We live in an age when park and recreation administrative structures must continually evolve to improve the delivery of services and meet the shifting and expanding expectations and demands of clientele and the changing composition of agency employees. Flexible approaches to meeting the needs of employees, a growing, socially-diverse clientele (i.e., participants, users, and customers), and the inter-relation between these two are vital elements to the overall success of the park and recreation agency. Agency administrators, managers, and leaders must continuously learn and implement new ways to direct organizations so that they can:

- adapt to ongoing societal changes, leisure trends, and the needs of their clientele;
- accommodate available, as well as compensate for unavailable, resources; and
- make full use of the capabilities and uniqueness of individuals within the organization.

Basic organizational principles and strategies are emphasized in this chapter. Managers are encouraged to explore innovative approaches to organizational structure continuously to be effective in a global society. To outline the best organizational structure and approach for operational success, it is necessary to closely examine the reason the organization exists in the first place: what is the organization’s mission?

**Mission**

The structure of an organization should reflect and enable the mission and vision of the organization: where is the organization heading, and for what purpose? Among the staff, there should be the critical competencies necessary to achieve business outcomes. In essence, the form of the organization follows the function of the organization.

The creation of a parks and recreation department is the decision of a policy-making body (i.e., a city council or board of directors), and the reasons for creating the agency, department or organization must be clearly stated. The policy decision for the creation of the recreation agency will most likely be a reflection of the values of the policy-making body which represents the wider community. Randolph (2006) states: “The mission statement describes what the organization does and influences the philosophy, goals and objectives” of the organization. For example, if a community set of values includes quality of life through good schools, good parks, and safe neighborhoods, then the intended purpose for creating the recreation agency (its mission) might be to develop operational goals and programs that support the values of the policy-making body, which represents the community. The East Bay Regional Parks District, located in Northern California and one of the largest special districts in the United States, was created to “…acquire, develop, manage, and maintain a high quality, diverse system of interconnected parklands which balances public usage and education programs with protection and preservation of our natural and cultural resources.” Likewise, the Boys and Girls Club of San Leandro CA describes its mission as: “To inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize and reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.” The Boys and Girls Club acts on that mission, as stated by the national body, by providing:

- a safe place to learn and grow;
- ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals;
- life-enhancing programs and character developing experiences; and
- hope and opportunity.

By determining and stating the intended purpose of the organization (e.g., to preserve park land and open space), the structure of the organization (how it acts on its mission/purpose) then can be appropriately developed. The mission is a guidepost for the development of the organization; it should be frequently revisited with questions like, “Are we doing what we were created to do? Is the mission in line with the organization’s values or vision of where we’re headed?” Such an examination may lead to either a change in the mission itself
(perhaps the leisure needs of the community or trends have changed, and the organization has not), or to a change in the goods and services offered by the department (perhaps the organization is not offering what the community really needs and it has strayed from its original intended purpose). Such examination is vital at regular intervals in order for the organization to meet or adjust to the changing needs in their community.

The mission of the organization, along with its vision (what the organization strives for) and its values (what it cherishes), guides the development of goals and objectives. Goals and objectives form the basis of the internal planning process in an organization. Goals can be defined as broad aims or intentions that move an organization toward a desired state, and can be thought of as an articulation of its values. Objectives, on the other hand, are specific, narrow, and measurable.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of an organization represent a desired outcome that act on the mission of the organization. They can be broad organizational goals, such as creating a better sense of community among participants; or they can be as programmatically specific as improving customer satisfaction in youth leisure classes. Edginton, Hudson and Lankford (2001) categorize five different types of goals:

1. output,
2. adaptation,
3. management,
4. motivation, and
5. positional goals.

Output goals can be seen as production goals related to the outward services of the department (i.e., plan and provide parks). Adaptation goals relate to how the organization adapts to outside influences on the organization. A good example of this would be how the department adapts to a changing budget crisis and potential loss of operating funds. Management goals, as the name implies, are goals that address how the organization operates and may include both staff and participants in setting the goals. Some management goals might be set from administrators higher in the organization, such as the policy-making body or lead administrator. For example, a city council might have a goal that the park and recreation department recover 50 percent of its direct costs through program or facility revenues in the coming budget year. The department, on the other hand, might enhance that goal internally by stating that a desired goal in the coming year is to recover 25 percent of direct costs in the youth and teen services division through program fees.

Goals can be measured quantitatively or qualitatively based on how they apply to staff, program customers, and the positioning of the department within the community. Qualitative goals seek to ensure customer happiness with the programs available to them, thus building a loyal customer base and adding advocates for the organization. This type of goal is used to solicit a sense, feeling, and quality of the program. Quantitative goals typically address figures or percentage increases within the department (i.e., increase youth dance classes by 25 percent). There is power in customers who recognize the importance of the goods and services the department provides; they are more likely to advocate on the department’s behalf when necessary. In the San Ramon Parks and Community Services Department in California, when funding for locker room upgrades to the aquatic center came before the City Council, advocates for the aquatics programs made the case that the programs were so popular that, not only was funding needed for the locker rooms, but additional pools were needed as well. The positioning of the department’s aquatics programs in the community helped persuade the City Council to award nearly $5 million toward the project, when the original work was not expected to exceed $1.5 million.

Beyond setting goals, the department needs to outline specific objectives to meet these goals. In addition, objectives must be measurable, in order to account for progress on the intended goal. Most objectives also have some form of resource allocation tied to them, which is useful in developing the structure necessary to achieve the stated mission of the organization. Exhibit 5.1 illustrates organizational goals, the objectives to achieve said goals, and indicators or how the objective will be measured (see Compendium 5-1 for additional examples). Allocating resources to achieve the stated goals can affect the organizational structure, both from a department-wide perspective and from a program perspective. For example, if an agency has the stated goal of running year-round youth sports programming, the agency may need to allocate resources in the department budget for staffing (programming and support staff) to run the programs; on the program level, a needed resource could be the promotion of the program through flyers, ads in the local paper, or via e-mails.

Vision

In addition to the mission of the organization, there is typically a vision statement: something that states where the organization is going. Vision statements are far-reaching and should be reviewed from time to time to ensure that the function of the organization is in line with its stated mission and aligned with its core values. Vision statements typically encompass the organization’s values in some fashion and have an emotional attachment to them. For example, the vision statement
of the City of Roseville CA is: “The City of Roseville is an exceptional organization committed to fostering a dynamic, caring and inclusive community that is simply a great place to be.” Below their vision statement, the City of Roseville further states their vision includes: fiscal health, a well-planned community, a strong community identity, complete and well-managed infrastructure, outstanding recreational opportunities, a healthy and safe community, an information rich environment, the highest quality community services and organizations, an active and involved citizenry, a “learning organization—a learning community,” and environmental quality.

Values

Values are social principles; they are goals and standards that members of an organization believe have worth. They reflect what an organization and their employees cherish and embody. Values are central to an organizational culture and are espoused beliefs that are at the core of organization. There are several levels of values within an organization, including first-level and second-level values. First-level values are uncompromising, such as human development, environmental stewardship, professional growth, creativity, and service to community. Such values can be explicit in that the community sees such values on display daily and uncompromising. Second-level values are those that have room for compromise.

In the discussion of values within the context of an organization’s mission and vision, it is vital to examine critically, discuss, and define what each espoused value means to employees. An organizational value such as appreciation of diversity may mean different things to different staff members within the organization. Does it refer to internal diversity? external diversity? diversity of thought? ethnic diversity? By defining that appreciation of diversity, for example, means internal diversity of thoughts and ideas, staff then know the context in which programming ideas and approaches are acceptable and welcomed in the discussion. Such a value would then be evaluated against the mission of the organization to ensure it is in line and appropriate. A useful tool in the constant review and examination of an organization’s mission, vision, and values is measuring programming efforts against the current mission, vision, and values. This process continually examines whether the cornerstones of the organizational structure are defined, created, or reinforced through its programming.

