



# **Section's Guide**

## **Section's Guide Goal**

To increase the level of service provided to the APA Texas Chapter membership and to provide a formal guide for state sections.

## **Section Bylaws**

Each Section shall adopt bylaws consistent with Chapter and National bylaws. It is important to reexamine bylaws every year to ensure sections are meeting all requirements. Sections shall post their bylaws on the section's webpage and shall be updated when a section bylaw amendment occurs.

## **Section Work Plans**

- Each Section should establish a long-range development plan for the current Section Director's tenure of goals to accomplish. In addition, each Section should establish short-term goals for the current year and how those goals will be implemented.
- Sections shall develop an orientation manual for new Section officers.
- Sections shall initiate or help to sponsor one community service project each year.

## **Membership**

- Sections shall maintain an up-to-date membership mailing list. Updated membership lists are provided to Section Directors each quarter by the Chapter Executive Administrator.
- Sections should also assist in membership recruitment such as speaking to universities.

## **Executive Board Meetings**

- Each Section shall hold two Section executive meetings a year, with at least one meeting held in person if possible. Please refer to Section Bylaws for executive board meeting guidelines.
- The Section Director shall participate in Texas Chapter Board meetings. If the Section Director is unavailable, the Assistant Director, Director-Elect, or Section Director designate shall be available for the Texas Chapter Board meetings.

## **Required Reporting**

- Section Directors and Treasurers shall maintain a financial reporting and budget adoption process consistent with the Chapter's approved accounting process. Please refer to Section Budgets below for more information on financial reporting.
- Each Section shall participate in the Chapter's annual reporting process by publication of an annual Section report circulated to all Section members. Section Directors shall also provide written reports to the Sections Representative for each Texas Executive Committee meeting, outlining the section's past and future events.

## **Sections Representative on the Chapter Executive Committee**

A Sections Representative is elected annually by all the Section Directors at the fall business meeting of the Chapter Board of Directors, to serve on the Chapter Executive Committee.

### **Chapter and National Conferences**

Sections shall assist Texas APA with Chapter Conferences when held in the Section’s region and National APA Conferences when held in Texas. The Section shall encourage participation in the Texas APA State Conference and National APA Conference.

### **Annual Texas APA Leadership Forum**

Section officers are encouraged to participate in the annual TXAPA Leadership Forum at the TXAPA Chapter Conference.

### **Programs**

At a minimum, each Section should hold two business, social, or educational meetings a year in various locations in the Section area, an annual business meeting, and at least one professional development event that is eligible for AICP Certification Maintenance (CM) credit. Sections larger than 100 members should hold two professional development sessions per year and Sections greater than 200 members should hold three professional development sessions. Below is a list of topics that each Section could consider:

- Citizen Participation,
- Climate,
- Comprehensive Planning,
- Demographics,
- Density,
- Economic Development,
- Environment,
- Green Communities,
- Hazards,
- History,
- Housing,
- Infrastructure,
- Law,
- Mixed-Use,
- Neighborhoods,
- New Urbanism,
- Parking,
- Parks and Open Spaces,
- Property,
- Revitalization,
- Signs,
- Site Plans,
- Small Towns,
- Smart Growth,
- Social Equity,
- Streets,
- Trails and Bike/Ped,
- Transportation,
- Urban Design,
- Zoning

All the topics above are eligible for CM credits. In addition, below are some common suggestions to consider for programs:

- Poll the membership to determine desired topics. This ensures the Section is meeting the needs of the membership.
- Determine what day and time work best for the membership. This could also be polled. Many cities have evening meetings during the week, so Fridays typically work best for most members. However, each section is different and it is important to determine which day and time works best for programs.
- Identify venue locations that are central to the membership.
- Create a “traveling session” for Sections that are geographically difficult for members to travel to and from during a day. A traveling session would repeat the same session in different locations of the Section.
- Partner with other similar organizations, including but not limited to CNU, ULI, ASLA, and other allied organizations. Many organizations have similar needs for programs and are often looking

for speakers. Sections should consider holding joint meetings with related professional organizations.

