

Reimagining Community Planning Academies

American Planning Association Conference 2022 San Diego



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Agenda for the Day

- Project Overview—National Scan of Community Planning Academies
- Spotlight—Citizens Planning Institute (CPI), Philadelphia Planning Commission
- Breakout/Tabletop Discussions:

How can planners and planning departments develop new or redesign existing CPAs to improve the land use literacy of diverse communities and serve as a forum and catalyst for transforming current land use/land development systems so they more just, equitable and inclusive

- Report Back and Close

Project Origin and Journey



Project Objectives

- *National Research*: explore how existing planning academies could be redesigned, developed, and operated as a forum for facilitating community conversations and community action on revamping local land use, land development and urban planning systems so they are more just, equitable, and inclusive.
- *Fresno Prototype*: co-create a community planning academy “prototype” that could expand the “land use literacy” of Fresnoans and serve as a catalyst for reforming current land use/land development systems in the City of Fresno so they are more just, equitable and inclusive.

National Research and Typology of Academy Models

National Scan (2021-2022)

- Inventory of more than 20 planning academies or organizations doing related work
- Interviews with 10 organizations
- Administered questionnaire on organization features to interviewees
- One focus group with alumni/participants from Baltimore Planning Academy

We spoke with nine organizations



American Citizen
Planning Program at
MSU



Baltimore Planning
Academy



Center for Land Use
Education at
University of
Wisconsin



Greenline Institute
Leadership
Academy



Nexus Community
Partners Boards and
Commissions
Leadership Institute



Pace Law School
Land Use
Leadership Alliance
Training Program



Philadelphia
Citizen's Planning
Institute



Sacramento Citizen
Planning Academy



Upstate Forever
Citizens Planning
Academy

We Saw Three Primary Planning Academy Models

- Community Planning Model
- Planning and Land Use Professional Model
- Community Builder Model

Community Planning Model

Host	Local Government Planning Agency
Staffing	Planning Staff
Applicants	City or county residents identified as leaders in their community due to their community involvement, organizing, volunteering, or advocacy work
Application	Essays and Interviews
Cohort size	20-30 people
Duration	3-5 months
Topics	Planning/land use basic concepts and local processes, zoning, and special topics such as affordable housing, transportation, etc.

Planning and Land Use Professionals Model

Host	University-affiliated land use law/policy center or land grant extension office
Staffing	Research Faculty and Extension/Outreach Staff
Applicants	Current local planning officials and planning professionals, such as commissioners, zoning board members Some nonprofits or community-based professionals involved with land use planning
Application	Workshops developed by request <i>or</i> applicants are nominated
Cohort size	10-20 people
Duration	1-2 day workshops or a retreat of a few days
Topics	basics of land use planning/zoning, rules and requirements related to the powers and processes for making land use decisions, public meeting rules, conflict resolution, legal rules and standards.

Community Builder Model

Host	Regional/ local non-profit
Staffing	Non-profit staff
Applicants	Young BIPOC professionals and community-based leaders involved with local policy/neighborhood issues.
Application	Workshops developed by request <i>or</i> applicants are nominated
Cohort size	8-12 people
Format/ Duration	Fellowship Model: 9–12-month fellowship/community policy project Boards & Commissions Model: 3–5-month academy to prepare BIPOC placement on local boards and commissions
Topics/ Focus	Specific projects/topics (land use+) on pressing priorities to the nonprofit and community, includes leadership development skills. Another model focuses on recruiting, training, preparing and placing individuals of color on a wide array of local government boards and commissions.

Academy Characteristics—The Four Features

- **Host & Funding**
- **Recruitment & Participants**
- **Curriculum & Delivery**
- **Network Building & Learning to Action**

Goals for Community Planning Academies

- ***Increases knowledge and resources*** available to community members to engage in land use and zoning conversations, decisions and actions
- ***Unpacks the role of structural racism in land use*** and how it is perpetuated through exclusionary zoning and other racially discriminatory land use policies and practices
- ***Provides space for conversations*** between participants, planning officials, and other land use and development actors on difficult land use topics
- ***Explores change and reforms*** to current land use and land development policies,
- ***Recruits and works with individuals*** who are underrepresented in land use and zoning decision-making including leaders of color
- ***Builds networks*** and pathways for participants to apply insights they learned, collaborate with the people they have met, and advocate for changes to improve existing planning and zoning policies and practices

Fresno's Prototype—Community Land Use Academy

Community Bootcamp



- Entry-level for community members
- Focus on pending development project or zoning/planning proposals
- Service-based learning
- Delivered by community organizers in short modules tailored to local land use problems

Land Use Leaders Academy



- Bootcamp graduates and active/engaged community members
- Focus on land use systems and urban planning more broadly
- Delivered in a 6 to 10 week cohort model
- Taught by local land use professionals and experts in the field

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