

APA OH Chapter-Section Relationship Policies

The Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Associations (APA Ohio) is pleased to have multiple regions where there are interested members of the organization who wish to provide regional activities and educational opportunities targeted to local members and non-members alike. As a section of the Chapter, both the Chapter and the sections have the responsibility to work cooperatively and move toward a shared vision established in the APA Ohio Strategic Plan.

APA Ohio recognizes that each section differs in terms of membership, leadership, and approach to services. With this in mind, the Chapter has established this policy document to set basic expectations about the nature of the relationship between the Chapter and local sections.

APA Ohio Bylaws

The APA Ohio Bylaws govern the Chapter's administration and may only be amended by vote of the entire Chapter membership. Sections of the Chapter are authorized in Section 10.1 of the APA Ohio Bylaws, which reads as follows:

"The Board may form geographic sections to further the purposes and objectives of APA Ohio. A section may be formed upon the written petition to the Board by at least 25 members. The territory of a section shall contain at least 25 members. A section shall be finally approved upon filing of section bylaws with the APA Ohio Secretary and upon voted approval by the Board. Sections shall adopt bylaws which shall not conflict with this Code. Copies of section bylaws shall be maintained by the Secretary. The principal elected officer of a section shall be the Section Director. The Board shall develop procedures to certify the on-going viability and existence of a section. The Board shall certify those sections who continue to comply with the intent of this section before each election in section 8.4 of this code of Regulations."

Section Boundaries

There are no formal section boundaries so it is ultimately the section leadership who decides which members of the state to contact about activities. The Chapter encourages cross-regional activities and will work with sections to help advertise any events.

Section Bylaws

The APA Ohio bylaws require that sections adopt their own bylaws. Sections should review their bylaws and submit any revised versions with the annual report discussed in the following paragraph.

Annual Report and Certification

The APA Ohio Board of Trustees shall be responsible for certifying sections during an annual review of the sections at the fall business meeting. Such certification shall be based on the submission of an annual report by each section as well as conformance with the Financial Responsibilities portion of this policy guide. As part of this annual report, the sections are responsible for filing a report on the section activities including type of activities, approximate number of attendees (as applicable), student participation (as applicable), a list of tangible benefits provided to members and non-members of the local planning community, and a general outline of how the section is working to advance the mission of APA Ohio. The section's annual report will be incorporated into the APA Ohio Annual Report that is distributed to the membership to highlight Chapter and section activities, plans, and accomplishments for the year prior to the report's publication.

After review of the annual report and discussion with section leadership, as necessary, the APA Ohio Board of Trustees shall vote on whether to certify, conditionally certify, or deny certification of each section. A vote to conditionally certify or deny certification shall be based on a section's failure to submit their annual report, failure to comply with the Financial Responsibilities portion of this policy guide, and/or demonstration of consistent inactivity as determined by the APA Ohio Board of Trustees after review at the annual business meeting. The APA Ohio Board shall make every effort to conditionally certify a section rather than deny certification to allow time for representatives of the APA Ohio Board to meet with the section leadership in an effort to identify steps for re-engaging the section. If, at any time, the APA Ohio Board votes to deny certification of a section, representatives of the APA Ohio Board will work with the section leadership to determine how to close out any financial accounts and reorganize, reassign, and/or dissolve the section.

A section's annual report shall cover the time period of July 1 through June 30 of each fiscal year and shall be submitted to the APA Ohio Executive by July 31st of each year in order to be included in the Chapter's annual report. The annual report is presented at the Chapter's annual business meeting each year, generally held in September of even numbered years or during the APA Ohio State Planning Conference in odd numbered years.

Financial Responsibilities

Sections are responsible for their own bookkeeping and day-to-day financial administration; however, APA Ohio is responsible for annually filing the Chapter's and all sections' taxes, as well as the overall financial oversight of the Chapter and sections. Sections must comply with the Chapter-Section Financial Relationship document that is attached to this policy.

Mandatory Requirements

The intent of the requirements in this policy guide is not to micromanage any of the sections but simply ensure that both the Chapter and the Section are working toward the shared mission of APA Ohio. However, there are some minimum requirements that all sections must adhere to including:

- All section events that require registration shall utilize the APA Ohio registration services as administered and determined by the APA Ohio Executive Director.
- All sections shall include the APA Ohio logo on all local programs, activities and communications.
- All sections shall notify the APA Ohio Executive Director of all section programs and activities (including free events).
- Where participants at section events are required to pay a fee for attendance, the section shall be required to provide a reduced rate of at least 10 percent of the fee for APA Ohio members. Sections that fail to provide a reduced rate shall not be eligible to submit the event for American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification Maintenance (CM) credits through the Chapter.
- All sections shall comply with the Annual Report and Certification portion of this policy guide.
- All sections shall comply with the Financial Responsibilities portion of this policy guide.

