

# AICP Exam

## Application Tips + Preparation



[www.ohioplanning.org/aicpexam](http://www.ohioplanning.org/aicpexam)

# Outline

- Introductions
- Why AICP?
- Exam Overview
- Applying to Take the Exam
- The AICP Exam – What to Expect
- Exam Preparation
- Certification Maintenance

# Introductions

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# Why AICP?

- Distinction among your peers and the public
  - Advocate and advance the field of planning
  - Be recognized for achieving professional level of skills
- Enhanced opportunities for employees and consultants
  - “AICP preferred” in job postings
  - Required within a certain time frame by employers
  - Distinguish yourself from the competition
- Enhanced salaries
  - AICP members earn median salaries \$15,700 more than non AICP members. (2014)

[www.planning.org/aicp/why](http://www.planning.org/aicp/why)



# Exam Overview

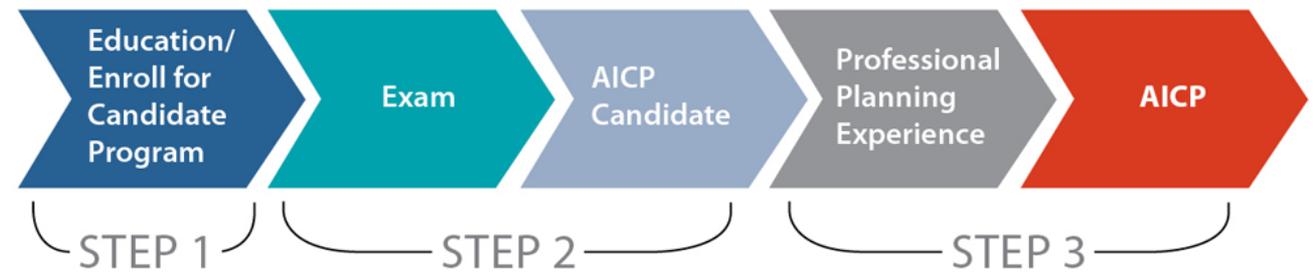
- Exam is offered twice a year: May & November
- Each exam window lasts 14 days
- Tests are administered electronically at Prometric testing centers
- You may take the test only once during each exam window
- You must register each time you wish to test
- Eligibility lasts for three years upon application approval
- Approved applications expire after three years

# AICP Candidate Pilot Program

Traditional Sequence



AICP Candidate Pilot Program Sequence



## When Does This Pilot Program Launch?

Starting in November 2017, qualified members may enroll in the program at any time during the year. Beginning in December 2017, graduates of PAB-accredited programs may register to sit for the May 2018 AICP exam. For details: [www.planning.org/aicp/candidate](http://www.planning.org/aicp/candidate).

# Applying to Take the Exam

- Application is online only at [www.planning.org/aicp](http://www.planning.org/aicp)
- Upcoming Dates:
  - **November 2017 Testing Window**  
 Application Window: Closed  
 Registration Deadline: October 31  
 Testing Window: November 6-20
  - **May 2018 Testing Window**  
 Application Window Opens: December 1  
 Early Bird Deadline: December 7  
 Final Application Deadline: December 28  
 Registration Deadline: April 27  
 Testing Window: May 14-28

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Professional Planning Experience*

Level of Education*	Total Number of Years of Professional Planning Experience Required
Graduate degree in Planning from a program accredited by the PAB	2
Bachelor's degree in Planning from a program accredited by the PAB**	3
Graduate degree in Planning from a program not accredited by the PAB	3
Any other post-graduate, graduate, or undergraduate degree***	4
No college degree	8

\* The education may be obtained before, during, or after the experience.

\*\* Accredited degrees have been determined by the Planning Accreditation Board to meet standards approved by the American Institute of Certified Planners and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning or recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners. AICP gives educational credit to applicants holding these degrees if the degree was received (1) during the period the university has been accredited (or previously recognized), and (2) by the time that an application for member is filed. If you are unsure about the status of your planning degree, consult the Planning Accreditation Board's list or contact AICP.

