



**American Planning Association**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

APA  
Women  
& Planning

# The Road to AICP

Hosted by APA Women and Planning Division

# Panelists

APA  
Women  
& Planning



Katrina Corcoran, AICP



Asela Chavez Basurto, AICP Candidate

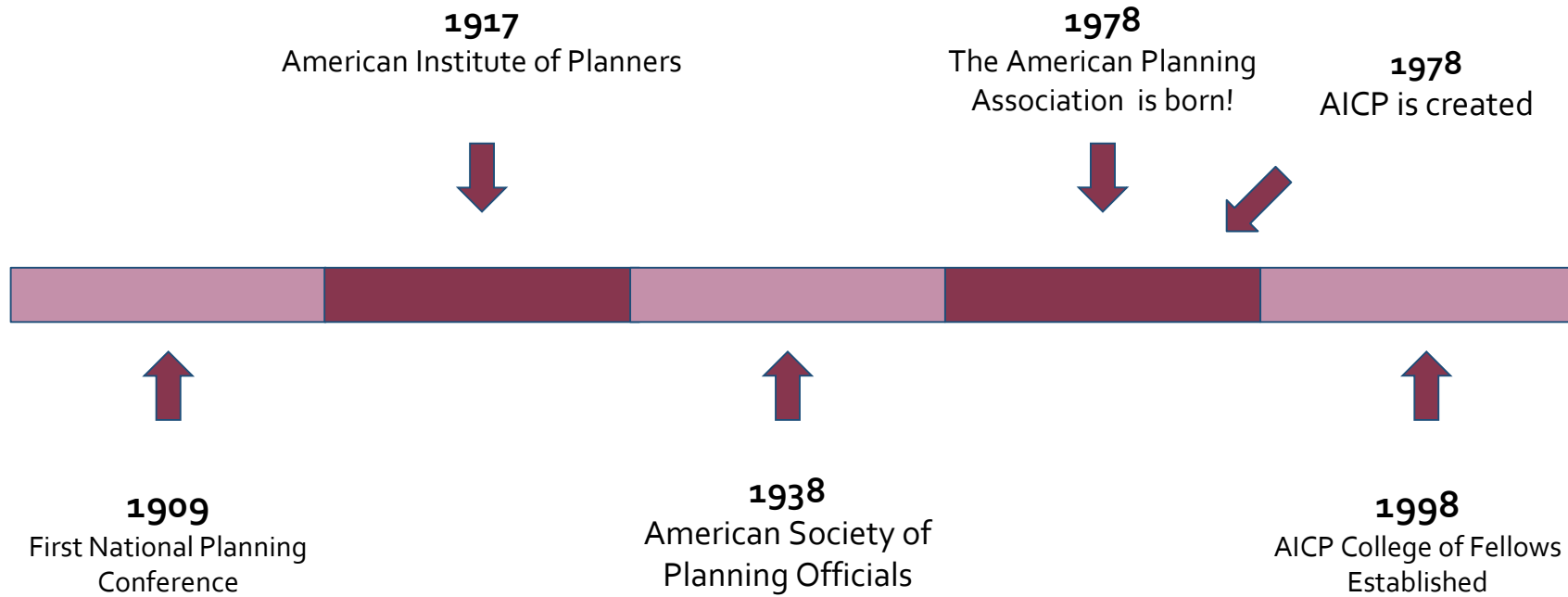


Molly Riddle, AICP Candidate



Jonathan Pacheco Bell  
@cityplann3r

# History



# AICP Membership

## APA MEMBERSHIP YEAR OVER YEAR

38.1 Thousand



APA FY2021 Q1

40.9 Thousand



APA FY2020 Q1

## AICP MEMBERSHIP YEAR OVER YEAR

16.9 Thousand



AICP FY2021 Q1

17.3 Thousand



AICP FY2020 Q1

# Benefits of Certification

There are many “**pros**” to taking the AICP, including:

- Credential is “industry standard”
- Certification is preferred or highly regarded in planning orgs
- Often organizational support includes payment of dues
- Necessary involvement with APA & continuing education
- Salary increases/earning potential



The American Planning Association's  
Professional Institute  
**American Institute  
of Certified Planners**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

# Benefits of Certification

There are many reasons to take the exam, and many positive aspects of becoming certified!