Chapter Services

The following services are provided by the Chapter to the sections on an as-needed basis at no additional cost (unless otherwise noted). These services include, but are not limited to:

- Permanent voting seat on the APA-Ohio Board of Trustees as a section representative, traditionally occupied by the Section Director;
- 501(C)(3) non-profit status and annual accounting (filing annual tax returns);
- General liability insurance, in addition to Officer and Director and Employee Dishonesty coverage;
- Financial assistance in the form of seed money or grants to assist with Section professional development workshops and/or other events that further the mission of APA Ohio (as budgeted);
- Advertisement/promotion of section events through:
 - Online calendar
 - Section webpage
 - Weekly eNEWS
 - Email blasts to section membership
 - Quarterly newsletter
 - Social media
- Creation, housing, and administration of section event registrations;
- Financial reconciliation and follow-up on outstanding payments for Section events;

- Discounted rates for administering American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification Maintenance (CM) credits at local events, where applicable;
- Access to the APA Ohio membership database;
- Assistance as may be requested by the section to identify potential section officers or provide for additional leadership assistance; and
- Other assistance, on a case-by-case basis, per a request submitted to the APA Ohio Board of Trustees and/or the APA Ohio Executive Director.

Chapter/Section Financial Relationship Policy (from the APA Ohio Accounting Practices & Financial Administration Guide)

1. Local Sections of APA Ohio shall use the same EIN as APA Ohio – Sections shall not have separate Tax Identification Numbers. The APA Ohio Chapter EIN is 51-0150311 and is officially known as “American Planning Association – Ohio 33.” Any Section filling out a W-9 for an organization/vendor should use the official APA Ohio title and form.
2. The APA Ohio Chapter is ultimately responsible for the financial management of all Sections. The APA Ohio Executive Director and/or the Chapter Treasurer (as approved by the APA Ohio Board) shall be a co-owner/signatory on all bank accounts/investment accounts/etc. held by each Section.
3. Sections may choose any financial institution and investment accounts (as applicable), although arrangements must be made with the Executive Director or Chapter Treasurer, as applicable, to be available as a co-signer when an account is opened or account signatories change.
4. Section Directors/Treasurers shall ensure that that the Chapter co-signer (APA Ohio Executive Director and/or APA Ohio Chapter Treasurer) has access to all accounts through account numbers, passwords, etc.
5. The APA Ohio Chapter (Executive Director, Chapter Treasurer, or any other authorized party) shall neither deposit nor withdraw any funds, either electronically or in person, without prior written approval of the Section Treasurer (or Section Director if the Section Treasurer is incapacitated).
6. The APA Ohio Executive Director and/or Chapter Treasurer may request statements directly from the Sections’ financial institutions, or otherwise access online accounts, to check balances and view transactions at any time.
7. If the APA Ohio Board, by majority vote, determines that there is reasonable evidence of financial mismanagement at the Section level, the Executive Director and/or Chapter Treasurer as signatory on the account(s) may remove all funds from the Section and hold them in a temporary account separate from the Chapter’s funds and other Section funds until a resolution is reached, at which point all funds shall be restored to the Section.
8. If Section treasurers/leadership believe there to be activity at the Chapter level that violates the terms of this policy, Section leaders should contact the Chapter President to initiate an internal or external audit, as applicable. The Section may also contact APA National to assist with investigating and/or resolving the potential violation.
9. Section funds shall be used by the Sections to further the mission of the APA Ohio Chapter in general and local Sections specifically. The APA Ohio Chapter will not direct the Sections in the use of Section funds, except as otherwise addressed in this guide. Section funds shall not be used by the Chapter.
10. All APA Ohio members that participate in the APA Ohio Chapter’s financial administration, including the Chapter Treasurer, Chapter President, Section Treasurers,

and APA Ohio Executive Director, are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the AICP Code of Ethics. Section Treasurers, Directors, and any other members of the Section leadership that have access to Section funds are expected to abide by the financial management practices and policies of this document, as applicable, and/or adopt an equivalent local Section policy document (provided local Section policies do not contradict Chapter or National policies).

11. The APA Ohio fiscal year is July 1 – June 30. The APA National fiscal year is October 1 – September 30. Each Section may receive an email from APA Ohio at the end of each National fiscal quarter (January-Q1, April-Q2, July-Q3, and October-Q4) to submit bank statements that include any broker, mutual fund, and other investments, if applicable. These must be submitted to APA Ohio by the time specified in order to get the financial package to National on time.
12. The APA Ohio Chapter shall maintain insurance coverage for all Section officers that have access to Section finances, including General Liability, Employee Dishonesty, and Officers and Directors insurance coverage.
13. APA Ohio and Sections share a group tax exemption with National. Sections should use the official form for tax exempt document. Some organizations/vendors request additional documentation to prove that Sections are part of the Chapter. Sections should use the official letter proving exemption.