\*\*\* Non-accredited undergraduate planning degrees and degrees in related and other disciplines (i.e. Geography, Architecture, History, Music, etc.) at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Does My Experience Qualify?*

### Part-Time

- Part-time experience is accepted
- Part-time experience is prorated into a full-time equivalent (assuming a 40 hr. work week)
- Should be used by full time workers who devote a portion of their time to another field

### Internship

- Intern experience is accepted **so long as:**
  - the internship was not part of course work for a grade (this must be stated in the verification letter)
  - the experience meets the definition of professional planning experience

### Non-Traditional

- Non-traditional experience, like unpaid work or volunteer work, is accepted **so long as:**
  - the experience meets the definition of professional planning experience
  - experience must be at a professional level

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Does My Experience Qualify?*

### **Experience in Related Fields or Professions**

- Experience in Related Fields or Professions is accepted **so long as:**
  - the experience meets the definition of professional planning experience
- Persons working full-time, but devoting a portion of their time to another field, may prorate that experience into a full-time equivalent (assuming a 40 hr. work week).
- Contributions by members of city councils, boards of commissioners, planning commissioners, boards of zoning appeals, and citizen advisory boards does not constitute professional planning experience.

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *What Jobs Should I Include?*

- Only include positions needed to meet the minimum eligibility requirements (2, 3, 4 or 8 years)
- Include positions for which you can provide the strongest responses (and meet eligibility requirements)
- When possible, do not include jobs that were held for a short amount of time (i.e. less than 6 months)

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *General Application Tips*

- **Read** the Exam Candidate Bulletin & use the Criterion Response Checklist
  - [www.planning.org/certification/bulletin](http://www.planning.org/certification/bulletin)
- **APPLY EARLY!**
- Proofread your responses
- Ask an AICP co-worker or supervisor to review your responses before submitting
- Write your essays in a Word document before submitting responses
- Keep copies of your essays and verification documents

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Employment Verification Tips*

- Give your employer(s) ***ample*** time to complete a verification letter on your behalf
- Provide your employer (current and former) with the sample verification letter:
  - [www.planning.org/certification/pdf/samplejobverification.pdf](http://www.planning.org/certification/pdf/samplejobverification.pdf)
- Double check to ensure all required information is included in each verification letter before submitting
- If you have a special circumstance, email [aicpexam@planning.org](mailto:aicpexam@planning.org) with questions

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Educational Experience Verification Tips*

Acceptable ways to verify your educational experience include:

- Providing a *notarized* diploma(s)
- Providing a PDF of official transcript(s) from your university
- Providing a letter from a school dean, registrar, or program director on University letterhead confirming that the degree was conferred
  - **Don't wait until the last minute to gather this information!**

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Common Reasons Applications are Marked Incomplete*

- Improper verification of educational experience
- Not meeting minimum eligibility requirements
- Not including the required information in an employment verification letter
- Not uploading the required verification documentation

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Criterion Responses: General Tips*

- Review the Do's and Don'ts Section of the Exam Candidate Bulletin
- Craft responses that are between 250 and 500 words
- Speak in first person (i.e. use the word "I" throughout the response) – don't speak to what "the team" did
- Refrain from using bulleted lists and writing in incomplete sentences
- **REMEMBER** – Reviewers are required to base their decision on your criterion responses. Do not assume your application will be approved just because you have a lot of planning experience.
- Avoid "filler" information

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Criterion Responses: General Tips*

- Only include completed project examples in your responses. Assumptions about project outcomes cannot be used to verify experience already gained.
- Only one essay is required per criterion.

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Criterion Responses: Specific Tips*

Criterion 1: Involve a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness while Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation.

