## Getting *Emerging Planning Professionals* Started: What We’re All About

*Draft for Discussion*

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Introduction
At the request of APA-Colorado President Susan Wood, Emerging Planning Professionals (EPP) was created to engage a key segment of the professional planning community – young and/or emerging planners. This document provides an overview of progress made to date. It will continue to get updated as the group evolves, and it will eventually serve as the basis for working with APA-Colorado to amend the state chapter’s by-laws to formally establish EPP as a committee.

Background
A survey was sent out to APA-Colorado members in the fall of 2012 to gauge initial interests in setting up a new group, similar to Young Planners Groups around the country. Roughly 30 people responded to the survey, all of whom were supportive of the effort. Following that, an initial discussion about starting the group was held at the APA-Colorado state conference in October 2012 where ideas for what the group could be were brainstormed. Through the survey and conference event, people were asked whether they would be interested in taking a leadership role, and after the conference, those people were contacted to set up a broader discussion about how to get the group started.

That group of 4 to 6 people started getting together every couple months to plan a broader kick-off to engage more people. In those early discussions and based on previous input, it was determined that membership in the group would not be defined by age. Many felt that it was more appropriate to distinguish this group by level of experience, in order to appeal to career changers and all those who may still feel as those they are in emerging phases of their career. In March 2013, a front-range kick-off event was held in Denver to formally announce the group and to generate momentum for involvement. Roughly 40 people attended that first happy hour. Since that first happy hour, four business meetings and potlucks have been held to formalize the basic structure of the group, to confirm the vision, mission, goals, and objectives, and to prepare for the first-ever officer elections.

Membership
Until formal development of by-laws and acceptance by APA-Colorado, membership in EPP is free and is not contingent on being a member of APA-Colorado or APA National. While support for our local chapter is strongly encouraged, APA Colorado sees EPP as an outreach effort to engage new and emerging professionals in planning and allied fields. EPP hopes to maintain free membership in order to engage emerging professionals who may not have the financial means to pay for membership and to encourage participation from allied professions.
Unlike other young planners groups around the U.S., membership for EPP is not contingent on age – but rather, experience levels. Most events will be open to everyone; however, based on the vision and mission of EPP, the primary audience for EPP is professionals who:

- have eight or fewer years of experience in the field (as defined by AICP for accreditation),
- consider themselves at entry- and mid-levels of their career, and
- are not currently enrolled in a planning-related undergraduate or graduate program.

It should be noted that EPP is not meant to duplicate efforts of student chapters for APA (APAS). Current students are encouraged to participate in their local APAS chapter and to consider EPP a resource for them once they have graduated from their respective programs.

To be placed on the contact list, interested parties may contact the Chair or a designated officer to express their interest.

**Vision and Mission Statements**

Through a collaborative and open process, participants at a series of early business meetings developed the following vision and mission statements to guide strategic decision-making for EPP.

**Vision**

*Dedicated to serving planning professionals across Colorado with eight or fewer years of experience in the field, EPP inspires and supports emerging planners to become community leaders today and tomorrow.*

**Mission**

*Emerging Planning Professionals (EPP), part of APA-Colorado, cultivates a vibrant community of entry- to mid-level planning professionals by offering and promoting opportunities for professional development, service, and meaningful, innovative contributions to an evolving, diverse profession.*

**Goals and Objectives**

Using the abovementioned vision and mission statements as a foundation, EPP members crafted the following goals and objectives to establish structure and priorities for future EPP activities. During that collaborative process, participants agreed that these statements may be revisited and updated as needed to maintain their relevance. Goals and objectives are organized into categories that follow four major themes:

1. **Connect** emerging professionals with like-minded friends and colleagues.
2. Support the **Professional Development** of emerging planning professionals.
3. Encourage and facilitate **Outreach and Service** to other communities, organizations and allied professions.
4. **Innovate and Showcase** the collective strength and vision of Colorado’s planning community.

**Connect**

**Goal:** Foster personal and professional connections among emerging professionals in planning and other related fields.

**Objectives**

1. Plan and execute friendly meet-ups for EPPs.
2. Network and learn from seasoned professionals.
3. Reach out to and mentor graduating planning students as they transition from school to the professional world.
4. Act as a liaison between EPPs and APA-CO.
5. Identify and connect with emerging professional groups in planning-related fields (i.e. architecture, engineering, green building, etc.).

