



PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

January 2015

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PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

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KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

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Preface

This *ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE* is the principal source of information about the American Public Works Association's Accreditation Program. It provides details about the Accreditation Council and instructions on navigating the accreditation process: from the time the Agency becomes interested in accreditation until it becomes accredited. The process book also assists accredited agencies in maintaining their accredited status and guides them through the re-accreditation process, which must be completed every four years.

There is currently one other publication that completes the library of documents that comprise the Accreditation Program:

APWA's Eighth Edition of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* (referred to as the "Manual") contains more than 500 standards, termed practice statements, which define those basic criteria and procedures that a public agency would need to perform as a full service public works agency. It details uniform criteria and procedures to perform all public works services and assist public works managers in planning and controlling operations, improving performance, and increasing productivity.

Software is also available to assist agencies in organizing information and tracking the process of the self assessment phase of accreditation. Use of the software is mandatory for agencies applying for accreditation.

These publications may be ordered from:

APWA Bookstore
American Public Works Association
2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2625
(816) 472-6100, FAX (816) 472-1610
Online: www.apwa.net/bookstore/

APWA also produces *Q & A About APWA Accreditation*, a pamphlet giving a brief overview of the public works accreditation concept and what it offers the public works community. Written in easy to read question and answer format, it provides a brief description of the process and of the benefits of accreditation. Information is also available on APWA's Internet web site at <http://www.apwa.net/accreditation/>.

Additionally, APWA periodically offers workshops entitled *Self Assessment Using Management Practices: A Tool for Improving Operations and Management*. This one day training course discusses the implementation of a self assessment program and is designed to guide the Agency in performing a self evaluation of an agency's current management policies and practices and how to improve overall effectiveness through continuous process improvement.

On-site workshops detailing the process and providing training for the local agency's entire staff are available to agencies in their own locale.

Acknowledgement

The American Public Works Association would like to acknowledge the dedication of APWA members, estimated to number more than a thousand, who have been involved bringing the program of Voluntary Accreditation for Public Works Agencies into reality.

From its earliest beginnings as a focus group at a Northwest Municipal Conference meeting, trying to identify the essential management practices that could be used by public works managers across the U.S. and Canada. To the research project developed by APWA that resulted in the publication of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* in 1991. To the members of the Management Practices Advisory Committee, who were responsible for assembling the more than 500 recommended practices contained in the current edition of the Manual and who developed the initial criteria for the accreditation program. To the APWA Board of Directors who finally approved the concept for the Accreditation Program in 1996.

Since its inception, eighty-two agencies have completed the self assessment and have attained full accreditation. Over three-dozen agencies have formally applied for Accreditation and are conducting the Self Assessment phase of the program. Hundreds of agencies are using the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* as a tool for evaluating their policies, practices and procedures.

Literally thousands of volunteer hours have been invested in developing the accreditation program that is summarized here, in this document, in but a few pages. The brevity of this document is a tribute to the members' ability to refine and focus on the key steps that are required to successfully attain the status of an Accredited Public Works Agency.

As with other massive projects, it is impossible to individually list all of those who have accepted the responsibility for producing portions of this document.

January 1, 2015
Ann Daniels
Director of Accreditation
American Public Works Association
Kansas City, Missouri

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

What Is Accreditation?

Accreditation is the mark of professionalism that indicates that a public works agency has made the commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of public works operations and services in the community it serves. Accreditation recognizes that an Agency's policies, procedures, and practices have been evaluated against nationally recognized, recommended practices.¹

Why Is Accreditation Important?

Accreditation is important to agencies that seek a method of demonstrating that the Agency is well managed, complies with recommended practices, and is dedicated to continuous improvement of public works management practices. Accreditation is important to your organization because it provides:

- International recognition for the commitment to processes that promote good government;
- Recognition for the commitment to policies, procedures and processes that promote effective delivery of projects and services;
- A process for conducting a needs assessment to ensure that all critical services have been addressed;
- A process for setting goals for improvement of all practices, facilities and services;
- Increased productivity and effectiveness through critical evaluation of programs and services;
- Tools for establishing performance measurement systems and internal performance standards for operations, management and administrative functions;
- A visible form of recognition that can be used to gain community support for improvement of public works facilities and services;
- An opportunity for professional development of the Agency's staff;
- A process for staying abreast of the latest developments in public works operation and maintenance

What Is the Process?

In summary, accreditation involves five phases:

¹ The term practice(s) is intended to be inclusive of the terms practice, policy and procedure.

1. **Self Assessment Phase** - During this phase the applying Agency performs an analysis of its practices using the criteria contained in APWA's *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.
2. **Application Phase** - During this phase information regarding self assessment and accreditation is exchanged. The Agency may submit a formal application for accreditation; thereby fixing terms and conditions required for accreditation.
3. **Improvement Phase** - Using the results of the self assessment phase, the Agency makes improvements to the various processes indicated by the self assessment as needing further enhancement in order to be considered in substantial or full compliance.
4. **Evaluation Phase** - Once the Agency believes it complies with all applicable practices, an evaluation team performs a "site visit" to affirm compliance.
5. **Accreditation Phase** - This is the final approval stage of accreditation by the Accreditation Council and the renewal process.

Accreditation is a voluntary process offered through the Accreditation Council (the Council), the accreditation-granting arm of the American Public Works Association (APWA). The Council is made up of professional managers with public and private sector experience in the delivery of governmental services. The Council is a subordinate entity, supported by the American Public Works Association.

Since self assessment and accreditation are voluntary programs, each public works agency has the ability to select how far they wish to proceed in the process. An agency can choose to participate only in the self assessment process as a needs assessment or quality improvement program. It is up to each agency to decide how to use the tools that have been developed for the accreditation program.

Chapter 2 contains a detailed discussion of each of the steps necessary to complete the accreditation process.

Who Is Eligible for Accreditation?

Any government agency or special use district with responsibility for management of public works infrastructure and services is eligible for accreditation by the Accreditation Council, the accrediting body established by the American Public Works Association. Major departments or divisions within large agencies can be accredited individually. There are no limits on the number of departments or divisions that can apply for accreditation.

How Much Does Accreditation Cost?

Fees and Charges. The fees paid to APWA for administering the accreditation program are determined by several factors:

- first, the population of the governmental body
- second, the administration fee for the first nine chapters of the Manual
- third, the administration fee for the individual chapters for which the agency has full responsibility

Payment of the fees can be made in a lump sum at the time the contract is signed or with fifty percent paid when the contract is signed and the remaining fifty percent being due eighteen months into the three year contract or when the Site Visit is requested.

(See the Application for Voluntary Accreditation form at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation to compute the fees for your own agency.

The local agency will be billed for the direct costs incurred with the On-Site Evaluation, after the site visit is completed. This includes cost of airfare, hotel, ground transportation, and meals. The average charge is between four and five thousand dollars.

Re-Accreditation fees

When an agency has reached the fourth year of their Accreditation and are ready to request an On Site Evaluation Visit, an Application for Voluntary Re-Accreditation must be submitted. Fees for Re-Accreditation are calculated just as for the original Accreditation, including the amount due for the population of the governmental body, the administration fees for the first nine chapters of the Manual, and the administration fee for the individual chapters for which the agency has full responsibility, **but based upon the fee structure currently in place at the time of Re-Accreditation.**

Once these fees have been calculated, the amount is divided by 50% and this becomes the amount due from the Agency to APWA.

Visit costs are billed for actual costs and are usually reduced from the first visit due to one less evaluator needed for Re-Accreditation.

Fees for Non-member Agencies. The cost of administration and operation of the accreditation program are partially subsidized by dues paid by member agencies, corporate members, and individual members of APWA. Nonmember agencies are encouraged to apply for accreditation but are charged a 50% surcharge, not to exceed the cost of agency membership.

A nonmember agency is defined as one not holding “Agency Member” standing in APWA. The Director of Credentialing can reduce or waive the requirements or fees for nonmember agencies, subject to the concurrence of the Executive Director of APWA.

Who Pays The Costs Of Accreditation?

The costs of the accreditation program are met by application fee and by charges paid by agencies for site visits. The Council may accumulate a reasonable surplus for future contingent needs. The Council normally sets fees on a three-year basis, but reserves the right to adjust fees upon written notice to all current applicants and accredited agencies. Site visit costs are charged to the Public Works Agency on an actual cost basis. Current schedules of fees and site visit charges are available from APWA or on the web site at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation. Payments may be made by lump sum at the beginning of the program or in installments as agreed to contractually.

Can an Accreditation Be Revoked?

The Council has the authority to revoke an accreditation award when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Public Works Agency is no longer meeting the accreditation criteria as defined in the *Management Practices Manual*. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Can an Agency Withdraw From Accreditation?

The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency in which a Public Works Agency is located may request the removal of a Public Works Agency from the published list of accredited agencies. The Council will comply with that request and delete the Public Works Agency's name. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Are Records Confidential?

The records of the Council and of ad hoc Appeal Panels used in making decisions on the accreditation of agencies and recommendations on all applications before it, and all records of the Council relating to accreditation, shall be kept confidential except:

- a. Listings of all categories of accredited agencies are published, as determined by the Council and specified above;
- b. Disclosure is made in those instances in which the Council is legally required to disclose information;
- c. At the request of the chief elected or appointed official of the Agency, information on a specific Public Works Agency may be made available to other agencies or organizations;
- d. In the case of an appeal, the Council's decision as recorded in the minutes is available to the Board of Directors of the American Public Works Association.

Chapter 2 THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

The Council on Accreditation of the American Public Works Association accredits public works agencies or agencies performing public works functions. The APWA Board of Directors approved the voluntary accreditation process at their meeting on August 23, 1996. Their approval was based on the description contained in Section 2 of the publication *Improving Public Works Operations and Management: a Guide to Self Assessment Using the Management Practices Manual*.

PURPOSE

The purpose of accreditation is to promote excellence in the operation and management of a Public Works Agency, its programs and employees. Accreditation is designed to assist the Agency in improving operations and management; in educating and training public works professionals; and in providing a valid and objective evaluation of Agency programs as a service to the public and the profession.

The principal function of the Council is to exercise professional judgment in making decisions on accreditation of agencies. The Council also:

- Develops guidance documents and data-gathering instruments necessary to carry out this principal function,
- Institutes programs for the training of site evaluators,
- Provides consultation to agencies,
- Interacts with other elements of the governance structure of the American Public Works Association on matters related to accreditation, and
- Takes such actions as required to enable it to carry out its functions.

The Council will periodically evaluate the site evaluators and their written reports as a quality assurance function of the program.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Participation in the Accreditation Program is voluntary and self-motivated with the goal to objectively evaluate, verify and recognize compliance with nationally recognized “recommended” practices developed by members of APWA. The objectives of the accreditation program are:

- Create impetus for organizational self-improvement and stimulate a general raising of standards;
- Offer a voluntary evaluation and education program rather than government regulated activity;
- Recognize good performance and provide motivation to maintain and improve performance;

- Improve public works performance and the provision of services;
- Increase professionalism; and
- Instill pride among Agency staff, elected officials and local community.

All governmental agencies with responsibilities for public works functions are eligible for accreditation. Accreditation is awarded to the department that provides the public works service. Major divisions of a public works agency that operate as a semi-autonomous unit may also be eligible for accreditation. The Accreditation Council verifies eligibility for accreditation. There is no quota, or annual limit on the number of agencies that can apply for accreditation.

The process is described in detail in Chapter 3 of this manual as five major steps:

1. Self Assessment Phase
2. Application Phase
3. Improvement Phase
4. Evaluation Phase
5. Accreditation Phase

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The “Council” is comprised of public works professionals and members of allied professions such as city/county management, government finance, law, public administration, human resource management, planning and others involved in administration of local, regional, state, provincial and federal government agencies. The Council determines the criteria for accreditation and will recommend changes to the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. The Council will establish policies and criteria for accreditation.

The Council consists of not fewer than six members appointed by the APWA President on the recommendation of the Executive Director. Council members serve staggered three-year terms. From these, the president of the American Public Works Association appoints one member as chairperson for a one-year term. All appointments are subject to ratification by the Board of Directors of the American Public Works Association. The membership of the Council may include public members who are not members of the public works profession. The number of public members may not exceed the number of public works professionals. Members of the profession, who serve on site evaluation teams or other bodies that may seek Council accreditation, may not accept concurrent membership on the Council.

Two-thirds of the members constitute a quorum for the purpose of making a decision on the status of a Public Works Agency. When a Council member is withdrawn from a portion of the meeting, that position is not counted in determining a quorum. A vote of the majority of the Council members at a meeting at which a quorum is present is required to make a decision on the status of any applicant or Public Works Agency.

