

South Carolina



Planning Education Advisory Committee

SCPEAC Announces New Guidance on Orientation and Continuing Education Requirements

March 18, 2020

In recognition of the extraordinary impacts on the work and personal lives of citizens across our state and nation, the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committee (SCPEAC) is announcing changes to the requirements for Orientation Training and for Continuing Education Training for local government planning and zoning officials and employees.

Section 6-29-1340 of the South Carolina State Code sets forth specific requirements for completing a minimum of six hours of Orientation Training within one year of the initial appointment or hiring, as well as a requirement for a minimum of three hours annually of Continuing Education Training. The SCPEAC lacks the authority to waive these requirements. But, recognizing the impediments to traditional training activities that have resulted from restrictions on travel and the need for social distancing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCPEAC has agreed to lift some of the restrictions on the delivery methods for the required training as indicated below:

Orientation Training

Two providers of Orientation Training have previously been approved by the SCPEAC: The Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) and the South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC). Both of these organizations were in the process of converting their training programs to an online model that would allow individuals to take the training remotely, while ensuring that the individual does – in fact – engage in the training.

On March 17th, MASC announced that their new on-demand Orientation Training program is up and running.

<https://www.masc.sc/Pages/programs/knowledge/training/Online-orientation-training-for-planning-and-zoning-officials.aspx>

This new training is available to any jurisdiction needing to use it.

SCAC will soon have their new on demand modules available as well.

This is a great leap forward and eliminates the need for in-person training to satisfy the Orientation Training component of the State Code. The SCPEAC applauds both MASC and SCAC!

Continuing Education Training

There are numerous organizations and institutions that have been pre-approved by the SCPEAC as providers of Continuing Education Training. See below:

<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/SCPEAC/ApprovedSponsorsContEd.htm>

However, all programs are currently required to be conducted in a classroom or group setting and in the presence of a Coordinator. These are requirements that the Committee was already in the process of reviewing. Current circumstances present an opportunity to test how we might adjust these requirements while still ensuring that individuals are actually participating in the training.

Effective immediately and through June 30, 2020, the requirements that Continuous Education Training be conducted in a classroom or group setting and in the presence of a Coordinator are hereby waived. Strong preference is given for training opportunities where attendance can be tracked and confirmed by the provider or jurisdiction. The SCPEAC cautions that training lacking such safeguards could be subject to challenge.

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