

SCPEAC

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

PRESENTED TO:

The President of the South Carolina Senate
The Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives

BY: THE SOUTH CAROLINA PLANNING EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SOUTH CAROLINA



PLANNING EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Members: **DATE:** February 5, 2026

Stephanie Monroe
Tillerson, Chairperson
Representing SCAPA

TO: The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander
President of the Senate

John Gaber
Representing Clemson
University

The Honorable G. Murrell Smith
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Mary Catherine Lawton
Representing MASC

FROM: Stephanie Tillerson, Chairperson

Andrea Melocik-White
Representing SCAC

RE: 2025 Annual Report of the South Carolina Planning Education
Advisory Committee

Neal Woods
Representing University
of South Carolina

In 2003, the Legislature established Educational Requirements for Local Government Planning or Zoning Officials or Employees. It also established a five-member Advisory Committee to compile and distribute a list of approved orientation and continuing education courses to satisfy the statute's requirements and to determine categories of persons eligible for exemption from these educational requirements. The Advisory Committee elected to operate under the title of the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee.

Please accept this as the 2025 Annual Report of the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee pursuant to Section 6-29-1330(D)(3) of the Code of Laws of South Carolina.

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Introduction

Article 9 of Title 6, Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Code of Laws establishes Educational Requirements for Local Government Planning or Zoning Officials or Employees. These provisions apply to all members of locally appointed planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals, architectural review boards and all professional employees engaged in planning and zoning activities.

Unless expressly exempted, each locally appointed official and professional employee must attend a minimum of six hours of orientation training in certain subjects and annually attend no fewer than three hours of continuing education in any of the subjects determined by the State Advisory Committee.

Approved training topics include, but are not limited to, land use planning, zoning, floodplains, transportation, community facilities, ethics, public utilities, wireless telecommunications facilities, parliamentary procedure, public hearing procedure, administrative law, economic development, housing, public buildings, building construction, land subdivision, and powers and duties of the planning commission, board of zoning appeals, or board of architectural review. An appointed official or professional employee who has one or more of the following qualifications is exempt from the educational requirements:

- (1) certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners,
- (2) a master's or doctorate degree in planning from an accredited college or university,
- (3) a master's or doctorate degree or specialized training or experience in a field related to planning as determined by the advisory committee, or
- (4) a license to practice law in South Carolina.

Appointed officials are subject to removal from office or suspension or dismissal from employment if they fail to complete the requisite hours of orientation training and continuing education within the time allotted by State Code or fails to file the certification form and documentation required by State Code.

The local governing body is responsible for tracking and filing the proper certification forms for their planning or zoning officials or employees with their municipal or county clerk.

Newly appointed board and commission members and newly hired staff members must receive the required orientation training within one year of their start date. All board, commission and staff members require a minimum of three hours of continuing education each year following completion of the orientation training.

Section 6-29-1330 of the Code establishes an Advisory Committee composed of five members appointed by the Governor. The Code provides that the members shall include a planner recommended by the South Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association, a municipal official or employee recommended by the Municipal Association of South Carolina; a county official or employee recommended by the South Carolina Association of Counties, a representative recommended by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service

and Policy Research, and a representative recommended by Clemson University's Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture.

This Committee, operating as the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee, or SCPEAC, is charged with

- compiling and distributing a list of approved orientation and continuing education programs that satisfy the educational requirements in Section 6-29-1340,
- determining categories of persons with advanced degrees, training, or experience that are eligible for exemption from the educational requirements in Section 6-29-1340, and
- making an annual report to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

As required by Section 6-29-1330(D)(3) of the Code, the annual report provides a detailed account of the following areas:

- (a) activities,
- (b) expenses,
- (c) fees collected, and
- (d) determinations concerning approved education programs and categories of exemption.

This report covers activities for the calendar year of 2025.

South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee Members

John Gaber, Ph.D., AICP

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Represents: University of South Carolina

* Ms. Lawton became a Municipal Association of South Carolina employee in December 2023.

Activities

A quarterly schedule of meetings was established, as allowed for under Section 6-29-1330(F) of the Code. The members conducted the first scheduled meeting of the year in person; and thus, the February 6, 2025, meeting was conducted at the offices of the Municipal Association of South Carolina. The May 8, August 7 and November 6 quarterly meetings were conducted via Microsoft Teams video conferencing. Additionally, a special called meeting was held on Friday, November 14, to make a decision on a request for exemption.

Advisory Committee Decisions:

- Effective immediately, the committee approved a request to add the National Council for Architectural Review Boards, [NCARB](#), as an approved sponsor organization. (2.6.25)
- Effective immediately, the committee determined that a new sponsor organization can be added to the Approved Continuing Education Sponsor Organization list by a referral and review process by the committee. Therefore, new organizations can be added without that organization submitting an application. (2.6.25)
- The committee elected board officers. Re-electing Stephanie Tillerson and Andrea Melocik-White as the Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.
- The committee submitted re-appointment letters to the Governor's Office for Dr. John Gaber, Clemson University and Dr. Neal Woods, University of South Carolina, to continue as members of the advisory committee.
- Effectively immediately, the committee approved the master's in environmental science degree as a "field related to planning" under the category three guidelines for exemptions. (11.14.25)

Other Committee activities included:

