

Peer Review for Public Agencies

Enhance organizational performance and services with a confidential evaluation from a team of civil engineering management experts.



"ASCE's peer review validated our strengths as a Department, but also identified significant opportunities for improvement and provided observations that were extremely beneficial and very valuable. Public agencies should be reviewed at a minimum every four years, but should be evaluated if there are changing conditions that warrant different frequencies, such as a change in administration. I believe that peer reviews should become a standard element of the business practices of all state transportation agencies. They are that valuable."

Thomas Sorel
Commissioner

Minnesota Department of Transportation
2010 Review

The right time to evaluate yourself and your team

ASCE Peer Review for Public

Agencies is a customized evaluation process designed to help federal, state, and local government engineering agencies or their subdivisions of all sizes improve the management and quality of their engineering services and better protect the public safety with which they are entrusted.

For an agency to provide high-quality engineering services on a long-term basis, it must be strong in many areas in addition to technical competence and production tools. Ensuring your managers and project teams are effective at setting realistic goals, allocating resources, maintaining quality standards and handling client and public relations are all essential to increasing the success of both the organization and its employees.



"ASCE Peer Review for Public Agencies is unquestionable value to our agency. One of the cost and tremendous value, and I absolutely w

Identify opportunities. Uncover weaknesses. Focus on the future.

An ASCE Peer Review helps you identify immediate issues of concern, but also helps you put your organization on solid footing for the long term. ASCE peer reviewers analyze the critical challenges and opportunities of your organization's structure, services, policies, procedures and management practices, but *do not* evaluate the technical competence of your agency or its individuals. An ASCE Peer Review also seeks to identify areas of strength and weakness in your organization rather than to resolve particular issues. It is not uncommon for insights gained through an ASCE Peer Review to be incorporated into an agency's strategic planning to bring about changes that better position it for long-term success.

Whether you're facing pressure to meet increased performance standards, need help promoting the value of the services you provide to the public right now, or are focused on improving specific management practices or operational procedures, ASCE's Peer Review for Public Agencies can make a significant difference in your success.

is **NOW**

...and an ASCE Peer Review will provide essential guidance for ultimately improving your organization.

a very impressive program, and of great benefits of this program is the low cost. I would recommend it to other agencies."

Michael G. Collins, P.E.

Chief, Engineering Bureau
Department of Environmental Services, Arlington County, VA
2007 Review



Bring in a team of experts...

Focus on your particular priorities.

An ASCE Peer Review puts an outside team of top level civil engineering managers at your disposal to evaluate your program and critique the effectiveness of your policies and procedures in any number of areas you choose, including:

- Organizational management
- Emergency management procedures
- Human resource management
- Public relations practices
- Project management
- Technical practice and procedures
- Financial management
- Strategic planning
- Sustainable practices

ASCE Peer Review team members are licensed professionals with more than 15 years of public agency experience, at least five of those in senior management. They are dedicated to improving the quality of engineering services and are active participants in professional societies or in other professional civic activities. Like professional coaches, they observe current performance and provide critical feedback to help you enhance your effectiveness and meet your objectives. Their training and experience in conducting peer reviews bring a richness of perspective, communication and listening skills, and vital objectivity to the process.

Each review begins with our promise of confidentiality.

While every ASCE Peer Review is unique to agreed-upon program requirements, all are confidential and each reviewer is required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before beginning the review. The results are not discussed with any other agency, your parent agency, or anyone within your agency other than the engineer/director requesting the review. No written records, reports, or findings are kept unless a written report is requested.



The ASCE Peer Review Process...

Three steps that will add value to your organization's mission.

1. The onsite review begins with a brief private meeting with the engineer/director and the ASCE Peer Review team. The team leader discusses the peer review process and reaffirms your goals and objectives. Review team members come prepared for this meeting by familiarizing themselves with information and documents provided in advance such as your mission statement, goals, organizational chart, policies, procedures, and technical standards.
2. Since the goal is to improve the quality of work performed throughout your agency, it is important that the peer reviewers interview a cross section of all levels of agency personnel. These interviews help assess how well your agency's policies and procedures are understood and practiced by your staff. They also provide insights into morale, job satisfaction, and perception of personnel policies.
3. When the onsite review is completed, the ASCE Peer Review team will give a summary report of its analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses to the engineer/director, and key staff members if requested. The verbal report, given by the peer review team at the exit interview, can be the final report. A written report, typically requested by most agencies, will be provided on request.

READY TO LEARN MORE?

It's easy to get started.

Any engineer/director of a public agency may request a peer review. For additional information and a confidential reply, contact the ASCE Professional Activities Department at **800-548-2723 (ASCE)** or send an email to **professional@asce.org**.

ASCE's professional staff is available to answer questions, provide information, and guide you every step of the way through the peer review process. When you're ready to proceed, the program coordinator will appoint a peer review team leader and the review effort and fee will be determined. Take the next step toward enhancing your organization's operation and success...

Call or email us today!

"We are very satisfied with the ASCE peer review process and the results. It was very beneficial to have the input and thoughts from peers that have been in our shoes and understand the complexities we deal with on a daily basis. We requested the ASCE Peer Review in preparation for a state-mandated legislative review. The findings of the ASCE review and the legislative audit were key in enabling our department to obtain additional funding from the state to help implement a new management system. I would recommend the ASCE program to other public agencies that want more insight into the effectiveness of their policies and procedures."

Tom E. Cole, L.S., P.E.
Chief Engineer
Division of Highways, Idaho Transportation Department
2008 Review

Division of Highways, Idaho Transportation Department
2008 Review

Is there a “right time” for an ASCE Peer Review?

ASCE Peer Reviews meet many important objectives and can provide essential and timely insight into a wide range of circumstances. Some agencies may want to schedule reviews on a regular basis to help ensure they remain focused on ongoing performance and productivity improvements. Other agencies have found an ASCE Peer Review helpful during periods of transition or challenge such as:

- When a new engineer/director is hired
- During times of economic change
- When staff reductions are implemented
- Soon after a major reorganization
- Office moves and expansions
- A new project is about to launch
- A significant project has recently been completed
- Changes in management and leadership have taken place
- A problematic situation of public perception arises
- A visit from the inspector general is on the horizon
- Issues with sister agencies need to be addressed
- A shift toward outsourcing is underway
- It's just time to reevaluate our priorities and practices with the aid of outside, expert perspective!

A lot of value for a modest investment.

Fees for a peer review are based on covering the costs of the program, including ASCE coordination expenses, and largely depend on the number of staff the agency employs. The staff size, in turn, determines the number of days required for on-site interviews and the size of the peer review team. The agency's fee includes reimbursement to the peer review team members for their expenses only. ASCE or the agency does not reimburse reviewers for their time, as this is considered a contribution to the profession.



“The peer review provided us with confirmation from a team of top experts that our overall organizational structure and program management approach were suitable for our large (\$2.5 Billion) program. The review also identified specific opportunities to make improvements. We have followed up on these opportunities including completion of a Construction Management Manual with a dispute resolution procedure, implementation of an in-house design group for small capital projects, and improved relations between our Engineering Department and Contracts Administration Division. These improvements have been important to the success of our program.”

James D. Herberg, P.E., BCEE
Director of Engineering
Orange County Sanitation District, California
2006 Review

For additional information or to request a peer review,
contact the ASCE Professional Activities Department.



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