



American Planning Association
Michigan Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

EMERGING PLANNING PROFESSIONALS

CAREER BUILDING RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK

Michigan Association of Planning
1919 W. Stadium Blvd., Suite 4
www.planningmi.org

Phone: 734.913.2000 Fax: 734.913.2061

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The Michigan Association of Planning's Emerging Planning Professionals

Emerging Planning Professionals are students, entry-level-to-mid-level planners, those in non-traditional fields without decades of experience, or individuals embarking on encore careers. Whether equipped with a brand new planning degree, shifting career focus, or tackling your first professional planning position, EPP's offer ambition, passion and potential, and often have questions about how to get to where they want to go.

Emerging planning professionals are the future leaders of our profession, and in our communities; they offer unique and fresh perspectives; and have somewhat different needs than our more experienced professional members. Because we value their involvement and membership, we have created a new program initiative with benefits customized to meet their distinct professional and personal needs.

As the largest organization dedicated solely to planning and zoning in Michigan, the Michigan Association of Planning provides resources and information to all members of our statewide planning community to connect, engage, and learn and we're excited to provide member services, opportunities and products specifically to EPP's now, as well.

Emerging Planning Professionals Committee Members

Michelle Aniol
Carsten Applegate
Lauren Chapman
Nathan Etu
Angela Fortino
Michelle Foster

Brittany Jones
Jenna Levin
Elizabeth Luther, AICP
Justin Lyons
Michael McBain
Caitlyn McGoldrick

Cassi Meitl
Sarah Murray
Kevin Schronce
Carly Shapiro
Jamie Simchik
Dave Waligora

This career building resource guidebook was created by the Michigan Association of Planning's
Emerging Planning Professionals Committee Members:

Michelle Foster, Jenna Levin, Nathan Etu, and Caitlyn McGoldrick



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NETWORKING GUIDE

Building connections and resources while contributing to the existing planning environment can be a tricky aspect of making the leap securely into your professional career. Networking is a useful skill that can be cultivated to forward your career and establish yourself as a professional. Bouncing ideas off of colleagues, connecting dots of opportunity, and developing meaningful relationships can be done through genuine and strategic professional-development networking. It is not always easy and can be even more difficult without the experience to understand how valuable and important building relationships can be to your career. In order to successfully network, you have to be committed and proactive. The following guide will help you make this transition and develop your professional networking skills and potential.

Why network?

- Progress your career
- Create synergies, partnerships, relationships
- Cultivate innovation
- Test your ideas, provide and receive feedback
- Inspire others/yourself
- Hone communication skills
- Learn
- Share

Who do I connect with?

Create a plan. Once you know why you're networking, you can develop a plan which identifies who you would like to contact.

If you are a municipal planner you probably want to build a local network of business leaders, non-profit professionals, residents, council members, etc.; a regional network of county staff, transportation leaders, grant providers, etc.; a statewide network of planners, state department staff...

If you are a transportation planning consultant, your network will look different from a housing coordinator's, and so on.

Tips:

Who to approach: find someone who is standing or sitting alone or in a small group, they will be easier to approach than a large group of acquainted people.

Who to avoid: networkers who exploit their contacts but do not listen and do not return favors.

Where to I network?

Conferences. Educational workshops. Networking events. Professional association committees. Committees. Meetings. Social networks.

Attend meetings and events on topics that interest you. Don't just attend though, ENGAGE. Strike up conversations with people you find interesting or haven't met before.

How?

1. Get contacts to know you

- Online or face-to-face? Both.
- Face-to-face meetings are better at building trust and recognition.
 - i. Smile
 - ii. Simple starter - How are you today? Did you try the salmon? It's great.
 - iii. Personal starter– Great talk on pedestrian movement earlier. I had a question on... – or – Is that a Shinola watch? I really want one with the orange leather band.
 - iv. Business cards are still relevant! Don't just be a business card hoarder though – they are only useful if you follow up! And hand yours out too. Get people to know you initially, then follow-up.
 - v. Tip: Listen and be polite, but make sure the conversation is two-way. If you get stuck, try "It was lovely to meet you, I'm off to circulate a bit."
- LinkedIn is useful for keeping professional contacts; Twitter is good for learning, staying in-the-know, and sharing information. Facebook is great for keeping a pulse on a community and staying in contact.
- Remember! When you work in/for communities, you should always be on your game. You never know who you are going to meet at the grocery store or on the sidewalk!

