



Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021

Action Steps & Metrics

“The past is your lesson, the present is your gift, and the future is your motivation”

Over the course of its 72-year history the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association has undertaken strategic plans before. These plans have been essential to the continued growth and improvement of MRPA. MRPA started in 1945 with a small group of professionals with the City of Baltimore’s Bureau of Recreation, and has grown to today’s organization of 3500 members working in 43 agencies throughout the State of Maryland. The parks and recreation profession has expanded as well with MRPA members holding a wide variety of positions – each having its own specific needs. Recently MRPA changed its member structure to encourage agencies to join – this has led to an increase in individual members and a desire to meaningfully engage members for this purpose...

To unite our members to provide the best recreation and park services throughout Maryland.

MRPA holds strong beliefs, in fact, *We Believe...*

- In developing leaders within the profession and within agencies
- In lifelong learning
- In connecting people
- Networking and training are essential to our professional development
- In laughter and fun

Building on its core strengths of valuing its members, volunteers, and staff; being financially smart and governing well; supporting each other; and our love of learning has led us to develop this 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. This plan is organized around 4 strategic initiatives:

- M** Member Engagement & Advocacy
- R** Relevant & Accessible Education
- P** Prospering Branches
- A** Assess Member Needs & Expectations

M Member Engagement & Advocacy

MRPA is focused on uniting its members to provide the best recreation and park services throughout Maryland, and to be advocates for our services. Our goal is to continue to advance membership engagement and develop member advocacy skills. We will transition new and current members quickly from being unaware to progressively higher levels of engagement, including attending, contributing, owning, and leading. We will also familiarize members with the ways they will benefit from their engagement in MRPA and the importance of being effective and continuous advocates for our services.

The best Maryland spokespersons to share the positive benefits of parks and recreation ARE Maryland's park and recreation professionals. There are many opportunities to be an advocate for parks and recreation. Our goal is to increase member engagement and skills in advocating for parks and recreation through:

- (1) Providing insight and education to policy makers on issues facing parks and recreation.
- (2) Informing members about local, state, or federal issues & regulations affecting parks and recreation.
- (3) Developing & maintaining relationships between policy makers and MRPA members (writing to and visiting with policy makers).
- (4) Advocating for the interests of members and member agencies.

Action Steps / Metrics / Status

2018-19

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Work with member agencies to secure member name, job title, work and/or personal email address; clarify personal email address will not be sold or distributed outside of MRPA uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact agencies within 30 days of receiving dues payment. 	Membership Committee MRPA Staff
2	Distribute a Welcome Letter to new members within 30 days of receiving their contact information; letter to include how to access the MRPA website and a list of up-coming events (statewide and branches).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letter written by Jan 2018 ○ Letter sent starting Jan 2018 	Membership Committee

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
3	Identify the social media platforms most used by MRPA members (i.e., LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook); actively utilize those platforms to share upcoming events, resources, job openings, and member news.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey members by [date] ○ Focus on top 2 platforms ○ Develop calendar / content for each platform by [date] ○ Identify options to utilize texting to communicate with members 	Marketing Committee
4	Identify Departmental Liaisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide with a Tool Kit to included speaking points, the MRPA pamphlet and a list of current Committee Chairs and the Executive Board, including contact information 	Membership Committee
5	Develop a 1-page Fact Sheet (#1) on the impact of a proposed policy or regulation to parks & recreation for distribution to policy makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fact Sheet developed by [date] ○ Fact Sheet distributed to members by [date] with specific ideas on how to distribute and to which policy makers (local, state, federal) 	Legislative Committee
6	Add legislative updates in communications to MRPA members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislative information added by [date] 	Legislative Committee

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
7	Video for New Hire Orientation @ Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create an outline of what will be included in the Orientation by April 2018 ○ Identify coordinator/point of contact for Agency Orientations ○ Seek out Videographers within Agencies/jurisdictions who could help ○ Post video to website so any member/individuals can see it 	Membership Committee
8	Develop a brochure/pamphlet to explain the ins and outs of the Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outline volunteer opportunities within the Association ○ Explain the benefits of membership 	Membership Committee