Should a member of the Council be in a possible conflict of interest with respect to any Public Works Agency scheduled for review by the Council at any particular meeting, that member is excused during discussion and decision on that Public Works Agency. Furthermore, the Council may in its judgment determine that a member is in possible conflict of interest and ask that member to withdraw from discussion of and decision on a particular Public Works Agency.

An Executive Committee, including at least one member each in the third, second, and first year on the Council, may be appointed by the chairperson of the Council to act for the Council between meetings on matters other than agency accreditation.

COUNCIL DECISIONS ON ACCREDITATION

A high degree of professional judgment will be exercised in the review of applications, in the conduct and reporting of site visits, and during the decision making process of the Council. A detailed description on the entire decision making process is contained within the various individual steps in Section 2. The following describes the Council's process and guidelines for decision making.

- a. Documentary Bases for Decisions. Before rendering a decision on the award, denial, renewal, placement on probation, or revocation of accreditation, the Council reviews the current self assessment by the Public Works Agency (application or mid-term report), the most recent site visit report, the Public Works Agency's response to that report, other relevant materials and the Public Works Agency's comments on these materials. The Council may make a decision or may defer action until its next scheduled meeting in order to obtain more information on which to base a decision. The decision of the Council is recorded in the minutes and transmitted not later than one month following the decision to the chief public works officer of the Public Works Agency, together with a statement of the factual basis for the decision and, in the case of an adverse decision, the criteria the Public Works Agency did not meet. That communication of the final accrediting decision clearly distinguishes between statements addressing actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria and statements offering consultative recommendations to the Public Works Agency.

- b. Award, Renewal, or Denial of Accreditation. Four types of decisions may be made by the Council to award, renew, or deny accreditation:
 - (1) In the case of a new Public Works Agency applying for accreditation, the Council first votes whether to grant accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant final accreditation, then the Council votes whether to grant provisional accreditation. Agencies that receive neither provisional nor full accreditation are denied accreditation.

(2) In the case of a provisionally accredited Public Works Agency, the Council first votes whether to grant full accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant full accreditation, the Council votes whether to renew provisional accreditation for a specified period. Agencies that receive neither accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation have their provisional accreditation revoked.

(3) In the case of a fully accredited Public Works Agency, the Council votes whether to renew accreditation. A Public Works Agency whose full accreditation is not renewed is automatically placed on probation for a period of not less than one year.

(4) In the case of a Public Works Agency on probation, the Council votes whether to reinstate full accreditation. If the Council votes against reinstatement, it then votes whether to continue probation for a specified period. A Public Works Agency that is neither reinstated nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

- c. Effective Date of a Decision and its Public Announcement. Award of full or provisional accreditation is effective as of the adjournment of the Council meeting in which the decision was made. The next site visit is scheduled from this same date. An annual listing of accredited agencies is placed in an appropriate professional journal selected by the Council to reflect the latest decisions of the Council, including revocations, except that no change in the status of a Public Works Agency is reflected in these listings if the Public Works Agency has filed an appeal that has not been decided. In the same public listing, notice is given of agencies that voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The Council will take action to correct any errors of fact or possibly misleading statements in its public listing in a timely manner.
- d. Revocation of Accreditation. A provisionally approved Public Works Agency that receives neither full accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation has its provisional accreditation revoked. A Public Works Agency on probation that is neither reinstated to full accreditation nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

A Public Works Agency on full accreditation that does not have its full accreditation continued is automatically placed on probationary status for a period of not less than one year. The placement of a Public Works Agency on probation is a clear warning that, if it does not substantially correct the deficiencies noted by the Council, the Public Works Agency will have its accreditation revoked at the end of the probationary period.

The Council has the authority to delete a Public Works Agency from the list of approved agencies when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Public Works Agency is no longer a functioning entity. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

APPEAL OF DECISION OF COUNCIL

The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, or the chief public works officer may appeal any eligible decisions of the Council within 30 days of receipt of written notice of the Council's decision. The only decisions eligible for appeal are specified in Chapter 4, which contains a detailed discussion of the appeals process. The burden of presenting the argument initially, and/or persuading the appeals body, rests with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal.

Within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director of APWA will appoint three members of an ad hoc Appeal Panel along with three alternates. No one of these designees may have had affiliation with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal or with the accreditation process relating to that Public Works Agency. The Public Works Agency must concur in the selection of the panel or by showing good cause why a Panel member would be unacceptable, in which case an alternate who is acceptable to both parties is selected.

The Appeal Panel meets within 90 days of the date on which the Public Works Agency is notified of the adverse decision by the Council or on a date mutually acceptable to the Public Works Agency, the Appeal Panel, and the Council representative. The Public Works Agency along with a representative from the Council will appear before the Panel to make oral and/or written presentations and to respond to questions from the Panel.

STAFF AND MEETINGS

Certain functions in the accreditation process are strictly administrative and are permanently delegated to the Executive Director, or staff designee. The Council does not have any governance responsibility within APWA and reports to the Executive Director.

The Council meets at the International Congress and Exposition, and such other time as necessary to conduct Council business.

The Director of Accreditation

is the primary staff contact at APWA responsible for the administration of the program. Specific duties are detailed throughout this guide.

Chapter 3 THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation is an administrative function within APWA, with control and oversight from the Accreditation Council, which is responsible for establishing the criteria for accreditation. Accreditation is defined as the process of recognizing agencies that comply with the recommended management practices established by APWA's Accreditation Council. These practices are contained in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*, referred to as the "*Manual*."

APWA is responsible for continuously updating the recommended practices through the Management Practices Advisory Committee and the Director of Accreditation. The Council is responsible for setting standards for accreditation and evaluating agencies that choose to apply for accreditation.

The accreditation program is strictly voluntary. There are no mandates or requirements that public works agencies seek accreditation. As a voluntary program, an agency can control the length of time necessary to complete the process.

ACCREDITATION PHASES

The Accreditation Process Map outlining the phases and steps are on page 3-4.

Self Assessment Phase (Steps 1-3)

The first step toward accreditation is the completion of a needs assessment, termed a **self assessment**, using the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. Self assessment is an internal review of an agency's practices combined with a comparison of the recommended practices contained in the manual. At the completion of the self assessment, the Agency will have a broad knowledge of its strengths and areas where improvement is needed to bring the Agency into compliance with the recommended practices. To become accredited, the results of the self assessment must be carefully documented. This documentation establishes the basis for setting goals and evaluating the Agency's effectiveness in attaining compliance with the recommended practices. *The self assessment is required before requesting a site evaluation, and is the core element in the accreditation process.* The Self Assessment Tracking Software program, available from APWA, is a requirement for applying for accreditation.

Application Phase (Steps 4-8)

This phase is the normal starting point toward accreditation. Information is exchanged between the Agency and APWA that should help the Agency in understanding the process and commitments, and eventually helps to make the decision to pursue accreditation. Once the decision has been made to commit to the accreditation process, the Agency submits a formal application along with the application fee. APWA in turn

will review the application, and if acceptable, will issue an accreditation agreement based on the *Application for Voluntary Accreditation*. (See Appendix B for sample.)

Improvement Phase (Steps 9-12)

Once the Agency has completed the self assessment and identified areas needing improvement, the Agency will work to bring all practices into an acceptable level of compliance with the recommended practices. Refinement and improvement to policies practices and procedures are encouraged even if the Agency's practices might be considered in compliance with recommended practices. Continuous improvement is the ultimate goal of the self assessment process; therefore, the improvement phase is extremely important. Agencies are encouraged to make continuous improvements to processes and procedures regardless of their status in the accreditation process.

Evaluation Phase (Steps 13-20)

This is the most critical phase of the process. The Agency requests a visit by a site evaluation team appointed by the Accreditation Council². The Agency will have the opportunity to review the team composition to avoid conflicts of interest. The Team will make an on-site review and evaluation of the Agency to determine the level of compliance with all applicable practices. Following the on-site evaluation, a final report will be developed, which the Agency will have the opportunity to review.

Accreditation Phase (Steps 21-25)

The Accreditation Council will review the recommendation from the Team Leader of the evaluation team, and the final report of the site visit electronically and take action on accreditation site visit results. The report will be used in the decision making process. The Council may then grant full or provisional accreditation or may modify the recommendation of the evaluation team.

The Council has the power to revoke or cancel accreditation based on due process. The Council has the power to place an accredited agency on probation if the Council suspects that an agency is no longer able to assure compliance with established criteria.

Accreditation is granted for a set period, four (4) years, at which time the Agency's accreditation shall expire. Biennial written updates are required to demonstrate continuing compliance and progress with self-imposed goals for improvement.

Appeal procedures have been established and are described in detail in Chapter 4.

THE PROCESS – STEP BY STEP

² Agencies that have not previously applied for Accreditation may do so at this point. Agencies that have not previously executed an Accreditation Agreement will be subject to fees and criteria in effect at the time of application.

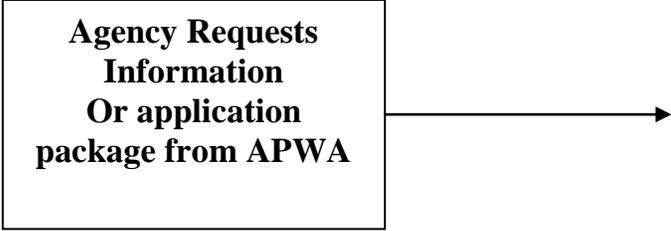
The remaining pages in this chapter illustrate and explain the twenty-five steps of the accreditation process. The responsibilities and protocol of each step are depicted as a flow chart. The entire accreditation process forms a cycle. A first-time agency enters at Step 1 and proceeds through Step 26 to attain the initial accreditation. Biennial/mid-term written updates are required to maintain accreditation for the four (4) year period. At this time, the Agency will apply for re-accreditation and begin the process again.

American Public Works Association

Accreditation Process Map

Self Assessment Phase	Application Phase	Improvement Phase	Evaluation Phase	Accreditation Phase
<p>1 Agency Requests Information or Application Package from APWA</p>	<p>5 APWA Reviews Application and Approved Accreditation agreement</p>	<p>8 Agency Makes improvements Identified during Self Assessment</p>	<p>13 APWA Acknowledges Request for Site Visit</p>	<p>20 Accreditation Council reviews recommendation from Evaluator Team and determines award</p>
<p>2 Agency Reviews Accreditation Process Guide</p>	<p>6 Agency confirms membership, either for Agency or Director and Accreditation Manager</p>	<p>9 Agency Updates Self Assessment documentation</p>	<p>14 APWA Identifies Evaluation Team and Informs Agency</p>	<p>21 APWA Notifies Agency of Results</p>
<p>3 Agency seeks training on the process for staff</p>	<p>7 Agency makes formal application and pays fees to APWA</p>	<p>10 Agency presents results of the Self Assessment to governing body</p>	<p>15 Agency Reviews Evaluation Team for conflict of Interest</p>	<p>22 Certificate of Accreditation is provided to Agency</p>
<p>4 Agency conducts Self Assessment</p>		<p>11 Agency submits documentation of completion of self assessment</p>	<p>16 APWA confirms site visit dates and schedule with Evaluators and agency</p>	<p>23 Presentation of Accreditation is made to the elected body</p>
		<p>12 Agency confirms documentation and Request for Site visit with Waiver Requests</p>	<p>17 APWA Provides Evaluators with Self Assessment Documentation</p>	<p>24 Continuous improvement continues using next edition of the Manual</p>
			<p>18 Evaluators conduct Site Visit and Prepare Report</p>	<p>25 Mid-term report is submitted at two-year mark</p>
			<p>19 Evaluation Team Submits Report to Accreditation Council</p>	<p>26 Re-Accreditation is requested at four years</p>

**Agency Requests
Information
Or application
package from APWA**



STEP 1: AGENCY REQUESTS INFORMATION OR APPLICATION PACKAGE FROM APWA

The APWA provides information about the accreditation program to public works agencies in a variety of ways. In addition to this Guide, there are currently two other resources described in the Preface that may be purchased and complete the library of documents that comprise the entire Accreditation Program:

- 1) *Public Works Management Practices Manual*
- 2) *Required Self Assessment Tracking Software*

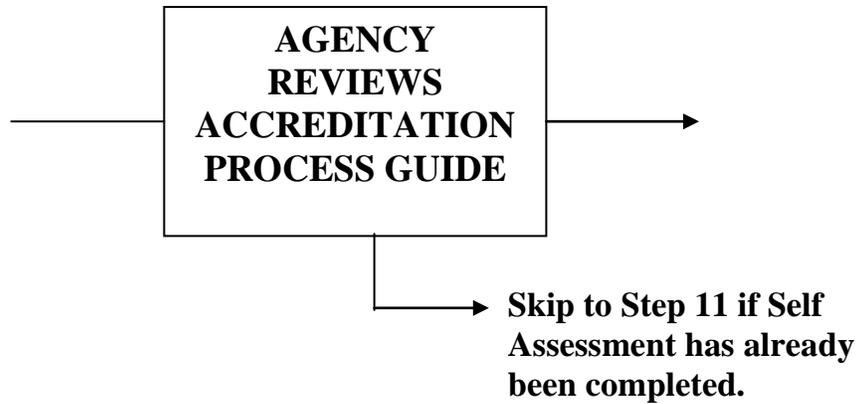
These publications are extremely useful regardless of whether the Agency chooses to pursue full accreditation.

