



American Planning Association
Delaware Chapter

Strategic Plan

2017-2021

VISION

The Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association (DE-APA) envisions the rise and preservation of livable, healthy, sustainable and prosperous communities across the First State through progressive planning.

MISSION

The mission of the Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association (DE-APA) is to:

1. Advance the art and science of planning in Delaware.
2. Provide vision and leadership to foster better planning for Delaware in the development of sustainable vital communities and conservation of valuable physical, natural, fiscal, and cultural resources.
3. Provide a forum for the training, understanding and application of sound planning principals.
4. Provide continuing education for planning professionals, public officials and the public in Delaware and beyond.
5. Facilitate the individual participation of DE- APA members in the affairs of the National APA.

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In an effort to meet our National APA standard to have a long-term development plan, and to better serve our local membership, Chapter leadership began updating its five-year Strategic Plan in late 2015. A Strategic Planning Subcommittee guided the plan's development by developing and conducting a comprehensive survey of chapter membership in January 2016. Emails requesting participation in the survey were sent to all 115 members of the Chapter. Forty-eight (48) members responded. Copies to the survey and a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the results are available at DE-APA's website.

Most survey respondents (64%) reported they have been members for 11 years or more, while 34% of respondents say they have been a member for over 21 years. This is in contrast from the survey from 2011 where most respondents (59%) reported being members for 10 years or less, and 19% had been members for over 21 years. The occupations of respondents shifted slightly from the 2011 survey, with 71% of the 2016 respondents stating they worked in the public sector (65% in 2011),

10% stating they worked in the private sector (21% in 2011), and 8% in education (5% in 2011), and 11% in other categories such as the non-profit sector, a student, or retired.

Respondents to our survey also reported frequent attendance at DE-APA events within the past 18 months, including:

- 71% of the respondents reported attended the DE/MD APA Regional Conference in October 2015 in Newark, Delaware.
- 73% of respondents reported attending an APA Audio/Web Conference.
- 52% of respondents reported attending the DE-APA Annual meeting.
- 27% of respondents reported attending courses with the Planning Education Certification program offered by the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA)
- 17% of respondents reported attending the National Conference.

When asked about the “quality” of events and trainings, the results were overwhelmingly positive. On a scale of 1 to 5, with “1” being poor and “5” being excellent, Charts 1, 2, & 3 shows (in blue) that most events score between “4” and “5”. The highest rated event was the DE/MD APA Regional Conference with a near perfect score of “4.78.” The lowest rated event was the Audio/Web Conferences with a score of “3.95.”

Charts 1, 2, & 3 also shows (in red) how members rated the “importance” of each service and activity that DE APA offers. On a scale of 1 to 5, with “1” being “not important.” and “5” being “very important”, the highest rated event was the DE/MD APA Regional Conference (4.78), followed by the Law Sessions w/ Local Review (4.65), the Ethics Sessions w/Planning Thespians (4.51), and the Added Value Sessions (4.35).

In terms of importance of initiatives by the Executive Committee, the highest rated response was “Enhancing communications- including newsletter, email, and web” (4.14), followed by “Increasing membership and participation from local governments e.g. Planning Commissioners” (4.1), and “Collaborate with affiliated organizations such as AIA, AARP, and DAPA” (4.0).

Chart 1

Rate APA Services and Activities



(scale from 1-5)

