

# american **CAMP** association®

## 20/20 Initiatives

**Name of Initiative:** Accreditation and Education Task Force

### Overview

- **Key Personnel:**
  - Volunteers: Art Wannlund, Chair, Jean McMullan, Dave Hilliard, Dawn Ewing, Judith Bevin, Chris Strevel, Tom Horner
  - Staff: Amy Katzenberger and Rhonda Mickelson, with contributions from other national staff
  
- **Objective (Charge):** to commission a task force of the board to initiate a process of comprehensive exploration and study in order to make recommendations for the preferred future of accreditation and professional development.
  
- **Desired Outcomes** (including return on investment [ROI] and specific benchmarks):
  - Increase the number of participating camps
  - Increase the positive impact for campers and their families
  - Increase the value and benefit of the professional development process
  - To increase the program's credibility with external audiences
  - To develop an integrated, comprehensive accreditation program including standards, professional development, and promising practices
  
- **Timeline(s)** (including benchmark timelines):
  - Phase One – Exploration and Research or Study Phase
  - Phase Two – Development and Design
  - Phase Three – Testing, Revisions and Implementation
  
- **Other Impacted Groups:**
  - Name(s):
    - NSC
    - Membership Task Force
    - Sections
  - Communication Strategies:
    - Inside ACA
    - Section Executives/Presidents calls
    - Section, Regional, and National meetings
  - Avenues for Dialogue and Feedback:
    - In-person formal and informal gatherings including: Fall National Standards Commission Meeting, and the Leadership Training for Education and

Professional Development Chairs held in Indianapolis, October 16-19, 2008

- Meetings with Chair and National Staff
  - Task Force members one-on-one communication
  - Online review
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- **Budget:** 2009 proposed budget is \$9406. The 2010 expenses have not been identified as of this initial report development.

### Current Status

- **Date of Update:** 10/2/2009
- **Name of Individual Providing Update:** Amy Katzenberger
- **Action Steps:**
  - See attached
- **Narrative on Current Status** (including comparison to benchmarks and alternatives/modifications needed related to the result of the benchmark review):  
See attached

Other Documents/Key Materials (if there are other working documents related to this initiative, attach to this document):

- Attachment A: Status Update as of 10/2/2009

american **CAMP** association®

20/20 Vision Progress Report  
Accreditation and Education



**Team:**

Accreditation and Education Task Force: Judith Bevin, Dawn Ewing, David Hilliard, Tom Horner, Jean McMullan, Chris Strevel, Art Wannlund, Amy Katzenberger, and Rhonda Mickelson

**Overview Statement:**

The ACA Accreditation Program will support the 20/20 initiative through a set of criteria that promotes a quality camp experience that contributes to positive human development and a professional development system that addresses critical core competencies.

**Relevancy to ACA's Preferred Future:**

*From the list of the ten items for ACA's Preferred Future, the following are relevant to this project:*

- *Item 3 – ACA would have a strong delivery system capable of providing relevant services to a broad range of users, including camp professionals, parents, and others interested in the camp experience.*
- *Item 7 – ACA would be recognized by the public as the authority on the camp experience.*

**Assumptions:**

- Entry into membership of the organization will be membership versus accreditation.
- For most, membership leads to accreditation.
- Accreditation is a service.
- To create and sustain viable programs, you must understand your expenses. Efficacy and economy of scale are imperative.
- Professional Development = People, Accreditation = Institutions/Programs.
- We must find the price point for camps that represents an exceptional value for camp affiliation and accreditation.

**Facts, Research, Environmental Scan:**

- Brief history of ACA Standards
  - Camp Standards officially adopted in 1948.
  - Additional Standards in the areas of Personnel and Program adopted in 1950.
  - Day Camp Standards adopted in 1956.
  - Travel Camp and Family Camp Standards adopted in 1961.
  - Implementation of *Prerequisites for Camp Accreditation* adopted in 1970.
  - Un-complicating the Standards: Three-year plan for the development of a refined Standards Instrument and training programs was adopted in 1983. New Standards Program in place in 1986.
  - Standards for Camp Accreditation and Site approval adopted 1990.
  - Standards for Retreat Centers adopted 1993.

