



January 5, 2009

Mr. Paul Ingraham, AICP President-Elect
Mr. Graham Billingsley, AICP President
Mr. Bruce Knight, APA President-Elect
Mr. Robert B. Hunter, APA President
Mr. Paul Farmer, CEO and Executive Director, APA and AICP
AICP Commission
APA Board of Directors
American Planning Association
122 S. Michigan Street
Chicago, IL 60603

Re: AICP Certification Maintenance - Differential Charges for non-AICP Members

Dear Mr. Ingraham, Mr. Billingsley, Mr. Knight, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Farmer,

The Transportation Planning Division (TPD) appreciates the efforts of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planner to craft the AICP Certification Maintenance (CM) Program as the national standard for planners. TPD itself has been supporting the effort by offering funding for CM programs that include significant or key transportation elements. However, we have been following this program (reference: TPD letter dated April 11, 2008) to see if it meets our members' needs and those of other divisions (reference: Planning and Law Division letter dated May 21, 2008, and Petition to AICP dated March 21, 2008). We, on behalf of our membership from our business meeting October 29, 2008 at Rail~Volution, would like to share a key concern to help the program grow. When the AICP Commission established the CM Program, the AICP Commission approved the following item¹:

6.3 Remaining Details on CM Program

By consensus, the Commission approved the following details on the CM program, after discussion:

Provider statement on differential charges for AICP members at educational events

*This is what all providers need to check off before final submission of their credit requests:
I verify that the information submitted in this form is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also verify that the course information and content will not be substantively changed from the time it is submitted for APA's review until it is delivered. Finally, I agree not to charge AICP members a higher fee or a surcharge for attending my CM approved course offerings.*

We strongly recommend that this final item, the requirement that AICP members cannot be charged a higher fee or a surcharge for attending CM approved course offerings, be revisited for two reasons:

1) Authority: While the AICP Commission was authorized to establish the CM Program, we do not believe that they have the authority to determine the fees or charges for non-AICP attendees. Should a provider opt to charge non-AICP participants a smaller fee (or provide the event to non-AICP members for free), the AICP Commission has no mandate over that procedure.

2) Equity: AICP is a voluntary certification program that planners may elect to apply for, join, and maintain membership, with all of its rights and obligations. The objective of the CM program is to help AICP establish and maintain national standards for certified planners. Planners who do not opt to pursue AICP credentials and/or continue their membership in AICP should not be penalized for their decision, nor are they obligated to financially support the AICP program. Financial support for AICP is provided by the annual membership fee that AICP members pay in addition to their APA membership fees. We note that despite the worthy goal of national standards for planners, the costs of AICP membership and CM maintenance are generally not supported by employers, and impose a significant cost burden for many APA members. APA members who do not pursue AICP credentials should not be penalized by having to pay for CM credits.

The American Planning Association has a history of recommending that individual users bear the cost of services from which they benefit. For example, the APA's Housing Policy (2006), Specific Policy Position #5C, states, "Where applicable, planners should seek to unbundle the cost of parking from basic housing costs." The "Reason to Support" for this policy is "Separating the cost of parking improves the affordability of housing by shifting these costs to car owners from all residents." In other words, the car owners should bear the cost of their services as a user fee.

Similarly, AICP members should bear the cost of their services with user fees for CM credits. APA members who do not receive the value of CM credits, should not be charged for these services. By requiring a single fee, with no differentiation between participants, APA is doing a disservice to its APA members, tantamount to taxing non-AICP members to subsidize AICP member's CM credits.

The Division is sure that once APA and AICP revisit this issue and consider the arguments presented, they will reconsider and amend this currently inequitable policy. We recommend a policy that allows providers to impose an additional fee or surcharge on attendees who seek CM credits, up to the amount the provider is paying AICP to provide those credits. This is similar to the model followed by many of our peer professional organizations, including the American Institute of Architects. The result will be to place the financial costs of AICP membership on those planners who would directly receive the value of the AICP CM Program.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David B. Fields". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Fields, AICP
Secretary, Transportation Planning Division
American Planning Association

By Direction of the TPD Executive Council
Noël P. Comeaux, AICP, PMP, Chair
Hilary Perkins, AICP, GISP, Vice Chair
R. Todd Ashby, AICP, Treasurer
Lawrence Lennon, AICP, Immediate Past Chair