

# COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES



## CAPRA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

July 2024



Created by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies and NRPA  
© 2024 National Recreation and Park Association

**Table of Contents**

**Overview and History of CAPRA .....5**

**Introduction .....5**

**Glossary of Terms .....6**

**Mission .....10**

**Purpose.....10**

**Accreditation Process .....11**

**Understanding Standards.....11**

**History of CAPRA Standards .....12**

**About the Commission.....13**

**CAPRA Committee and Task Force Descriptions .....15**

    CAPRA Commission Member ..... 15

    CAPRA Executive Committee Member ..... 17

    CAPRA Committee Structure ..... 18

    CAPRA Volunteer Committee ..... 20

    CAPRA Training Committee ..... 21

    CAPRA Standards Committee ..... 22

**Confidentiality of Accreditation Information .....23**

**Non-Endorsement of Consultants as part of CAPRA Accreditation Process .....23**

**Code of Professional Conduct.....24**

**Amendments to the Manual .....24**

**Amendments to Standards .....24**

**Standards Committee Subject Matter Expertise (SME) Engagement.....25**

**Eligibility .....26**

**Accreditation Standards.....26**

**CAPRA Fee Schedule .....27**

**CAPRA Refund Policy .....27**

**General Steps for Initial Accreditation .....28**

**General Steps for Renewed Accreditation (Reaccreditation) .....30**

**Mandatory Participation in CAPRA Volunteer Recruitment .....31**

    Currently Accredited Agencies..... 31

    Purpose ..... 32

    Implementation and Fines..... 32

**Extensions – Initial Accreditation Agencies .....32**

**Extensions – Renewing CAPRA Accredited Agencies.....32**

**Extension - Eligibility.....33**

<b>Extension Fees.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Withdrawal from CAPRA.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>CAPRA Mentorship Program .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Maintenance of Accreditation.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Policy for Annual Report and Audit Process for Accredited Agencies .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Timeline of Review.....	38
Auditing Process .....	38
Annual Report EOC .....	38
CAPRA Audit Team (CAT).....	39
Audit Findings .....	39
CAPRA Audit Team (CAT) Lead Position Description .....	40
CAPRA Audit Team (CAT) Member Position Description.....	41
<b>Self-Assessment Report - Overview.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Addressing Ongoing Agency Change.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Costs of Self-Assessment.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Preparing and Submitting the Self-Assessment Report – Writing Requirements .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Writing Requirements – To Ease Self-Assessment Review.....	44
Narrative Format .....	44
Evidence of Compliance Format .....	45
Failure to Follow Format and Writing Guidelines.....	46
<b>Reviewing the Self-Assessment Report.....</b>	<b>47</b>
CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Member Position Description .....	48
CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Lead Position Description .....	50
CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Advisor Position Description .....	52
Volunteer Selection .....	53
Evaluations.....	54
<b>CAPRA Review Process (New and Reaccrediting Agencies).....</b>	<b>55</b>
Important Notes .....	55
Phase A – Pre-Visit (New and Reaccrediting Agencies) .....	55
Phase B – Virtual Site Visit .....	56
Phase B – In-person Site Visit .....	58
Phase C – CAPRA Review Team Reconvenes .....	59
In-person Site Visit Preparation.....	60
Arranging for Transportation.....	61
Arranging for Lodging .....	61

Arranging for Meals .....	61
Handling Expenses .....	61
Other Physical and Support Arrangements .....	62
Unsolicited Information .....	62
CRT Team Demeanor .....	63
Potential Conflict of Interest – Gift, Activities and Events.....	63
Confidentiality.....	63
<b>The Visitation Report - Overview.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CRT Record of Review .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>CAPRA Visit Executive Summary Report .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Agency Response to the Visitation Report .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>CAPRA Commission Business Meeting and Hearing - Purpose .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Initial Accreditation Hearing Procedure .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Renewing Accreditation Hearing Procedure.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Votes Required for Commission Action .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Effective Dates .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Accreditation Status - Actions .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Grant accreditation without conditions .....	69
Grant accreditation with conditions .....	69
Defer action .....	69
Deny accreditation.....	69
Withdraw accreditation .....	69
Issue a warning .....	70
Progress reports.....	70
<b>Complaint Policy - Overview .....</b>	<b>71</b>
Complaints Against an Accredited Agency .....	71
Complaints Against the Commission and Commissioners.....	73
Complaints Against a Volunteer Representing the Commission .....	75
<b>CAPRA Marketing Overview.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>CAPRA Logo Usage Guidelines.....</b>	<b>77</b>
Usage Eligibility .....	77
Logo Use.....	78
CAPRA Digital Badge .....	78
CAPRA Promotional Toolkit .....	78
NRPA/CAPRA Brand Colors.....	78

## **Overview and History of CAPRA**

Achieving accreditation by NRPA’s Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) is the best way to demonstrate that your agency and your staff provide your community with the highest level of service. CAPRA Accreditation is a management system for best practices in parks and recreation operations. Being CAPRA accredited means your agency is meeting, or exceeding, standards maintained by park and recreation leaders, and will strengthen the value of the programs, facilities and experiences offered to your community.

Every park and recreation agency, whatever its size, focus or field of operation, is rightfully concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations and service to the public. With the importance of park and recreation agencies and your services to the quality of life for your participants, your agency has an essential role in enhancing their lives and meeting the recreational needs of the people you serve. CAPRA accreditation is a quality assurance and improvement process demonstrating your agency’s commitment to your employees, volunteers, participants and community.

The CAPRA standards for national accreditation provide an authoritative assessment tool for park and recreation agencies. Through a process of peer verification of compliance with these national standards, CAPRA accreditation assures policy makers, department staff, and the general public that an accredited park and recreation agency has the operational capacity to deliver programs, facilities, and services at a high level of quality. While accreditation standards effectively distinguish between agencies that should and should not be accredited, they are not a guarantee of quality, safety, or ethical practice.

## **Introduction**

This Manual is for use by individuals who are working with the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation process. It also is for use in training sessions designed to help these individuals become more knowledgeable and effective regarding the accreditation process. This Manual is designed to be used in conjunction with CAPRA National Accreditation Standards and the *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies, 2022, M. Moiseichik, Ed. , 5th Edition*).

## Glossary of Terms

**This document includes a number of terms and acronyms specific to CAPRA and its processes. Please refer to *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies, 2016, M. Moiseichik, Ed., 4th Edition OR Management of Park and Recreation Agencies, 2022, M. Moiseichik, Ed., 5th Edition.* to define and provide context for the terms and acronyms used.**

**As-Built Drawings** – A revised set of drawings submitted by a contractor upon completion of a construction project. As-built drawings show the dimensions, geometry, and location of all components of the project.

**Assessment** - A formative type of evaluation that seeks information for learning or achieving as opposed to an evaluation that is a final or summative judgment.

**CAPRA staff** - CAPRA staff oversee the national accreditation program. CAPRA staff serve as the liaison to the CAPRA Commission and CAPRA Executive Committee. They are employed by the National Recreation and Park Association, which is the administrative manager of CAPRA.

**Community Education for Leisure (Formerly Education for Leisure)** – Leisure education develops the attitudes (affective), skills (psychomotor), and knowledge (cognitive) required for optimal leisure functioning and a full range of lifelong leisure activities.

Park and recreation agencies should have a plan of community education for leisure. The plan should provide a continuous, systematic and operational program to teach the general public (children, adolescents, adults, seniors, including persons with special needs) about the use of leisure time, emphasizing an understanding of the value of recreation (organized leisure) to the individual and the effects (benefits, values, impacts) of leisure on society and quality of life. Providing multiple opportunities to explore and experience a variety of enjoyable leisure activities are important aspects of the plan.

**Comprehensive Plan** - A Comprehensive Plan or General Plan or land-use plan is the long-term development plan for the agency. The plan usually identifies a series of goals, policies and objectives to guide development. The plan has several sections including land use, transportation, and public facilities that include discussion of parks, recreation and open space. (

**Conceptual Foundations of Play, Recreation and Leisure** – Recreation programs should reflect the basic conceptual foundations of play, recreation, and leisure. Recreation programs should encourage or promote a degree of freedom, choice, or voluntary engagement in their structure or design.

**Play** - As a form of behavior is usually considered a creative, spontaneous expression. Often, park and recreation programs reflect the spirit of play in their design, promoting open, free, and expressive opportunities for individuals.

**Recreation** - Is an activity in which a person engages for a positive, purposeful end.

**Leisure** can be defined as time (free from obligations), activity (that people engage in during their free time) and state of mind (includes perceived freedom, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence and positive affect).

**Consultant** - An individual or group of individuals who provides professional or expert advice in a particular area such as master planning, human development, marketing, finance, landscape design, facility construction, etc.

**CAPRA Review Team (CRT)** – Led by the CRT Lead and supported by the CRT Advisor, oversees all aspects of the review process including cursory review to determine visit readiness and more detailed review in preparation for and during the visit. The CRT Lead and team also complete Visitation Report (CRT Record of Review and CAPRA Visitation Report Executive Summary) for CRT Advisor approval and agency distribution.

**Encroachment** – An illegal intrusion into land without authorization; an illegal intrusion with claim of right.

**Evaluation** - A final or summative judgment, as opposed to an assessment, which is a formative type of evaluation that seeks information for learning or achieving.

**Evidence of Compliance (EOC)** - The supporting documentation or materials that demonstrate that the standard is Met. This may include items such as agreements, documentation, manuals, narratives, plans, policies, etc.

**Executive Committee** – Chairperson (Chair), Chair-elect, Past-chair, Secretary and CAPRA staff (ex-officio, non-voting) make up the Executive Committee.

**Goal** – An aspirational statement describing desired attainment of conditions or attributes

**Grievance** - A complaint by an individual or organization concerning the interpretation or application of rules and regulations governing personnel practices, working conditions, workplace rules, or alleged improper treatment

**Guideline** - A suggested plan or course of action.

**Leisure** - (see Conceptual Foundations of Play, Recreation, and Leisure).

**Logic Model** - A logic model is a graphic depiction (map) that presents the shared relationships among the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact for the program. It depicts the relationship between the agency's programs, activities, and its intended effects for participants.

**Manual** – An approved operating document or repository of official guiding documents for the agency.

**Mentor** – CAPRA mentors are assigned by the Commission to all new agencies and renewing accrediting agencies **upon request** to help guide the agency through all aspects of the accreditation process.

**Mentorship** - An active and ongoing relationship with two or more persons in which the CAPRA mentor guides the mentee (agency) in understanding the CAPRA Policies and Procedures Manual and Standards, as well as what is required when preparing, writing, and submitting the Self- Assessment Report and subsequent Annual Reports.

**NRPA Pillars** – The three (3)-part (Health and Wellness, Conservation, Equity) strategic framework of the National Recreation and Park Association.

**Objective** - A specific and quantifiable statement of achievement. It is a statement of measurable outcome which can be used to determine progress towards a goal. The SMART model is a widely recommended format, e.g., specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed.

**Operating Code** - Agency culture is heavily affected by a code of ethics (a public document with values outlining how the agency conducts its business) and a code of conduct (internal document intended for employees with guidelines for behavior). Operating procedures define how the day-to-day operations flow.

**Organizational Component** - A major subdivision of the organization, e.g., department or division.

**Ordinance** - A city or county law that is codified that carries more authority than a resolution.

**Outcomes** - Outcomes are measurable changes in behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, conditions, or skills. Outcomes show the relationship between resource inputs and the resulting impacts and benefits of the outputs

**Output** - Actual programs and services delivered to the clientele.

**Parks and Recreation Master Plan** - An adopted plan that provides specific direction regarding decision making with regard to parks, recreation facilities and programs. The master plan usually summarizes the agency's recreation needs and desires and details a course of action that will enable the agency to realize objectives.

**Plan** - Written or graphic account of an intended future course of action aimed at pursuing goals and achieving specific objectives within a specific timeframe. It may explain in detail what needs to be done, when, how, and by whom.

**Play** - (see Conceptual Foundations of Play, Recreation, and Leisure).

**Policy** - A formally adopted written directive to set a course of action. A policy is usually implemented by rules and procedures.

**Procedure** - Specific steps set forth by the administrator or staff to facilitate the implementation of policies. A procedure provides detail on how something is to be done, when, and by whom.

**Recreation** - (see Conceptual Foundations of Play, Recreation, and Leisure).

**Review** - A written affirmation of status, effectiveness, relevance, and appropriateness. Annual reviews are conducted at least once each year. Periodic or regular reviews are done at fixed intervals. Continuous reviews are conducted frequently on an ongoing basis.

**Self-Assessment Report (SA)** - The agency's self-assessment submitted in report format to the CRT to determine agency readiness to proceed and conduct a thorough verification for accreditation and re-accreditation.



**Site Plan** - A drawing at appropriate scale that shows completed or contemplated physical characteristics of the site, including facilities, vegetation, circulation, service and maintenance areas, and parking.

**Standard** - A statement of minimum expectation as set forth by experienced professionals.

**Strategic Plan** - The document that guides implementation of longer-range agency vision in a manner consistent with agency mission.

**Statistics** – A branch of mathematics working with data collection, organization, analysis, interpretation, and presentation.

**Trends Analysis** – Trends analysis is a method of comparison that helps agencies forecast what the future might hold by studying changes in the past.

## Mission

The mission of the CAPRA accreditation program supports the achievement of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) mission and is to:

1. Provide standards, procedures, and best practices for the evaluation of public park and recreation agencies through a program of self-evaluation and external peer review for the purpose of national accreditation;
2. Confer judgment regarding whether agencies have met the national accreditation standards while promoting social equity, health and wellness, and conservation;
3. Enhance the performance of park and recreation agencies through data-driven research and seek to continually improve the quality of their programs, services, and facilities;
4. Promote agencies that demonstrate overall best practices, excellence and transparency in programming, operations, and management; and
5. Model diverse, equitable, and inclusive policies and procedures which improve the health and well-being of communities for all people through parks, recreation and conservation.

## Purpose

The purposes for which the agency accreditation program exists and to which NRPA and CAPRA are committed are:

1. **Development of quality park and recreation agencies:** The agency accreditation program focuses on the education and evaluation of park and recreation agencies utilizing standards considered to be the essential elements for effective and efficient operations that apply to all park and recreation systems. Standards promote improved performance for all park and recreation agencies and signify minimum standards in the field of parks and recreation.
2. **Education:** The agency accreditation standards are the benchmark for the accepted level of practice in the industry. Through the comprehensive and systematic self-assessment process and onsite or virtual visitation and peer review, park and recreation professional(s) gain knowledge and information about agency operations. Additionally, through training of reviewers (peer evaluators), mentors, advisors and agency personnel, the agency accreditation program contributes to the ongoing professional development of park and recreation professionals.
3. **Determination of the accreditation status of park and recreation agencies:** Standards provide the tool used to identify compliance with accepted professional best practices. While accreditation standards effectively distinguish between agencies that should and should not be accredited, they are not a guarantee of quality, safety, or ethical practice. No accreditation program by any organization provides such a guarantee. Accreditation is an assurance that the park and recreation agency has voluntarily subjected itself to outside evaluation by other professionals. Evaluation evidence presented for each standard presented in the self-assessment are used to determine quality of operations, process, policies and procedures; no other determinants are used.

## Accreditation Process

CAPRA accreditation includes six (6) steps:

1. Agency submission of accreditation application with fee (new applicants only) or payment of annual fee or review fee if agency is reaccrediting
2. Training of agency staff and CAPRA volunteers on the accreditation process
3. Development of the agency self-assessment report
4. CAPRA volunteers complete initial review of self-assessment report to determine visit readiness
5. Agency hosts group of CAPRA volunteers for onsite or virtual visitation
6. CAPRA Commission review and decision at agency hearing during Commission's annual meeting

At least one (1) person from the agency must attend the CAPRA-approved training session on the current set of standards within the two (2) years of submitting the agency's preliminary application. In submitting the application, the agency must provide the year in which they are requesting their site or virtual visit (the same year their hearing will take place) –which must be within 2 years of their application date.

