



American Planning Association  
**Pennsylvania Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

P.O. Box 4680  
Harrisburg PA 17111  
[planningpa.org](http://planningpa.org)

**Please review conference session details below before submitting your proposal in the *Call for Presenters***

**Deadline to Submit:**

Friday, March 13, 2026 at 11:59 PM

**Conference Date and Location:**

October 18 – 20, 2026

Wind Creek Bethlehem

77 Wind Creek Blvd, Bethlehem, PA 18015

**Conference Theme:**

*Forging the Next 250 Through Preservation, Innovation, and Collaboration*

**Format:**

Proposers are encouraged to submit **traditional and non-traditional sessions, plus mobile workshops**. Traditional sessions typically involve presentations and audience interaction with an expert panel. Non-traditional sessions can include problem-solving roundtables, “fast-fun-fervent” presentations, and peer-group sessions.

All sessions and presentations should **emphasize useful takeaways** for participants. Examples include breakthrough information that makes a convincing case for an innovative idea; usable tools and methods with an understanding of how and when to use them; and key resources for deeper examination of an idea or tool. Proposals should consider incorporating real world scenarios to walk participants through the application of an idea or tool. In the proposal, please note how you will structure the session to address the above areas of emphasis.

**All sessions must include some measure of facilitated interaction** with the audience in addition to any traditional Q&A. At least one-third of session time must be devoted to facilitated interaction and Q&A. Also, in each session, spoken presentations should not run longer than 15 minutes without insertion of an interactive segment or a change of speaker. In the proposal, you will be asked to indicate agreement with these guidelines.

## Non-Traditional Sessions

Proposers are invited to submit three types of non-traditional sessions:

- **Problem-Solving Roundtables** - These sessions may be proposed by one person or a team with expertise in a particular planning problem or issue. Session leader(s) will introduce the problem, provide brief background on the problem and a real-world example of the problem or issue, then facilitate interaction with participants to discuss solutions and best practices. There should be time for participants to pose their own experience with the problem for response by the experts and discussion by the group.
- **“Fast-Fun-Fervent” Presentations** – These sessions feature short, high-energy presentations delivered in a 20-slide, 20-seconds-per-slide format (approximately 7 minutes). Presentations will be grouped by related planning topics. Presentations may address any planning subject—including places, people, policies, or emerging ideas—and should reflect the presenter’s unique insight or point of view. These sessions are designed to spark interest and inspire discussion; while the format encourages creativity and wit, presentations should be substantive and insightful rather than frivolous and may be passionate and personal in tone.
- **Peer-Group Sessions** – Teams of two or three persons may propose sessions for participants of a particular peer group by demographic segment, professional specialty, level of experience, or other common characteristic (i.e. Planning Commission members, students, emerging planners, etc.). Session leaders will propose topics of unique interest to the peer group, facilitate discussion around those topics, and facilitate discussion of other topics that may arise from the group

*Proposers of non-traditional sessions are encouraged to be creative. The Conference Planning Committee will be open to ideas from proposers in deciding the final structure and format of non-traditional sessions.*

## “Mini” Sessions

The Conference Committee invites proposals for shorter sessions – both traditional and non-traditional – that are 45 minutes in length. “Mini” sessions are encouraged to be higher-energy dives into planning details and finer subject matter by individual experts or small panels.

## Mobile Workshops

The Conference Committee also invites proposals for Mobile Workshops that accomplish a dual objective:

- Provide valuable, relevant, AICP-creditworthy information on planning issues and success stories
- Expose conference attendees to the unique places, assets, character, and lifestyle of the greater Lehigh Valley/Berks area

Mobile Workshop proposals will be considered in the following categories:

- Bus Tour – A guided mobile session where participants travel by bus while facilitators provide narration, context, and discussion about sites, corridors, or issues observed along the route.
- Site-Based Tour – These mobile sessions will take participants to a specific location or series of locations to experience real-world examples firsthand. Attendees may visit project sites, neighborhoods, facilities, or landscapes that reflect the learning objective of the session.
- Walking/Biking Tour – These mobile sessions require attendees to actively participate in exploration through walking, hiking, biking, etc. These tours shall highlight a planning problem, solution, or topic of interest.

Proposals should specify if these tours require initial transportation to the walking/biking tour or if it is accessible from the conference site.

Mobile workshops are typically offered as either half-day or full-day sessions but will be considered for the standard session lengths of 45, 60, 75, or 90 minutes. Proposals should indicate whether classroom or meeting space is needed as part of the session before, during, or immediately following the mobile tour. If your mobile workshop requires transportation or equipment rental (i.e. bikes, scooters, etc.) and you are able to provide this at no cost, please include this detail in your proposal.