2. Get contacts to like you

- This step is not just about having a great personality. Professional contacts do like a witty comment and a smile, but real value comes from an informed and helpful contact.
- Listen! (If you have a bad memory, write down tidbits of your conversations at the end of the night so you have something to follow up with.)
- Be yourself and have confidence!

3. Get contacts to trust you

- Networking can be quick, but building a relationship isn't. Be patient when networking, building trust takes time – don't pump your contacts for help too quickly!
- 24/7/30 – Nurture your relationships by following up within a day, a week and a month. Once you've established contact, you can go longer without slipping from memory. However, don't forget about them altogether and make each connection relevant. Professionals receive too many emails as it is – be willing to give, catch up over coffee, or send articles which might be of interest.

Tips:

- Be yourself and communicate with a person, not a title. When you're not worried about the influence a person's title might have on your career, you will be more confident and personable.
- Don't get caught off guard! Don't force dialogue, networking requires you to be quick on your feet. Stay up-to-date on planning topics, local projects, and new stories. When in doubt, ask questions e.g. "Well, I have a strong opinion on the design of the new stadium, but I would like to hear what you think about..."
- Google, Outlook, and other contact keepers provide notes section – use them! If you learned that Bob is going to Vienna for Christmas, write it down and ask him about the trip at the next meeting.

- Notes aren't just for contact reference, jot down ideas you hear in conversation. If Bob has a great process for a public art project that you want to copy, write it down. Remember that networking is about idea generation and innovation too.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

Professional and personal etiquette skills honed for the business setting can ease your uncertainty and establish a comfortable environment. When proper etiquette is used appropriately applied, those involved feel more comfortable. Professional etiquette plays a monumental role in making a lasting positive first impression and can give you a competitive edge over others who may not be as courteous or professional. This section includes introductory and advanced professional etiquette techniques for meetings and interviews, attending workshops and conferences, networking, non-verbal communication, and basic etiquette for cell phone use, doors and elevators, presenting yourself, written correspondence, conversing, and dining.

Basic Professional Courtesy

Meetings or Interviews

- **Be on time to meetings**, especially interviews. 15 minutes early is preferred.
- **Call if you are running over 5 minutes late** and give a reason. i.e. traffic
- **If you must cancel or postpone**, notify the person immediately, apologize, and offer the reason.
- **Be prepared**. Know what you are there to speak about. Have some notes and questions written down. Take brief notes as others are talking; however, look up as well.
- **Knock before entering if you are meeting someone in an office**. If the door is already open, still knock, say hello, and introduce yourself.
- **Wait to sit** until you're invited to or it is comfortable to do so.
- **Stand up** if you are being introduced to someone.
- **Introduce yourself** with your first and last name(s), and shake hands firmly.

Conference and Networking Event Etiquette

Nametag

- **Pin your nametag high on your right side** so that when you shake hands, people can follow the line of your arm straight up to your name without having to scan your chest, or stomach with lanyards. Never put your name tag on your belt or pants pocket.
- **Put your business cards in your nametag pouch** behind your name so that they are easily accessible. Otherwise have them available elsewhere.
- **Include your first and last name** if you are writing your own nametag.

Business cards

- **Business cards are essential**. If you are making your own, make them as attractive as possible, but still professional looking.
- **Give your business card** if you ask someone for his or her card.
- **Scan the business card quickly** before putting it away. This shows interest and there might be something on it that you can talk about with them.
- **Write a couple of reminders on the back** of their business card to refer to later when you follow up. This way you can remember who you spoke with about what.



- **Do not pass business cards indiscriminately** around the room; it devalues them.
- **Templates and business card content information is available on the MAP EPP homepage:** <http://www.planningmi.org/epp.asp>

Attire

- **Dress professionally and comfortably everyday** of a multiple day conference. You never know when you're going to meet your next resource, contact, or employer.
- **Do not wear anything too revealing** and be aware of how you are sitting. You should present yourself cleanly, put together, and prepared for the opportunities that await.

Alcohol (Cocktails and Mocktails)

- **Do not sip through that tiny little straw** -- that is a stir stick. Use it to stir your drink and then discard it.
- **If you have fruit in your beverage**, do not reach in with your fingers to get it. If it is stuck to the bottom of the glass, leave it.
- **Never chew your ice.** Like the cracking of knuckles or the scraping of teeth on fork, that really makes some people cringe.
- **Know your limit.** No one is impressed by how much alcohol or food you can put away.