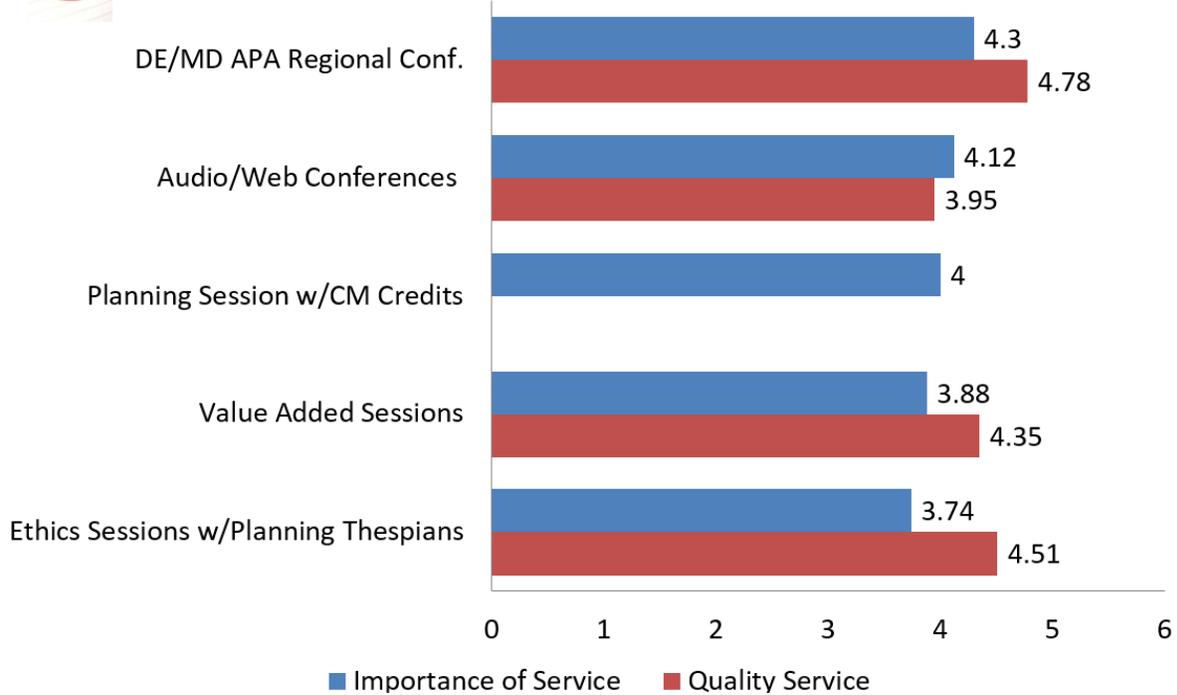


Chart 2

Rate APA Services and Activities



(scale from 1-5)