- Host programs during lunch and either provide lunch to the members or have the members bring their own lunches.
- If you are having difficulty finding speakers, consider hosting a webinar where members could come together and watch. Hosting webinars (in particular for Law and Ethics CM credit) are also good to consider at the end of the year before CM credits are due.
- Offer one law and/or ethics CM session each year.
- Offer site visits/tours as part of the sessions.
- Consider cooperating with neighboring Sections for joint sessions.
- Think about offering training sessions as well as educational sessions. For example, training classes could include a grant writing class or a public speaking course.
- Discuss speakers with the Texas APA Professional Development Officer (PDO), Planning Official Development Officer (PODO), and Chapter Executive Administrator to determine if any statewide speakers are available for a specific topic.
- Try partnering with local universities for speakers and/or conference space. Universities are a great partner and can assist TXAPA in a number of ways.
- Consider bringing in national speakers. National speakers typically require travel/accommodations to be paid by the section; however, charging members to attend the workshop could balance the speaker costs.
- Political speakers and/or partners should be discussed by the Section board members. The speakers/partners should provide educational benefit to the section membership. Political speakers and/or partners should not be endorsed by the Section.

#### **AICP Certification Maintenance and CM Provider**

All Sections are encouraged to have a Professional Development Officer (PDO) who is in charge of submitting program sessions to AICP for Certification Maintenance (CM) credits. The Chapter pays the AICP an annual fee of \$95.00 for each of the Sections to also be a CM Provider, under the Chapter's CM Provider account. The Section may submit eligible sessions for approval for CM credits. The Section PDO should contact the Chapter Executive Administrator to be added by AICP for online access to the Chapter CM Provider account. Included in the attachments is a CM Provider Form. Sections may submit eligible Section activities for CM credits approval. Sections may also submit activities for which the Section is a primary sponsor, provided the following criteria are met:

- Providers are not allowed to share their assigned Provider Account Number with other agencies, firms, companies, organizations or individuals who are not approved by AICP CM to provide courses.
- AICP CM provider account numbers and approved status are solely for the purpose of providing high quality continuing education to AICP members. By allowing others to use your provider number, the quality of the education provided is compromised.
- Providers are expected to uphold the standards and guidelines in this CM Provider Handbook. <http://www.planning.org/cm/activities/pdf/cmproviderhandbook.pdf>
- In order for a registered CM provider to be considered the primary sponsor of a program the following conditions must be met:
  - The Section has contributed at least one-third of the total direct costs of the program (not including consumables such as food and beverages) **OR**
  - the activity is principally marketed under the registered provider's brand, **and** It has contributed significantly to the development of the program (for example, topic and speaker identification), **and**

- It has participated in the marketing of the program, **and**
- The registered provider will receive economic benefit commensurate with its financial and in-kind contributions.

### **Social Events**

Social events and networking receptions are important for the membership. Social events include, but are not limited to: happy hours, awards banquets, holiday parties, and conference receptions. It is common for Sections to hold social events after programs to promote networking. Below are a few guiding principles for commonly asked questions:

- Upon the Section’s approval, alcohol may be purchased as part of a program or seminar to encourage networking.
- Typically alcohol is purchased by providing drink tickets to members and the Section pays the bill at the end of the event.
- Upon the Section’s approval, door prizes may be purchased to encourage participation.
- Section award banquets are encouraged to recognize cities and individuals at a Section level. Award recipients are encouraged to apply for the Chapter awards program.
- Happy hours should take place at venues with alcoholic beverage licenses and servers trained to enforce age requirements.

### **Section Budget and Chapter Grant Requests**

Sections are invited to submit annual requests for Chapter Grant Funding. Requests should be submitted to the Chapter Treasurer by the designated deadline, which typically occurs each spring. The request should be accompanied by the Section’s proposed annual budget. Contact the Chapter Executive Administrator or Chapter Treasurer for guidelines regarding the preparation of section budgets and the submittal of Chapter grant requests.

### **Section Bank Account/Expenditures**

As components of the APA Texas Chapter and APA National, the Sections are nonprofit 501(c)3 educational organizations, which are exempt from state and local sales taxes and are subject to IRS regulations for such organizations. Copies of the Chapters Tax Exemption Notification form are available from the Chapter Executive Administrator. The Chapter maintains a bank checking account for each of the Sections. The Section Director and Treasurer will be added as signatories on the Section account, and a debit card will be provided for the Treasurer. They must appear in person with either the Chapter President or Secretary at a Chase Bank branch in order to be added to the account, which is best accomplished when all are attending a Chapter Board of Directors meeting at one location. The Sections shall utilize their account for deposits and payments for Section programs and activities. The Section Director and Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- Retaining receipts for all transactions including check or debit card transactions for a period of 3 years.
- Checks over the amount of \$2,500 require two signatures by officers listed on the Section account
- Payments by check or debit card for Section expenses, and deposit of income received.
- Provide Tax Exempt Notification form to vendors to avoid paying sales tax on Section purchases.
- Use signed reimbursement forms with attached receipts to request reimbursement for Section-related expenditures.
- Complying with adopted Chapter policies including travel reimbursement policy.
- Monitoring the Section account through on-line statements.