- Current Standards adopted 2005.
- Mechanics of Current Standards
  - Camps seeking accreditation status compile physical “notebooks” that are reviewed by volunteer visitors during an on-site visit, and in some cases, a written documentation preview.
  - Visitors score the camp from 326 standards deemed to apply to their program and setting.
  - The standards include a mix of mandatory and selective issues of compliance.
  - Camps determine which standards apply.
  - Score forms are turned in, reviewed, and tabulated, with results entered in the association’s database.
  - Results are forwarded to local offices. Local office boards meet and give final approval of accreditation status.
  - Notifications are made each November.
  - Approximately 825 camps are visited each year out of the total of approximately 2400.
  - The re-accreditation cycle is three years.
- **Accreditation and Education Attachment A:** This document reflects an environmental scan of the accreditation programs and fees for several human services organizations and accrediting bodies.
- *Camping Magazine* “Edge” articles written by Accreditation and Education Task Force Members provide additional context - [www.ACAcamps.org/campmag/the\\_edge.php](http://www.ACAcamps.org/campmag/the_edge.php).

#### **Findings:**

- ACA is one of the few accrediting bodies that absorbs the cost of on-site visits.
- ACA is the only human services accrediting body studied that has varying fees based on geography.
- The true cost of the ACA-accreditation program is challenging to identify, given the varying philosophies and expense reimbursement policies applied in our Sections.
- Our peers in human development have incorporated technologies that have streamlined their processes, reduced reliance on printed accreditation guides, and have addressed “customization” in our ever more specialized world.
- Our volunteers in the Standards arena are a valued resource.
- Professional Development = People, Accreditation = Institutions/Programs. We must develop a complementary professional development program in order to appropriately support the individuals seeking accreditation status for the camps and programs.
- The repetitive re-accreditation process does not encourage our camp professionals to stretch to new heights.
- Our program is burdensome for our camps
- To make the business model work, fees, programs, services, and language must invite people and businesses to ACA.

#### **Recommendations:**

- ACA needs an accreditation program seen as relevant to the camp and youth development audience as well as parents, care-givers, and the general public.
- The creation of an association-wide professional development system will support the individual seeking accreditation for their camp or program.
- ACA needs an accreditation service that is more accessible and inviting to a wide range of camps and programs, many of whom feel as though they don’t fit by design or scale.

- The implementation of technology will allow for greater efficacy for camps seeking accreditation status, customization of standards to programs, and ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.
- The price point for membership and accreditation must represent and communicate real market value.
- The references “casual,” “connected,” and “committed,” describe the varying relationships of individuals to ACA. Our programs and services will address the needs of individuals across this relationship spectrum. Our programs and services address an audience ranging from casual and connected to committed.
- **Envisioned future of ACA-accreditation services**
  - Camp standards will be focused in the areas of health, safety, and risk management.
  - New technology will be used to support camps, volunteers and association staff working with the program.
  - A streamlined program with less repetition, and more clarity around the standards that apply.
  - Review of the association’s standards that includes internal and external subject matter experts (authoritative sources).
  - Less reliance on paper.
  - An online self-assessment or “in-take” component, that prompts and collects detailed information about the programs offered as well as the setting where programs take place.
  - Both real and perceived customization about the standards required, based on the type of program offered and disclosed through self-assessment.
  - Online submission of documentation suitable for review prior to an on-site visit.
  - A site visit component granted upon successful completion of the self-assessment and “in-take” process.
  - A site visit focused on observation, communication, and education, rather than documentation compliance.
  - Continued valuing of volunteers, with more opportunity for educating and mentoring relationships with camp professionals seeking accreditation.
  - Professional development tools, programs, and resources in place that support the individual seeking accreditation status for their program.
  - In the not too distant future, focus around regulatory relief.
  - Accredited camp status granted upon successful completion of the assessment and on-site visit.