**Professional Development**

**Goal:** Support emerging planners through continuing education and professional development opportunities.

**Objectives**

1. Read and discuss planning-related books/articles/journals with EPPs.
2. Identify and invite guest speakers to present to the Committee/community.
3. Identify training opportunities for networking, business development, facilitation and leadership skill building.
4. Share existing planning training opportunities with EPP’s and/or host training workshops.
5. Create study groups for certification (AICP, LEED, etc.) as needed.
6. Host professional role-playing exercises to further develop skills through practice.
7. Provide a platform for sharing job/internship opportunities.

**Outreach & Service**

**Goal:** Encourage volunteerism to further the goals of Colorado communities through outreach and service.

**Objectives**

1. Connect EPPs with volunteer and service opportunities within the community.
2. Join efforts with existing outreach organizations in the community.
3. Research existing outreach and service efforts in other communities to implement in our community.
**Innovate & Showcase**

**Goal:** Showcase innovative planning practices and promote the creativity and ingenuity of EPPs within the profession.

**Objectives**
1. Seek opportunities to create and support projects that highlight planning innovations in our community.
2. Host EPP member presentations to learn about what other EPPs do in the planning field.
3. Find opportunities for EPPs to present our work to the community and other professionals outside of our organization.
4. Find and create opportunities to teach non-planners about our profession.
5. Share local, national, and international planning news.
6. Learn about members’ projects and challenges.
7. Create and maintain a space in which “the good, the bad and the ugly” planning ideas can be shared, discussed and cultivated.

**Electing the First All-star Leadership Team**

The first elections will be held on Thursday, July 18, 2013 at a happy hour event in Denver. Those interested in running for a position should attend and give a short speech describing their interest and ideas for EPP (2 minutes max). All those present will vote to elect each position. If there is not sufficient interest in every position, the All Stars will appoint someone to fill a position through the remainder of the term, or they may decide to combine responsibilities. Those interested in running for positions should meet the general requirements for EPP membership.

**All Star Roles and Responsibilities**

All together the eight positions described below will make up the EPP leadership team (a.k.a. “the EPP All Stars). All Stars will be expected to attend regular business meetings, provide creative leadership, collaborate with others, and otherwise inspire and engage the rest of the EPP. The following descriptions provide some initial guidance to those interested in taking a leadership role, but individual personalities and strengths will determine just how amazing EPP can become. The names of each position may evolve, as well.
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| **Committee Chair**   | *Role* - To lead EPP through the business of planning, implementing, and evaluating the Committee’s goals and objectives. Additionally, the Chair will facilitate business meetings, provide overall guidance, and act as the primary liaison to APA Colorado.  
  
  *Responsibilities* -  
  - Assume overall responsibility for coordinating Committee programs and activities.  
  - Call and facilitate Committee business meetings.  
  - Develop and maintain an annual strategic plan for EPP.  
  - Act as the liaison to APA Colorado.  
  - Coordinate by-law development and updates with APA-Colorado.  
  - Attend APA-Colorado board meetings as appropriate.  
  - Represent the Committee, acting as the face of EPP.  
  - Oversee budget preparation and funding requests to APA-Colorado. |
| **Vice Chair of Administration** | *Role* - To undertake all administration regarding the EPP Committee, including budget oversight & management.  

  *Responsibilities* -  
  - Assist the Chair in business meeting planning.  
  - Receive and circulate agenda items among Vice Chairs.  
  - Take notes and distribute meeting minutes.  
  - Manage EPP membership/contact list.  
  - Assist Chair in preparing an annual budget request to APA-Colorado.  
  - Report budgetary information as appropriate.  
  - Devise and implement fundraising strategies.  
  - Coordinate with APA-Colorado as appropriate, for example, regarding budget oversight/reporting.  

