



American Planning Association  
**Pennsylvania Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

# AICP Exam Prep

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***Professional  
Development  
Committee***

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*October 2011 APA-PA Conference*

# Today's Agenda

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- ❖ Why/What of AICP
- ❖ Eligibility and Application
- ❖ Background and Tips
- ❖ Content

## What is AICP – American Institute of Certified Planners?

- ❖ APA's professional institute
- ❖ To be AICP, a planner must:
  - meet requirements for education and experience,
  - pass the AICP exam,
  - pledge to uphold ethical standards (AICP Code of Ethics), and
  - engage in ongoing professional development (Certification Maintenance)

# Why AICP?

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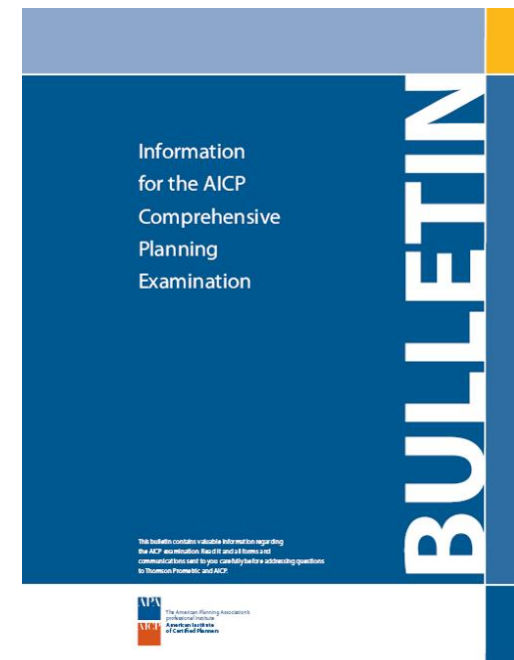
- ❖ Demonstration to elected officials, community leaders, and employers of a commitment to excellence
- ❖ Potential employment
- ❖ Salary survey

# Eligibility

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- ❖ Current APA member
- ❖ Submit online application meeting education and experience criteria
- ❖ Fee of \$485
- ❖ Pass exam

*APA website –  
www.planning.org and the  
Exam Candidate Bulletin for  
all the details*



# Education and Experience Criteria

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## ❖ Education

- Graduate planning degree (PAB): 2 years
- Bachelors planning degree (PAB): 3 years
- Graduate planning degree (non-PAB): 3 years
- Other degree: 4 years
- No college degree: 8 years

## ❖ Experience – *Professional Planning as defined by AICP*

- Apply a planning process appropriate to the situation
- Employ an appropriately comprehensive point of view
- Involve a professional level of responsibility and resourcefulness
- Influence public decision making in the public interest

# Education and Experience

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## ❖ Verifications!!!

- For degrees and all employment you are claiming as professional planning experience
- Check dates carefully

# Test Windows – 2 weeks

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- ❖ May: Application due in January after being open for approximately 5 weeks; response in March
- ❖ November: Application due in July after being open for approximately 5 weeks; response in September
- ❖ Early bird: earlier deadline, earlier notification
- ❖ Approvals (ATT) and incompletes notified by email
- ❖ Denials issued by letter

# Need to know...

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- ❖ Schedule on your own with Prometric
- ❖ Approvals are good for 4 exam cycles, but need to inform APA if not taking the exam in the next window
- ❖ APA Exam Bulletin and APA staff for any questions – don't wait until it's too late

# Test Background

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- ❖ 170 multiple choice questions, including 20 sample questions – must answer approximately 110 – 115 of the 150 “real” questions correct in order to pass
- ❖ Scoring on a scale, pass rate is approximately 65%
- ❖ 3 ½ hours to complete (brief tutorial before exam)
- ❖ Test questions last updated in 2008 (no 2010 Census data yet)
- ❖ Test centers
  - Arrive 30 minutes early for paperwork
  - Take required IDs – make sure name and spelling is matching
  - Calculator/paper/pencil provided
- ❖ Study early and often
  - Identify weak areas
  - Study groups and practice exams
  - Make use of resources appropriate for your background

# Test Content

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- ❖ History, Theory and Law – 15%
- ❖ Plan Making and Implementation – 30%
- ❖ Functional Areas of Practice – 25%
- ❖ Spatial Areas of Practice – 15%
- ❖ Public Participation and Social Justice – 10%
- ❖ AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct – 5%

These 3 areas make up 70% of the exam – expect lots of approach & process questions.