**The agency's self-assessment report will be due on January 15 of the year of their visit and hearing.**

If accreditation is granted by the Commission at the agency's hearing during the Commission's annual meeting, the agency will be accredited for five (5) years. Following receipt of accreditation or re-accreditation, the agency is required to submit an annual report each of the subsequent four (4) years that address its continued compliance with the accreditation standards. Eighteen (18) months in advance of the expiration of the five (5)-year initial accreditation and each subsequent reaccreditation, a reminder will be sent to the agency that they are due for reaccreditation. The reaccreditation process follows the same steps as the initial accreditation.

## Understanding Standards

Standards are not a quantitative measure of the local availability of funds, lands, personnel, etc. and should be distinguished from other types of standards that address specific elements, such as park acreage and facilities standards, which may be population-based, and playground equipment standards that are product-based. CAPRA's qualitative standards for accreditation comprehensively deal with all aspects of agency operations.

The standards provide an effective and credible means of evaluating a park and recreation agency's overall operations. The standards apply to all park and recreation systems, because they are generally accepted prerequisites for effective and efficient operations regardless of jurisdictional size or agency structure. Most agencies administer both park and recreation functions; however, some only administer one. Additionally, the jurisdictional structure of agencies differs throughout the country, with many agencies operating under municipal authority, while others operate under county, park district, or other structures. Further, the standards apply to agencies of all sizes in terms of personnel, budget, and population served. It is recognized that each community is unique and may meet the standards in differing ways.

## **History of the CAPRA Standards**

A forerunner of the CAPRA standards was a document entitled *Evaluation and Self-Study of Public Recreation and Park Agencies* first issued in 1965. The standards in the document were initially determined by leading professionals in the Great Lakes Region of the National Recreation Association. In 1972, a statewide study in Pennsylvania encompassing 30 municipal park and recreation departments resulted in the document being updated and revised. In 1993, it was replaced by the CAPRA standards.

The CAPRA standards were developed by a special committee initiated in 1989 by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The standards and accreditation process were field tested at park and recreation agencies of varying characteristics. In 1993, the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) was established to implement and administer agency accreditation. Since then, the CAPRA standards have been reviewed and revised several times, notably in 1996, 2001, 2009, 2014 and 2019. The current CAPRA Standards are evaluated on a continuous basis to maintain relevance to the industry. This is accomplished through an inclusive and transparent process described later in this Manual.

In 1998, work was begun to adapt the accreditation process to military recreation. A United States Army version of the standards, developed by the Army, was approved in 1999 and a representative of military services was added to the Commission board. In 2007, the Department of Defense proposed a revised set of military standards that apply to all military services; and was approved by the Commission in 2008 for use by all military services. The military accreditation standards are available as a separate document from CAPRA staff.

## About the Commission

The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies consists of 18 members appointed to three-year (3) terms on a staggered basis. The composition of the Commission includes representatives from:

- American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration - AAPRA (5 representatives)
- American Therapeutic Recreation Association - ATRA (1 representative)
- Armed Forces Recreation Network - AFRN (1 representative)
- Council of State Executive Directors - CSED (1 representative)
- International City/Council Management Association - ICMA (1 representative)
- National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials – NACPRO (1 representative)
- National Recreation and Park Association - NRPA (5 representatives)
- National Recreation and Park Ethnic Minority Society (1 representative)
- National Association of State Park Directors/America’s State Parks (1 representative)
- The Academy of Leisure Sciences - TALS (1 representative)

An annual meeting with the representative groups will be held to discuss upcoming vacancies and Commission make up with the goal of achieving broad and diverse representation on the Commission. Details on this process can be found on page 17.

When a position on the Commission becomes available, a Call for Nominations is posted to the applicable group(s). Nominees must submit their full contact information and current resume for consideration. Commissioners are selected and appointed by each of the representative groups when a position becomes available for that group.

Candidates shall have (Position requirements):

- Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, experience as an accreditation volunteer is a plus
- Demonstrate a passion for CAPRA’s goals and represent the Commission by exhibiting professionalism, confidentiality and promoting the best practices of CAPRA
- Agree to serve a three (3) year term (not to exceed 2 consecutive terms)
- Actively participate in the Commission meetings and activities
- NRPA Appointees must hold and maintain an NRPA Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE) certification.

Commissioners must agree and annually sign the Commissioner Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement. Commissioners serve three-year (3) terms and may not serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms for a total not to exceed six years. Commissioners who are appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive three-year (3) terms regardless of affiliation.

Commissioner tasks are as follows:

- Serve as CRT Advisors to CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Leads providing expertise on the accreditation standards and assisting the Lead with questions or challenges during review team work;
- Serve on special task forces as necessary;
- Serve on one (1) of three (3) committees: Standards, Volunteers, or Training;

- Provide summary report for Commission at annual Commission hearings;
- Oversee accreditation policies, procedures and establish CAPRA standards;
- Provide formal judgment on agency accreditation status decisions.

These responsibilities require a commitment of approximately 80 to 100 hours of time outside of regularly scheduled meetings each year. The full Commission meets six (6) times per year, once in-person (or virtually when extreme extenuating circumstances occur such as a pandemic or Act of God event) in the fall in conjunction with the NRPA Annual Conference, and every other month via videoconference. Committee meetings are held bi-monthly (a minimum of 3 times a year) via videoconference. The Commission may also hold in-person retreats annually. **Commissioners are responsible for travel expenses related to attending the in-person meetings, unless otherwise approved to be covered by NRPA.**

The Commission Officers are: Chairperson (Chair), Chair-elect, Secretary, and Past Chair. Officers and CAPRA staff (ex-officio, non-voting member) make up the Executive Committee of the Commission. Terms of officers are for one (1) year. Elections are held annually at the NRPA Annual Conference.

The Commission is administratively sponsored by the NRPA but acts with independence and under its own authority in determining accreditation standards and conferring accreditation/reaccreditation of applicant agencies. CAPRA staff are employee(s) of the NRPA.

## **CAPRA Commission Liaison Appointments Process**

CAPRA staff and CAPRA Commission Executive Committee members conduct an annual meeting with all CAPRA Commission Liaisons (external organizations that appoint Commission members) to discuss opportunities to increase diversity in identified areas when considering potential representatives from their organizations.

### **Annual Timeline**

- **January** - Identify liaisons with upcoming CAPRA Commission vacancies
- **March** – hold meeting with all liaisons
- **April 30** – deadline to provide lists of potential representatives
- **May** – Staff to compile lists and provide recommendations to EC
- **June** - EC and CAPRA staff meet to discuss recommendations
- **Early July** - Commission Chair to electronically notify each liaison to provide recommendations and reasons why and setting deadline for their decision
- **July 31** – Liaisons must formally make their appointments
- **August** – NRPA staff will formalize appointment and provide details to each on next steps
- **October** – all newly appointed Commissioners participate in Commission dinner and annual meeting prior to NRPA conference

## **CAPRA Commission Member (18 Members)**

*The ten organizations that appoint Commission members shall collaborate to ensure the Commissioners reflect the gender, racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of park and recreation professionals and the general public.*

- **Commission Mission**
  - Provide a set of management best practices, operation standards and procedures for the evaluation of public park agencies through a self-evaluation program involving outside peer review for the purpose of national accreditation
  - Establish the long range, relevant, and sustainable operations of the accreditation process for continued growth within our industry and the profession.
- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**
  - Attend and actively participate in the work of the Commission through Committees and Task Forces to further the mission.
  - In conjunction with NRPA, develop and revise procedures and operational Manual necessary for the implementation of the agency accreditation program including but not limited to, updating the CAPRA Accreditation Manual and the CAPRA Standards manual.
  - Develop procedures and Manual for the agency accreditation program, including but not limited to:
    - Selecting, developing, and training Volunteers (Mentors, CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Advisors, Leads, and Members)
    - Developing training curriculum and procedures for all agency accreditation volunteers and visitations.
  - Administer the agency accreditation process, including but not limited to:
    - Interpreting individual standards for clarity and consistency of application.
    - Interpreting the accreditation process for clarity and consistency, including making judgments regarding situations that are not specifically or formally described in the agency accreditation publications.
    - Evaluating the effectiveness of the standards and revising as needed.
    - Developing new standards or accreditation designations as needed.
    - Follow and understand the Manual standards and operations.
    - Enforce Manual operations and standards.
    - Function as the final appeal body for standards interpretation, visitation results, and accreditation issues.
  - Provide input to CAPRA staff during budget development process.
  - Advise CAPRA staff about external sponsorships and grants that would enhance the agency accreditation program.
  - Collaborate and coordinate with CAPRA staff by providing subject matter expertise in the development of future editions of the text *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies*.
  - Conduct a comprehensive review of the final draft to ensure that the content of future editions of the text *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies* is consistent with the agency accreditation standards.
  - Work continuously to improve the accreditation program through evaluation, benchmarking, technology, and feedback from participants. Collaborate with CAPRA staff to develop a

process map for financial considerations of significant changes.

- **Position Requirements**
  - Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, experience as an accreditation volunteer is a plus
  - Demonstrate a passion for CAPRA’s goals and represent the Commission by exhibiting professionalism, confidentiality and promoting the best practices of CAPRA
  - Agree to serve a three (3) year term (not to exceed 2 consecutive terms)
  - Actively participate in the Commission meetings and activities
- **Breakdown of Commission Membership by Professional Associations (found on page 14)**
- **Training and Supervision**
  - New Commission members are expected to attend the new Commissioner Orientation (offered annually)
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
  - Will be assigned a Commission mentor
- **Time Commitment**

○ Board meetings and Committee/Task Force meetings (monthly)	est. 20 hours per year
○ Committee/Task Force work outside of meetings (as needed)	est. 24 hours per year
○ Assistance with agency review (as needed)	est. 40 hours per year
○ Annual hearings and meeting	est. 16 hours per year
○ Special projects may require additional time commitments	est. 12 hours per year
○ 3-year commitment (not to exceed 6 years)	
- **Benefits**
  - Eligible for Professional Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.



## **CAPRA Executive Committee Member (4 Members)**

- **Committee Mission**
  - Provide leadership, direction and management of the CAPRA Commission and collaborate with NRPA on the sustainability of the accreditation process.
- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**
  - Oversee strategic direction of the Commission
  - Represents the Commission at events, functions, and meetings
  - Review, discuss and act on complaints from agencies, volunteers, and Commission members
  - Ensure the confidentiality and integrity of process
  - Work continuously to improve the accreditation program through evaluation, benchmarking, technology, and feedback from participants.
  - Collaborate with CAPRA staff to develop a process map for financial considerations of significant changes.
  - Providing on-going communication with Commission members
  - 1 year commitment or as elections work out (members can be appointed up to 2 times)
- **Position Requirements**
  - Current Commission Chairperson (Chair), Chair-elect, Secretary and Past Chair are appointed members
  - Actively participate in the Committee meetings, projects and meet deadlines
  - Ability to delegate and manage workflow
  - Develop and manage organizational change and vision
  - Work collaboratively with fellow committee members and CAPRA staff liaison
- **Training & Supervision**
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
- **Time Commitment—additional expectations of time**
  - Monthly Executive team meetings est. 18 hours per year
  - Committee meetings (bi-monthly) est. 12 hours per year
  - Special projects est. 60 hours per year
- **Benefits**
  - Eligible for Professional Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

## **CAPRA Committee Structure**

*The CAPRA Commission and NRPA will ensure all Task Force and Committee members reflect the racial, ethnic, gender and geographic diversity of park and recreation professionals and the general public.*

CAPRA Staff Liaison for all committees (ex-officio, non-voting)

- **Committee Makeup**
  - The committee shall consist of up to 10 members with a minimum of 7.
  - New members will be added to the committees in January and will serve a 3-year term.
  - Members shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- **Selection Process**
  - When committee vacancies exist, new members shall be solicited through the NRPA. Prospective members will apply by submitting the committee application form.
  - New members will be elected by the current committee by majority vote.
  - Committee member terms shall be staggered to ensure complete turnover of the committee does not occur at one time.
- **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**
  - Committee meetings (bi-monthly) est. 12 hours per year
  - Working committee meetings as needed est. 24-40 hours per year
  - Committee members who are absent from two meetings will be subject to dismissal. The Committee Chair shall affect the dismissal and shall defer to the selection process if needed.
- **Officers**
  - The Officers shall be members of the Committee and shall be elected by the committee for one-year terms with a maximum of two consecutive terms in each office.
  - The Committee Officers are: Chairperson (Chair), Chair-elect, Secretary, and Past Chair. Officers and the CAPRA Accreditation Manager (CAPRA staff as ex-officio, non-voting member) will make up the Committee Executive Committee.
  - Officers shall take office at the start of the first meeting of the next year after the vote occurs.
  - Elected officers shall fulfill the functions normally assigned to such offices, included but not limited to:
    - Chairperson (Chair) - (1) preside at all committee meetings, (2) appoint all temporary or permanent subcommittee members and their chairs, (3) serve as ex-officio member of all subcommittees, (4) serve as the principal spokesperson for the committee. (5) shall automatically assume the office of Past Chair at the completion of their term (if Chair's term is set to expire, they may participate on the Committee as the Past Chair, but will do so as a non-voting member).
    - Chair-elect – (1) shall, in the event of the absence or inability of the Chairperson to exercise their office, become Acting Chairperson of the committee, with all the rights, privileges, and powers, as if they had been the duly elected chairperson; (2) shall automatically assume the office of Chair at the completion of their term.
    - Past Chair- shall assist the current Chairperson throughout the year as needed. If their term has expired, they may participate on the committee as a non-voting member.
    - Secretary – in collaboration with CAPRA staff shall (1) keep records of all meetings and



actions, in appropriate format, (2) ensure quorum is met (3) keep of minutes and other documents, as appropriate, (4) exercise all duties incident to the office of Secretary, (5) perform such other duties as are usual for such an officer and as may be assigned by the Chairperson for the committee.

- Parliamentary procedures - All committees will adhere to a parliamentary procedure provided in the CAPRA Operating Code. In the event of procedural ambiguity, Roberts Rules of Order may be referenced.
- Quorum - A quorum for purposes of transacting business for the committee shall be a majority of the entire committee. In the absence of a quorum, the chair may adjourn the meeting until a quorum is obtained.

