Our house style is a hybrid between APA-specific uses shown here and the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition. Everyone at APA has access to the online version of this book.

Our official dictionary is Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition. Almost all spelling questions can be resolved by looking up the words there. If two acceptable spellings are given for a particular word, use the first one.

Keep the following list handy for words and usages that come up often or that are specific to APA.

**Animals and Species**
Check Webster’s for acceptable spellings, whether or not to capitalize certain words, etc.

**Use a hyphen? One word or two?**
email
e-book
e-learning
land use; land-use plan
price-managed lanes
ride-sharing
bike share; bike-sharing program
home sharing
car sharing, but car-sharing service
child care
day care; day care center
health care; health care facility
citywide (for other –wide words, use hyphen if they are not in Webster’s)
coauthor
coeditor
cochair
 colocate, colocation
crowdsourcing
African American
build-out (noun)
datasets
downzone; downzoning
upzone; upzoning
eco-density
eco-roof
ecotourism
eco-village
farmers market
fifty-fifty
high rise, but high-rise building
home builder
home owner; home owners association
home buyer
home sharing, but home-sharing website
light-rail station
placemaking
policy making; policy-making body
ride sharing; ride-sharing service
sea level; sea-level rise

**Titles of people**
Use gender-neutral name when possible: commissioner, board member, council member (not councilman or councilwoman)

Cap a title before someone’s name, but not if it follows the name.
Director of Planning Jane Jacobs . . .
Jane Jacobs, director of planning

**APA-specific guidelines**

Honorifics and Credentials (AICP, etc.)
There is a separate list of acceptable honorifics and credentials and how to use them in this folder: X:\Common\Brand_Identity\APA House Style Guide. In print (including in correspondence, etc.), our practice is to use small caps for these letters, like this: Jane Jacobs, AICP.

APA Board and AICP Board titles:
Check the APA website for exact titles and names of current board members.

Don’t use periods for degrees like BA, MA, PhD, JD

It’s acceptable to use NPC as an abbreviation for APA’s National Planning Conference. Be sure to spell it out on first mention if there would be any doubt as to what NPC means.

National Community Planning Month (don’t use NCPM)
Great Places in America (don’t use GPiA).
Great Places in America is the flagship program of National Community Planning Month. (use “flagship” to refer to this program)

**Planning-related**
Congress for the New Urbanism, but new urbanism
smart growth (general term); Smart Growth (specific program) SmartCode (specific type of code; not a generic term)
complete streets

**Government organizations, bodies, and programs**
Don’t capitalize city, county, state in sentences like this:

The city will implement the plan next year. (NOT: The City will implement the plan next year)

Congress, but congressional
Obama administration
U.S. Census, but the census, the 2010 census, census figures
block grants

Court: capped in second reference to the U.S. Supreme Court only. Use lower-case court for second reference to state or other court.

**Technology**
cell phone but smartphone
.jpg
PDF
e-mail
e-book
internet
wifi
Lidar

URLs: planning.org (no http://www. needed). Test the stripped-down URL to make sure it works.

In periodicals: OK to shorten lengthy URLs using tinyurl.com. Generally shorten anything over 50 characters.

No need to say “last visited on . . . “ in reference lists

GIS (no periods needed)
3-D

**Geography**
Spell out state names in text like this:

Dayton, Ohio, is drafting a new plan. (NOT Dayton, OH is drafting a new plan or Dayton OH is drafting a new plan)

(Note the commas before and after Ohio. We use the full state name EXCEPT on forms, in addresses, on envelopes, or in tables where space is tight)

Some cities do not need the state name in text because there would be little confusion as to what we’re talking about. They are:

Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle

Government buildings: Capitol Hill, city hall

Don’t capitalize city, county, state in sentences like this:

The city will implement the plan next year. (NOT The City will implement the plan next year)
The city of Chicago will implement the plan.
The state of Washington will implement the plan.
Washington State is in the Pacific Northwest.

**Numbers**
Spell out one through nine in text. Use numerals from 10 up. It’s fine to use all numerals in tables.

**Titles of works, plans, etc.**
Books: italicize title
Newspapers: Italicize titles. For the *New York Times*, don’t capitalize or italicize the “the.” *New York Times*
Blog titles: Italicize. But put titles of individual posts in quotes.
Article titles: place in quotations. “Hurricane Sandy’s Wake-Up Call” is in the February issue of *Planning.*

**Specific words**
A historic, not an historic
Data uses a singular verb. The data shows that sea levels will continue to rise.
We hyphenate land use as an adjective (The land-use plan is under consideration) but not mixed use (The developer has proposed a mixed use complex).
African American (no hyphen); white, black
LGBTQ
Generations: baby boomers, millennials, Gen X, Gen Y
graywater

Headlines and titles—what to capitalize
DO NOT capitalize: a, an, and, as, at, by, etc., for, from, if, in of, on, or, the, to, versus
CAPITALIZE: After, All, Also, Among, Any, Are, Be Beneath, Between, But, Can, Down, During, Go, Into, Is, It, May, Mid, No, Not, Only, Our, Out, Over, Per, So, Some, Than, That, Then, These, They, Through, Toward, Under, Up, Via, Was, We, What, When, Where, Which, Who, Why, Will, With, Without