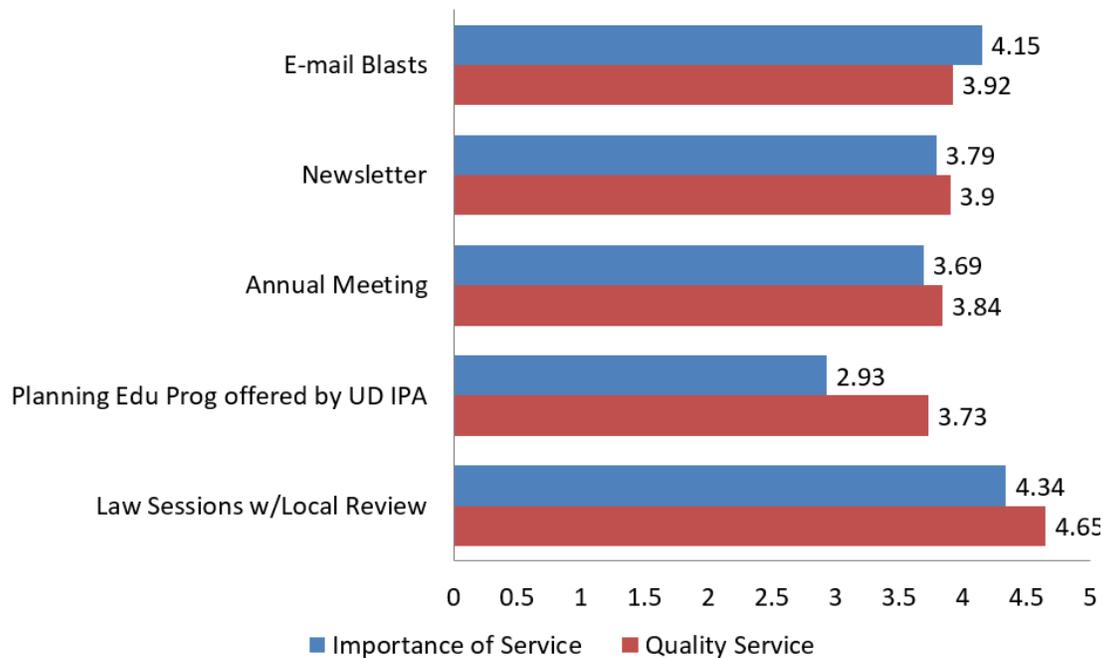
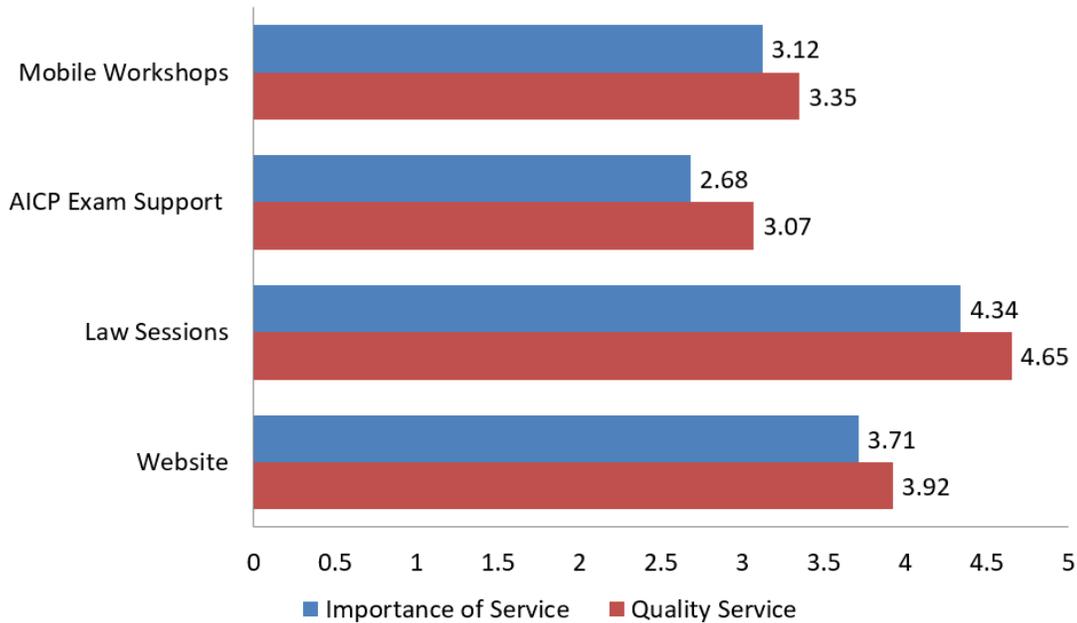


Chart 3

Rate APA Services and Activities

(scale from 1-5)



Is Delaware APA doing enough training opportunities locally for AICP Planners? [Table 1](#) shows that most respondents (75%) said that we are offering enough opportunities for AICP planners (Only 4% said we were not offering enough). **Table 1**

However, 35% of those who responded would like to see DE-APA do more.

As for what Delaware APA can do to improve upon the services we provide, the most common response was “Provide more CM training sessions” (29 respondents), followed by “Offer more activities in NCC and Kent County” (25 respondents) and “More Audio/Web Conferences” (23 respondents).

Has APA Delaware been offering enough CM training opportunities locally for AICP Planners?