However, as the next speaker will dive into, a **test doesn't define you** as a planner or person

We're here to give you both sides





# Counterpoints to Certification



Image: [Patrick Fore](#) on Unsplash

I come in peace

Not a takedown!

Conversation & dialog

Inclusive development  
& workspaces

# Counterpoints to Certification

**AICP IS TOO  
EXPENSIVE**





# Counterpoints to Certification

**AICP IS NOT  
“NEEDED”**



Image: [Chester Wade](#) on Unsplash

# Counterpoints to Certification



**AICP IS  
SELF-  
FULFILLING**

# Counterpoints to Certification



Photo: [Henning Kesschut](#) on Unsplash

**AICP IS A  
GATEKEEPER  
CREDENTIAL**

# Counterpoints to Certification

**AICP SEEKS  
PARITY WITH  
LICENSURE**



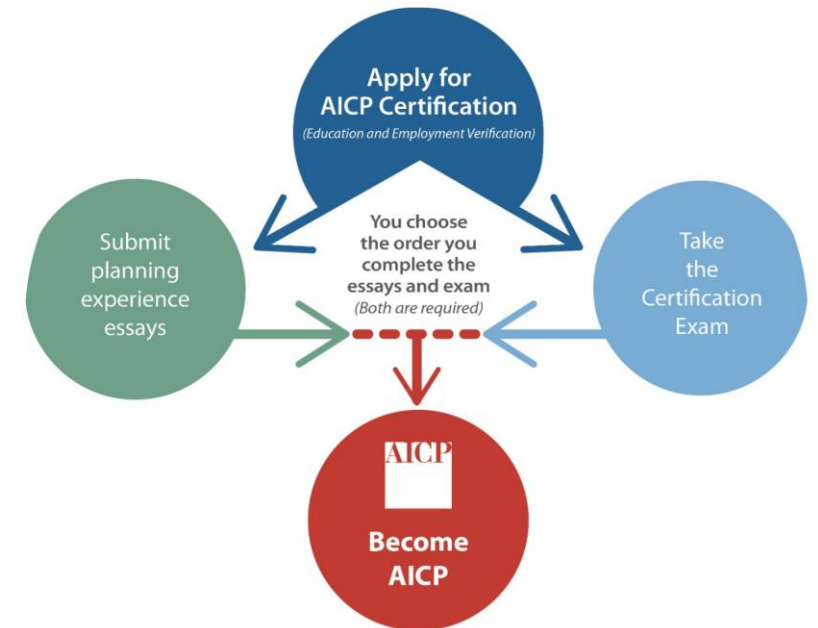
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# Eligibility & Process - AICP Application

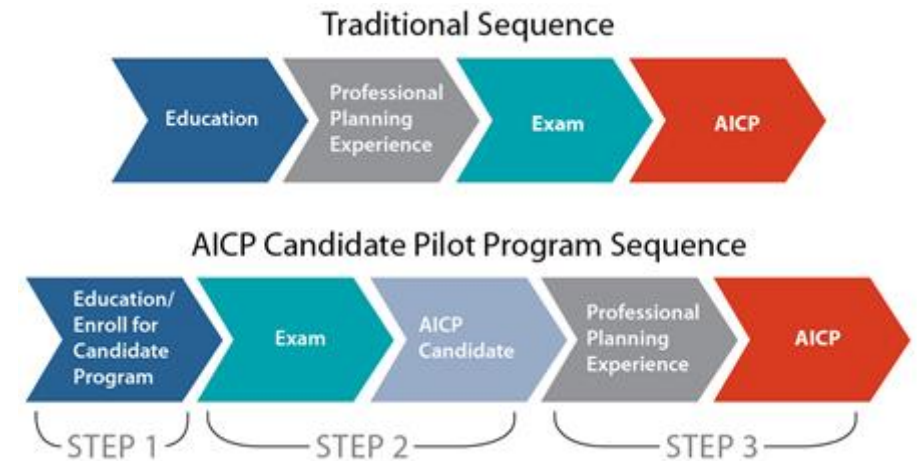
- Bring membership up to date
- Review Eligibility Requirements
  - Current member of APA
  - Be engaged in professional planning, either currently or in the past, as defined by AICP
  - Have completed, at the time of application submission, one of the combinations of education and corresponding years of professional planning experience (as listed on the APA/AICP website)

