

IN PURSUIT OF APO

By Rachel Yoka, CAPP, LEED AP BD+C

Would you like to benchmark your organization? Streamline your operations? Evaluate your training program? Motivate your leadership? Pursue accreditation and you will be well on your way to achieving all of the above.

Accredited Parking Organization (APO) is a designation for parking organizations that have achieved a comprehensive standard of excellence. It recognizes best practices in responsible parking management and operations, customer service, professional development, safety, and security. The APO program is complex, addressing 14 major categories with well-defined and attainable measures in each.

The APO Manual: More than a Checklist

Whether you are on the path to accreditation or are interested in evaluating best practices for your organization, the APO Manual for Applicants is a significant industry milestone. It is the first and only industry accreditation available to the parking industry and specifically outlines best practices that advance the parking profession, one organization at a time.

The manual addresses the fundamentals of the program, including a concise summary of eligible organizations, definitions, and summary of criteria that also addresses required items. The document details how an organization can prepare effectively and the appropriate role of the APO site reviewer. It pairs with the information contained in the APO Matrix, offering additional guidance and the intent of each category under Content Area I: Policy, Planning, Operations, and Administration; and Content Area II: Site-Visit Field Assessment.

Taking the Next Step

How do you know if you are ready to apply for the APO Program?

When you submit your application, your organization will have one year to submit your comprehensive package of documentation. There is no precise formula for a program this thorough, but here are a few checklist items to get you started:

- Make the APO Manual for Applicants required reading for your key staff, and complete an internal self-assessment utilizing the APO Matrix.
- Based on your self-assessment, outline how you can meet and document the 25 required measures, as well as 80 percent of the remaining criteria.
- Assign champions from your key staff as accountable for individual sections of the matrix.
- Consider the additional criteria for Accreditation with Distinction.


- Cultivate the support not only of your top leadership but also your key team members and meet regularly as a team.
- Download and review the list of IPI-approved APO Site Reviewers and begin the selection process.
- Target your Premier Site(s); include up to three with your complete submission package.
- Complete the online application, and contact me with any and all questions.

IPI recommends a three- to six-month timeline to start the process, collect documentation, and retain an IPI-approved Site Reviewer to perform a review and site assessment for selected Premier Site(s).

Recognition for the class of APOs will take place at the 2017 IPI Conference & Expo in New Orleans, La.; IPI will accept full documentation packages for recognition at the show through March 1, 2017.

Spotlights

Check out the APO Spotlights at parking.org/apo to learn how APOs applied the criteria and process within their organizations. Stay tuned to the *Parking Matters*® Blog (parking.org/blog), and watch for new posts from our APOs as they offer more insights into the program in this ongoing series.

If you plan to pursue APO in time for recognition at the 2017 IPI Conference & Expo in New Orleans, it's time to start planning—reach out to me directly, and we will get started on the journey together! 

Quick facts about the program:

- All parking organizations are eligible.
- Planning resources and documents are available at no cost at parking.org.
- Organizations must meet 25 required criteria, plus 80 percent of remaining criteria.
- Criteria represent best practices in our industry, organized into 14 content areas.
- Organizations must have one facility that meets site-specific criteria for a Premium Facility.
- APO with Distinction represents organizations that meet 80 percent of “advanced” practices.
- Independent, third-party review by IPI-approved and trained site reviewers is integral to the APO process.



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