### Organizational Structure

The examination of the mission, vision, and values of the organization (which create the underlying philosophy of the organizational function and purpose), combined with the goals and objectives to enact that function, will assist in determining the organizational structure or form necessary for its success. Since an organization is a collection of people with different responsibilities, all working together for a common purpose (i.e., mission success), it is necessary to organize that work in some fashion for maximum efficiency.
Within the organizing process, there is typically both a formal structure and an informal structure. The formal structure is designed and controlled by management, which typically includes organizational charts, committees, and policies and procedures. The informal structure is what happens naturally among people within an organization. Informal structure often does not follow any prescribed chain. It reflects how people communicate and interact with each other. A good manager will maintain both the formal structure for the organization, dictated by the function of the organization, while being aware of and using the informal structure to benefit the organization.

There are a number of organizational structures in use by park and recreation organizations across the nation and, as mentioned above, examining the intended function of the organization will assist in the development of its structure or form. The formal organizational structure includes both hierarchical and nonhierarchical approaches. Connected to the formal structure of any organization is an underlying informal structure or network, made up of the organizational culture that comprises the interplay of espoused values, organizational artifacts, and operational assumptions.

Exhibit 5.2 presents the conceptual model and inter-relatedness of the form of mission, vision, values, structure, policies and procedures, and culture as it relates to the material in this chapter. The model shows an interdependent relationship among each facet within the model. The vision, mission, and values are created by and for the community and public officials, which in turn drive inputs such as budget, people, the structure of the organization, and policies and procedures. The inputs influence the types of outputs seen in goals and objectives that are measured as community-based outcomes (observable results that influence the quality of life, community, societal, and environmental needs), which are then compared against the established mission, vision, and values. Surrounding and permeating this process is culture; this is seen both as internal to the organization itself (its informal structure) and as external (the community’s values, its advocates, and commonly-held assumptions). Culture then, is viewed in this model as the “glue” that unites both the informal operations of the organization with the external community and its values, norms, and expectations. The end result of successful implementation of this model is enhanced quality of life within a community through the connection of people, parks, and programs.

**Formal Organizational Structure**

The structure of an organization affects the behavior and function of individuals and groups and, thus, the effectiveness of the organization. The organization reflects its purpose, its methods of operation in relation to its resources, and its relationship to the community. The structure is a method for organizing the people and standardizing the practices so that a shared or common purpose can be efficiently and effectively achieved. All individuals in an organization must know their role and purpose in the wider success of the organizational mission. When people understand their roles and responsibilities, they are then able to focus their energy on individual and organizational goals effectively. Essentially, structure is the way an organization identifies and groups together positions, and how those positions relate to each other.

The organization should establish a formal structure through which organizational components are based, defined, directed, and coordinated to achieve mission success. The exact form depends on the organization’s history; its mission, vision, and values; its size, complexity, and inter-organizational networking requirements (i.e., relationship to other departments within the organization); and the organizational culture, including preferred communicational and operational norms.

The formal organizational structure clearly delineates the roles, responsibilities, and communication pathways for each individual in the organization, and creates an atmosphere conducive to efficient and effective operation. To that end, there are a variety of structural models in use among park and recreation agencies across the country that have been successful in furthering the mission of the organization and community. Whatever structure is selected, it must be communicated to others in a written form, an organizational chart. The organizational chart, also commonly called a line-staff chart, chain of command, or hierarchy of control, illustrates the formal structure of an organization. It depicts the levels of authority and span of control (see Exhibit 5.3). The chart, which should be placed in the administrative manual and permanently posted where everyone can see it, should be updated annually or more frequently if needed. Separate organizational components should be established for the grouping of line or programming functions (those activities that are directly related to carrying out the organization’s objectives) and support staff functions (those activities carried out to support the line functions). The chart should reflect the chain of command, as well as the line of authority and communication within the organization.

There are two main types of position classifications including both programming, or line, and support staff. People with programming or line positions have direct responsibility for achieving the objectives of an organization. Line positions appear vertically on the organizational chart, with the people in higher-level positions generally entrusted with greater authority than the people in lower levels. The line positions are
those that provide the services and include such titles as Recreation Supervisor, Coordinator, Center Director, or other programming position.

Support staff positions appear horizontally on the chart. Staff provides advice and support to those in line positions. Examples of staff are: secretaries, bookkeepers, maintenance personnel, procurement, marketing, and so on. In traditional models, people in line positions (i.e., the center director) can direct support staff positions (the secretary) who are lower on the organizational chart. People in staff positions (the secretary) usually depend on suggestion and persuasion to influence their supervisors in line positions. In most cases, managers in lateral line positions (i.e., the Recreation Supervisor for aquatics and the Recreation Supervisor for fee classes) have equal authority and therefore do not supervise each other. The same is true for people in lateral support staff positions, although in some organizations this protocol may become blurred. People in support staff positions may have functional authority over those in line positions, meaning that their authority is only for that phase of responsibility given to that staff person. For example, an administrative coordinator in charge of personnel would have process authority over a line staff member who is hiring summer program staff.

The formal structure can be either centralized or decentralized, and either simple or complex. The manager can directly affect the extent to which an organization is formalized and centralized and its degree of complexity through decisions regarding division of labor, delegation of authority, unit sizes, and the style of communication and leadership. A centralized organization has decision-making emanating from the top and working its way down, which is typically seen in older, more bureaucratic organizational models. Decentralized organizations, on the other hand, make decisions across departments and at a variety of levels. This model is typically more modern and follows a more holistic or systems thinking style.

Whether the structure of an organization is simple or complex is first determined by the function of the organization and, next, by the number of job titles (horizontal differentiation) and the number of levels...
Exhibit 5.3
Community & Recreation Services Organizational Chart
or tiers (vertical differentiation) that make up the organization. A simple or more “flat” organization has few employees and a small number of levels or tiers within the organization. Its structure appears more horizontal. An example of this can be seen in smaller organizations such as the City of Oakley CA Recreation Department that consists of one Recreation Manager, one full-time Recreation Specialist, 1.75 regular, part-time senior recreation leaders, and seasonal recreation leaders and aides, serving a population of 33,000. Because of the small size of the organization, a single person must perform a great variety of tasks and may hold many functional titles (see Exhibit 5.4).

The complex organization, by contrast, is larger, has more job titles, and has many tiers within the organizational structure. The employees are more specialized. A large fitness center, for example, would have a manager, plus a supervisor with staff for each facet of the center’s operations, including marketing, programing, maintenance, and financing. Each employee is in a specialized position and may have only limited knowledge beyond his or her role in the organization. This is in contrast to the simple or flat organization described above, where a single employee might perform marketing, maintenance, and financing duties, in addition to running the program itself.

Regardless of the how the organization is structured, there are various internal components that influence and coordinate the functions for maximum efficiency. In a formal structure there are three major components:

- organizational structure (hierarchical versus nonhierarchical);
- policies and procedures as set forth in the administrative manual; and
- administrative operations.

The Organizational Structure

There are two types of structure: hierarchical and nonhierarchical. A hierarchical structure is most commonly used in city park and recreation agencies where the department fits into the bureaucracy of a city as part of a larger system of departments. The second, and less commonly used, is a nonhierarchical structure that is developed around a team concept or systems approach without the stratification of authority. This approach is often seen in the corporate sector, particularly high tech industries, where projects are developed and completed by teams of people with a variety of expertise. It is growing in popularity among park and recreation agencies.

