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▶ Accreditation is based on an agency's compliance with the 144 standards for national accreditation. Fundamental Standards, which are indicated by the black arrow icon, and at least 85% of the remaining standards must be met for accreditation.

Source: Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, *National Accreditation Standards*

Standard
The source of authority of, and powers for, the public recreation and park managing authority shall be clearly set forth by legal document.
The organizational authority structure should provide for one public authority responsible for policy-making functions.
There should be citizen advisory boards/committees.
There should be established guidelines defining the delineation of responsibilities for the policy-making functions of the approving authority and the administrative functions of the chief administrator and staff.
The specific geographical boundaries of the agency's jurisdiction should be set forth by geographical description and map.
There shall be an established mission statement, which defines the direction and purpose of the Agency.
There shall be established, measurable goals and objectives for the agency and for each organizational component within the agency. Such goals and objectives shall be directed toward accomplishing the agency mission, be reviewed annually, and distributed to all appropriate personnel.
There should be a process for acquiring and considering input from the various personnel levels within the agency in the development of agency goals and objectives.
A distinction should be made among policies, rules and regulations, and operational procedures and how each is developed and implemented within the agency.
There shall be a manual setting forth the agency policies, which is kept up-to-date, reviewed systematically, at least every five years, by the administration, and made available to pertinent administrative and supervisory personnel.
There shall be an understanding of the roles of counterpart and complementary organizations through liaison roles with nearby park and recreation agencies, public and social service organizations, and other local government agencies.
There should be established policies on cooperative use and maintenance of facilities and program operation, facility design, land development, finances, etc., with other agencies or organizations or individuals.
The agency should have planning functions with established responsibilities, including at least one staff member or consultant with planning capability.
The park and recreation agency shall be regularly involved in local planning (community, comprehensive planning, strategic planning, capital improvement planning) that will impact parks and recreation services within their jurisdiction.
The public park and recreation Agency should have a working relationship with regional, state, and federal agencies as well as non-governmental service providers that impact the services within their jurisdiction.
There shall be a comprehensive park and recreation system plan, which is basically an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future programs and services, acquisition and development of areas and facilities, and administration. The plan shall be officially adopted by the appropriate governing body, updated regularly, be linked with a capital improvement budget and a phased development.
There shall be a system in place to assess societal and local trends over time.
A comprehensive community study based on population shifts and changing social and economic conditions shall be conducted regularly.
There should be a compiled, complete and current inventory of all agency used and/or managed areas, facilities, programs and services, as well as, alternative providers of such.
A needs index for determining priorities for development of services within the community should be established within the comprehensive plan.
Feasibility Studies shall be conducted to determine the feasibility of proposed facilities.
An agency shall have a strategic plan, approved by the approving authority, stating how the agency will achieve its mission, goals, and objectives. The strategic plan shall be reviewed annually.
There should be site plans to guide the use of existing and the development of future areas and facilities.

Standard
A historical, cultural and natural resource management plan(s) should address all resource-based areas.
The agency should include community involvement in the planning process.

Standard
The agency shall establish a staff organizational structure, specifying the interrelationships within the organization.
The agency should have an established purpose statement for each organizational component that is available to all employees.
There shall be policies and procedures, encompassing administrative aspects of the organization.
There should be allocated administrative space and equipment to perform the agency's functions and responsibilities.
Support staff and services should be provided to enable the professional staff to perform their appropriate functions.
A communication system shall be established to ensure the accurate and timely transfer of information, both internal and external.
There shall be an established process regarding the integrated role of public information, community relations, and marketing functions of the agency including periodic reporting and evaluation.
A written statement states that the agency is committed to informing the community and the news media of events within the public domain that are handled by or involve the agency and sets forth policies that govern what information should be released, when it should be released, and by whom it should be released.
A specific position in the agency should be designated to direct the public information and community relations functions.
The agency should establish a community relations plan.
The agency should have an established marketing plan, based on market research that includes an annual evaluation.
A specific position should be designated to direct the marketing function.
The Agency shall have a management information system, including statistical and data summaries of agency activities, such as daily, monthly, and annual reports.
The application and use of technology should enable the agency to operate efficiently.
The agency should have established policy and procedures for control, maintenance, and retention of records.
There should be an established Records Disaster Mitigation and Recovery plan and procedures.
There shall be established policies, which govern the administration of personnel procedures for both professional and nonprofessional employees that are reviewed annually.
There must be an established statement of ethical principles for agency personnel.
There should be a comprehensive recruitment process to attract qualified personnel.
There shall be an established policy regarding diversity for all employment practices and evidence that it is being implemented.
There should be comprehensive procedures for the process of hiring personnel.
Personnel hiring should include procedures for background investigation prior to appointment, including verification of a candidate's qualifying credentials, review of a candidate's civil and criminal record, particular attention to drug and child/adult-abuse records, and driving record for employees assigned to operate motor vehicles.
There should be an established employee benefits plan.
There should be constructive and effective supervision of all personnel to help them grow professionally and improve programs and services.
There should be an established compensation plan that is reviewed annually that establishes equity of compensation among units within the agency.
There should be a fair and systematic procedure for annual appraisal of job performance.
There should be an established statement available to all employees defining the promotion process and the agency's role.
There should be a disciplinary system based on the code of conduct and performance.
A grievance procedure, available to all employees, should be established.
There should be established policies and procedures for termination and end of employment.
The agency shall employ professional staff qualified to develop and operate programs and services.