*Review the APA outline of material.*

*Allocate study time according to the APA outline and your own background.*

# Test Tips

# Study Materials from PA Chapter

The screenshot displays the website for the American Planning Association Pennsylvania Chapter. The page features a navigation menu with links for CONTACT US, ABOUT US, EVENTS & TRAINING, LEGISLATION/LAW, ONLINE SERVICES, CAREER CENTER, EDUCATION, and SECTIONS. The main content area is titled "AICP Exam" and includes a list of links: About the AICP Exam, Taking the AICP Exam, AICP Exam Schedule, Partial Scholarships available, AICP Exam Study Materials, and AICP Exam Prep Session via Webcast August 27. Below this, there are sections for "About the AICP Exam", "Taking the AICP Exam", "AICP Exam Schedule", "AICP Exam Study Materials", "Practice Questions and Answers", "AICP Exam Preparation Course Presentations", "APA AICP Exam Study Manual", and "Study Materials from Other States".

[www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org)  
**\*\*AICP Exam under Career Center\*\***

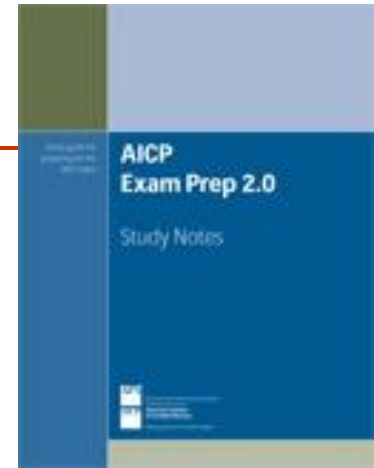
- ❖ Prior Prep Session PowerPoints (spring session is a full day)
- ❖ Ethics presentation and scenarios
- ❖ PDC Study Notes
- ❖ How to obtain the CPC Manual
- ❖ Other Chapter information (NC, WA, CO, FL – new one: Georgia)



# Test Tips

## Study Materials from APA

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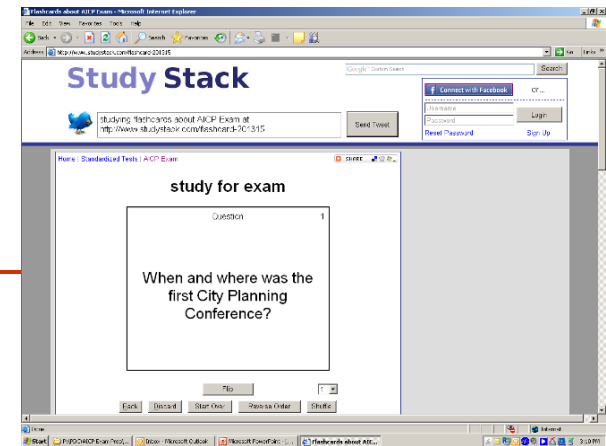
*[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org) and [www.planning.org/certification/examprep](http://www.planning.org/certification/examprep)*

- ❖ AICP Exam Prep 2.0
- ❖ Ethics Code and Information/PowerPoints
- ❖ Policy Guides ([www.planning.org/policy/guides/index.htm](http://www.planning.org/policy/guides/index.htm))
- ❖ Legislative Information
- ❖ Top 25s - 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (<http://myapa.planning.org/25anniversary> or Google)
  - Planning Stories,
  - Cases in Planning and Environmental Law,
  - APA Award Winners,
  - Most Significant Planning Laws (1978 – 2003),
  - Individuals Who Influenced Planning Before 1978
- ❖ Timeline (or Pathways) of American Planning History – APA website or Google to find this listing from 1785 to 2000

