

THE ISSUE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

CRAB'S MISSION

The mission of the County Road Administration Board is to preserve and enhance the transportation infrastructure of Washington Counties by providing Standards of Good Practice, fair administration of funding programs, visionary leadership, and integrated, progressive, and professional technical services.

CRAB'S STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Since 1965, RCW 36.78.020 has required the County Road Administration Board to establish, by rule, Standards of Good Practice. (WAC 136-12 through 136-70)

- Vacancy in position of County Engineer
- Priority programming procedures
- Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program
- Annual Road Program and Construction Report
- Day Labor Construction
- Inspection of County Bridges
- Processing county road accident reports
- Accommodation of utilities on county road rights-of-way
- Adoption of written administrative policies
- Use of Pavement Management System

Recently, the focus has been on maintenance and preservation of existing transportation infrastructure. Because of CRAB's Standards of Good Practice, counties are able to accurately demonstrate the effectiveness of their maintenance and preservation programs.

ANNUAL CERTIFICATION

In order to ensure that counties adhere to the Standards of Good Practice, CRAB conducts an Annual Certification of each county. The purpose of the Annual Certification is to verify that counties have, during the preceding year, "reasonably complied with provisions of law relating to county road administration and with the Standards of Good Practice as formulated and adopted by the CRABoard." (WAC 136-04-010)

Annually, each County Engineer and either the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners or the County Executive must certify that the county has operated in compliance with the Standards of Good Practice. A complete county audit includes not only the Annual Certification but also an annual Bridge Inspection Report and biennial performance audits.

MORE THAN GRANTS

CRAB does much more than administer grant programs. Its sole mission when it was created in 1965 continues to be its primary mission today — to ensure that the 39 County Road Departments of Washington State are fully accountable for transportation spending and performance within their counties.

- CRAB provides training for County Engineers, Public Works Directors, and key management staff to ensure that they recognize and adhere to the statutory and professional requirements and responsibilities of their positions.
- CRAB provides comprehensive on-site and telephone support for any and all questions related to the operation of County Road Departments and performance of engineering and management duties.
- CRAB helps counties maximize limited resources by fulfilling functions on behalf of all 39 counties that they would otherwise have to provide individually.
- CRAB assists counties as requested in hiring key staff by screening résumés, providing interview questions, and participating on interview panels.
- CRAB drafts model ordinances, resolutions, policies, and documents that can be adapted to individual county situations.
- CRAB facilitates the implementation of common solutions by serving as a repository for technical and managerial information that can be shared among the counties.

SERVICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The counties prefer to keep CRAB as it is today. One county says it sees the services offered by CRAB as an extension of its own staff — worth about two full-time equivalents, but providing a range of services that it could not hire any two employees to provide.

CRAB regulates and ensures accountability by providing tools that enable the counties to improve professionalism. The return to the public on this investment in professionalism can probably never be calculated, but it surely exists in two main forms — dollars saved or better spent, and increased trust of county government by the public.



**Washington State
County Road Administration Board**