

# Program Department Updates

It's been a busy year in the ACCT world. With our financial position stabilized and the addition of some staff, many of our programs are now receiving much-needed updates. ACCT has also added several new Task Forces to continue the momentum. Here are some quick updates from each Task Force and Panel:

## Operation Reviewer Task Force

The group met face-to-face at the ACCT office in Longmont CO on 4/5-4/6 to discuss what the certification process will look like as it feeds into the Operation Accreditation program.

This highly-qualified team is creating training content for those seeking to become an Operation Reviewer, and is creating a guide and checklists so that all reviews will be conducted consistently.

The group continues to meet every two weeks by conference call. It intends to have its tasks completed by June, 2019.

## Operation Accreditation Panel

This Panel has created the forms and policies that will help establish the Operation Accreditation program.

Activities with this panel are currently on hold until the Operation Reviewer Task Force completes its work.

## Vendor Accreditation Revamp Task Force

This group met in Longmont on 4/12-4/13. It's currently tasked with 1) updating the process of applying for Professional Vendor Accreditation, 2) bringing more education and benefits to the PVMS, 3) creating a smoother reporting process, and 4) realigning the program with updated standards.

The group is hoping to roll out the updated program later this year.

Program improvements under way include new exams and a new Prep Course. The panel intends to have test materials translated into Spanish. There will also be many updates to the certification website to make it more user-friendly.

You may not be as familiar with this team - it's one of ACCT's newest, and is modeled somewhat on the Practitioner Certification Task Force.

This group is tasked with creating a program to provide trainers with an ACCT Certification in Training, much as we offer Inspector Certification for Inspectors. In the future, this program may feed into Operation and Vendor accreditation.

Since ACCT works with both credentialing and accreditation, this might be an excellent chance to explain the difference between the two.

Certification is a voluntary process by which an association (non-governmental professional organization) or a government organization (like the Department of Labor) grants recognition to an individual who has met certain qualifications. It is a credential which attests that the individual has demonstrated a certain level of mastery of a specific body of knowledge and skills within the relevant field of practice. Certification should not be confused with either licensing or accreditation; while each involves some form of evaluation and the awarding of some credential, they are quite different from one another, and the terms should not be used interchangeably. Certification differs from licensure in that, under a licensing law, practitioners of the licensed occupation must have a license to practice; unlike certification, it is involuntary. With regard to certification, however, one does not have to be certified in order to practice. An individual takes the certification exam simply because they want to enjoy the benefits of certification. However, to use the title and initials copyrighted and associated with the professional certification, one must be certified by that organization.

Accreditation is a non-governmental, voluntary process that evaluates organizations and programs, while certification and licensing involve individual practitioners. Accreditation is defined as the process through which an agency or association grants public recognition to a company or organization (such as ACCT's Vendor Accreditation Program) for having met certain established qualifications or standards. These standards are determined through initial and periodic evaluations that involve submitting self-evaluation reports, site inspections by a team of experts, and evaluation by an independent board or community.