2019-20

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Develop a succinct list of benefits of MRPA membership and engagement that are quantifiable and meaningful; promote said benefits through the website, publications, social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ List of benefits developed by [date] ○ Test list with sample of members by [date] ○ Benefits regularly communicated by [date] 	Membership Committee

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
2	Identify the barriers to involvement and attendance at MRPA events through focus groups, branch meetings, and general membership meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct focus group at [event] ○ Create brief survey to distribute at branch meetings by [date] 	Membership Committee
3	Create & implement a member engagement plan based upon the member engagement pyramid ¹ with the goal of transitioning a member from “unaware” to “following” and “attending”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement plan developed by [date] ○ Implementation begins by [date] 	Membership Committee
4	Develop 1-page Fact Sheet (#2) on the impact of a proposed policy or regulation to parks & recreation for distribution to policy makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fact Sheet developed by [date] ○ Fact Sheet distributed to members by [date] with specific ideas on how to distribute and to which policy makers (local, state, federal) 	Legislative Committee
5	Develop testimonials (video clips) of members sharing their thoughts about the value of advocacy for parks & recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select 3-5 members to video by [date] ○ Video members by [date] ○ Share video clips at [number] MRPA events 	Legislative Committee
6	Training on advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal advocacy for MRPA involvement with Agency/Supervisors ○ Promoting profession to the community, agency members and legislators 	Training Committee

¹ MRPA engagement pyramid was created during the strategic planning process and is an addendum to the Strategic Plan

Updated: December 6, 2017

2020-21

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Offer a new member orientation at the annual conference; specifically invite and provide incentives for new members to attend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop orientation agenda / select speakers by [date] ○ Develop specific invite & distribute to new members by [date] ○ Hold new member orientation at conference [date] 	Membership Committee Conference Committee
2	Develop 1-page Fact Sheet on the impact of a proposed policy or regulation to parks & recreation for distribution to policy makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fact Sheet developed by [date] ○ Fact Sheet distributed to members by [date] with specific ideas on how to distribute and to which policy makers (local, state, federal) 	Legislative Committee

R Relevant & Accessible Education

MRPA believes a member's individual success is also its success. Our goal is to support and foster the professional development and growth of our members. We acknowledge that learning occurs in many forms – from conversations between members as well as structured workshops or conferences. We acknowledge that not all members have the same needs or the same access to educational opportunities. We want our educational offerings to be significant, accessible and focused on issues important to providing the best possible recreation and park services throughout Maryland.

Action Steps / Metrics / Status:

2018-19

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	<p>Study the feasibility of creating Learning Communities within MRPA and its branches to foster self-directed learning among members.</p> <p>If approved by Board; TF to develop suggested operating procedures for Learning Communities (LC) organizers and train Learning Community Organizers (LCO).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Task Force created by [date] to study feasibility of LCs within MRPA ○ Present recommendation to Board by [date] ○ TF to develop operating procedures for LCs ○ Training program for LCOs developed by [date] ○ Members recruited to serve as LCOs ○ LCOs receive training 	Training Coordinator

2019-20

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Start Learning Communities initiative, publicize to members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members informed of LCs by [date] ○ LCOs communicate with interested members 	Training Coordinator
2	MRPA Training Committee (TC) to develop a multi-year educational plan; committee to include branch representatives and other members; report 3x a year to the Executive Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TC create an annual training calendar by [date] ○ Members notified [when & how] ○ TC to create evaluation tool to measure training effectiveness ○ Evaluation tool distributed to training organizers 	Training Committee
3	Develop process for incorporating educational and developmental needs identified by agency directors and incorporate accreditation ² standards as established by the Commission on the Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Process to connect with agency directors developed by [date] ○ Agency directors surveyed by [date] ○ Survey data analyzed & incorporated into educational plan by [date] 	Training Committee Training Coordinator
4	Investigate online learning platforms available in the marketplace; survey members to assess their interest/likelihood of utilizing online learning options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Task Force created to investigate possible learning platforms by [date] ○ Members surveyed as to preferences by [date] ○ Data used to select appropriate online platforms by [date] 	Training Coordinator

