PREPARING FOR THE AICP EXAM

North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association

2017 State Planning Conference

Hanna Cockburn, AICP | City of Greensboro Planning Vice President for Professional Development
JUST 5 SIMPLE STEPS...

1. get educated
2. gain experience
3. apply for the AICP exam
4. pass the exam
5. become an AICP member
OR... PILOT COMING IN NOVEMBER

Traditional Sequence

- Education
- Professional Planning Experience
- Exam
- AICP

AICP Candidate Pilot Program Sequence

- Education / Apply for Candidate Program
- Exam
- AICP Candidate
- Professional Planning Experience
- AICP

Step One, Step Two, Step Three
THE CANDIDATE PILOT

**Step One**
Apply for the AICP Candidate Pilot Program

- Students or graduates of PAB-accredited programs apply to program
- Submit education verification documents

**Step Two**
Take AICP Exam and Become AICP Candidate

- Graduate and submit graduation verification document
- Take and pass exam

Earn 16 CM Credits including 1.5 law and 1.5 ethics due at Step 3

**Step Three**
Earn AICP credential

- Earn required years of professional experience
  - Graduate: 2 years
  - Undergraduate: 3 years
- Submit employment verification documents and professional experience criteria essays

- Candidate Program Fee: $20
- AICP Exam Fee: $100
- Certification Application Fee: $375

- Essays approved
- Pay AICP dues

Earn AICP Credential

https://www.planning.org/aicp/candidate/
APPLICATION PROCESSES
RESOURCES
SUBJECT MATTER
PREPARATION
EFFECTIVE TEST STRATEGIES
PERSPECTIVES
APPLICATION PROCESS
APPLICATION & ELIGIBILITY

- Have you joined APA?
- Meet the education & experience requirement
- Gather verification documents
  - Employment verification for each job
  - Transcript or notarized diploma
- Start early
- Use early bird for feedback
- Reflect the criteria
- Use the APA checklist
- It’s about YOU

Approval is valid for up to six testing windows
APPLICATION CRITERION

1. Planning Process
   a) Plan Making & Implementation
   b) Functional Area of Practice
   c) Research, Analysis & Teaching

2. Comprehensive View
   a) Use specific examples
   b) Describe how a comprehensive view was used
   c) Discuss multiple impacts, stakeholders

3. Public Decision-Making
   a) Specific example of influencing decision making
   b) Clearly identify who was influenced and the benefit to the public interest
RESOURCES
THE AICP EXAM BULLETIN

- Eligibility
- Forms
- Registration Details
- Site Scheduling
- Practice Exams

http://www.planning.org/certification/bulletin
SELECT READINGS

http://www.planning.org/library/greatbooks/
CODE OF ETHICS

- KNOW THE CODE
  - Communications only through the Ethics Officer
  - Adopted 2005; revised in 2009 & 2016

- Five Sections:
  - A. Aspirational Principles
  - B. Rules of Conduct
  - C. Advisory Opinions
  - D. Adjudication of Complaints of Misconduct
  - E. Discipline of Members

https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm
PRACTICE TESTS & STUDY MATERIALS

- FL-APA Treasure Coast Section Study Links
  www.floridaplanning.org/treasurecoast/aicp_links.pdf
- Study Stack
  www.studystack.com
- APA tutorial & reading list
  www.planning.org/certification/examprep
- Planning Prep
  planningprep.com
- Planning Peeps
  planningpeeps.weebly.com/quizzes.html
TEST PREP COURSES

- APA Exam Prep 3.0 ($249)
- Planetizen AICP Exam Prep Class ($245-$689)
- Others?
# Dates to Remember

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Notification</td>
<td>September 28, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Deadline</td>
<td>October 31, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer Deadline</td>
<td>October 31, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testing Window</td>
<td>November 6-20, 2017</td>
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SUBJECT EMPHASIS

- Fundamental Planning Knowledge (25%)
- Plan Making & Implementation (30%)
- Areas of Practice (30%)
- Leadership, Administration & Management (5%)
- AICP Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct (10%)

http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep/subjectmatter.htm
Fundamental Planning Knowledge

- History, movements & influences
- Theory
- Legal principles & decisions
- Patterns of human settlement
- Terminology & principles
- Natural, social & economic systems
- Core values of planning

Source: newworldencyclopedia.com
Plan Making & Implementation

- Conducting research
- Spatial analysis
- Public engagement
- Communication
- Preparing to plan
- Formulating plans & policies
- Plan implementation

- Monitoring & assessment
- Project & program management
- Social justice

Source: Greensboro Planning
Areas of Practice

- Comprehensive, sector, community & subarea
- Current planning
- Sustainability
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Hazards, mitigation & resiliency
- Environmental & natural resource
- Economic development
- Urban design
- Housing
- Parks, recreation & open space
- Historic & cultural resources
- Institutional
- Food
- Health
- Rural & small town
Leadership, Administration & Management

- Leadership
- Managing external relationships
- Internal organizational management
- Technology and related applications

Source: Collaborative Family Healthcare Association
Code of Ethics

○ **Section A**
  Aspirational principles

○ **Section B**
  Rules of conduct

○ **Sections C, D & E**
  Procedural provisions

*Source: Stevens First Principles*
### BEFORE THE TEST
- **Study early & often**
- **Use practice tests**
- **Be strategic**
  - Focus on weak areas
  - Scenario, multi-part ?s
- **Schedule your test site ASAP**

### FOR THE TEST
- **Get a good night’s sleep**
- **Arrive early**
- **Bring 2 forms of ID**
- **Dress comfortably (in layers)**
- **Bring a survival kit**
- **DON’T FREAK OUT**
TEST STRATEGIES
3 HOURS & 30 MINUTES...

- BREATHE
- 15 minute tutorial at test site occurs before test begins
- 170 questions (but only 150 count)
- Keep a rhythm, pace yourself
- ANSWER EVERY QUESTION
- Mark questions to come back to later
- When in doubt, guess
- 55+ is passing, tests are scaled, questions vary in value

http://www.planning.org/_offsite/certification/tutorial/
REFLECTIONS: MEET SUCCESSFUL EXAM-TAKERS

Julia Zweifel, AICP
IF YOU DON’T PASS...

- DON’T PANIC!
- You are not alone
  - US pass rate: 65%
  - NC pass rate: 53% (May 2017)
- Schedule your retake, re-apply if needed
- Review your score report, identify weak areas
- STUDY, STUDY, STUDY
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