- Submitting annual Chapter grant requests for funding to help support Section program activities.

The Chapter Treasurer and Executive Administrator are responsible for submitting IRS returns and documents. The Chapter retains a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to assist in managing the accounts. The Chapter Executive Administrator reconciles the Section accounts with the CPA.

**Insurance**

The Chapter carries a Commercial General Liability Insurance policy that provides coverage for Chapter events. If the Section needs an insurance certificate for an event, contact the Chapter Executive Administrator.

**Outside Income Opportunities**

Sections should take advantage of opportunities for various sources of outside income, such as conference registration and meeting fees, sponsor contributions, workshop fees, etc.

**Elected and Appointed Officials Outreach and Training**

Sections should initiate or help to sponsor outreach programs to increase participation by Planning Commission members and elected officials within the Section. Sections should also consider hosting elected and appointed official workshops to train and educate decision makers. The Chapter PDO and Texas APA Executive Administrator can assist with providing speakers for training sessions.

**AICP Exam Preparation**

Sections shall assist in sponsoring or helping to sponsor an AICP exam preparation session within their region. Section The Section’s Professional Development Officer (PDO) should work closely with the Texas Chapter PDO to provide an exam preparation session. Sections are encourage to create an Exam Study Group comprised of members preparing to undergo the AICP exam. The Chapter PDO can provide a listing of members who have begun applying to take the exam.

**Section Elections**

All Sections shall hold biennial elections on odd years or simultaneously with the State Chapter. Elections shall follow the Section’s bylaws, but a general timeframe is provided below:

Action	Deadline
Nominating Committee appointed	June 15
Nominating Committee reports to Executive Board	July 30
Secretary sends report to members	August 4
Nominating Committee receives petition names. Nominations closed	August 18
Candidate statements due	September 1
Ballots sent to members	September 15
Nominating Committee reports results	September 30
Officers take office	End of annual TXAPA Chapter Conference

- Nominating Committees should email all Section membership to recruit individuals to run for office.
- Officer elections can be held a number of ways including online polls or mailing ballots to membership. Survey Monkey is a free online survey service has been used by several Sections in the past. Along with listing the member’s name on the ballot, a biography and/or photo may

accompany the member's name to provide the membership more information on the candidate. Section officer shall transfer Section records to new Section Officers within two weeks of new officers taking office.

### Communications

- Each Section should have a public information/communications coordinator or someone designated as the public information contact. This individual shall also be the Website Administrator for their section. See Website Administrators information below.
- Each Section shall publish two newsletters a year. This does not have to necessarily be a hardcopy or electronic "newsletter", as long as information is disseminated (including website, blogs, message board, etc.) to the membership at least twice a year. Sections shall also include a comprehensive list of meetings or related professional organizations in the Section area.
- Each Section shall contribute at least one article per year to the Chapter newsletter.
- Sections shall be required to update the Section website on the Texas Chapter webpage as indicated below.

### Website Administrators

Section Website Administrators may sign-up for an individual log-in by contacting the Texas APA Communications Coordinator. Section Website Administrators must limit their updates to the following:

- **Events Calendar** (If available, add a photo for your event.)
- **Jobs Module** (Formatting instructions located here: <http://www.txplanning.org/how-to-submit-a-job-listing/>)
- **Business Directories Module** (aka Request for Proposals)
- **News and Articles** (Must provide sources)
- **Individual Section page**
  - Each Section page **must** provide the following information:
    - Location description
    - Section officers and contact information
    - Section Bylaws
    - Agendas/Minutes
  - Each Section page **may** provide the following information:
    - Hyperlinks to Section Newsletters
    - Announcements

### To get started, please view the "Intro to Tendenci On-Demand Webinar Video".

This webinar covers getting started and navigating the Tendenci CMS Software! Section Website Administrators are encouraged to view the following topics. \*Note the timestamps to navigate directly to any section.

\*Basic Content Page Editing - *timestamp 8:00 - 24:45*

\*The Tendenci Events Calendar - *timestamp 44:40 - 1:00:00*

\*Jobs Module - *timestamp 1:09:00 - 1:14:00*

\*Business Directories Module - *timestamp 1:14:00 - 1:16:00*

\*Updating News and Articles - *timestamp 31:30 - 36:05*

View Video Now!

