



Professional Certification of Floodplain Managers

Program Charter

(Revised August 17, 2007)

**Arkansas Floodplain Management Association
Charter for Professional Certification of Floodplain Managers**

Recognizing the floodplain management and hazard mitigation requirements of local, state and federal programs dealing with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Arkansas Floodplain Management Association (AFMA) hereby establishes and intends to operate a statewide program for certifying floodplain managers.

The role of floodplain managers throughout the country is expanding due to increases in disaster losses, emphasis on mitigation to alleviate the damage-rebuild-damage cycle, and a recognized need for professionals to adequately address these issues. Floodplain managers come from a variety of curricula and backgrounds. This certification program lays the foundation for ensuring highly qualified individuals are available to meet the challenge of breaking the damage cycle and reducing the negative drain on human, financial and natural resources.

The formation of a professional certification program is recognized as an effective means to:

- Formalize a procedure to recognize and provide an incentive for individuals to improve their knowledge of floodplain management concepts.
- Enhance individual professional development goals.
- Promote an understanding of relevant subject matter that is consistent nationwide.
- Convey new concepts and practices.
- Build partnerships among organizations and agencies that share the goal of advancing sound floodplain management.

I. Objectives of the Professional Certification Program

The Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) program is hereby created by AFMA to raise and maintain the professional standards of those individuals that manage floodplains, wetlands and watersheds within the state of Arkansas. CFM® is a registered trademark of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM). The program is designed to certify competency with the basic principles of sound floodplain management as mandated and encouraged by the NFIP.

II. Program Vision and Goals

The vision of the program is such that every community in Arkansas will have access to a core group of professionals that provide technical assistance and guidance to ensure effective floodplain management.

The primary goal of the program is to improve the knowledge and abilities of floodplain managers in the state of Arkansas. Improving NFIP knowledge and capabilities within local governments and the floodplain management community will contribute substantially toward reducing the state's flood losses and ensure the protection and enhancement of natural floodplain values. This primary goal will be achieved over time through:

- A. Encouraging self-study and attendance at training sessions by requiring testing to obtain certification.
- B. Requiring continuing education as a condition for certification renewal.
- C. Encouraging city and county governments to require training and professional certification of local floodplain managers.
- D. Ensuring that CFMs maintain an awareness of the NFIP and comprehensive floodplain management.

On a larger scale and in a longer time frame, a second major goal of the certification program is to increase the prominence of floodplain management and hazard mitigation in decisions made by local and state officials, as well as the general public. This goal will be achieved over time through:

- A. Improving the recognition of floodplain management and hazard mitigation as a specific discipline.
- B. Increasing the status of floodplain managers as knowledgeable professionals in a complex and important field.
- C. Promoting certification to provide greater visibility of the profession.
- D. Increasing the educational and training opportunities for floodplain managers through partnerships with other organizations.
- E. Encouraging CFMs to contribute to the profession of floodplain management for a better Arkansas.

III. Target Audience

The AFMA certified floodplain manager program has been developed for individuals from among a variety of occupations, interests and educational backgrounds who have floodplain related duties. Typically these include representatives from groups including: local, state and federal officials; the private sector; academia; interest groups; and private citizens.

While members of AFMA only account for a fraction of the potential candidate population for certification, a majority of the floodplain managers in Arkansas do not belong to the organization. It is recognized that any certification program should include every floodplain manager in the state.

For the purposes of the AFMA certified floodplain manager program, two definitions are set forth below:

- **Floodplain Management**
A comprehensive process that uses a variety of techniques and programs to help reduce flood losses while protecting and enhancing the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a key building block and important first step in this process, but it is not the only approach to floodplain management.
- **Certified Floodplain Manager**
Any person certified in floodplain management by the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) or an ASFPM accredited program. The AFMA certified floodplain manager program is accredited by ASFPM.

IV. Establishment of Committee

The Professional Development Certification Committee (PDCC) is hereby established as an ongoing operating committee of AFMA.

A. Membership of Committee

Membership of the PDCC shall include:

1. At least one member of the AFMA board of directors, appointed by the board.
2. The state NFIP coordinator.
3. Three additional members of AFMA, appointed by the board.