- Submitted the 2024 SCPEAC Annual Report to the State Legislature, March 2025.
- Approved 10 requests collectively from municipal and county officials for Continuing Education program approvals under a "consent agenda" over the course of the year.
- Approved 10 requests collectively from municipal and county officials for approval as Continuing Education Instructors, under a "consent agenda" over the course of the year.
- Approved the 2026 Advisory Committee calendar:
 - o Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 11 a.m. – virtual
 - o Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 11 a.m. – virtual
 - o Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 11 a.m. – virtual
 - o Thursday, November 5, 2026, at 11 a.m. - virtual

Expenses

The committee incurs minimal operating expenses. De minimis postage, copying, printing, and domain costs have been absorbed by the Municipal Association of SC. South Carolina Legislative Printing, Information and Technology Systems Department maintains the

Committee’s website. The South Carolina Legislative Printing, Information, and Technology Systems Department maintains the Committee's website at no cost to the Committee at the domain, www.scpeac.org.

The individual members or their employers have borne costs for travel to meetings of the committee. No costs for overnight stays or meals have been incurred.

The Municipal Association of South Carolina donates the meeting space for the Committee’s annual on-site meeting, as well as administrative support to the Committee. Limited refreshments are provided similarly to other groups that use the Association’s facilities.

Fees Collected

No fees have been collected.

Section 6-29-1330(G) of the Code provides for the imposition of a nominal fee to each entity applying for approval of an orientation or continuing education program. The Committee has chosen not to impose such a fee at this time.

Determinations Concerning Approved Education Programs and Categories of Exemptions

In 2025, the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee approved the following continuing education courses:

1. Charleston County - “Charleston County HPC Annual Meeting Presentation” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-01***, approved 2.5.25
2. Charleston County - “Charleston County PC Annual Meeting Presentation” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-02***, approved 2.14.25
3. Charleston County - “East Cooper Historic District Tour” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-03***, approved 2.19.25
4. Town of Pawleys Island - “Pawleys Island Rain Garden” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-04***, approved 3.6.25
5. Town of Pawleys Island - “Pawleys Island Rainwater Harvesting Workshop” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-05***, approved 3.13.25
6. City of Rock Hill - “Comprehensive Planning 101 In the City of Rock Hill” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-06***, approved 4.7.25
7. City of Rock Hill - “Storyline Trail” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-07***, approved 9.18.25
8. Aiken County Government - “Housing of Workforce” - ***Authorized Course No.: 2025-08***,

approved 10.6.25

9. Aiken County Government - “Traffic Impact Analysis Basis and Its Importance in Community Planning” - *Authorized Course No.: 2025-09*, approved 10.6.25
10. Charleston County Government - “Resilience & Sustainability Symposium” - *Authorized Course No.: 2025-10*, approved 10.17.25

In 2025, the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee approved the following Continuing Education Instructor applications:

1. **Alison R. Simmons**, Berkeley County Planning and Zoning Director, approved 3.5.25.
2. **Kiera Reinertsen**, Director of Planning & Zoning Dorchester County, approved 7.1.25
3. **Heather Davis**, Deputy Planning Director, Horry County, approved 7.11.25
4. **Jeffrey Guilbault**, Planning Director, Appalachian Council of Governments, approved 7.31.25
5. **Jennifer L. Vissage**, Senior Planner Appalachian Council of Governments, 8.4.25
6. **Megan Clark**, Asst Planning Director, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, approved 8.18.25
7. **L. Suzanne Pritchard**, Assistant Director, Planning & Development, City of North Myrtle Beach, approved 8.27.25
8. **Richard Green**, Government Services Director Upper Savannah COG, approved 9.23.25
9. **Stafford J. McQuillin**, Attorney, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A., approved 10.2.2025
10. **Stephanie Monroe Tillerson**, Town Administrator, Town of Kiawah Island, approved 10.2.25



SCPEAC Continuing Education Program Approval Policy and Procedure

- Only continuing education programs approved by the SCPEAC may be used to fulfill the continuing education requirement for South Carolina planning officials. The term "program" includes training in any format that complies with the provisions in Section 6-29-1340 of the South Carolina Code of Laws as interpreted by the SCPEAC.
- There are three options for Continuing Education Program approvals:
 - **Approval as a Continuing Education Sponsor**
 - A CE Sponsor is an organization, department or agency at the national, state or regional level respected and viewed as an expert in one or more of the CE subjects listed in Section 6-29-1340 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.
 - The following organizations are currently approved as [CE Sponsors](#).
 - All CE programs offered by an approved CE Sponsor are approved to satisfy CE requirements for planning officials, provided that the program's subject matter addresses one or more of the educational subjects defined in Section 6-29-1340 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.
 - It is the responsibility of the CE host or individual subject to the CE training requirement to verify that the subject matter meets this requirement.
 - Additional organizations wanting to be approved as Continuing Education Sponsors must complete this [application](#) for the SCPEAC to consider approval of its application.
 - The SCPEAC reserves the right to identify any organization, department or agency at the national, state or regional level that is respected and viewed as an expert in one or more of the CE subjects listed in Section 6-29-1340 of the South Carolina Code of Laws and approve them as a CE Sponsor without the need for an application submission to the SCPEAC.
 - **Approval as a Continuing Education Instructor**
 - A Continuing Education instructor is an individual who possesses a defined level of education and experience in land use planning deemed sufficient by the SCPEAC to qualify to offer CE programs without SCPEAC review and approval for each program offered.

