PREPARING FOR THE AICP EXAM

North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association
2019 State Planning Conference

Hanna Cockburn, AICP | North Carolina DOT
Vice President for Professional Development
JUST 5 SIMPLE STEPS...

- get educated
- gain experience
- apply for the AICP exam
- pass the exam
- become an AICP member
OR...

AICP Candidate Pilot Program Sequence

1. Education/Enroll for Candidate Program
2. Exam
3. AICP Candidate
4. Professional Planning Experience
5. AICP

www.planning.org/aicp/candidate/
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
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
THE AICP EXAM BULLETIN

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

www.planning.org/certification/bulletin
APA POLICY GUIDES

Energy  Impact Fees  Agricultural Land Preservation

Public Redevelopment  Provision of Child Care  Homelessness

Billboard Controls  Food Planning  Smart Growth

http://www.planning.org/policy/guides
SELECT READINGS

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

- KNOW THE CODE
- Communications 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

Source: ICMA
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.com/aicp-prep
TEST PREP COURSES

- APA Exam Prep 3.0 ($149) – no longer available
- Planetizen AICP Exam Prep Class ($255-$689)
- Planning Certification ($197 – e-books)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Fee</td>
<td>$70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Bird Resubmission</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>$425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>$100</td>
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DATES TO REMEMBER — NOV 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Notification</td>
<td>September 30, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Deadline</td>
<td>October 31, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Deadline</td>
<td>October 31, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing Window</td>
<td>November 4-18, 2019</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Dates to Remember – May 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application Window</td>
<td>December 2-30, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Bird Deadline</td>
<td>December 9, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing Window</td>
<td>May 11-23, 2020</td>
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SUBJECT MATTER
SUBJECT EMPHASIS

- History, Theory & Law (15%)
- Plan Making & Implementation (30%)
- Functional Areas of Practice (15%)
- Spatial Areas of Practice (15%)
- Public Participation & Social Justice (10%)
- AICP Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct (5%)

http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep/subjectmatter.htm
History, Theory & Law

- Key dates
- Case law
- Planning theory
- Patterns of human settlement

Plan Making & Implementation

- Planning processes
- Research, data & analysis (including GIS)
- Environmental analysis
- Development regulation
- Growth management
- Budgets & financing
- Stakeholder involvement
- Policy making

Source: newworldencyclopedia.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Areas of Practice</th>
<th>Spatial Areas of Practice</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Multi-state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Urbanized area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: City of Raleigh, Lego, State of NC, Realtor.com
Public Participation & Social Justice

- Public involvement
- Techniques
- Engaging underserved communities
- Social justice issues & practices
- Working with diverse communities
- Coalition building

Code of Ethics

- Aspirational principles
- Rules of Conduct
- Procedures
- Suspension of Certification

Source: ICMA
PREPARATION
PREPARATION

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 (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 (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/
IF YOU DON’T PASS...

- DON’T PANIC!
- You are not alone
  - US pass rate: 69%
  - NC pass rate: 73% (May 2016)
- Schedule your retake (re-apply if needed)
- Review your score report, identify weak areas
- STUDY, STUDY, STUDY
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