THE COLLEGE OF FELLOWS OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PLANNERS (FAICP)

Induction to the College of Fellows is the highest honor that the American Institute of Certified Planners bestows upon a member.

This honor recognizes an individual's achievements as an outstanding planner who has made significant contributions to the planning profession and society. Such contributions must extend beyond competency in normal professional planning activities and duties.

Fellowship will be granted to planners who have achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching, mentoring, innovation, research, community service and leadership.



The American Planning Association's
Professional Institute
American Institute of Certified Planners

Making Great Communities Happen

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Note: The Fellows Guidelines have been restructured to identify in Part I the requirements, with additional guidance and suggestions provided in Part II.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read and follow these Guidelines carefully. They guide and structure your application. They will be considered by the FAICP Selection Committee to support a transparent and equitable review process.
2. Complete the pre-screening checklist to confirm that the nomination package meets all eligibility and submission requirements.
3. Please note that each Chapter and Division may have its own nominating process and election schedule. Be sure to consult your Chapter's or Division's timeline for applicable procedures and deadlines.
4. Administrative Review: Nomination packages may be submitted for administrative review by July 9, 2027. Responses will be provided by July 21, 2027.
5. Final Submission: Submit the completed nomination package and application fee through the online form by July 31, 2027. Late submissions will not be considered.

PRIMARY CRITERIA

To qualify for nomination as a Fellow, a nominee must achieve and document in the nomination:

- Exceptional and sustained leadership, resulting in a readily definable change to a specific place, people, or process.
- Innovation and excellence in creating consensus and support for a planning activity that has led to community improvements.
- An evident legacy for their profession, community, and society, such as an impact that has created or shown potential to provide a benefit to their profession, community, and society.
- Exceptional accomplishments in planning over the extent of their career for an extended period.
- The clear significance of the nominee's unique role in the work is mentioned is clearly demonstrated throughout the nomination.

Election to the College of Fellows recognizes a career of exceptional achievement, leadership, and service to planning. Fellowship is both an honor and a continuing commitment to advancing the profession, mentoring future leaders, and serving the public interest.

Part I. Submission Requirements

Nominee Eligibility

To be eligible for nomination to the College of Fellows, a nominee must:

- Be a member of AICP for at least 10 years.
- Be a member of AICP in good standing, including current dues, up-to-date CM requirements, and no ethics violations.

Nominations that do not meet both requirements are ineligible for review.

Nominator Eligibility

A nomination may be submitted by one of the following:

- An APA Chapter, through its executive committee, awards committee, or a special committee established by the chapter.
- An APA Division, through its executive committee, awards committee, or a special committee established by the division.
- A group of 10 AICP members in good standing, excluding the nominee.

NOMINATION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS

Nominator Endorsement Letter

Maximum length: 3 pages

The Nominator Endorsement Letter must:

- Confirm that the nominee is endorsed by an eligible nominating body.
- Be on the nominating entity or individual' letterhead.
- Be signed by the appropriate representative of the chapter, division, or 10-member AICP nominating group.
- Summarize and substantiate the nominee's unique and specific contribution to the profession based on the Primary Criteria, as well as Career Area Guidelines (see Appendix) and other relevant contributions.
- Clearly state the reason(s) the nominating body supports the nomination to be awarded a Fellowship, without reiterating accomplishments already mentioned above.
- Present a compelling argument with specific examples of the nominee's individual excellence, community impact, and contributions to planning.

Narrative Statement

Maximum length: 1 page

The Narrative Statement must:

- Provide a concise overview of the nominee's case for Fellowship.
- Identify five distinct and exceptional accomplishments.
- Highlight innovative, sustained, and transformative impacts on communities, practice, or the planning profession.
- Focus on accomplishments rather than skills, duties, or general areas and responsibilities of practice.

Nominee's Story

Maximum length: 10 pages

The Nominee's Story must:

- Present a focused narrative of the nominee's exceptional contributions.
- Explain the significance of the nominee's accomplishments using specific examples.
- Clearly distinguish the nominee's individual role from the work of an agency, firm, team, or organization.
- Describe how the nominee's work has positively impacted communities, policy, practice, or the planning profession.
- Provide sufficient professional context to help reviewers understand the arc of the nominee's career, without the narrative becoming a resume or exhaustive list.

Relevant APA, AICP, public service, allied organization, honors, leadership, or service information may be included to the extent it helps demonstrate FAICP impact.