### **Session Topics**

Proposals are particularly requested for the following topics:

- **Planning Law** - Two sessions will be selected, at least an hour in length with AICP-creditworthy content and presenters. Suggestions for content include guidance or updates on case law or legislation.
- **Planning Ethics** - Two sessions will be selected, at least an hour in length with AICP-creditworthy content and presenters. Suggestions for content include discussions on how to adhere to the Code of Ethics, whether in whole or focused on a specific aspect, including aspirational principles.
- **Planning Equity** - Two sessions will be selected, at least an hour in length with AICP-creditworthy content and presenters. Suggestions for content include topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion that provide the opportunity for planners to expand their equity toolkit, leading to more equitable outcomes in communities.
- **Planning Sustainability & Resilience** - Two sessions will be selected, at least an hour in length with AICP-creditworthy content and presenters. Suggestions for content include topics that help planners better plan for sustainable and resilient outcomes.
- **Emerging Technology** - Including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), planning for the impacts of Data Centers, Autonomous Vehicles (AV), Smart Cities, and planners use of Virtual Reality (VR) or Digital Twins
- **Environmental Issues** – Including water resource planning, stormwater and wastewater planning and management, sustainability, “Green Infrastructure”, climate and energy resiliency.
- **Focus on Lehigh Valley/Berks County** – Regional coordination, redevelopment, industrial land use trends, and growth management
- **Healthy Communities** - Including issues that can impact an individual’s wellbeing such as air quality, food access, safety, open space, walkability, and transit access
- **Historic Preservation** – Including tools for regulation and governance, adaptive reuse, economic development and revitalization, and storytelling
- **Housing** – Including housing supply issues, attainability, and zoning reform
- **Rural Planning Issues** – Including the changing face and economy of rural areas and small towns, development opportunities and pressures, utility infrastructure, landscape conservation, recreation and agricultural tourism, and lack of planning capacity
- **Transportation** - Including regional transportation planning, safe streets, active transportation, transit planning, congestion management, freight planning, and passenger rail

Other topic examples include, but are not limited to:

- Changing demographics and how they will affect future societal needs, land uses, development markets, and the broader community and economy.
- Community Development – Including placemaking, neighborhood revitalization, dealing with blight, workforce development, transportation access, and environmental justice
- Core MPC Tools - Comprehensive plans, plus zoning, subdivision, and official map ordinances – including ways they can be innovated to better address current thinking and changing times.

- Planning Officials and Planning Commissioners – Including roles, procedures, leadership development, and current issues for planning commissions and zoning hearing boards
- Planning Operations - Including organizational strategic planning and development, office management, technology tools, meeting facilitation, project management, and conflict management.

## **Proposal Submissions**

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the submission form or the Conference, please send your emails to Kim Gusic at the PA Chapter office: [admin@planningpa.org](mailto:admin@planningpa.org)

### **Submitting a Proposal**

Session proposal must be submitted by completing an [online submission form](https://planningpa.org/events-training/annual-conference/callforpresenters/call-for-presenters-form-2/) (<https://planningpa.org/events-training/annual-conference/callforpresenters/call-for-presenters-form-2/>).

### **Proposal Questions:**

To assist you in preparing a session proposal, the questions asked in the online submission form are listed below. Questions marked with an asterisk “\*” are mandatory.

*After submitting your proposal online, you will receive an automatically generated email recapping your submittal. Please note the Committee’s decisions are made based on the strength and clarity of the session title, session summary and learning objectives. Please pay careful attention to these items when completing your proposal.*

### **\*Speaker Policies:**

I have read and agree to the following speaker policies. As the Lead Presenter for this session I verify that I will share this information with any additional presenters. If you do not agree, your session will not be considered for presentation. The PA Chapter of APA maintains the following policies that are consistent with APA’s speaker policies:

- All speakers MUST register for the conference. This applies whether you will attend the event for only your session, a single day, or the full event.
  - All speakers who will attend sessions and conference events MUST pay regular registration fees. As a courtesy, we extend the early bird registration fee to all presenters regardless of when you register for the event.
  - Speakers who will attend the conference to ONLY present their session are not required to pay registration fees (but still MUST register for the conference).
- Speakers are responsible for their own hotel accommodations and travel.
- An audio-visual request form will be sent to the Lead Presenter for each session. Lead Presenters are responsible for coordinating the audio-visual needs for their sessions. The conference provides the following equipment **as needed**: microphones, LCD (data) projectors, screens, and flipcharts.
- **VERY IMPORTANT: Speakers MUST provide their own laptops.**

### **\*Lead Presenter Contact Information:**

The Lead Presenter is responsible for coordinating the session with additional presenters (if any). Include professional designations such as AICP, FAICP, PhD, PP, etc.