Examples of Organizing Structures

Recreation services are provided through an array of organizational structures. Whether public, nonprofit or private, the organizing structure is a reflection of the core function and philosophy of the governing agency. Relationships between the operational unit and its larger parent organization will affect the organizational structure and how it operates within the larger system. A municipal park and recreation department and the city administration, a Boys and Girls Club and their national office, or a state park and the state park administration office would all be examples of this relationship. The parent organization passes important information (such as policy changes, availability of funds, advertising campaigns, financial cutbacks, or personnel changes) to the operating unit so it can operate in accordance with the parent organization. In many ways, this frees the operational unit from the burden of developing many of its own policies and procedures. The downside of this relationship can be that it is harder to change policies or procedures because it would affect the larger organization and not just the specific operational unit.

Public. Public recreation services are provided at the local, regional, state, and national levels. They are classified as public because they are, at least in part, supported by tax dollars. Public agencies include the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Armed Forces Morale, Welfare and Recreation services, state parks, regional parks, local parks and recreation agencies, as well as special districts. The structure of each is often complex.

National. A U.S. Forest Service recreation area, although managed at a ranger district level, is part of the much-larger Department of Agriculture. While trail construction and maintenance, operation of recreation areas, and management of forest and wildlife occurs at the ranger district level, several districts will comprise a forest under a forest supervisor. The 155 forests and 20 grasslands within the United States are contained within 9 broad geographic areas under the supervision of a regional forester. Regional foresters report to the Chief who oversees the entire Forest Service. The Chief reports to the Under-Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The National Park System and Army Corp of Engineers facilities have similar bureaucratic organizing structures.

State and Regional. States provide state parks. Many times parks are part of a state tourism department. Each state park will have a director with staff to run the individual park. The park director will answer to a state office of Parks and Tourism. The director of this office will be accountable to the governor (see Compendium 5-2 for a complex structure).

On a regional level, local municipalities or other political subdivisions may vote to form an independent...
or regional park district independent of municipal, county, or state control, as is the case with the East Bay Regional Park District in California (see Compendium 5-3); or it may be controlled by a county itself. Generally, a park and/or recreation special district is a special taxed area specifically for parks and recreation programming and not a division of another government. For example, without a district the county recreation is under the county government and receives its revenue from the county and becomes a department of the county. The recreation services for the Town of Alamo CA, an unincorporated part of Contra Costa County, receives its funding and programming under county jurisdiction, while a special district is not part of the county government and has its own funding and authority. Other examples include the Chicago Park District in Illinois and Dade County Park District in Florida.

Local. There are a variety of methods used to organize a municipal park and recreation department. In most communities they are part of the city government and act as a department or part of a department. Some cities have a Park Department and a Recreation Department as separate services, with each focusing on a specific aspect. Other cities combine park and recreation services under one director who oversees all recreation services and facilities. Some park and recreation organizations are part of a Community Services Department, which might also include libraries, fine arts centers, and cemeteries (see Compendium 5-4 and 5-5). In some communities, a special district is established to provide parks and recreation to the community.

As a city service supported by General Fund taxes, park and recreation agencies may often compete against the needs of public safety (police and fire) and other public service (streets and maintenance) departments for funding. When parks and recreation is a unit of a larger department, such as in the City of Turlock CA (where recreation services are part of a municipal services department that includes utility maintenance, water quality control, and public facilities maintenance), it may be relegated to a lesser or more discretionary standing, compared to other internal departmental budgetary or community needs.

Some cities combine park and recreation services with typically-independent or other government-styled services such as school districts, library services, airport, and garbage services. In some cases, such combination assists with sharing facilities or equipment and is an efficient use of taxpayer money. For example, sharing facilities with the local school district ensures use of space that would sit idle in the evenings and during summer months. In many cases, the combination of other city services under the umbrella of the parks and recreation department makes sense. Parks and recreation agencies that share services have the ability to reach and influence more people in their community through the variety of programs and services they offer, compared to more internally-focused departments such as an engineering department. (See Compendium 5-3 to 5-5 for a variety of city organizational structures.)

Nonprofit. A nonprofit organization is one created under a special tax provision that is not organized for profit, but where resources are used for educational, charitable, or recreational purposes. Examples of nonprofit organizations include associations or community groups. Nonprofit organizations are of two types. Some local nonprofit agencies are operated by an independent board of directors. These organizing structures are fairly simple, with a board of directors, executive director and staff. Other agencies are a part of larger national nonprofit organization or corporation such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, and Boys and Girls Clubs, Boys and Girls Campfire, and 4-H Clubs. For this type, the organizational structure includes a national headquarters with local agencies holding a charter or other document of authority. The major policies and direction for the organization are established by the national headquarters. The local organization usually operates under a board of directors that supervises the executive director and, in turn, the staff. The middle managers might be responsible for areas such as membership, programming, facilities, public relations, and fund development. An example of such a multi-leveled organization would be the Girl Scouts of America (national), Girl Scouts of Northern California Council (regional), and the San Francisco Bay Area Section (local) which has staff managers who oversee section membership, programming, public relations, etc.

Private. Private recreation enterprises operate under a variety of organizational structures and are different from nonprofit or public agencies by there being a sole proprietor with one owner or a general partnership with multiple owners that operate a business for profit. Some private agencies are established as a corporation that separates management and ownership. The S corporation, the limited liability corporation, and the limited liability partnership are variations in organization that offer tax breaks, limit the liability of the owners, and/or provide other financial incentives. Each private agency would have a different accompanying organizational structure. (For more information on these legal structures, see Chapter 3.)

Private organizations come in all sizes and structures. There are small private fitness centers with few personnel similar to small community recreation
departments, and there are extremely-large organizations like The Del Webb corporation that builds planned communities for both Active Adults (over age 55), and Family Living communities (all ages). The active adult communities, for example, are designed with an emphasis on a “unique and healthy lifestyle,” with world-class recreational facilities and places for people to meet and enjoy their leisure.

Park and recreation services are structured in a variety of organizing frameworks to best fit the needs of the organization and the community/clientele it serves. There is no “best” way. However, it is important to understand the implications that accompany a particular organizational chart. The next sections will take a more in-depth look at both hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures

**Hierarchical Structure**
Hierarchical structures use departmentalization and generate an organization chart that shows a chain of command with a top-down structure. The steps used to formulate a hierarchical structure are:

- departmentalize by roles and functions;
- assign tasks to specific positions and units to take advantage of the specialized skills of certain employees;
- divide and distribute the overall workload of the organization (division of labor or delineation of responsibility);
- establish the number of people who will report to each supervisor (span of control);
- ensure that there is a supervisor for each person (unity of command); and
- determine the degree of power and control of each position (delegation of authority).

*Departmentalize by functions.* Departmentalization is achieved by dividing the organization into areas by the services it provides. In a city this may be streets, water and sewer, fire, police, sanitation, planning, and parks and recreation. Parks and recreation may be further departmentalized by pools, golf courses, special events, maintenance, and so on. Each of these departments takes care of its own specific function and they communicate with each other through an established protocol.