The "Nominee's Story" was previously identified as the "Annotated Resume." The narrative should not consist primarily of extensive lists of projects, awards, or activities that do not adequately convey the nominee's impact.

Letters of Support

Minimum: 7 letters (updated), Maximum: 10 letters
Maximum length per letter: 2 pages

Each letter of support must:

- Be addressed to the Selection Committee.
- Be signed and on the signatory's letterhead (with contact information).
- Identify the author and explain the author's relationship to the nominee.
- Refer to specific examples that support the accomplishments described in the nomination package.

The nomination package must also include a summary chart listing the support letter authors, their relationship to the nominee, and the relevance of each letter to the nomination, following the example below:

Letters of Support Summary Chart

Author	**History/Relationship/Dates**	**Relevance (page number)**
Jane Smith, AICP	Director of Planning for X City; oversaw the nominee's work when the nominee served as Planner III for X City (dates)	Work conducted on XYZ projects (discussed on page X)
John Doe	Developer for X Company; worked with the nominee when the nominee served as Project Manager for X Project (dates)	Worked together on X Project over three years (discussed on page X)
John Smith, AICP	Fellow Commissioner on AICP Commission (dates)	Worked together on X to create X (discussed on page X)

The following individuals may not nominate or write letters of support:

- Current members of the FAICP Selection Committee.
- Current members of the College of Fellows Committee.
- Sitting members of the APA Board of Directors.
- Sitting members of the AICP Commission.
- Current APA staff members.

100-Word Statement

Include a statement of no more than 100 words summarizing the nominee's most notable accomplishments. If the nominee is selected, this statement will be used for public communications and ceremony materials.

Statement of Intent

Election to the College of Fellows recognizes exceptional career achievement, leadership, and service. FAICP is both an honor and a continuing commitment to advance the planning profession. Each nominee must submit a statement of no more than 100 words describing how they will continue contributing to the profession if inducted. Fellowship is not solely a capstone honor; it recognizes past achievement and carries an expectation of continued engagement.

Headshot

Submit a high-resolution, portrait-style headshot as a separate file. The headshot must not appear in the nomination PDF reviewed by the Selection Committee.

Processing Fee

Submit the $100 processing fee through the designated online process. The fee applies to both first-time submissions and resubmissions.

Formatting Requirements

Unless otherwise noted, all nomination materials must comply with the following:

- Submit the nomination package as a single PDF, except for the separate headshot file.
- Use at least 11-point font and one-inch margins.
- Number the pages of each nomination section. The Nominee's Story must not exceed 10 pages.
- Hyperlinks are not permitted anywhere in the nomination package.
- Graphics are not recommended and will count towards applicable page limits if used.
- Photographs of the nominee are not permitted in the nomination package.
- Divider pages do not count toward the stated page limit for the section that follows.
- Nominations may be written in either first person or third person, but the choice must be used consistently.

Part II. Suggestions and Helpful Hints

Roles and Responsibilities

A successful nomination to the College of Fellows requires substantial effort from both the nominator and the nominee. Responsibilities for preparing and coordinating the nomination may vary; accordingly, this section is intended as general guidance.

The Nominator Must

- Nominate only candidates whose accomplishments clearly rise to the level of Fellowship.
- Know the nominee well enough to describe their distinctive contributions with specificity.

- Write or secure the signed Nominator Endorsement Letter.
- Help guide the applicant to ensure that their package is complete, well written, and persuasive.
- Allow sufficient time for preparation, review, and revision.
- Review the final application package for clarity, accuracy, completeness, and overall quality.

The Nominee Must

- Take primary responsibility for coordinating the nomination package.
- Allow sufficient time to prepare a strong nomination package.
- Prepare draft materials for early review, including the Narrative Statement, Nominee's Story, and 100-word statement and Statement of Intent.
- Solicit detailed letters of support from appropriate individuals.
- Work with the nominator to ensure the package presents the nominee's accomplishments and impact clearly and consistently.
- Carefully review and edit the final package for factual accuracy, clarity, grammar, and completeness.

General Suggestions

Focus the nomination and package on the Primary Criteria. Fellowship recognizes exceptional professional achievement marked by leadership, innovation, excellence, and sustained impact. Strong nominations show how the nominee's work exceeded ordinary professional expectations, why it mattered, and what changed as a result.

For each major accomplishment, the nomination should identify:

- The challenge, opportunity, or issue addressed.
- The nominee's specific role and level of responsibility.