### **\*Lead Presenter Biography:**

Please include a narrative biography, of no more than 300 words, that includes the following: current position, professional credentials, education and 2-3 sentences describing your expertise in the subject matter. **DO NOT submit resumes or bulleted lists.**

**\*Proposed Session or Presentation Title (Please note the title of the session is a critical element in the committee's review of this proposal.)**

**\*Primary Target Audience (choose all that are applicable):** Professional Planner, Planning Official/Commissioner, New Planner, Student or Other)

**\*Please classify your session (choose one):** Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, All

**\*Which description most closely follows how you envision the session (choose one):**

- Overview/analysis of program/policy/topic
- Review of a best practice/real application of a program/policy/tool, etc.
- Interactive dialogue to explore a concept/topic
- Other

**\*Indicate the type of session (choose one):**

- Traditional
- Problem-Solving Roundtable
- Fast-Fun-Fervent
- Peer-Group
- Mobile Workshop

**\*Session Length:**

Proposals will be accepted for sessions: 45 minutes, 60 minutes, 1:15, and 1:30 in length. Mobile Workshops may also be accepted for a half-day or full-day session. (*Note: The conference committee may choose to modify session length as the program is developed.*) Please confirm your session content is appropriate for a :45, :60, 1:15, or 1:30 time slot, two back-to-back sessions for in-depth training, a mobile workshop, or is a Fast-Fun-Fervent presentation.

**\*Brief Description of the Session or Presentation:**

Provide a brief (300-word) description of the proposed session and include how the session will enable others to replicate results and engage attendees. Please note the session summary is a critical element in the committee's review of this proposal. Session summaries may be edited by the Conference Committee for publication in the conference program.

**\*Indicate by checking the box that you agree to the guidelines for sessions to include facilitated interaction and time limits on spoken presentations.**

**\*Learning Objectives:**

Please provide up to 3 objectives that attendees will be able to achieve by the conclusion of the session.

**\*How Does the Session Meet the APA CM Criteria? Is this session appropriate for Certification Maintenance Credits (refer to criteria below)?**

Sessions do not need to be appropriate for Certificate Maintenance for inclusion at the conference, but it is strongly encouraged. *If you are submitting a proposal for "Fast, Fun, Fervent" simply type N/A.*

The following criteria must be met for the session to be considered for CM credits:

- **Educational Objective:** Each session must be designed to meet a specific planning-related training objective. The educational purpose must be identified.
- **Relevance to AICP Core Competencies:** The content should address the demonstrated educational needs of AICP members, as outlined in [AICP's Core Competencies](https://www.planning.org/aicp/corecompetencies/) (<https://www.planning.org/aicp/corecompetencies/>).

- **Appropriate Depth and Scope:** The subject matter must be taught at a level appropriate for planning currently in practice, with at least four years of professional experience following completion of a two-year master's degree in planning (or equivalent).
- **Unbiased and Non-Promotional:** CM content must be free of promotional material. References to an organization's services or products must occur only before or after the completion of the CM credit portion of the activity.
- **Qualified Speakers:** Education must be led by subject matter experts. For education covering one of the four mandatory planning - AICP Ethics, Law, Equity, or Sustainability & Resilience - at least one presenter must be AICP and presenters must meet additional criteria as outlined in the [mandatory topics guidelines](https://www.planning.org/cm/credits/) (<https://www.planning.org/cm/credits/>).
- **Minimum Duration:** Planning education must be at least **15 minutes** in length. Education covering the four mandatory planning topics must be 1 hour long. [Mandatory topics guidelines](https://www.planning.org/cm/credits/) (<https://www.planning.org/cm/credits/>).
- **No Substantive Changes Post-Entry:** Once a session is accepted for presentation, its substantive content may not be altered. Changing speakers requires a resubmission of the entire CM application to APA. Speakers should only be replaced in very compelling circumstances.

CM credits will be considered per hour of educational experience (i.e. 45-minute session = 0.75 CM credit, 60-minute session = 1CM credit, 90-minute session = 1.5CM credits)

**Has this session been presented before?**

**Restrictions on Session Date & Time (optional).**

If you cannot present on a particular day or time slot (morning/afternoon), please tell us.

**Presenter #2 Information** Include professional designations such as AICP, FAICP, PhD, PP, etc. **Presenter #2 Biography**

**Presenter #3 Information** Include professional designations such as AICP, FAICP, PhD, PP, etc. **Presenter #3 Biography**

**If you feel your session would be more valuable with an additional presenter, please include their information (name, address, email, biography) under "Additional Information/Comments".**