



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

**National Water Resources Planning Professional
Certification, Planning Community of Practice
(PCoP) Version 1.0**

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1.0 Purpose.

This document describes the process the USACE Planning Community of Practice (PCoP) shall follow to identify National Water Resources Certified Planners (WRCPs). The objective of the National Water Resources Certified Planner Program is to advance the technical capability of individual planners and recognize the overall national planning competency.

The National WRCP Program is a framework for developing and sustaining a results-oriented, high performing planner workforce. This program lays out the requirements for becoming a “Water Resources Certified Planner.” A WRCP is an individual who has a broad variety of experience and training in the USACE planning processes and is capable of leading the most complex water resources planning efforts, agency technical reviews, and planning task forces across the country. The intent is to delineate and clarify the many different skills necessary for being a successful planner and recognize those who have successfully accomplished a high level of expertise. By identifying WRCPs, the organization can help resource managers assign experienced planners to complicated, controversial, and highly visible studies and initiatives. USACE planners and associated disciplines may use this program to track the development of their knowledge, skills and abilities and may work with supervisors to pursue a full range of experiences based on this program.

The National WRCP Program assesses a broad group of elements that contribute to enriching the capability of a planner and focuses on the technical complexities and responsibilities inherent in the planning process. A WRCP in USACE would meet requirements in four key areas: 1) Education and Training, 2) Experience, 3) Knowledge of Planning Policy and Process, and 4) Mentoring, Communication and Leadership in the Planning Community of Practice.

The National WRCP Program addresses the Civil Works Transformation efforts, Civil Works Strategic Plan and the USACE Campaign Plan Goal 2, Transform the Civil Works. It accomplishes this by advancing the overall national planning competency and the technical capability of individual planners. One of the Performance Metrics for the People initiative for Planning Modernization is the percent of planners achieving certification under the Planner Certification Program.

2.0 Applicability.

This guidance applies to all USACE elements, Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs), and district commands having Civil Works responsibility.

3.0 References.

Engineer Regulation 1105-2-100, Planning Guidance Notebook, April 2000.

Civil Works Transformation Framework, 2008.

Civil Works Strategic Plan 2014-2018. Sustainable Solutions to America's Water Resource Needs.

USACE Campaign Plan Goal 2 Transform Civil Works.

4.0 Definitions.

Water Resources Certified Planner (WRCP). An individual who has a broad variety of experience and training in the USACE planning processes and is capable of leading the most complex water resources planning efforts, agency technical reviews, and planning task forces across the country.

Agency Technical Review (ATR). An Agency Technical Review (ATR) is an in-depth review, managed by USACE, to ensure the technical analysis is correct, while also ensuring compliance with all pertinent USACE guidance. The ATR is conducted by a qualified team outside of the home district that is not involved in the day-to-day production of the project/product.

USACE Planning Advisory Board (PAB). The PAB is a group of USACE planning leaders established to provide corporate oversight and strategic planning to sustain a national planning capability and a robust Civil Works program to meet the Nation's water resource needs. The PAB serves an advisory role to the Director of Civil Works.

Planning Center of Expertise (PCX). The USACE Planning Centers of Expertise are part of USACE initiative to improve the quality and effectiveness of water resources planning. The role of the PCXs is to focus on plan formulation and the complex technical evaluations that are associated with plan formulation, evaluation and alternative analysis. The PCXs manage Agency Technical Review, conduct review of planning models, and provide mission-specific planning advice.

5.0 Responsibilities.

Water Resources Certified Planner (WRCP). The WRCPs, once certified, will ensure they remain engaged within their organization to implement the Civil Works program to the highest professional standards, will mentor and develop planning professionals within USACE, and will serve the USACE, if called upon, to solve water resources challenges and address projects of

regional or national scope. WRCPs will ensure they remain informed on current Civil Works guidance and policies. WRCPs shall ensure specific professional development activities are undertaken to upkeep their certification, which may include continued education, providing instruction, mentoring, conducting technical and policy review, and participating on “Tiger Teams,” when requested. WRCPs will annually update their qualifications statement and resume.

Planning Advisory Board (PAB). The PAB will review WRCP recommendation packages. The PAB will review all the application packages endorsed by MSC Planning and Policy Chiefs. The PAB will recommend candidates for WRCP certification to the HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy. The PAB will maintain the qualifications statement template, verification statement, essay questions, and interview questions. For each round of certification, the PAB will select essay questions and assign a group of individuals to evaluate the essay questions.

District Planning Chief. A District Planning Chief conducts informal dialog with potential WRCP candidates to gauge qualifications for WRCP. The District Planning Chief reviews and validates the accuracy of candidate’s application package. The District Planning Chief prepares and submits a memo to the MSC Planning and Policy Chief endorsing the candidate’s qualifications as a water resources planner. The District Planning Chief will consider requesting participation of WRCPs as lead, team member or advisor on complex water resources planning efforts in their area of responsibility.

MSC Planning and Policy Chief. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief evaluates the application package and identifies prospective candidates to continue to the interview process. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief conducts interviews of candidates within the MSC using a consistent set of interview questions. MSC Planning and Policy Chiefs will also participate in interviews of candidates in other MSCs. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will identify those candidates that he/she feels perform at the WRCP level. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will prepare and submit a memo endorsing identified candidates to the Planning Advisory Board through the Deputy for the Planning Community of practice. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will notify non-certified candidates and provide specific feedback on why the candidate was not certified and what additional activities/experience would be helpful. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will consider requesting participation of WRCPs as lead, team member or advisor on complex water resources planning efforts in their area of responsibility.

HQUSACE Chief, Planning and Policy. The HQUSACE Chief, Planning and Policy ultimately determines the certification status of candidates endorsed by the PAB. HQUSACE Chief, Planning and Policy will consider requesting participation of WRCPs as lead, team member or advisor the most complex water resources planning efforts, agency technical reviews, and planning task forces across the country.

