

What is CAPRA?

An Overview of the CAPRA Accreditation Process

NRPA Annual Conference 2024



NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION



Jennifer Schleining

**CAPRA Accreditation Senior
Manager, NRPA**

P: 703-858-2155

E: jschleining@nrpa.org



What is CAPRA?

NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) delivers quality assurance and improvement to accredited park and recreation departments throughout the United States by helping them build a comprehensive management system of operational best practices.

This system improves their infrastructures; increases efficiency in all department functions; and demonstrates accountability within their communities. Implementation of this system strengthens teamwork among staff, imbeds all aspects of CAPRA into their department's internal culture, and establishes a continuous improvement mindset for all activities.

About NRPA

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this mission by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being.



The CAPRA Commission

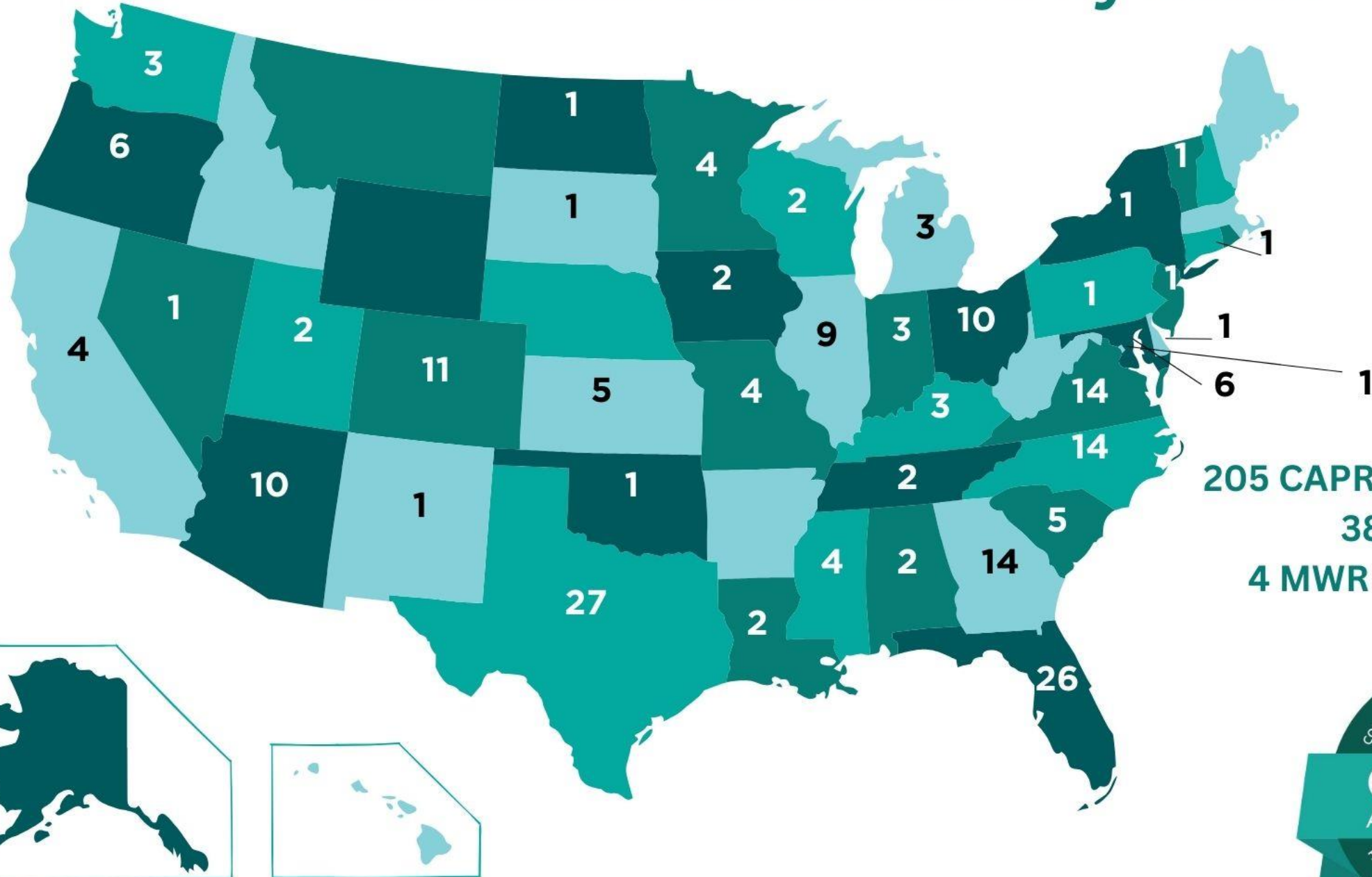
The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) is an 18-member board composed of representatives from:

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

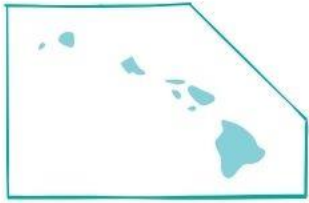
The Commission is administratively sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association but acts with independence and under its own authority in determining



CAPRA Accreditation by State



205 CAPRA Departments
38 States
4 MWR Installations



OBJECTIVES

What Does it Take?



Understand the effort and resources required to successfully apply for CAPRA Accreditation.

Make it Sustainable



Operationalize best practices for long-term success & a manageable accreditation process.