# Test Tips

# Other Sources

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- ❖ [www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com)
- ❖ [www.planningprep.com](http://www.planningprep.com) (dated format/information?)
- ❖ Mike Waiczis materials (reportedly good practice exams, if you can locate them)
- ❖ Institute of Continuing Planning Education (not updated?)
- ❖ Cyburbia: <http://www.cyburbia.org/forums/>
- ❖ Flashcards: [www.studystack.com](http://www.studystack.com) or [www.flashcardexchange.com](http://www.flashcardexchange.com) (search AICP) and gFlash app for mobile devices
- ❖ [www.oyez.org](http://www.oyez.org) (legal)
- ❖ Colorado Chapter link: <http://plannersreference.com/aicp/>
- ❖ Chapter Presidents Council manual

*Practice exams are critical, but don't study the questions – pay attention to the topic. Format quality varies greatly by source.*

*Real questions are likely to require a mix of professional judgment and technical knowledge.*

## Test Tips

# Comprehensive Study Sources

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- ❖ PDC Study Notes...*free*
- ❖ PLAN 310 Planetizen AICP Exam Preparation Course (\$129)...*interactive with practice exams*
- ❖ APA AICP Exam Prep 2.0 (\$195)...*practice exams*

*These generally review all topics noted in the APA outline of test content.*

# Test Tips

## Reading Materials

**AICP Certification Exam Selected Readings**

The following list may help planners who are preparing to take the AICP examination. Please note that the readings are presented with two cautions:

- No reading list can span the entire range of material in the AICP exam. As a result, the list is not a substitute for professional planning experience and education. It is not expected that exam takers will have read all the resources cited.
- The readings are intended as guidelines only. The AICP exam questions are not drawn from these readings directly, but are developed from materials of similar content.

**General Reference**

**Books**

Dalton, Linda, Charles Hoch, and Frank So (eds.). 2000. *The Practice of Local Government Planning*. Washington, D.C.: ICMA.

American Planning Association (ed.). 2006. *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

**APA General References**

*Planning* magazine

*Journal of the American Planning Association*

PAS reports

*Planning & Environmental Law*

Policy Guides

**I. History, Theory and Law**

Brooks, Michael. 2002. *Planning Theory for Practitioners*. Chicago: American Planning Association: (2002).

Campbell, Scott (ed). 2003. *Readings in Planning Theory*. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Eisner, Simon, Arthur Gallion, and Stanley Eisner. 1993. *The Urban Pattern* (6th ed). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Lucero, Lora (ed.). 2005. *Four Supreme Court Land-Use Decisions of 2005*. Planning Advisory Service Report No. 535. Chicago: American Planning Association.

Hall, Peter. 1988. *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Irons, Peter H. 1996. *May It Please the Court*. New York: New Press.

Krueckeberg, Donald (ed.). 1983. *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy.

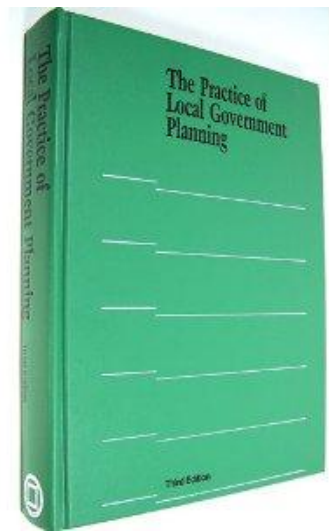
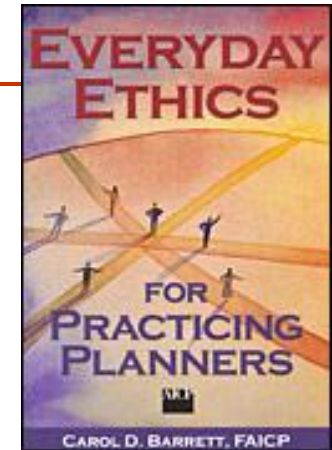
Peterson, Jon. 2003. *The Birth of City Planning in the United States: 1840-1917*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