- Discuss how you applied a planning process appropriate to the situation through one of the three sections of professional planning content
- AND how you were a responsible and resourceful professional when applying that process.
- Choose ONE of 3 topics to write about

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Criterion Responses: Specific Tips*

### Criterion 2: Employ An Appropriately Comprehensive Point of View.

- Describe your role(s) in a project(s) and how you were able to employ a comprehensive point of view, rather than simply describing project outcomes.
- Describe how you employed a comprehensive point of view, not how the project/process itself or outcomes were comprehensive.

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## *Criterion Responses: Specific Tips*

### Criterion 3: Influence Public Decision Making in the Public Interest.

- There are two parts to this criterion:
  - 1) *Discuss how you have been responsible to the public.*
  - 2) *Discuss how you have influenced public decision making in the public interest.*
    - You must answer both parts successfully to qualify.

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Tips for Returning Applicants*

### Returning Applicants: Pre-Approved

- An application is pre-approved for six consecutive exam windows, beginning with the window in which you were initially approved.
- You must register your intent to sit for the exam within that open application window.
- If your application is expired (i.e. falls outside of the six consecutive exam window), you will need to submit a new application for full review.

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *Tips for Returning Applicants*

Returning Applicants: Previously Denied  
Check to see which (if any) verification materials are still on file and revise materials where needed

- Follow the guidance provided in your denial statement
- Ensure you have addressed the reasons for denial cited in your denial letter before resubmitting
- Upload valid verifications

# Applying to Take the Exam

## *AICP Certification Related Costs*

- Before Exam
  - AICP Comprehensive Planning Exam Application Fee - \$70 (non-refundable if denied)
  - AICP Comprehensive Planning Exam Fee - \$425 (*scholarships are available through APA Ohio*)
  - Transfer Fee - \$100
- Post Exam
  - AICP Dues – This fee is in addition to APA membership. You will receive an invoice for pro-rated AICP dues if you pass the exam. Sliding scale based on salary.
  - Certification Maintenance – free and for-cost educational activities are available

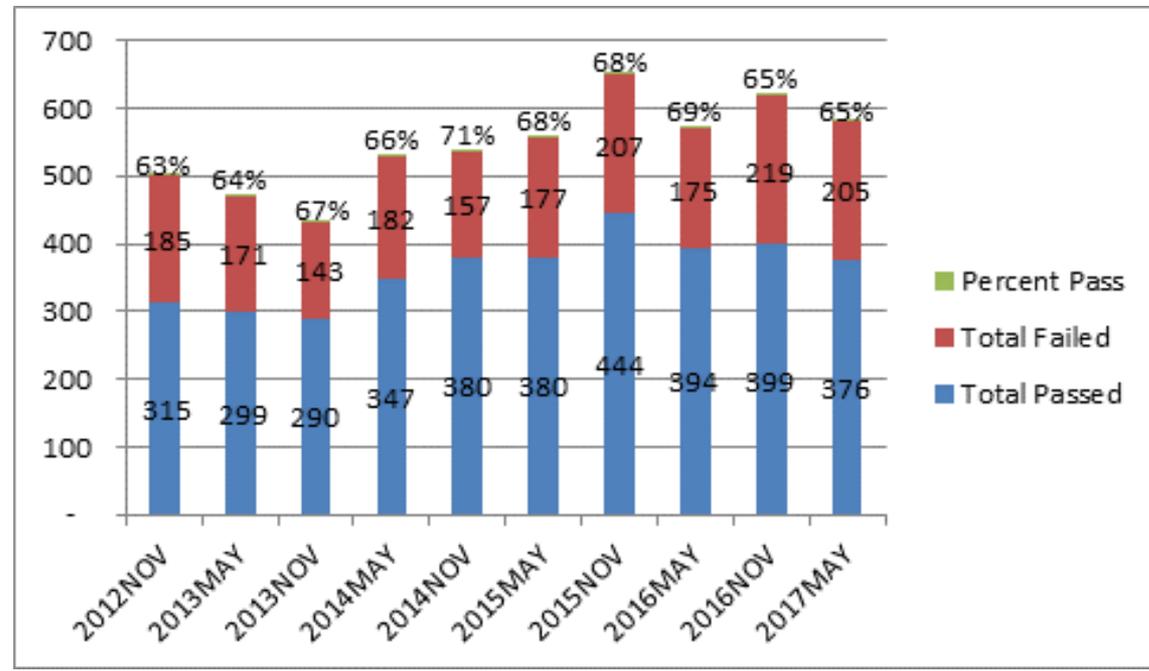
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## *Exam Score Details*