Parks and recreation managers have a number of ways to organize, which should reflect the purpose of the organization and what it holds to be important. Many city parks and recreation organizations are structured with an overall manager or director, and then a manager or superintendent in charge of specific divisions such as parks or recreation. Each of these managers has staff members who handle specific responsibilities within each division. An advantage to this type of structure is that it positions highly-trained specialists at the top of the organization; they offer expertise and training to their staff and, because you have one specialist overseeing everything, there is a coordinated effort to keep all facilities in quality condition. Projects can be both coordinated within divisions and across divisions within a department. For example, the annual renovation or maintenance of a ball field can be coordinated around scheduled recreational programs in the park, with the needs of both having equal importance by scheduling maintenance when programming is in an off-season or relocating recreation programming to other facilities

*Departmentalization by geographic area.* Departmentalization within an organization may also be divided by geographic region, such as a neighborhood, district, or specific area. In such cases, a neighborhood or district director or lead staff might have the authority over recreation programming, facilities, and other services within the geographic span of control. In such cases, aquatics programming, for example, may not be under the direct control of a person who oversees all pools within the department, but rather under the supervision of the area director or manager, who might also oversee the local gymnasium, community center, and community gardens. In this case, the departmentalization of functions is decentralized to a geographic region. The mission of the organization, the population it serves, and its geographic size will all be determining factors in the methods used to structure the delivery and supervision of services by the organization. This type of structure may allow for closer understanding of service area needs than a division by function might provide.

**Assign tasks.** Each department then divides responsibility by distributing the workload of the department. This is accomplished through structural tiers of managers, middle managers, and service providers, which are based on specialization of skills, knowledge, ability, and span of control. For example, a department is planning a Fourth of July festival for 50,000 attendees and needs staff for various aspects of the event, such as parking. Through an examination of programming staff and volunteers available, the task for parking can be assigned to the division that has the most employees and is capable of handling the task.

**Division of labor.** The agency should delineate the responsibilities, that is, have a written purpose for each organizational component and for the duties and responsibilities of each job assignment within each component. The written purpose should be available to all personnel. To enhance coordination, all personnel should understand the responsibilities of each organizational component within the organization and
be able to review up-to-date position descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of each job assignment. (How to write position descriptions is described in Chapter 17.)

At every level within the organization, personnel should be given the authority to make decisions necessary for the effective execution of their responsibilities within that level. The organization should assure that each employee is fully accountable for the use of delegated authority, as well as for the failure to use it.

Span of control. Span of control refers to the number of people a manager or administrator can effectively supervise. To achieve effective direction, coordination, and control, the number of employees under the immediate supervision of the manager should not be excessive. Typically, at higher levels of authority there are fewer employees in the span of control of the manager or supervisor. The addition of employees increases the difficulty of command and decreases the efficiency of both the supervisors and their employees. Generally speaking, the number of people a manager can effectively supervise does not exceed five or six, but this is dependant on several variables, including the diversity and complexity of function among staff, the number of staff, the geographic distribution of staff in the organization, the ability of supervisors, and the skill of staff being supervised.

Another variable includes use of outsourced or contracted staff functions. For example, the City of San Francisco contracts out its parks maintenance to a private company; the Hayward Area Recreation District in California contracts its personnel services with Alameda County. In both cases, the span of control is different than in organizations where parks maintenance and personnel are positions under the umbrella of the parks and recreation department.

Managers can typically supervise a larger number of subordinates when the subordinates all have similar and highly-specialized tasks. Conversely, when subordinates have widely-diverse tasks or are less skilled, they require more guidance and assistance. Consequently, the number of people a manager can supervise is lower. In other words, when the work is more similar and less complicated (i.e., mowing fields), supervisors are able to oversee a larger number of subordinates. However, the more subordinates a supervisor oversees, the less direct contact each subordinate has with the supervisor.

In a Girl Scout Council, for example, middle managers may be divided by program, camp facilities, membership, public relations, and field manager. The field manager might supervise 10 field executives (those who work directly with the leaders) who handle 40 leaders each. It would be difficult for one manager to supervise both the other positions and all of the field executives, and therefore a manager is assigned to this task. Even though the manager of the field executives has ten people under her, they are all doing the same job, unlike the variety of jobs supervised by the Council Director. The lower the position on the organization chart, the less diversity of job supervision there will be and, therefore, the greater the span of control.

Unity of command. Unity of command is the ability of the employees to identify to whom they will be accountable for their job performance. To achieve effective direction, coordination, and control, supervisory personnel should be accountable for the performance of employees under their immediate supervision. This standard applies to each level of supervision within the organization. Typically, employees at all levels should report to only one supervisor, so that there is clear direction and reporting line. However, while this “ideal” works in a typical chain of command-style organization, other structures of organizing work are growing in popularity, including matrix and team models that are discussed below.

In a typical strict chain of command-style organization, there may be times when a supervisor has to give work direction to an employee who is outside their chain of command; however, in ordinary circumstances, each employee should be able to identify one, and only one, supervisor to whom they are accountable. When subordinates who have varied tasks report to more than one supervisor, a conflict can arise. An employee caught between two supervisors, giving different directions, inevitably will be put in a no-win situation if pressed to make a decision on which work gets top priority.

Delegation of authority. Good managers realize they do not have the time, skills, knowledge, or ability needed to accomplish every organizational goals. For instance, the recreation director in most large agencies is not expected to prepare ball fields for a softball tournament and still attend to the management of the organization. Therefore, he or she must delegate authority to others in the chain of command. Delegation means entrusting work to employees and giving them the authority to make some decisions to get the job done. Delegation benefits the organization, the manager, and the employee. It can:

- leverage capacity so the manager has more time to devote to other tasks;
- allow the manager to concentrate on other responsibilities;
- build the skills, competence level, and confidence of the employee who receives the delegation;
- develop a strong foundation for employee empowerment, investing them in the organization;
• improve employee morale and self-esteem;
• create a better team approach;
• improve the efficiency of the organization; and
• infuse the organization with greater creativity and innovation.

Delegation of authority to an employee should happen only after the manager has accurately assessed the ability of that employee to satisfactorily make the proper decisions. Does the person being delegated the authority have the experience, training, and knowledge to carry out the tasks as expected? If not, can the manager train the person in the skills needed? While it is impossible for the manager to provide all the necessary information to allow the employee to make quality decisions, it is important that the employee know the scope of his authority and when to seek assistance from supervisors. (For more information on delegation, see Chapter 18, Supervision of Personnel.)

In the example above, the recreation director would give the responsibility for prepping the fields for a softball tournament to sports division staff (Supervisor, Coordinator, or others). At the same time, the Supervisor should be given the right to schedule the ball fields, oversee the use and preparation of equipment, and indicate staffing needed to control the event. The Director should allow this to happen without intervention, and other employees should respect the decisions of the division supervisor as the person responsible in that area.

**Nonhierarchical Structures**
Hierarchical structures are, typically, rigid systems that create positions based on clearly-defined tasks and reporting lines. Such structures are not ambiguous and are designed for organizational stability and control; they often appear in larger, more-bureaucratic organizations. Such structures may have difficulty responding to the needs of a changing clientele as rapidly as desirable. In today’s 24/7 society, emerging organizational structures that are nonhierarchical in nature and apply more of a systems approach have gained popularity. Three such structures are work teams, matrix designs, and outsourcing.

**Work teams.** An organization can develop structure and direction through the use of work teams. The key is to coordinate efforts to meet a common objective. In a typical team, there is less dependence on a power structure. Each member comes to the team with different expertise needed for the project. One member is designated the leader or facilitator, but he or she may not have the ultimate authority. The team makes decisions based upon input of the members and communicates as a group to those people in the administrative position. The normal supervisor may or may not be in charge of the team in this format.

