



# AICP Exam Review 2011

Nancy Frank, PhD, AICP

APA - WI Professional Development Officer (PDO)

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Department of Urban Planning



# Overview

- How to sit for the AICP exam
- Preparing to take the exam
  - Topics
  - Study resources



# How to Sit for the AICP Exam

- Eligibility requirements
  - Amount of experience needed varies by educational background
- Three-Step Process to be “AICP”
  1. Apply to take exam and be accepted
  2. Take exam and pass
  3. Pay AICP dues



# Applying to Take Exam

- Write a series of 250-500 word essays
  - How your work experience engaged planning knowledge and skills
- Submit verification documents
  - Employer verifies employment and responsibilities
  - University verifies degree



# Employer Verification

- Each letter must include:
  - Your name,
  - Your APA ID number (provided by you to the employer)
  - Your position/title,
  - Your dates of employment (e.g. February 2000 through November 2005) and
  - A brief summary of your duties as a professional planner.
  - The name, title, and phone number of the letter writer should also be noted.
- A sample employment verification letter is available online at:  
<http://www.planning.org/certification/pdf/samplejobverification.pdf>
- Lots of “notes” on this in the Exam Bulletin pdf
  - <http://www.planning.org/certification/pdf/bulletin.pdf>



# Calendar

## **MAY 2011 EXAM (sample)**

Deadline to submit online application: mid-January 2011

Notification by April 5, 2011 if accepted to sit for exam

**Testing window:** May 9-23, 2011

8-10 weeks to be notified of eligibility

Application status check:

<http://www.planning.org/certification/statuscheck/>

## **NOVEMBER 2011 EXAM**

**Testing window:** mid-November 2011

*Applications will be accepted beginning in mid-June 2010.*



# Passing

## ○ Pass Rate:

- Nationally: 63 percent
- Wisconsin:
  - November 2010: 100 percent (N=4)
  - May 2010: 91 percent (N = 11)
- Yea, Badgers and Panthers!



# Passing

- Scores are reported on a scale of 25-75, with 55 as the passing score.
- Unofficial score reported immediately at testing site
  - Failing candidates: how many questions answered correctly in each content areas
- Official score mailed ~ 6 weeks later
- If you fail, you may retake . . . .
  - . . . . But \$425 fee



# Costs . . .

Change this year: No separate app fee



## **AICP Exam Fee**

**\$485**

## **AICP Dues (after you pass)**

- Dues for Median Planners' Salary

(\$70,000 in 2010)

**\$140**

- Dues Range

**\$90 - \$175**

- On top of APA dues

## **Certification Maintenance (annual estimate)**

Registration only, not travel

**\$0 - \$500**



## . . . And Benefits

- Increased Salary
  - On average, \$18,000 more per year than non-AICP members
- Career Advancement
- Marketing Advantage
- Benefits to Profession: Quality
  - Quality assurance to clients and employers



# Arriving at test site

- Thomson ProMetrics sample site
  - [http://www.planning.org/\\_offsite/certification/tutorial/](http://www.planning.org/_offsite/certification/tutorial/)
- Find location on a day before the exam—obscure locations
- Arrive on time with two forms of ID
  - Check AICP Exam Bulletin for details
- NO scratch paper, pencil, or calculator
  - Test center will provide it



# Exam Preparation

- 170 multiple-choice questions
  - 150 scored; 20 are pretest items
  - 3.5 hours
  - 15 minute orientation before you begin
    - Plan to arrive early!
  - No penalty for wrong answers
    - Guess, don't leave any blank!



# Exam Topics

- History, Theory and Law [15%]
- Plan Making and Implementation [30%]—largest category
- Functional Areas of Practice [25%]—second largest category
- Spatial Areas of Practice [15%]
- Public Participation and Social Justice [10%]
- AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct [5%]



# Study Resources

## ○ APA

- <http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep/index.htm>
- Exam Prep package (\$195)

## ○ National APA Review Session

- <http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep/pdf/2010fullexamprep.pdf>
- 40 slides of sample content



# Free APA Materials

- AICP Selected Readings list
  - Link on AICP Prep pages
  - My favorites and recommendations on handout
- *Planning* magazine and *JAPA*
- *PAS Reports*
- *Planning and Environmental Law*



# More Study Resources

- CPC Manual trouble
- APA - WI website
  - Today's handout
  - Scott Campbell's "Planning Methods"
  - Florida APA links: huge list
    - Review courses (\$\$\$)
    - Flashcards (free)
  - APA links: "This source mistrusted."
    - Firefox warning [shrug]
    - Links to APA home page instead of resource



# APA pages

- Influential Planners: Planning Pioneers
  - <http://www.planning.org/awards/pioneers.htm>
- Planning and Environmental Law
  - <http://www.planning.org/pel>
- Smart Growth
  - <http://www.planning.org/thecommissioner/2004/fal/resourcefinder.htm>



# More on APA

- 100 Essential Books of Planning
  - Arranged by decade
  - <http://www.planning.org/centennial/greatbooks/index.htm>
- JAPA special history edition
  - March 2009



# Quick Review

- Sample questions from AICP Bulletin
- Events in Planning History list
- Plan making and planning theory
- Ethics
- Law
- Citizen participation
- Quantitative methods



# Questions?

- I have a question!
  - Anyone here interested in finding study partners?
    - May Exam
    - November Exam