



Q & A Questions & Responses – February 25, 2022

1. Can you discuss the differences between question 2 and question 5 in what the judges are looking for?

Question 2 is a follow up question to question 1 which asks the agency to state what it does well. This question is looking for examples of measures / data the agency is using to measure its performance. If the agency says it is doing "xx" well, how does it know that?

2. How much weight is given to the Master Plan Summary and the Strategic Plan Summary, if any?

The judges review the Master Plan and Strategic Plan summaries in phase one of the judging specifically looking for progress measures. Those documents are more critically analyzed in phase two when the Grand Plaque recipient is chosen from the Finalist pool.

3. States and communities have varied experienced with the duration of pandemic restrictions. Any advice for how to address in the application? With one of the latest dates for removing masks (still 3 weeks away) it's relevant to our experiences and results over the past 3 years.

Absolutely how the agency has responded to its jurisdiction's pandemic restrictions is important to indicate. There are several questions where the agency can provide examples of its pandemic efforts, i.e., questions 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10.

4. How is Diversity & Equity factored into the award and judging process?

Question 7 asks agencies to address their efforts to provide fair and just access to quality parks and recreation. Diversity, inclusion, and equity can be addressed in other questions if desired.

5. Where do we attach the designed version with the essay question responses?

The online application platform provides the place to upload PDFs of the required Master Plan and Strategic Plan Summaries.

6. On average how long does the application take to complete, being that we are a month out from deadline?

The time it takes to complete an application depends on many variables which the agency controls. AAPRA generally allows approximately 10 weeks for the application process each year. That said, if you have applied before or if you have been active in agency accreditation, state association awards, etc., it may be easier and less time consuming. If you are using the team approach to developing your responses you may need a bit more time for the group to convene, make assignments, review drafts, and then finalize. The other factor is really, how much time an agency wants to put into their application. We do know of agencies who have put their application together in a month or less. Agencies report limiting their responses to the designated word count takes time.

7. What type of measurements/data are most captivating for judges?

Simply, those that show an impact. The judges like to see the impact measured against broader indicators or best practices if available. As an example, if your agency provides 10 acres of parkland per 1000 residents and the state or national average is 5 acres then the agency is making an impact. The judges realize that not every measurement/data point has a benchmark or best practice associated with it. If the agency has set its own benchmark and is making progress towards reaching that goal indicate that in your response.

8. Should all answers tie to one another, or should they all be able to stand alone and be completely independent of one another? A couple of you mentioned not repeating the same items.

Judges report on those applications where the agency keeps repeating the same data or programs do not score as well as those who use each question to highlight a different component of their programs or services.

9. Can you talk about what you are looking for and the difference between Question 3 and 4?

*Question 3 is focused on **internal** actions, initiatives, or programs that demonstrate how you connect or inform your policy makers, commissions/boards, businesses, partners, or coalitions.*

*Question 4 is focused on **external** actions, initiatives, or programs that demonstrate how you connect or inform your customers and/or community members. Both internal and external communications are important.*