- The actions personally undertaken by the nominee.
- The measurable or documented outcomes achieved.
- The long-term impact on communities, the planning profession, or society.

Crafting the Narrative Statement

The Narrative Statement should provide a concise overview of the nominee's five most exceptional career achievements in bullet format. Each should be itemized, highlighted, and addressed as follows:

- Describe each accomplishment and its specific, innovative, and measurable impact on communities, the planning profession, or society.
- Highlight impacts that are distinctive, sustained, and transformative.
- Present five clear accomplishments, not general skills, responsibilities, or areas of specialization.
- Clearly explain what the nominee specifically did, why the accomplishment mattered and how it changed a place, policy, practice, process, profession, or community.

The Narrative Statement serves as the foundation for the Nominee's Story.

Developing the Nominee's Story

The Nominee's Story should present a focused narrative of the nominee's exceptional contributions to planning and to the communities they have served. A strong nomination focuses on the Primary Criteria and demonstrates exceptional leadership, innovation, and sustained impact. It highlights how the nominee's work exceeded ordinary professional expectations, why it mattered, and what changed as a result. It should not function as a resume or exhaustive career history. Instead, it should underscore the plans, projects, programs, activities, or accomplishments that best

demonstrate FAICP leadership, innovation, excellence, individual contribution, and lasting impact.

Professional Background

Provide enough context for reviewers to understand the nominee's career path, practice setting, and areas of influence. Education, professional experience, relevant APA and AICP activities, and other honors, service, or leadership roles should be included only to the extent they help explain the nominee's Primary Criteria contributions.

Major Accomplishments and Impact

Focus on the accomplishments most relevant to the Primary Criteria. Strong nominations expand on the narrative to show why the work mattered, what changed, and why the accomplishments rise above expected professional performance. Support claims with specific examples, measurable outcomes, implementation results, and other evidence of impact.

Individual Role

Clearly identify the nominee's specific role in each major accomplishment. For collaborative work, distinguish the nominee's individual contributions from those of the team and the broader organization. Reviewers should be able to understand what the nominee personally did, why it mattered, and how those contributions were exemplary. Nominees are encouraged to review the Appendix section for guidance specific to different career areas.

- Founders or principals should focus on the outcomes, influence, and community impact of the work rather than having founded or managed a firm.
- Nominees that have served in elected office should identify the office held, jurisdiction served, dates of service, and planning-related accomplishments. Service in elected office alone does not constitute FAICP achievement.
- Where relevant, explain how potential conflicts of interest were addressed, including through disclosure, recusal, or employer approval

Writing Tips

- Use narrative rather than resume-style lists.
- Be concise and precise; wordy text reduces positive impact.
- Provide enough geographic, institutional, or practice context for reviewers outside the nominee's specialty or region.
- Focus on quality, significance, and sustained impact.
- Avoid lengthy lists of projects, presentations, memberships, or publications without explaining their significance.
- Refer to the Career Area guidance in the Appendix, as appropriate.
- Graphics are not required. Text descriptions are preferred.
- AI tools may be judiciously used to assist with editing, proofreading, and formatting, but all materials must accurately reflect the nominee's accomplishments and contributions. Generic, inconsistent, inaccurate, or overly AI-generated content may weaken the nomination's credibility.

Using Letters of Support Strategically

Letters of support should provide specific, firsthand evidence of the nominee's exceptional accomplishments, individual role, and impact. Strong letters do more than endorse the nominee. They verify a range of accomplishments described in the nomination package and help demonstrate significance, influence, and lasting value.

The strongest letters usually come from individuals who directly observed, experienced, benefited from, or can credibly verify the nominee's impact. Letters should include the following:

- The letter should include the writer's identity, credentials, professional role, relationship to the nominee, and letterhead (personal/professional).

- A clear explanation of how the writer knows the nominee and the basis for that knowledge.
- Specific examples of the nominee's accomplishments, contributions, outcomes, or impact.
- The letter writer's perspective on the quality, significance, influence, and lasting value of the nominee's work.
- Evidence of measurable impacts, observed outcomes, implementation results, or long-term benefits.