HQUSACE Deputy Chief, Planning and Policy. The HQUSACE Deputy Chief, Planning and Policy will maintain the roster of Water Resources Certified Planners. The Deputy Chief will receive requests for reconsideration from non-certified candidates and facilitate consideration of the request by the Planning Advisory Board and the HQUSACE Chief, Planning and Policy.

Planning Center of Expertise (PCX). The PCXs will consider participation of WRCPs for the most complex agency technical reviews, model reviews, and planning task forces.

6.0 Procedures.

Applications for WRCP Certification will be considered annually using the process described below and shown in Figure 1. Individuals located at MSC's, HQ, ERDC, IWR that are interested in becoming certified would follow a similar procedure developed with the commensurate levels of engagement within their organizations.

6.1 Self-Nomination of Technical Competency for WRCP. All USACE planners who want to be considered for WRCP Certification need to submit a qualifications statement and resume. Example qualifications statements are attached as an appendix to this document and are provided as a guide. Information in the qualifications statement will be reviewed and verified by first and/or second line supervisor and the District Planning Chief. Any differences between employee information and supervisory opinion must be discussed and resolved. Once the District Planning Chief is in concurrence with the employee's self-nomination, the District Planning Chief will digitally sign the validation form to validate the data. The qualifications statement, resume and validation form is then forwarded to the MSC Planning and Policy Chief in the home MSC.

6.2 Review by the MSC Planning and Policy Chief. All signed WRCP application packages will be reviewed by the MSC Planning and Policy Chief. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will score the qualifications statement using guidelines established by the PAB. Based on the scoring and resume, the MSC Planning and Policy Chief will identify candidates to complete the essay questions. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will submit the essay questions for scoring by the review team selected by the PAB. Based on results from the essay question evaluation, the MSC Planning and Policy Chief will select candidates for interview and conduct interviews. Using information from the interview, essay, resume and qualifications statement, the MSC Planning and Policy Chief will identify candidates that he/she feels perform at the WRCP level. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will prepare and submit a memo to the Planning Advisory Board through the Deputy for the Planning Community of Practice endorsing the candidates.

6.2.a Qualifications Statement. The qualifications will be scored by the MSC Planning and Policy Chief using a consistent scoring rubric or spreadsheet provided by the PAB.

6.2.b Essay. The essay questions will be maintained by the PAB and updated as needed. Each year the PAB will select the essay questions that will be answered by all applicants. One of the essay questions will address an aspect of SMART Planning. The combined responses to the essay questions shall not exceed a prescribed word limit and it is up to the applicant on how to allocate the words among the responses to the essay questions. The PAB will assign a group of senior planners to review and evaluate the essay questions to ensure consistent scoring across MSCs. The essay review group will work together to ensure scoring consistency among reviewers. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will submit essays to essay review group for scoring. The essays scores and written feedback will be provided to the MSC Planning and Policy Chief.

6.2.c Interview. Interviews will be conducted by the home MSC Planning and Policy Chief and (2) other MSC Planning and Policy Chiefs, The interview panel will select interview questions from a list of questions maintained by the PAB. The interview panel can select different questions for each applicant, allowing the panel to explore areas not easily demonstrated in the qualifications statement.

6.3 Review by the Planning Advisory Board. The PAB will review all the application packages endorsed by the MSC Planning and Policy Chief. The PAB may solicit input from anyone having relevant information that could assist in making their recommendations. The PAB will convene a session to discuss candidates and affirm content and sufficiency of candidate qualifications. Each MSC Planning and Policy Chief will serve as the role of proponent for candidates within their MSC. The PAB will recommend a list of candidates for WRCP certification to the HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy. The list of recommended candidates will include a brief summary documenting each candidate's qualifications. The MSC Planning and Policy Chief will work through the District Planning Chief to notify non-certified candidates and provide specific feedback on why the candidate was not certified and what additional activities/experience would be helpful.

6.4 Certification of WRCPs. The HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy will receive and review the list of candidates endorsed by the PAB and will make the final determination on which candidates will be WRCPs. The roster of WRCPs will be updated by the HQUSACE Deputy Chief of Planning and Policy. The newly certified WRCPs will be announced to the Planning Community of Practice.

6.5 WRCP Roster. A roster of WRCPs and their areas of expertise and qualifications statement will be maintained as part of the Planning SME Database located at <http://sme.iwrmsuite.us/>. The HQUSACE Deputy Chief of Planning and Policy will periodically provide a list of WRCPs to all MSCs and Review Management Organizations (RMOs).

6.6 Continuing Certification Requirements. The WRCP qualification statement(s) will be updated annually. Certification will be renewed every three (3) years. Renewal will require the re-submittal of an up-to-date qualifications statement and review by the MSC Planning and Policy Chief, the PAB, and the HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy.

6.7 Non-Certified Candidates. The MSC Planning and Policy Chiefs will work through the District Planning Chief to notify non-certified candidates and provide specific feedback on why the candidate was not certified and what additional activities/experience would be helpful. A candidate may resubmit a qualifications statement annually. If a candidate feels they are highly qualified and were not certified for WRCP in error, they may submit a request for reconsideration to the HQUSACE Deputy Chief of Planning and Policy. Requests must reference new technical competency information entered into the qualifications statement and validated by the requestor's supervisor. The HQUSACE Deputy Chief of Planning and Policy will review the new information in consultation with the PAB and render a decision whether to recommend that the HQUSACE Chief of Planning and Policy certify the individual as a WRCP. The roster of WRCPs will be updated accordingly.

Figure 1. Water Resources Certified Planner Process Flowchart

