APCO AGENCY TRAINING PROGRAM CERTIFICATION (ATPC)
A Project 33© Initiative

Business Rules

Contents

Mission

The mission of the Agency Training Program Certification (ATPC) Committee is to advise APCO staff regarding training for Public Safety Communications Program Evaluators and Applicant Agencies and the specific certification process.

Vision

To enhance the Public Safety Communications profession through the certification of agency training programs that meet national training standards.

Job Description[1]

A Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator is an individual who, as a subject-matter expert, conducts a systematic review of agency training programs for compliance with established APCO standards. This enhances professionalism and promotes recognition of the public safety communications profession.

Committee Member Selection Criteria

Program Evaluator
In order to be selected as an APCO Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator, candidates should possess the following minimum qualifications:

1. Be an APCO member in good standing;

2. Possess the ability to write high-quality professional reports and/or comments;

3. Be able to remain objective and apply analytical skills in the assessment of public safety communications training programs;

4. Have the ability to maintain confidentiality; and

5. Be employed by an agency that holds APCO Agency Training Program Certification.

Team Leader
In order to be designated as a Team Leader, a Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator must possess the following additional qualifications:

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[1] On March 19 and 20, 2013, an Occupational Analysis was conducted to identify the major duties and accompanying tasks of a Public Safety Communications Training Program Evaluator, as well as, the requisite knowledge, skills, and traits of an incumbent serving in that position. A second panel of incumbent workers validated the initial results on May 21, 2013 and an occupational profile was developed.

1. Have served as an APCO Public Safety Communications Program Evaluator for two years;

2. Have completed at least three training program evaluations;

3. Items 1 & 2 may be waived with equivalent experience as deemed by the Committee Chair;

4. Be recommended for the position by the Committee Chair.

Team Leader assignments will be made at the beginning of the committee year based on the number of committee members and anticipated applications. Team Leader notification will be made as soon as practical in the new committee year. A Committee Member that is interested in serving as a Team Leader will be communicated during the regularly scheduled committee sign up process.

The Team Leader will serve as the primary contact for APCO staff and will ensure that program evaluations are completed within the prescribed deadlines.

Committee Rules

The ATPC Committee is a Designated Committee and will function in accordance with the APCO Policy Manual and Bylaws.

Committee Members may be removed for lack of participation in committee activities at the discretion of the Committee Chair and Group Leader. Examples of adequate participation include, but is not limited to:

- Attendance at more than 50% of committee meetings;

- Timely acceptance and completion of application review assignments;

- Responding to all communication from APCO Staff and/or Committee Chairs;

- Completion of required training; and

- Completion of APCO required agreements, including intellectual property rights (IPR) agreement.

Training

Evaluator Training

Training for Public Safety Communications Evaluators is critical to ensuring the integrity of Training Program Certification. In order to ensure Evaluators receive the most effective and relevant training possible for their positions, an instructional program was developed. This

program consists of both a formal online initial training module and ongoing monthly conference call training. Learning objectives focus on the agency training program review process and evaluating compliance with established standards. All new Evaluators are required to complete the training within thirty (30) days of appointment to the ATPC Committee and shall complete this training before being assigned to participate in an evaluation of an agency's training program.

Evaluators will be required to complete refresher training as changes are made to the certification process or at least annually.

Agency Training

Training for agency representatives will be required in order to proceed with the ATPC process. This training program consists of a review of the Business Rules that guide the certification process, review of the current version of APCO American National Standard (ANS) Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST), and completion of a PowerPoint presentation designed to educate applicant agencies on the requirements of the certification program and process. Once the agency representative has completed the PowerPoint training, there is a short test and acknowledgement required to complete the training. After this step is complete, the agency representative will receive a certificate for training.

Agency Training Program Certification (ATPC) Process

The review process from beginning to end should take no longer than sixteen weeks, from the time the agency submits its application until certification is either awarded or denied. Evaluators should strive to complete the review within established timeframes.