## **CAPRA Volunteer Committee**

- **Committee Mission**

- Establish a process for recruitment, assignment, evaluation, and management of volunteers to support the mission of the CAPRA Commission

- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Recruit, develop and screen volunteers for the key processes of CAPRA (CAPRA Review Team Advisor, CAPRA Review Team Lead, CAPRA Review Team Member, Mentor, Committees/Task Forces)
- Assist NRPA with assignment, tracking and management of volunteer assignments
- Work with NRPA and Training Committee to develop training for Volunteers to improve the volunteer experience and the quality and consistency of CAPRA (CAPRA Review Team Advisors, CAPRA Review Team Leads, CAPRA Review Team Members, CAPRA Mentors, Committees/Task Forces)
- Review volunteer performance
- Investigate and provide corrective feedback or training for deficient performance
- Establish best practices for CAPRA Volunteer Program
- Develop and update CAPRA Volunteer Manual
- Revise Volunteer Matrix to examine and evaluate volunteer pool (i.e., where volunteers are from – size of agency; geographical location; type of agency – city, county, state, federal or military agency; position in agency)
- Establish recognition programs for CAPRA volunteers

- **Position Requirements**

- Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years' experience as a former CAPRA Commissioner; CAPRA Review Team Advisor, Lead, or Member; or CAPRA Mentor
- Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
- Ability to recruit, train and motivate volunteers
- Experience with volunteer management, human resources, or organization management
- Actively participate in the Committee meetings, projects and meet deadlines

- **Training & Supervision**

- Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures

- **Benefits**

- Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
- Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
- Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
- Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
- Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

## **CAPRA Training Committee**

- **Committee Mission**
  - Produce, implement, and evaluate training to support the needs of the CAPRA Commission and processes for agencies, CAPRA Review Team Advisors, CAPRA Review Team Leads, CAPRA Review Team Members, CAPRA Mentors, and Commissioners for the betterment of the process
- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**
  - Produce and implement training in a variety of formats (virtual, on demand, in person, etc.)
  - Identify subject matter experts (SMEs) for all training offerings including trainings at state conferences
  - Review findings from annual training program evaluations to improve training for upcoming year
  - Evaluate trainings and trainers
  - Research best practices for delivering training and develop standards for training
  - Ensure training, CAPRA Standards and CAPRA Manual are aligned for process consistency
- **Position Requirements**
  - Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years' experience as a former CAPRA Commissioner; CAPRA Review Team Advisor, Lead, or Member or CAPRA Mentor
  - Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
  - Experience with training development, adult learning, or information management
  - Actively participate in the Committee meetings, projects and meet deadlines
- **Training & Supervision**
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
- **Benefits**
  - Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
  - Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
  - Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
  - Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
  - Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

## **CAPRA Standards Committee**

- **Committee Mission**
  - Review the CAPRA standards and provide recommendations to ensure the relevance of best practices and update as the industry changes
- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**
  - Develop, review and draft standards that are meaningful best practices for the management of park and recreation agencies allowing for participation from a broad and diverse cross section of parks and recreation agencies nationally
  - Develop, review and draft procedures and operational processes for review and evaluation of the accreditation process.
  - Work with NRPA and Training Committee to develop training curriculum and procedures for all CAPRA Mentors, CAPRA Review Team Advisors, and CAPRA Review Team Leads and members when standards change or need more defined interpretation.
  - Align and reference standards to best practice publications within the field including the *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies*
  - Work continuously to improve the accreditation program through evaluation, benchmarking, technology and feedback from accredited agencies and professionals from the P&R field.
  - Evaluate and respond to standard questions or clarifications.
  - Provide CAPRA staff with guidance for inquiries on standards.
- **Position Requirements**
  - Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years' experience as a former CAPRA Commissioner; CAPRA Commission Review Team Advisor, Lead or Team Member; or CAPRA Mentor
  - Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
  - Experience with organization, management best practices, continuous improvement, and technical writing desired
  - Actively participate in the Committee meetings, projects and meet deadlines
- **Training & Supervision**
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
- **Benefits**
  - Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
  - Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
  - Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
  - Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
  - Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

### **Confidentiality of Accreditation Information**

The minutes of Commission meetings (excluding minutes of executive sessions), including accreditation review decisions, are available to the public upon request. All other data, observations, conversations, reports, and working documents related to the Commission's dealings with agencies are confidential. Acceptance of membership on the Commission or on a visitation team constitutes a contractual agreement to safeguard the confidentiality of information acquired in these capacities.

As a matter of policy, accreditation decisions on individual agencies are made in executive sessions. Attendance at these sessions is limited to members of the Commission and those persons specifically invited to attend by the Commission.

Information on final actions by the Commission on applications for accreditation shall be public information. Information regarding actions that are not final, including appeals and deferrals, shall remain confidential until final decision is reached. The Commission retains the right to release a full report, or parts thereof, when necessary to correct or clarify inaccurate information.

### **Non-Endorsement of Consultants as part of CAPRA Accreditation Process**

The CAPRA Commission and the National Recreation and Park Association believes that participation in the CAPRA Accreditation Program provides agencies with a comprehensive management system of operational best practices to improve their infrastructures; increase efficiency in all their departments; and demonstrate accountability within their communities. Implementation of this comprehensive system strengthens teamwork among agency staff, embeds all aspects of CAPRA into their agency's internal culture and establishes a continuous improvement mindset in all agency activities.

**As a result, the CAPRA Commission and the National Recreation and Park Association do NOT endorse the use of external or private consultants of any kind in any aspect of the CAPRA accreditation and reaccreditation process, including preparation, review and completion of Self-Assessment or site visit and Commission hearing preparation.** We believe agencies are most successful in building this comprehensive management system when staff at all levels (and only staff) from the Director level downward participates in its creation, refinement, and maintenance.

If an external or private consultant(s) is used managing or assisting an agency in the CAPRA accreditation and reaccreditation process, the Commission is in no way responsible or accountable for the services provided by the consultant(s), the outcome or work of the private consultant(s) and in no way does CAPRA or NRPA recommend or endorse the services of any consultant.

## **Code of Professional Conduct**

This code sets forth the standards of professional conduct to be observed by CAPRA Commissioners, CAPRA volunteers, and CAPRA accredited agencies, as they act in the capacity of that role. Individuals shall, in their professional activities, sustain and advance the integrity, honor and veracity of their position by:

- adhering to the highest standards of integrity and honesty in all public and professional activities to inspire confidence and trust;
- supporting in a positive manner all actions taken by CAPRA even when the member is in a minority position on such actions;
- abiding by the Operating Code and all policies and procedures in the CAPRA Manual;
- removing oneself from cases of conflicts of interest;
- never disclosing confidential information related to or verbally discussed about the CAPRA program, e.g., including but not limited to drafts of the self-assessment, CAPRA Review Team (CRT) reports, and/or visit reports;
- doing the best work possible, being objective, using due care and making full use of education and skills;
- always acting in the best interests of CAPRA by informing the Commission of needed changes or current best practices;
- never rewarding or punishing, or awarding or denying benefits based on personal considerations, including but not limited to, favoritism, nepotism or bribery; and
- serving in the interests of stakeholders in a lawful manner, while maintaining high standards of conduct and character, and not discrediting the profession or the Commission.

An individual who fails to practice these professional standards shall be subject to review and imposition of appropriate sanctions by the Commission.

## **Amendments to the Manual**

The Manual may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Commission.

## **Amendments to Standards**

CAPRA Standards will be reviewed on an on-going basis to maintain relevance to the industry. The standards may be amended by a two-thirds vote by a quorum of the Commission. Proposed substantive changes to the standards the Commission shall be submitted for public comment permitting sufficient time for interested individuals and organizations to respond prior to final action by the Commission. To maintain transparency in this process, revision notes, rationale, and version history will be maintained.



## Standards Committee SME Engagement

The Standards Committee of the CAPRA Commission recognizes that there will be occasions when the Commissioners may not have the requisite expertise to represent a specialty area during standards review and discussion adequately. Whether conducting regularly scheduled standards review, analyzing an issue with the construction of an existing standard, or considering the addition or deletion of a standard, the Standards Committee **may** elect to solicit advice and recommendations for review from a subject matter expert (SME).

- SMEs may be drawn from **professional organizations** recognized by NRPA as representing one of a wide array of park and recreation industry related areas.
- If an NRPA-recognized professional organization is not identified, a SME may be identified by the leadership of NRPA, AAPRA, or the CAPRA Commission.
- Experienced practitioners and educators shall be asked to serve as SMEs. If one is not identified consultant assistance may be necessary.
- Process:
  - Standards Committee shall identify the need for a SME to be engaged, defining the deliverable required.
  - Standards Committee votes on the proposed SME engagement deliverable. The CAPRA Commission may choose a SME from among the Commissioners which does not require Executive Committee authorization outlined below.
  - Standards Committee Chair communicates the Committee’s request for a SME(s) and a defined deliverable to the Executive Committee and NRPA staff, requesting authorization to proceed with volunteer engagement outside the Commission. Paid consultant assistance shall be limited and subject to CAPRA budget constraints.
  - Once authorized, NRPA staff assist to identify an NRPA-recognized organization(s) contact(s).
  - NRPA staff creates a connection between the organization(s) contact(s) and the Standards Committee Chair.
  - Standards Committee Chair communicates the need for SME engagement with the NRPA-recognized organization contact(s) or the identified CAPRA Commission SME.
  - Once SME(s) are identified, the Standards Committee Chair, or designee, will work directly with the SME(s).
  - The SME(s) recommendation(s) for review shall be sent to the Standards Committee for review and discussion.
- SME deliverables are considered advice and recommendation, only becoming action once the CAPRA Commission has taken action.

## Eligibility

Accreditation is open to agencies that can meet the minimum required standards and pay the required fees. Upon receipt of application, CAPRA records the agency's intent to pursue accreditation, and sends a confirmation letter acknowledging receipt of the application and providing information on next steps. If an organization seeks CAPRA accreditation but has a separate park department and a separate recreation department, one application form may be completed including both departments.

This CAPRA Manual (2024 Edition) is designed to detail the accreditation process and procedures. In addition, the Commission strongly recommends the agency purchase and read the *Management of Park and Recreation Agencies* (M. Moiseichik, Ed., 2022, 5th Edition, NRPA/CAPRA) which explains the management practices embodied in the CAPRA Standards.

## Accreditation Standards

Accreditation is based on an agency's compliance with 154 standards for national accreditation. To achieve accreditation, an agency must comply with all 36 Fundamental Standards and 106 (90%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards upon initial accreditation and 112 (95%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards upon reaccreditation.

A standard is a statement of minimum expectation as set forth by experienced professionals. In evaluating an agency for accreditation, the standards are a measure of effectiveness using the cause and effect ("if...then") approach. If one acts in a certain way, then it is expected that there will be a certain outcome. In practice, if an agency complies with a given standard, then it is expected that the agency's operations related to that standard will be positively affected. Viewed holistically, if an agency complies with the vast majority of the standards (i.e., all fundamental standards and at least 106 of the non-fundamental standards upon initial accreditation and 112 of the non-fundamental standards upon reaccreditation), then it is probable the agency is performing at a high level. Standards enable evaluation by comparing what is found within an agency operation to what are generally accepted by professionals as desirable practices.

### **CAPRA Fee Schedule\***

All CAPRA Agencies must pay a fee to NRPA annually to retain their accreditation. This fee is either an Accreditation Review Fee (during the year in which the agency is being reviewed for the first time or as part of their reaccreditation) or an Annual Accreditation Fee (to maintain their accreditation).

The Accreditation Review Fee covers all aspects of the review process for that visit year including visit scheduling and team identification: CAPRA Review Team (CRT) review of self-assessment report; visit approval and review of report in preparation for and during the agency’s visit; production of final visitation report; hearing preparations; and finalization of accreditation. **This fee is billed on October 15 of the year before their review and must be paid before January 15 of the year of their review.**

The Annual Accreditation Fee is required to maintain an agency’s accreditation in good standing for the year and covers agency’s listing on the NRPA website and use of CAPRA logos on agency’s website and related publications. **This fee is billed on October 15 and must be paid before January 15 of the following year.**

Accreditation fees are based on agency population size. **Accreditation review fees are billed on October 15 of the year before their review and must be paid before January 15 of the year of their review. Accreditation annual fees are billed on October 15 and must be paid before January 15 of the following year.** Fees are subject to change and are reviewed annually.

<b>Agency Level</b>	<b>Agency Population Served</b>	<b>Annual Fee</b>	<b>Review Fee</b>
1	<20,000	\$325	\$1500
2	20,000-49,999	\$400	\$2000
3	50,000-99,999	\$500	\$3000
4	100,000-249,999	\$650	\$3750
5	250,000+	\$800	\$4400

#### **Other Fees**

Preliminary Application Fee	\$130
Extension Request Fee	25% of Review Fee
Annual Report Late Fee	\$500
Annual/Review Fee Late Fee	\$500

### **CAPRA Refund Policy**

All fees for CAPRA Accreditation are nonrefundable. Agencies may request up to a one (1)-year extension by following the process found in the section entitled **Extensions**.

## General Steps for Initial Accreditation

1. At least one (1) person from the preliminary-applicant agency must attend a CAPRA approved training on the current set of standards within two (2) years of submitting the agency's application.
2. Preliminary applicants must submit the Application for Accreditation, and pay the required fee, providing a request for a visit to occur within two (2) years of the application date. The visit calendar is maintained by CAPRA staff who will work with the agency and the Commission Executive Committee (EC) to assign a Mentor, and a CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Advisor and a CAPRA Review Team (CRT).
3. Upon receipt of the Application for Accreditation, the preliminary-applicant agency will be automatically assigned a CAPRA Mentor based on their region and population size. The agency will be provided with that person's contact information. They shall contact and work closely with their Mentor, as soon as possible once their application has been submitted. The Mentor will serve as a resource and will answer basic CAPRA questions regarding Self-Assessment (SA) Report preparation and submission, review sample narratives for brevity and clarity, and validate EOC for accuracy and ease of review.
4. Upon the submission of the application and assignment of a Mentor, the preliminary applicant will receive access to the online self-assessment report form in the CAPRA portal based on the CAPRA standards. Agency staff can start completing each section and uploading the appropriate documentation for meeting the Evidence of Compliance (EOC) requirements.
5. The agency will be required to pay its accreditation review fee by January 15 of the year of their anticipated hearing.
6. In early fall of the year prior to their hearing, CAPRA staff will contact all agencies under review with visits forthcoming to confirm their participation and determine their visit availability. Agencies are required to provide 1 week of availability for their visit for each month of the review year (March to June). NRPA will make the final decision on the assigned visit week.
7. Once CAPRA staff has confirmed availability from all agencies under review, an **Upcoming CAPRA Visit Season Survey** will be sent to all current CAPRA Volunteers to confirm their participation.
8. The Commission EC and CAPRA staff work together to identify the CRT for the hybrid review of the SA for site-visit readiness; conduct the onsite visit; AND evaluate all documentation provided with the SA. CRTs for initial accreditation are usually comprised of three (3) individuals, one of whom is designated the CRT Lead who will lead the site visit. The Commission EC and CAPRA staff also work together to identify the CRT Advisor who provides support, advice and guidance to the CRT Lead as needed. The decision regarding number of Volunteers and frequency of visits for specific cases rests with the Commission.
9. The agency will be able to access the proposed CRT resumes to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. CRT members **MUST NOT** make any travel arrangements until the CRT has provided their official notification that the visit has been approved to be scheduled and the CAPRA staff notifies the agency that the visit is to proceed.

10. The agency submits its completed SA with all electronic documentation of EOC by **January 15 of the year of their anticipated hearing** for review by the CRT. The CRT will conduct a comprehensive review of the SA to determine if there are appropriately constructed narratives and satisfactory EOC for the visit to take place. Once the review is complete, the CRT Lead shares the CRT's review and consults with the CRT Advisor regarding the agreement that the site visit can proceed. **Any concerns that one or more Fundamental Standards and/or 6 or more non-Fundamentals will not be met shall be addressed at this time, with the CRT Lead discussing the concerns with the CRT Advisor and CAPRA staff. The CRT Lead should contact the agency lead copying CAPRA staff of the concerns. The Agency has 14 calendar days to resolve the concerns. If the agency is not able to satisfactorily resolve the concerns and the CRT Lead and CRT Advisor feel a site visit would be unsuccessful the CAPRA Executive Committee and CAPRA staff should be notified for guidance.** Only following concurrence by the CRT Lead, CRT Advisor, and CAPRA Executive Committee that the visit can occur, the CRT Lead notifies the CAPRA staff that the visit can proceed. CAPRA staff then notifies the Agency that the visit can move forward, and the travel arrangements can be coordinated between the Agency and the CRT.

The CRT conducts the visit inspection; reviews all documentation; and submits an electronic Visitation Report of their findings to all CRT members and the CRT Advisor. The CRT Advisor and CRT team members review the comprehensive report and finding no issues, they each sign the report and the report is released to the agency. Accompanying the report is a cover letter and comprehensive CRT Record of Review finalized by the CRT Lead at the end of the visit.

12. The Commission is provided written summaries for all initial agency visits by the assigned CRT Lead and conducts the Agency hearings at the next in-person meeting (extenuating circumstances may require the Commission to hold a virtual meeting instead of an in-person meeting) of the Commission, typically in the fall at the NRPA Conference. The CRT Advisor provides a summary report to the Commission in advance of the agency's hearing. The Commission may grant accreditation, establish conditions for an accreditation extension, defer action, or deny accreditation. **If a CAPRA Commissioner is also serving as a CRT Advisor for an agency under review, this information must be disclosed at the beginning of the hearing and that individual will be the last vote on their assigned Commission hearing team.**

13. At least two (2) representatives from initial agency accreditation applicants must attend and participate in the agency hearing. One [1] of the agency representatives must be the agency director and it is recommended that the agency's lead accreditation staff member also attend the agency hearing.

14. Upon receiving accreditation, the agency is required to submit Annual Reports and Annual Accreditation Fees the first, second, third and fourth years after initial accreditation and undergo a complete reevaluation (Self-Assessment Report, Accreditation Review Fee, visit, and Visitation Report) every five (5) years to retain CAPRA accreditation.