→ Yes	19	40%
→ Somewhat, but I'd like to see more	17	35%
No	2	4%
I am not an AICP planner	7	15%
No opinion / neutral	3	6%

And finally, we asked what benefits Delaware APA best provides. Member's responses were divided into three (3) general categories:

1. Professional Development/Education,
2. Venue for Association/Networking, and
3. Protector/Leader of Profession.

Chart 4 shows the variety of responses in each general category. We found through the responses a relationship between “Professional Development/Education” and “Venue for Association/Networking.” Respondents indicated that both were central to DE-APA’s purpose, and that we should combined these activities as much as possible. In other words, when hosting training or education event, also set aside time for social activities and networking – or vice-versa.

Chart 4

In your experience, what benefits does APA Delaware best provide?

Professional Development/Education (19)

- Great Regional Conference
- CM education and training (providing and helping get)
- Sharing data and resources
- Certification Maintenance Events
- Learning from experts
- DE APA does better than APA national events
- Sharing contemporary knowledge on planning issues



Venue for Association/Networking (16)

- Venue for planners to have positive associations.
- Meet planners in state and region.
- Meeting planners from Delaware agencies
- Communication with other planners

Protector/Leader of Profession (6)

- Give reason to be a planner
- Keep professionals informed
- Lobbying for better planning
- Coordination between states
- Keep everyone up-to-date on APA news and training classes



CHAPTER PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

The National APA list the following performance criteria for state chapters. Following the publication and execution of this plan, the Delaware Chapter will meet each of these requirements.

- 1) The following items are required to be completed and submitted to APA staff and the CPC Executive Committee to remain in good standing with APA:
 - a. Mission statement which defines the chapter's core function(s) or purpose(s) and submit to APA staff and the CPC Executive Committee. The mission should include a commitment to the provision of continuing education of its members.
 - b. A long-range vision statement for the Chapter which articulates a long-term vision for the chapter's future programs and services. Chapter Annual Work Plan, which identifies specific quantifiable goals for the coming year(s), based on the mission statement. The Chapter Work Plan shall not exceed a four-year span. This Work Plan can be a listing of goals and objectives, much of which correspond to these criteria. Bylaws: Chapter shall operate under a current set of bylaws. Chapters shall review their bylaws no less than once every four years and update as needed.
- 2) At least three (3) times per year, each chapter shall publish and send to its members, the CPC Executive Committee, APA staff and national leadership, a communication piece that focuses on current information and concerns relevant to its chapter. This publication maybe in an electronic form. Each chapter will determine the most appropriate avenue(s) and frequency for this communications.
- 3) Providing educational opportunities for the membership is a key component to the performance of Chapters. As part of professional continuing education as well as providing education to the broader community, each chapter shall provide access to 16 hours' worth of educational opportunities to its members per year. These educational opportunities could include, but is not necessarily limited to, conference sessions, brown bags, webinars, sponsoring or marketing other educational opportunities relevant to the planning profession.
- 4) Each chapter must prepare and submit the financial report for the previous (or most recent) fiscal year to APA staff and the CPC Executive Committee annually. The report shall include the identification of all sources of income as well as expenditures.

- 5) Each chapter must send its chapter president or proxy to at least one of the two leadership meetings held in any given calendar year.
- 6) Each chapter must hold a business meeting annually in person or via electronic communications.
- 7) Chapter publications shall be identified with the full name of the chapter as "a Chapter of the American Planning Association," and with the uniform logotype of the Association.
- 8) Each chapter shall provide and maintain a current list of all elected chapter officers to APA staff.
- 9) Each chapter shall have a plan for leadership transition to ensure the smooth transfer of experience and knowledge to new chapter leaders.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES TO CARRY FORWARD

The membership survey revealed strong support for many current Chapter initiatives, particularly the regional conferences. Each of the following past initiatives will continue, as appropriate, through 2021:

- Bi-annual Regional Conference with the Maryland Chapter.
- APA webcasts offered at no cost in New Castle and Kent Counties.
- “Value Added” sessions that pair a webcast with local speakers.
- Ethics sessions with the “Planning Thespians”.
- Law sessions with local case law reviews by local attorneys.
- Co-sponsorship of the University of Delaware’s Planning Education Program.
- Annual meeting.
- Website (www.delawareapa.org).
- AICP exam support.
- Occasional Chapter co-sponsored events and mobile workshops.

