

FY2018 – FY2022 ACWA Strategic Plan

Who is ACWA

Founded in 1961, the Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA) is the independent, nonpartisan, national organization of state, interstate and territorial clean water program managers, who on a daily basis implement the water quality programs of the Clean Water Act (CWA). For more than half a century, ACWA has supported its members with information, programming, technical support and collaborative opportunities that increase state and interstate capacity and effectiveness.

Mission Statement

As the national voice of state and interstate water programs, ACWA strives to protect and restore watersheds to achieve “clean water everywhere for everyone.” ACWA works to maintain a vibrant national organization that:

- Serves membership needs and achieves a high level of participation;
- Is the national voice for state and interstate clean water program concerns, interests and priorities;
- Facilitates technical and policy innovation among national and state and interstate water programs (best practices);
- Fosters the collaboration needed for sound public policy; and
- Carries out activities in an efficient, ethical and fiscally sound manner.

ACWA’s FY 2014 to FY 2017 Strategic Plan

ACWA’s previous strategic plan continued the Association’s commitment to high-quality member services and to serving as the “Voice of States and Interstates.” That plan also set a course for fiscal stability, calling for a “fully sustainable operational budget” by the start of FY 2016. Over the FY 2014 – FY 2017 period, the Association was able to report significant accomplishments to its members on every strategic initiative in the plan. Membership meetings were managed, information exchanged, and newsletters issued. Committees, task forces and workgroups facilitated meetings, hosted calls, and developed comments and positions. ACWA members and staff maintained good relationships with EPA and others. And in particular with regard to finances, the FY 2015 Annual Report contained a letter from the executive director summarizing actions of the board that put the Association on sound financial footing.

ACWA’s FY 2018 to FY 2022 Strategic Plan

In August 2016, the ACWA President, in consultation with the Board of Directors, created a Strategic Plan Task Force, assigned with developing a draft FY 2018 – FY 2022 plan. Building on the FY 2014 – FY 2017 Strategic Planning effort, ACWA members were asked to provide input on an FY2018 – FY 2022 plan in several different ways, including completion of an electronic survey and by providing direct feedback on an early draft. The Strategic Plan Task Force used all of this information to further refine the plan’s goals, objectives, and action items. As noted by the performance measures, the ACWA staff, Executive Committee, and Board of Directors will monitor the activities of the association to ensure implementation.

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Goal 1: Provide High Quality Member Services

Providing high-quality member services is critical to accomplishing ACWA’s mission. To that end, the Association will review the services it provides to assure that it is effectively addressing current priorities.

Objective 1.1 - Evaluate Existing Services

Evaluate existing services in the regulatory, policy, legislative, legal and technical arenas to ensure alignment with membership priorities.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
1.1.1	Organization Chart	Develop chart showing connections between ACWA staff, the Board, committees, workgroups, and task forces, explaining their various roles.	ACWA Staff 1 st Quarter of each FY (Jul-Aug)
1.1.2	Process for Setting Priorities	Establish a process and schedule through which ACWA will periodically determine its priorities in each of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Water Act policy • Grants and funding • Partnerships and collaboration • Management of the Association • Other matters as appropriate 	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board of Directors 3 rd Quarter of FY2018 (Jan - Mar 2018)
1.1.3	Process to Review Services	Establish the process and schedule by which ACWA will periodically review existing services to determine alignment with priorities.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 3 rd Quarter of FY2018 (Jan - Mar 2018)
1.1.4	Protocol to Redirect Resources	Establish a protocol for the board and staff to redirect resources as warranted to assure alignment with priorities.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 4 th Quarter of FY2018 (Apr - Jun 2018)
1.1.5	Report Results	Report the results of each year’s evaluations in the annual reports.	ACWA Staff 4 th Quarter of each FY (Apr - Jun)

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Objective 1.2 - Identify Ways to Improve Communication

Identify options to improve communication and information sharing among members regarding Clean Water Act issues.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
1.2.1	Establish National Forum	Establish a national forum where member states and interstates can share and address challenges and barriers to clean water program implementation and showcase new and innovative clean water initiatives.	ACWA Staff 1 st and 3 rd Quarters of each FY (Mar & Aug)
1.2.2	Facilitate More Member Discussions	Investigate options to facilitate greater member-to-member discussions such as forums, discussion groups, or virtual workspaces and make a recommendation to the Board.	ACWA Staff 1 st Quarter of FY2018 (Jul - Sep 2017)
1.2.3	Evaluate Effectiveness of Communications	Conduct periodic e-surveys of members to evaluate the effectiveness of ACWA's communications, including member-to-member communications, organizational communications, and ACWA meetings. Use feedback to evaluate methods that could be adopted to improve communications.	ACWA Staff 2 nd Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)
1.2.4	Report Results	Summarize in the annual report steps taken to improve communications and meetings and the results as available.	ACWA Staff 4 th Quarter of each FY (Apr - Jun)