Additionally, a pamphlet entitled, “Commonly Asked Questions” is available as a brief description of the program and may be useful for distribution to interested persons.

The Agency may have sufficient general information about the program and then may proceed to request a formal application package.

All requests for publications, information, and forms should be directed to the following:

Director of Accreditation
American Public Works Association
2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2625
(816) 472-6100
FAX: (816) 472-1610
www.apwa.net



STEP 2: AGENCY REVIEWS ACCREDITATION PROCESS GUIDE

General program information is available to download at
<http://www.apwa.net/credentialing/accreditation/For-More-Information>

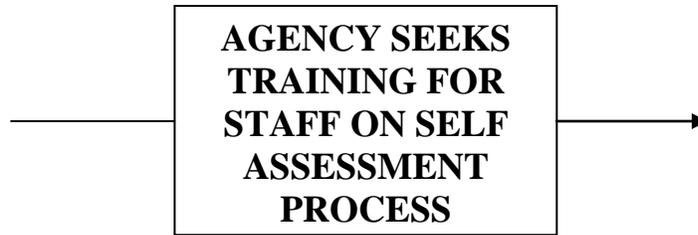
Such items include:

- Fee schedule
- General program statistics
- Accreditation process map

The *Process Guide* is located on the APWA web site and includes

- *Detailed information on the Self Assessment and Accreditation programs*
- *Sample letter of Application (Appendix A)*
- *Application form (Appendix B)*
- *Sample Accreditation Agreement (Appendix C) – Contact APWA for current form or view on the web site at www.apwa.net/About/Accreditation*
- *Sample Checklist for Requesting Site Evaluation for Voluntary Accreditation (Appendix D)*
- *Sample Accreditation Site Visit Agenda (Appendix E)*

If the Agency has already completed a self assessment, skip to Step 11.



STEP 3: AGENCY SEEKS TRAINING FOR STAFF ON SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

APWA provides several levels of training for staff of the department to ensure understanding of the program requirements and to acquaint staff with necessary requirements for completing the program.

Possible training is available through:

1. Nationally sponsored Self Assessment/Accreditation workshops. This training is available at the annual APWA Congress and Exposition each year, as well as at one or two other times in varying other locations throughout the year. Registration fees are charged and travel to and from the location is at the expense of the agency.
2. The workshop training may be offered as a “Member benefit” by an APWA chapter or branch at a location and date of their choosing. The chapter/branch would pay a workshop fee to APWA, provide travel and lodging for the presenter, and offer the workshop to all members of the chapter/branch as part of their membership in the chapter/branch.
3. On-site workshops are available for presentation to the individual agency, at their own site, and with all the staff they feel would benefit from the training. Fees are the same as for the Chapter/Branch workshop; workshop fee to APWA, travel and lodging for the presenter. No individual fees are charged.

Understanding the process and being able to easily determine the information that is sought and required by all those working in the program is almost essential to a good end product. For more information about any of these training opportunities, contact the Director of Credentialing at APWA.



STEP 4: AGENCY CONDUCTS SELF ASSESSMENT

The next step toward accreditation is the completion of a management and operational needs assessment, termed a self assessment, using the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*. Self assessment is an internal review of the Agency's practices combined with a comparison of the recommended practices contained in the manual. To become accredited, the results of the self assessment must be documented and presented to the elected body of the agency. The self assessment findings establish the basis for setting goals and evaluating the Agency's effectiveness in attaining compliance with recommended practices. *The self assessment and improvements to bring the Agency into full or substantial compliance with all applicable practices are required before receiving accreditation.*

Workshops, reference materials, documentation software and on-site training sessions are available from APWA to assist the Agency in conducting a self assessment, documenting the self assessment process, setting goals for improvement and preparing for final accreditation.

Overview of Process: Before the self assessment is initiated, an implementation plan should be developed that includes responsibilities, resources, and processes for conducting the self assessment. One overall manager should be identified, but a team approach to conducting the self assessment is encouraged where feasible. A filing system should be established that creates a file for each applicable practice. Each folder should contain applicable standards and procedures along with background documentation and working documents for bringing the practice into compliance. The Self Assessment Tracking software must be used to document the findings and those findings are required to be submitted to the Council before the site evaluation.

Practice Statements: Practice statements contained in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* do not represent standards since they do not dictate how a function or activity must be accomplished. Nor do they represent quotas or unit productivity. The recommended practices provide a series of statements and commentary designed to help an agency conduct a self-examination of each aspect of its performance and determine how the practice ensures effective delivery of public works services.

Each recommended practice is composed of two parts: the recommended *practice statement* and a *description* intended to assist the Agency staff in understanding the practice statement. The practice statement is a declarative sentence that places a clear-cut requirement or multiple requirements on the Agency. The practice statement, if

applicable, must be met in order for the Agency to become accredited. The Agency must demonstrate that they are in either full or substantial compliance with the recommended practice, by providing written documentation to this effect.

The commentary (or definition) supports the practice statement as an example, but is not binding on either the Agency or the Council. It serves as an expanded discussion of the practice, which will help the Agency understand the reason for the practice. The description can be thought of as a prompt, which provides guidance to clarify the intent of the practice, or as an example of one possible way to comply with the practice. Since the Agency has the latitude to determine how it will comply with the practices to effectively meet its needs, and since the burden of proof to verify this compliance is the Agency's responsibility, it may simply use the description as a guideline.

Compliance With Recommended Practices: The Agency must determine whether it complies with the recommended practice. The level of compliance must be classified as one of the following:

- Full Compliance (FC) -- Fully complies with the practice, without exception.
- Substantial Compliance (SC) -- Indicates that the agency consistently meets all major provisions of the practice.
- Partial Compliance (PC) -- Indicates that the agency meets some of the provisions of the practice.
- Non-Compliance (NC) -- Indicates that the agency fails to meet the provisions of the practice
- Non-Applicable (NA) -- The practice does not apply to the agency.
- Waived (WV) -- The practice has been waived. Requires written approval before the site visit.

Waiver requests must be made in writing to the Director of Accreditation, citing the reason for requesting the waiver. Proof of compliance must be demonstrated by review of written records, interviews, and field observations during the on-site evaluation by the accreditation team.

Substantial compliance means that an agency complies with the intent of each recommended practice in a manner that will ensure that the public's interest and investment of capital is protected. Minor areas of non-compliance within a recommended practice will not necessarily preclude an agency from attaining accreditation, so long as a specific goal and an implementation plan is adopted to bring the Agency into compliance.

Each agency is responsible for determining the appropriate practices for its community, subject to concurrence of the site evaluation team. The Agency must be able to demonstrate that it is in full or substantial compliance through documentation, subject to verification during the on-site accreditation visit.

Optional Paths for Self Assessment: Each agency may choose one of three paths to accomplish the self assessment phase –

- **Option 1 - Conduct the self assessment without assistance**

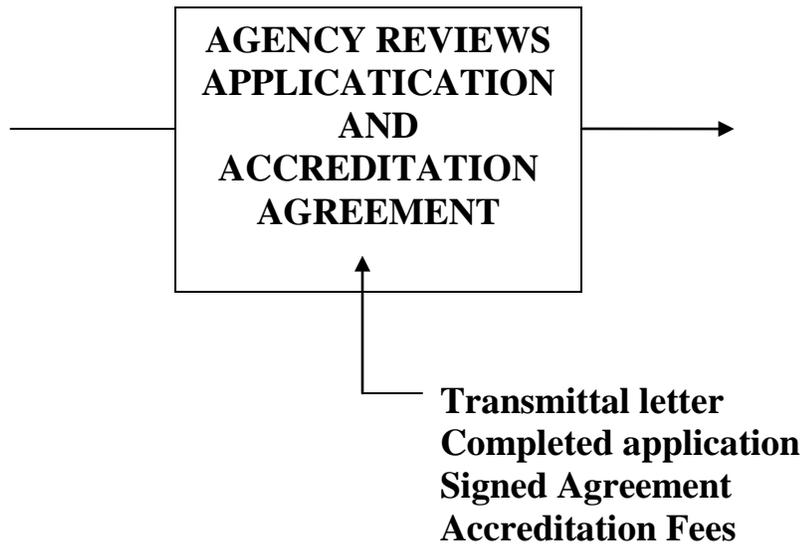
The Agency conducts the self assessment using the Agency's staff in conjunction with reference materials and workshops available from APWA. The Agency could expect tremendous benefit by participating in the self assessment program, even if they stopped at this point. At any time, in the future the Agency could complete the documentation and apply for accreditation.

- **Option 2 - Conduct the self assessment with a Mentor**

Under this option, the Agency would select mentors, public works professionals who have experience with management, self assessment and accreditation, to work with the agency throughout the self assessment and accreditation process. Two or more agencies could work cooperatively to create a self-help mentoring relationship to assist each other through the process. The Agency would complete the required documentation and apply for accreditation.

- **Option 3 - Conduct the self assessment with reviews by peer review team at key points during the self assessment**

In this last option, the Agency could request that a peer review team visit the Agency during the final stages of the self assessment phase. The peer review team could assist the Agency in ensuring that the documentation was satisfactory and assist in establishing goals for improvement of the agency's management practices. The Agency would apply for accreditation upon completion of the self assessment process. Note: This option may significantly increase the cost of accreditation since there would be more than one on-site visitation.



STEP 5: AGENCY REVIEWS APPLICATION AND ACCREDITATION AGREEMENT

Because the accreditation process is initiated by the Agency that submits itself for review, the burden of proof of compliance with the criteria rests with the applicant. Therefore, an application must be prepared with a degree of thoroughness that will satisfy detailed review by staff, a site visit team, and the Council.

The Application constitutes a commitment to conduct a self assessment by the Agency, organized in accordance with guidelines furnished by the Council. A letter of commitment must accompany the application. Agencies desiring to contractually establish their fees and criteria for accreditation may submit an Accreditation Agreement and pay all, or a portion of the accreditation fees.

The complete application for accreditation consists of a letter of intent, a completed application, and a signed agreement. The application letter from an Agency ***must be signed by the chief elected or appointed official of the Agency***. The accreditation application form may be signed by the chief public works officer(s) responsible for the department being accredited. The completed application must be submitted to the Accreditation Council as follows:

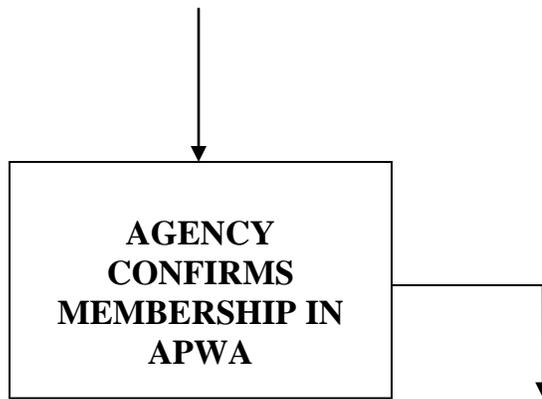
Department of Accreditation
American Public Works Association
2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2641

During the application process, agencies are required to identify each functional area (represented by a chapter in the Manual) where the Agency has any responsibility. Each agency is required to comply with the recommended management practices specifically applicable to the functional areas. Each agency must consider its mission, legally mandated responsibilities, and the demands of community in determining which practices are applicable and how to comply with them.

Waivers for specific practices may be requested for agencies that cannot comply due to legislation, labor agreement, court orders, case law, or other legitimate reasons. The Agency must submit the request for the waivers in writing, citing the extenuating circumstances that preclude the Agency from complying with the recommended practice to the Director of Credentialing prior to the Site Visit. Simply not having funding or staff resources will not be considered a valid reason for non-compliance.

When applying for accreditation, the Agency declares which practices apply and which are not applicable. The Agency, in conjunction with APWA staff, will propose those practices that will be evaluated throughout the accreditation process. The Accreditation Council can accept, reject or modify the list of practices that the Agency must address during the accreditation process. The Agency must substantially or fully comply with *all* of the applicable practices as defined later in this document.

