

Letter from AICP President Sue Schwartz, FAICP, and AICP President-Elect Graham Billingsley, AICP

On behalf of the AICP Commission, we extend our thanks and appreciation to everyone who took the time to submit remarks concerning the proposed Certification Maintenance program. About 1,400 comments were received in response to the first draft of the program proposal, which was issued to AICP members in December 2006.

Those comments were analyzed and thoroughly considered when the second draft of the program proposal was created. Members generally expressed strong support for some type of certification maintenance requirement for certified professional planners. However, many members are concerned about some of the details of the proposed program. This second draft of the program responds to many of those concerns.

We have heard strong concerns about affordability and access to continuing education opportunities. We took this concern seriously in our program development and made changes for this second round principally because of these sorts of concerns. This has been a concern of the Commission for several years and led to the development of products such as audio conferences, CD-ROM packages, etc., to try and address those needs. There are several dozen offerings now, and we will continue with these and the development of online courses. From initial discussions with chapters, divisions, and sections, as well as the academic community, we anticipate offerings in these media to grow.

Many of the proposed requirements of the Certification Maintenance program are based on the existing voluntary Continuing Professional Development program. Examples include the requirement that 40 credits be obtained over two years and the requirement that at least half of the credits be provided by APA or sources sponsored or endorsed by APA, or sources accredited through the PAB program. The existing voluntary program has been easy to use, and the users have not had difficulty reaching their requirements.

Although we did receive significant input, we don't feel we are yet quite done. We want additional input on the latest proposal. To make that easier for all AICP members, so participation would not be limited by geography or the ability to attend the national conference, we have created a virtual town hall meeting. Visit ecomunities.planning.org to comment on this important program. Please note that you will need your APA log-in information to access this link. You may also submit comments via e-mail to AICP-CM@planning.org.

We will again consider your comments before we take action on Certification Maintenance in April prior to the conference. Please read this program description in full, and let us know your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Sue Schwartz, FAICP *Graham Billingsley, AICP*
AICP President *AICP President-Elect*

1.0 Program Description

1.1 Certification Maintenance (CM) Requirements for Certified Planners

Within each two-year period, AICP certified planners will be required to engage in at least 40 credits of eligible professional development activities; up to 10 credits of these 40-year period may be self-directed study. Each two-year period begins on January 1.

No minimum number of credits need be logged per year so long as 40 qualifying credits are logged in during each two-year reporting period.

A four-month grace period, beyond the two-year reporting cycle, may be used to complete the Certification Maintenance credit requirements. Any credits used in a grace period cannot be double counted towards the next reporting cycle. A

The Authority to Set Standards

The Articles of Incorporation of the American Planning Association, Article Four, provide the authority for the AICP Commission to set standards for certification. Click here to read the bylaws.

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maximum of 20 excess credits can be carried over to the next reporting cycle. Self-directed study credits will not qualify for carry-over credits.

1.2 Achieving CM Credit Requirements

Forty eligible credits will be reported in a two-year period and will be achieved in the following way:

- All 40 credits may be earned from APA, APA-sponsored and APA-endorsed sources, or from PAB graduate courses.
- At least 30 credits (75 percent) of the eligible credits will come from registered providers, of which at least 20 credits (50 percent) will come from APA, APA-sponsored programs, APA-endorsed programs, or PAB graduate degree courses.
- A maximum of 10 credits (25 percent) may be self-directed study credits or credits from unregistered providers. These credits cannot be carried over to the next two-year reporting cycle.

				40 Credits (the total needed every 2 years)
				At least 30 of 40 Credits from Registered Providers
				At least 20 of 40 Credits from APA, APA-Endorsed, APA-Sponsored, or PAB graduate courses
				Up to 10 credits from Self Guided Study or from Unregistered Providers

- Volunteer, unpaid planning instruction may qualify for the self-guided study portion of the program. Certification Maintenance credit may be earned only once for teaching a particular course or seminar or for presenting a professional paper. The amount of credit equals the length of the presentation in hours plus one hour for preparation.
- Qualifying credits that satisfy the continuing education needs of another professional association can be counted for both Certification Maintenance and the other association's continuing education requirements.
- 1.5 of the APA, APA-sponsored, or APA-endorsed programs or PAB graduate degree course credits will be on the topic of ethics. These credits cannot be carried over to the next reporting cycle.
- 1.5 credits will be on the topic of current planning law; these credits may be earned from any registered provider. These credits cannot be carried over to the next two-year reporting cycle.