## General Steps for Renewed Accreditation (Reaccreditation)

1. At least one (1) person from the renewing accreditation agency must attend a CAPRA approved training course on the current set of standards every two (2) years to stay in compliance.
2. The renewed accreditation agency will receive access to the Online Self-Assessment Report form in the CAPRA Portal based on the CAPRA standards – they are **NOT** required to pay an application fee for reaccreditation. Agency staff can start completing each section and uploading the appropriate documentation for evidence of compliance.
3. The agency will be required to pay its accreditation review fee by January 15 of the year of their anticipated hearing.
4. In early fall of the year prior to their hearing, the CAPRA Accreditation Manager (CAPRA staff) will contact all agencies under review with visits forthcoming to confirm their participation, determine their availability, and confirm their choice of having a hybrid or virtual accreditation review. Agencies are required to provide 1 week of availability for their visit for each month of the review year (March to June). NRPA will make the final decision on the assigned visit week.
5. Once CAPRA staff has confirmed availability from all agencies under review, an **Upcoming CAPRA Visit Season Survey** will be sent to all current CAPRA Volunteers to confirm their participation during the visit season.
6. The Commission EC and CAPRA staff work together to identify the CRT that will review the SA for site-visit readiness; conduct the site visit; AND evaluate all documentation provided with the SA. CRTs are usually comprised of three (3) individuals, one of whom is designated the CRT Lead who will lead the site visit. The team is supported by a CRT Advisor for advice and guidance to the CRT Lead, as needed. The decision regarding number of Volunteers and frequency of visits for specific cases rests with the Commission.
7. The agency will be able to access the proposed CRT resumes to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. CRT team members **MUST NOT** make any travel arrangements until the visit has been approved to be scheduled and CAPRA staff notifies the agency that the visit is to proceed.
8. The agency submits its completed SA with all electronic documentation of EOC by January 15 of the year of their anticipated hearing for review by the CRT. The CRT will conduct a comprehensive review of the SA to determine if there are appropriately constructed narratives and satisfactory EOC for the visit to take place. Once the review is complete, the CRT Lead shares the CRTs review and consults with the CRT Advisor regarding agreement that the site visit can proceed. Any concerns that one or more Fundamental Standards and/or 6 or more non-Fundamentals will not be met shall be addressed at this time, with the CRT Lead discussing the concerns with the CRT Advisor and the CAPRA staff. Upon concurrence about the status of the Standards with the CRT Lead, CRT Advisor and CAPRA staff, the CRT Lead should contact the agency lead of the concerns. The Agency has 14 calendar days to resolve the concerns. If the agency is not able to satisfactorily resolve the concerns and the CRT Lead and CRT Advisor feel a site visit would be unsuccessful the CAPRA Executive Committee and CAPRA staff should be notified for guidance. Only following concurrence by the CRT Lead, CRT Advisor and CAPRA Executive Committee that the visit can occur, the CRT Lead notifies the CAPRA staff that the visit can proceed. CAPRA staff then notifies the Agency that the visit can move forward, and the travel arrangements can be coordinated between the Agency and the CRT.

9. The CRT conducts its onsite or virtual visit, inspection; reviews all documentation; and submits an electronic Visitation Report of their findings to all CRT members and the CRT Advisor. The CRT Advisor and CRT members review the comprehensive report and finding no issues, they each sign the report and the report is released to the agency. Accompanying the report is a cover letter and comprehensive CRT Record of Review finalized by the CRT Lead at the end of the visit.

10. Should a hearing be required for a reaccrediting agency, the assigned CRT Lead will provide a summary report to the Commission in advance of the agency's hearing. The Commission may grant accreditation, establish conditions for an accreditation extension, defer action, or deny accreditation. **If a CAPRA Commissioner is also serving as a CRT Advisor for the reaccrediting agency under review, this information must be disclosed at the beginning of the hearing and that individual will be the last vote on their assigned Commission hearing team.**

11. If a hearing is required, at least two (2) representatives from the agency must attend and participate in the agency hearing. One (1) of the agency representatives must be the agency director and it is recommended that the agency's lead accreditation staff member also attend the agency hearing. The agency's CRT Lead must participate in this hearing. If a hearing is NOT required, all reaccrediting agencies will be voted on by the Commission as a consent agenda item during the annual meeting.

12. Upon receiving reaccreditation, the agency is required to submit Annual Reports and Annual Accreditation Fees the first, second, third and fourth years after receiving reaccreditation and undergo a complete reevaluation (Self-Assessment Report, Accreditation Review Fee, visit, and Visitation Report) every five (5) years to retain CAPRA accreditation.

## **Mandatory Participation in CAPRA Volunteer Recruitment – Currently Accredited Agencies**

### **Currently Accredited Agencies**

Each currently accredited agency that has 200 or fewer full time staff members shall provide at least one (1) staff member as a CAPRA volunteer each year of current accreditation. Agencies with more than 200 full time staff members shall provide two (2) or more staff members as CAPRA volunteers each year of current accreditation. This is a requirement to keep the agency's accreditation current.

## **Purpose**

To keep the agency involved, ensure the agency is gaining “best practices” opportunities by learning from other agencies, and develop dedication and allegiance to the CAPRA program by safeguarding its success and sustainability with added resources and volunteer opportunities. Volunteers will benefit from this professional development opportunity by solidifying their recognition and understanding of the CAPRA standards of excellence and building a broader network of park and recreation professionals across the U.S. while promoting future CAPRA international accreditation efforts.

## **Implementation and Fines**

Agencies will have 1 year from the date of notification to comply with this requirement. If the agency falls out of compliance with this requirement for within a 2-year period of time, the agency will be required to pay a fee equal to 10% of their Agency Review Fee. If the agency falls out of compliance with this requirement for beyond 2 years, the agency will lose their accreditation status. If an agency loses its accreditation status, the Agency can reapply for accreditation the following year.

## **Extensions – Initial Applicant Agencies**

Preliminary Applicant Agencies may seek an extension of time to complete the self- assessment process and schedule the onsite or virtual visit due to leadership changes, budget changes, or other defined hardships that should be described in depth when submitting this request. If the agency is unable to complete the self-assessment and/or schedule the visit within the two (2)- year timeframe, the agency may request an extension and pay the extension fee\* or withdraw from the process. If they withdraw from the process, they may apply again when they are ready.

To request an extension, the agency contact must request the appropriate form from CAPRA staff. The form must be returned to CAPRA staff, including a detailed description and appropriate documentation for their request, along with the required fee\*.

Once received, CAPRA staff will provide the form and appropriate documentation to the Executive Committee of the CAPRA Commission to approve or deny the request. The agency accreditation contact will receive an official electronic notification of the decision and if approved will be provided an invoice for the extension fee\*. Upon processing, NRPA’s records will be updated as appropriate.

Any costs incurred by the agency related to the deferral of its visit are the agency’s responsibility (i.e., airline tickets or hotel reservations for volunteers). Preliminary Applicant extensions may be requested up to 12 months in advance but will not be permitted after the visitation team report has been issued or once the visitation team has arrived at the agency. Once a visitation team has arrived at the agency, a visit report must be issued.

## **Extensions – Renewing CAPRA Accredited Agencies**

Renewing CAPRA accredited agencies may request an extension for their accreditation visit due to leadership changes, budget changes, or other defined hardships that should be described in depth when submitting this request. To request an extension, the agency contact must request the appropriate form from CAPRA staff. The form must be returned to CAPRA staff, including a detailed description and appropriate documentation.



The request must demonstrate and include:

- The reason why the agency is requesting an extension;
- How this extension will enable the agency to proceed with a rescheduled accreditation review and visit in the future;
- Provide an action plan and timeline for how the agency will overcome these barriers in time for a rescheduled accreditation review and visit

Once received, CAPRA staff will provide the form and documentation to the Executive Committee of the CAPRA Commission to approve or deny the request. The agency accreditation contact will receive an official electronic notification of the decision and if approved will be provided an invoice for the extension fee\* Upon processing, NRPA's records will be updated as appropriate.

If an accredited agency requests an extension and it is approved, their original five (5) year accreditation cycle will be adjusted appropriately (i.e. if extension was granted until 2024, then their 5-year cycle will restart in 2024)

Extensions may not be requested after the visitation team report has been issued or once the visitation team has arrived at the agency. Any costs incurred by the agency related to the deferral of its visit are the agency's responsibility (i.e., airline tickets or hotel reservations for volunteers). Once a visitation team has arrived at the agency, a visit report must be issued.

### **Extension - Eligibility**

**Preliminary applicant agencies are eligible for no more than 2 extensions.** If an agency has been approved for 2 extensions, the agency must then complete the process or withdraw from the program. If an agency withdraws from the program, the agency can reapply at a later date.

**Renewing CAPRA Accredited Agencies are eligible for no more than 2 extensions between review cycles.** If an agency has been approved for 2 extensions, the agency must then complete the process or withdraw from the program. If an agency is not successful in being reaccredited following 2 extensions, the agency is no longer an accredited agency. If an agency withdraws from the program, the agency can reapply to become accredited at a later date

### **\*Extension Fees**

If extension request is submitted **before January 15** of their review year, the agency will be required to pay a fee equal to 25% of their annual review fee (see section on CAPRA fees for detailed information about CAPRA annual review fees). Renewing agencies are also required to pay their annual accreditation fee and submit their annual report for the upcoming year to maintain their accreditation. If extension request is submitted **after January 15** the agency will be required to pay the entire accreditation review fee for the upcoming year.

### **Withdrawals from CAPRA**

New or renewing accredited agencies may request to voluntarily withdraw from the CAPRA program. To request a withdrawal, the agency contact must request the appropriate form from CAPRA staff. The form must be returned to CAPRA staff, including a detailed description on why they have decided to withdraw.

Once received, CAPRA staff will provide the form and documentation to the Executive Committee of the CAPRA Commission to approve or deny the request. The agency accreditation contact will receive an official electronic notification of the decision and NRPA's records will be updated as appropriate.

If the withdrawal request is received after January 15 of the year of their anticipated hearing, the agency will be responsible for paying their review or annual fee as invoiced.

## **CAPRA Mentorship Program**

The CAPRA Mentorship Program involves actively assigning Commission-approved volunteers from currently accredited agencies as well as retired and active CAPRA volunteers to new and reaccrediting agencies by region and population served by the respective agencies. Mentors will be assigned to all new agencies by the CAPRA staff. Mentors will be coached on communication with their respective agencies and will be held accountable in this role through required training and evaluations.

### **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Serve as a Mentor to an assigned agency preparing for accreditation or re- accreditation.
- Be responsive in a timely manner to requests for assistance from the assigned agency.
- Provide guidance to an agency for completing their Self-Assessment; provide the agency with direction to resources available to the agency for completing their Self-Assessment; do not give them specific direction or provide them with specifics in completing their Self-Assessment.
- If uncertain how to handle a situation, reach out to CAPRA staff or a member of the Executive Committee of the CAPRA Commission
- 1 year Commitment

### **Position Requirements**

- Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years' experience as a former CAPRA Commissioner; CAPRA Review Team Advisor or Lead; CAPRA Site Visit Team Lead; or CAPRA Mentor
- Completion of CAPRA Review Team Mentor training within the last 2 years
- Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
- Ability to handle difficult or challenging situations in a calm and supportive manner

### **Training & Supervision**

- Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures

### **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**

- Responsive to needs of assigned agency est. 20 hours per Agency

### **Benefits**

- Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
- Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
- Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
- Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
- Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

## Maintenance of Accreditation

The agency must be successfully reviewed and reaccredited on a continuing basis every five (5) years. Once an agency has been accredited, the maintenance of its accreditation is contingent upon fulfilling the following requirements:

1. Being reviewed and approved by the Commission on a continuing basis every five (5) years and/or responding to any possible requests by the Commission regarding accreditation status decisions.
2. Continued compliance with standards set by the Commission for the duration of the five (5)-year period between reviews.
3. Paid annual accreditation or accreditation review fee by required due date (see page 27 for details on this) and submitting an Annual Report by April 15th of each year. Agencies are notified at least (thirty) 30 days prior to the due date of the Annual Report and fee.
  - a. If an agency is non-compliant for failure to submit the Annual Report by the April 15th deadline, the following steps will be taken:
    - i. Following 15 calendar days: An automated reminder will be sent to the agency on April 30th assessing the Annual Report Late Fee and requesting submission of the Annual Report.
    - ii. Up to one (1) month of the original due date. An additional reminder will be sent along with a phone call to the agency on May 15 notifying the Agency Director and the Commission of non-compliance and a request for explanation from the agency regarding such non-compliance.
    - iii. Up to two (2) months of due date. Without prior response, the agency's accreditation status will be placed on the agenda for summary judgement at the next Commission meeting due to non-compliance with the Annual Report submission requirement.
  - b. If an agency is non-compliant for failure to submit the annual accreditation fee or accreditation review fee by the payment due date on the agency invoice, the following steps will be taken:
    - i. 14 days following the due date. An automated reminder will be sent to the agency and a late payment fee will be assessed to the agency.
    - ii. Up to one (1) month of due date without payment. A follow-up e-mail notice and phone call will be placed to the agency for a response. The Commission will be notified of agency non-compliance.
    - iii. Up to two (2) months of due date without payment. If no response has been provided, the agency's accreditation status will be placed on the agenda for summary judgement at the next Commission meeting due to non-compliance with the maintenance of necessary accreditation fees requirement.

4. Upon receipt of all the Annual Reports, 25 agencies will be selected each year for audits.

The assigned auditor will commence reviewing the Annual Reports to identify any compliance issues that they determine need to be addressed prior to an agencies next scheduled visit.

- a. If any compliance issues are identified and are deemed necessary for an agency to address prior to their next scheduled visit, the assigned auditor will contact CAPRA staff) with a description of the areas of concern.
- b. CAPRA staff will add the description of the areas of concern to the Commission's next meeting agenda for discussion with the full Commission.
- c. The full Commission will determine the next steps at their next meeting and the CAPRA staff will notify the Agency Director and the Agency Contact regarding those next steps. The Commission will assign a Commissioner who will be the agency's point of contact throughout this process.

## **Policy for Annual Report and Audit Process for Accredited Agencies**

Agencies are required to submit an Annual Report each year. To ensure agencies are continually addressing the CAPRA standards in their day-to-day operations and adopting continued improvement practices, the Annual Report will require an agency to produce updated or current Evidence of Compliance (EOC) for selected standards from the most recent CAPRA Self-Assessment that resulted in an agency's accreditation. The CAPRA Commission will select a representative sample of standards each year for the agencies to provide EOC. The Commission will select no more than 10 standards for this review annually.

### **Timeline of Review**

- **December** - Executive Committee determine annual review standards
- **January/February** - CAPRA staff send annual report notifications to agencies
- **April 15** – Annual Report due to CAPRA staff
- **No later than May 1** – CAPRA staff provides Annual Reports to Audit Teams
- **No later than July 15th** – Auditor submits Audit Report to Audit Team Lead
- **Not later than July 31<sup>st</sup>** – Audit Team Lead submits Audit Report to CAPRA staff

### **Auditing Process**

25 agencies will be audited annually upon submission of the annual report. From the pool of agencies required to provide an annual report, a random selection of agencies will be assigned to a CAPRA Audit Team for examination of standards assigned for that year's review. Agencies will be expected to provide access to their document management system (if necessary) to their Audit Team if an audit is requested. An agency not providing the assigned documentation for the most recent updates, latest review and EOC for selected standards will be notified and may receive sanctions from the CAPRA Commission up to and including withdrawal of agency's status due to non-compliance of the submission requirements for the Annual Report. Within a 5-year cycle all currently accredited agencies will be audited at least once.

- 25 agencies will be systematically audited over a four-year period.
- Any agency with a status other than "Active" will be automatically included as one of the 25 agencies selected for the audit.

### **Annual Report EOC**

Only EOC documentation is required of the agencies selected for audit, narratives are not required. Agencies will be provided access to the NRPA portal to provide links to all EOCs for required standards for the audit.