B. Organization, Meetings and Terms of the Committee

1. Members of the PDCC will elect a chairman, a vice-chairman and secretary from within its membership.
 - a. The PDCC chairman shall preside at all committee meetings at which he or she is in attendance and guide the PDCC in the performance of its duties prescribed by the AFMA board of directors and / or the PDCC.
 - b. The PDCC vice-chairman shall perform the duties of the chairman in the absence of the chairman. In the event the office of chairman becomes vacant for any reason, the vice-chairman will assume all duties until a successor is named.
 - c. The PDCC secretary shall be responsible for taking minutes of all committee meetings and recording all decisions made by committee members. The secretary shall write a congratulatory letter to the supervisor of each successful applicant, and if the applicant is employed by a government entity, to the chief elected official or manager thereof. The AFMA chairman will sign these letters.
2. The PDCC shall meet at least once every year, typically during the annual AFMA spring workshop. The chairman may call additional meetings when deemed necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the committee.
3. The membership of the committee will change when the board decides to replace current or retiring members.

C. Responsibilities of the Committee

The PDCC shall be responsible for the following activities, subject to approval of the AFMA board of directors.

1. Report to the AFMA board of directors on meetings and decisions made by the PDCC.
2. Develop rules and regulations for operating the AFMA certification program.
3. Develop program application forms and credentials required for professional certification.
4. Review and develop professional standards as basis for certification.
5. Develop renewal requirements.
6. Develop closed-book testing procedures and exam to evaluate the applicant's knowledge of the NFIP, floodplain management, and hazard mitigation.
7. Develop and evaluate opportunities to offer application and testing for the certification program.
8. Establish and collect fees for the certification program.
9. Review and approve or reject applications for professional certification.
10. Grade closed-book exams and evaluate testing requirements.
11. Issue certificates to all applicants that pass the closed-book exam and meet all other requirements for professional certification.
12. Establish continuing education requirements.
13. Review educational programs and define continuing education credits (CECs).
14. Evaluate non-AFMA programs, conferences and training sessions for credit under the continuing education requirements.
15. Develop advanced training and certification programs as needed.
16. Other duties as assigned by the AFMA board of directors.

V. Responsibilities of the AFMA Board of Directors

The AFMA board of directors shall have the responsibility for, but not be limited to, the following activities:

- A. Overall responsibility for the certification program.
- B. Appoint / remove members of the PDCC.
- C. Promote and facilitate professional certification under the certification program.
- D. Offer at least one opportunity per calendar year for AFMA members to make application and test under the certification program.
- E. Offer at least one opportunity per calendar year for CFMs to meet the continuing education requirements.
- F. Develop additional opportunities for application and testing under the certification program.
- G. Promote and facilitate the offering of the FEMA training course "Managing Floodplain Development Through the National Flood Insurance Program."
- H. Promote and develop training opportunities for floodplain managers.
- I. Promote and develop additional advanced training opportunities to include specific topics such as flood hazard mitigation, the community rating system (CRS), multi-objective management, and other related disciplines.
- J. Assist ASFPM with ongoing development of a national certification program for floodplain managers.
- K. Maintain and publish a list or directory of all AFMA members participating in the certification program.
- L. Promote the Code of Professional Conduct for CFMs.

VI. Disclaimer of Liability

Professional certification is a peer review process administered by AFMA. Participation in the CFM program is strictly voluntary. The program is designed to establish educational, training, and experience criteria related to floodplain management, hazard mitigation, and the NFIP; and to certify that an individual applicant has met these criteria. If the Arkansas CFM program would cease to exist, all Arkansas CFMs agree to relinquish their state certification and not hold ASFPM or any other organization responsible for such program termination.

AFMA assumes no liability for any action or decision made by individual CFMs during the normal course of performing their prescribed duties and responsibilities of managing development within the identified floodplain, as established by criteria of the NFIP or the state, and mandated by their respective employer or local government agency. Furthermore, any list of CFMs should be used with care. AFMA has not attempted to independently verify the information submitted by certification applicants. We strongly recommend that anyone using the professional services of any listed individual or firm contact that individual or firm directly, and verify their references and credentials.

If ASFPM accredits the AFMA certification program, then ASFPM assumes no liability for any action or decision made by an individual CFM during the normal course of performing his prescribed duties and responsibilities of managing development within the identified floodplain as mentioned in the above paragraph.

