

## Missouri Rural Water Association

### Certified Office Professional Program (C.O.P.P.) Manual

#### I. Intent

It is the intent of Missouri Rural Water Association (MRWA) to promote and develop professionalism among municipal and water/sewer district office professionals. In order to provide recognition and guidance towards professionalism, MRWA is working with a group of member office professionals to develop a comprehensive training and professionalism recognition program for administrative staff. This program shall be referred to as the Certified Office Professional Program (COPP).

It should be kept in mind that MRWA's intention is to develop and promote this program with the initial purpose of evaluating its performance and value. MRWA reserves the right to end this program should it be found necessary.

#### II. Definitions

- a. Clerk—official custodian of records.
- b. Collector—the official that is responsible for the collection of service fees and customer payments.
- c. Office Manager—any person that oversees the office operation of a municipality, water/sewer district, or privately-owned public water or sewer system.
- d. Office Professional—any person employed by a municipality, water/sewer district, or privately-owned public water or sewer system to perform those functions involving the operation of the office.
- e. Treasurer/Financial Officer—official responsible for accounting and finance.

#### III. Requirements

##### a. Educational Course Requirements

- i. Applicant must complete thirty (30) hours of course work formally acquired through MRWA's Office Professional Seminar, Conferences, or applicable one-day courses. The core subjects shall be identified as follows:

1. Office Management: 10 hours,
  - a. Telephone courtesy,
  - b. Communication and presentation skills,
  - c. Computer skills,
  - d. Office machine operation and maintenance,
  - e. Grammar,
  - f. Letter writing,
  - g. Office organization.
2. Financial Administration: 5 hours
  - a. Audits,
  - b. Debt service,
  - c. Budgeting,
  - d. Accounting,
  - e. Funding sources,
  - f. Internal controls,
  - g. Fund accounting,
  - h. Purchasing (bid specs, sealed bids, etc.)
  - i. Understanding financial statements.
3. Water and Wastewater System Operations: 5 hours
  - a. Basic water science,
  - b. Identifying common appurtenances,
  - c. Distribution system operational overview,
  - d. Treatment system operational overview,
  - e. Source water protection,

- f. Sampling processes,
- g. Water and wastewater regulations,
- h. Operational reporting,
- i. Emergency planning,
- j. System security.

4. Legal and Personnel Issues: 5 hours

- a. Minutes, notices, agenda, ordinances, resolutions and elections.
- b. Sunshine Law,
- c. Exempt/non-exempt employees,
- d. Hiring and firing procedures,
- e. Maintaining personnel files,
- f. Employee evaluations,
- g. Sexual harassment,
- h. Payroll records, including tax related paperwork,
- i. Employee handbooks,
- j. Basic civics,
- k. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA), etc.
- l. Insurance, including Cafeteria plans, Worker's Compensation, health insurance, system insurance, vehicle insurance, etc.
- m. Media relations.

5. Personal Development: 5 hours

- a. Board/Council/Employee Relationships
- b. Time management,

- c. Multi-tasking
- d. Dressing for success,
- e. Maintaining mental and physical health

- ii. The course work may be achieved in no particular time frame as long as the prescribed number of hours in each category is achieved.

- iii. The attendance of any three (3) MRWA Office Professional Seminars on or after the 2004 year shall count as the thirty (30) hour requirement of course work. The Office Professional Seminars attended do not have to be concurrent years.

- iv. If attendance at any given MRWA Office Professional Seminar is used as coursework credit, then that year's seminar can not be used again as coursework credit.

- v. Applicants will track their own course work achievements and document such upon application.

- vi. MRWA maintains final decision as to whether course work documented will be accepted as credit.

- b. Work Experience

- i. Applicant must demonstrate at least three (3) years of work experience in an office professional position preferably with a municipality or water/sewer district.

- c. Application

- i. Applicant must submit a copy of Form MRWA COPP-1, Application, to MRWA along with a \$25 application fee.

- ii. Applications must be received not later than 30 days before the applied for examination date.

- iii. Applications must completed entirely documenting course work attended and work experience.

- d. Examination

i. Applicant must pass a written examination provided by MRWA. The exam shall consist of 100 multiple choice questions.

ii. Examinations shall be given at MRWA's Annual Conference and Office Professional's Seminar. Other special exam events may be developed if an apparent need is determined by MRWA.

iii. A passing grade on the exam is a score of 70% or higher.

iv. Examinations will be graded by at least two MRWA employees.

v. Applicants will be notified by mail or e-mail, if e-mail address is given during application, regarding examination status.

vi. Examination Appeals

1. If an applicant feels that a grade is given in error, the applicant's examination will be re-graded.

2. If an applicant feels that any provided exam question is incorrect, invalid, or out of date, then the applicant may submit notice in writing to MRWA for evaluation of the question.

3. All decisions made by MRWA are final.

IV. Certification Process and Renewal

a. Upon demonstrating completion of all items in Section III, MRWA will issue the applicant a certificate.

b. The certifications shall be issued for a three-year period.

c. The certification shall be maintained by obtaining at least 30 renewal hours of training on course topics relating to the subjects outlined in Section III, Part A, Subsection i.

d. Applicant shall submit a renewal fee of \$25.

e. If a Certified Office Professional fails to acquire the 30 hours of renewal training, or submit their renewal before the noted due date, then the individual must retake the exam.