## **CAPRA Audit Team (CAT)**

- Auditors will be selected from the NRPA CAPRA volunteer pool with priority given to those volunteers who did not serve on annual review team. One auditor will be assigned per agency to conduct the agency audit.
- Audit Teams
  - A total of 5 Audit Teams will be created for the annual agency audits.
  - Each Audit Team will consist of one Commissioner and five auditors.
  - Five members of the CAPRA Commission will serve as the CAPRA Audit Team Leads.
  - The Commissioner role as CAPRA Audit Team Lead will be similar to that of the CRT Advisor for CAPRA Review Teams.
  - Each Audit Team will have five (5) assigned agencies, with each auditor reviewing one (1) agency.
  - Auditors will use the audit report form to conduct and complete the audit (see attached audit report form).
  - Each auditor is to submit the audit report form to the Audit Team Lead upon completion, no later than July 15.
  - The Audit Team Lead will review each audit completed by team members and, if necessary, work with individual auditors to resolve any report issues.
  - Each Audit Team Lead is responsible for submitting the completed audits to the CAPRA staff no later than July 31.

## **Audit Findings**

CAPRA staff will share the completed audit report with each agency following the audit process. In the event an agency is not successfully meeting the standards identified in the annual report, CAPRA staff will also share the audit report with the CRT Lead when the agency is scheduled for their reaccreditation visit.

The audit process is designed to ensure that agencies are maintaining compliance with the standards from year to year and to serve as a tool to prepare agencies for their reaccreditation visit. The commission may **issue a warning** to an agency based on the results of the agency's annual report audit. \*Refer to the **Accreditation Status – Actions** section on page 63 of this document in reference to the process of receiving a warning.

## **CAPRA Audit Team (CAT) Lead Position Description**

- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**
  - Serve as the Lead on an assigned CAPRA Audit Team (CAT), consisting of 5 auditors, for review of selected agencies annual reports
  - Provide guidance or assistance to CAT members as needed during the annual agency report audit process.
  - Be responsive in a timely manner to requests for assistance from the assigned CAT members.
  - If uncertain how to handle a situation, reach out to a member of the Executive Committee of the CAPRA Commission and CAPRA staff for assistance.
  - If needed, serve as a replacement auditor should another member of the team need to drop out (notify CAPRA staff to attempt to assign a replacement auditor)
  - 1 year Commitment
  
- **Position Requirements**
  - Strong familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years experience serving as a CRT Advisor or Lead; CAPRA mentor; and/or past member of the CAPRA Commission
  - Completion of CAT Lead training within the last 2 years
  - Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
  - Ability to handle difficult or challenging situations in a calm and supportive manner
  
- **Training & Supervision**
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
  
- **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**
  - Responsive to needs of assigned CAT - est. 10 hours per CAT
  
- **Benefits**
  - Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
  - Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
  - Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
  - Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
  - Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.



## **CAPRA Audit Team (CAT) Member Position Description**

- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**
  - Serve as an Auditor on an assigned CAPRA Audit Team (CAT), consisting of a CAT Lead and 5 auditors, for review of selected agencies annual reports
  - One auditor will be assigned to each agency to conduct the agency audit.
  - Be organized, thorough and timely in completing the review of an agency's Annual Report.
  - Effective and timely communication with CAT Lead and fellow Members.
  - If uncertain how to handle a situation during the review process, reach out to your assigned CAT Lead for assistance.
  - 1 year Commitment
  
- **Position Requirements**
  - Be currently employed full-time in, or retired from, the field of recreation, park resources, and leisure services
  - Have completed five (5) years of full-time professional experience in the field
  - Completion of CAT Member training within the last 2 years
  - Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
  - Hold membership in the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and/or related professional organization
  - Participate in free CAPRA Volunteer only training opportunities (access available when application processed)
  - Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process
  - Ability to handle difficult or challenging situations in a calm and supportive manner
  - Demonstrate excellent written and verbal communication skills as well as copy-editing proficiency
  - **May not currently be a sitting member of the Commission, unless, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, there is an extenuating circumstance, e.g., quality control, visitation team vacancy or visitor shortage.**
  
- **Training & Supervision**
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
  
- **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**
  - Annual Agency Report Audit Process - est. 7 hours per Auditor
  
- **Benefits**
  - Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
  - Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
  - Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)



- Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
- Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.
- **Selection Process**
  - Auditors will be selected from NRPA CAPRA active volunteers list and from received applications

### **Self-Assessment Report - Overview**

The self-assessment process serves as an opportunity for an agency to engage in rigorous self- review and improvement against nationally recognized quality indicators. The resulting self- assessment report is the primary document in the Commission’s evaluation of the agency. Thus, it is extremely important that the self-assessment report be written carefully and accurately.

Two basic purposes exist for conducting and preparing the self-assessment:

1. To collect, review, and record all material relative to the administration of the park and recreation agency. The self-assessment process provides the opportunity to involve staff at all levels of the organization in the assessment of the agency.
2. To provide documentation that an agency is meeting nationally recognized best practices standards. The visitation team assesses the documentation indicating the ways in which the standards are being met and serves as a basis for the Commission’s determination of accreditation.

The self-assessment report must include clear and compelling evidence of compliance with each of the standards. A well-written self-assessment is thus pivotal to the success and efficiency of the entire review process. Because of the complexity involved, data may be gathered from multiple sources, and it is not uncommon for the data collection and preparation to take a considerable amount of time. This preparation phase is one of the most valuable parts of the entire process because it is here that the agency comes to know itself better. It provides opportunities for clarity, improvement, and a unified approach to change.

### **Addressing Ongoing Agency Change**

Changes within the agency may occur during the time period in which the self-assessment is being written. Generally, an agency will be accredited on the material that is current at the time of the visitation. Unless requested to do so by the Commission, changes to the self-assessment should not be made after it is submitted to the CAPRA Review Team (CRT).

Making a note of these changes and their anticipated impact on the agency and specific standards is appropriate and can be reported to the CRT during the visit, to the Commission during the hearing, or within an agency's annual report.

It is the responsibility of the agency to keep all contact information up to date with NRPA. Contact information can be updated by contacting NRPA Customer Service or logging into the NRPA website and updating account information at [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)

### **Costs of Self-Assessment**

Self-Assessment costs are the responsibility of the agency seeking accreditation. They include direct and indirect costs involved in preparing the self-assessment document including staff time for the research, preparation, and production of the document, and costs for supplies. All self-assessments and evidence of compliance must be submitted online via the CAPRA Application and Review Portal.

## **Preparing and Submitting the Self-Assessment Report (SA) – Writing Requirements**

A well-developed and executed Self-Assessment Report (SA) is essential for CAPRA Review Team (CRT) members to both determine agency readiness to proceed and to do a thorough verification in advance of the visit. The CRT will look for relevance, accuracy, specificity, and completeness. The self-assessment format for each standard has two parts: 1) a narrative, and 2) linked evidence of compliance (EOC) documentation for each standard.

CAPRA provides access to a specific online application and review portal. Use of the portal is mandatory as it provides a single location and uniform format that assists the CRT in performing consistent reviews. Agencies use the portal to provide their narrative and related EOC for each of the CAPRA standards.

### **Writing Requirements - To Ease SA Review**

- Use proper grammar, syntax (sentence structure, complete sentences), and punctuation.
- Proofread the document thoroughly, to eliminate all spelling and grammatical errors.
- Use abbreviations only after the abbreviation or acronym has been fully written out once and fully described, e.g., when the agency provides EOC in the SA, the EOC must be correctly identified.
- Refrain from using proper nouns when referencing individuals; use pronouns, where possible, and third person (she/he/it/they) not first person (I/we).
- Use succinct and factual sentences to produce a tightly scripted document.
- Refrain from using overstatement and hyperbole, i.e., We are second to none in the region.
- Write in a consistent ‘voice’ throughout the Report. Identify and correct shifts in verb tense, e.g., use current tense. Use the active voice, e.g., The director gives instructions (active voice). Instructions are given by the director (passive voice).
- Include titles, dates, and page numbers in EOC references.
- Include, revision, adoption, and approval dates for tracking purposes, e.g., revision of the 1995 policy on encroachment was adopted on October 2, 2019.
- Never cut and paste or copy word-for-word from any agency report or website, unless properly cited with title, publisher and date or website address and access date.
- Complete all sections of the self-assessment report form entirely.
- Contact and work closely with the assigned Mentor, by sharing multiple samples, of the Self-Assessment Report’s standards and EOC, PRIOR to the submission to CAPRA.

### **Narrative Format**

SA narratives should be concise, yet thorough. Throughout, the wording should be factual and objective to avoid ambiguity. A narrative that merely indicates that the evidence is on file or only provides a listing of EOC documents without a narrative is insufficient. The narrative both discusses HOW the agency complies with the standard and makes thorough reference to each EOC document that is being offered in support of compliance.

## Evidence of Compliance (EOC) Format

When the agency provides EOC in the SA, each EOC document **MUST** be correctly identified or referenced with bookmarking and (yellow) highlighting, thoroughly organized, and consistently presented to avoid ambiguity and vagueness. It is important to provide the date and source of EACH piece of evidence to assure credibility and significance. The CRT will be checking for suggested EOC with the appropriate wording set forth in the standard. **Be precise, e.g., if a plan or policy is required, be certain to provide a clear plan or policy, not a collection of documents in place of the plan or policy.**

Follow these requirements for submission of EOC documents:

- List each document in the same order it is mentioned in the narrative to facilitate easy retrieval and review. The narrative should be a brief explanation of how the agency meets the standard.
- Online files must be well organized to facilitate quick access. Documents must be available in hard copy or electronic format.
- Present the narrative and documented EOC in a consistent format for each standard. Refer only to those documents for which there is evidence presented. Number and list each piece of EOC as it is mentioned in the narrative.
- Do NOT list or include documents that are NOT referenced in the narrative or apply to the standard.
- When the EOC is only part of a multi-page document, plan, or manual provide the title, date of publication, and page or pages with the relevant passage marked or highlighted (in yellow). ***The Report narrative or embedded electronic link MUST direct the CRT to the exact page, paragraph, and line on which the evidence is referenced.***
- When linking to any document, such as a policy manual, there shall be bookmarks and (yellow) highlighting, including specific page and section references, and/or links that allow the CRT to quickly and easily access the item to be reviewed.
- When the EOC is an entire plan or manual, include only the title, date of publication, table of contents and, where required, the adoption or approval date by the appropriate governing authority.
- Provide the date of document preparation and provide the date of approval or adoption by the approving authority and the date of last review, as required (refer to Standard 1.2 Periodic Timetable for Review of Documents and Standard 1.2.1 Document Approval Authority).
- Electronic links and online documents **MUST** be named exactly as referenced in the corresponding narrative. They must point the CRT to specific information that is published elsewhere. If hyperlinks are used in the SA, they **MUST** be valid and operational for the CRT. **Agencies are responsible for assuring that ALL links are functional.**
- Provide only required or suggested EOC; do NOT include extra materials or documents that are not necessary, e.g., redundant, supplementary, or complementary documents.
- Where suggested EOC topics or heading names do not “mirror” or coincide exactly with suggested CAPRA terminology, EOC documentation **MUST** be described and/or a rationale shared as to WHY they differ.

### **Failure to Follow Format and Writing Guidelines**

The Agency Contact, with a copy to CAPRA staff, will be sent an electronic communication if their SA report does not follow the required format and writing Manual. The agency will have two (2) weeks to revise the Self-Assessment Report and send it back to the CRT, with a copy to CAPRA staff, for the CRT to complete its work

## **Reviewing the Self-Assessment Report (CRT, CRT Advisor, CAPRA staff, and Agency Responsibilities and Procedures)**

Once the Self-Assessment Report (SA) has been submitted for review on January 15 of the year the agency will be reviewed, the agency will provide access to CRT team members and the CRT Advisor and, if necessary, include simple and uncomplicated steps for third-party access, e.g., minimizing stipulations and/or platform disclaimers.

To ensure continuity with previous CAPRA reaccreditation reviews, CAPRA staff will email copies of the agency's most recent Visit Report and the subsequent Annual Reports to the CAPRA Review Team (CRT) upon request.

## **CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Member Position Description (2 per team)**

- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Serve as a team member for an assigned CAPRA Review Team to complete the review of an agency's Self-Assessment for agency accreditation and re-accreditation.
- Be organized, thorough and timely in completing the review of an agency's Self- Assessment.
- Effective and timely communication with fellow review team members.
- If uncertain how to handle a situation during the review process, reach out to your assigned CAPRA Review Team Lead for assistance.
- 1 year Commitment

- **Position Requirements**

- Be currently employed full-time in, or retired from, the field of recreation, park resources, and leisure services;
- Have completed five (5) years of full-time professional experience in the field;
- Completion of CAPRA Review Team Member training within the last 2 years
- Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
- Hold membership in the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and/or related professional organization;
- Participate in free CAPRA Volunteer only training opportunities (access available when application processed)
- Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process
- Ability to handle difficult or challenging situations in a calm and supportive manner
- Demonstrate excellent written and verbal communication skills as well as copy-editing proficiency
- **May not currently be a sitting member of the Commission, unless, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, there is an extenuating circumstance, e.g., quality control, visitation team vacancy or visitor shortage.**

- **Training & Supervision**

- Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures

- **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**

- Agency Review Process - est. 20 hours per Review Team

- **Benefits**

- Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
- Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
- Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
- Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process





- Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

- **Application Process**

Individuals interested in becoming a volunteer must submit the CAPRA Volunteer Application Form with a copy of their resume (found on the NRPA website) for consideration. Individuals currently serving or scheduled to serve as CAPRA Agency Contacts or agency Self-Assessment Report contributors are especially encouraged to apply to become a volunteer.

**When feasible, no more than one (1) new volunteer should be assigned to a CRT team. Assignments will be made based on volunteer’s experience in similarly sized agency.**

## **CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Lead Position Description**

- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Serve as the Lead for an assigned CAPRA Review Team to provide direction and guidance to fellow review team members and the agency through the CAPRA Review process for agency accreditation and re-accreditation process.
- Be organized, thorough and timely in completing the review of an agency's Self- Assessment.
- Effective and timely communication with agency director and accreditation lead, Review Team members, CAPRA staff, and CAPRA Review Team Advisor as needed.
- If uncertain how to handle a situation during the review process, reach out to your assigned CAPRA Review Team Advisor and CAPRA staff for assistance.
- 1 year Commitment

- **Position Requirements**

- Have participated in at least three (3) CAPRA visits;
- Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years' experience as a former CAPRA Commissioner; CAPRA Review Team Advisor, Lead, or Member; CAPRA Site Visit Team Lead or Member; or CAPRA Mentor
- Completion of CAPRA Review Team Lead training within the last 2 years
- Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
- Ability to handle difficult or challenging situations in a calm and supportive manner

- **When feasible, the CRT Lead should have at least one (1) of the following recommended qualifications:**

- Have at least three (3) years of management experience at a CAPRA-accredited agency or five (5) years of management experience at a non-CAPRA accredited agency;
- Currently work or previously worked for an accredited agency and served as the agency's CAPRA Agency Contact (Coordinator) or in a similarly active leadership role in helping the agency achieve accreditation or reaccreditation;
- Have at least three (3) years of teaching experience in parks and recreation or related fields at an Accreditation for Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT)-accredited college or university or five (5) years of teaching experience at a non-COAPRT accredited school;
- Have at least five (5) years of professional consulting experience in the field of parks and recreation; or
- Previously served as a CRT Lead and received positive evaluations from their CRT members, and agencies.

- **Additionally, the following criteria should be considered if feasible when making CRT Lead assignments:**

- CRT Lead should have experience working for a similarly sized agency;
- CRT Lead is located within the same or an immediately adjacent time zone as the agency being reviewed;
- Ensure first-time CRT Leads are not assigned agencies seeking initial accreditation; and



- First-time CRT Leads should be assigned a visit team with experienced visitors only.
  