An agency can declare its candidacy for accreditation without executing an Accreditation Agreement by submitting a completed application, together with the application fee. This step allows an agency to announce its intent to become accredited without paying the accreditation fees. However, all fees and requirements for accreditation are subject to change until an agency executes an Accreditation Agreement. Agencies are encouraged to execute an Accreditation Agreement early in the process to avoid the potential for increased fees or the need to revise the self assessment to conform to the recommended practices published in any later editions of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.



STEP 6: AGENCY CONFIRMS MEMBERSHIP IN APWA

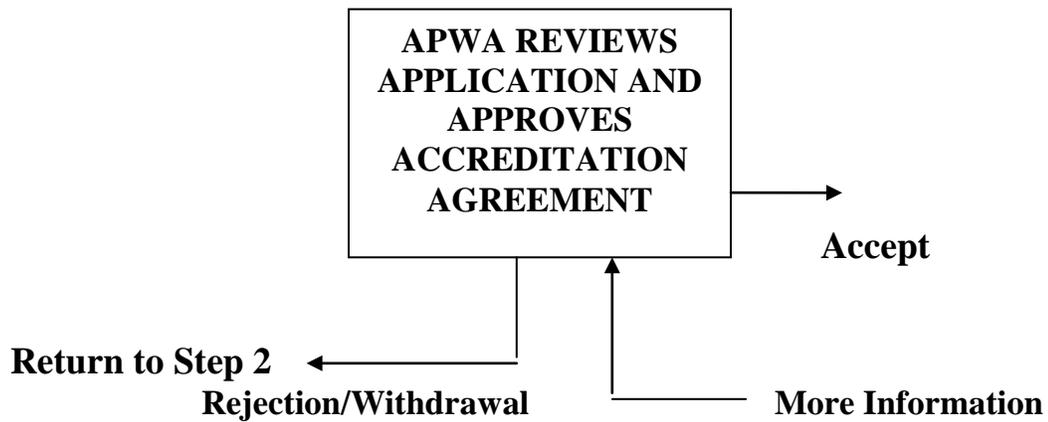
To be eligible to become Accredited by APWA, agencies will be required to:

1. Document membership in APWA either through an Agency membership or
2. Full membership for the Director of the Agency and the Accreditation Manager

Non-member agencies may be Accredited but the fees will be fifty percent above those listed for member agencies.

Information about obtaining membership in APWA is available at:

<http://www.apwa.net/membership>



STEP 7: APWA REVIEWS APPLICATION AND APPROVES ACCREDITATION AGREEMENT

Acceptance of the Application:

In order to expedite processing, the staff of the Council reviews each application and may schedule the initial site visits. When the application seems to be incomplete in its response to one or more criteria-related topics in the application guidelines, Council members may request additional information from an Agency before making this decision. All applications that may not clearly meet the criteria to warrant a site visit are referred to the Council. The Council then decides, by vote of the majority of the Council members at which a quorum is present, to:

- (1) Accept the application and instruct the Agency to begin the self assessment, or
- (2) Accept the application and schedule a site visit (for Agencies that have previously completed a self assessment); or
- (3) Reject the application because, in the opinion of the Council, the applicant does not meet the criteria for accreditation; or
- (4) Request additional information.

Agreement Approval:

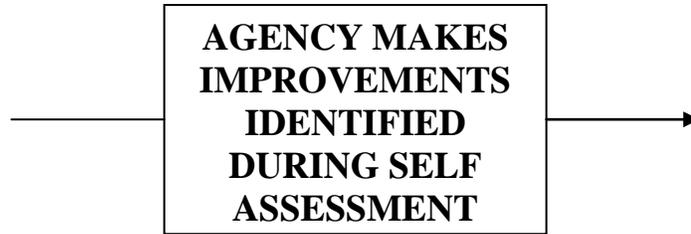
If the Council decides to accept the application, the Agency will be formally notified of the latest version of the *Management Practices Manual* and the required tracking software to be used, together with the completed agreement signed by the AWWA Executive Director.

Notice of Rejection:

In the event the Council rejects the application, it advises the Agency in writing of the reasons for its rejection. The Agency may appeal the rejection to the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association as provided in Step 11 below.

Withdrawal of Application:

At any time before the Council takes final action to grant or refuse accreditation to an applicant Agency, the senior signatory may withdraw the application without prejudice.

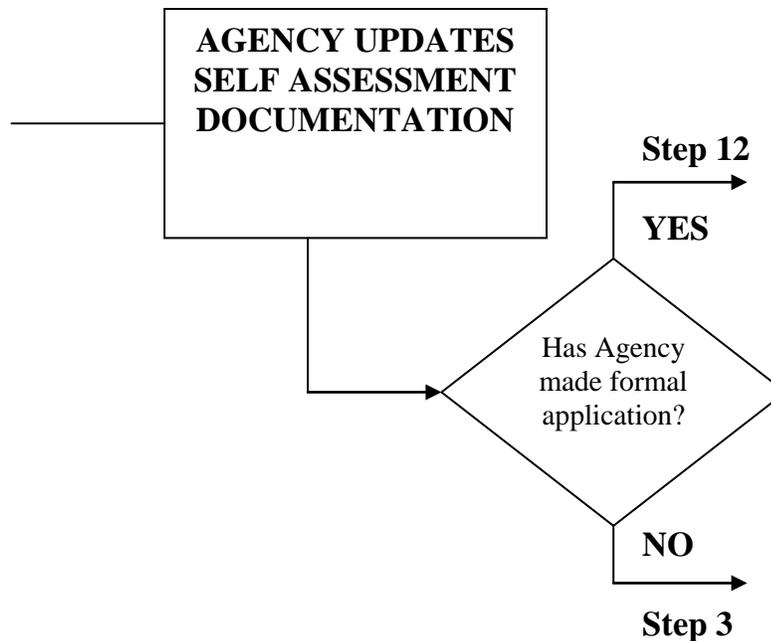


STEP 8: AGENCY MAKES IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED DURING SELF ASSESSMENT

One of the primary goals in conducting a self assessment, as well as the entire accreditation process, is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency. Besides taking the first critical step toward self improvement through a process of self evaluation, the next most important step is to take action to address those areas needing improvement. In many cases, bringing an Agency's practice into compliance may simply require documenting existing processes or standards more completely. Others may require a complete reevaluation of the Agency's policies, practices or procedures.

The practice statements in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* contain those elements considered necessary to minimally address a given subject matter. They do not state how an agency must satisfy a given practice, only that the Agency must adequately address the requirements of the practice. Other public works practitioners developed these practices over a long period. By doing so, the Agency is comparing itself against this set of recommended practices.

During this step, the Agency should modify or establish processes, standards, and procedures that it finds to be in less than substantial compliance. Agencies are also encouraged to make improvements where feasible and practical to bring all practices into full compliance.



STEP 9: AGENCY UPDATES SELF ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

Following all modifications to agency policies, standards, and procedures that the Agency believes is necessary to attain an acceptable level of compliance, the Agency updates the documentation, including the required tracking software in Step 7.

At this time the Agency might consider performing a “mock” on-site evaluation, or a peer review, as a final check of documentation prior to fully committing to beginning the remainder of the accreditation process and committing to further expenditures. This “mock” evaluation or peer review is purely optional, but if performed, this simulation should utilize knowledgeable practitioners in the role of the assessors and be conducted as stringently as the actual on-site evaluation.

Form of Documentation. Preparing for accreditation requires that each applicable practice be documented -- that is, that proof of compliance is provided. Each agency desiring accreditation must provide the documentation through use of **required tracking software** that provides many of the details needed for the accreditation review.

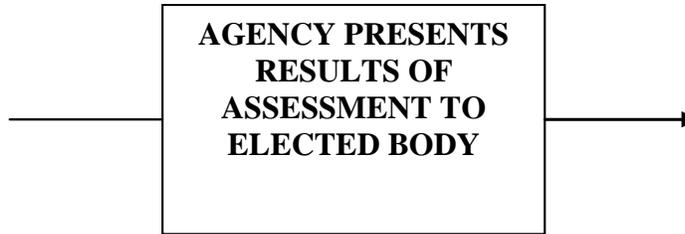
Agencies are required to maintain a central filing system containing all written documentation, interview results and copies of supporting documents during the site visit by the accreditation evaluation team. If several of the practices apply to one document (a snow and ice plan for example) only one copy is required, however multiple copies of applicable sections should be (or uploaded to the software) placed in files for each management practice help to speed the on-site review in Step 18.

For Agencies submitting hard copy documentation, a completed copy of an Individual Practice Status Report (IPSR) for ALL practices contained in the applicable edition of *Public Works Management Practices Manual* must be submitted.

All agencies applying for accreditation must use the required tracking software that corresponds to the edition of the *Manual* being used.

Agencies not desiring accreditation are encouraged to use the tracking software to assist in the self assessment process.

The Agency should not proceed to the next step until the chief public works officer is personally satisfied that all documentation has been updated and that it is ready to commit to the additional costs of the on-site evaluation (see Step 11).



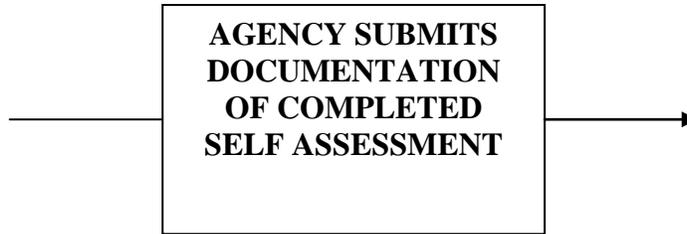
STEP 10: AGENCY PRESENTS RESULTS OF SELF ASSESSMENT TO ELECTED BODY

The Agency must present the results of its self assessment to the local elected body in writing. Agencies are encouraged to present the information to their elected officials when they are comfortable with the results. Agencies may also choose to present the completed self assessment prior to completion of the improvement phase, together with a strategy for improving those practices that the Agency believes are rated as either Partial Compliance or Noncompliance.

The documentation developed during the self assessment should be used as the basis for making such presentations. The presentation must be made in a forum that allows the public the opportunity to comment on the findings and improvements made because of the self assessment.

Most agencies will choose to make the presentation to the elected body at one of their normal meetings. Use of a work session, which is open to the public, is also an excellent way to highlight the accomplishments of the public works agency. The presentation could become part of the formal budget process or an agency-wide strategic planning effort. Each agency will need to determine the appropriate content and venue for such a presentation.

Agencies that complete this process, even if they are not interested in obtaining accredited status, will be recognized by APWA (see Chapter 6).



STEP 11: AGENCY SUBMITS DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLETED SELF ASSESSMENT

The Agency completes and submits the following items:

- Transmittal letter
- The dates that the self assessment was started and completed.
- Copy of Public Meeting Agenda or consent agenda showing presentation of Self Assessment findings
- Complete copy of agenda package submitted to elected officials
- Remaining accreditation fees, if payment remains
- The updated documentation in approved format (software files)

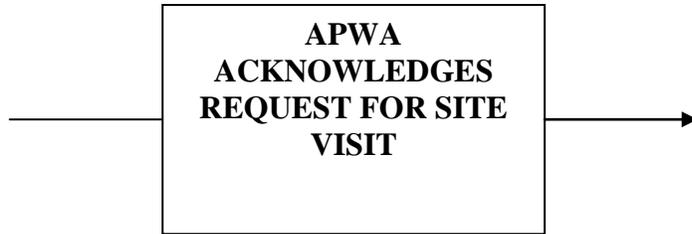
If this step is applicable, APWA will respond by combining Steps 4 and 13.



STEP 12: AGENCY REQUESTS SITE VISIT

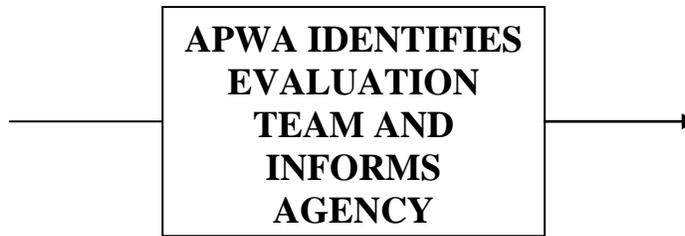
The package must include this information:

- A confirmation or a request to adjust the practices from the original application (Step 3) that are not applicable, along with a waiver request.
- Documentation on why waiver is justified
- The preferred schedule for the on-site evaluation by the evaluation team. A minimum of 45 days is required from receipt of the complete application package. Every effort will be made to accommodate the Agency's requested dates for the accreditation team visitation; however, the Accreditation Council and APWA reserve the right to establish the actual dates of the site visit
- A brief narrative describing the community served (demographics, highlights, etc.) and the agency's organizational structure, services offered, etc.
- Any additional information that may help the site evaluation team understand how the Agency fits into the parent organization, including information about other public works related departments, which are not being evaluated.
- List of individuals that will be the responsible for explaining the documentation, listed by area (i.e. chapter.)
- The balance of accreditation fees, if not already paid in full.