Do's and Don'ts

- Select letter writers who bring informed and varied perspectives.
- Include only letters that are specific, substantive, and credible.
- Prefer letter writers who quickly establish who they are, how they know the nominee, and which specific accomplishments and impacts described in the nomination they can verify.
- Use letters that reinforce the nominee's individual role, accomplishments, and impact.
- Don't rely on title or prestige if the writer lacks direct knowledge of the nominee's work.
- Don't include letters that are unsigned, generic, brief, poorly written, or unsupported.
- Don't use template letters or letters that repeat the same general praise.
- Don't include letters that emphasize team or organizational achievements without clearly identifying the nominee's individual contribution.
- Don't rely too heavily on letters from within the nominee's own firm or organization when broader impact is being claimed.
- Don't use letters of support to serve as character references or provide summaries of routine job duties.

Part III. Review, Selection and Notification

The FAICP nomination review and selection process includes an optional administrative review which includes screening for completeness. The packages upon final submission are submitted to the Selection Committee for final review.

Administrative Screening

APA staff review nomination packages for completeness, timeliness, signatures, letterhead where required, and compliance with page limits and formatting requirements. Incomplete packages may be returned and will not be considered unless all deficiencies are corrected by the deadline. For the optional administrative review, email the package to fellows@planning.org. Final nominations must be submitted through the online portal once all edits are complete. . The APA staff will review the following and notify the nominee of exceptions as noted below.

- The Nominator Endorsement Letter does not exceed three pages, is on letterhead where required, and is signed.
- The Narrative Statement does not exceed one page.
- The Nominee's Story does not exceed 10 pages and does not include a headshot.
- The100-word statement and Statement of intent are included
- Letters of Support comply with page limits, minimum and maximum number requirements, signature requirements, and the summary chart requirement.

Selection Process

The FAICP Selection Committee is composed of six members of the College of Fellows, including one alternate. Committee members participate in reviewer orientation and calibration activities designed to promote consistency in applying the Fellowship criteria.

APA staff complete the screening process for completeness and timeliness. The Selection Committee reviews eligible nominations during regularly scheduled meetings from August through January. Each committee member evaluates nominations using a standardized rubric, and scores and notes are used to support committee discussion.

Selection is based solely on the strength of the submitted nomination materials and documented Primary Criteria contributions. Selection is not based on quotas by chapter, division, or number of nominees. The alternate votes when a Selection Committee member recuses themself from consideration of a nominee.

Notification

Nominees, Chapter and Division Presidents, Chapter Professional Development Officers, and nominators who led nominations by 10 AICP members will be notified by email within four weeks after the final Selection Committee review, usually mid-February. A formal letter from the Chair of the Selection Committee is included. General feedback will be provided in notification letters.

Once all nominees and nominators have been notified, the list of selected nominees will be posted on the APA website.

The Selection Committee's decision is final. Selected nominees will be invited to the Induction Ceremony and Reception which is held Sunday afternoon during even-year NPC events. APA staff will provide additional information before the event.

APPENDIX I: GUIDANCE - CAREER AREAS

The Career Area guidance helps nominees identify, organize, and explain Fellowship-level accomplishments. Nominees may use one or more career areas, as appropriate. The career areas are not separate eligibility categories and do not replace the Primary Criteria.

Across all career areas, nominees should clearly explain:

- The nominee's individual role and level of responsibility.
- Why the accomplishment cited was exceptional.
- The results, influence, or measurable outcomes achieved.
- The sustained or transferable impact on communities, the planning profession, or society.
- Evidence that substantiates the impacts claimed.

Awards, publications, titles, and organization-based service accolades may be included as supporting evidence if they are relevant to the Nominee's Story. However, they are not substitutes for a clear explanation of the nominee's accomplishments and impact.

Nominees may consider the following career areas:

- **Professional Practice**
- **Teaching**
- **Mentoring**
- **Research**
- **Community Service and Leadership**

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Professional Practice recognizes exceptional leadership in the planning, design, adoption, or implementation of plans, policies, programs, and projects in public, private, nonprofit, or related

practice. Nominees should demonstrate how their individual work produced significant, sustained, and transferable benefits for communities, the profession, or society.

Demonstrating Excellence

- Leadership in developing or implementing plans, policies, programs, or projects of exceptional quality or significance.
- Innovative approaches that improved planning practice, decision-making, implementation, equity, or community outcomes.
- Successful navigation of substantial political, institutional, technical, financial, or community challenges.
- Influence on planning practice beyond the nominee's immediate organization or jurisdiction.
- Sustained improvements to the quality, resilience, equity, or livability of communities.