Communication

- **Your handshake** should not be too strong so as to hurt someone, but also should not be too limp. A firm handshake is ideal and shows confidence and assertiveness.
- **Smile and make eye contact.** This is imperative in every professional situation from waiting for a presentation to begin, sitting at a table during a conference lunch, or in an interview.
- **Do not look around when you are speaking with someone.** Make sure that you at least appear to be listening to whoever is speaking. Be present, not preoccupied.
- **Do not cross your arms.** Keep your arms relaxed on your side. Do not fidget, slump, lean on objects or look away from the other person. This indicates that you are uncomfortable or disinterested.

Cell Phones

- **Turn your cell phone on silent and do not check your phone** while you are talking to someone. If, only in an emergency you must, go to the restroom or outside.
- **Avoid using your cell phone or text messaging while sitting in the waiting room** before an interview or even a sales call (which is in itself, an interview). Take out a notebook and study your notes. Go over the answers to tricky questions in your head. Even if you usually review notes on your phone or PDA, use something else so you don't appear to be checking messages. Leave the impression that you are focused on the business at hand and not distracted by other things in your life.
- **Try not to answer the phone when you are in restaurants.** If you are expecting an important call, let those you are dining with know, and when you receive the call, excuse yourself, leave the table, and make the call brief.
- **Be aware of how loud you talk** on a cell phone in public places and create space by moving at least two arm lengths away from those around you (or out of the room if possible).

Presenting Yourself

- **Be aware that people will look at your LinkedIn and Facebook pages.** Employers as well as those you meet at conferences. Make sure that you do not have any inappropriate photographs or posts on it.
- **Voicemail:** Have a professional sounding voicemail message.

- **Be aware of your breath.** Remedy garlic breath or bad breath during a business meal by chewing on parsley, drinking lemonade or taking advantage of the restaurant's after dinner mints. Or just have some mints on hand. Chewing gum is unprofessional.

Written Correspondence

Thank You Letters

- **Sending a thank you letter** is not only very courteous, but could also make the difference in whether or not you get the job. It is also another way of getting your name and qualifications in front of a networking connection and potential resource. Additionally, your letter can also be one more way of displaying your writing skills.
- **Three types of "Thank You" communications:**
 - **Formal letter:** Not used very much anymore for job interviews, but is appropriate for other thank you situations. See: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Formal-Letter>
 - **Handwritten card:** Ideal for after job interviews when you are aware that a decision is not going to be made for at least a couple of weeks. Use dark blue or black ink. If more than one person interviewed you, send one card to each interviewer and make sure that they are not exactly the same as it is likely they will discuss their cards with each other.
 - **E-mail:** Ideal for after job interviews when you are aware that a decision is likely going to be made quickly.

Netiquette (Email Etiquette)

- **Your E-mail address.** Make sure that it is professional, not Cutiepie444@email.com.
- **Correct grammar** is essential for all correspondence.
- **Avoid using emoticons, abbreviations, or fancy format or fonts.** They do not convey professionalism (LOL, U instead of you, TTYL). Fancy fonts, format and layouts can be distracting. It is best to stick to plain professional text.
- **Include an appropriate subject line** that is a short and to the point description which accurately reflects the subject of the email. These help recipients sort and locate specific emails in their inbox. i.e. "Hello" does not serve any function.
- **Say please and thank you** in appropriate places throughout your email.
- **Address your recipient appropriately.** Business emails should contain the recipient's name. Make sure to use formal titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr.) unless the recipient has asked you to use his or her first name. If you are uncertain if a female recipient is married, use Ms.
- **Be aware of your tone.** You want to sound friendly and approachable.
- **Proofread** (and if possible have someone else proofread) your important business email before sending.
- **Never use all capital letters** as IT APPEARS AS THOUGH YOU ARE SHOUTING. Using all lowercase letters is also inappropriate.
- **Get to the point.** Try to keep your email brief while still getting your point across. Don't ramble or repeat information, but also don't be too short. Be friendly and clear, but get to the point.
- **When replying to someone else's email,** make sure you provide answers to their questions.
- **Include your full name at the bottom of your email.** You should have all of your contact information in your signature.
- **Reply within 24 hours when someone sends you an email that requires a response.** If it will require longer than 24 hours for you to appropriately respond to their questions, at least send a reply to the person acknowledging their email and stating that you are working on acquiring necessary information to properly respond.
- **Do not attach large or unnecessary files.** Only send attachments that are relevant.



