fourth years after initial accreditation or reaccreditation and undergo a complete reevaluation (application, self-assessment, visitation, visitation report, and hearing) every five (5) years.