- **Training & Supervision**
  - Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures
  
- **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**
  - Agency Review Process est. 20 hours per Review Team
  
- **Benefits**
  - Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
  - Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
  - Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
  - Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
  - Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

## **CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Advisor Position Description**

- **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Serve as an Advisor to an assigned CAPRA Review Team when guidance or assistance is needed during the accreditation and re-accreditation process.
- Be responsive in a timely manner to requests for assistance from the assigned CAPRA review team.
- If uncertain how to handle a situation, reach out to a member of the Executive Committee of the CAPRA Commission and CAPRA staff for assistance.
- If needed, serve as a replacement team member should another member of the team need to drop out (notify CAPRA staff so Commissioner can be assigned as new CRT Advisor for the remainder of the review)
- 1 year Commitment

- **Position Requirements**

- Familiarity with CAPRA and the accreditation process, including 2+ years' experience as a former CAPRA Commissioner; CAPRA Review Team Advisor or Lead; CAPRA Site Visit Team Lead; or CAPRA Mentor
- Completion of CAPRA Review Team Advisor training within the last 2 years
- Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or Certified Parks and Recreation Executive (CPRE) credentials
- Ability to handle difficult or challenging situations in a calm and supportive manner

- **Training & Supervision**

- Attend trainings to be aware of processes and procedures

- **Time Commitment-- additional expectations of time**

- Responsive to needs of assigned CAPRA Review Team est. 10 hours per Review Team

- **Benefits**

- Solidify a strong understanding of the CAPRA National Accreditation Standards
- Join a broader network of professionals who understand the benefits of CAPRA
- Free online, on demand CAPRA training for all active volunteers (and free access to future updates to those trainings)
- Professional Development growth in reviewing policies and procedures of other agencies during the CAPRA review process
- Eligible for Profession Service Equivalency (PSE) for continuing education units.

## Volunteer Selection

CAPRA staff maintains a list of approved volunteers who have met specified criteria and are up to date on their training requirements. Only individuals who have been approved are eligible to serve on CRTs.

To maintain the highest ethical standards, the following policies exist:

- Volunteers to a particular agency must come from outside of the state in which the agency being reviewed is located
- An individual may not serve as a volunteer to an agency at which he/she has been employed
- At least two (2) visitation cycles (usually 10 years) must have passed before a volunteer may return to that agency as a volunteer
- Volunteers must sign and submit a confidentiality and conflict of interest statement annually.
- An individual may not serve as a volunteer to an agency at which he/she provided consulting services within the previous five (5) year period and may not serve as a consultant to an agency within five (5) years following a visit.

Once confirmed as a volunteer, an individual must make the commitment to the rest of the visit team, the agency, and to CAPRA that he/she will fulfill his/her duty as a volunteer. If the individual is unable to continue with the visit process due to a bona fide (documented, undeniable and not open to question) hardship, he/she must notify CAPRA staff as soon as possible to ensure the necessary arrangements can be made to fill the vacancy on the visit team. If the cancellation is made after travel arrangements have been made on the volunteer's behalf, a determination will be made by the Commission executive committee and CAPRA staff about who (CAPRA or the volunteer) will cover the expenses caused by the cancellation. In addition, if the cancellation reason is deemed as not bona fide, the volunteer will be required to reimburse the travel expenses and may no longer be assigned to future visits.

Using dates of availability provided by the agencies in the fall prior to their visit year current volunteers are given the opportunity to confirm in which visits they can participate. In putting together visit teams, the CAPRA Executive Committee and CAPRA staff will ensure there is at least one volunteer on each team that has worked for a comparable-size agency to the one being visited.

CAPRA staff provides resumes of the proposed team members to the agency for their approval to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, and confirmation. The agency may object to any name on the list, giving reasons for doing so. However, the Commission reserves the right to determine the review team. Following acceptance of the list of proposed volunteers, CAPRA staff invites the selected individuals to serve and requests that the CRT Lead make specific travel arrangements for the visit directly with the agency and his/her visit team members.

Once all volunteers have been assigned and confirmed to upcoming visits a communication will be sent to notify those who were not chosen.

CAPRA volunteers must respond to the request for visits (sent out each fall after conference) once every

3 years to remain an active volunteer.

### **Evaluations**

At the conclusion of the visit season, all members of the visitation team are evaluated for professionalism and competence.

- The CRT Lead evaluates the CRT Advisor.
- The CRT Advisor evaluates the CRT Lead.
- The CRT team members evaluate each other.

Evaluations are completed and submitted via online forms. Positive evaluations are necessary to remain an accreditation volunteer. If concerns are identified for any volunteer, the status of that volunteer will be reviewed by the executive committee.

## CAPRA Review Process (New and Reaccrediting Agencies)

### Important Notes:

- All new accreditation agencies will have in-person Site Visits and Hearings.
- Reaccrediting agencies will have the choice of having hybrid or virtual Site Visits and in-person Hearings.
- **All 3 team members will participate in the in-person or virtual visits**
- The in-person Site Visit should last no longer than **2 full days**.
- **A maximum of five (5) locations** should be visited during the in-person Site Visit.
- **Agencies must follow their internal gift policies when providing small appreciation gifts with little to no monetary value (e.g., t-shirt, coffee mug) that feature the agency jurisdiction or logo. Questions regarding what is and is not permissible should be directed to CAPRA staff**
- The draft schedules included in Phase B for both virtual and in person visits are **examples only**. The CRT Lead and the agency will need to work together to create the schedule. The CRT Lead should have final authority on the needed schedule based on the areas of focus identified in Phase A.

### Phase A – Pre-Visit (New and Reaccrediting Agencies)

- CAPRA Review Team (CRT) (2 team members and 1 lead) will review the 10 chapters.
- Each team member would be responsible for 3 chapters, while the lead will be responsible for 4 chapters. It is recommended that the chapters be split up for review of the Self-Assessment in this manner: **Chapters (1, 2, 5, 10), (3, 4, 7), and (6, 8, 9)** for an equitable distribution of work.
- **Each team member is required to review their assigned chapters a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the agency visit.** This review provides the opportunity for team members to become familiar with the narratives and EOCs and if the agency will need to revise narrative(s) and/or provide additional EOCs.
- The CRT will review each Standard against the Self-Assessment for: **clear narrative that identifies Evidence of Compliance (EOC), EOC that appears to meet the standard, hyperlinks are working, and the EOC is relative to the standard and easy to access with highlights for long EOC documents.**
- Any concerns that one or more Fundamental Standards and/or 6 or more Non-Fundamental Standards will not be met shall be addressed at this time and **CAPRA staff should be notified IMMEDIATELY.** The CRT Lead should share concerns with the agency lead, the CRT Advisor, and the CAPRA staff. All concerns should be provided to the agency lead in writing along with a set deadline of **14 calendar days** to resolve the concerns. **At this point, please include CAPRA staff and the CRT Advisor in all communications so they can effectively monitor the situation.** If the agency is not able to satisfactorily resolve the concerns and the CRT Lead feels a detailed review and site or virtual visit would be challenging, the CRT Advisor, the CAPRA Executive



Committee and CAPRA staff should be notified for guidance. CAPRA staff will follow back up with the CRT Lead following consultation with and direction provided by the CAPRA Executive Committee. Should a CAPRA Executive Committee member be identified to meet with agency CAPRA staff will schedule a meeting with the EC member, the CRT Advisor, and CRT Lead in advance of meeting with the agency to fully understand the situation. **Based on the outcome of the meeting with the agency they will be given the option to extend to the next review year (if eligible); withdraw from the CAPRA accreditation program; or continue with their review with the knowledge that they may not be successful in obtaining accreditation or reaccreditation.**

- CRT Team will meet virtually, at least once, to confirm findings, discuss issues of concerns and the facilitation of Phase B.
  - Each team member shall have their sections reviewed (with comments, questions, concerns) prior to this meeting and submitted to the CRT Lead at least **4 days** before Team meeting
  - CRT Lead will have reviewed materials in preparation of Review Team meeting to ensure comments, questions and concerns of Team are addressed during meeting
- If issues arise during Phase A that require assistance or guidance, the CRT Lead will reach out to CRT Advisor for as needed assistance and guidance
- Following the Review Team meeting discussing the findings, issues of concern and facilitation of Phase B, the CRT Lead will meet with the CRT Advisor to discuss Pre-Visit review and the decision to move forward with site or virtual visit
- **Once a decision has been made to move forward with a site or virtual visit the CRT Lead is to notify CAPRA staff so they can send the appropriate communication to the agency**

## Phase B - Virtual Site Visit

- The information below is a **sample virtual site visit**. Meeting times and areas of focus will vary based on the results of your pre-visit and the identified areas of concern. Days do not need to be concurrent, but should be within the same week:
- Day 1
  - 8:30 am- Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead to review schedule and any updates to the self-assessment report since it was submitted.
  - 9 am- Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 4.0- Human Resources
  - 10:30 am – Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 2.0-Planning
  - 1 pm- Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 5.0- Financial Management





- Day 2
  - 9 am- Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member and external staff responsible for 8.0-Public Safety, Law Enforcement and Security
  - 10:30 am – Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 6.0 – Programs and Services Management
  - 1 pm- Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 9.0-Risk Management
  
- Day 3
  - 9am – Virtual meeting with Agency lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 10-Evaluation, Assessment and Research
  - 10:30 am – Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead and staff member responsible for Chapter 7 – Facility and Land Use Management
  - 1 pm- Virtual meeting with Agency CAPRA lead to pre-review Chapters 1 and 3, and address any issues identified in previous virtual meetings

OR

## Phase B - In person Site Visit

The information below is a sample in-person visit. Meeting times and areas of focus will vary based on the results of your pre-visit and the identified areas of concern.

- Arrive mid-day before visit
  - Agency to provide a driver for site visit or a map/route **with up to five (5) locations** to visit. **Anticipated amount of time required: 3 hours.**
    - **Potential visit locations include but are not limited to:** city-county headquarters/ location of elected personnel and or agency leadership, a recreation center, regional park, neighborhood park, aquatic facility, senior center, sports complex, environmental education center, park maintenance/operations staff facility, agency headquarters.
    - These are only provided as an example as not all agencies have each type of facility.
    - These facilities should be visited again during the **next day's site visit.**
  - Goal of this visit is for the CRT Team obtain the following:
    - Culture of/for CAPRA is evident at the agency
    - Talk to staff about their facilities and get a first-hand understanding of adherence to CAPRA standards
    - Meet with elected officials or agency leadership (**Note- this is not meant to be a formal meeting, but an attempt to get an understanding of adherence to standards.**)
- Next Day (**sample schedule**)
  - 8:00 am- Meet with Agency CAPRA lead to review updates from virtual visits.
  - 8:30 am- Meet with Director of agency to review Chapter 1.0- Agency Authority, 3.0 Organization and Administration and 9.0 Risk Management.
  - 9:30 am-Meet with lead recreation staff member (director, superintendent, manager, chief) to review Chapter 6.0- Program and Service Management
  - 10:30 am- Meet with lead staff member (director, superintendent, manager, chief), and if applicable, head of planning and head of park operations to review Chapters 2.0-Planning and 7.0-Facility and Land Use Management
  - 11:30 pm-1:30 pm Lunch/site visit



- 1:30 pm – Meet with appropriate lead staff to review Chapters 4.0- Human Resources, 8.0-Public Safety, Law Enforcement and Security, and 10.0-Evaluation, Assessment and Research
- 2:30 pm- Meet with City/County Manager/Assistant City/County Manager (or Parks Board/Advisory Board) to review role of agency in the overall community
- 3:00 pm- Meet with parks and recreation staff from a variety of work areas (i.e., recreation, planning, maintenance, HR, administrative staff) to review continuous improvement process and culture of accreditation at agency
- 4:00 pm- Work time for the CRT Lead to prepare for exit meeting
- 4:30 pm- Meet with Agency CAPRA lead and Director to conduct exit interview
- Leave agency return home- evening or next morning

### **Phase C - CAPRA Review Team Reconvenes**

- Team reconvenes to review information from virtual or in-person Site Visit and prepares final report
- Final report due two (2) weeks from completion of virtual or in-person Site Visit
- CRT Lead completes the report and shares report with CRT Advisor
- The CRT Lead and Advisor meet to review report, sort out any issues and update report, if there are any updates that are needed, prior to signatures are added to the report
- CRT Team Members and CRT Advisor sign the completed report
- CRT Lead provides final report to CAPRA staff for distribution to agency
- CRT Advisor completes the fact-based summary report of the CRT's final report for the Agency's Hearing with the Commission

### **In-person Site Visit Preparation**

When the invited volunteers accept the assignment, they are provided with details about the agency, share contact information with each other, and provide CAPRA staff with signed versions of the annual CAPRA Volunteer conflict of interest form.

By January 15 of the year of their review the agency provides access to their SA report to their assigned CRT team. **(Failure to do so may result in cancellation of the scheduled visit).** Any expenses incurred up to this point (e.g., prepaid visitor travel expenses) are the responsibility of the agency.

The visit must take place at least 90 days prior to the Commission meeting at which the agency will be reviewed. The agency makes all arrangements for visitation team arrival, time onsite, and departure.

The CRT Lead and agency work together to set the specific dates for the visit and to develop the onsite visit agenda. The agency arranges for housing, meals, workspace, materials, clerical assistance, and interview schedules. All arrangements should be made in close consultation between the volunteers and the host agency. As early as possible, details of all CRT team members' arrival and departure schedules should be determined. CRT members **MUST NOT** make any travel arrangements until the agency has been notified that their visit is approved.

### **Arranging for Transportation**

Depending upon proximity to the agency, CRT members may travel to the agency by personal vehicle or airplane. Most commonly, CRT members will travel by air to the airport nearest the agency.

Typically, the agency assumes responsibility to meet the CRT members at the airport and provide transportation to the hotel. The agency should communicate with individual CRT members to coordinate arrival times and locations. The agency will also need to make arrangements for transporting CRT members to the airport at the conclusion of the visit. The agency is also responsible for transporting the visitation team between the hotel and the agency and from one site location to another.

If a CRT member chooses to select an alternative method of travel (i.e., driving, train, bus, flying to a different location than their home destination, etc.) that is more expensive than traveling roundtrip to/from the agency via airplane, he/she will only be reimbursed up to the amount of the cost of a roundtrip airfare ticket to/from the agency's location.

### **Arranging for Lodging**

Typically, the agency makes arrangements for lodging. The agency lead will know what is available and may be able to take advantage of any partnerships the agency may have with local hotels. They are in a better position to select the site and make reservations than individual CRT members. An individual hotel room should be reserved for each CRT member. In addition to privacy, this provides the opportunity for CRT members to spend time working on individual assignments before and after each day's activities. In selecting a hotel, it also will be important to consider proximity to eating establishments.

### **Arranging for Meals**

On some occasions during the visit, the CRT team may have meals with elected officials, community leaders, commissioners, and staff. Other times, they will want to eat on their own, as a group. CRT members need time together to coordinate their activities and share their perceptions as the visit progresses. Too many planned meals or events can become a burden for both the CRT team and the agency. It is important for the agency representative and CRT Lead work together to determine meal preferences and any special dietary needs.

### **Handling Expenses**

No honoraria are given to members of the CRT team; however, the agency under review covers all CRT team travel expenses (e.g., transportation, parking, meals, and lodging). If possible, all costs shall be incurred by the agency and not by the CRT team member. If CRT team members make their own travel arrangements, the agency must be prepared to reimburse the individual(s) either in advance of the visit or during the visit. In no situation should a CRT team member incur credit card interest expenses while waiting for reimbursement. **In addition, for a n initial review, the agency is responsible for travel expenses of the CRT Lead (or his/her designee) to attend the Commission hearing at which the agency is reviewed.**

The agency should determine ahead of time how CRT team member expenses will be handled. In some cases, CRT team members may pay for their own meals, parking, etc. and the agency reimburses individuals for these. In other cases, the agency may pay for these expenses directly. Lodging is often handled by the agency arranging with the hotel to pay directly. Typically, this will depend on agency policies. If reimbursement is required, the agency should inform CRT team members as to what documentation or receipts are needed to ensure timely reimbursement. The agency should obtain whatever information is required by the agency from each CRT team member (e.g., identification numbers, receipts, statements of related expenses) prior to the conclusion of the visit. Reimbursements should be made before the CRT team members leave the agency, if possible. If agency policies do not permit this arrangement, reimbursements should be mailed within two weeks after the visit.

If a CRT team member is unable to continue with the visit process due to bona fide hardship, he/she must notify CAPRA staff as soon as possible. If the cancellation is made after travel arrangements have been made on the CRT team member's behalf, a determination will be made by the Commission executive committee and CAPRA staff about who (CAPRA or the CRT team member) will cover the expenses caused by the cancellation. In addition, if the cancellation reason is deemed as not bona fide, the CRT team member will be required to reimburse the travel expenses and may no longer be assigned to future visits. In the event of a CRT team member cancellation, the agency will not be required to pay for the travel expenses of that CRT team member.