Standard
Established job descriptions for all positions shall be based on the job analysis and include, at a minimum: duties, responsibilities, and tasks of each position; and minimum level of proficiency necessary in the job-related skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors.
There shall be a professionally-qualified administrator who is responsible to the approving authority for the management, direction, and control of the operations and administration of the agency, and who shall have authority to perform such responsibilities.
There should be an established policy governing the provision of physical examinations for employees.
There should be an employee health and wellness program(s) within the agency.
There should be an orientation program for all personnel employed by the Agency.
There shall be an in-service training function within the agency that is evaluated, updated, and reviewed annually.
There should be a program of employee development, available for employees throughout the agency, based on needs of individual employees and future organizational needs.
Agencies should formulate a succession plan to ensure the continued effective performance of the organization by making provisions for the development and replacement of key people over time.
Professional personnel should be active members of their professional organization(s).
There should be a volunteer management function within the agency, including a comprehensive Volunteer Management Manual.
Volunteers should be utilized by the agency in a variety of positions.
There should be an on-going function within the agency for the recruitment, selection, orientation, training and retention of volunteers, including procedures on background screening.
Agency volunteers should be monitored, should receive supervisory visits and conferences, and be evaluated regarding performance.
There should be a function within the agency for the recognition for volunteers.
Agency volunteers should be covered for negligence liability by the agency.
The agency should have policies and procedures regarding the use of consultants and contract employees.
Fiscal policies setting guidelines for management and control of revenues, expenditures, and investment of funds shall be set forth clearly in writing, and the legal authority must be clearly established.
There shall be an established policy on the type of services for what fees and charges may be instituted and the basis for establishing the amount of such fees and charges.
The agency should have an established policy for the acceptance of gifts and donations.
Where feasible and appropriate, regional, state and federal grants should be used to supplement agency funding through an established procedure to research, coordinate and implement grants.
Where feasible and appropriate, private, corporate, and non-profit support should be used to supplement agency funding through a established procedure to research, coordinate and implement alternative funding.
There shall be established procedures for the fiscal management of the agency.
The agency's chief administrator should be designated as having the authority and responsibility for the fiscal management of the agency.
Agencies should have established procedures for the requisition and purchase of agency equipment, supplies and services.
There should be established procedures for emergency purchases within the agency.
The agency shall have a comprehensive accounting system.
The agency should utilize monthly financial status reports.
There should be established procedures for maintaining control over approved positions in relation to budget authorizations.

Standard
There should be established procedures used for collecting, safeguarding, and disbursing funds.
There shall be an independent audit of the agency's fiscal activities conducted annually.
There shall be an annual operating and capital improvements budget(s), including both revenues and expenditures.
The heads of major agency components within the agency should participate in the development of the agency's budget.
Agency components should provide recommendations, based on operational and activity analysis, for use in the development of the agency's budget.
There should be procedures for budget control within the agency, including an allotment system, accounting system, frequent reporting of revenues and expenditures, and continuous management review.
There should be established procedures for requesting supplemental or emergency appropriations and fund transfers.
There should be established procedures for inventory control of agency property, equipment, and other assets.
The agency shall utilize a recreation programming plan that includes both a long-range plan covering 3-5 years or more that is periodically reviewed and a current-year implementation plan.
The programs and services provided by the agency shall be based on the conceptual foundations of play, recreation, and leisure; constituent interests and needs; community opportunities; agency philosophy and goals; and experiences desirable for clientele.
The agency's development of programs and services should involve participants.
The agency should offer self-directed recreation opportunities.
The agency should offer leader-directed recreation opportunities.
The agency should offer facilitated recreation opportunities.
The agency should offer programs and services for a fee.
There should be cooperative programming among the public, commercial, and nonprofit entities.
There shall be specific objectives established for programs or services.
Programs shall be evaluated regularly and systematically based on stated program objectives.