Conversing

A Good Conversationalist...

- **Is well informed** and talks on a broad range of subjects.
- **Keeps abreast** of the major news in the world.
- **Shows interest** in what other people do for a living.
- **Adjusts to the person** with whom she/he is talking.
- **Makes a statement based on knowledge** and experience, not just conjecture.
- **Looks a person straight in the eye** when talking.
- **Avoids correcting** another's grammar or pronunciation in public.
- **Addresses and includes (looks at) everyone within a group**, not just one or two people.

Contributing to the Conversation

- **Look at the people** who are talking.
- **Wait for a point** when no one else is talking, don't interrupt.
- **Make a short appropriate comment** that relates to the topic being discussed.
- **Choose topics and words** that will not be offensive or confusing to others.
- **Give other people a chance** to participate.
- **Don't talk too loudly** or for too long and consider that other people may be interested in talking to those you're speaking to, too!

Maintaining the Conversation

- **Keep a relaxed but attentive posture.** Nod your head to show interest.
- **Ask follow-up questions** that pertain to what the other person just said.
- **Avoid fidgeting**, looking away or yawning.
- **Don't interrupt the other person.** If interruptions occur, say, "Excuse me," and let the other person finish. Get back to what the other person was saying as soon as possible. This shows people that you value their ideas and company.
- **Take your turn in the conversation**, but be careful not to dominate or exaggerate.

Closing the Conversation

- **Allow everyone a chance to talk** about the current topic.
- **If it is time to leave the table or room**, wait for a comfortable break in the conversation. Stand and say, "Excuse me..." or, "It was very nice talking to you...", or, "Thank you very much for the conversation, I learned a lot."

Etiquette Tidbits

- **Use proper grammar and vocabulary.** Avoid the use of slang words or phrases and NEVER use foul language.
- **Show interest and respect** by using good listening skills.
- **Do not debate controversial subjects.** Topics that should be avoided are religion, money, and illegal or questionable activities. Politics should be dealt with sensitively.

Dining

Being Seated

- **Wait to be seated** by restaurant staff or your host.
- **Place purses, bags, or briefcases** out of the way on the floor beside you or under your seat. Never place these items on the table.

Ordering

- **Do not pick up your menu until after your host** has done so and allow your host to order first.
- **When choosing your meal**, consider selections that will not be messy or awkward to eat.

- **If your host is paying for the meal**, choose a moderately priced option. Avoid choosing the priciest selections on the menu.

Your Napkin

- **Once you've been seated**, unfold your napkin and place in your lap. Never shake out your napkin, crumple it, or stuff it into your clothing.
- **If you need to use it during the meal**, just bring a corner of it up from your lap and gently blot your mouth with it and return it to your lap.
- **If you need to leave the table** during the meal, place the napkin on the table, but make sure to fold it in a way where no food particles can be seen.

Your Silverware

- **Use the utensils that are furthest away from your plate first.** Each has a specific purpose (salad fork, soup spoon, main meal fork, etc.) Work your way in towards your plate so that for your main meal you are using the fork that is closest to your plate.
- **Desert forks and tea spoons** are generally placed on the top of your plate.
- **Place a used utensil** on the edge of your plate, not on the table.

When to Begin Eating

- **Follow your host's lead at an interview or dinner party**, and begin eating when your host begins.
- **If there are a small group of people at your table** at a banquet or dining situation, begin eating when everyone at your table has been served. If in a conference situation wait until at least a few people have been served before you begin. If you are served later than others, urge them to go ahead.
- **With a buffet**, you may begin eating as soon as you are seated, but it is polite to wait until at least a few people have joined you.

Etiquette Tidbits

- **You should pay if you have asked someone to meet your for a meal.** If they insist, thank them as you accept, then thank them one more time as you leave.
- **Even if your host mentioned they would pay**, offer money but gratefully allow your meal to be paid for.
- **Be polite to all restaurant staff** that you encounter, as you would personally.
- **Cell phones should be turned off or to silent** and they should not be seen or heard during the meal.
- **Do not rest your elbows** or arms on the table.
- **Maintain good posture.** Your feet should be flat on the floor in front of you.