STEP 13: APWA ACKNOWLEDGES REQUEST FOR SITE VISIT

The AWPA will provide a formal acknowledgement for the request for a site visit. The acknowledgement will describe in detail the process to be used and probable schedule.



STEP 14: APWA IDENTIFIES EVALUATION TEAM AND INFORMS AGENCY

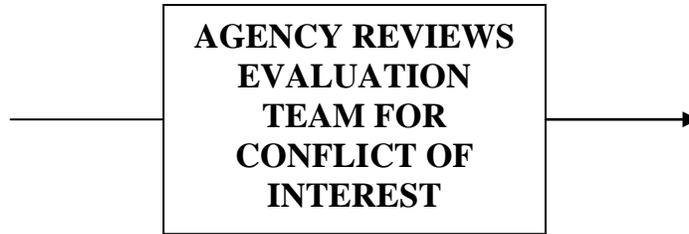
Upon receipt of the invitation, the Staff develops a list of potential evaluation team members. No fewer than three persons constitute a team to visit an Agency, except by mutual agreement between the Council and the Agency. The list of potential team members is then submitted to the Agency for information and identification of potential conflicts of interest.

The Director of Accreditation will select the on-site evaluation team. Wherever possible team members and support staff will be selected based on relevant experience in agencies that are comparable to the agency being accredited.

Depending upon the number of functional areas (chapters in the *Management Practices Manual*) being reviewed and the size of the organization, the typical assessment team may range in size from 2 to 4 evaluators and will include an APWA staff member. Large organizations with multiple sites or large numbers of staff may require larger teams, longer visits, or both.

An evaluation team leader will be designated from one of the evaluators. The team leader is responsible for conducting the review with the Agency's project manager. The team leader will provide an orientation at the beginning and a debriefing at the conclusion of the on-site review. The team leader is responsible for assuring that the accreditation team follows the adopted procedure, provides support to the team members and is responsible for logistical issues related to the on-site evaluation.

During the on-site evaluation, the evaluators acting as representatives of the Council will review the Agency's management practices against recommended practices contained in the then-current edition of the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* in effect at the time that the Accreditation Agreement is executed.



STEP 15: AGENCY REVIEWS EVALUATION TEAM FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

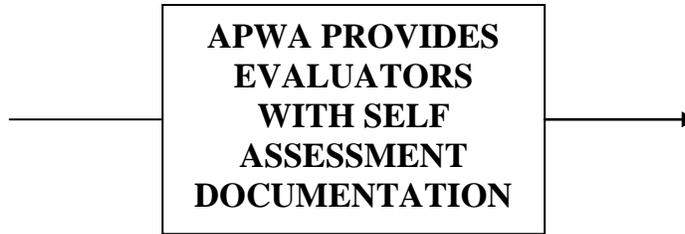
The Agency shall have thirty (30) days from the date of the notification to provide the Council with a list of the proposed evaluators who they believe might not be objective in their evaluation of the Agency's application. The Agency is not required to provide any reason but is expected to act professionally in making such a response. Requesting removal of an evaluator is only to be requested when the Agency has specific knowledge of a team member's potential conflict of interest.



STEP 16: APWA CONFIRMS SITE VISIT WITH EVALUATORS AND AGENCY

After an Agency has responded to the notification of the proposed evaluation team, or thirty days after the notice was sent, whichever occurs first, APWA's Director of Accreditation will send the Agency official notification of the evaluation team and leader. The Agency is responsible for contacting the Director of Accreditation to set a proposed date for the site evaluation visit.

Detailed arrangements for the site visit are made through direct contact between the Agency and the Director of Accreditation, who may designate the team leader as the primary contact. The exact dates of the on-site evaluation will be negotiated based on the Agency's and team members' schedules. A tentative agenda will be proposed by the Director of Accreditation based on the number of practices to be reviewed and the number of team members. The Agency will offer suggestions for site tours, group dinners, and other agenda items and the agenda will be adjusted as mutually agreed. See Appendix E for a sample agenda.



STEP 17: APWA PROVIDES EVALUATORS WITH SELF ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

Evaluators are provided read-only access to the self-assessment software prepared in advance by the Agency prior to the Site Visit, along with other pertinent information on the locality or agency provided by the Agency in Step 12. Agencies are encouraged to submit copies of supporting documentation, via the on-line software, which will be furnished to the evaluator assigned to review the related practices.



STEP 18: EVALUATORS CONDUCT SITE VISIT AND PREPARE REPORT

The site visit, also known as an on-site evaluation or site evaluation, constitutes an essential and unique step in the initial award and renewal of accreditation. It provides for peer interaction between experienced professional members of the evaluation team and professionals associated with the Agency and appropriate elected or appointed officials of the parent agency.

Through discussions with members of the parent agency staff, Agency staff, support personnel, and by inspection of facilities and equipment, the evaluators are able to form professional judgments about the Agency's degree of compliance with the Criteria. The evaluation team will review and rate the Agency's compliance with each recommended practice on one of the levels of compliance described in Figure 1 (Page 3-11).

In order to be accredited, the Agency must demonstrate "full or substantial compliance" with all applicable practices. Evaluators will be looking for evidence that the Agency's stated practices are actually being followed by the Agency. This will include copies of completed forms, rather than blank ones, to demonstrate the program is actually being used.

The accreditation team is responsible for validating the Agency's compliance with all applicable practices through interviews and observations. The accreditation team will provide the Agency with feedback on its progress during and at the conclusion of the site visit.

On-Site Arrangements: Upon arrival in the agency's city, the APWA staff will secure transportation for the evaluation team to various agency facilities to allow inspection and observation. Any expenses that are related to the site visit incurred by the evaluation team are subject to reimbursement by the Agency, this includes meals, airfare, and lodging. Agencies are expected to make arrangements for hotel rooms to be direct billed to the agency and to arrange for payment of the evaluation team's expenses for group meals and entertainment while on-site. Additional normal expenses will be reimbursed by expense voucher. Agencies are cautioned to avoid extravagant or "special" arrangements that would be inconsistent with travel policies in effect for the Agency's own management or executive personnel.

The Agency should arrange for appropriate opportunities to introduce key staff to the evaluators. The Agency should also provide a brief orientation, e.g., briefing and tour to acclimate the evaluators to the Agency and its environment.

During the site visit, the Agency must provide the evaluators with all reasonable assistance to facilitate their on-site review. There are three caveats:

1. The burden of proof regarding compliance rests with the Agency.
2. **Evaluators do not need to review sensitive or confidential documents to confirm compliance.** Appropriate alternatives may be substituted.
3. Evaluators are bound by the confidentiality provisions of the Accreditation Agreement and are not permitted to discuss their findings with persons outside of the Agency or Council, unless authorized by the Agency.

Physical arrangements for evaluators to conduct reviews must take into account the following things:

1. Number of host agency staff to participate with individual reviewers
2. Noise level of multiple groups in one room
3. Access to jointly required files or agency documentation
4. Computers and connections to view documentation on-line.

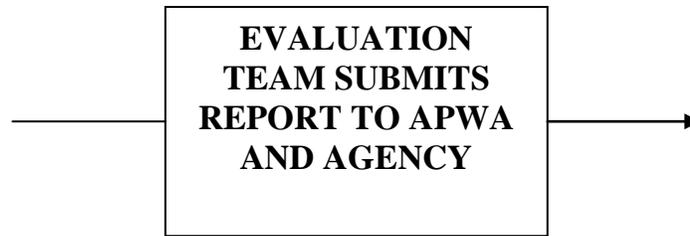
Amenities should include:

- Easy access to water, coffee, soda
- Light snacks
- Easy access to restrooms
- One area with computer access to the internet

Lunch each day will be provided on-site by the Agency and a private room should be available for the Team to meet together during the lunch break.

Courtesy

A small token of appreciation reminiscent of the host agency for each member of the APWA evaluator team would be appropriate, if desired.



STEP 19: EVALUATION TEAM SUBMITS REPORT TO APWA AND AGENCY

Within forty-five (45) days of the completion of the site visit, the team leader forwards a written report to the Agency and chair of the Council, in a format prescribed by the Council. The Report includes a recommendation to the Council of the accreditation status to be awarded the Agency. This recommendation is advisory to, but not binding on the council.

The recommendation of the site visit team is transmitted to the Agency along with the detailed site evaluation report. The written report of the team should clearly distinguish between statements of actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria, and consultative statements offering recommendations to the Agency.

In addition to providing the Council with a report of the team findings, the site visit is expected to be of benefit to the Agency in its quest for excellence.

The team leader is responsible for preparing a written report that details the activities and findings of the accreditation review. This formal report is forwarded to the Agency, with a copy to the Director of Accreditation. It will become part of the accreditation submittal to the Council. The site visit team may recommend that the Agency complete additional work on documentation, set additional goals, or improve specific practices before final review by the Council.

The Director of Accreditation will prepare the final accreditation package for submission to the Accreditation Council for action. The report will contain a synopsis of the Agency's application for accreditation, including initial documentation, and the accreditation team's findings and report.

The site evaluation team's report includes:

- A chronological description of events that occurred during the on-site evaluation;
- Team chapter assignments (i.e., which chapters were reviewed by which evaluators);
- Copies of self assessment logs, duly annotated with compliance indicators;
- Documentation of practices with which the Agency was not in compliance or came into compliance during the on-site evaluation;
- Information about operational programs, policies, or procedures that the on-site evaluation team considered as worthy of comment and inclusion in the APWA's database of model practices; and

If the final report indicates areas of noncompliance or other unresolved conditions, APWA staff coordinates their completion with the Agency, the evaluators, or both.



STEP 20: ACCREDITATION COUNCIL REVIEWS RECOMMENDATION FROM EVALUATOR TEAM AND DETERMINES AWARD

Applications for accreditation are evaluated by experienced public works professionals from across the United States and Canada. APWA's Director of Accreditation is responsible for coordinating the accreditation program through the Council, which is the governing body with the sole authority to award or deny accreditation.

Documentation of Basis for Decisions. Before rendering a decision on the award, denial, renewal, placement on probation, or revocation of accreditation, the Council reviews the current self assessment by the Agency (application or mid-term report), the most recent site visit report, the Agency's Response to that Report, and other relevant materials and the Agency's comments on these materials. The Council may make a decision or may defer action until its next scheduled meeting in order to obtain more information on which to base a decision. The decision of the Council is recorded in the minutes and transmitted not later than thirty (30) days following the decision to the chief public works officer of the Agency, together with a statement of the factual basis for the decision and, in the case of an adverse decision, the criteria the Agency did not meet. That communication of the final accrediting decision clearly distinguishes between statements speaking to actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria and statements offering consultative recommendations to the Agency. In the decision letter, the Council encourages the Agency to share information about its accredited status appropriately.

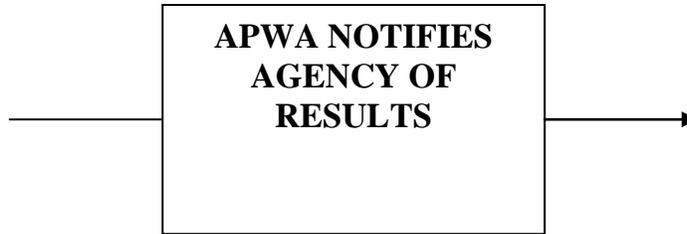
Award, Renewal, or Denial of Accreditation. Four types of decisions may be made by the Council to award, renew, or deny accreditation.

(1) In the case of a new Agency applying for accreditation, the Council first votes whether to grant accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant full accreditation, then the Council votes whether to grant provisional accreditation. Agencies that receive neither provisional nor full accreditation are denied accreditation.

(2) In the case of a provisionally accredited Agency, the Council first votes whether to grant full accreditation. If the Council votes not to grant full accreditation, the Council votes whether to renew provisional accreditation for a specified period. Agencies that receive neither accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation have their provisional accreditation revoked.

(3) In the case of a fully accredited Agency, the Council votes whether to re-accredit the Agency. An Agency whose full accreditation is not renewed is automatically placed on probation for a period of not less than one full year.

(4) In the case of an Agency on probation, the Council votes whether to reinstate full accreditation. If the Council votes against reinstatement, it then votes whether to continue probation for a specified period. An Agency that is neither reinstated nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.



STEP 21: APWA NOTIFIES AGENCY OF RESULTS

The Council will make a decision based on the report of the on-site evaluation team and other information supplied by the Director of Credentialing. The Council will deny accreditation to those agencies not meeting the minimum criteria. The Council has two options to approve accreditation:

Full Accreditation. Accreditation represents a mark of excellence that recognizes agencies for their commitment to improving the quality of service provided to the community. Agencies that achieve full accreditation are expected to maintain the recommended practices that were documented as part of the accreditation process. In addition, it is expected that accredited agencies will continue to improve their management practices as a condition of continued accreditation.