**OPTIONS**  
New ways for planning officials to partner with APA.

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Join

**Online Master of Arts in**  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES



# Test Tips

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- ❖ Get plenty of rest for the exam
- ❖ Dress in layers
- ❖ Eat before the exam
- ❖ Arrive early
- ❖ Answer every question
- ❖ Use the “marking” option
- ❖ Think of answer before reviewing choices
- ❖ Skim answers before reading long questions
- ❖ Do math twice
- ❖ Think national
- ❖ Think APA
- ❖ Think AICP/Code of Ethics – the BEST answer

# History, Theory, and Law – 15%

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- ❖ History of planning – refer to Green Book and Timelines (or Pathways) of American Planning History, know people and events, philosophies and movements
- ❖ Planning law – amendments (1, 5, and 14) and case law
- ❖ Theories of planning – overall theories, urban design theories, city development theories...
- ❖ Patterns of human settlement

*APA-NC is a great website for law information:  
Annotated Planning Law Outline  
Planning Law Case Chart  
Big Cases*

# Plan Making and Implementation – 30%

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- ❖ Visioning and goal setting
- ❖ Quantitative and qualitative research methods
- ❖ Collecting, organizing, analyzing and reporting data
- ❖ Demographics and economics
- ❖ Natural and built environment
- ❖ Land use and development regulations
- ❖ Application of legal principles
- ❖ Environmental analysis
- ❖ Growth management techniques
- ❖ Budgets and financing options
- ❖ GIS/spatial analysis and information systems
- ❖ Policy analysis and decision making
- ❖ Development plan and project review
- ❖ Program evaluation
- ❖ Communications techniques
- ❖ Intergovernmental relationships
- ❖ Stakeholder relationships
- ❖ Project and program management

*Consider the plan making process in the different functional areas, in the different spatial areas, in the context of public participation and social justice.*

# Functional Areas of Practice – 25%

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- ❖ Community development
- ❖ Comprehensive or long range planning
- ❖ Development regulation or administration
- ❖ Economic development and revitalization
- ❖ Economic analysis and forecasting
- ❖ Educational, institutional, or military facilities planning
- ❖ Energy policy
- ❖ Food system planning
- ❖ Growth management
- ❖ Hazard mitigation and disaster planning
- ❖ Historic preservation
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Infrastructure
- ❖ Labor force or employment
- ❖ Land use
- ❖ Natural resources and the environment
- ❖ Parks, open space, and recreation
- ❖ Planning law
- ❖ Policy planning
- ❖ Public services
- ❖ Social and health services
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Urban design

*Understand the history, legislative background, terminology, and implementation tools for these topics – and how to plan for them!*  
*Read the APA Policy Guide for any topics you are not familiar with.*

*Why plan at all of these different levels?*

*Because the resource demands it.*

## Spatial Areas of Practice – 15%

- ❖ Planning at national level (environmental, housing, transportation)
- ❖ Planning for multi-state or bi-state regions (TVA, transportation)
- ❖ Planning for state (environmental)
- ❖ Planning for sub-state region (Outer Banks)
- ❖ Planning at county level (hazard mitigation planning, growth management)
- ❖ Planning for urban areas (infill, redevelopment)
- ❖ Planning for suburban areas (old and new, sprawl, infrastructure)
- ❖ Planning for small town (infrastructure, economic opportunity)
- ❖ Corridors (transportation, environmental)
- ❖ Neighborhoods (access to services, walkability)
- ❖ Waterfronts (hazard mitigation, access and economic opportunity)
- ❖ Historic districts or areas (National Register and local)
- ❖ Downtowns (mixed use, signage, events/tourism)



*Categories are not exclusive – this is an umbrella topic.*

*Complexity of planning process generally grows as the planning area grows.*

*Study within other topic areas, particularly functional.*

# Public Participation and Social Justice – 10%

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- ❖ Public involvement planning
- ❖ Public participation techniques
- ❖ Identifying, engaging, and serving underserved groups
- ❖ Social justice issues, literature, and practice
- ❖ Working with diverse communities
- ❖ Coalition building