In the San Ramon Parks & Community Services Department in California, a work team was organized to develop a Go Card rewards program that allowed customers to earn points for money spent on recreation programs. Points could be converted to dollars to be used toward other department offerings. The work team included staff from several divisions in the department that would be part of the Go Card program, plus marketing and administrative line staff. The team was to design the program to include various “members-only” events and other perks. Once the project was underway, the team met occasionally to monitor the program and plan future activities and events.

**Matrix designs.** Matrix designs leverage the expertise of staff members across disciplines and departments to achieve success on specific projects. For example, in the design of a community park, the matrix project team might include specialists from engineering, planning, finance, public services, and recreation programming. While such specialists may come from separate lines of authority (departments), they are also responsible to the project team, which may be in another department. Such matrix designs develop cross-functional specialists, allow for enhanced learning across department lines, improve team and leadership skills, and increase flexibility to achieve more than they could within their own organizational structures. Matrix designs can often be seen in the development of large projects that cross departmental lines such as park design (where context experts involved in the project might include a park planner, a recreation specialist, a finance person, maintenance staff, and engineering staff). By including content experts as equal partners in the success of the project, each member has the opportunity to learn more about other disciplines, in addition to facilitating leadership skills in a group setting. The more an organization moves to team approaches such as committees and task forces, the more they move toward the nonhierarchical structure.

Great care needs to be used in the development of work teams. An organization cannot simply put people together and expect them to be a work team. There are a variety of skills needed for a team to be successful. A team needs people with:

• clear understanding of the outcome and goal;
• technical expertise to carry out the tasks assigned to them;
• problem-solving and decision-making skills to identify issues, generate alternatives, evaluate
those alternatives, and make competent decisions;

- good interpersonal skills—listening, feedback, and conflict resolution;
- accountability for their individual contribution to the project; and
- commitment to see the project through to completion.

Members of a project or work team, regardless of the type of team design, will view the project through their own lens of reality or discipline. By seeing how other members approach the problem, the team will be more creative in the project management phase—imagining the desired outcome, planning the process to achieve the outcome, then executing the plan. Exhibit 5.5 illustrates how a nonhierarchical project team structure looks as part of a larger, more formal hierarchical structure. If the team was tasked with designing a new park, team members, using the circular section of this organizational chart, could include staff from agency departments such as Finance, Public Services, Engineering, Planning, and Park Maintenance, in addition to recreation staff. The team might also include sports user groups, and Park and Recreation Commission members.

Although it may take longer to arrive at a decision using this type of organizational structure than using a hierarchical structure where decisions are made by the manager, it may allow greater opportunity for more abundant and realistic input from those personnel with specific content knowledge. It also has the potential to create a higher level of job satisfaction for employees, who will see their opinions and efforts integrated into a tangible benefit to the community.

While developing specific project teams, such as the example above, it is necessary to establish ground rules or operational norms and to identify—in writing—the mission, goals, and objectives of the assembled team in order to help keep the team on track to accomplish the project. By establishing a “road map” of rules, norms, and desired outcome up front, the team will have a better chance of successful completion of the project with minimal disagreement.

**Outsourcing.** In recent years, many organizations have begun outsourcing; that is, contracting services to be done by outside businesses or individual content experts. It is conceivable that an organization could have a director, who then outsources all services, creating a “virtual organization.” For example, a small rural recreation organization might hire a park and recreation director who would then contract services for programs, facilities, maintenance, and personnel functions (as noted above in the examples of the City of Dublin and the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District). Another example would be the Circuit Riders of Colorado (www.ccriders.us), who provide a diverse menu of services to local governments and districts in the state of Colorado. Outsourcing typically saves the cost of personnel, equipment, and facilities, while providing for the recreational needs of the community.

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**Exhibit 5.5**

*Nonhierarchical Team Approach in a Traditional Formal Organization*
A caution is needed here: outsourcing does not remove ultimate responsibility from the director and may take more direct supervision to ensure the tasks are completed in an acceptable manner.

The new wave of management is to not send work “downward” but to hire managers who can negotiate “outward” with “free agent” content experts or knowledge workers. This requires a manager who has the ability to view the needs of the organization through a variety of lenses and think outside the traditional structure to create new and synergistic relationships that will be mutually beneficial to the organization and its clients.

**Systems thinking.** The link between an organization’s formal structure and its informal and underlying culture is an important one. A growing approach in bridging the formal, and often rigid structure of an organization, is found in *systems thinking*. Systems thinking operates in, and revolves around, the concept of “wholeness.” Any organization is a system of sorts where changes and influences, both outside or inside the organization, will effect change. Systems thinking can be applied as part of a larger effort to develop organizational learning. It can be thought of as a shift in how one traditionally views organizations. A traditional view sees an organization as a set of “stand alone” departments that produce goods and services independent of other departments in the organization. A systems thinking approach looks at departments differently, examining the interrelationships between them that create a larger whole, rather than merely cause-and-effect chains. Systems thinking creates a more holistic approach to problem-solving and change. For example, if the parks department staff decides to close all baseball fields in the city for a month for renovation one week before the big tournament scheduled by the recreation department, this would not only hamper the recreation department’s ability to hold its event, it could have significant negative economic impact on local business. If one looks at the lattice of economic relationships involved in this example, one see that decisions can have enormous impact on the whole organization, one well beyond just the recreation or parks department. Seeing the whole as a system, rather than just as the cause (closings the fields) and the effect (canceling the tournament), allows the organization to think outside the individual department “silos.”

Steps to integrate a systems thinking approach in an organization are fairly simple. A perfect start would be to institute a team approach for those projects whose outcome affects several departments; the team could include members from all those departments affected. Each member then has a vested interest in the outcome, and each brings their own discipline’s point of view to the project. Using the ball field example, above: the engineering and planning and inspection departments may have a role in the renovation proposed by the parks department, which, in turn, affects the recreation’s department ability to carry out its mission. By recognizing the interrelationships involved, the proposed outcome can be managed or altered to everyone’s mutual success. Matrix projects (those involving a variety of expertise from within the organization, as described above), increase organization learning and heighten awareness of cause-and-effect influences. This systems thinking approach also allows for a feedback process, where actions influencing other actions can be examined to determine if course changes are necessary for mutual mission success. Applying a systems approach to organizational thinking, along with a focus on individual learning, will increase overall organizational learning, thus embedding itself as a staple in a healthy organizational culture (Senge, 2006).

**Informal Organizational Structure**

Operating simultaneously with the formal structure is the informal structure, which embodies organizational culture. The informal structure develops naturally at all levels of the organization based upon how people casually communicate and interact with each other. Informal structures that offer insight, break down prohibitive barriers, and reduce administrative tasks are beneficial and can enhance formal structure. Informal structures that are divisive, in conflict with the formal structure, and otherwise problematic can impede the efforts of the organization to reach its goals. Human resources management may refer to this as “psychological contract,” the agreement between the expectations of the employee and those of management. An astute manager must recognize the informal structures, since they can positively or negatively affect the effectiveness of individual, group, and organizational performance. It is important that formal and informal structures be in harmony for optimal organizational performance. This section of the chapter addresses organizational culture and selected values of the profession.

**Organizational Culture**

Individuals in an organization need to have a shared meaning and goal—sense of belonging—in the work they perform. Organizational culture distinguishes the organization from others. The culture can be seen in the practices, rituals, and myths of the employees. It is the how and the why of employee behavior and actions. Knowledge of an organization’s culture can
help managers broadly predict reactions and behaviors. This shared system of values guides the members in their daily jobs, as well as in specific situations. These values may be based on the past success of an organization using them, or they may be based on the values of the manager or past and present community leaders. Examples of core values might include taking risks in decision-making, or, on the other extreme, fully documenting decisions.