Standard
The agency shall proactively extend programs and services to residents who may be underserved in the community.
The agency's programs shall provide opportunities in all program fields for various proficiency levels, ability, socio-economic levels, racial and ethnic backgrounds, ages, and gender in accordance with the agency's statement of mission.
The selection of program content, specific activities, and opportunities shall be based upon an understanding of individual differences and the culture of the community.
The agency should have a function to educate the community on the benefits, values, and impacts of leisure services.
The agency should collect statistics on its programs and services for evaluation and future program and service development.
The agency should have established policies and procedures for the acquisition of lands for park, recreation, conservation, and historical-cultural purposes.
The agency should have established policies and procedures for the development of park and recreation land and facilities.
The agency should have procedures for protecting park and recreation lands and facilities from encroachment.
The agency should have established procedures regarding the disposal of park and recreation lands.
There shall be an established maintenance and operations plan for management of the agency's park and recreation areas, facilities, and equipment.
There should be a regular review of legal requirements related to facilities, such as licenses, sanitary regulations, fire laws, and safety measures, and inspections of adherence thereto.
There should be a comprehensive preventive maintenance plan, which incorporates a preventative program for each facility that includes regularly scheduled systematic inspections and detailed safety checks.
There should be a recycling program for park and recreation facilities as well as the agency's administrative offices.
The agency should have an established fleet management plan comprised of an inventory and maintenance schedule of all vehicles and other major equipment, annual inspections, and a replacement schedule.
There should be policies and procedures for the management of and accountability for agency-owned equipment and property.
There shall be environmentally sound policies and procedures that are integral to all operations.
The agency should have an established environmental sustainability policy that addresses energy conservation, environmentally preferable purchasing, water conservation/quality protection and sustainable design/construction of buildings and facilities.
The agency should have procedures for the assignment of competent personnel with clearly defined duties for routine maintenance, repairs and minor improvements, general cleanliness and overall attractiveness of areas, facilities, and equipment.
The agency should have an established depreciation and replacement schedule for all park and recreation capital assets.
Public safety and law enforcement within parks and recreation areas and facilities shall be governed by laws and ordinances, some of which may be enacted specifically for the control and management of parks and recreation areas and facilities.
The authority of Law Enforcement Officers to enforce laws and ordinances pertaining specifically to activity within parks and recreation areas and facilities shall be clearly established to ensure that enforcement actions are upheld.
Law enforcement officers with the authority to enforce laws within areas and facilities under the jurisdiction of the agency must have proper training in order to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
Agency staff has a role in educating and informing patrons of laws, ordinances, rules and regulations that apply to parks and recreation areas and facilities. This role and level of authority shall be established through policy directive.
There should be formalized liaison assignments for agency staff to the official law enforcement officers providing public safety and law enforcement service to the agency.

Standard
Agency staff should understand their role in public safety and law enforcement and relationships with law enforcement officers having jurisdiction within parks and recreation areas and facilities.
There should be established procedures prescribed for agency staff for response to disruptive behavior at agency areas and facilities.
Large-scale events hosted or facilitated by the agency require planning and coordination of traffic, parking and crowd control should be coordinated with the official law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the affected areas.
Procedures should be established that guide agency staff in the preservation and handling of evidentiary items from discovery until transferred to the appropriate law enforcement authority.
The agency shall have a comprehensive general security plan addressing all major areas, buildings and facilities under its jurisdiction.
Park and recreation agencies, having roles in emergency management systems within their local jurisdiction, should be aware of the applicable operations plan.
Through the use of in-service training, agency personnel should understand their role in ongoing security and emergency management.
There shall be a risk management plan reviewed on a regular basis which encompasses analysis of risk exposure, control approaches and financial impact for the agency.
The agency should have a policy for risk management that is approved by the proper authority.
There should be a manual(s) of operating procedures for carrying out the risk management plan, accessible to all agency personnel.
There should be established procedures for accident and incident reporting and analysis of accident and incident reports.
The risk management function within the agency should involve active interaction among personnel at all levels.
There should be an individual with risk management responsibility and authority to carry out the policies established for risk management of the park and recreation agency.
There shall be a process for evaluation to assess the outcomes of park and recreation programs, services areas and facilities, completed annually at a minimum and linked to the agency's planning process.
There should be specific personnel within the agency responsible for managing the evaluation analysis.
There should be at least one experimental or demonstration project or involvement in some aspect of research, as related to any part of park and recreation operations, each year.
There should be ongoing training opportunities for all personnel of the agency involved in evaluation of programs, services, areas and/or facilities.
The agency should monitor and evaluate the quality of its programs, services, areas and facilities from the user's perspective.

ion. To achieve accreditation, an agency must comply with all 36 maining 108 standards (i.e., 92 of the remaining 108).