From analysis and discussion of the 2011 survey results, four strategic initiatives were identified by the Strategic Planning Committee. The strategic initiatives included:

- Advocacy, Public Policy, Public Engagement
- Meetings and Events
- Membership
- Website and Communications

For each initiative, a Subcommittee was developed to provide focus on a series of goals, objectives, and action items. These goals, objectives, and action items were updated for the 2017-2021 DE-APA Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Advocacy, Public Policy, Public Engagement

Goal: Develop a solid, statewide reputation as a go-to organization for planning issues.

- **Objective:** Support IPA's training programs to determine how to increase effectiveness and refine curriculum
 - **Action:** Annually review current programs based on satisfaction surveys from participants, identify areas for improvement, and recommend to IPA staff improvements within the curriculum.
 - **Action:** Assist with the promotion of the IPA training programs through outreach to local governments, planning commissioners, and other citizen planners.
- **Objective:** Create planning-friendly narrative to counter anti-planning/anti-Smart Growth messages.
 - **Action:** Establish a messaging subgroup
 - **Action:** Obtain professional marketing/messaging assistance if necessary.
 - **Action:** Use the narrative in Chapter communications.

- **Objective:** Effectively advocate with legislators, local governments.
 - **Action:** Regularly follow Federal and State legislation and court rulings and communicate updates to membership regarding possible implications.
 - **Action:** On issues of general consensus among planning professionals, or that a majority of the DE-APA Executive Committee determines an issue has a significant impact to the planning profession or planning in Delaware, inform and engage local legislators on behalf of the DE-APA.

Goal: Build stronger relationships with organizations that share our goals

- **Objective:** Develop effective coalitions with outside organizations to strengthen the Chapter's position
 - **Action:** Identify organizations to network/collaborate.
 - **Action:** Consider reviving Delaware Institute for Planning and Design or similar collaboration.
 - **Action:** Hold joint sessions with allied professions at previously-scheduled meetings to spur collaboration and mutual support with groups such as (but not limited to): Institute of Transportation Engineers, Association of American Geographers, American Association of Retired Persons, American Institute of Architects, and the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Meetings and Events

Goal: Provide a wide range of training, networking, and social opportunities.

- **Objective:** Hold a regional conference every two years in conjunction with a state APA chapter; the location should alternate between the two states.
 - **Action:** Host Regional Conference in Delaware in 2018.
- **Objective:** Hold CM-approved planning trainings combined with socials/networking and explore varying times to outreach to new people and organizations.
 - **Action:** Host at least three events per year that provide a mix of training and social/networking opportunities. Examples could include:

Annual Meeting	Breakfast or lunch meetings	Social mixer/dinner
Add-on to webinars	Field Trips	

Membership

Goal: Better understand existing membership (geography, public vs. private, years of experience) to better target activities.

- **Objective:** Analyze membership data to better understand the Chapter's composition and underrepresented groups.
 - **Action:** Develop report on membership composition.
 - **Action:** Evaluate membership composition to determine underrepresented groups to target future outreach.

Goal: Increase membership.

- **Objective:** Develop an outreach program for students to attract greater participation from that population.
 - **Action:** Develop and create appropriate outreach materials/literature.
 - **Action:** Engage faculty/staff to assist in identifying potential students interested in being involved with DE-APA.
 - **Action:** Engage student's by exploring pricing incentives at DE APA events.
 - **Action:** Explore feasibility and interest in a mentor program between DE-APA members and students.

- **Objective:** Develop outreach program for emerging professionals to attract greater participation from that population.
 - **Action:** Develop and create appropriate outreach materials/literature.
 - **Action:** Engage planning directors and similar agency heads to assist in identifying interested emerging professionals.
 - **Action:** Engage emerging professionals by exploring pricing incentives at DE-APA events.
 - **Action:** Explore feasibility and interest in a mentor program between established DE-APA members and emerging professionals.

