

Basic Course in Land Use Law and Planning

Questions and Answers

What is the purpose of the course?

The course provides a basic understanding of the role and responsibility of members and alternative members of municipal planning boards, zoning boards of adjustment and combined boards

Who must attend the course?

All current municipal board members are required to complete the basic course and test within 18 months from the date an approved course is first offered. Future members must complete the course within 18 months from the date of their appointment.

Are there any exemptions?

Yes. The following persons are exempt from the course:

- The Mayor or person designated to serve on a planning board in the absence of the Mayor who serves as a Class I member.
- A member of the governing body serving as a Class III member.
- Any person who is a licensed professional planner.

I already attended another course, am I eligible for a waiver?

It depends. Any person who offers proof of having completed a more extensive course within 12 months of the date upon which that person would have been required to take the *Basic Course in Land Use Law and Planning* can request a waiver. In other words you may be eligible for a waiver if you complete a more extensive course twelve months prior to this course first being offered for current members or twelve months prior to appointment for future members.

How do I request a waiver?

Print and complete the official *Waiver Request Form* located on the Office of Smart Growth website and mail or fax it to us along with the required supporting documentation indicated on the form.

How long is the course?

The basic course is a maximum of five hours and is to be provided within the same calendar day. Some other approved courses may be longer than that.

What topics are covered?

The course covers three main areas of study: 1) the roles and responsibilities of planning and zoning board members under the Municipal Land Use Law, 2) understanding the master plan and its sub-elements and relationship to local, regional and state planning, and 3) the development application review process. We want to make sure you receive the practical information that you will need to perform your duties as a board member.

Who provides the course?

Organizations with a proven track record of providing high quality courses in land use law and planning. The Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs must approve each provider. A list of approved course providers will be available on the Office of Smart Growth website.

What is the cost?

Anticipated costs may range from \$50 to \$200 per participant depending on the course provider selected.

Where are courses offered?

The course will be offered at convenient locations and times around the state. Please check specific course provider websites for details and registration instructions. Contact information is available on the OSG website.

Is there a test?

Yes. A brief simple multiple-choice test, which covers key points, will be administered.

Why do I need to take a test?

The test verifies that each participant has a working understanding of the role of the planning and zoning official.

Will I receive a certificate of completion?

Yes. You will receive an official certificate from the Department of Community Affairs, indicating that you have attended and successfully completed the course

Do I have to take the course more than once?

No. However, we recommend that you continue to take other courses in land use law and planning. In addition, a list of recommended reading is available on the OSG website.

What happens if I don't complete the course within 18 months of my appointment?

Failure to complete the course within the prescribed time period will result in an automatic termination of board membership.

How will my municipality pay for the course?

Municipalities are obligated to pay for course fees. However, they may defray the cost of tuition through the use of development application fees pursuant to [N.J.S.A.40:55D-8](#). A copy of the statute is available on the OSG website for your reference.

How does the N.J. Department of Community Affairs receive information about current board members?

Municipal Clerks will enter lists of current board members with dates of appointment and contact information in the N.J. Department of Community Affairs "Training Program Database" via the GovConnect portal on the official State of New Jersey website. Any change in board membership must also be reported when applicable.