Provisional Accreditation. The Council may grant provisional accreditation to agencies that complete the on-site evaluation but are not in full compliance with all applicable recommended practices. Accreditation may be granted on a provisional basis, subject to conditions imposed by the Council.

The Agency shall have 90 days to comply with the conditions imposed by the Council and submit documentation to the Director of Accreditation. The Director of Accreditation will determine whether the Agency has complied with the conditions set by the Accreditation Council in their action, and is empowered to enroll the Agency as a fully accredited agency if the conditions are met. If in the opinion of the Director of Accreditation, the Agency has not met the conditions, a written determination will be sent to the Agency and the matter will be scheduled for the next Council meeting.

The Council also has the power to revoke or cancel accreditation based on due process. The Council has the power to award provisional accreditation, or to place an accredited agency on probation if the Council suspects that an agency is no longer able to assure compliance with established standards.

The Council will require accredited agencies to maintain compliance and live by the letter and spirit of the accreditation program. There is a presumption on the part of the Council that all accredited agencies will operate in compliance with the established practices, in a manner that most effectively meet the needs of their Agency and the citizens they serve.

Accreditation is granted for a set period, four (4) years, at which time the Agency's accreditation shall expire.

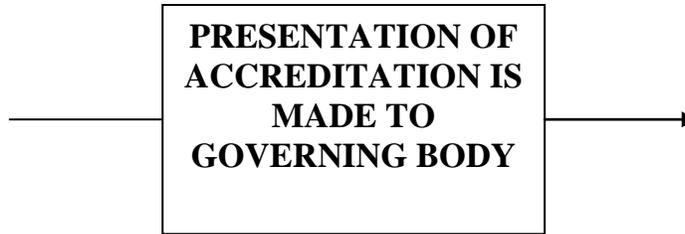


STEP 22: CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION AWARDED TO AGENCY

The Council and APWA will jointly award accreditation to the Agency. Representatives of the Council and APWA will present the award at a meeting of the Agency's elected officials. APWA will issue a press release from national headquarters recognizing the achievement of accreditation by the Agency.

Recognition for achieving accreditation will also be given at the International Public Works Congress. All agencies achieving accreditation since the last Congress will be recognized at the annual awards reception. Recognition will also be given in APWA's official publication, *The Reporter*, or other publications.

Effective Date of a Decision and its Public Announcement. Award of full or provisional accreditation is effective as of the adjournment of the Council meeting in which the decision was made. The next site visit is scheduled from this same date. An annual listing of accredited agencies will be placed in an appropriate professional journal selected by the Council. The listing reflects the latest decisions of the Council, including revocations, except that no change in the status of an Agency will be made if the Agency has filed an appeal still under evaluation. In the same public listing, notice is given of agencies that voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The Council will make every effort to correct in a timely manner any errors of fact or possibly misleading statements in its public listing.



STEP 23: PRESENTATION OF ACCREDITATION IS MADE TO GOVERNING BODY

Following the notice of award of Accreditation by the Accreditation Council, the Director of Accreditation will forward notice to the Media Relations Coordinator for APWA to assist in preparing a press release, coordinated with the agency.

APWA is pleased to provide a member of the APWA Board of Directors, Accreditation Council, Past President of APWA, or the Director of Accreditation to travel to a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body for the intent of making a formal presentation of the Accreditation plaques for the agency.

A date and time will be coordinated and notice provided to the news media in the local area of the impending presentation.



STEP 24: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MID-TERM REPORTS

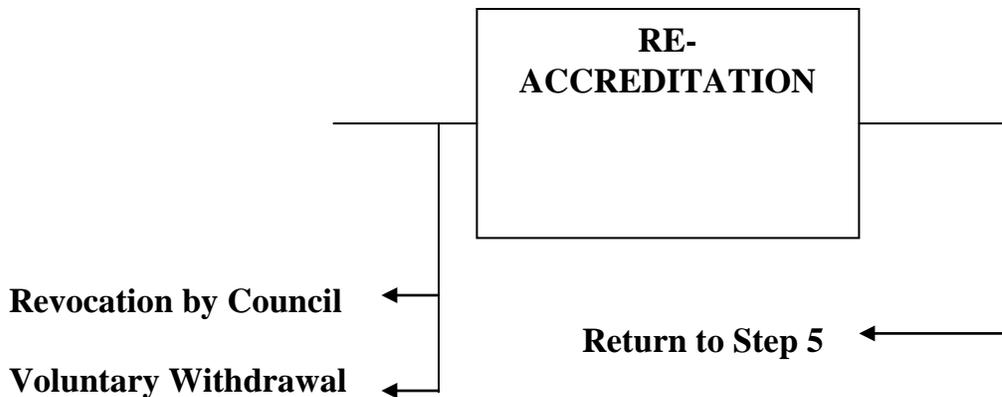
Agencies are strongly encouraged to constantly strive to improve their practices, regardless of accreditation status. For those agencies that are granted accreditation, biennial written updates are required to demonstrate continuing compliance and progress with self-imposed goals for improvement.

Agencies awarded accreditation must submit a biennial update, due on the second anniversary date of the original accreditation. The mid-term report must address significant changes in the Agency. The report must include an overview of changes in the parent agency that might affect management or operation of the Agency.

It is expected that an accredited agency will work toward improvement of its management and operational practices on a continual basis. The report should address the goals set during the accreditation process and may propose changes in existing goals or new goals. The reporting process provides a framework for measuring the Agency's progress since the original accreditation. The report must include the following:

1. A description of improvement efforts completed during the past year.
2. Identification and discussion of practices, which had a change in applicability to a given agency.
3. Certification that the Agency is still in full or substantial compliance with *all* of the applicable practices.

Reports should be submitted to the Director of Accreditation at APWA Headquarters.



STEP 25: RE-ACCREDITATION

Re-Accreditation is required every four (4) years. In order to be considered for re-accreditation, the Agency must have submitted the required biennial update of the documentation described in the previous step.

An on-site evaluation team will visit the Agency and conduct a re-accreditation review in a similar manner as utilized for the initial accreditation review but will likely be less intensive. Agencies that are in full compliance with all applicable recommended practices will be expected to focus on how the Agency is going to improve its level of service to the community.

The intent of the accreditation process is to provide a continuous cycle of self assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Accreditation, or Re-Accreditation, is not an end product of a linear process. Rather it can be likened to an element of a circular process often referred to as continuous improvement.

Revocation of Accreditation. A provisionally approved Agency that receives neither full accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation has its provisional accreditation revoked. An Agency on probation that is neither reinstated to full accreditation nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

An Agency on full accreditation that does not have its full accreditation continued is automatically placed on probationary status for a period of not less than one year. The placement of an Agency on probation is a clear warning that, if it does not substantially correct the deficiencies noted by the Council, the Agency would have its accreditation revoked at the end of the probationary period.

The Council has the authority to delete an Agency from the list of approved agencies when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Agency is no longer a functional entity. At a subsequent time, the Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Voluntary Withdrawal From Accredited Status: The chief elected or appointed official of the community may request the removal of an agency from the published list of accredited agencies. The Council will comply with that request and delete the Agency's name from the list. At a subsequent time, the Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

Chapter 4 **APPEAL PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES**

The fee for appeal will be due with the appeal filing.

a. Documentary Basis for Decisions. Before rendering a decision on the award, denial, renewal, placement on probation, or revocation of accreditation, the Council reviews the current self assessment by the Public Works Agency (application or mid-term report), the most recent site visit report, the Public Works Agency's Response to that Report, and other relevant materials and the Public Works Agency's comments on these materials. The Council may make a decision or may defer action until its next scheduled meeting in order to obtain more information on which to base a decision. The decision of the Council is recorded in the minutes and transmitted not later than thirty (30) days following the decision to the chief public works officer of the Public Works Agency, together with a statement of the factual basis for the decision and, in the case of an adverse decision, the criteria the Public Works Agency did not meet. That communication of the final accreditation decision clearly distinguishes between statements speaking to actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria and statements offering consultative recommendations to the Public Works Agency. In the decision letter, the Council encourages the Public Works Agency to share information about its accredited status appropriately.

b. Award, Renewal, or Denial of Accreditation. Four types of decisions may be made by the Council to award, renew, or deny accreditation.

See Step 21 (page 3-32) for detail of this process.

c. Effective Date of a Decision and Its Public Announcement. Award of full or provisional accreditation is effective as of the adjournment of the Council meeting in which the decision was made. The next site visit is scheduled from this same date. An annual listing of accredited agencies will be placed on the APWA web site. The listing will reflect the latest decisions of the Council, including revocations, except that no change in the status of a Public Works Agency is reflected for a Public Works Agency that has an unresolved appeal. In the same public listing, notice is given of agencies that voluntarily withdraw from accredited status. The Council will make every effort to correct in a timely manner any errors of fact or possibly misleading statements in its public listing.

d. Revocation of Accreditation. A provisionally approved Public Works Agency that receives neither full accreditation nor continued provisional accreditation has its provisional accreditation revoked. A Public Works Agency on probation that is neither reinstated on full accreditation nor granted continued probation has its accreditation revoked.

A Public Works Agency on full accreditation that does not have its full accreditation continued is automatically placed on probationary status for a period of not less than one year. The placement of a Public Works Agency on probation is a clear warning that, if it does not substantially correct the deficiencies noted by the Council, the Public Works Agency would have its accreditation revoked at the end of the probationary period.

The Council has the authority to delete a Public Works Agency from the list of approved agencies when the Council has sufficient documentary evidence that the Public Works Agency is no longer a functional entity. At a subsequent time, the Public Works Agency may reapply for accreditation without prejudice.

APPEAL OF DECISION OF THE COUNCIL

a. Filing an Appeal. The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, or the chief public works officer may appeal any of the decisions of the Council within 30 days of receipt of written notice of the Council's decision. The appeal must specify the grounds on which the appeal is made. The appeal should be addressed to the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association. The burden of presenting the argument initially, and/or persuading the appeals body, rests with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal.

b. Appealable Decisions. Only the following decisions of the Council may be appealed:

- (1) In the case of a Public Works Agency applying for an initial site visit, a denial of the initial visit;
- (2) In the case of a Public Works Agency applying for accreditation, a denial of full or provisional accreditation;
- (3) In the case of a Public Works Agency applying for accreditation, the award of provisional instead of full accreditation;
- (4) In the case of a provisionally or full accredited Public Works Agency, a denial of full accreditation, continued provisional accreditation, or revocation of provisional accreditation;
- (5) In the case of a provisionally accredited Public Works Agency, a decision to place the Public Works Agency on probation;
- (6) In the case of a Public Works Agency on probationary status, a decision to continue probation or to revoke accreditation;
- (7) In the case where the Council decides to request the next site visit in a fewer number of years than the normal intervals defined in Section 4.b. above.

(8) In the case where the Council denies re-accreditation of any Agency.

c. Formation of ad hoc Appeal Panel. Within 30 days of receipt of the appeal, the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association will name three members of an ad hoc Appeal Panel and three alternates. None of the designees will have had affiliation with the Public Works Agency filing the appeal or with the accreditation process relating to that Public Works Agency. Staff of the Council determines the willingness of the designated principals and alternates to serve and notifies the Public Works Agency of the names of the three principals. If the Public Works Agency shows good cause why a named principal is unacceptable, an alternate who is acceptable to both parties is selected.

d. The Meeting of the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel shall meet within 90 days of the date on which the Public Works Agency submits an appeal to the Council or on a date mutually acceptable to the Public Works Agency, the Appeal Panel, and the Council representative. The Public Works Agency may have one or more representatives appear before the Panel to make an oral and/or written presentation and to respond to questions from the Panel. The Chairperson of the Council designates a representative to appear before the Appeal Panel to support the decision of the Council and to respond to questions of the Appeal Panel. Counsel may represent either party; however, the proceeding is conducted on an informal basis. The Appeal Panel may request the assistance of counsel to provide guidance in the interpretation and resolution of legal or procedural problems that may arise in the context of an appeal.

e. Documents To Be Considered by the Appeal Panel. The issues addressed by the Appeal Panel are limited to those included in the appeal made by the Public Works Agency. The panel, the appellant, the Council's representative, and legal counsel will be furnished with all of the documents reviewed by the Council in making its decision and the letter notifying the Public Works Agency of the Council's decision. The Appeal Panel may not consider changes that may have been made by the Public Works Agency that would alter the nature of the programs described in these documents.

f. Decisions of the Panel. The function of an Appeal Panel in a given case is to review the decision of the Council based on the record that was before the Council at the time of its decision. In the event that the decision of the Council is not upheld, the case will be remanded to the Council for disposition in a manner consistent with the findings of the Appeal Panel. The decision of the Council shall stand if the Appeal Panel does not remand the appeal to the Council.

g. Reporting of the Decision of the Panel. The report of the Panel, including the decision and reasons for such, is prepared within 30 days and is addressed to the Executive Director of the American Public Works Association. Copies are forwarded to the chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, to the chief public works officer, and to the chairperson of the Council.