Interestingly enough, the culture of an organization is reflected in the community in which it operates. As noted in Exhibit 5.2, above, the cultural norms of the community (externally) and the informal structure of the organization (internally) each influence the mission, vision, and values, goals and objectives, input and output. A community that values its parks, programs and facilities will influence the culture of the parks and recreation agency and vice versa. A byproduct of the internal and external cultural phenomena is a community that is supportive of and advocates for the needs of organization.

How an organization builds its culture and how it passes it on to succeeding levels and generations of employees is the central question for leaders to tackle in achieving success in today’s organizations. While an organization may employ a base set of assumptions and values for its daily operation, each level of employment and department/division within the organization may have its own sub-culture that may or may not necessarily be in line with the organization’s culture.

Frames of Organizational Culture

Culture is typically built by the work of the organization’s founders or early leaders. As the organization grows, successful modes of operation, core values, and a philosophy become underlying assumptions for others to follow.

Conversely, as the organization grows in size and age, different levels of the organization will interpret these underlying assumptions in different ways to suit their needs. It therefore becomes important for leaders in an organization to understand varying levels of cultural understanding by viewing such assumptions through different frames or windows of reference.

There are three basic levels of culture within an organization. In descending order, the surface level includes artifacts, visible structures (the physical building or decor), and processes such as routine behaviors in the organization. Such artifacts may include uniforms, name tags and other physical manifestations that display a sense of team. This level can be seen in the uniforms that Boy Scouts wear, in the type of artwork found in the lobby of the recreation office, or in the staff clothing worn by department staff. Such artifacts demonstrate that members are independently dependent as a team working for mission success.

Espoused values are the next level of culture. In this level, the underlying values of the individual and the organization are used in the decision-making process. They become espoused values when the entire organization shares a common commitment to these values of behavior. A classic example is the Disney Corporation’s ubiquitous value, “we create happiness.” Measuring the proposed decision against the espoused values of the organization will ensure the organization is acting in line with its authentic self, with its values of behavior.

The deepest level is made up of the basic assumptions that lie at the heart or core of an organization’s culture. Assumptions represent the way things are done in an organization or its mode of operation; that is, its mission-critical competencies. A basic assumption might be employee motivation. If such assumptions are present and reliable, then the organization leaders can more allow employees to work without close supervision, trusting that they can accomplish their tasks without being told how to do them. The real power of an organization’s culture is seen in the continuous reinforcement of shared assumptions and values.

To build a complete understanding of an organization’s culture, cultural elements need to be viewed from different perspectives. To a director, culture will certainly be viewed differently than by a line worker. There will be different sets of assumptions about how business should be conducted or what processes are used in decision-making. The key to fully understanding culture is to uncover interlocked assumptions that transcend all levels. An organizational culture is developed over time by management and shaped by various personnel working in the organization; once established, there are three forces that play a particularly important role in helping to sustain it: the selection process, the actions of top management, and socialization methods.

Selection Process

Organizations need to hire employees who will be able to perform the job and fit within the organizational culture that exists. One of the best ways to understand a culture is to experience it. With this in mind, there are several methods that an organization can incorporate into its hiring process to determine whether an applicant would be a good fit in the existing culture. After all, it is important to note that a potential employee is interviewing the organization at the same time the organization is interviewing them:

1. Analysis of the Organizational Culture
Is the organization non-bureaucratic? fast-paced? informal? team-oriented? Does it have a family-type
atmosphere? Is there high-pressure? What sort of management style exists? Are employees empowered? Are decisions made from top-down?

2. Background of Organization of Previous Work
Is the culture of the organization similar to the ones where the applicant has worked in the past? If not, would that applicant find it desirable to work in a different environment? While many organizations seek to hire new employees who are the right fit (e.g., they had similar work culture experiences; or they think and even dress the same way), leaders should also be mindful to look at those who are counter to or on the fringe of the organization’s culture. Why? Because they think differently than the rest of the pack. When reviewing the background of an applicant, it’s important to consider if the applicant merely fits into the mold (uniformity and consistency) of what exists already or if the organization needs skills that are different (i.e., innovative thinking) to continue the evolution of the organization’s culture.

3. Clear About the Type of Place the Organization Is
The interview might include an in-depth tour and a visit to the workspace where the applicant would be working, plus an exposure to the sense of pace of the organization, the interaction between employees, and the demands of the position. The physical environment says a lot about the culture of the organization. Office organization, art work on the walls, and employee dress are all very telling artifacts. For instance, one organization that had troubling hiring and keeping employees found that the values and culture espoused did not match the artifacts or “feel” in the office space.

4. Provide Opportunities to Meet with Peers
A growing trend in many parks and recreation departments is to hold assessment center-styled interviews where the applicants interact with both each other and the staff with whom they would be working if hired. The Town of Danville CA employs a day-long assessment that reveals much about the organization and its staff to the applicants. Being able to interact with staff in an informal setting such as a social or lunch, gives the applicant the opportunity to see and be seen in a snapshot of the organization’s culture.

5. Ask Questions that Show How Applicant Will Fit In
Giving the applicant the opportunity to share his or her own experiences or philosophical views provides an opportunity for the hiring manager to assess if the applicant would bring value to the organization. Ultimately, hiring for the best fit is important to the future of the organization.

Actions of Management
As noted above, the actions of the top management greatly influence the organizational culture. The way managers perform their jobs, handle public relations, delegate authority, give subordinates raises, and correct inappropriate work behavior all directly or indirectly change or perpetuate the culture of the organization. An organization that realizes this will, in turn, try to find the best possible people for top management positions. The culture of the organization can flourish or become stagnant based upon people in the top management positions and how well they understand how employees at different levels of the organization have different lenses through which they view their organization.

It is possible that sub-cultures exist within the broader organizational culture. In many organizations, regardless of size, there exist three distinct sub-cultures: executive sub-culture, consisting of department heads and division managers; mid-management, encompassing supervisors and coordinators; and technicians, including line workers and support staff. To keep the organization on track in achieving its mission, it is vital that managers be aware of the existence of such sub-cultures and be able to view the wider organization through each sub-cultural lens. (See Compendium 5-6 for a guide in assessing sub-cultural norms.)

Internal Communication
Just as having the proper resources is an important element of the organizational structure, so too is having good communication lines and systems in place. The organizational structure, both formal and informal, provides the framework for internal communication. The formal structure outlines the communication lines along the chain of command and span of control—information sent up and received down through the organization. How that information is delivered and how effectively it is received and acted upon largely rests on the informal structure or the culture of the organization.

The importance of communicating effectively cannot be overemphasized. The inability to communicate has caused serious problems in organizations. The primary purpose of communication—oral, written, or nonverbal—is for the communicator to transfer a message that will be correctly understood by another person or persons. If, for whatever reason, the message is not received and accurately comprehended by the intended receiving person or persons, the communication is ineffective.
Today’s communication takes place in a variety of manners, including face-to-face, voice mail, e-mail, text messaging, Internet use, facsimiles, and word processing. Such media of communication enable speedy and efficient communication within and without the organization and help it keep up with today’s fast-paced society. Which method of communication is most appropriate is determined by many factors including:

- the relationship between the communicator and the receivers;
- the number of receivers;
- the intricacy of the message;
- how fast a response is needed;
- the resources available;
- the importance of confidentiality; and
- the cultural norms in place.