1.3 Non-Qualifying CM Activities

- Time spent in business meetings of APA leadership, whether at the national, chapter, or division levels, will not be eligible for CM credits.
- Time spent in mentoring activity will not be eligible for CM credits.
- Time spent in volunteer activities will not be eligible for CM credits.
- Teaching for a salary, fee, or honorarium will not be eligible for CM credits.

1.4 Online Logs

Credits will be reported by each qualifying AICP member in the CM online logging system. The CM logging system will be launched in January 2008. Eligible credits gained under the current CPD system on or after April 13, 2007, will be carried over into the CM logging system.

If CM credit requirements have not been satisfied by the end of the four-month grace period, the online CM logging system will no longer be accessible. At this point, an AICP member must maintain external log details in order to support future CM credit claims.

If AICP Certification Maintenance requirements are not met within four years, an AICP member will lose AICP certification and will be obliged to seek recertification in order to retain the AICP credential. See Section 3.0 for exemptions and waivers.

AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

www.planning.org/ethics/conduct.html

Why Are These Non-Qualifying Activities?

Based on the input received and discussions of the AICP Commission, we have concluded that some activities do not fulfill the intent of the CM program. This is why these activities are included in the non-qualifying CM list.

2.0 Requirements for Course or Provider Registration

Educational providers will be required to register with APA/AICP in order to become qualified professional development providers. This means that the providers and all their eligible educational offerings will be reviewed and, upon approval, will be entered into the online directory of approved credits that all members may access. These courses will also be entered into the APA/AICP online educational calendar so that all members may become aware of these approved programs.

Members claiming CM credits from unregistered providers may apply these credits under the 25 percent self-directed study provision, 10 credits over the two year period.

After their content has been reviewed, there will be a registration fee for educational providers. If educational providers offer their training for free, they can qualify for registration without paying a fee to APA/AICP. However, free conferences with an overall attendance of more than 500 participants will need to pay the APA/AICP registration fee to address some of the administrative costs.

3.0 Exemptions and Waivers

3.1 Retired Members

Retired members, as defined by APA, will be exempt from Certification Maintenance requirements.

3.2 Special Exemptions

Special exemptions may be granted for personal or hardship reasons. Documentation may be required for individuals seeking CM inactive membership status. While various circumstances may qualify, the following list is representative of those in which a temporary inactive membership status may be granted:

1. Parental leave. An inactive membership status of six months may be granted for the birth or adoption of a child.
2. Military service leave. An inactive membership status may be granted to members on active duty who are deployed overseas for either Temporary Duty (TDY) or Permanent Change of Station (PCS), or to members of the Armed Forces Reserve or National Guard who have been mobilized or deployed.
3. Health. An inactive membership status may be granted for reasons of ill health.
4. Care leave. An inactive membership status may be granted to members who need to stay at home to care for another person.
5. Foreign residency. An inactive membership status may be granted to members living outside of the U.S. for up to one year.
6. Other reasons for inactive membership status will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.3 Inactive Membership

AICP members will not be required to pay AICP dues during the period in which their membership is inactive. However, during this period, AICP membership will be inactivated and the AICP credential cannot be used. Members with inactive membership status must remain members of APA and will be required to pay APA dues; they must also abide by the AICP Code of Ethics. Inactive members must reinstate AICP membership within four years and pay 20 percent of back dues owed since beginning inactive membership status. Anyone who has been an inactive member for more than four years will be required to retake the AICP exam and reenter the Institute following new member procedures.

3.4 Waivers

Most Certification Maintenance requirements may be waived for unemployed members during the period of unemployment. However, AICP and APA memberships must be paid and active, although they may be paid at the reduced unemployed rate. Unemployed members may continue to use the AICP credential so long as they obtain at least 25 percent of the required CM credits; this may be done through less expensive training such as self-directed study activities.

Planners practicing outside the U.S. will be exempt from the 50 percent APA,

APA-sponsored, or APA-endorsed program requirement, but will still be required to maintain certification through professional development. AICP members who belong to another planning organization with a rigorous, APA-approved credential program and who must uphold Certification Maintenance for two organizations, will be able to satisfy AICP requirements through the host country's requirements so long as 40 credits are maintained over a two-year period.