## Accreditation and Education Attachment A – Environmental Scan of Accreditation Programs and Fees

Accreditation Fee Study, 2009 Page 1	Council on Accreditation (COA)	American Camp Association (ACA)	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) CAPRA	Association for Experiential Education (AEE)	Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
<b>Fees</b>	Non refundable, initial application fee <b>\$750</b> . Re/Accreditation fee calculated on sliding scale, based on <i>audited</i> , gross, annual revenue with a minimum of <b>\$6720</b> for non-sponsor-affiliated organizations with revenue of \$500,000 or less. Max fees or gradation on sliding fee not available. Organizations affiliated with one of COA's 14 sponsoring groups receive a 25% discount. Annual maintenance fee of <b>\$400</b> .	No application fee. "Affiliate fee" equal to "Camp fee" for the camp is assessed in the year of application. 2009/10, the lowest fee (national and ACA, Rocky Mountain) is <b>\$451</b> for a program of up to \$25k annual operating budget. Fees assessed on sliding scale with a combined national (same across all sections) and varying fee set by Section. Max fees range <b>\$11k-14k</b> , but total # of camps/operators in the category is modest.	Enrollment and self study, sliding scale: <b>\$425-\$775+</b> Application and Self Assessment, sliding scale: <b>\$200-\$425</b> Candidacy/Site (see below) Annual Report, sliding scale: <b>\$300-\$450+</b> . Fees amortized over five years.	CAPRA: Sliding scale, application fee from <b>\$165 to \$3,300</b> and annual fee from <b>\$60 to \$600</b> .	Application fee <b>\$150</b> . Annual, minimum fee of <b>\$1175</b> for organizations with less than 250K annual operating, and sliding scale up to 1M + with max of <b>\$2,175</b> .	Pre-application fee: <b>\$1000</b> Initial Accreditation fee for self study: <b>\$6500</b> Reaccreditation self study <b>\$6500</b> Annual Fee <b>\$2,000</b> Special assessments are possible. Fees are flat and have no relation to operating revenue of organization or institution seeking accreditation status.

Accreditation Fee Study, 2009 Page 2	Council on Accreditation (COA)	American Camp Association (ACA)	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) CAPRA	Association for Experiential Education (AEE)	Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
<b>On-Site Visit</b>	Flat fee of \$2,000 per peer reviewer for a two-day, on-site review plus \$425 x additional days and reviewers.	On-site visit is part of service fee, and is not paid separately. Local office attempts to find visitors who are in close proximity. Visit completed in one day, unless a pre-visit is scheduled, which doubles cost born by association. In large geographic regions, flights are sometimes involved, including visits to Puerto Rico.	Referred to as Candidacy/Site Visit, sliding scale, \$650-\$1150+ Additional fees assessed for cancellation of visit including \$450 rescheduling fee. Verification fee (spot check) sliding scale of \$950 to \$1,550+.	CAPRA: Agency seeking accreditation is responsible for paying travel and related expenses for team members.	Organization or institution seeking accreditation is responsible for the fees of the accreditation team of (3) reviewers spending three days on site, including travel, food, and lodging. AEE estimates the total to be between \$1,200-\$1,700.	Billed for surveyor (visitor) actual travel, meal, and incidental expenses, at an average of \$2,000. Video conference option available at \$950 plus any local video expense options.
<b>Reaccreditation Cycle</b>	4 years in most cases.	3 years.	5 years, annual report due each year.	5 years.	Initial accreditation is 3 years and renewal is 5 years.	3 to 6 years depending on results.
<b>Estimated annual Fees if Amortized</b>	\$2,667 for lowest fee paying category	\$451 for lowest fee paying category in Section charging the lowest fees. Highest, annual fees top \$14k.	\$685 at lowest price category.	\$231 to \$1,280	\$1,625-\$2,791 (used 3 year cycle).	\$4500. Used a 3 year cycle.
<b>Other</b>	Fees are not amortized. 50% due early in cycle and remaining 50% within 60 days.	<b>Other</b> Currently, affiliation fee, equal to service fee is paid in the application year, then the service fee, every year after. Membership embedded in fees.			Membership is embedded in Annual Accreditation fee, and is available for non accredited programs as well at \$300 Organizational \$550 Institutional.	Fees are not amortized.

\*Note – fees and policies researched via organization’s Web sites. There may be additional fees or policies that vary slightly from this environmental landscape.