## PATH TO BECOME AN AICP-CERTIFIED PLANNER



# Eligibility & Process - AICP Candidate

- Enroll in the program by submitting your education verification and paying the application fee
  - *You can begin tracking Certification Maintenance credits*
- Register for the AICP Certification Exam
- Take the exam prior to earning professional planning experience
  - *Note: You must be part of an accredited planning program to enroll*
- Earn your planning experience
- Submit your planning experience essays



# Eligibility & Process - Costs

## Traditional AICP Exam Costs:

\$70 Application  
\$220 Essays (\$290 Expedited)  
\$220 Exam Registration  
\$100 Essay Appeal  
\$100 Transfer Fee

## AICP Candidate Exam Costs:

\$35 Enrollment  
\$100 Exam Registration  
\$375/\$445 Essay Fees after exam  
passed, work experience gained &  
associated planning work essays  
submitted & approved (thus, becoming  
AICP)

## Post Exam:

- AICP Dues - in addition to APA membership
- Certification Maintenance - free and for-cost educational activities



# Eligibility & Process - Essays

## 3 Criterion

1. **Criterion 1:** Demonstrate a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness While Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation
2. **Criterion 2:** Evaluate Multiple Impacts to a Community When Implementing Professional Planning Tasks
3. **Criterion 3:** Influence Public Decision Making in the Public Interest