- **Objective:** Develop outreach program for retired professionals to attract greater participation from that population.
 - **Action:** Identify existing members who are retiring, or have recently retired, and invite them to the Annual meeting to be recognized for their service.
 - **Action:** Engage retired professionals by exploring pricing incentives at DE-APA events.
 - **Action:** Explore feasibility and interest in a mentor program between retired DE-APA members and emerging professionals.

- **Objective:** Have diverse and inclusive representation within our Executive Committee and Sub-committees that reflects the Delaware Planning profession.
 - **Action:** Give consideration for new appointments to the Executive Committee and Sub-committees so underrepresented membership is included.

Goal: Enhance benefits for existing members.

- **Objective:** Promote employment opportunities in the Delaware planning profession.
 - **Action:** Create and maintain platform for job posting on web.
 - **Action:** Explore incentive for a 1-year free chapter membership to Delaware planners who successfully complete the AICP exam.

Website and Communications

Goal: Provide a useful website and planning resource for DE-APA members and local individuals interested in planning in Delaware.

- **Objective:** Effectively manage website content.
 - **Action:** Track website hits with analytic tools in order to understand the popularity of the Chapter's webpages, and patterns of web hits.
 - **Action:** Develop a process in which content is posted to website, either through the individual committee chairs, or through a centralized website manager.
 - **Action:** Explore the feasibility of establishing a "Model Ordinance" reference library.

- **Objective:** Provide a “user-friendly” website
 - **Action Item:** Routinely review the DE-APA website and evaluate other platform that may improve the user-friendliness for the website.

Goal: Directly communicate with DE-APA members

- **Objective:** Continue the DE-APA Newsletter
 - **Action:** Use e - mail software to directly communicate with membership on upcoming events, planning news, and local issues.
 - **Action:** Review and define e - mail list to reflect current e - mails and membership.
 - **Action:** Consider additional targeted audience lists to constituencies.

- **Objective:** Use social media
 - **Action:** Explore the feasibility and effectiveness of using social media as a method of contacting and informing membership about planning issues and events.

Appendix A



Making Great Communities Happen

We Want Your Feedback... Your Delaware APA Chapter Executive Committee would like to learn more about your ideas and opinions to determine how we can improve the chapter services and better impact planning initiatives in the State of Delaware. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey. The results of the survey will be compiled anonymously. Please complete the survey by **Friday, January 29th, 2016.**

Thank you for your participation!

APA MEMBER ID #

1. What is your current membership category with the APA?
 - Full member
 - Student member
 - Chapter only member

2. How long have you been an APA Delaware member?
 - 0 – 5 years
 - 6 – 10 years
 - 11 – 20 years
 - 21 or more years

3. How likely are you to renew your APA Delaware membership?
 - Not at all likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - Very likely

4. Where do you work?
 - Public sector
 - Private sector
 - Education sector
 - Nonprofit sector
 - Student
 - Retired
 - Not currently employed

5. How did you hear about Delaware APA?

6. Does your employer pay for your Delaware APA membership?
 - Yes
 - No

7. What APA and APA Delaware events have you participated in **during the last 12 months?** (*Check all that apply*)
 - National APA Conference
 - APA Delaware/APA Maryland Regional Conference
 - Audio/Web conference
 - APA Delaware Annual Meeting
 - APA Delaware co-sponsored conference or event
 - Delaware Planning Education Program, offered by UD IPA

8. To what extent would you like to increase your opportunities to get to know other Delaware APA members?
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Very much
 - Extremely

9. To date, to what extent have you been able to develop relationships with other planners and professionals through Delaware APA?
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Somewhat
 - Very much
 - Extremely

10. Has APA Delaware been offering enough CM training opportunities locally for AICP planners?
 - Yes
 - Somewhat, but I'd like to see more
 - No
 - I am not an AICP planner
 - No opinion/neutral