*Understand techniques and how they function and when they are best used.*

*Know names - Alinsky, Davidoff, Arnstein.*

*Understand basic social justice issues and approaches to solving them.*

# AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct – 5%

## ❖ Four sections

- **Principles to Which We Aspire** – responsibility to the public, clients, employers, profession, and colleagues, no sanctions for violating
- **Our Rules of Conduct** - 26 rules that you can be sanctioned for violating, many on accurate information and conflict of interest
- **Our Code Procedures** – informal advice, formal advice, charges of misconduct
- **Planners Convicted of Serious Crimes** – automatic suspension of AICP

*Effective June 1, 2005; Revised October 3, 2009. Available on the APA website.*



**“We need to draw the line on unethical behavior.  
But let’s draw it with an Etch-a-Sketch and  
don’t be afraid to shake it a little.”**

*Rule 26 and  
Section D (Serious  
Crimes) will not  
be on the exam,  
as it has not been  
revised since  
2008.*

# Sample Question

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An urban municipality has received grant funding to restore riparian buffers in order to improve the untreated water quality of the municipality's public water, which is drawn partially from surface waters. Which of the following steps is not necessary to get the project underway?

- A. Research existing databases for information on water quality within the source waters' watershed.
- B. Determine ownership of parcels along all surface waters within the municipality.
- C. Review aerial photography to assess conditions adjacent to waterways within the source waters' watershed.
- D. Research the most effective riparian buffer restoration methods for water quality improvement (such as differing buffer widths and vegetation type).
- E. Contact adjacent municipalities that contain any of the source waters' watershed.

*Answer: B. This exact step is not needed. Determining ownership for certain parcels in the source watershed will likely be needed later in the process.*

# Sample Question

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Industry	Local Employment	National Employment
X	3%	6%
Y	10%	7%
Z	11%	3%

5. Listed above are two types of employment percentages for industries X, Y, and Z in a metropolitan area. The local employment for each industry is listed as a percent of total local employment, and the national employment in each industry is listed as a percent of total national employment. Under the location quotient method, an economic planner can assign which of these industries to the export sector of the metropolitan area?

- A. Y only
- B. X only
- C. X and Z
- D. Y and Z

*Answer: D. This is a realistic example of the type of calculation question that the exam may have (from the Georgia Chapter).*

# Sample Question

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Advocacy planning is associated closely with Paul Davidoff and Saul Alinsky. Which of the following was the significant effect of the advocacy movement?

- A. Assisted single women with children find employment.
- B. Caused social planning to move from back room negotiations into the public forum.
- C. Reduced the need for more environmental documentation.
- D. Created economic stability.

*Answer: B. Questions related to people will not necessarily ask what they wrote or what year it was – they can ask how those people impacted planning.*

# Sample Question

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Which of the following court case(s) is/are concerned with takings:

- I. Renton v. Playtime Theatres Inc.
- II. Pennsylvania Coal Co. v. Mahon
- III. Metromedia, Inc. v. City of San Diego
- IV. Agins v. City of Tiburon

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. I and III
- D. II and IV

*Answer: D. Three points here – one, this question format will appear frequently. Two, court case questions can be important to mark, or make notes from, since they can overlap somewhat (see next slide/question). Three – this is a simple case law question. See the next slide for a more difficult case law question.*

# Sample Question

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The landmark case *Agins v. City of Tiburon* (1980) established a test: a regulation is a taking if it can be shown that it:

- I. Prompts a property owner to file a lawsuit.
- II. Deprives property of all economically viable use.
- III. Creates a nuisance on the affected property.
- IV. Fails to advance a legitimate governmental interest.

- A. I and II
- B. II and IV
- C. II and III
- D. III and IV

*Answer: B. Similar points as the prior slide. One – question format. Two – marking (or notes) can help you answer questions due to potential overlap of questions. Three – this is an example of a more difficult case law question, focused on the details of the ruling.*

# [www.planningpa.org](http://www.planningpa.org)



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