Documentation Guidance

- Describe the nominee's specific role in each major accomplishment and distinguish that contribution from the work of the team or organization.
- Explain what changed because of the nominee's work and how the results were sustained, replicated, or transferred to other settings.
- Support claims with implementation results, measurable outcomes, stakeholder evidence, policy changes, or other documentation of impact.
- An exceptional act of professional courage may be relevant when it advanced an important planning principle or produced significant change. Clearly describe the challenge, the nominee's actions, and the resulting impact.

TEACHING

Teaching recognizes exceptional influence on planning education and professional learning, with emphasis on the preparation of planners for practice. Nominees should demonstrate how their teaching leadership changed what or how people learn and produced lasting benefits for students, educational programs, the profession, or communities.

Demonstrating Excellence

- Development or transformation of curricula, degree programs, professional education, or community-based learning.
- Innovative instructional methods that strengthened planning knowledge, skills, ethics, or professional readiness.
- Sustained influence on students, educators, institutions, or planning education beyond a single course or program.
- Effective integration of planning practice, research, equity, or community engagement into education.
- Leadership that expanded access, opportunity, or success for students and emerging professionals.

Documentation Guidance

- Describe selected teaching innovations and explain how they improved learning, professional preparation, or planning practice.
- Provide evidence of outcomes, such as program growth, curricular adoption, student achievement, alumni influence, institutional change, or replication by others.
- Explain the nominee's influence beyond routine teaching responsibilities or normal expectations of an academic or training position.
- Include publications, educational materials, or awards only when they help demonstrate exceptional and sustained educational impact.

MENTORING

Mentoring recognizes sustained and exceptional contributions to the professional growth, leadership development, and advancement of planners. Nominees should demonstrate how their guidance, sponsorship, and support created meaningful and lasting outcomes for individuals, groups, organizations, or the profession.

Demonstrating Excellence

- Sustained mentoring or sponsorship that advanced the careers and leadership capacity of planners.
- Creation of formal or informal mentoring programs that produce documented results.
- Expansion of access to professional opportunities, networks, leadership roles, or career pathways.
- Exceptional support for emerging professionals and individuals from groups underrepresented in planning.
- Visible legacy through the accomplishments, service, or leadership of those mentored.

Documentation Guidance

- Describe the mentoring approach, its duration and scope, and how it exceeded ordinary supervisory or collegial responsibilities.
- Provide specific examples of how individuals or groups benefited and what professional outcomes resulted.
- Explain whether the mentoring model was sustained, expanded, or adopted by others.
- Use letters from individuals with direct knowledge to verify the nominee's influence and long-term impact.

RESEARCH

Research recognizes exceptional contributions to planning knowledge and the application of that knowledge to policy, practice, education, or community outcomes. Nominees should demonstrate how their research changed understanding, influenced decisions, or produced practical and lasting benefits.

Demonstrating Excellence

- Original or innovative research that significantly advanced planning theory, methods, policy, or practice.
- Application of research to plans, policies, programs, decision-making, or community solutions.
- Sustained influence on researchers, practitioners, institutions, or public policy.
- Effective dissemination of research within and beyond academia.
- Research that advanced equitable, sustainable, resilient, or evidence-based planning outcomes.

Documentation Guidance

- Describe the research contribution and explain what was new, significant, or influential.
- Show how the research was applied, cited, adopted, replicated, or used to change policy, practice, education, or community outcomes.
- Identify the nominee's individual intellectual and leadership contributions, particularly in collaborative research.
- Select the publications, projects, or products that best demonstrate impact rather than providing an exhaustive bibliography.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Community Service and Leadership recognize exceptional contributions through volunteer, civic, professional, elected, nonprofit, or organizational service that advance planning principles, strengthen communities, or expand the profession's public impact. Routine membership or service alone is not sufficient.

Demonstrating Excellence

- Leadership that produced significant organizational, community, policy, or professional change.
- Exceptional volunteer or civic service beyond normal employment responsibilities.
- Creation or advancement of programs, initiatives, partnerships, or policies that strengthened planning or community outcomes.
- Leadership that expanded participation, access, equity, or opportunity within communities or the profession.
- Sustained influence through APA, AICP, allied organizations, public service, or other planning-related leadership.

Documentation Guidance

- Describe what the nominee initiated, changed, or accomplished through service and why the results were exceptional.
- Distinguish active leadership and measurable impact from routine membership, attendance, or years of service.
- Explain how the work advanced planning principles or benefited communities, organizations, or the profession.