VII. Rules and Policies of the Certification Program

The purpose of this section is to establish the application procedures and criteria for registration as a CFM and to establish basic operating rules and procedures for implementing the certification program.

A. Eligibility

Any person that meets the credentials and requirements as established by the PDCC is welcome to apply for professional certification under the AFMA certification program. It is anticipated most applicants will be local floodplain managers; however, the program is open to individuals in the private sector, state and federal government, and other agencies or organizations dealing with floodplain and other related disciplines.

B. Program Requirements

The initial CFM designation will be granted upon successful completion of three criteria:

1. Application.
2. Credentials of the applicant.
3. Exam.

VIII. Application

All applicants for certification must obtain an application package, complete the official certification program application, and return it to AFMA with the appropriate fee prior to being allowed to take the closed-book exam.

IX. Applicant Credentials

A successful applicant for the certification program must meet the following minimum credentials:

A. Experience

The applicant must demonstrate at least two full years of experience dealing with the management of floodplain, wetlands and / or watersheds. Individuals with less than two years of experience may apply for certification if they have successfully completed the FEMA training course "Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program." Individuals with a degree and / or a professional license as a civil engineer are considered to possess the necessary experience.

B. Education

All applicants must be a high school graduate or have completed a GED. The PDCC may waive the high school graduate / GED requirement after considering an applicant's other qualifications / experience / training.

C. References

A reference from the applicant's current supervisor will be required as part of the application process. Self-employed applicants must submit a written reference from an appropriate professional.

D. Professional Association Membership

It is strongly recommended that the applicant be a member of AFMA and maintain that membership after becoming certified. It is not necessary to be a member of AFMA to become a CFM (see Section VII., (A) Eligibility, on page eight of this document).

E. Training

A listing of training courses to prepare individuals for testing and continuing education related to certification will be developed by the PDCC. The PDCC will also develop criteria to determine the exact number of CECs that can be obtained by attending conferences, workshops, and other training opportunities directly related to floodplain management or indirectly related disciplines. This CEC evaluation document will become an addendum to this charter.

X. The Exam

All applicants, regardless of experience, must score at least 75 percent or higher on the certification program closed-book exam, which measures basic management skills and comprehension of the principles of sound floodplain management as established by criteria of the NFIP. All exam results will be held in strict confidence. Each applicant must be pre-approved to take the exam to protect its confidentiality and to simplify the record keeping process. Photo identification will be required for pre-approved applicants to take the proctored exam. The exam will be prepared by the PDCC. The pool of questions from which exam questions for a specific level of certification are drawn, will be assembled by the PDCC. The PDCC will also set the time limits for the exam, and make other arrangements for examination. The exam will be revised as deemed necessary by the PDCC.

XI. Certification and Renewal

The following requirements pertain to the certification and renewal of floodplain managers under the AFMA certification program:

A. Certification

Upon completion of the above requirements, and payment of the appropriate fee, applicants will be awarded a certificate and designated a CFM. The date of issuance will be May 1 or November 1, whichever is nearest the date of the exam.

B. Renewal

The certification period will be for two years. At the end of the initial and subsequent certification periods, each CFM must submit an application for renewal to AFMA. Approximately two months prior to renewal, the CFM will receive a reminder letter discussing the CEC requirements and the renewal process. A current listing of reported CECs will also be provided. The application will be utilized to update the CFM's credentials and to document completion of the required continuing education credits. A renewal fee must be included with the application. When these conditions are met, a renewal card for a time period of two years will be issued to the CFM.

XII. Decertification

A CFM may be decertified for failure to fulfill renewal requirements specified in Section XI., (B) Renewal (found on page 10 of this document) or for violation of the Code of Professional Conduct.

A. Failure to Submit Documentation and Fees

1. A CFM may be decertified for failure to fulfill the requirements specified in Section XI., (B) Renewal (found on page 10 of this document) by the renewal date. In the event an application for certification or renewal is denied, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision of the PDCC. Such appeals must follow the guidelines specified in Section XVI (found on page 13 of this document).
2. If a CFM has not requested renewal by 15 days following the expiration of certification (May 1 or November 1), the PDCC will send a letter officially notifying the individual of a two-month grace period in which to submit CEC documentation and fees.
3. If a CFM fails to make an application for renewal within the two-month grace period (by July 1 or January 1) the individual shall be required to complete a new application package, pay the initial application fee, and take another exam. A CFM that fails to recertify by the prescribed deadline will be decertified and will not be allowed to take the required test for a period of at least six months following expiration of certification. If special circumstances prevent timely renewal, the PDCC will consider waiver of these requirements.