² Currently there are 3 accredited agencies in Maryland (City of Baltimore, Howard County, and MNCPPC)

Updated: December 6, 2017

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
5	Identify barriers to member's participation in educational programs; once identified address to minimize the impact of these barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey developed to identify barriers perceived by members by [date] ○ Data used to identify barriers ○ Plan developed to overcome perceived barriers 	Training Committee
6	Support branches in offering "hot topic" sessions at general membership meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branches offer "hot topic" sessions by 2019 general membership meetings 	MRPA Board

P Prospering Branches

The parks and recreation profession in Maryland is broad; it includes many areas of specialization, some of which are organized into branches: Parks & Resource Conservation, Recreation & Leisure Services; and Therapeutic Recreation. Our goal is to enrich member experiences and job performance through the branches or other platforms for sharing and learning.

2018-19

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Survey other park and recreation state associations in regards to their branch structure and purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey completed by [person/group] by [date] ○ Findings shared with branch leadership & MRPA Board by [date] 	Branch Chairs
2	Convene a Branch Summit to share survey findings and to identify the purpose and function of branches within MRPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Branch Summit held by [date] 	Branch Chairs
3	Review placement of branch information on the MRPA website for the purpose of highlighting the benefits of branches and how to connect with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review completed by [person/group] by [date] ○ Recommendations submitted to Executive Director by [date] ○ Executive Director to implement any changes by [date] 	Branch Chairs with Marketing Committee and MRPA Staff

2019-20

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Clarify within the MRPA Constitution and Bylaws the purpose and functions of the Special Interest Branches ³ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board approve changes to Bylaws & submit to membership by [date] 	MRPA Board
2	Develop a Branch Development Plan to support the growth and positive impact of branches to MRPA members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Board appoint Branch Development Task Force by [date] to develop plan ○ Task Force submit recommendations to Board by [date] ○ Task Force dismissed by [date] 	MRPA Board Branch Chairs

2020-21

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Provide branch leadership with a list of active members to enable them to make personal connections with their members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MRPA office provide list of branch members by [date] 	MRPA Staff

³ Currently the MRPA Constitution and Bylaws are silent on the purpose and function of branches

Updated: December 6, 2017

A Actively Assess Member Needs & Expectations

Formally assess member needs, concerns, and expectations at least once every three (3) years. Members want a Return on [their] Investment (ROI) of time, energy, and expertise. We pledge to give our members a high Return on Your Investment (ROYI).

2018-19

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Convene focus groups with agency directors ⁴ to clarify their needs and expectations regarding their employee's involvement in MRPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schedule focus group by [date] ○ Develop agenda / speakers by [date] ○ Hold focus group by [date] ○ Communicate recommendations & insights to Board by [date] 	Training Committee

2019-20

	Action Steps	Metrics	Assigned To
1	Conduct a member needs/interest survey to assess member needs and expectations (recommended survey be created and tabulated by a consultant familiar with associations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure adequate funding is available to conduct survey by [date] ○ Submit RFP to association consultants by [date] ○ Complete survey by [date] ○ Share findings to members & branches by [date] 	Membership Committee

⁴ Agency directors is one segment of the membership that can be invited to participate in a focus group; others might be members under the age of 30; members of less than 3 years; members working in a small agency; members living in a specific part of the state

2	Utilize current meeting opportunities to gather information from members about their training needs, issues they are facing at work, their satisfaction with their MRPA membership, familiarity with member benefits, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Develop list of opportunities [date]○ Develop survey to distribute at [xx number] of opportunities.○ Conduct survey at a minimum of 10 different opportunities by end of 2020.○ Share findings with Board by [date]	MRPA Board/Staff
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