



APA OHIO CHAPTER

2025-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN

ADOPTED DECEMBER 13, 2019 | UPDATED DECEMBER 13, 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The APA Ohio Chapter Board of Trustees is grateful for the time and efforts of those who contributed to developing this Strategic Plan. APA Ohio would like to thank the following:

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FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTO CREDIT

Ohio Department of Development, TourismOhio

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This update to the APA Ohio chapter 2025-2029 Strategic Plan represents four years of hard work advocating and improving the lives of planners throughout the state. Since adopting our Strategic Plan in 2019, we've made great progress towards accomplishing our short- and long-term goals, celebrated several major wins, and made a conscious decision to tackle systemic underrepresentation in our organization. A few highlights include:

- Our DEI Task Force performed an audit of our organization and recommended a framework to assist the board in developing specific actionable steps to elevate and promote improving equity, diversity, and inclusion in our organization and the profession.
- We published the second edition of the *Guide to Planning in Ohio*, a resource intended to provide an understanding of the principles of planning as practiced in Ohio today.
- The Legislative Committee updated our Policy Platform to outline the planning practices, principles and issues we advocate for and support. The Policy Platform guides the chapter's advocacy efforts and informs positions on legislative issues, while offering flexibility to address unanticipated issues that inevitably arise.
- We developed a formal chapter communications plan, continued to develop the #BecauseWePlan campaign, and developed performance metrics to measure the chapter's success implementing programs and initiatives.

Purpose: Our Strategic Plan, as outlined in the following pages, is APA Ohio's guiding framework. It articulates the chapter's mission and priorities and ensures that board actions serve the organization's mission, vision, and values. It serves as the foundation for the chapter's annual committee work plans which, along with the annual budget, are how the board implements strategic priorities. It is a "living vehicle" that can be easily updated. The Executive Committee will drive the execution of this plan by facilitating the creation of annual work plans and budgets to implement each of our strategic initiatives, balanced with each committee's annual responsibilities defined by our bylaws.



Process: APA Ohio's Board of Trustees spent a year updating this Strategic Plan. We conducted an audit of work carried out over the last four years. We analyzed how our organization operates, and revised our mission, vision, and core values statements. We performed a SWOT analysis on the chapter and each of our committees to inform decision-making, and we developed strategic goals and tactics to achieve those goals. This work defined how the organization will *Inform, Advance, Promote and Develop* over the next five years. We asked ourselves why we chose to be planners, how we want to advance the profession, where APA Ohio has been, and what we aspire the organization to be.

Implementation: We will report progress in the newsletter and at board meetings. We welcome all members, non-members, professional and civic planners, partners, elected officials and collaborators to join us in the execution of our work. #BecauseWePlan, we can achieve so much when we work together.



Photo Credit: Ohio Department of Development, TourismOhio

OUR MISSION

APA Ohio is dedicated to advancing the art, science and practice of planning to create vibrant communities that are equipped to anticipate and navigate change.

OUR VISION

Because we plan, the quality of life for all Ohioans continues to improve.

CORE VALUES

People Centered	Fostering Learning & Growth	Future Focused
Equity	Agility	Resilience
Diversity	Innovation	Stewardship
Inclusion	Ethics	Foresight

ABOUT APA OHIO

APA Ohio is a non-profit association of professional and civic planners committed to promoting and enhancing planning in order to maintain and improve the quality of life for all Ohioans. APA Ohio is a state chapter of the American Planning Association (APA).

To learn more about APA Ohio and our organization, visit www.ohioplanning.org/about

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS 2025-2029

APA Ohio's strategic focus for the years 2025-2029 is on four specific goals that provide direction for the efforts of leaders, volunteers and staff.

Inform

Encourage widespread dissemination of information and education

- Enhance professional development
- Expand training and engagement
- Promote and share knowledge
- Foster career growth and mentorship
- Increase outreach and participation

Advance

Engage and influence legislative and policy outcomes

- Promote our platform throughout Ohio
- Establish planning best practices within local governments
- Outline community evaluation criteria
- Localize and expand advocacy
- Organize key events

Promote

Elevate our stories to support the process and profession

- Enhance and humanize communication
- Develop storytelling skills
- Identify and share our successes
- Promote awards and recognition
- Execute a comprehensive PR campaign

Develop

Enhance services for existing and future members

- Foster growth and inclusivity
- Enhance membership value
- Expand outreach and partnerships
- Demonstrate our value
- Diversify service offerings

1 INFORM: Encourage widespread dissemination of information and education

Lead Committees: Executive and Education

- **Enhance professional development:** Offer education on current topics, train planners in storytelling and thought leadership, and support members in achieving AICP certification with relevant materials and information.
- **Expand training and engagement:** Conduct various training modules, including civic engagement and webinars with non-planning experts, and organize events to share information from national APA and other conferences.
- **Promote and share knowledge:** Solicit content and ideas from a diverse range of professionals for workshops and conferences and disseminate information through broad networks and outreach efforts.
- **Foster career growth and mentorship:** Facilitate bi-monthly career-related lunches, maintain office hours for Professional Development Officer, and develop a mentorship program.
- **Increase outreach, participation and partnerships:** Host a virtual career fair for planning schools, reach out to non-planning degree programs to promote planning, and engage with communities/organizations not currently participating in APA Ohio events.