B. Unprofessional Conduct

A CFM may be decertified for unprofessional conduct if one of the following occurs:

1. Conviction of a crime or any felony directly related to professional duties.
2. Falsification, intentional destruction or modification of official records or documents relating to professional duties; or otherwise knowingly providing misleading information related to professional duties or floodplain management.
3. Acceptance or solicitation of money or anything of value directly or indirectly that may be expected to influence actions or judgment in a manner outside of commonly accepted practices or values.

4. Use of position in an illegal, dishonest, or unprofessional way to influence or gain a financial or other benefit, advantage or privilege for personal benefit or benefit of immediate family or organization with which associated.
5. Violation of the Code of Professional Conduct.

Information regarding unprofessional conduct of a CFM must be submitted to the AFMA board of directors in writing. No anonymous submittals will be accepted. If the chairman of the Professional Development Certification Committee (PDCC) determines that consideration of decertification may be warranted, the charges and all supporting documentation will be forwarded to the CFM by certified mail. The CFM shall have 30 days upon receipt thereof to respond in writing to the charges.

If a CFM has not fulfilled renewal requirements by the biennial renewal date or has not responded to the charges of unprofessional conduct by the specified deadline, a letter of decertification will be forwarded to the individual by certified mail which states the individual may no longer use the designation of "AFMA Certified Floodplain Manager" or use the registered trademark CFM in any way for a period of time specified in the letter. The individual may reapply to take the CFM exam after that period had expired.

If the CFM submits appropriate information by the deadline, procedures in the program charter will be followed.

XIII. Code of Professional Conduct

A signed copy of the Code of Professional Conduct (see below sample) must be submitted with the application for certification as a floodplain manager in Arkansas.

Code of Professional Conduct

As a certified floodplain manager, I agree to abide by the following tenets of the Code of Professional Conduct in all of my professional responsibilities.

I will:

- Practice honesty and integrity in all of my professional relationships with the public, peers and employer.
- Be truthful and accurate in professional communications.
- Be fair and considerate of all persons.
- Foster excellence in floodplain management by staying abreast of pertinent issues.
- Enhance individual performance by attention to continuing education and technology.
- Avoid conflicts of interest resulting in gain or advantage.
- Be economical in the utilization of the nation's resources through the effective use of funds, accurate assessment of flood-related hazards, and timely decision-making.
- Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information.
- Promote public awareness and understanding of flood-related hazards, floodplain resources, and flood hazard response.
- Be dedicated to serving the profession of floodplain management and to improving the quality of life.

XIV. Continuing Education Requirements

As stated in Section XII., (A) Failure to Submit Documentation and Fees (found on page 11 of this document), the CFM must meet the continuing education requirement for renewal. The PDCC has determined how many credits of continuing education will be required. During each two-year certification period, unless changed by the PDCC, the required number of continuing education credits (CECs) shall be 16; of which no more than 12 may be obtained in either year.

The PDCC defines continuing education credits as one credit per hour of instruction of **directly related** floodplain management subject as defined in the CEC evaluation document. One CEC will be credited per two hours of education / training related to **parallel or indirect** subject matter. Of the 16 CECs required for each certification period, no more than one-half or eight CECs can be parallel or indirect. In addition, an instructor or presenter of continuing education will receive two CECs for each hour of instruction. Credit for instruction is limited to a one-time credit every five years, unless there has been a substantial revision to the presentation.

The content of the education / training received by the CFM will be compared to the certification exam categories that are intended to measure an individual's knowledge of a community's responsibilities under the NFIP and related floodplain management topics. The categories are:

- Overall context of floodplain management.
- Floodplain mapping.
- NFIP regulatory standards.
- Regulatory administrative procedures.
- Flood insurance.
- Flood hazard mitigation.
- Natural and beneficial function.