Agency Roles:

Applicant / Applicant Agency: The agency seeking certification of their training program.

Agency Representative: Any person within the agency who is tasked with completion of the ATPC application.

Agency Point of Contact (POC): The primary agency representative responsible for the ATPC application.

Step 1: Application Pre-Requisites

Prior to payment and purchase of the ATPC application, the agency will be required to complete the Agency Training noted above and upload the certificate to its account.

Step 2: Application for Certification

An agency seeking certification shall submit a non-refundable application fee of $500.00 and complete an ATPC Application for each training program for which certification is sought. Applications expire one (1) calendar year from the date of purchase. APCO Staff

will monitor the progress of application completion and send reminders to the agency at six (6) and nine (9) month intervals.

Recognition at the annual APCO Conference is based on the submission of a complete application by December 1 of the prior year. As an example, applications submitted by December 1, 2019 will be recognized at the APCO 2020 Conference if certification is achieved. This provides sufficient time to accommodate any delays in the evaluation process due to unforeseen circumstances. This also allows for awards to be ordered in time to present at the subsequent Annual Conference.

Step 3: Compliance with APCO American National Standard (ANS) Minimum Training Standards for Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST)

Applicant Agencies must submit proof of compliance with each element of the Standard. Proof of compliance includes, but is not limited to:

- The current lesson plans used in the training program;
- A current version of additional training materials such as student manuals and workbooks;
- Audiovisual aids and their description;
- Completed performance examinations;
- Completed Testing instruments;
- Completed class evaluation forms; and
- Instructor support materials.

Applicant Agencies are encouraged to include additional materials to prove compliance with the standard. Examples of additional material include; but are not limited to:

- Agency policies and/or written directives,
- Completed daily observation reports (DOR)
- Completed training checklists.

The Applicant Agency must show the training program in use, blank documents will not be accepted for certification.

In the application explanation field, the agency is required to identify the precise location of applicable proofs so that reviewers can go directly to the supporting material. It is acceptable to cite as proof, "see document name, page 14, line 3."

Step 4: Review for Application Completeness and Assignment of Evaluation Team

Within three (3) business days of submission, APCO Staff will perform an initial review of the application to determine if it is substantially complete. If the application is incomplete, APCO Staff will notify the agency POC and provide guidance on what is needed to make the application complete. Complete applications will be assigned to an Evaluation Team which consists of a Team Leader and an Evaluator.

Evaluation Team Responsibilities

Within three (3) business days of assignment, the Evaluation Team must notify APCO Staff that they either accept or decline the assignment. Upon acceptance of the assignment, the Evaluation Team shall log into the ATPC platform and formally accept the review.

The assigned Team Leader will immediately conduct a review of the application to ensure it is substantially complete. If the Team Leader determines that the minimum information needed to proceed with the evaluations has not been provided, APCO Staff shall be notified.

Upon completion of the initial review of the application, the Team Leader will contact the Evaluator to discuss the plan for completing the review.

The Evaluation Team will complete their review of the application within fifteen (15) business days.

Evaluation Process

Step 1: Establish Evaluator Contact
The Team Leader will contact the Evaluator to discuss the plan for completing the review. It is recommended that this contact be made by telephone to ensure there is adequate communication before, during, and after the review is complete.

Step 2: Evaluating the Materials
The Evaluation Team is given access via the web portal to uploaded documentation provided by the agency in support of the application. The Evaluation Team uses the web portal to compare each element of the Standard against the proofs of compliance and other materials uploaded by the applicant. The Evaluation Team will review the application and mark each element as 'approved' or 'need information'.

Deficiencies or Questions
If the Evaluation Team identifies any deficiencies in the application proofs of compliance, has any questions about the submitted material, and/or are unable to open a specific document, the Team Leader will notify the Committee Chair and APCO Staff. The Evaluation Team will provide specific instructions to the applicant agency in the comments field of the application ensuring that necessary documentation is specifically identified to the applicant agency. **Committee members shall not directly contact any agency.** All communication will be facilitated through APCO Staff. The Committee Chair may have limited contact with applicant agencies and should consult with APCO Staff to ensure a consistent message.