<http://tendenci.com/help-files/intro-video/>



**Collegiate School of Planning Coordination**

Sections that include a collegiate school of planning should be more actively engaged with academic planning programs, so faculty are involved with APA and practitioners are involved with the programs that are teaching future planners. Universities are a great partner for programs as well and can offer conference/seminar space. The Planning Student Organization (PSO) within each of the universities are also components of the APA Texas Chapter and welcome opportunities to coordinate their student activities with the Section for joint meetings and social events. Sections may organize and provide mentoring programs with the PSO.

**Travel Policy**

The Chapter has established a Travel Policy which is included in the attachments. Contact the Chapter Executive Administrator for any travel related questions.

**Logos**

Chapter and Section logos shall follow the national APA Brand Guidelines in regards to font, layout, size, and color. Please contact the Chapter Executive Administrator for questions related to the Section logos.

**Texas Mentorship Program**

As a Section leader, Section officers are strongly encouraged to participate in the Texas Mentorship Program.

**Texas Emerging Planning Leaders (TxEPL) Representative**

Sections should have a representative for the Texas Emerging Planning Leaders (TxEPL) group.

## ATTACHMENT

### RECOMMENDED LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR TEXAS APA SECTIONS

#### BASIC LEVEL (All Sections)

1. Adopt Section bylaws consistent with Chapter and National bylaws.
2. Each Section should establish a long-range development plan for the current Section-Director's tenure of goals to accomplish.
3. Each Section should establish short-term goals for the current year and how those goals will be implemented.
4. Maintain a financial reporting and budget adoption process consistent with the State approved accounting process as outlined in the Section Bank Account section in the Guide.
5. Holding biennial elections.
6. Conducting two executive meetings a year, with at least one meeting held in person.
7. Transferring Section records to new Section Officers within two weeks of new officers taking office.
8. Having an orientation session for new Section Officers.
9. Maintaining an up-to-date membership mailing list.
10. Participation in Texas Chapter Board meetings.
11. Encouraging participation in the Texas APA State Conference and National APA Conference.
12. Participation in the Chapter annual reporting process by publication of an annual Section report circulated to all Section members.
13. Holding two business, social or educational meetings a year in various locations in the section area, to include an annual business meeting.
14. Sponsoring one continuing education (CM) or professional development program annually.
15. Developing an outreach program to involve citizen planners, elected officials, non-participating cities and planning student in Section activities.
16. Having a professional development office (PDO).
17. Sections that include a collegiate school of planning should be more actively engaged with academic planning programs, so faculty are involved with APA and practitioners are involved with the programs that are teaching future planners.
18. Publishing two newsletters a year. This does not have to necessarily be a hardcopy or electronic "newsletter", as long as information is disseminated (including website, blogs, message board, etc.) to the membership at least twice a year.
19. Contributing at least one article per year to the Chapter newsletter.
20. Each Section should have a public information/communications coordinator or someone designated as the public information contact. This individual shall also be the Website Administrator for their section.
21. Sections shall be required to update the Section website on the Texas Chapter webpage as indicated in the Communications Section of the Guide.
22. Sections should have a representative for the Texas Emerging Planning Leaders (TxEPL) group.
23. Section officers are strongly encouraged to participate in the Texas Mentorship Program.
24. Sections that include a collegiate school of planning should be more actively engaged with academic planning programs, so faculty are involved with APA and practitioners are involved with the programs that are teaching future planners.



### **INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (Membership size 100 and greater)**

1. Helping to organize Chapter conferences as called upon.
2. Taking advantage of opportunities for various sources of outside income, such as conference profits, sponsors, workshops, etc.
3. Sponsoring a second continuing education or professional development program.
4. Encouraging joint meetings with related professional organizations.

### **ADVANCED LEVEL (Membership size 250 and greater)**

1. Cooperating with neighboring Sections on matters other than conferences.
2. Having a public information chair and program.
3. Developing an orientation manual for new Section Officers.
4. Having a Section Awards program and submitting award winners to the State Awards program.
5. Sponsoring or helping to sponsor an AICP exam preparation session.
6. Having an organized membership drive.
7. Distributing a comprehensive list of meetings or related professional organizations in the Section area.
8. Holding joint meetings with related professional organizations.
9. Initiating or helping to sponsor an outreach program to increase Planning Commission members within the Section.
10. Initiating or helping to sponsor one community service project each year.
11. Sponsoring a third continuing education or professional development program