### **Other Physical and Support Arrangements**

CRT team members will require access to and use of some agency facilities. The team will need a workspace (that can be secured) to meet together, review materials, and work on the report.

Supplemental materials that may be helpful to the team should be available in the workspace (e.g., the agency's relevant policy statements not included in the self-assessment). Shared use of a telephone and a printer is also necessary.

### **Unsolicited Information**

The purpose of the accreditation visit is fact-finding to verify information provided in the self-assessment. Thus, information is gathered from a wide range of sources during the visit. Occasionally, unsolicited information is shared with CRT team members; some of this may relate directly to accreditation standards, whereas some information may relate to internal matters that are unrelated to standards.

CRT team members are cautioned to accept and utilize this information wisely. If the information is submitted anonymously and/or unrelated to accreditation standards, it should be ignored. If the source of the information is identifiable and the information is related to accreditation standards, the source may be invited to meet with the CRT team during the visit to provide additional information. If such information is received after a visit is made, it shall be ignored unless the CAPRA executive committee finds it compelling.

### **CRT Team member Demeanor**

As representatives of CAPRA and NRPA, all CRT team members shall maintain a helpful and respectful attitude. Additionally, positive and professional attitudes enhance the tenor of the visit and create an overall positive impression. CRT team members should dress appropriately to the norm of the agency determined in advance of the visit. CRT team members are encouraged to emphasize their role as the “eyes and ears” of the Commission whose job it is to focus solely on fact-finding as related to the standards. This helps to minimize the likelihood of getting distracted by internal politics or making inappropriate judgments, recommendations, or suggestions for improvement that are outside the scope of the standards. It is particularly important to avoid making comparisons with other agencies with which a volunteer is familiar.

### **Potential Conflict of Interest – Gifts, Activities, and Events**

The agency plays an important role in ensuring the CRT team is not put in situations that may be perceived as creating a conflict of interest. **Commission members, CRT Advisors, and CRT team members may not accept gifts beyond small tokens of appreciation with little to no monetary value (e.g., t-shirt, coffee mug) that feature the agency jurisdiction or logo.** Questions regarding what is and is not permissible should be directed to CAPRA staff.

Gift, awards, or other offerings that may present the perception of a conflict of interest should not be offered by an agency. Agencies should not treat CRT team members to unnecessary “luxuries.” Such behavior can put the credibility of the agency at risk and can damage the reputation of the accreditation program.

### **Confidentiality**

Acceptance of an offer to participate on a CRT team constitutes a contractual agreement to safeguard the confidentiality of information acquired in that capacity. Team members sign a statement of confidentiality and conflict of interest on an annual basis. Team members are obligated to avoid any situation where any perception of conflict of interest might arise. Breach of confidentiality on the part of any CRT team or Commission member undermines the accreditation process.

CRT team members participate as agents of CAPRA and NRPA; therefore, official contacts with the agency regarding the visit are made only through CAPRA staff or the CRT Lead. The results of Commission deliberations are reported to the agency only through the Commission chair or CAPRA staff. Self-assessment materials and the visitation reports are to be held in confidence by all parties.

### **The Visitation Report – Overview**

A well-developed and executed Visitation Report (CRT Record of Review and the CAPRA visit executive summary report) is essential. Here, all CRT members can provide guidance on met/not met and comments for each standard. All team members can work in this document at the same time and there is a place to include your name to help your CRT lead. In addition, it will help the agency and its staff to both determine the agency’s ability to: 1) continue to evolve and improve its best practices, and 2) complete successful Annual Reports, as well as enable future Teams to do a thorough verification. Accredited and Reaccredited agency staff will look for relevance, accuracy, specificity, and completeness in the Report’s findings and assistance for future accreditation submissions.

## **CRT Record of Review**

In the first draft of the CRT Record of Review, the comments should denote what was reviewed, who was spoken to and indicate whether the EOC is complete and the Standard is met. The document will also include an appendix with a list of initial issues or concerns identified during this first review. The CRT will keep comments well-written, grammatically correct, concise, factual, and free of opinion. The comments will be reviewed by the CRT Advisor as evidence to determine a motion for accreditation status at the hearing.

The final version of the CRT Record of Review will be prepared for release to the agency by the CRT Lead. It is incumbent on them to ensure that each standard's CRT Comments be written uniformly throughout the Report, e.g., same voice (active and past tense). A final version of the appendix to be included will be updated to reflect that all issues identified at the beginning of the review have now been resolved.

Any reference to members of the agency should be by title, rather than by name. References to documents should provide a title, source, and date citation, unless it was provided by the agency in the Self-Assessment.

## **Additional Review Tips**

Select MET or NOT MET for each standard:

- Pass/Fail

Specify what you reviewed and/or discussions you had that demonstrated compliance:

- Include dates and approving authorities.
- Do not cite irrelevant documents.

Document necessary EOC received during the Visit and not originally included in Self-Assessment Report (SA).

Keep comments well-written, grammatically correct, concise, factual, and free of opinion.

Address CRT concerns in your comments.

If the standard is not met, explain why:

- Tie it back to the standard definition and suggested EOC.
- What required components were missing?

**It is appropriate to establish a final deadline for missing EOC.**

Use consistent names or abbreviations when referencing agency, e.g., Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, CCPR, and/or Department.



## **CAPRA Visit Executive Summary Report**

*In addition, the complete Visit Report will also include the CAPRA Visit Executive Summary report with the following parts:*

**Introduction:** The Introduction provides a brief overview of the itinerary and the context in which the team members approached their task. This should include the types of data gathering processes undertaken, types of individuals interviewed, health and safety accommodations utilized, and materials reviewed.

**Agency Strengths:** Areas that substantially exceed standards and indicate quality of services related to those standards, i.e., program matrix was an efficient and effective example of program services with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Oriented) objectives evident for each event or activity.

**Agency Preparedness:** The CRT's assessment of agency preparedness for accreditation, e.g., document relevance and completeness, staff availability, file organization, etc.

**Standards Overview:** List specific standards by number and title found to be unmet. Provide clarification for all unmet fundamental standards. Indicate how many standards were met overall, how many fundamental standards were not met, and how many non-fundamental standards were not met.

**Other Concerns Related to Maintain Accreditation:** The CRT will identify any item(s) of general concern related to the agency's ability to maintain accreditation. This should also assist the agency in better identifying and including the necessary EOC in future Annual Reports and Self-Assessment Reports.

**Signatures of CRT Lead and team members:** At the end of the CAPRA Visit Executive Summary Report, each CRT member must date and sign his/her name electronically or physically. A page with physical signatures can be emailed to CAPRA staff.

**Affirmation by CRT Advisor:** The CRT Advisor may request changes to the Report through the CRT Lead. Those edits or revisions are listed on the Affirmation Page with clear statements as to why the changes were needed, i.e., 2.2 Involvement in Local Planning-Clarification requested and provided.

Once the Report is complete, the CRT Advisor will sign. The finished CAPRA Visit Executive Summary Report and final CRT record of review is then forwarded by the CRT Lead to CAPRA staff, who will send both documents to the agency.

### **Agency Response to the Visitation Report**

If the approved Visitation Report indicates the minimum level of compliance for accreditation has been achieved, **the Commission will not accept a follow-up response from the agency.**

If the approved Visitation Report indicates one or more fundamental standards are not met and/or less than 90% of the non-fundamental standards are met (95% for reaccreditation), the agency is required to submit a comprehensive response within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Visitation Report that includes all required evidence of compliance. The response should address the findings and any actions taken to rectify them. The response should be sent in electronic format to CAPRA staff.

An agency response should provide the following information in both written and matrix formats:

- Summary of the information provided in their response,
- Narrative that addresses each finding, and
- Evidence to ensure professionalism for the CAPRA Review Team (CRT) Advisor and CRT Lead and to confirm the Agency's Contact and Director/CEO are in agreement with their agency's response(s).

Once the response has been received by CAPRA staff, the agency will receive notification of receipt of the response, and it will be electronically forwarded to the CRT Advisor and CRT Lead. The CRT Advisor and CRT Lead will have thirty (30) days from the date of receipt to complete their review and determine by consensus if the newly provided documentation demonstrates compliance with the missed standard(s).

After review of the provided documentation, the CRT Lead will respond to the agency electronically, with a copy to the CAPRA staff and CRT Advisor, on the adequacy/inadequacy of the materials provided.

If significant concerns remain that may affect accreditation status, the agency will be notified of such by the CRT Lead. The Self-Assessment Report (SA), Visitation Report, and the response documentation, along with a recommendation from the CRT Advisor and CRT Lead, will be provided to the full Commission at the hearing for determination of the agency's accreditation status.

### **CAPRA Commission Business Meeting and Hearing – Purpose**

The Commission meets seven (7) times per year, once in-person in the fall in conjunction with the NRPA Annual Conference and six times via teleconference. At its fall meetings, the Commission determines the accreditation status of agencies visited during the preceding spring/summer. Additionally, the Commission conducts regular business during these quarterly meetings.

When there are more non-consent agenda hearings scheduled to take place during the fall meeting than can be accommodated in the typical meeting, the Commission will split up to conduct two hearings simultaneously. At least six (6) members of the Commission must be present at each hearing, with the Commission chair presiding over one hearing and the Chair-elect presiding over the other.

### **Initial Accreditation Hearing Procedure**

The agency director and CRT Lead are required to participate virtually or in-person in the Commission hearing when agency accreditation status is determined. In extenuating circumstances (e.g., an unexpected medical emergency) the Commission may permit participation via a conference call. That decision rests with the Commission Executive Committee. Other visitation team members are welcome to attend, at their own expense.

CAPRA staff informs the agency director and CRT Lead of the date, time, and location of the accreditation hearing at least two (2) months in advance. **The agency is responsible for expenses of the CRT Lead (or his/her designee) to attend the Commission meeting at which the agency is reviewed.**

The CRT Advisor will provide a summary report for each visit to the CAPRA Commission in advance of the hearing.

At the hearing, the Commission hearing team lead and the CRT Advisor for the respective agency will make introductory remarks and the CRT Lead will briefly summarize the visit and comment on the major strengths and major concerns identified by the team. The agency director will be invited to share any relevant updates that have occurred since the visit; however, no new or additional documentation may be provided during the hearing. If the agency has new information or has made changes since the visit, the agency director may refer to the information in response to questions. The Commission will then open the meeting for discussion, beginning with the CRT Advisor. Following discussion, guests and observers in the room are asked to step out while the Commission takes action in executive session. **In the event that a CAPRA Commissioner is also serving as a CRT Advisor for an agency under review, this information must be disclosed at the beginning of the hearing and that individual will be the last vote on their assigned Commission hearing team.**

## Renewing Accreditation Hearing Procedure

Unless the agency is asked to participate in a hearing virtually or in person, the Commission will take action through consent agenda. If guests and observers are in the room they will be asked to step out while the Commission takes action. If any Commissioners currently work for or have worked for the agency under review, they will recuse themselves from the discussion and vote for that agency.

The Commission will request the agency director to participate in the hearing virtually or in-person in the following circumstances:

1. The Visitation Report indicates unmet fundamentals; and/or
2. The Visitation Report indicates fewer than 95% of the non-fundamental standards were met, or
3. The CRT Lead and/or CRT Advisor recommend to the Commission that the agency participate in the hearing.

CAPRA staff informs the agency director of the date and time of the accreditation hearing at least two (2) months in advance.

The CRT Advisor will provide a summary report for each visit to the CAPRA Commission in advance of the hearing.

At the hearing, the Commission Chair and the CRT Lead for the respective agency make introductory remarks and the agency director will be invited to share any relevant updates that have occurred since the visit, however, no new or additional documentation may be provided during the hearing. If the agency has new information or has made changes since the visit, the agency director may refer to the information in response to questions. The Commission will then open the meeting for discussion, beginning with the CRT Advisor. The Commission will decide upon hearing all the evidence. **In the event that a CAPRA Commissioner is also serving as a CRT Advisor for the reaccrediting agency under review, this information must be disclosed at the beginning of the hearing and that individual will be the last vote on their assigned Commission hearing team.**

## Votes Required for Commission Action

1. Any action taken by the Commission must be approved by a majority of the eligible commissioners and be consistent with CAPRA's Code of Professional Conduct (CAPRA Manual 2.2).
2. Any action taken by the Commission related to accreditation/re-accreditation must be approved by a majority of eligible Commission members and be consistent with CAPRA's Code of Professional Conduct (CAPRA Manual 2.2). A Commissioner must abstain if he/she is or was employed (staff and/or contractor), is employed/resides in the same state as the agency or has a significant relationship with the agency under review which has the potential of discrediting the profession or the Commission.

## Effective Dates

Initial accreditation or continuing accreditation of an agency becomes effective on the date of approval by the Commission, including approval with conditions.

## **Accreditation Status – Actions**

At its annual meeting in the fall, the Commission may take the following action regarding an agency's accreditation status:

**Grant accreditation without conditions** – If the approved Visitation Report indicates all fundamental standards are met and 90% of non-fundamental standards are met (95% for reaccreditation).

### **Grant accreditation with conditions**

- a. Conditions must be met within a prescribed time period set forth in the motion.
- b. Failure to document corrections of deficiencies within the specified time period will result in withdrawal of accreditation.

### **Defer action**

- a. The determination of accreditation may be deferred for a specific time, pending compliance with action specified by the Commission, and set forth in the motion.
- b. Failure of the agency to document corrections of deficiencies within the specified time period shall be considered void and the agency must reapply for accreditation.
  - i. Under these circumstances, if an agency was being considered for reaccreditation, the agency is not allowed to use any CAPRA materials and must remove all references to being an accredited agency.

**Deny accreditation** - The determination of initial accreditation may be denied for specific reason(s) as set forth in a motion.

**Withdraw accreditation** - The determination of continuing accreditation may be withdrawn, either voluntarily by the agency or by Commission action. If by Commission action, the specific reason(s) are set forth in a motion. Under these circumstances, if an agency was being considered for reaccreditation, the agency is not allowed to use any CAPRA materials and must remove all references to being an accredited agency. An accredited agency may also voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. If an agency chooses to voluntarily withdraw, the agency must submit this action in writing using the appropriate form. After withdrawing, the agency must reapply for accreditation. Agencies that are no longer accredited through a withdrawal decision will receive official notification from CAPRA staff) as needed notifying the agency of their accreditation status. The letter will describe that the agency is no longer accredited and that all use of CAPRA branding must be removed from agency communications. The agency may reapply under the procedures for initial accreditation if it wishes to become reaccredited.

**Issue a warning** - The Commission may issue a warning to an agency at any time. Warnings are formal statements issued by the Commission that signal serious concerns about potential compliance issues in maintaining standards. Warnings are given when, on the basis of its Annual Report, official accreditation review, or other evidence, an accredited agency is believed to be falling significantly below minimum compliance requirements. The agency is informed of the decision at the meeting and within thirty (30) days via official letter to the Director or Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The agency may make a written request for further clarification within thirty (30) days of receipt of the official letter. Only the Commission Chair or CAPRA staff is authorized to disseminate information prior to official notification of action by the Commission to the agency.

Agencies that receive a deferral or warning will be given opportunity to make the required improvements. Evidence that an agency has responded satisfactorily to the circumstances leading to deferral or a warning will be based on one or more of the following:

- A written report indicating improvements made accompanied by relevant documentation, as appropriate and stipulated in the Commission motion;
- A supplementary visit (at agency expense) and as stipulated in the Commission motion. The number of Visitors and number of days scheduled will be determined by the Commission;
- A meeting of agency representatives with designated Commission representatives and as stipulated in the Commission motion.
- Combinations of the above or other specified evidence as stipulated in the Commission motion.

The agency will send written documentation of compliance with specific actions taken in response to the Commission's motion to the Commission's Executive Committee and CAPRA staff. Depending upon the nature of the documentation, the Commission may require verification from the agency's Director, CEO or delegate. In the case of compliance with conditions, documentation also will be forwarded to the CAPRA Review Team (CRT) designated for the agency in question for their review and responses. In the case of a deferral to the next calendar-application year, to the extent feasible, the same CRT will be appointed to review the improved resubmission. The agency is responsible for expenses incurred by the Commission or Commissioners regarding conditional or deferred accreditations.