The continuing education requirement can be met by attending the AFMA spring workshop, the AFMA fall conference, or other training programs offered by AFMA, the state of Arkansas, FEMA, ASFPM, or other agencies and organizations approved by the PDCC.

A document titled "Continuing Education Credit (CEC) Policy" will be prepared and maintained by the PDCC to provide more detail concerning CEC requirements.

XV. National Accreditation and Disclaimer

A person granted certification under this AFMA CFM program will be recognized by ASFPM as an accredited CFM. This recognition is valid in all states except those with their own accredited CFM program. States with their own accredited CFM program will determine the conditions of reciprocity in that state.

See also Section VI. Disclaimer of Liability found on page eight of this document.

XVI. Appeals Procedure

An appeal is a request for the AFMA board of directors to review a decision to grant or deny certification or renewal by the PDCC. The act of requesting an appeal is an acknowledgement that the findings of the board of directors in the appeals process are final and binding for all parties. An appeal may be made on the grounds the decision was in conflict with the approval procedures or on other grounds to include, but not limited to:

- Substantial errors were made in processing the material.
- The PDCC guidelines were not followed.
- Candidate disagrees with evaluation and files an appeal.

A. Procedure for Initiating an Appeal

If an applicant wishes to appeal the decision of the PDCC, the applicant must request an appeal in writing within 60 calendar days of being notified of the PDCC actions. The appeal and accompanying documentation should be sent to the attention of the chairman of the AFMA board of directors. The following materials are to be enclosed with the letter requesting an appeal:

- A copy of the PDCC decision and any other pertinent documentation, including, but not limited to:
- A statement clearly identifying the reasons for the appeal.
- A check or money order for the appeal fee.

B. Procedure for Reviewing an Appeal

Upon the receipt of a request for appeal, the following actions will be taken:

- The AFMA board of directors will acknowledge receipt of the materials and indicate if additional materials are needed from the appellant. Such acknowledgement will occur within 60 days of the date of postmark of the appeal request.
- The AFMA board of directors less those board members that also serve on the PDCC will investigate the appeal.
- The AFMA board of directors (as modified above) will make its decision based on review of the materials and an interview with the appellant, if warranted. This may be done by teleconference or in person. All expenses involved in facilitating such an interview will be borne by the appellant regardless of the outcome of the appeal process.
- Within 60 days of receipt of all requested materials, the AFMA board of directors (as modified above) will prepare a summary report of its findings. The report will be sent to the appellant who will be advised of a 30-day period in which he / she may supply any additional comments to the AFMA board of directors (as modified above) before final action is taken.
- The decision of the AFMA board of directors (as modified above) is binding.

XVII. Record Keeping

The PDCC secretary shall keep a record of all meetings, applications, certifications granted, certifications denied, and appeals. Records shall be maintained by the PDCC chairman in a secure location. An annual report shall be made to the AFMA board of directors and a listing of CFMs shall be displayed at the annual AFMA fall conference and other meetings as directed by the board. Although individual test results and application materials will be kept confidential, upon successful certification, a letter will be sent to the applicant's supervisor or reference listed on the application.

XVIII. Schedule of Fees

In order to cover the costs of administering the certification program, fees will be collected for specific actions. All checks shall be made payable to AFMA and shall be deposited in the AFMA bank account. The PDCC has established the following fees:

	AFMA Member	Non-Member
A. Application, exam, certification	\$35.00	\$100.00
B. Biennial renewal	\$25.00	\$50.00
C. Appeal fee	\$25.00	\$50.00

Additional fees may be established as the certification program progresses.

XIX. Reciprocity

AFMA will recognize the certification of any person that is in good standing with an accredited state program or ASFPM. Applicants will be required to complete an AFMA application package and submit the fee required for new CFMs. Applicants will be provided with information regarding state laws and agencies, which is among the required knowledge for certification in Arkansas. Applicants will be expected to become familiar with this information as part of their responsibilities under the Code of Professional Conduct.

XVII. Board Approval

This revised program charter for professional certification of floodplain managers is hereby approved by the AFMA board of directors at its meeting held on August 17, 2007.

Note: revisions under review. Signature & notary to come soon.

AFMA Chairman (printed name)

AFMA Chairman (signature)

AFMA Secretary (printed name)

AFMA Secretary (signature)

Notary Public (printed name)

Notary Public (signature)

Date

Seal: