

# AICP Exam Overview

October 25, 2024

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Georgia Planning Association  
Professional Development Officer*

# Overview Session Agenda

- ▶ One Path to AICP Process
- ▶ Eligibility Pre-Check
- ▶ Certification Support
- ▶ Preparing for the Exam
- ▶ After the Exam
- ▶ Questions/Comments

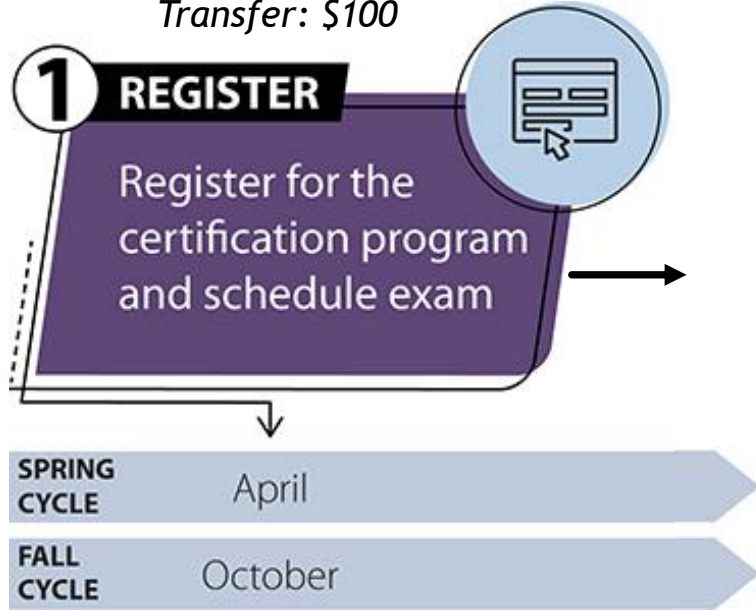
# One Path to AICP

# One Path to AICP

- ▶ Can sit for the exam without meeting experience requirements
  - ▶ Previously, needed experience to be eligible to take the exam
- ▶ AICP Candidate Pilot Program was a success (PAB accredited students)
- ▶ Three-step process to certification now for all candidates

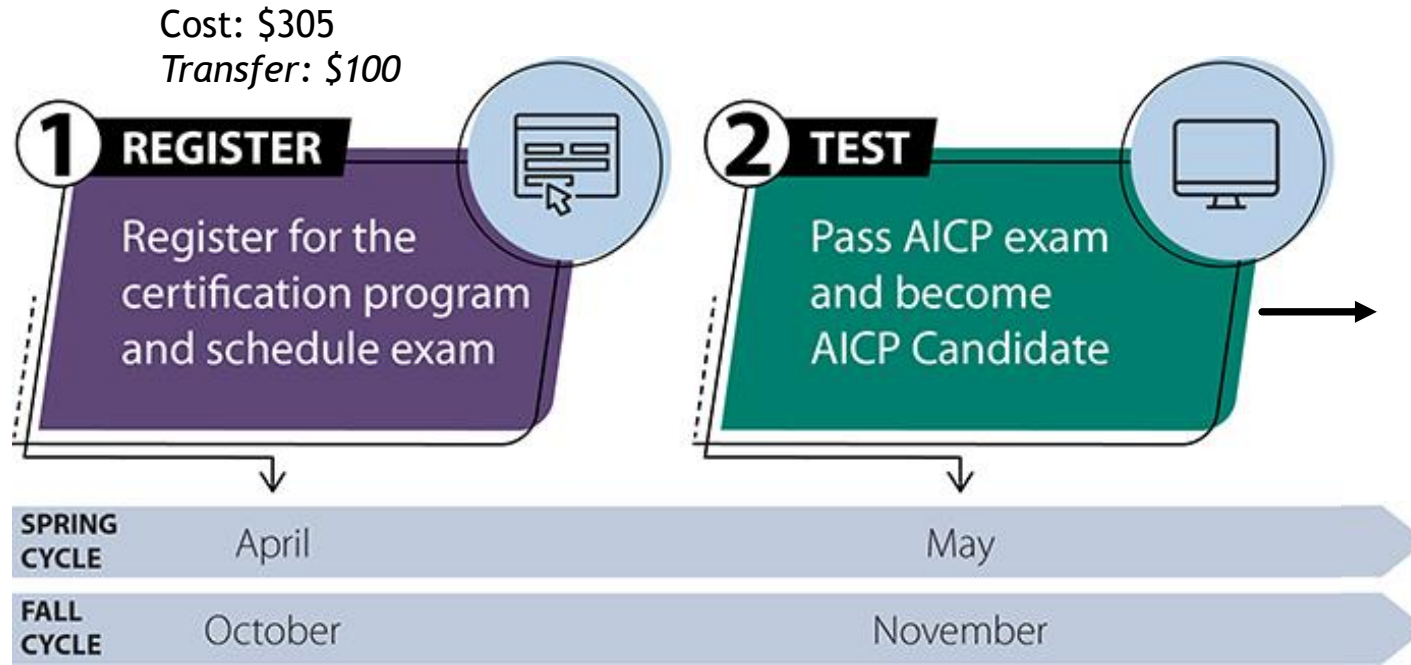
# One Path to AICP

Cost: \$305  
Transfer: \$100



**Opens:** Oct. 1 at 9:00am CST  
**Closes:** Oct. 31 at 3:00pm CST  
**Transfer Deadline:** Nov. 25 at 3:00pm CST

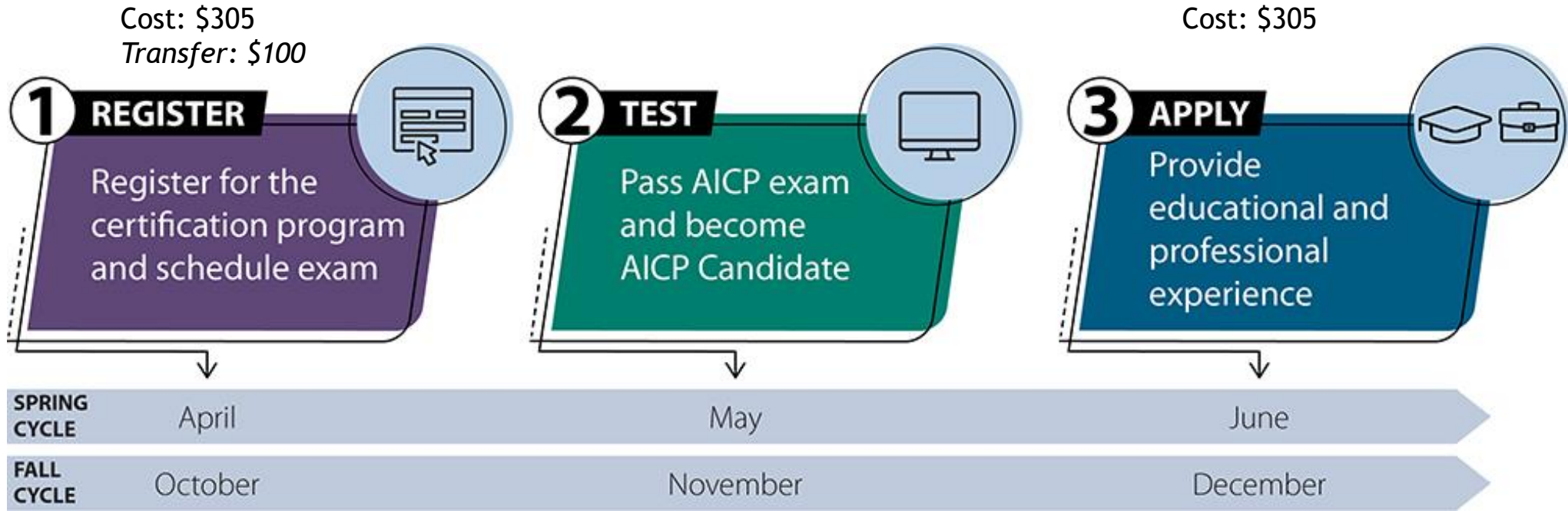
# One Path to AICP



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**Exam Window:** Nov. 4-30

# One Path to AICP



**Opens:** Oct. 1 at 9:00am CST  
**Closes:** Oct. 31 at 3:00pm CST  
**Transfer Deadline:** Nov. 25 at 3:00pm CST

**Exam Window:** Nov. 4-30

**Opens:** Dec. 2 at 9:00am CST  
**Closes:** Dec. 31 at 3:00pm CST

# Eligibility Pre-Check

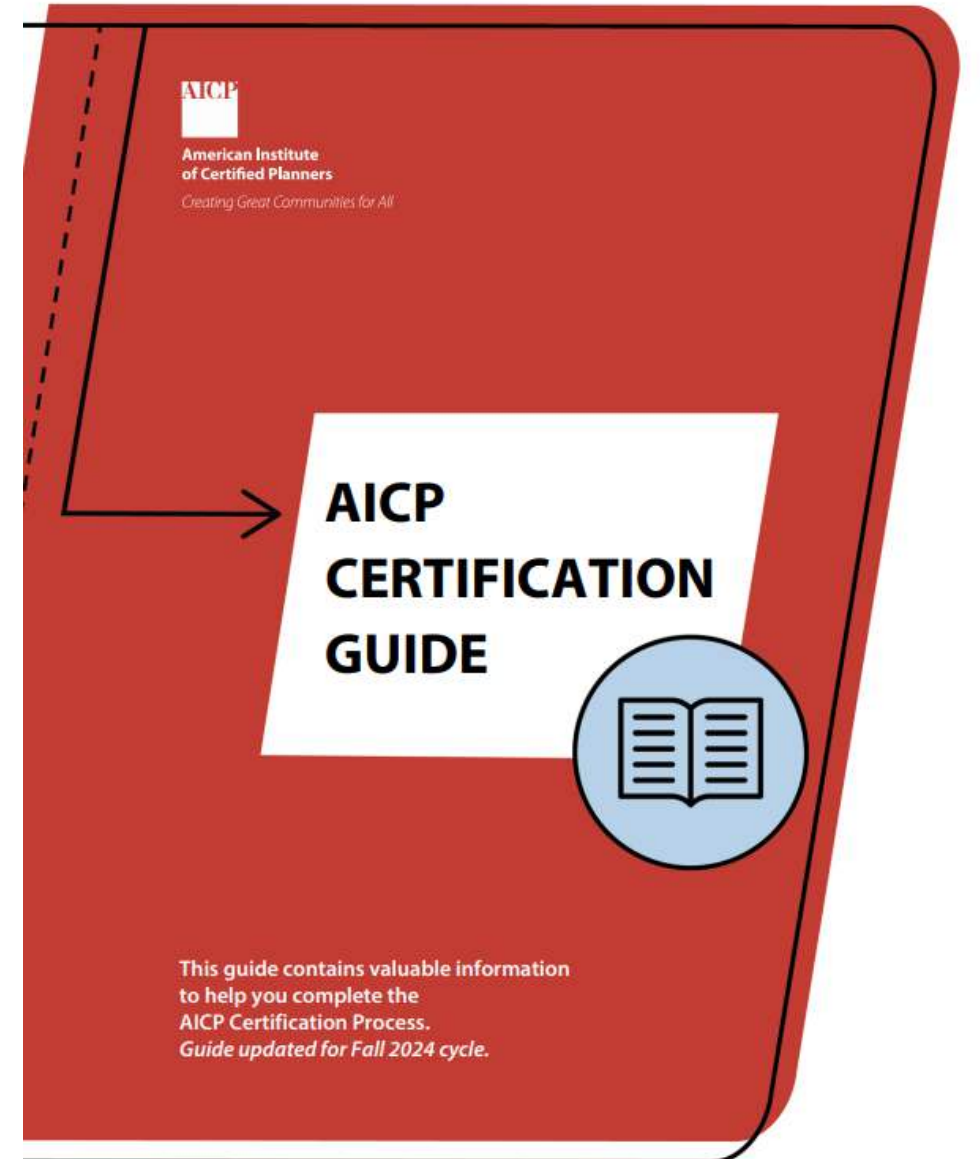


# Eligibility Pre-Check

- ▶ [AICP Certification Guide](#)
- ▶ [Planning Experience Assessment Worksheet](#)
- ▶ [Professional Planning Experience Worksheet](#)
- ▶ [Interactive Experience Calculator](#)
- ▶ [Planning Curriculum Worksheet](#)

# AICP Certification Guide

- ▶ Updated for Fall 2024
- ▶ Step-by-step guide for preparing to take the AICP
  - ▶ Eligibility pre-check
  - ▶ Scheduling the exam
  - ▶ Transfers
  - ▶ Taking the exam
  - ▶ Experience assessment



# How Much Experience Do I Need?

Education <sup>1</sup>	Required Years of Professional Planning Experience
Graduate degree in planning from a PAB-accredited program <sup>2</sup>	2
Bachelor's degree in planning from a PAB-accredited program <sup>2</sup>	3
Graduate degree in planning from a program not accredited by the PAB <sup>3</sup>	3
Any other post-graduate, graduate, or undergraduate degree	4
No college degree/no degree information provided	8

# Planning Experience Assessment Worksheet

- ▶ Help to determine if your professional planning experience meets criteria for AICP Certification (similar to official submittal after exam)
- ▶ Three overarching criteria
  - ▶ Demonstrate a professional level of responsibility and resourcefulness while applying a planning process appropriate to the project or situation.
  - ▶ Evaluate multiple impacts to a community when implementing professional planning tasks.
  - ▶ Influence public decision making in the public interest.

## Areas of Practice

In the entirety of my verified professional planning experience, I have worked in the following areas of planning practice (select all that apply):

### Area of Planning Practice

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate adaptation or mitigation planning                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Land-use planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community advocacy and equity planning                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community development planning                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks, recreation, and open space planning   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive planning  | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning law   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current planning (e.g., zoning, development review)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development planning                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural and small-town planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and natural resources planning                  | <input type="checkbox"/> State planning   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal planning  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food systems planning   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard mitigation or resiliency planning                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health planning   | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban design   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic and cultural resources planning                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (If your professional planning experience has included areas of planning practice not listed above, list those additional areas of planning practice in 20 words or less.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing planning  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure planning                                       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional planning (e.g., airport, military, educational) |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International planning  |   |

# Professional Planning Experience Worksheet

- ▶ Yes/No checklist to help you evaluate your various experiences and if they count toward AICP eligibility
- ▶ Identify if new experience may still be needed
- ▶ Walk through the worksheet for each position you plan to submit
  - ▶ Experience may need to be prorated - use the Interactive Experience Calculator

## CRITERION 1: Demonstrate a Professional Level of Responsibility and Resourcefulness While Applying a Planning Process Appropriate to the Project or Situation

Professional urban, rural, and regional planners apply multistep processes related to managing change in communities. Typical process steps include defining a problem or opportunity, setting goals and objectives, generating alternative strategies, selecting a preferred alternative, implementing the preferred strategy, and monitoring and evaluating strategy performance.

In this position, do I regularly lead or am I responsible for applying all or parts of <b>one or more</b> of the following <b>types of planning processes</b> ?	Yes	No
Plan making (e.g., regional, comprehensive, functional, subarea)		
Community engagement		
Regulatory or incentive program design		
Zoning administration or development review		
Analysis (e.g., economic, environmental, health, transportation, land use, housing, historic preservation, community development)		
Development project or land-use site selection		
Development project or land-use entitlement		
Research program or project design		
Research program or project execution		
Plan, program, or project evaluation		
Planning-related technical assistance or training		
Planning-related course or curriculum development		
Planning-related course or curriculum evaluation		

# Interactive Experience Calculator

- ▶ Online tool that helps you to determine the amount of experience needed based on your highest/most relevant degree
- ▶ After degree information, include start/end dates for work and the approximate hours per week toward planning-related activities

## Degree Information

Enter degree info for highest, most relevant degree in Planning (if any).

SCHOOL :

PROGRAM :

DEGREE LEVEL :

GRADUATION DATE:

*If you have not graduated, enter an expected graduation date or the date you were last enrolled.*

Is this a Planning Degree?

*Check box if this is a planning degree, especially if not PAB-accredited.*



# Planning Curriculum Worksheet

- ▶ Only needed if you attended a non-PAB graduate degree program
- ▶ Helps you to determine how many years of experience you may need (3 or 4 years)
- ▶ Yes/no responses for eligibility

## Planning Curriculum Required Elements

Category	Element	Did my master's degree curriculum address this?
<b>Planning Values and Ethics</b>	Equity, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion (e.g., key issues of equity, diversity, and social justice, including planners' role in expanding choice and opportunity for all persons; planning for the needs of disadvantaged groups; reducing inequities through critical examination of past and current systems; and promoting racial and economic equity)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Planning Values and Ethics</b>	Sustainability, Resilience, and Climate Justice (e.g., environmental, economic, and social/political factors that contribute to sustainable and resilient communities, mitigating and adapting to climate change)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Planning Values and Ethics</b>	Professional Ethics and Responsibility (e.g., serving the public interest, achieving high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge, ethics of public decision-making, research, and planning practice)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Basic Planning Knowledge</b>	Planning History and Theory (e.g., the evolution and current practice of planning in communities, cities, regions, and nations; how planning has hindered and advanced the attainment of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; expectations about planning outcomes in different local and national contexts; conceptual models about what planning is and how it works)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Basic Planning Knowledge</b>	Planning Law and Institutions (e.g., processes and structures available to bring about sound planning outcomes; mechanisms and practices for ensuring equitable and inclusive decision making; legal and institutional contexts within which planning occurs in the U.S. and internationally)	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Certification Support



# Certification Support: Employer Assistance

- ▶ Does your employer pay for some/all of the costs associated with earning certification?
  - ▶ Costs of the exam
  - ▶ Costs to maintain your certification (must have membership in APA to maintain AICP)

# Certification Support: Diversity Scholarship

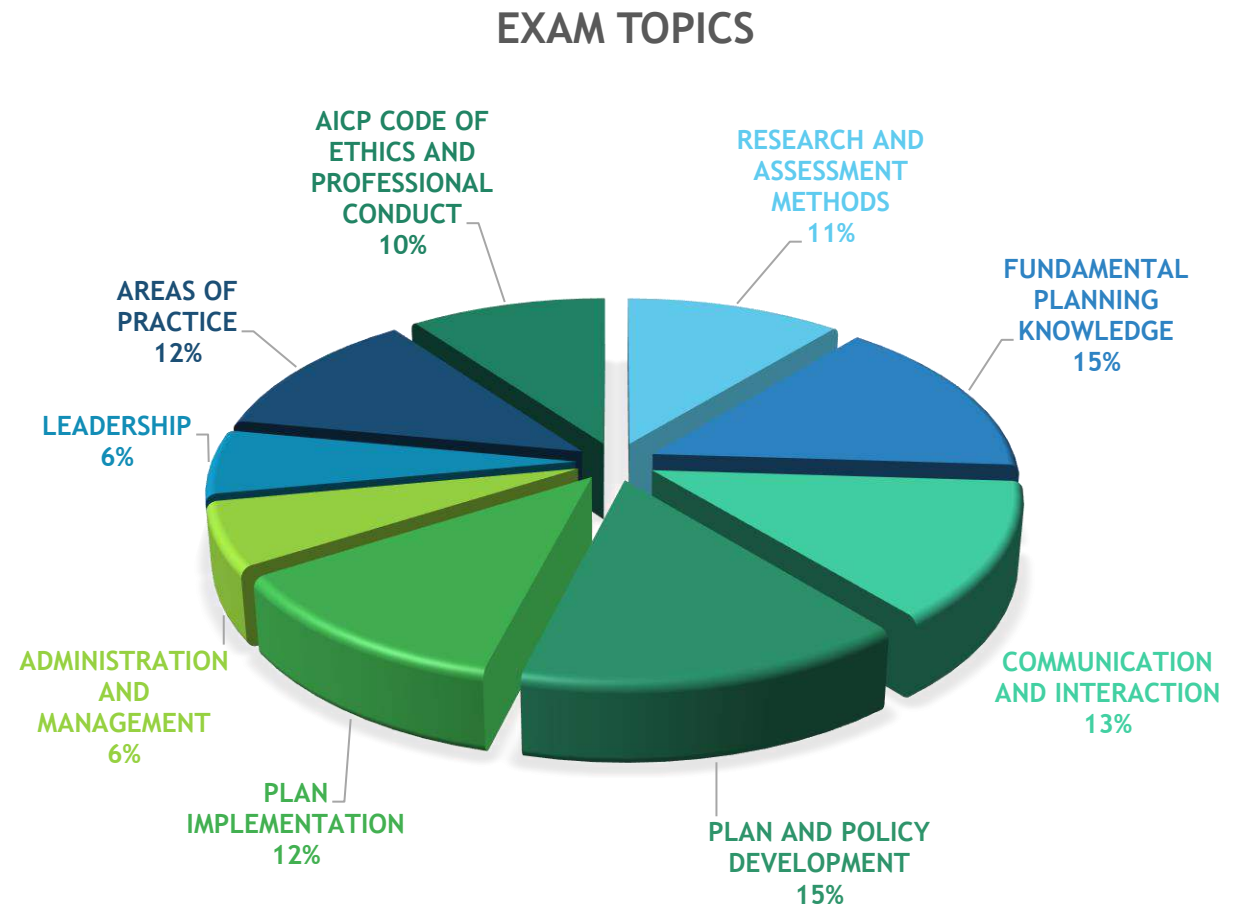
- ▶ Certification Diversity Scholarship
  - ▶ Women, people of color and indigenous descent, veterans, disabled persons, and members of the LGBTQ community who are currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate Planning Accreditation Board (PAB)-approved programs.
  - ▶ Applicants must be APA members; membership for students is free.
  - ▶ This scholarship is awarded annually to students intending to pursue careers as practicing planners who will diversify the profession and who can demonstrate a genuine financial need.
  - ▶ Applicants must have at least 2 (two) recommendation letters submitted on their behalf.
  - ▶ For the 2024 cycle, they awarded 18 scholarships at \$5,000 each.

*(Cycle for 2024 is closed. New cycle to open ~February 2025)*

# Preparing for the Exam

# Exam Content and Changes

- ▶ 170 multiple choice questions (20 are unidentified research questions)
- ▶ Content has been reorganized - balance of questions by topic differs from previous exams
- ▶ Scenario-based questions where 3-5 questions relate to one scenario
- ▶ Test takers receive draft score immediately



# Tips and Recommendations

- ▶ Planning has had a big influence on our country's development
  - ▶ Knowing the history and law that came before us is important in the exam
  - ▶ More standard “memorization” for these types of questions would be helpful
- ▶ Exam is geared toward a public-sector practicing planner who has a few years working the front counter under their belt
  - ▶ Questions are focused on a national level, so do not focus on local policies and topics too heavily
- ▶ You should have a basic understanding of planning statistics - mean, median, mode, Floor Area Ratio (FAR), how to read a graph, etc.
  - ▶ No hard equations or questions that need a calculator (but a calculator is provided)
- ▶ Practice, practice, practice - take practice exams, but do not rely on them for knowledge base

# Exam Prep Training

- ▶ GPA-hosted review sessions - currently including the following topics:
  - ▶ History and Theory
  - ▶ Leadership, Administration, and Management
  - ▶ Law
- ▶ APA topic overview videos - recorded Spring 2023, supplemented Fall 2024
- ▶ Archived presentations from GPA review sessions
- ▶ Study groups

# APA Online Resources

- ▶ Valuable resources available on APA's website
- ▶ Some documents must be purchased (i.e., Chapter Presidents Council Study Manual)
- ▶ Some documents may follow the previous exam format/weighting, but the content is still valid

The following resources are useful starting points:

- [Selected Resources: AICP Certification Exam](#)
- [Chapter Presidents Council Exam Prep History Timeline](#)
- [AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct\\*](#)  
\*All ethics questions are based on the Code of Ethics adopted in 2022.
- [Planning and Law Division Foundational Land Use Law Cases](#)
- [APA Policy Guides](#)
- [PAS Reports](#)
- [Planning magazine](#)
- [American Planning History Since 1900](#)  
This free resource was developed for individuals interested in the planning field. Although it is an engaging and useful resource, be aware that it is not a comprehensive list of historical milestones in planning.

# After the Exam



# After the Exam

- ▶ After passing the exam, you are known as an AICP Candidate until the experience portion is completed. The designation will be added to your APA profile and can be added to your name where relevant.
  - ▶ You must maintain your APA membership during this time.
  - ▶ You must abide by the AICP Code of Ethics.
- ▶ Submit your Education, Employment, Experience
  - ▶ Education history and verification
  - ▶ Employment history
  - ▶ Planning experience assessment
- ▶ APA will notify you within four weeks of submission of your status
- ▶ After completion of the experience portion, you become AICP
  - ▶ Initial dues required at this time

# Certification Maintenance

- ▶ Reporting periods are two years in length
- ▶ You must earn 32 credits (1 training hour = 1 credit) in that window. Credits are flexible, but some are required. As of January 2022, must have:
  - ▶ 1 hour - AICP Ethics
  - ▶ 1 hour - Law
  - ▶ 1 hour - Equity
  - ▶ 1 hour - Sustainability and Resilience
- ▶ You can carry over a maximum of 16 credits per reporting period

# Panel Discussion - Recent test takers



**Rob Dell-Ross**  
City of Milton  
Engineering Project  
Manager  
Public Works  
Department



**Shelby Stamback**  
Kimley-Horn  
Urban Planner and  
Designer



**Jonathan Demirci**  
Kimley-Horn  
Urban Planner

Questions/Comments?

Good Luck!