### **Progress Reports**

With reference to a motion issued for conditions or deferrals, the Commission may request a progress report. When a progress report is requested, the Commission will ask the agency to respond to specific questions by a specific date.

## **Complaint Policy - Overview**

The Commission, in fulfillment of its public responsibility assuring the quality and integrity of agency accreditation of parks and recreation agencies, has established a process for reviewing complaints against the Commission, accredited agencies, and/or volunteers. Any individual, (e.g. staff member, practitioner, and/or affected public citizen) may submit a written complaint concerning the Commission, an accredited agency, and/or a volunteer representing the Commission. The Commission will act only upon a signed allegation that an accredited agency, volunteer representing the Commission, or the Commission and/or its members violated Commission accreditation standards or policies. The Commission will not intervene on behalf of individuals regarding hiring, appointment, promotion, or dismissal practices.

## **Complaints Against an Accredited Agency**

The following procedures will be used in the investigation of a complaint against an accredited agency.

1. A written, signed complaint is received by CAPRA staff or information comes to the attention of the Commission, Commissioners or CAPRA staff from credible sources such as law enforcement agencies or media outlets.
2. If information comes to the attention of the Commission, Commissioners or CAPRA staff, that information is forwarded to the CAPRA staff within three (3) business days of receipt of the information.
3. CAPRA staff forwards all written complaints to the Commission Chair within three (3) business days of receipt of the complaint.
4. If the Commission Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, determines that the complaint does not relate to violation of accreditation standards or policies, the Commission Chair and CAPRA staff will notify the complainant in writing within two (2) weeks of receiving the complaint that no further action will be taken.
5. If the Commission Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, determines that the complaint relates to a violation of accreditation standards or policies, the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two (2) weeks of receipt by the Commission Chair and CAPRA staff and the complainant will be provided a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
6. If it is determined that the complaint relates to a violation of accreditation standards or policies, at the same time as the complainant is notified, the complaint will be forwarded by certified mail to the Agency Director. At the request of the complainant, the name of the complainant will be redacted within the body of the written complaint sent to an Agency Director along with a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
7. The Commission Chair will request that the agency conduct a preliminary investigation and submit an initial report addressing the complaint as related to violation of accreditation standards or



policies. The preliminary report shall be delivered to CAPRA staff no more than thirty (30) calendar days following the agency's receipt of the preliminary investigation request.

8. The Commission Chair may request further information or materials relating to the complaint from the complainant, the agency, or other sources not limited to sending a CAPRA Review Team (CRT) to the agency to verify the complaint and any actions that have been taken to resolve the issue, at the agency's expense.
9. The Commission Chair will appoint a Review Committee comprised of three (3) Commissioners to consider the complaint, along with all relevant information. The Review Committee will recommend appropriate action to the Commission at its next scheduled meeting. The Executive Committee and CAPRA staff will determine if immediate action is warranted. If immediate action is warranted, the complaint(s) will be adjudicated via a conference call comprised of a quorum of Commissioners.
10. Determination of an appropriate action will be based on the Commission's consideration of the complaint, materials relating to the complaint, including any necessary Visit information, and the Review Committee's findings and recommendations. In the event a violation is determined, at the sole discretion of the Commission, to have occurred the action taken must consider if the violation pertains to a fundamental standard or would otherwise affect eligibility for accreditation based on the number of standards missed during the agency's most recent accreditation visit.
11. The Executive Committee or the full Commission may determine that consultation with legal counsel is appropriate. If legal counsel is deemed appropriate, CAPRA staff will work with the Executive Committee and legal counsel to develop a plan to address the complaint. Once the plan is developed, the plan will be shared with the full Commission. The Executive Committee, CAPRA staff, and legal counsel, if deemed necessary, will be responsible for follow-up procedures and monitoring of implementation of the plan. The full Commission will be provided updates on the monitoring and implementation of the plan.
12. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated or unrelated to the accreditation standards or policies, no action will be taken, and the complainant will be so notified.
13. If the complaint is substantiated and the Commission determines that the agency appears to be out of compliance with the accreditation standards or policies, action will be taken. This action may include, but is not limited to, scheduling a prompt Onsite Visit of the agency, with costs covered by the agency, establishing timeline conditions, assigning warnings, or withdrawing accreditation.
  - a. The Agency Director and the complainant will be notified of the Commission's decision and action in writing within two (2) weeks of the decision. They will also be notified of the process to appeal the decision.
  - b. The agency or the complainant will have the right to request reconsideration of the decision when either provides evidence that the Commission did not adhere to its complaint policy and procedures. Any such request must be made in writing and submitted to CAPRA staff within thirty (30) days of receipt of final action by the Commission.



## Complaints Against the Commission and Commissioners

The following procedures will be used in the investigation of a complaint against the Commission or Commissioners.

1. A written, signed complaint is received by CAPRA staff or information comes to the Commission, Commissioners or CAPRA staff's attention through credible sources, such as law enforcement agencies or media outlets.
2. If information comes to the Commission, Commissioners or CAPRA staff, that information is forwarded to CAPRA staff within three (3) business days of receipt of the information.
3. CAPRA staff forwards all written complaints to the Commission Chair, or in the case of a complaint against the Commission Chair, the complaint is forwarded to the Commission Chair-elect, within three (3) business days of receipt of the complaint.
4. If the Commission Chair or the Commission Chair-elect, in the case of a complaint against the Commission Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, determines that the complaint does not relate to violation of accreditation standards or policies, within two (2) weeks of receiving the complaint the Commission Chair or accordingly the Commission Chair-elect and CAPRA staff will notify the complainant in writing that no further action will be taken.
5. If the Commission Chair or Commission Chair-elect, in the case of a complaint against the Commission Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, determines that the complaint relates to violation of accreditation standards or policies, the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two (2) weeks of receipt by the Commission Chair or accordingly the Commission Chair-elect and CAPRA staff and the complainant will be provided a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
6. The Commissioner(s) or, in the case of the Commissioner being named, will also be notified of the complaint in writing within two (2) weeks of receipt by the Commission Chair or Commission Chair-elect, accordingly, and CAPRA staff and will be provided a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
7. With the acceptance of the Commission and CAPRA staff, a past Commissioner (hereafter termed "CAPRA designee") will conduct the investigation.
8. The CAPRA designee may request further information or materials relating to the complaint from the complainant, CAPRA staff, Commissioners, or other sources.
9. The CAPRA designee will appoint a Review Committee comprised of three (3) past Commissioners to consider all relevant information. The CAPRA designee will request that the Review Committee submit a report within thirty (30) days addressing the complaint as related to accreditation standards or policies. The Review Committee will recommend appropriate action to the CAPRA designee. Recommendations warranting immediate action will be presented via a conference call to a quorum of Commissioners without the Commissioner the complaint is filed against in attendance.



10. Determination of an appropriate action will be based on the consideration of the complaint, materials relating to the complaint, and the Review Committee's findings and recommendations.
11. The CAPRA designee, the full Commission, or the Executive Committee may determine that consultation with legal counsel is appropriate. If legal counsel is deemed appropriate, the Executive Committee and CAPRA staff will work with the CAPRA designee and legal counsel to develop a plan to address the complaint.
12. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated or not related to the accreditation standards or policies, no action will be taken, and the complainant will be so notified.
13. If the complaint is substantiated and indicates that a violation of accreditation standards or policies occurred, action will be taken. This action may include, but is not limited to, retraining or dismissal from the Commission and/or review of any Commission actions or decisions influenced by noncompliance with standards or policies. The Executive Committee and CAPRA staff will be responsible for implementing the actions of the Commission and keeping the full commission apprised of such actions.
14. The Commissioner(s), the complainant, CAPRA staff, and the Commissioner(s) the complaint is filed against, will be notified of the CAPRA designee's decision and action in writing within two (2) weeks of the decision by the Commission Chair or Commission Chair-elect, accordingly. They will also be notified of the process to appeal the decision.
15. The Commissioner(s) or the complainant will have the right to request an appeal of the decision when either provides evidence that the Commission did not adhere to its complaint policy and procedures. Any such request must be made in writing and submitted to the accreditation manager within thirty (30) days of receipt of notice of the decision.
16. If a member of the Executive Committee is whom the complaint is filed against, that Commissioner is not allowed to be in any portion of Executive Committee or Commission meetings during which the complaint is being discussed.

## **Complaints Against a Volunteer Representing the Commission**

The following procedures will be used in the investigation of a complaint against an approved volunteer representing CAPRA.

1. A written, signed complaint is received by CAPRA staff.
2. CAPRA staff forwards all written complaints to the Commission chair within three (3) business days of receipt of the complaint.
3. If the Commission chair, in consultation with the executive committee, determines that the complaint does not relate to violation of accreditation standards or policies, within two (2) weeks of receiving the complaint the Commission chair and CAPRA staff will notify the complainant in writing that no further action will be taken.
4. If the Commission chair, in consultation with the executive committee, determines that the complaint relates to violation of accreditation standards or policies, the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within two (2) weeks of the receipt by the Commission chair and CAPRA staff and the complainant will be provided a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
5. At the same time as the complainant is notified, the complaint will be forwarded by certified mail to the named volunteer. At the request of the complainant, the name of the complainant will be redacted within the body of the written complaint sent to the volunteer.
6. The Commission will conduct a preliminary investigation and submit an initial report to the volunteer addressing the complaint as related to accreditation standards or policies. The initial report shall be delivered no more than 30 calendar days following the notification of complaint.
7. The Commission chair may request further information or materials relating to the complaint from the complainant, the volunteer, or other sources.
8. The Commission chair will appoint a review committee comprised of three (3) Commissioners to consider the complaint, along with all relevant information. The review committee will recommend appropriate action to the Commission at its next scheduled meeting. Complaints warranting immediate action will be presented via a conference call comprised of a quorum of Commissioners.
9. Determination of an appropriate action will be based on the Commission's consideration of the complaint, materials relating to the complaint, the review committee's findings and recommendations.
10. The full Commission or the executive committee may determine that consultation with legal counsel is appropriate. CAPRA staff will work with the executive committee and legal counsel to develop a plan to address the complaint.
11. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated or unrelated to the accreditation standards or policies, no action will be taken, and the complainant and volunteer will be so notified.

12. If the complaint is substantiated and the Commission determines that there was a violation of accreditation standards or policies, action will be taken. This action may include, but is not limited to, retraining, removal from the CAPRA list of approved volunteers, and/or review of any Commission action or decision influenced by the volunteer's noncompliance with standards or policies.
13. The volunteer and the complainant will be notified of the Commission's decision and action in writing within two (2) weeks of the decision. They will also be notified of the process to appeal the decision.

The volunteer or complainant will have the right to appeal the decision when either provides evidence that the Commission did not adhere to its complaint policy and procedures. Any such request must be made in writing and submitted to CAPRA staff within 30 days of receipt of the decision.

### **CAPRA Marketing Overview**

Marketing plays a vital role in the success of CAPRA by increasing the visibility and value of the accreditation. When developing and producing CAPRA content and programming, it is important to collaborate with marketing to:

- Ensure consistency with the NRPA brand
- Coordinate CAPRA production timelines with marketing timelines to allow for timely delivery of important information
- Get marketing best practices to improve communication strategies, create marketing materials and connect with the appropriate target audiences

CAPRA's continued collaboration with the NRPA marketing department will provide consistent cross promotion of the CAPRA accreditation across all media platforms. NRPA offers several opportunities to build visibility around CAPRA:

- *Parks & Recreation Magazine*: Share CAPRA stories and content in NRPA's award-winning magazine. These stories can cover information like the benefits of CAPRA, the CAPRA accreditation process, CAPRA case studies, in- person training dates and locations, and more.
- Open Space Blog and Podcast: Like the magazine, the blog and podcast provide the chance to engage a broader audience with compelling stories about the meaning of CAPRA accreditation.
- NRPA Annual Conference: The NRPA Annual Conference, which is the largest professional development and networking event in parks and recreation, offers the perfect platform to provide training and spread the word about CAPRA accreditation to a highly engaged audience of thousands of park and recreation professionals.
- Other Communications: Promote CAPRA on NRPA's digital media platforms including email, social media and NRPA's member networking platform — NRPA Connect

## CAPRA Logo Usage Guidelines

Accredited agencies are encouraged to use the CAPRA logo in a variety of ways to promote their accreditation achievement to the public, elected officials and other agencies. The CAPRA logo is copyrighted by NRPA as the Commission's graphic identity.

All Commissioners, visitors, staff, associated professionals and participating agencies are united graphically by the CAPRA logo. These Guidelines are to ensure the logo is accurately and consistently expressed wherever it appears. The logo shall only be used on official CAPRA projects or for official CAPRA business unless otherwise approved by the Commission. Failure to strictly adhere to the Guidelines within this document shall result in immediate revocation of authorization to use the logo.



## Usage Eligibility

To be eligible to use NRPA's CAPRA logo, a representative from your organization must complete the online Logo Usage Agreement form in the [CAPRA Marketing Toolkit](#). Once completed, you can download multiple versions of the logo.

1. Commissioners or visitors may use the logo in official Commission capacity but may not use it to represent their personal interests.
2. The logo shall NOT be used for the following:
  - In political campaign messages or other materials of a partisan nature
  - In a manner that is misleading, defamatory, libelous, obscene or sexually suggestive
  - In a manner that would disparage or damage the image of CAPRA
  - In a manner that suggests that editorial content has been authored by, or represents the views or opinions of CAPRA
  - On food items, health-related items or alcoholic beverages
  - In connection with any material that infringes the trademark, copyright or any other rights of any third party
  - In advertisements, marketing, or endorsements of any product, service, or business that is not related to CAPRA
  - In a manner that infringes, derogates, dilutes or impairs the rights of CAPRA
3. Alteration of the logo in any way is strictly prohibited. Examples of alteration include changing any of the constituent colors or fonts, adding additional text or other graphic elements, removing, relocating, or modifying any element of the design (i.e., using the logo as a caricatured figure), disproportionately scaling any element of the design, tilting at an angle, or adding borders around the logo or elements of the design, or applying other effects and filters.
4. The CAPRA logo shall remain the exclusive property of CAPRA and NRPA.
5. Any uses associated with the logo shall be in compliance with any applicable local, state or federal law.
6. Users agree that all uses of the CAPRA logo will support the benefit of the Commission.

7. Users shall not register any logo that is identical to or confusingly similar to the CAPRA logo in any jurisdiction, domestic or foreign
8. CAPRA may modify these Guidelines from time and time and users will be bound to comply with the material contained in the updated Guidelines immediately upon receipt of, or posting of, the new Guidelines.

### Logo Use

The CAPRA logo is a valuable asset; as such, it is important to closely monitor the way in which the brand identity is displayed. The logo is the basis of the identity and a critical component of the overall branding and strategic message. Computer alterations to the logo, such as drop shadows and outlines, are unacceptable.

### CAPRA Digital Badge






Digital badges provide professionals and agencies a way to be recognized for their achievements while offering others access to information on these accomplishments. Digital badges also create a link from the achievement to a method of verification. Badges can be added to email signatures, resumes, websites and social media.

To access the digital badges for CAPRA Accreditation and information on how to use them, please [log in to your NRPA profile](#).

### CAPRA Promotional Toolkit

The [CAPRA promotional toolkit](#) will help agencies spread the word about their CAPRA accreditation. Access logo files, sample social media posts, a press release template and more.

### NRPA / CAPRA Brand Colors

					
<b>CMYK</b>	C: 100 M: 0 Y: 49 K: 0	C: 92 M: 36 Y: 66 K: 39	C: 33 M: 0 Y: 100 K: 0	C: 0 M: 14 Y: 77 K: 0	C: 0 M: 68 Y: 80 K: 0
<b>RGB</b>	R: 0 G: 168 B: 158	R: 0 G: 88 B: 77	R: 183 G: 212 B: 51	R: 255 G: 216 B: 87	R: 243 G: 116 B: 67
<b>Pantone</b>	3272U	3298U	381U	113U	7409U
<b>HEX</b>	#00a99e	#00584d	#b7d433	#ffd758	#f37443