11. Please rate the current APA Delaware chapter services and activities in terms of their **importance** to you as a member. (1=Not important at all; 5=Very important)

	1	2	3	4	5
APA Delaware/APA Maryland Regional Conference	0	0	0	0	0
APA Audio/Web Conferences	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Sessions with Certification Maintenance (CM) credits.	0	0	0	0	0
“Value Added” sessions (Pairing of audio/web sessions with a panel of speakers)	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics Sessions with the “Planning Thespians”	0	0	0	0	0
Law Sessions with local case law review by attorneys	0	0	0	0	0
DE Planning Education Program offered by UD IPA	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware Annual Meeting	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware Newsletter	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware E-mail blasts	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware website (www.delawareapa.org)	0	0	0	0	0
AICP Exam support for those studying to take the AICP exam	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile workshops	0	0	0	0	0

12. Overall, how would you rate the **quality** of each of the current APA Delaware chapter services and activities? (1= Poor; 5= Excellent)

	1	2	3	4	5
APA Delaware/APA Maryland Regional Conference	0	0	0	0	0
APA Audio/Web Conferences	0	0	0	0	0
“Value Added” sessions (Pairing of audio/web sessions with a panel of speakers)	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics Sessions with the “Planning Thespians”	0	0	0	0	0
Law Sessions with local case law review by attorneys	0	0	0	0	0
DE Planning Education Program offered by UD IPA	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware Annual Meeting	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware website (www.delawareapa.org)	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware Newsletter	0	0	0	0	0
APA Delaware E-mail blasts	0	0	0	0	0
AICP Exam support for those studying to take the AICP exam	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile workshops	0	0	0	0	0

13. How can APA Delaware improve upon the services we currently provide to you, our members? (Check all that apply.)

- Have conferences more regularly
- Offer shorter conferences at a reduced cost for registration
- Offer longer conferences, although this may cost more for registration
- Improve our regular communications with members via a newsletter and upgraded website
- Offer more audio/web conferences
- Offer more CM training sessions
- Offer more activities in New Castle County
- Offer more activities in Kent County
- Offer more activities in Sussex County
- Provide more support for those who aspire to take the AICP exam
- Other:

14. The following table lists initiatives by the Executive Committee. Please rate these initiatives based on their importance to you as a member. (1= Not important at all; 5=Very important)

	1	2	3	4	5
Becoming more involved in statewide legislative and policy issues	<input type="radio"/>				
Enhancing communications to members, including newsletters, emails and our website	<input type="radio"/>				
Providing pro-bono training opportunities for local planning commissions and citizen planners	<input type="radio"/>				
Collaborating with affiliated organizations, such as AIA, AARP, DAPA and others, on topics of mutual interests,	<input type="radio"/>				
Increasing membership and participation from local governments, particularly planning commissioners	<input type="radio"/>				
Advocating for the establishment of an accredited planning school in Delaware	<input type="radio"/>				

15. Do you have any additional ideas for new initiatives that the chapter should consider undertaking? If so, please list them here.

16. In the past 5 years, what has been the best, or most beneficial, experience you have had with APA Delaware?

17. In the past 5 years, what has been the worst, or least beneficial, experience you have had with APA Delaware? (Be honest, we can take it. We can't improve if we don't know about it.)

18. In your experience, what benefits does Delaware APA best provide?

19. What would you like to learn about at the next Delaware APA training session?

20. Please provide any additional ideas, thoughts or comments you have about our chapter here:

21. Overall, how satisfied are you with Delaware APA?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral/No opinion
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

22. Overall, how satisfied are you with APA?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral/No opinion
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

23. Would you be interested in serving on: (Check all that apply)

- The Executive Committee
- Management and Finance Committee
- Website & Communications Committee
- Advocacy Committee
- Meetings and Events Committee
- Membership Committee