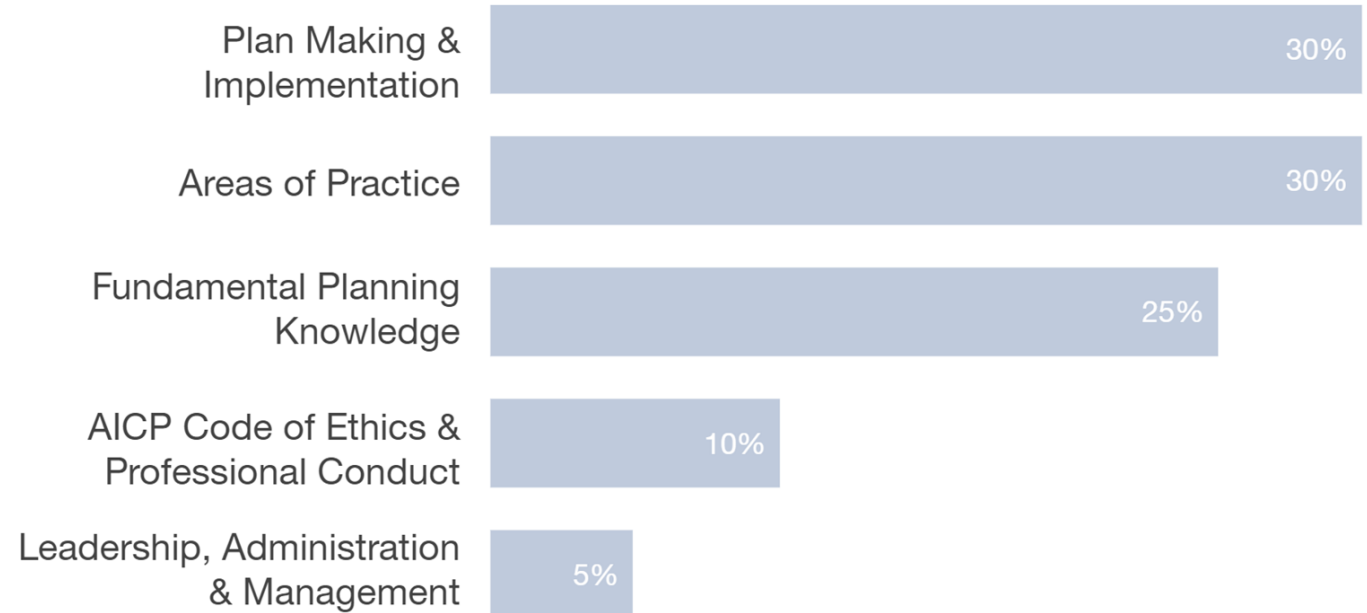
## Criterion Responses: General Tips

- Early Bird/Expedited Review
- Review the [AICP Essay Guide](#) in its entirety
- Review sample essays others have submitted
- 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
- Have your local Professional Development Officer or another AICP certified planner review your essays



# Test Specifics

- May & November
- 3 hr 30 min
- 170 questions
  - Only 150 count
- 5 subject areas
  - Factual & situational content



\* precise topic emphasis changes over time

# Test Tips

- Preparation

- Choose **resources**, make a **plan**
- Join/Make a **study group**
- Read a few core **textbooks**
- Focus on **emerging issues**
- Use cards to **keep details fresh**
- Take lots of **practice exams!**



Image: Pieper Review

# Test Tips

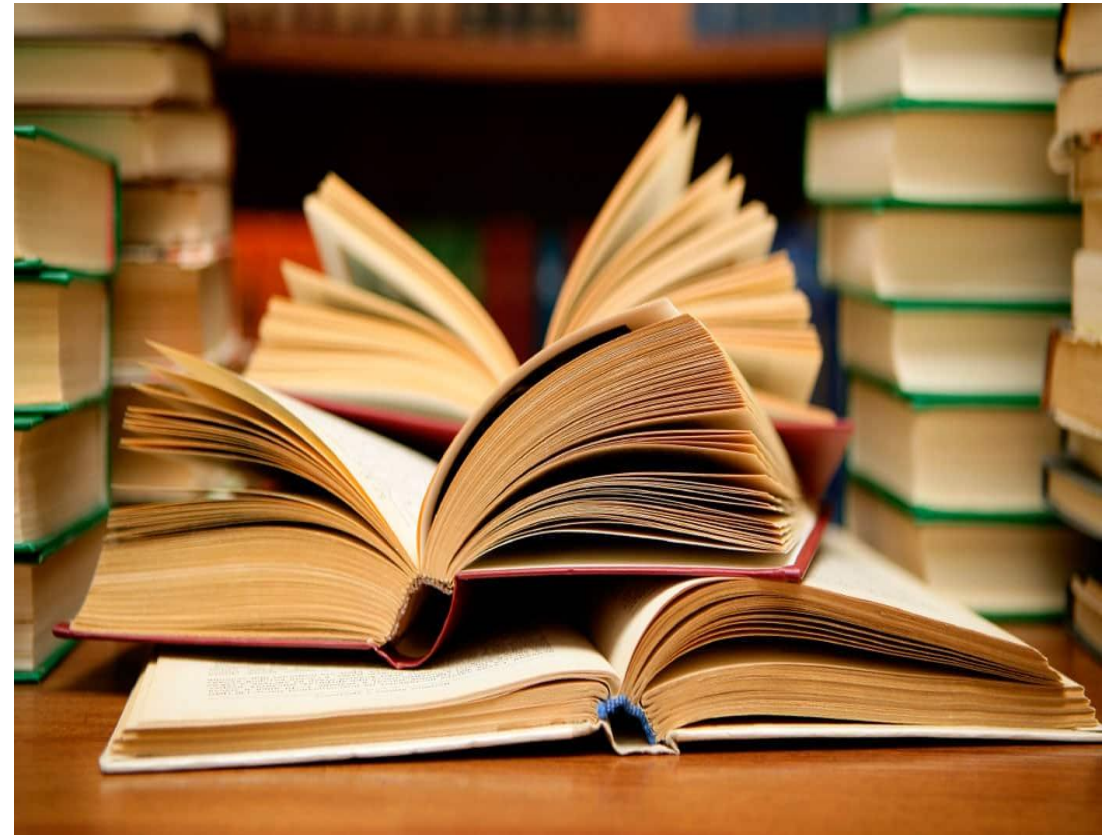
- Exam day
  - Go in rested, etc.
  - **Think national**
  - **Think APA**
  - **Use the test** to take the test
  - Use marking options, scratchpad
  - **Answer every question!**