Tactics	Responsible	Priority
1.01 Drive higher attendance, revenue, and value at future conferences.	Executive	1 year
1.02 Focus on equity when planning educational opportunities – include an equity and diversity focus when approaching speakers and selecting sessions.	Education	1 year
1.03 Boost participation in state and local events, ensuring annual conferences are well-attended, effective, and valuable for members and non-members alike.	Executive	1-2 years
1.04 Explore topical or policy “themes” on an annual basis for consistent programming and messaging across the state.	Education, Legislative	1-2 years
1.05 Develop a Planning Webcast Series 2.0 to provide members with diverse planning resources and best practices.	Education	1-2 years
1.06 Improve how we solicit content ideas for workshops and conferences.	Executive	1-2 years
1.07 Reach out to planning-adjacent degree programs and K-12 schools/programs to help them understand more about planning as a career.	Education	1-2 years
1.08 Create a technology initiative to address the skills gap in the planning profession.	Education	2-3 years
1.09 Support members seeking AICP through materials, information sharing and Professional Development Officer (PDO) office hours.	Education, PDO	2-3 years
1.10 Expand educational opportunities and topics (bi-monthly career-related lunches, civic engagement training, etc.)	Education	2-3 years
1.11 Hold a virtual career fair with planning schools throughout Ohio	Education	3-5 years
1.12 Facilitate a statewide mentorship program by creating a framework for APA Ohio sections to implement.	Executive	3-5 years
1.13 Work with local APA Ohio sections and universities to incorporate leadership training into local events and annual conferences.	Executive, Education	3-5 years

2 ADVANCE: Engage and influence legislative and policy outcomes

Lead Committees: Executive, Governance and Legislative

- **Promote our platform throughout Ohio:** Clearly define “comprehensive plan” in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and formalize an advocacy strategy with dedicated funding to promote our legislative policy.
- **Establish planning best practices within local governments:** Strategize an accreditation platform for planning departments who implement best practices in administration.
- **Outline community evaluation criteria:** Establish criteria for recognizing “great communities” and conduct an audit of allied organizations to ensure alignment with key messages, values, and policy platforms.
- **Localize and expand advocacy:** Strengthen local advocacy efforts and explore the creation of a rural section to address regional needs.
- **Organize a planning gala event:** Plan and execute a gala to celebrate and promote the planning profession.

Tactics	Responsible	Priority
2.01 Pursue a clear definition of “comprehensive plan” in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC).	Legislative	1-5 years
2.02 Formalize a state-level advocacy strategy with dedicated funding to promote our legislative policy.	Legislative	1-2 years
2.03 Explore the creation of a rural section to address regional needs for exurban communities, like Appalachia.	Executive	1-2 years
2.04 Plan and execute a gala to celebrate and promote the planning profession.	Executive, Awards	1-2 years
2.05 Annually identify guest speakers to invite to board meetings to advance policy discussions and expand APA Ohio’s influence.	Legislative	1-2 years
2.06 Craft a strategy to fund legislative efforts.	Executive	1-2 years
2.07 Engage in active outreach to underrepresented geographies and BIPOC professionals throughout Ohio to discuss APA and intentionally invite their active participation in the organization, its committees, and programs.	Executive	1-2 years
2.08 Craft a strategy to strengthen local advocacy efforts.	Legislative	2-3 years
2.09 Establish criteria for recognizing “great communities”	Awards	2-3 years
2.10 Conduct an audit of allied organizations to ensure alignment with key messages, values, and policy platforms.	Executive	2-3 years
2.11 Strategize an accreditation platform for planning departments to implement best practices in administration.	Legislative	3-5 years
2.12 Define strategies to support rural planners and local governments more broadly.	Executive	3-5 years

3

PROMOTE: Elevate our stories to support the process and profession

Lead Committees: Communications and Awards

- **Enhance and Humanize Communication:** Update the communications plan to better define and target audiences, including underrepresented communities and schools, and utilize a mix of media channels while incorporating a touch of humor and engaging stories.
- **Develop Storytelling Skills:** Provide professional development and PR/media training for planners to improve their storytelling abilities.
- **Identify and Share our Successes:** Seek compelling stories from various sources, including FAICP interviews, Ohio history, and member interviews, to drive membership engagement.
- **Promote Awards and Recognition:** Intentionally seek out awards submissions from communities with fewer resources and expand awards categories
- **Best Practices:** Evolve initiatives like the *Guide to Planning in Ohio* into “best practice” programs to encourage improvement of skills and organizations.
- **Execute a Comprehensive PR Campaign:** Refine key messages, develop a PR campaign, and revive initiatives like #BecauseWePlan to enhance the visibility and impact of the planning profession.

