



What is RP₃?

The American Public Power Association's RP₃ (Reliable Public Power Provider) designation recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate leading practices in reliability, safety, work force development and system improvement.

How do utilities apply for the designation?

Applicants earn points for their practices and accomplishments in each of the four disciplines (reliability, safety, work force development and system improvement). Criteria within each category are based on leading-edge business practices and are intended to represent a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity. More information on the application process is available at www.PublicPower.org/RP3.

How are RP₃ utilities chosen?

RP₃ applications are evaluated and scored by an 18-member panel that includes officers from APPA's safety, transmission and distribution, and system planning committees; representatives chosen by APPA's Board Chair; and one member of a joint action agency or state association.

Why should utilities apply?

RP₃ utilities are in a unique position to convey to their customers the commitment they have to providing reliable and safe electric service. Each RP₃ designee has proven itself to be following industry standards of best practices in operations. Many utilities have seen improved performance through the RP₃ applications process. APPA provides tools and resources to help utilities tout their RP₃ designation.

Still have questions?

Visit www.PublicPower.org/RP3 or give us a shout at RP3@PublicPower.org.



The American Public Power Association (APPAA), based in Washington, D.C., is the service organization for the nation's more than 2,000 community-owned electric utilities. Collectively, these utilities serve more than 47 million Americans.



RP3 Program Criteria

The RP3 program recognizes utilities that demonstrate high proficiency in four areas: reliability, safety, work force development and system improvement. An overview of each section is provided below.

RP3 Criteria

Becoming a Reliable Public Power Provider

Application Period:

Each year the RP3 application open period is **May 1 – September 30**.

Applications received are reviewed by the 18-member [RP3 Review Panel](#), which is comprised of public power employees from across the country. Based on the information provided in a utility's completed application, utilities may be recognized as a Gold, Platinum or Diamond Reliable Public Power Provider.

RP3 Utility Size Categories:

- Small Utility: Under 5,000 Customers
- Medium Utility: 5,000 – 30,000 Customers
- Large Utility: Over 30,000 Customers
- Non-APPA Member

Designation Levels:

Several significant changes to the program were introduced in the Year 9 (2013) application that applies to utilities designated beginning in 2014 (year 10); these enhancements are the result of feedback

received from member utilities over the past nine years. Starting in the Year 9 (2013) application (used by utilities that applied in 2013, and were designated in 2014) the designation levels are:

- Gold: 80% - <90% of the possible points
- Platinum: 90 - <98% of the possible points
- Diamond: 98 - 100% of the possible points

For utilities that applied before 2013, the Diamond designation was awarded to the utility if it successfully met 100% of the defined criteria. The Platinum designation was awarded if the utility met 90-99% of the criteria. The Gold designation was awarded if the utility met 80-89% of the RP3 Program criteria.

Designation Period:

Beginning with the 2014 designees, RP3 designations last for three years.*

Utilities that wish to maintain their RP3 status must re-apply the year prior to the expiration of their designation (in other words, they should re-apply in the second year of the three year designation period). For example, a utility that applies in 2016 will receive their designation for 2017, which will remain valid until early 2020. In order to maintain their status after that period, the utility must re-apply in 2019. The intent of the re-application process is to ensure RP3 utilities are consistently striving to maintain and improve the quality of their system.

*Prior to the 2014 designation (2013 Application), RP3 designations were valid for a two year period (e.g., utilities that were designated in 2013, will need to reapply by September 30, 2014 in order to maintain their RP3 status).

RP3 Disciplines

RP3 Disciplines

Criteria within each of the four RP3 disciplines are based upon sound business practices and recognized industry leading practices. The RP3 Application Guide provides in-depth explanations of the requirements for each area, including a question-by-question [guide](#) for filling out the application, as well as the associated scoring guidelines.

Reliability

The term "reliable" is defined by Webster's Dictionary as an adjective that means: can be relied on; dependable; trustworthy; and worthy of confidence. Although these are all true in context, reliability of an electric system goes deeper than just defining the results that are evident through reliable day-to-day service. Key elements of the Reliability section include collecting and analyzing reliability data, having a mutual aid agreement, devising and using a system-wide disaster management plan (emergency response plan), and implementing any needed cyber and physical security.

Safety

Utilities must create a culture of safety. This commitment to safety must begin with top management and include safety in all aspects of operations from generation to line work, and all utility services in between.

Benchmarking safety metrics, focusing on frontline workers, and implementing rigorous safety training is crucial to the delivery of safe and reliable electricity. In the RP3 program, each utility must prove that it uses an accepted safety manual and follows safe work practices across the utility.

Workforce Development

Training employees, whether through traditional avenues such as workshops and college courses or through in-house programs, demonstrates that a utility values its work force. Utilities benefit from providing opportunities for staff to network with other utility representatives throughout the nation and encourage them to get involved in the national perspective of utility relations. Utility staff knowledge increases through membership in state, regional, and nationally focused committees, and through attendance in conferences and training.

System Improvement

Stewardship of utility assets is essential to ensuring long term system reliability and performance. Utilities maintain the integrity of their system and promote long term planning by embarking on improvement programs that include both an eye on the future through research and development (R&D) and a commitment to system betterment programs can help utilities provide reliable services in the future. Important items in this section include participation in R&D programs, involvement in energy efficiency and/or energy conservation programs, and implementation of system planning and betterment projects.