Objective 1.3 - Develop and Maintain a Roster of Experts

Develop and maintain a roster of ACWA-member technical, legal and policy subject matter experts who are receptive to contact from ACWA staff and members.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
1.3.1	Identify Subject Area Experts	Request committees, task forces, workgroups and general membership to identify subject area experts and to communicate that information to the staff coordinator.	ACWA Staff 2 nd Quarter of FY2018 (Oct - Dec 2017)
1.3.2	Coordinate Experts List	Identify a staff person as coordinator of an experts list and propose for the Board to review a protocol for sharing that information.	Executive Director 2 nd Quarter of FY2018 (Oct - Dec 2017)
1.3.3	Evaluate Experts Roster	Request that members evaluate the value and usefulness of an "experts roster" and solicit suggestions for improvement in annual survey.	ACWA Staff 3 rd Quarter of each FY (Jan - Mar)

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Goal 2: Voice of State & Interstate Clean Water Administrators

State and interstate water quality program managers recognize that their common interests are best advanced when represented as a group. Therefore, ACWA will continue to speak for its members, effectively engaging with EPA and Congress as well as other government associations and professional organizations.

Objective 2.1 - Ensure Positions Represent Membership

Ensure ACWA's positions represent membership perspectives.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
2.1.1	Protocol for Elevating Issues	Establish a protocol for committees, task forces, workgroups, members or staff to elevate to the board issues regarding which the Association may want to take a position.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 1 st Quarter of FY2019 (Aug - Sep 2018)
2.1.2	Review/Revise Protocol for Developing Positions	Review existing protocols for development of ACWA's letters and position statements by its committees and make revisions to ensure a transparent process.	ACWA staff 4 th Quarter of FY2018 (Apr - Jun 2018)
2.1.3	Protocol to Notify Members of Positions	Establish a protocol for notifying members of ACWA position statements and letters.	ACWA Staff 4 th Quarter of FY2018 (Apr - Jun 2018)
2.1.4	Solicit Member Input on Protocol	Use the annual survey to solicit member opinions on the effectiveness of this process.	ACWA Staff 2 nd Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)

Objective 2.2 - Enhance Key Federal Relationships

Enhance key relationships with federal clean water agencies after identifying priority organizations in consultation with the Board of Directors.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
2.2.1	Process to Identify Key Federal Agencies	Establish a process for the board to identify those federal agencies with which ACWA should develop and maintain strategic partnerships.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 1 st Quarter of FY2019 (Aug - Sep 2018)
2.2.2	Plan for Communicating and Working with Federal Agencies	Develop and implement a plan for communicating and working with each of the federal agencies so identified.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 1 st Quarter of FY2019 (Aug - Sep 2018)
2.2.3	Report Results	Summarize collaboration with federal partners in the annual report.	ACWA Staff 4 th Quarter of each FY (Apr - Jun)

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Objective 2.3 Expand, Improve and Strengthen Partnerships

Expand, improve and strengthen strategic partnerships with non-federal groups.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
2.3.1	Process to Seek Strategic Partnerships with Other Associations	Establish a process for the board to consider associations and groups, other than federal agencies, ACWA should seek strategic partnerships with and provide recommendations on how those relationships should be pursued.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 1 st Quarter of FY2019 (Aug - Sep 2018)
2.3.2	Partner with Other Associations	For organizations so identified, pursue partnerships and exchange of ideas and information that advance the states' and interstates' ability to implement the nation's clean water programs. Communicate the leading role ACWA and its members play in protecting those waters.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 2 nd Quarter of FY2019 (Oct - Dec 2018)
2.3.3	Report Results	Summarize in the Annual Report ACWA's involvement with non-federal groups.	ACWA Staff 4 th Quarter of each FY (Apr - Jun)

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Goal 3: Enhance Membership Development

ACWA is a membership organization whose effectiveness relies heavily on its officers, its board, and the chairs of its committees and task forces. The Association will therefore review how it can best facilitate greater member participation and encourage members to prepare for and pursue ACWA leadership positions.

Objective 3.1 - Improve Understanding of Membership

Improve each member's understanding of member status and responsibilities.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
3.1.1	Members' State-Determined Roles and Programs	Determine how each member's role in ACWA is decided by the member state or interstate organization and identify which water programs fall under the member's areas of responsibility (clean water, drinking water, ground water, other).	ACWA Staff 4 th Quarter of FY2018 (Apr - Jun 2018)

Objective 3.2 - Improve Membership Engagement

Improve membership engagement, leadership training, and use of alumni resources.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
3.2.1	Member Training Strategy	Develop and implement a member training strategy to educate all new members on what the organization is and how they can best get involved.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 1 st Quarter of FY2018 (Aug - Sep 2017)
3.2.2	Board Contact and Update Members	Board members will contact the state or interstate members they represent at least once each year to ensure their members remain aware of ACWA's priorities, initiatives, successes, challenges and value to the members.	Board of Directors 4 th Quarter of each FY Between 3 rd & 4 th Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)
3.2.3	Mentor Program	Develop a mentor program that encourages participation in leadership activities and helps future officers, board members and committee chairs in an improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those positions.	ACWA Staff 2 nd Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)
3.2.4	Alumni Program	Develop an Alumni program that provides previous ACWA members with access to organizational materials and leverages institutional knowledge and volunteer efforts.	ACWA Staff 2 nd Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)

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Goal 4: Promote a Culture of Organizational Excellence

The quality and reliability of ACWA’s work is critically important to support its members’ programs and to support protection of the nation’s waters. Accordingly, the organization will review its operations, financial management and staffing policies to assure effectiveness, efficiency, integrity and sustainability.

Objective 4.1 - Attract, Develop, and Retain Professional Staff

Recruit, develop and retain staff to assure delivery of professional services as identified by the board of directors and in the strategic plan.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
4.1.1	Retaining ACWA Staff	Maximize staff retention by assessing, at least annually, their job satisfaction, position descriptions, and ensuring competitiveness of salary and benefits packages.	Executive Director in consultation with the Board Periodically (at least every 4 years) 1 st Quarter of FY2019 (Jul - Sep 2018)
4.1.2	Compensation Study	Conduct a compensation study to ensure salaries are commensurate with job descriptions and market salaries for comparable positions.	Executive Director 1 st Quarter FY2018 (Jul - Sep 2017)
4.1.3	ACWA Staff Training and Succession Plan	Develop ACWA staff training plan and succession plan to ensure the organization is well situated for turnover; this is particularly critical with a small staff.	ACWA Staff 3 rd Quarter of FY 2019 (Jan - Mar 2018)

Objective 4.2 - Comply with Administrative Requirements

Remain vigilant in complying with all employment, organizational management, board governance and grants-related requirements.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
4.2.1	Support Education Opportunities at ACWA	Ensure staff, managers, directors, officers and others identify and participate in continuing education opportunities, conferences, shadowing, etc., that support this objective.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 1 st Quarter of each FY (Jul - Sep)
4.2.2	Financial Audits	Ensure that financial audits are routinely conducted, the results of which are reported to the board and members.	ACWA Staff in consultation with Treasurer Between 1 st and 2 nd Quarter of Subsequent FY (Jul - Aug)

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Objective 4.3 - Ensure Efficient and Effective Use of Organizational Resources

Ensure efficient and effective use of organizational resources.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
4.3.1	Evaluate Cost-Saving Opportunities	Regularly revisit vendor costs and evaluate cost-saving opportunities including shared-services options.	ACWA Staff - biennially 2 nd Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)
4.3.2	Update Technical Resources	Review infrastructure, technologies, and other technology resources to ensure that they are adequate and keep pace with the needs of the organization.	ACWA Staff - annually 2 nd Quarter of each FY (Oct - Dec)

Objective 4.4 Ensure Financial Integrity and Sustainability

Ensure financial integrity and sustainability through appropriate budgeting and investment.

Action Item	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
4.4.1	Balanced Operating Budget and Projections	Develop and implement balanced annual operating budgets and perform long-term budget projections as appropriate.	ACWA Staff in consultation with Treasurer - annually 3 rd Quarter of each FY (Jan - Mar)
4.4.2	Evaluate Reserve Goal	Determine whether the current six-month reserve is sufficient to assure financial stability, and if not increase the reserve goal.	ACWA Staff - biennially in consultation with Treasurer 3 rd Quarter of each FY (Jan - Mar)

Objective 4.5 - Ensure Strategic Plan is Implemented

Ensure strategic plan goals, objectives and action items are integrated into organizational operations.

Action Item#	Activity	Description	Performed By / Timeframe
4.5.1	Performance Measures for Action Items	Develop a set of performance measures associated with the Action Items that would allow the Executive Director, the Board of Directors, and the general membership to assess progress and relevant results from implementing the strategic plan.	ACWA Staff in consultation with the Board 4 th Quarter of FY2018 (Mar - Jun 2018)
4.5.2	Annual Report	Publish an annual report that addresses how ACWA has addressed each of the objectives and actions in the strategic plan.	ACWA Staff - annually 1 st Quarter of each FY (Aug - Dec)