Chapter 5 **PROCESS CONCERNS, DISPUTES AND COMPLAINTS**

The following section describes procedures that will be followed for handling concerns regarding the accreditation process, status of a Public Works Agency, or about evaluators during the conduct of the on-site evaluation. The section also discusses complaints received from third parties about accredited agencies.

a. Complaints on the Operation of an Accredited Agency from a Third Party. To be considered by the Council, a complaint about the operation of an accredited Public Works Agency must:

- (1) Be written and signed;
- (2) Identify the individual group or legal entity represented by the complainant;
- (3) Present substantial evidence that the subject Public Works Agency is not in compliance with one or more of the criteria in use at the time referred to in the complaint;
- (4) Demonstrate, when reasonably possible, that serious effort has been made to pursue all review procedures provided within the public agency in which the Public Works Agency is located; and
- (5) Grant permission to send the complaint, in its entirety, to the Public Works Agency.

Receipt of a complaint meeting these requirements is acknowledged by Council staff and sent to the Public Works Agency for comment. Both complaint and comment are placed on the Council agenda for its next scheduled meeting. The Council may reach a decision at that meeting, wherein the matter is resolved and the Public Works Agency will be so informed. Alternatively, the Council may vote to pursue the matter further, either by further correspondence with the Public Works Agency or by means of a special site visit to provide additional information on which to reach a decision on the accreditation status of the Public Works Agency. The Public Works Agency is afforded the opportunity to comment on any additional information provided to the Council by means of a special site visit. The Council communicates the disposition of the complaint, in writing, to the complainant and the Public Works Agency.

b. Against Actions of Site Evaluation Team Members or Visitors. The chief elected or appointed official of the public agency, or the chief public works officer may file a complaint regarding the actions of the site evaluators. That official must notify the Council of the Agency's intent to file a complaint within 14 days after completion of the site visit. Subsequently, the complaint should be addressed to the Council and must:

- (1) Be written and signed by the chief public works official;
- (2) Be sent *before* the host institution has received the written report from the site visit team and within 30 days after completion of the site visit;
- (3) Provide a clear description of the critical incident(s) in question; and,

- (4) Grant permission to send the complaint, in its entirety, to the evaluation team members or others named in the complaint.

Receipt of a complaint meeting these requirements is acknowledged by the Council's staff and held until the Report of the evaluation team is received. The complaint is sent to all members of the evaluation team with request for comment within 30 days. At the same time, the site evaluation Report is sent to the Public Works Agency for comment. Upon receipt of (1) the comments by evaluators on the complaint and (2) the Response of the Public Works Agency to the site visit report, both sets of documents are placed on the Council's agenda for its next scheduled meeting.

In mailing the agenda to the Council members, the complaint is covered separately and not bound with the site visit report and Public Works Agency's response in the main agenda book. In preparation for the meeting, Council members are requested to observe the following procedures. Each member is asked to review the complaint and evaluators' comments, and then to review the site visit Report and Response to it and to form an opinion as to whether the action(s) of the evaluators were such to void the site visit report.

Based upon its review of the relevant materials, the Council may reach the following decisions by a majority vote:

- (1) Deny the complaint, thereby sustaining the evaluators;
- (2) Sustain the complaint, thereby requiring a reprimand of the evaluators, which may include deletion from the list of potential evaluators maintained by the Council; or
- (3) Vote to pursue the matter further, by further correspondence either with the parties involved, or by means of a special fact-finding group, to provide additional information on which to reach a decision.

In the event the Council votes to sustain the complaint, it then must determine whether the critical incident(s) influenced the content of the site evaluation report. If the incident is determined to have influenced the site visit report, the Council voids the site visit Report and will schedule a second on-site evaluation at the Council's expense. If the incident is determined not to have influenced the site visit Report, the Council proceeds with its decision regarding the Public Works Agency's compliance.

In no case is the Council's decision regarding the Public Works Agency's compliance with the Criteria made until the complaint has been disposed of by the Council. The Council communicates the disposition of the complaint, in writing, to the chief public works officer and to the evaluators.

c. Processing of Accreditation Complaint that is in Litigation. If in the course of processing a complaint, the Council finds that the party against which the complaint is filed is involved in litigation over the same issue, the Council, upon advice from legal counsel, may exercise its discretion in determining the most appropriate action to take. That discretion can be guided by a number of factors, including whether the individual expressing the complaint is willing to cooperate with the Council, how protracted the litigation is likely to be. Whether the failure to initiate action against the Public Works Agency immediately might damage the public interest, and the impact on the confidentiality of the Council's deliberations if its files are subpoenaed during the course of litigation. In all instances, the Council should consider the potential effect of its action upon the interests of the public and the profession.

Chapter 6 **RECOGNITION AND AWARDS**

Awards. Two levels of recognition are provided for agencies that participate in the Self Assessment and/or Accreditation processes. The two awards are for:

- (1) Completion of the self assessment process and submission of the results to the elected body; and
- (2) Achieving full accreditation or re-accreditation through an on-site evaluation.

Recognition. Any agency that completes the Self Assessment process, whether or not it intends to apply for accreditation, is eligible for recognition by APWA. Requirements for recognizing an agency include completion of the Self Assessment, including preparation of complete documentation, presentation of a report to the Agency's elected officials at a public hearing, and submission of documentation to the Director of Accreditation. The recognition is available to any agency, regardless of its intention to apply for full accreditation.

Full Accreditation. A representative of APWA will present a plaque to the Agency at a meeting of the Agency's elected board. A press release will be issued from APWA Headquarters to news media in the Agency's service area. In addition, the Agency will be recognized in APWA's official magazine, *The APWA Reporter* and/or other publications of the Association.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE LETTER OF APPLICATION

(Print on Agency Letterhead)

Date

American Public Works Association
Director of Credentialing
2345 Grand Blvd, Suite 700
Kansas City, MO 64108-2641

Subject: Application for Accreditation

The [insert Parent Agency name] is pleased to submit an application for Accreditation of the [insert Agency/Department name].

[Insert a statement of support from the elected body, or appointed CEO, indicating that the whole agency will support the Self Assessment and Accreditation phases of the program]

[Insert additional text as desired to indicate support]

Enclosed is a completed application, Accreditation Agreement, and [check or purchase order information, including amount].

Please contact [insert name and contact information] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[insert name]
[insert title—must be chief elected or appointed official]

Enclosure

January 2015



**ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION
APPLICATION FOR
VOLUNTARY ACCREDITATION**

Agency Name: * _____

*An entire operating division of a public works agency can apply for accreditation if it is a separate, semi-autonomous unit of government.

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____

(if different from street address)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

• Parent Agency's Chief Executive Officer: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

• Public Works Agency's Chief Executive: _____

Title: _____ Elected - Or Appointed -

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

APWA Agency Member? -- Yes, Contact _____ -- No

• Public Works Agency's Accreditation Manager: _____

Title: _____

APWA Member? -- Yes, I.D. Number _____ -- No

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail _____

The public works agency is responsible for the Functional Areas, which are checked on the reverse side of this application form. The agency is responsible for addressing all recommended practices in the Functional Areas for which the public works agency has responsibility. Each area is covered by a separate chapter in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* and forms the basis for fees charged for the accreditation process.

We hereby apply for voluntary accreditation by the Accreditation Council of the American Public Works Association. By this application, the agency acknowledges its commitment to accreditation and is willing to devote the resources necessary to complete the accreditation process. The agency is prepared to provide such information necessary for the Council to fairly evaluate the agency's eligibility for accreditation.

Executed this ____ day of _____, 201____.

By: _____, Title: _____

(typed or printed name)

DETERMINATION OF FEES AND APPLICABLE FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Which of the following functions does your department administer, manage, or provide services -- either directly or through a contractor or outside vendor? The department is responsible for an entire chapter if they have any involvement in any portion of the practices contained in a chapter, even if another department or agency has ultimate responsibility. If there is any accountability—the whole chapter applies. Explain reason for not being responsible or accountable for a particular functional area.

FUNCTIONAL AREA (Chapter Number)	YES	NO	REASON FOR NON-RESPONSIBILITY
Chapter 1-9			Required for all agencies
Planning and Development (10)			
Code Enforcement (11)			
Engineering Management (12)			
Bid Process (13)			
Project Management (14)			
Right-of-Way Management (15)			
Utility Coordination (16)			
Facilities Management (17)			
Equipment and Fleet Management (18)			
Parks, Grounds, and Forestry (19)			
Solid Waste Management (20)			
Solid Waste Collection (21)			
Solid Waste Recycling and Reuse (22)			
Solid Waste Disposal (23)			
Street Maintenance (24)			
Street Cleaning (25)			
Snow Removal and Ice Control (26)			
Stormwater and Flood Management (27)			
Vector Control (28)			
Potable Water Distribution System (29)			
Water Treatment (30)			
Wastewater Collection and Conveyance (31)			
Wastewater Treatment and Disposal (32)			
Traffic Operations (33)			
Parking (34)			
Cemeteries (35)			
Airports (36)			
Transit Operations (37)			
Bridges (38)			
Beaches (39)			
TOTALS (please enter a number for both Yes and No)			Total for Yes and No must equal 30

Fees for accreditation are as follows: All applicants are responsible for Chapters 1 through 9 in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*, regardless of functional responsibilities.

Each functional area is represented by a separate chapter in the manual. Conversely, each chapter will be counted as a functional area for the purpose of determining accreditation fees.

Part A: Base Fee by Agency Population (2010 Census Data)

Check	POPULATION		Extension
	Under 10,000	\$1,500	
	10,001 to 25,000	\$2,500	
	25,001 to 50,000	\$6,500	
	50,001 to 100,000	\$9,000	
	100,001 to 300,000	\$11,000	
	300,001 to 1,000,000	\$15,000	
	More than 1,000,000	\$18,000	
	Subtotal Base Fee		\$

Part B: Functional Area Fee (Added to the Base Fee)

Functional Areas	FUNCTIONAL AREAS		Extension
9	First 9 Chapters (Required for all agencies)	\$800	\$800
	Each additional chapter (Maximum fee for additional chapters is \$4,800)	\$200 each	\$
	Subtotal Functional Area Fee		\$

Total Fee (add Base Fee and Functional Area Fee)

\$ _____

Calculation of fees is subject to verification by the Accreditation Council. Additional fees will be charged for Functional Areas, which should have been included in the original calculation.

Excludes on-site assessment costs, instructional materials, reference materials, subscriptions, consulting, or other services purchased directly from the American Public Works Association.

ACCREDITATION AGREEMENT

This Agreement is entered into between the _____ (full name of political subdivision or agency) (“the Agency”) with principal offices located at _____, and the Accreditation Council (“the Council”), a division of the American Public Works Association (“APWA”), an Illinois nonprofit corporation exempt from federal income taxation pursuant to Section 501©(3) of the Internal Revenue Code with principal offices located at 2345 Grand Boulevard, Suite 700, Kansas City, Missouri 64108.

APWA is an international educational and professional association of public agencies, private sector companies, and individuals dedicated to providing high quality public works goods and services. APWA has created the Council to recognize public works agencies in having policies and practices addressing subject areas as set forth in the *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.

The Agency is responsible for directly or indirectly administering, managing or providing public works related services in ____ functional areas, more fully described on the Agency’s Application for Accreditation, which is hereby incorporated into this Agreement. The Agency desires that the Council assess the Agency’s practices in order for the Council to determine if the Agency is eligible for designation as accredited in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

The parties, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows:

1. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES: The Agency shall:

1.1 Provide all information, including all documents, files, records, and other data as required by the Council except to the extent that the disclosure of such information is restricted by law (in which case, the Agency shall notify the Council that such information has been withheld);

1.2 Conduct a self assessment as to compliance with recommended practices, and provide full and accurate results thereof to the Council using software developed and approved by the Council;

1.3 Provide one or more persons to assist the Council representatives (“Evaluators”) in making the necessary inquiries and assessments of Agency information relative to compliance with recommended practices; provide access to files and records; and provide necessary facilities that are requested by the Evaluators; and

1.4 Respond to all communications from the Council promptly, but in no event later than ten (10) business days from the receipt thereof.