- Official score provided immediately after completing the computerized exam (thank you!)
- Scores are reported on a scale of 25-75, with 55 as the passing score
- Official letter sent out about one month later along with pro-rated dues invoice
- Official welcome package sent out about three months after exam window closes

# Applying to Take the Exam

## Pass Rate Data





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# Applying to Take the Exam

*Personal Experience + Questions?*

# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

## *Overview*

- 800 questions in the pool
- 170 questions on the test
  - Only 150 are scored – 20 are “feelers”
- 3 versions of each test at all times
- You are given 4 hours to complete the exam:
  - 15 minutes at the start to read directions
  - 3 ½ hours to take the exam
  - 15 minutes at the end to complete a survey
    - You must complete the survey before seeing your score on the screen. 😊

# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

*Exam Content (May 2017 +)*

- Questions changing to reflect emerging trends
- Survey sent to members in February 2016; over 3,600 responses
- Will not be rewriting all questions; a large percentage will remain the same.
- Merely removing outdated questions and non-performing questions
- New questions will be added based on the new topic areas of the new exam outline.

# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

## *Exam Content*

- **Fundamental Planning Knowledge**  
38 Questions (25%)
- **Plan Making & Implementation**  
45 Questions (30%)
- **Areas of Practice**  
45 Questions (30%)
- **Leadership, Administration & Management**  
7 Questions (5%)
- **AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**  
15 Questions (10%)

# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

## *Ahead of the Exam*

- Confirm your appointment (over the phone) with your testing center at least one week ahead of time.
- If you don't know where your testing site is, do a drive by ahead of time.
  - Know if there's construction or daily traffic that may affect your drive time.
- Bring two forms of ID (see Exam Bulletin for list).
  - If you have concerns, call the testing center ahead of time.
- If you plan to use ear plugs, call the testing center ahead of time to get their packaging policy.
- Get sleep the night before. Seriously!
- Maintain your normal eating/drinking routine the day of.

# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

## *The Exam Center*

- Get to the testing center 15 minutes early to sign waver and provide ID's
- You'll be asked to remove any layered clothing and may be asked to lift pant legs. You may also get wanded. 😊
- Lockers/key are available
- Bring extra layers if you get cold easily
- You may not bring anything into the room besides a sweater, your locker key, your ID, and the materials provided to you
- You may exit the testing room for beverage/snack/bathroom (clock keeps ticking)
- You will receive a scratch paper booklet, a sharpened pencil, and a basic calculator and you must return all three upon completion of the exam

# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

## *During the Exam – The Testing Space*

- There will be sound blocking headphones at your seat and white sound pumped into speakers
- You're in a room full of people taking various tests
- Proctors circle the room every 15 minutes
- Utilize the Computer-based Examination Tutorial to become familiar with the computer program ahead of time

[www.planning.org/certification/examprep](http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep)





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# The AICP Exam - What to Expect

*Personal Experience + Questions*

# Exam Preparation

## *APA Resources*

- AICP Exam Prep Package 3.0 (All Online): \$249
- Recommended Reading List (Dauntingly Lengthy)
- Computer-based Exam Tutorial (Must do!)
- APA Policy Guides (25 PDF's)
- APA PAS Reports (now FREE to APA members)
- AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
- CPC Study Manual: \$10
- Planning Magazine
- JAPA/Zoning Practice: \$40-\$60

[www.planning.org/certification/examprep](http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep)