It becomes necessary, then, for the organization’s cultural communication norms to be explicit to those within the organization. Knowing what medium of communication is appropriate in a particular instance is critical to reach the intended audience with the desired effect. For more information on how to choose the right type of communication, see Chapter 18 on Supervision of Personnel.

**Socialization**

No matter how well the organization does in selecting and hiring new employees, they will not be immediately assimilated into the organization’s culture. Therefore, the organization should help the new employee succeed by providing an orientation to the organization, its culture, norms, and values, as well as to opportunities where the new employee can get involved in programs and projects and thereby get to know the operating norms of the organization. Individual development plans are good tools to help a new employee become familiar with the organization, its policies, and its procedures over a period of time. See Chapter 17 for discussion of an employee orientation program.

**Administrative Manuals**

All organizations should have a series of administrative manuals that detail policies, rules and regulations, and operational procedures relative to the agency. Such manuals, particularly those at the wider organizational level, will include basic work rules, evaluation and grievance processes, employee classifications, etc. Departmental policy/procedure manuals include information specific to the daily operations of the department, including fiscal forms, permits, uses of areas, charges and fees procedures, rentals, purchasing, inventories, and safety considerations. An administrative manual is the repository of official guiding documents of the organization. For an individual parks and recreation department, this might include the statement of philosophy, mission, vision, organization chart, and job descriptions. As mentioned above, there may be overarching organizational manuals in addition to departmental specific procedural manuals. Other departments in the organization may also contribute documents to a manual; for instance, Human Resources may contribute for a personnel manual, Public Works for a maintenance and operational manual, Risk Management for a risk management manual, and the Finance department for a financial procedures manual.

Each employee should have the section(s) or jurisdictional manuals appropriate to his or her work. A complete manual also should be placed in accessible locations within the organization for easy reference by employees.

The manuals should be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as needed. They should be in a format that permits easy revision; a three-ring notebook is often used to accommodate changes. Each page should be dated with the last revision. These days, administrative manuals are also being stored electronically and made available over organization networks or Intranets; organizations can easily update such manuals and ensure that they are current. In one organization, for example, department staff members are divided into groups to annually review and update specific sections of the departmental manual. They then present them for discussion and approval by the entire group. (See Compendium 5-7 to 5-9 for a sample department table of contents and manual examples).

**Policies and Procedures**

A *policy* is a broad mandate for handling situations that arise. There is a hierarchy or order of importance of policies. In many public agencies that may include a City Charter, a General Plan, a specific element of the General Plan addressing parks and recreation, a Master Plan, a Business Plan, and a Strategic Plan. Departmental or divisional policies will typically reference higher-order polices, such as department master plan, business plan, or strategic plan policies.

A *procedure* is the accepted method for implementing a policy. The manual may also set forth the procedures for complying with the law. For example, an organization has a broad policy regarding fee collection, adopted by the City Council. The policy might include the approved fee schedule (what the agency can charge for services) for that fiscal year. The procedure for the cashier at the swimming pool might be to keep...
X amount of money in the change fund each day, complete the cash handling log sheet for each cashier shift and drop the profit in the safe at the end of each shift. As the same decision must be made more than once, it can become standardized. This allows for efficient operation.

Policies are usually thought of as standards and guidelines that reflect the mission and goals of park and recreation organization with respect to the delivery of programs, the operation of areas and facilities, the management of revenue and expenditures, and similar areas of managerial concern. Policies set the legal and procedural framework for facilitating day-to-day organization operations. Policies are typically reviewed and/or approved by the governing body for that organization. For a municipal park and recreation agency, such policies would be reviewed by the City Council, and/or a Parks and Recreation Commission. Park and recreation managers must understand the policy-making process, their role in the policy process, the nature and scope of different types of policies, and the factors that influence the policy process.

**Policies Processes**

What is the role of the manager in the policy process? One perspective is that managers have no role in forming policy, but have the primary responsibility for implementing policy in the regular, ongoing operations of the organization. People who support this perspective contend that, in organizations that have a governing board, it is the responsibility of the governing authority to make major policy decisions. The value orientation of an organization provides the conceptual and philosophical foundation upon which its mission, goals and objectives, and vehicles of service delivery are initiated and justified. Such broad-based policy statements are known as legislative policies. In these areas of policy-making, the managers may identify problems for which policies need to be created. The manager would write procedures for the policy.

Conversely, another perspective is that managers should have some role in forming legislative policies because of the professional training and experience they bring to their positions. In practice, park and recreation managers are most often responsible for developing and implementing what are referred to as administrative or factual policies. These policies are specific in nature and are almost always limited to one area of managerial concern, such as financial management. Factual policies delineate the management practices of the organization and provide the step-by-step procedures necessary to plan, organize, direct, and control various organization functions.

Policy-making is an ongoing process that consists of three interrelated actions: policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. **Policy formulation** involves gathering information and making decisions based on the availability of resources and other controlling conditions. Policy formulation based on accurate and pertinent information tends to produce consistent and coordinated action within an organization. It is influenced by numerous political, social, physical, and economic factors that are in constant interaction with one another. There are seven steps in policy formulation that are common to all park and recreation organizations.

1. Identify the need for the policy or sub-policy.
2. Determine the authorization required for the policy.
3. Review the need for the policy in the context of the organization’s value orientation.
4. Seek input on the policy from organization stakeholders.
5. Consider policy alternatives and determine costs associated with each alternative.
6. Determine the effects or events that may occur as the result of policy adoption.
7. Write a policy statement that incorporates the actions necessary to meet the need of the organization and its stakeholders.

**Policy implementation** occurs when a policy is incorporated into the day-to-day operations of an organization; it is one of the major functions performed by park and recreation managers. **Policy evaluation** provides means to determine the extent to which a policy has achieved its intended purpose.

Policies and procedures cover a variety of topics, and these are determined by the nature of the organization. Generally, a policy manual will include sections on personnel, facility operation, programs, membership, finance, and so on (see Compendium 5-7 for examples of the types of policies by category). In each of the categories in the manual there would be a number of policies listed, followed by the procedures relevant to that policy. Each procedure description should be accompanied by the forms required for that procedure.

**Rules and Regulations**

Whereas a procedure prescribes how a policy is to be implemented, a rule is a directive how an employee or member is to act or not act in a given circumstance. Directives for the operation of facilities or programs are examples of rules. An administrative manual should have a section of rules and regulations (i.e., a code of conduct) that employees are expected to follow. This section is important for both the organization and the employees. The organization needs to be able to set standards that it can enforce, while the employees need
to clearly understand what is expected of them. Some standard rules and regulations address:

- attendance,
- punctuality,
- parking,
- safety and security,
- energy conservation,
- telephone and computer use, and
- dress codes.

**Position Descriptions**

One of the most important parts of the administrative manual is a section on position descriptions (also called *job* descriptions). In today's organizations, the position description has become a necessity. For every job title or component of the organization chart, there should be a written position description that delineates the duties and responsibilities of that job assignment. This should include not only what the job duties are, but also what it would take to do the job. It is imperative that the job description include the physical requirements of the job, as well as any certification, education, and licensure requirements. Job descriptions must stipulate which tasks are essential to the job and which are not. The administrative manual might include only a discussion of the broad job categories or job class (i.e., Recreation Supervisor), or a brief description of the job, while a personnel manual would specify all aspects of each specific position.