Planners practicing part time will be required to meet the full obligations of Certification Maintenance, unless granted inactive membership status.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 APA Programs. APA offers many educational programs throughout the year. These programs focus on the professional development of practicing planners and qualify for Certification Maintenance credits. Such APA programs include, but are not limited to, APA chapter conferences and programs (including sections), APA division training programs, the APA National Planning Conference (sessions, workshops, symposia, mobile workshops), PTS Workshops, AICP Symposia, APA and AICP audio conferences, APA National Independent Study (e.g. APA audio tapes, CD-ROMs, or online courses), Tuesdays at APA, and APA's L'Enfant Lecture.

4.2 APA-Sponsored Programs. APA-sponsored programs are those to which APA or its components (AICP, APA chapters, or APA divisions) have significantly contributed by developing content or by providing significant financial or in-kind support.

4.3 APA-Endorsed Programs. APA-endorsed programs are those that APA or the responsible official in one of its components (AICP, APA chapters, or divisions) have reviewed and approved. Financial support or a contribution to the content of the program is not necessary for an endorsed program.

4.4 CM Credit. One CM credit is equivalent to one contact hour of training. In the case of self-directed reading, two hours of reading are equivalent to one CM credit.

4.5 Qualifying CM Courses. Qualifying CM credits must be activities or courses that are:

1. designed to meet a specific planning-related training objective,
2. led by one or more experts on the subject,
3. offered by organizations that:

- a. provide some form of documentation, i.e. transcript, workbook, certificate, summary, course syllabus, etc.
- b. are considered eligible providers by APA, AICP, APA chapters, or APA divisions.

4. designed to teach subject matter at a level beyond an entry-level planning job.

4.6 PAB Graduate Degree Courses. PAB graduate degree courses include those offered by PAB-accredited graduate programs but do not include PAB undergraduate degree courses or any courses offered through extension programs, professional development centers of accredited universities, or similar entities. Such entities are invited to apply through one of the other qualifying mechanisms.

4.7 Registered Provider. A registered provider is a provider of continuing education that has been approved for providing qualifying CM courses.

4.8 Retired Member. The current definition of a "retired" member is this: "You must have been an APA or AICP member continuously for 10 or more years, be 65 or older, and completely retired."

4.9 Self-Directed Study. Self-directed study is defined as education received through unregistered providers or from time spent reading books or articles or

listening to audio tapes of books that support professional development. Two hours of reading time will qualify for one credit.

Significant Changes in This Second Draft of the Certification Maintenance Program

This revised Certification Maintenance program description responds to many of the comments that were submitted after the release of the first draft. These are some of the significant changes:

- The credit requirement was lowered from 48 credits to 40 credits in two years.
- The 10 self-directed study credits provision was maintained and broadened to include unregistered providers.
- PAB graduate degree courses were added to the list of course offerings that would satisfy the 50 percent rule (the most restrictive CM criterion).
- The definition of registered provider was broadened to include APA-sponsored and APA-endorsed programs.

Some of the feedback we have received indicates concern about the need to register professional development offerings. The reason for requiring registration of professional development offerings is to assure quality of programs. A registration fee is being required in order to support the new administrative expenses that AICP will incur by introducing Certification Maintenance without raising membership dues specifically to support the CM program. This is consistent with other professional certifying and licensing bodies such as AIA and the state bar associations.

Information about registration fees to educational providers will be provided in future months.

How Do I Comment on This Second Draft of the Certification Maintenance Program?

This is the final comment period before the AICP Commission will take action on the proposal to institute new Certification Maintenance standards. The AICP Commission encourages your feedback. Please send your comments to AICP-CM@planning.org. You may also join a virtual town hall meeting by visiting ecommunities.planning.org. Please note that you will need your APA log-in information to access this link. All comments must be received by Tuesday, March 20, 2007, in order to be considered by the AICP Commission.

What's Next?

Once again, your comments will be forwarded to the AICP Commission for review and consideration. A decision on the Certification Maintenance program is expected at the AICP Commission meeting on April 13, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. at the Philadelphia Marriott Hotel, 1201 Market St.

As Certification Maintenance is implemented, the Commission will be monitoring the issues that arise and making adjustments where necessary. In addition, a major evaluation of the program will take place at the end of five years.

Minimum Credit Requirements of Other Organizations

Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)

18 hours per year

Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

50 hours per 2 years

Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)

60 points per 2 years

American Institute of Architects (AIA)

18 hours per year

American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Various: e.g., Kansas, 30 hours per 2 years

American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)

120 hours per 3 years

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