# Exam Preparation

## *Other Resources*

- *Local Planning: Contemporary Principles and Practice*: \$125
- *APA Planning and Urban Design Standards*: \$110
- *Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners*: \$35
- Planetizen AICP Exam Prep (All Online): \$245-\$720
  - [www.planetizen.com/store/aicp](http://www.planetizen.com/store/aicp)

# Exam Preparation

*Unofficial Resources > Beware!*

- [www.planningprep.com](http://www.planningprep.com)
- [www.studystack.com](http://www.studystack.com)
- [www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com)
- [www.flashcardmachine.com](http://www.flashcardmachine.com)

# Exam Preparation

*Unofficial Resources > Don't Beware!*

- Planning Webcast Series  
[www.youtube.com/planningwebcast](http://www.youtube.com/planningwebcast)
- Ohio Chapter  
[www.ohioplanning.org/aicpexam](http://www.ohioplanning.org/aicpexam)
- Northern New England Chapter  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XLGIvqJQSI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XLGIvqJQSI)
- Florida Chapter  
[www.floridaplanning.org/treasurecoast/aicp\\_links.pdf](http://www.floridaplanning.org/treasurecoast/aicp_links.pdf)
- Georgia Chapter  
[georgiaplanning.org/aicp/aicp-exam-reviews](http://georgiaplanning.org/aicp/aicp-exam-reviews)



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# Exam Preparation

*Personal Experience + Questions*



# Certification Maintenance

- AICP designation now includes formal commitment to continuing professional development. CM launched in 2008.
- All new AICP members' CM Reporting Period will begin on January 1st after they pay their first dues. Each reporting period is two (2) years with a four (4) month grace period.
- Required to complete 32 credits in period (1 hour = 1 CM credit) – 1.5 must be Ethics and 1.5 must be Law.
- If you pass November 2016 exam: period begins January 1, 2018.
- More information about the Certification Maintenance program can be found at [www.planning.org/cm](http://www.planning.org/cm).

# Certification Maintenance

*Opportunities to Earn Credits – FREE!*

- American Planning Association  
[www.planning.org/cm/free](http://www.planning.org/cm/free)  
[www.planning.org/tuesdaysatapa](http://www.planning.org/tuesdaysatapa)
  
- Planning Webcasts Series  
[www.ohioplanning.org/planningwebcast](http://www.ohioplanning.org/planningwebcast)
  
- Local APA Ohio events  
[www.ohioplanning.org/calendar](http://www.ohioplanning.org/calendar)



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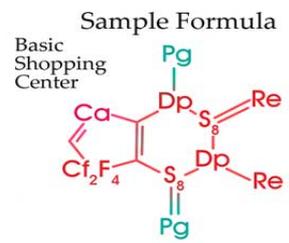
# Certification Maintenance