2. COUNCIL’S RESPONSIBILITIES: The Council shall:

2.1 Provide necessary documentation, forms, and instructions regarding the accreditation process.

2.2 Provide Evaluators for the purpose of conducting an on-site evaluation of the Agency’s policies and practices;

2.3 Promptly analyze compliance data and advise the Agency of the results of the on-site evaluation and the need for additional information, if any;

2.4 Conduct a hearing and certify the Agency has accredited if it has met the then applicable practices.

2.5 If the Agency is accredited, (a) provide a certificate and award, and (b) make available indicia of accreditation

2.6 If the Agency is not accredited following an examination of its policies and practices, provide the Agency with reasons for the Council decision, and

2.7 Upon payment of the Agency of a \$1,000 appeal fee (which must be paid within sixty days of notice by the Council of the reasons for the Council decision), allow the Agency to appeal the decision of the Council (which fee shall be refunded if the Agency prevails on the appeal).

3. TERM:

3.1 This Agreement shall become effective when it has been signed by an authorized representative each of the parties.

3.2 The Agreement shall terminate:

- (a) Upon execution of a Re-Accreditation Agreement between the Agency and Council, or
- (b) Upon expiration of the 36th month following the effective date of this Agreement unless a successful on-site evaluation within that period of time; or
- (c) Upon written notice by the Agency that it withdraws from the accreditation process, or
- (d) Upon termination pursuant to Section 5.1, 5.2, or 5.3 hereof; or
- (e) Upon expiration or revocation of the Agency's accredited status.

3.3 The term of any accreditation provided to the Agency shall have a term of Four years from the date of issuance. If the Agency has not executed a Re-Accreditation Agreement (and paid the fees required thereby) and scheduled the Re-Accreditation on-site visit before the expiration of such four year term, the accreditation shall lapse and the Agency shall not hold itself out as being accredited by the Council.

4. MODIFICATION: There shall be no modifications of this Agreement except in writing, signed by both parties, and executed with the same formalities as this document.

5. TIME AND MANNER OF PAYMENTS:

5.1 The Agency may elect one of two options (lump sum or installment) for payment of the accreditation fee, which is not refundable (except as noted in Sections 5.2 and 5.4). Under either option, the fees do not include the Agency's responsibility for costs associated with the on-site evaluation in accordance with Sections 5.3, 5.5 and 5.6.

The Agency agrees to one of the following options by checking the appropriate Block

(a) Lump Sum Option

The Agency will remit to the Council a single payment in the lump-sum amount for processing of the accreditation of \$_____, upon the execution of this Agreement by the Agency.

The total amount of \$_____ is herein remitted to the Council (payable by check to the order of American Public Works Association) via check number _____, or

Purchase Order No. _____ is herein remitted to the Council in the amount of \$_____.

(b) Installment Option

The Agency will remit to the Council a total payment of \$_____ for processing of the accreditation. The first installment of \$_____ (50% of total fee) is due at the signing of this Agreement by the Agency. The second installment of \$_____ (remaining 50% of fee) is payable at the end of the eighteenth (18th) month from the effective date of this Agreement or at the time of submission of the completed self assessment and request for the onsite evaluation, whichever occurs first.

The first installment of \$_____ is herein remitted to the Council (payable by check to the order of American Public Works Association) via check number _____, or

Purchase Order No. _____ is herein remitted to the Council in the amount of \$_____.

*The Council reserves the right to terminate this Agreement if an installment payment is delinquent by more than sixty days, and the Council shall not be obligated to refund any fees previously paid.

5.2 If the Agency is determined ineligible to apply for participation in the accreditation program, after the execution of this Agreement and payment of fees, the Council will refund the fees reserved from the Agency, less a \$1,000 processing fee.

5.3 The Council will invoice the Agency for the Council's actual on-site evaluation costs. An itemized invoice will be delivered to the Agency within forty-five days of completion of the on-site visit. The Council reserves the right to terminate this Agreement if such payment is delinquent by more than sixty days, and the Council shall not be obligated to refund any fees previously paid.

5.4 If the Agency terminates this Agreement pursuant to Section 3.2(c), the Agency shall receive a refund based on the following schedule, based on the effective date of this Agreement.

Less than one-year:	Seventy percent (70%) of the total fee
More than one year, but less than two years	Fifty percent (50%) of the total fee
More than two-years	No refund allowed

Refunds shall not exceed the amount actually paid by the Agency.

5.5 If the Agency requires more than 36 months to complete a successful on-site evaluation, the Agency may request a 12 month extension to this Agreement. If the extension is granted, the Agency agrees to pay a nonrefundable fee amounting to 25% of the fee in effect on the effective date of this Agreement for that additional period. The Agency may continue to request an additional extension every 12 months thereafter, and agrees to pay the additional 25% fee, until a successful on-site evaluation has been achieved or this Agreement has been terminated in accordance with Section 3. No such additional fee will be levied where the Council delays the on-site evaluation for their convenience or where the on-site evaluation cannot be reasonably scheduled within the original 36-month period.

5.6 If the Agency's initial on-site evaluation is not successful (i.e., work after the initial on-site evaluation is required to achieve compliance with recommended practices), and the volume of review necessary for completion would require a second on-site evaluation, with the Agency shall prepay costs for a subsequent on-site evaluation and/or additional staff/evaluator assistance required on or off site. The additional work required (on and/or off site) must be completed within six (6) months.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY:

6.1 The Council shall receive and hold confidential any and all reports, files, records and other data obtained from the Agency pursuant to this Agreement. The Council shall use reasonable commercial efforts to prevent the disclosure, distribution, or release to any person or organization, except authorized Agency officials, employees or agents, or upon order of any court, state or federal, any materials or contents thereof, either provided by the Agency or developed by the Council in the furtherance of its responsibility under this Agreement. Notwithstanding anything in this Agreement to the contrary including the above, the Council is authorized, but not required, in the exercise of its sole discretion, to conduct an open meeting regarding the Agency's candidacy for accreditation or, its continued compliance with applicable standards, including but not limited to all factual matters relating to the assessment, appraisal, and determination of accreditation and all comments which form a basis for the opinion either in favor of or against accreditation, unless specifically notified by the Agency in writing to the contrary, in which case such meeting shall be closed to the public. Nothing herein shall be construed to require the Council to conduct all or part of its meeting in public, including but not limited

to the right of the Council, in the exercise of its sole discretion, to terminate an open meeting at any time and conclude such meeting in a closed session.

6.2 In response to inquiries concerning the Agency, the Council's reply will be to identify the Agency's status. All other requests for information will be directed to the Agency.

7. NEWS RELEASES:

7.1 Notwithstanding any provision of this Agreement to the contrary, the Council shall have the right to identify the Agency in news releases and its publicity program after the Agency's on-site evaluation has been scheduled, the purpose of said news release and publicity program will be to identify the Agency as seeking accreditation. Where specific mention of the Agency is used in this regard, a copy of the news release or publicity material will be provided to the Agency for its information.

7.2 The Agency shall provide the Council with a copy of all its news releases or publicity material concerning its accreditation activities.

8. THE COUNCIL AS AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR: For all purposes under this Agreement, the Council is an independent contractor and shall not be deemed to be an employee, agent, franchise, partner, or legal representative of the Agency. The council shall not have any authority to create or assure any obligation on behalf of the Agency. The Council shall pay and discharge any and all obligations it may incur to federal, state, or local governments for estimated income taxes, Social Security contributions, and the like.

9. INTEGRATION: This instrument embodies the whole Agreement of the parties. The parties warrant that there are no promises, terms, conditions, or obligations other than those contained herein. This Agreement shall supersede all previous communications, representations, or agreements, either verbal or written, between the parties hereto.

10. SEVERABILITY: If any provisions of this Agreement or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance shall be held invalid, the remainder of this Agreement and the application of such provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which is held invalid shall not be affected hereby.

11. CHOICE OF LAW: This Agreement and the rights of the parties hereunder shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the law of the State of Missouri.

12. WARRANTY NOT INTENDED OR IMPLIED: It is understood that the Council's award of accreditation represents that the Council has determined, based in part on information supplied by the Agency, that the Agency has policies and practices addressing certain subject areas, but the council is not making any representations that such policies or practices are adequate or appropriate for Agency. Agency is solely responsible for determining whether its policies and practices are adequate and appropriate and the Council's award of accreditation is not a substitute for the Agency's ongoing and in-depth monitoring and evaluation of its activities and the quality of its services.

13. WAIVER: Any waiver by the council of any breach of this Agreement by the Agency shall relate only to that particular breach and shall not amount to a general waiver.

14. NOTICE: Any notice between the parties shall be in writing and set postage prepaid, to the addresses as specified in the preamble of this Agreement or to such other address as either party may specify in writing in accordance with this section.

15. HEADINGS: The heading of this Agreement shall not be deemed part of it and shall not in any way effect its construction.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Agency has caused this Agreement to be executed in duplicate on this ____ day of _____, 201 ____.

Witness: By: _____

(Typed name)

(Title)*

Witness: By: _____

(Typed name)

(Title)*

*Title of the Agency's Chief Executive Officer or Chief Elected Official and title and that of the appropriate civil authority in the event such signature is required to effect this Agreement. If not required, please so note in this signature block.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the APWA has caused this Agreement to be executed by the Deputy Executive Director of the American Public Works Association, acting on its behalf.

Witness: By: _____

Peter B. King
Executive Director

APPENDIX E

(Name of Agency)

Accreditation Site Visit Agenda

Typical Schedule for Medium Size Agency Responsible for 22 Chapters

Saturday

Location	Time	Activity
		Travel to Agency
	4:00 – 9:00 P.M.	Register at Hotel
		Dinner On Your Own

Site Visit Team Lead: Evaluator 1

Chapter Assignments: Evaluator 1: 1, 9, 15, 16, 18, 24, and 25
 (_____ Edition) Evaluator 2: 3, 4, 11, 17, and 30
 Evaluator 3: 2, 5, 6, 12, and 27
 Evaluator 4: 8, 7, 10, 13, and 14
 APWA Staff: Logistical Support and Quality Control

Chapters Represented as Not Applicable: 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 31.

A total of 339 Practices will be reviewed

(Numbers in parentheses are total number in chapter—not all apply)

Sunday

Location	Time	Activity
	9:00 A.M.	Meet in lobby
	11:30 – 1:30	Lunch with PW staff and Evaluation Team; Orientation, Agency presentation
	1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Tour of Agency (Includes drive-by of major facilities, but does not include detailed inspection)
	3:30-4:30 P.M	Joint Review of Chapter 1
	4:30-5:00 P.M.	Wrap-up and Discuss Agenda for Monday
	6:00 P.M.	Reception and/or Dinner – Evaluation Team & Agency Self Assessment Team, Elected Officials, Others

Monday

Location	Time	Activity
Hotel	6:30-7:30 A.M.	Evaluator Breakfast – Meet at Hotel Coffee Shop
	7:45 A.M.	Team Departs for Meeting Facility
	8:00 – 12 Noon	Review of Chapters by Evaluators and local agency staff Evaluator 1 – Chapter 2 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 26, 27 Evaluator 3 – Chapter 5, 6 Evaluator 4 – Chapter 10, 11
	12 Noon – 1:00 p.m.	Working lunch provided for Evaluator Team
	1:00-5:00 P.M.	Afternoon Session Reviews: Evaluator 1 – Chapters 24 Evaluator 3 – Chapters 5, 6 Evaluator 4 – Chapters Chapter 8 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 3, 17 APWA Staff – Waiver Requests and N/A Chapters 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 31.
Hotel	5:00 P.M.	Return to Hotel
Restaurant	6:00 P.M.	Dinner for Evaluators (on their own)
Hotel	8:00 P.M.	Return to Hotel – Discussion of Requirements for Partial & Non-Compliant Practices as needed

Tuesday

Location	Time	Activity
Hotel	6:30-7:30 A.M.	Breakfast – On Your Own
	7:45 A.M.	Evaluators leave for Meeting Facility
	8:00 – Noon	Morning Session Reviews: Evaluator 1 – Chapters 15, 18, 25 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 30 Evaluator 3 – Chapters 12, 27 Evaluator 4 – Chapters 10, 13
	Noon-1:00 P.M	Working Lunch – catered by Agency
	1:00-5:00 P.M	Afternoon Session Reviews: Evaluator 1 – Chapter 9, 16 Evaluator 2 – Chapter 4, 11 Evaluator 3 – Chapter 2 Evaluator 4 – Chapters 7, 14
	5:00 P.M.	Evaluators return to hotel
Restaurant	7:00-11:00 P.M.	Dinner and Debriefing (Evaluation Team Only)

Wednesday

Location	Time	Activity
Hotel	6:30-7:30 A.M.	Breakfast – On Your Own
	7:45 A.M.	Transportation to Meeting Facility
	8:30 - 10:00 A.M.	Missed Practices and Prepare Report
	10:30 A.M.	Review Findings with Department Director. Discussion of practices requiring further action.
	11:30 A.M.	Depart for Airport