Image: [golubovy](#) on Business Because

# Resources

- APA guidance & support
  - Publications
  - Chapter-based webinars, study groups
- Core textbooks
- Third-party study tools
- Exam prep classes
  - Chapter-based (\$\$) vs. Planetizen (\$\$\$)





# Extras - Recently Emphasized Exam Topics

- Public participation and social justice
  - Diversity and equity in public engagement
  - Outreach to non-English speaking constituents
- Food resources
  - Food security, reaching underserved communities
- Conflicts of interest
- New Urbanism
- Smart Growth
- Historic Preservation

\* See relevant Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Reports for updated content on these topics

Source: APA New York Metro Chapter AICP Exam Prep Webinar, Alex J. Wallach, October 10, 2019

# Extras - AICP Exam Study Resources

- APA AICP Exam Outline <https://planning.org/certification/examprep/subjectmatter/>
- APA Policy Guides, PAS Reports, PAS QuickNotes, AICP Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct <https://www.planning.org/publications/>
- APA Chapter Presidents' Council (CPC) Study Manual - \$18 through local APA chapter (**Highly recommended!**)
- Local chapter annual exam prep class (February, March or May) or National Conference Prep class. Youtube recordings:
  - [California](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Oregon](#)
- Free resources from APA chapters - recommended: Florida, Texas, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Ohio (**see next slide for FL offer!**)
- Recommended Textbooks (read, at least, 1 each of ethics, history/theory and standards; buy, rent, get ebook from public libraries):
  - *Contemporary Urban Planning* - John M. Levy (**strong coverage of history & theory; easy to follow**)
  - *Local Planning: Contemporary Principles and Practice* ("Green Book") - ICMA Press (**digest of standards for most areas of practice**)
  - *Planning and Urban Design Standards* - APA, Frederick R. Steiner (**digest of standards for most areas of practice**)
  - *Essential Readings in Urban Planning* - Planetizen Press (**textbook of historically influential articles on planning theory**)
  - *Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners* - Carol Barrett (**APA-endorsed analysis of ethics standards + practice scenarios**)
- Planning prep webpage - (free but maybe outdated?) <https://www.planningprep.com/>
- Free note/flash card websites - StudyShack, Quizlet, Brainscape (**be sure to confirm the accuracy of content!**)
- Legal case brief summaries <https://www.oyez.org/>
- Planetizen AICP exam prep course <https://www.planetizen.com/aicp-exam-prep>

# Extras - Resource-Sharing Opportunity

- Excellent opportunity to access APA chapter resources!
  - **What:** The APA Florida Chapter's State Professional Development Officer has offered to extend his chapter's resources and webinar information to out-of-state exam takers.
  - **How:** Contact Henry by **email** (below) and provide your **name, email address, APA Chapter and APA#**. Henry will then add you to his email list and provide access to his extensive library of free resources, as well as his webinar course (weekly, available either recorded or live).
  - **Contact:** Henry Bittaker, FAICP, APA FL State PDO
  - **Email:** [hbittaker@aol.com](mailto:hbittaker@aol.com)



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## Resources



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@APAPWD



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