*Personal Experience + Questions*

# QUESTIONS

## Periodic Table of City Planning Elements

1 <b>Ci</b> City Hall																	2 <b>O</b> Office						
3 <b>Po</b> Post Office	4 <b>Co</b> Community Center																	5 <b>Gs</b> Grocery Store	6 <b>Fm</b> Farmers Market	7 <b>Ca</b> Cinema	8 <b>Be</b> Bed & Breakfast	9 <b>Re</b> Recycling Center	10 <b>B</b> Bank
11 <b>H</b> Hospital	12 <b>Li</b> Library																	13 <b>Cf</b> Coffee Shop	14 <b>Sr</b> Skating Rink	15 <b>Sp</b> Sports Complex	16 <b>Mo</b> Motel	17 <b>Sg</b> Storage	18 <b>Cl</b> Clinic
19 <b>Mu</b> Museum	20 <b>Cu</b> Cultural Center	21 <b>Fi</b> Fire Station	22 <b>St</b> Streetscape	23 <b>Nu</b> Nursery School	24 <b>P</b> Park	25 <b>Sf</b> Single Family Residential	26 <b>Cc</b> Child Care	27 <b>Ph</b> Pharmacy	28 <b>Re</b> Restaurant	29 <b>De</b> Deli	30 <b>By</b> Bakery	31 <b>S</b> Shop	32 <b>At</b> Amphitheater	33 <b>Sw</b> Swimming Pool	34 <b>Ho</b> Hotel	35 <b>W</b> Warehouse	36 <b>Dt</b> Dental Clinic						
37 <b>Bu</b> Bus Stop	38 <b>Bt</b> Bus Terminal	39 <b>Pd</b> Police Station	40 <b>Pa</b> Public Art	41 <b>El</b> Elementary School	42 <b>Ts</b> Townsquare	43 <b>To</b> Townhomes	44 <b>Sc</b> Senior Care	45 <b>Os</b> Office Supplies	46 <b>Bk</b> Bookstore	47 <b>Ms</b> Music Store	48 <b>Cy</b> Candy Shop	49 <b>Sm</b> Supermarket	50 <b>Th</b> Theater	51 <b>Ap</b> Amusement Park	52 <b>Rv</b> Rec. Vehicle Park	53 <b>In</b> Industry	54 <b>Lb</b> Laboratory						
55 <b>Tr</b> Train Station	56 <b>Ma</b> Marina	57 <b>Hb</b> Historic Structure	72 <b>Hi</b> High School	73 <b>Mi</b> Middle School	74 <b>Bg</b> Botanical Garden	75 <b>Cm</b> Condominium	76 <b>Eh</b> Elderly Housing	77 <b>Cs</b> Clothing Store	78 <b>Lr</b> Laundromat	79 <b>Sa</b> Beauty Salon Barber	80 <b>Fl</b> Florist Shop	81 <b>Gd</b> Garden Shop	82 <b>Dp</b> Department Store	83 <b>Tp</b> Theme Park	84 <b>V</b> Visitors Center	85 <b>Ei</b> Eco-Industrial Park	86 <b>Bp</b> Business Park						
87 <b>Sp</b> Seaport	88 <b>Ap</b> Airport	89 <b>Lm</b> Landmark	104 <b>Pv</b> Private School	105 <b>Cg</b> Community Garden	106 <b>Zo</b> Zoo	107 <b>As</b> Apartments	108 <b>Mh</b> Mobilehome Park	109 <b>Dc</b> Dry Cleaner	110 <b>As</b> Antique Store	111 <b>Fs</b> Furniture Store	112 <b>Hc</b> Home Improve. Ctr	113 <b>Hs</b> Hardware Store	114 <b>Fg</b> Fitness Gym	115 <b>Aq</b> Aquarium	116 <b>Cv</b> Convention Center	117 <b>Pw</b> Power Station	118 <b>Bs</b> Broadcast Studio						



58 <b>Wo</b> Place of Worship	59 <b>Pg</b> Parking	60 <b>Ce</b> College	61 <b>Gc</b> Golf Course	62 <b>Hs</b> Homeless Shelter	63 <b>My</b> Mortuary	64 <b>Ac</b> Animal Care	65 <b>Pr</b> Printer	66 <b>Ga</b> Gas Station	67 <b>A</b> Auto Service	68 <b>Cw</b> Carwash	69 <b>F</b> Fast Food	70 <b>Sv</b> Street Vendor	71 <b>Cn</b> Casino
90 <b>He</b> Heliport	91 <b>Jl</b> Jail	92 <b>U</b> University	93 <b>La</b> Landfill	94 <b>Ce</b> Cemetery	95 <b>Au</b> Adult Use	96 <b>Ni</b> Nightclub	97 <b>Ba</b> Bar	98 <b>Pb</b> Pub	99 <b>Ls</b> Liquor Store	100 <b>Wi</b> Winery	101 <b>Ps</b> Pawn Shop	102 <b>Tt</b> Tattoo Parlor	103 <b>Tp</b> Treatment Plant