Step 3: The Evaluation Team Determination

Upon completion of the review, the Team Leader will ensure that the evaluation team is in agreement in all areas of the application prior to "final submit". The Team Leader will contact APCO Staff and the Committee Chair for guidance if the Evaluation Team cannot reach an agreement on the application's approval, request for more information, or denial. The Team Leader will notify the Committee Chair and APCO staff that the evaluation is complete, and the recommendation of the evaluation team based on the following:

- Certification;
- Denial of Certification; and
- Recertification.

Certification

Once the Review Team approves an applicant agency's certification, a written notification of certification from the current APCO President will be sent to the agency POC.

Agencies achieving certification will be recognized at the next[2] APCO International Annual Conference and Exposition with the presentation of a plaque. APCO Staff will produce a press release announcing the certification.

Denial of Certification

If the Review Team indicates that the application does not meet the standard or the submitted materials do not sufficiently show proof of compliance of agency practice, certification will be denied. APCO Staff will notify the applicant agency of this decision with a notice of denial from the Committee Chair which outlines the specific areas of deficiency. Within thirty (30) days of receiving this notification, the applicant agency may request a ninety (90) day extension to revise and submit missing documentation. Requests for extensions shall be made in writing and directed to APCO Staff. No additional application fee is required. A second and final review of materials will be conducted once the agency submits its changes during the extension. The initial Review Team will be assigned to the second review when available.

If an extension request is not received within the required thirty (30) days, or sufficient documentation is not provided during the ninety (90) day extension, certification will be denied, and the applicant agency must reapply. Applicants that do not receive certification will be required to wait a minimum of six (6) months before reapplying for certification. Reapplication for certification must include a non-refundable certification fee of $500.00, and the submission of all required documentary proofs and supporting materials as required in the original program guidelines.

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[2] Based on submission deadline of December 1.

Recertification

ATPC is valid for three (3) years from the date of the certification. The certification date will be noted on the plaque presented to the agency.

Recertification follows the same process as the original certification (outlined above). Materials submitted as part of the application shall reflect current practices of the agency and be dated within a reasonably current timeframe. An agency should begin the recertification process six (6) to twelve (12) months prior to expiration. An Evaluation Team comprised of individuals who were not involved in the initial certification for the applicant agency shall conduct the recertification evaluation.

Upon successful recertification, the agency will be presented with a recertification plaque that will be valid for another three (3) year period from the date of the certification.

Certification Expiration

There is no grace period for expired agency certification and ATPC is considered expired three (3) years from the date of certification.

The resource coordinator will track expirations and will email the agency with the following template six months prior to the agency's expiration date.

> **CLOSE TO EXPIRATION:**
>
> Subject: APCO Agency Training Program Certification Approaching Expiration
>
> We noticed that the APCO Agency Training Program Certification for your agency will be expiring on (fill in the date). Below is the link to start the re-certification process, as well as a link to the rules and procedures for the program.
>
> Click Here to Start the Re-Certification Process
>
> Click Here to View APCO Agency Training Program Certification Rules and Procedures
>
> If you have any questions, please contact NAME at NAME@apcointl.org or PHONE NUMBER.

Intellectual Property

All materials submitted remain the intellectual property of the applicant agency and are not disclosed beyond the ATPC Committee and APCO Staff. Agencies may redact the names of employees or personnel information on submitted documents as needed. Each member of the ATPC Committee is bound by the terms of a non-disclosure agreement that prohibits the release of information obtained through the application review process. The identities of the Evaluators are confidential and known only to the Committee and APCO Staff to prevent undue influence or interference with the review process.

Record Retention

APCO will maintain agency records for the current certification period and the previous certification period, or a maximum of six (6) years.