Job descriptions are typically developed based on an analysis of the needs necessary to fulfill the mission of the organization. Considerations when developing a job description might include: the ability to fund such positions both in the near and distant future; office space requirements; and the potential for future program growth. An agency may not want to hire a full-time field sports supervisor if there were limited resources (i.e., parks) available to allow for the potential growth of the program. In this case, the field sports supervisor work may be incorporated into another job description as just one task. Developing a job description includes several variables: the work required to be done, which should be related back to the mission of the organization (see Exhibit 5.1); any specific talents or abilities necessary to perform the job; and minimum qualifications for the position. For the Field Sports Supervisor position noted above, work required might include supervising youth and adult soccer, adult softball, and flag football programs, and might include the hiring, training, and supervision of score keepers, coaches, and officials. Special abilities and talents might include: specific sports training, certifications, CPR/First Aid Instructor, and the ability to operate field lining equipment. Qualifications might include: a bachelor’s degree in recreation or related field; five years of progressive experience in running leagues and hiring/supervising part-time staff; and the ability to work a flexible weekly schedule. Special consideration for the frequency of tasks performed, the level of decision making required, and the level of difficulty in performing these tasks should be examined as well. By analyzing the position needs, talents/abilities, frequency of tasks, and level of decision-making necessary to accomplish the job — typically called a job analysis — an agency can develop a job description to advertise the position. It should be noted that it is often helpful to review other similar, or “like” jobs in the surrounding area to ensure that important skills necessary to accomplish the job are not missed. It is important to have the agency’s personnel or human resources department involved throughout the job description development process.

The job description itself, born out of the job analysis, will include the position title, job duties, and desirable knowledge, skills, abilities and/or competencies necessary to be a successful candidate for the job. The job description may also include job salary information, to whom the job reports in the organization, level of supervision, licenses/certificates required, and physical requirements. (See Compendium 5-10 through 5-14 for samples of job descriptions.)

Positions — which job descriptions describe — may later be placed into an organizational class of employee (i.e., supervisors), which may include “like” employees from a variety of departments that display common supervisory skills, as in the example above. Such classification of employees is necessary when looking at broad range salary studies to ensure the organization is competitive with other “like” agencies when setting salaries for its employees (see Compendium 5-15 for a sample classification).

**Management Audits**

From time to time it is necessary to analyze and evaluate the administrative functions of an organization. Terms used to describe broad-reaching scrutiny of the organization’s structure and practices to see if the organization is still in line with its mission might include:

- “management audit,”
- “administrative review,”
- “organizational review,”
- “quality improvements study,” or
- “master plan update.”

The impetus for a management audit may be positive or negative. The process starts with a catalyst that spurs an administrator to examine the organization as a whole.
A new facility opening or a failed bond issue can lead to concerns that the administrative practices need to be reviewed. In some instances, the rationale for the audit may be merely to fine tune an already-effective organization.

Triangulation is used to identify the issues by capitalizing on as many perspectives as possible to determine all aspects of the issue. A management audit will utilize multiple methods for analyzing the organization. Using demographic material, conducting town meetings, comparing standards and benchmarks, and evaluating agency documents are ways to determine organizational issues. The review may include examining best practices of other organizations and retrofitting them to the issues of the agency undergoing the management audit. The management audit is followed by an action plan to implement the solution.

**Administrative Operations**

For the formal structure of the organization to work well, the manager must have a sound administrative operation. These operations bolster the mission of the park and recreation organization by giving managers and employees the time and equipment they need to carry out their objectives. Some refer to this as “office management.” The manager must know the components of efficient and effective administrative operations. These cannot be entirely delegated. Administrative operations include:

- support staff;
- administrative offices;
- administrative support services;
- records management; and
- internal communication.

**Support Staff**

For the greatest economy and efficiency, the professional personnel should be freed from clerical, maintenance, and other support functions (staff positions). Support staff help make it possible for the professional staff to do their jobs effectively. For example, the parks director who is taking program registration, filing, or typing memos has no time to write grant proposals, handle personnel issues, and develop programs. Although the city is still being serviced, it loses the expertise for which the director was hired.

The number of support staff available will vary, depending upon the needs of the organization and its financial resources. Typical examples of support staff include administrative clerical staff, budget analysts, marketing specialists, and receptionists. Their tasks discharge the day-to-day duties essential to the organization, such as processing registration forms and mailing letters to program participants.

**Administrative Offices**

Organizations benefit from having administrative offices accessible to the public and providing an adequate, attractive reception area. These areas should reflect the professional atmosphere of the organization; there should be convenient office hours and courteous, informed staff or volunteers in the reception area to answer phones, take registration, and respond to questions.

Adequate and attractive work environments appeal to both employees and volunteers and can enhance their performances. Comfortable and attractive meeting rooms supply space for planning purposes, in-service education, and other needs. Personnel need adequate office space with sufficient room to work, including storage facilities and filing cabinets. A centrally-located, up-to-date library promotes staff use and research. This information can encourage staff to be innovative and creative in service delivery. Depending on the size of the organization, there may be a need for separate warehouse space for storing and distributing materials, supplies, and equipment. Warehouse space can facilitate efficiency of purchasing and ensure adequate supplies for day-to-day operations.

**Support Services**

Once the proper people occupy functional office spaces, they need adequate resources to perform their jobs. The modern workplace often demands such office equipment as computers, copiers, and audio-visual equipment. These resources can enhance the effectiveness of staff workers.

The staff is then able to give managers the services they require to provide quality programming. These services include administrative support performed at various levels throughout the organization.

At a basic or entry level, an organization may have an office assistant or office receptionist. This person may have a variety of duties including to:

- type and review documents;
- answer phones, provide information on the department and receive compliments/complaints;
- greet/register patrons for programs; take and schedule facility reservations;
- maintain file systems and file records and other documents;
- schedule appointments and keep calendars;
• handle and distribute incoming and outgoing mail;
• perform duplicating services; and
• maintain forms and guidelines.

At the mid-level, an organization may have an office manager. Tasks that an office manager may perform include:

• sorting, calculating, and retrieving data;
• tracking inventory and supplies;
• receiving supplies and forms;
• procuring printing services;
• maintaining security of records;
• organizing, editing, and preparing documents;
• administering organizational travel regulations.

At the top level, an organization may have an administrative person known as a confidential assistant or executive secretary. This person will engage in:

• problem-solving,
• technical assistance,
• the development of guidelines for the clerical staff,
• forecasting and planning for major mailings,
• analyzing printing and duplicating services, and
• managing records.

Records Management

It is vital that every organization, no matter how large or small, how simple or complex, have a records management system. Records are the “life blood” of an organization, and a mark of excellence in their proper management. A records management system requires maintenance of inactive records, records protection, and accurate, complete, up-to-date, and accessible active records. While technology has enabled very sophisticated records management, many matters relating to records can be handled quite well with manual systems (from low-tech to no-tech). Elements of a records management system include:

• determining what records must be maintained;
• establishing how long records should be retained (retention schedule);
• retaining and storing active and inactive records based on the retention schedule;
• establishing an inventory of records with a filing system for ease of retrieval;
• authorizing appropriate personnel to use the records;
• securing records from unauthorized use;
• protecting records from possible fire or water damage (disaster control);
• determining who is responsible for managing the records system; and
• determining how records can be managed more economically and efficiently.

Records come from every aspect of management, and the various chapters in this book address records that are essential to each particular aspect.

Conclusions

There is much at stake in developing the organizational structure of a park and recreation department. To be sure, the mission, vision, and values of the agency will clearly state the function of the organization—it's reason for being—and will help drive the structure or form it takes. In cooperation with setting goals and objectives, as well as developing policies and procedures, the organization needs the tools necessary to take action toward mission success. As the organization develops, so does the culture made up of those who work there, the underlying assumptions of how work gets accomplished, the artifacts that describe the physical culture, and the values that help bind it all together.
Resources


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