Tactics	Responsible	Priority
3.01 Update the chapter Communications Plan to better define and target audiences to drive member engagement.	Communications	1 year
3.02 Utilize a mix of media channels while incorporating a touch of humor and engaging stories.	Communications	1-2 years
3.03 Seek compelling stories from various sources, including FAICP interviews, Ohio history, and member interviews, to drive membership engagement.	Communications, Section Leaders	1-2 years
3.04 Develop a more equitable awards nomination and submission process to make submittals easier for less-resourced communities.	Awards	1 year
3.05 Explore the creation of new awards categories for diversity, equity, and inclusion; technology in planning; youth in planning, legislator and/or elected official.	Awards	1 year
3.06 Develop new strategies to encourage members to submit session proposals for conference and stories to the chapter newsletter.	Communications, Education	2-3 years
3.07 Provide professional development and PR/media training for planners to improve their storytelling abilities	Communications	2-3 years
3.08 Feature best practices and case studies of “equitable development” in the APA Ohio newsletter on an ongoing basis.	Communications	2-3 years
3.09 Align efforts to engage the youth of our communities in the process of stakeholder engagement.	Communications, Executive	3-5 years
3.10 Use chapter awards to raise the profile of APA Ohio and expand the influence of good planning policies in Ohio.	Awards	3-5 years

4 DEVELOP: Enhance services for existing and future members

Lead Committee: Membership

- **Foster Growth and Inclusivity:** Build a robust member pipeline by integrating DEI principles, targeting rural areas, and establishing partnerships with universities and allied professions.
- **Enhance Membership Value:** Improve engagement by making APA Ohio membership more valuable, offering benefits such as access to grant-funded scholarships, salary surveys, and negotiation workshops.
- **Expand Outreach and Partnerships:** Increase interest in planning among K-12 students through strategic partnerships and develop targeted outreach efforts, especially in rural and underserved communities.
- **Demonstrate APA Ohio's Value:** Use diagrams, infographics and personalized stories to better communicate APA's value and create engaging content to attract and retain members.
- **Diversify Service Offerings:** Implement additional engagement tracks focused on issues such as youth, environment and transportation, and identify subject matter experts and speakers to help bridge the gap with members.

Tactics	Responsible	Priority
4.01 Create a leadership succession plan for the chapter and sections. Work with committees and sections to develop future leaders.	Executive, Governance	1 year
4.02 Implement a membership campaign and a sponsorship campaign.	Executive	1-2 years
4.03 Develop performance metrics/key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the chapter's success implementing programs and initiatives.	Executive	1-2 years
4.04 Work with committees and sections to document policies, programs, and institutional knowledge as part of succession planning.	Governance	1-2 years
4.05 Develop a diverse leadership pipeline by implementing DEI task force recommendations. Promote inclusion in member recruitment, highlight diverse planners, and actively recruit BIPOC planners to the board.	Executive	1-2 years
4.06 Develop a strategy to increase interest in planning for K-12 students	Executive, Governance	1-2 years
4.07 Explore a "rural focused" board position.	Executive	1-2 years
4.08 Establish an advisory group for past board members to retain historical knowledge and for aspiring members to support succession planning.	Executive	2-3 years
4.09 Develop a leadership and engagement path for students and young professional members, connecting with them early in their career path.	Membership	2-3 years
4.10 Within a statewide framework, develop guidelines for student/new professional mentoring programs for Sections to implement.	Membership	2-3 years
4.11 Engage allied organizations and establish partnerships to recruit potential members and maximize impact on legislative priorities.	Membership	2-3 years
4.12 Strategize regular member feedback through surveys. Communicate results to ensure APA Ohio effectively engages with key stakeholders.	Membership	2-3 years
4.13 Empower non-board members to serve as volunteers to implement APA Ohio programs and initiatives, with benefits ranging from leadership development to membership recruitment and retention.	Executive, Membership	2-3 years
4.14 Maintain communication and engagement with APA national.	Executive	3-5 years

GET MORE INVOLVED WITH APA OHIO!

Do you want to give back to the profession?

APA members who volunteer play an important part in advancing the chapter's goals. Volunteering is an excellent way to build your network, flex your skills, and learn from colleagues. You can volunteer by joining a chapter committee and participating in local sections across the state!

Email info@ohioplanning.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities with APA Ohio.



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