Pro Tips for Success



How to navigate common hurdles and prioritize the work

CAPRA 6 Step Process

- ❖ **Complete Application**
- ❖ **Attending Training – *Prepare for CAPRA Accreditation***
- ❖ **Develop Self-Assessment Report**
- ❖ **Present Self-Assessment Report to assigned CAPRA Review Team (CRT) for Initial Review**
- ❖ **Host CRT members for Hybrid or Virtual Visit**
- ❖ **Attend In-Person or Virtual Hearing**

2019 Standards

- ❖ **154 Standards in 10 Sections**
- ❖ **36 Fundamental Standards** ★
- ❖ **New Departments**
 - ✓ Meet all 36 Fundamental Standards
 - ✓ 103 (90%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards
- ❖ **Reaccrediting Departments**
 - ✓ Meet all 36 Fundamental Standards
 - ✓ 108 (95%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards

Reimagination of Accreditation Standards (2022-2024)



Clarify Standards

Remove the ambiguity of Evidence of Compliance



Identify Best Practices

Distill the standards to best practices for P&R departments of ALL populations



Interweave values

Make sure values of diversity, inclusion, equity, conservation, sustainability and improvement are throughout



Establish Improvement

P&R departments participating in the program improve every review cycle

2024 Standards

(Beta Test Version)

- ❖ **68 Standards in 10 Chapters**
- ❖ **37 Fundamental Standards** ★
- ❖ **New Departments**
 - ✓ Meet all 37 Fundamental Standards
 - ✓ 25 (80%) of the 31 Non-Fundamental Standards
- ❖ **Reaccrediting Departments**
 - ✓ Meet all 37 Fundamental Standards
 - ✓ 28 (90%) of the 31 Non-Fundamental Standards



Benefits of the CAPRA Process

- ❖ Capture institutional knowledge.
- ❖ Remove information silos & improve collaboration.
- ❖ Check operations against best practices.
- ❖ Professional development for staff.
- ❖ Systematic evaluation process.
- ❖ Credibility with the community & elected officials.



Cost Considerations

Agency Population Served	Annual Fee	Review Fee
<20,000	\$325	\$1500
20,000-49,999	\$400	\$2000
50,000-99,999	\$500	\$3000
100,000-249,999	\$650	\$3750
250,000+	\$800	\$4400





Cost Considerations: Review Week

First-Time Departments – Hybrid Review including 2 day in person visit

- ❖ Host CAPRA Review Team (Hotel, Airfare, Food, Transportation, Other Incidentals for three reviewers)

Re-Accrediting Department – Choice of Hybrid or Virtual in 2025 and Beyond



Operationalize for Sustainable Success



Identify Key Players



Department Point of Contact

Understands the CAPRA process, is an excellent communicator, & well organized.



Chapter Leads

Knowledgeable of the standards and capable of quality control for narratives and EOC.



Area Experts

Standard leads are familiar with the day-to-day or periodic implementation of a CAPRA standard.

Planning & Implementation



Action plan for accountability.



Create a document review schedule.



Update team members regularly.

*Incorporate
CAPRA components
in daily operations.*



Pro Tips for Success



Avoid using blank forms.



Check links, highlights, & bookmarks work.

Watch out for Double Jeopardy questions.



Include meeting minutes and attendance lists with agendas.



Navigate Common Hurdles



Create Connections

CAPRA Mentor,
Accredited Agencies,
NRPA Community Connect



Read the Standard

Understand the
standard and what is
being asked.



Edit & Edit Again!

Only include information
and evidence related to
the standard.



Celebrate the Small Wins

Instill pride in staff
by sharing small wins
and progress updates.

Prioritize

❖ **Complex projects or standards.**

- Plans (*Strategic, Programming, Marketing, etc.*)
- Feasibility Studies
- Community Involvement (*Needs Assessment*)

❖ **Inter-agency coordination or special approval.**

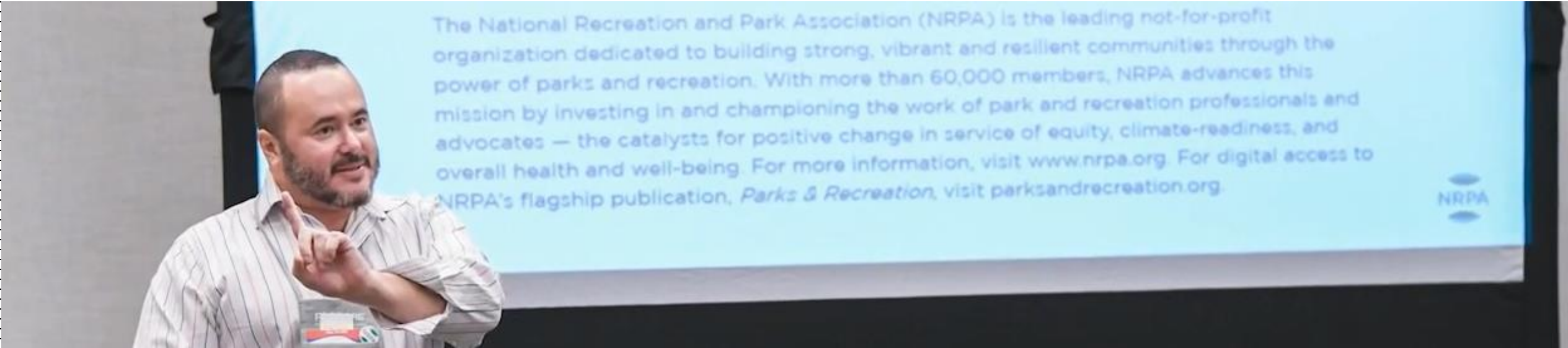
- Plans (*Master, Security, Risk Management, etc.*)
- Written Statements (*ex. Public Safety Training*)



Learn & Volunteer!



Together We Grow Parks & Recreation



CRT Member

Agency Mentor



THANK YOU