With knowledge and preparation comes confidence. Understanding your environment and the appropriate nature of your networking experience will provide a comfortable climate for you to build your network of professional planning resources. You can do it!

For more emerging planning professionals resources, educational opportunities, and events, stay connected to www.planningmi.org/epp.asp

Professional Etiquette Sources

- San José University – Division of Student Affairs:
<http://www.sjsu.edu/careercenter/students/find-a-job-internship/interviewing/professional-etiquette/>
- UNC – Charlotte – Division of Academic Affairs – Center for Work, Service, and Internships:
<http://career.uncc.edu/students/effective-interviewing/professional-etiquette-tips#sthash.5D5abx7n.dpuf>
- Shepherd University – Career Development Center, *Professional Etiquette*
www.shepherd.edu/jobweb/etiquettepacket.pdf
- Terry Arndt and John Ricchini, *Backpack to Briefcase: Steps for a Successful Career* (Brainbridge Island, WA: College Transition Publishing), January 17, 2003.

RESOURCE LIST

Job Search Resources:

American Planning Association
www.planning.org/jobsandpractice
American Planning Association | Michigan Chapter (MAP)
www.planningmi.org/jobs.asp
www.planningmi.org/epp.asp
Architecture Crossing
www.architecturecrossing.com
Career Builder
www.careerbuilder.com
Coroflot
www.coroflot.com
Cyburbia
www.cyburbia.org
Dice
www.dice.com
Get Urban Planning Jobs
www.geturbanplanningjobs.com
Government Jobs
www.governmentjobs.com
Glassdoor
www.glassdoor.com
Higher Ed Jobs
www.higheredjobs.com
Indeed
www.indeed.com
Just Jobs
www.justjobs.com
LinkUp
www.linkup.com

Linked In

www.linkedin.com
Michigan Association of Planning
www.planningmi.org/jobs.asp
Michigan Civil Service Commission
www.michigan.gov/mdcs
Michigan Economic Development Corp
www.mitalent.org
Michigan Townships Association
www.michigantownships.org
Michigan Works!
www.michiganworks.org
M Live
www.mlive.com/jobs
Monster
www.monster.com
Online Jobs Post
www.onlinejobspost.com
Planetizen
www.planetizen.com
Simple Hired
www.simplyhired.com
Urban Planning Now
www.urbanplanningnow.com
USA Jobs
www.usajobs.gov
Zip Recruiter
www.ziprecruiter.com

Data Resources:

EMCOG
www.emcog.org
EUPRPDC
www.eup-planning.org
Data Driven Detroit
www.datadrivendetroit.org
HealthData.gov
www.healthdata.gov/dataset/search
NEMCOG
www.nemcog.org

Networks Northwest
www.nwm.org
SEMCOG
www.semcoog.org
STATS Indiana
www.stats.indiana.edu
Tri-County Regional Planning Comm.
www.tri-co.org
United States Census Bureau
www.census.gov

Planning Tools & Training:

Assoc. of Collegiate Schools of Planning

www.acsp.org/resources/multimedia/links

American Planning Association

www.planning.org

Environmental Systems Research Institute

www.esri.com

Global Development Research Center

www.gdrc.org

Google Earth

www.earth.google.com

Google Sketch-Up

www.sketchup.com

GRASS GIS

www.grass.osgeo.org

Int'l Society of City & Regional Planners

www.isocarp.org

Michigan Association of Planning

www.planningmi.org

Michigan Municipal League

www.mml.org/events/index.html

Planetizen

www.planetizen.com

Planners Network Online

www.plannersnetwork.org

Planners Web

www.plannersweb.com

QGIS

www.QGIS.org

Smart Growth Network

www.smartgrowth.org

Urban & Regional Information Systems

www.urisa.org

Land Use Resources:

Environmental Law Institute

www.eli.org

Food and Agriculture Org. of the U.N.

www.fao.org

Greenbelt Alliance

www.greenbelt.org

Michigan State University Extension |

Schindler's Land Use Page

<http://lu.msue.msu.edu/>

Partnership for Public Spaces

www.pps.org

Smart Communities Network

www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/landuse

The World Bank

www.worldbank.org

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

www.blm.gov

Urban Land Institute

www.uli.org