  Please note: As of now, EPP is operating under a $0 budget. However, the board has suggested that if we prepare a formal budget request by October, we can request funds for the following year.
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| **Vice Chair of Communications**  | *Role:* To ensure EPP members are informed of upcoming news and events related to Committee activities and facilitate easy communication among EPP members.  
RESPONSIBILITIES-  
• Develop and implement a strategy for communication including, but not limited to, creating and maintaining an online presence.  
• Communicate with other Vice Chairs to ensure accurate & timely information flow.  
• Work with Vice Chairs to develop engaging forms of communication to generate participation in their events/opportunities/forums.  
• Act as the primary point of contact via social media and email.  
• Coordinate with APA-Colorado Vice President of Communications, as appropriate, to augment state efforts such as newsletter contributions.  
• Develop and update web content for APA-Colorado’s website and coordinate with chapter administrator as needed. |
| **Vice Chair of Networking and Events** | *Role:* To plan and identify events and opportunities that facilitate networking and relationship building between EPP members and emerging professionals from other related fields.  
RESPONSIBILITIES-  
• Organize social events.  
• Recruit new members.  
• Manage event-specific social media content.  
• Design social event-related promotion materials.  
• Communicate event plans to and coordinate with APA Colorado.  
• Coordinate networking events with emerging professionals in other related fields. |
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| Vice Chair of Service & Outreach | Role- To identify and organize service/volunteer opportunities for EPP members to actively engage Colorado communities.  
Responsibilities-  
• Identify and organize service/volunteer opportunities around the state.  
• Manage service & outreach-specific social media content.  
• Design promotional materials specific to service and outreach.  
• Coordinate efforts with APA-Colorado’s Outreach Committee, as appropriate, to augment state efforts.  
• Act as primary liaison with student APA chapters at CU Boulder and CU Denver, as well as other planning programs around the state. |
| Vice Chair of Professional Development | Role- To organize and identify opportunities for EPP members to engage in professional development and continuing education.  
Responsibilities-  
• Develop and implement an annual strategy for professional development, including but not limited to guest speakers and training opportunities.  
• Guide and coordinate EPP involvement with the State APA conference each year, including coordination of an annual business meeting, happy hour and other conference-related efforts.  
• Work closely with the EPP Vice Chair of Networking & Events.  
• Coordinate with the EPP Vice Chair of Communications to develop and maintain a platform for sharing career opportunities & related discussions.  
• Manage professional development-related social media content.  
• Design promotional material specific to professional development.  
• Coordinate with APA-Colorado Professional Development Officer, as appropriate, to augment state efforts, as well as with other APA-CO committees such as the Sustainability and Legislative Committees. |
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| **Vice Chair of Innovation** | *Role*- To ensure EPP members are informed of emerging trends in planning while providing opportunities for EPP members to showcase their creative strengths with the goal of promoting Colorado as a state that is leading progressive and positive change within the field.  
*Responsibilities-*  
- Design a platform for sharing innovative planning practices with EPP members.  
- Find ways to showcase the collective strengths of Colorado communities and planners in Colorado.  
- Inspire creative thinking and new ideas to improve the planning profession.  
- Create opportunities for members to share their work, ideas and personal experiences with Committee members, the community, and other professionals.  
- Encourage various award submissions from EPP members.  
- Keep Committee members abreast of the latest trends.  
- Manage social media content as it relates to innovative planning practices.  
- Design outreach material specific to planning innovation and showcasing opportunities. |
| **State Representative At Large** | *Role*- To represent and serve EPP members from around Colorado who do not live in the Denver metro region.  
*Responsibilities-*  
- Coordinate with Area Representatives on APA-CO Board to engage emerging professionals from around the state.  
- Develop and coordinate events and online services to promote involvement from EPPs around the state.  
- Participate in regular EPP business meetings via conference call. |

**General Terms and Conditions**
Until formal adoption of by-laws and incorporation into APA-Colorado’s bylaws, the following terms and conditions shall guide elections:
1. Terms for leadership positions will run from July 1 to July 31 of each year to facilitate transition each year.
2. There are no limits to the number of terms a person can hold.
3. If, for some reason, officers need to vacate their position mid-way through their term, the EPP All Stars will appoint an interim replacement to finish the term. A new officer will be elected at the time of regular elections.
4. If there is not sufficient interest in a particular position at the time of elections, the EPP All Stars will appoint an interested person to that position.
5. Emerging professionals from around the state are encouraged to apply – particularly for the State Rep at Large position. Conference calls can be made available for business meetings as needed.

2013/2014 Priorities

EPP proposes the following framework for setting up an exciting, but manageable calendar of events and opportunities for the first year (July 1, 2013 – July 31, 2014):

- EPP will facilitate and/or advertise monthly events, which will vary between:
  - Regular business meetings, including associated potlucks and happy hours,
  - Events that EPP organizes, and
  - Related events or efforts led by other groups or by the state chapter that EPP helps promote or co-sponsor.
- At a minimum, one event, project, or effort that satisfies each goal area should be completed within the year.
- Overall priorities: At previous business meetings, it was discussed that the innovation and showcasing goal area is our chance to shine. Along with professional development, those two goal areas were considered higher priorities than networking and service/outreach. For example, this group is more than just another happy hour group.

Budget

At this time, EPP is operating under a zero dollar budget. However, the state chapter has expressed their willingness to entertain small, periodic requests as well as formal preparation of a budget request to be considered by the board as part of the annual allocation process. Upon finalizing this strategic plan and election of officers, a formal budget and budget request will be prepared and submitted for consideration. To the extent possible, EPP should attempt to create a neutral budget, where expenses match any revenue generated.