NIGP CREDENTIALING SYSTEM FAQs

December 12, 2019

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General FAQs:

We are convinced that there are better, multiple ways to deliver learning and competency development to professionals. And we are equally convinced that there are better, multiple ways to recognize the achievement of skills and competencies of those professionals through credentialing options.

*Benefits to our NIGP Members and the Public Procurement Profession*

Members have told us that they want learning that is:

- Accessible (delivered both in the classroom and online/on demand)
- Flexible (available 24/7 and whenever the learner has the time to dedicate to education)
- Customized to the role they play in public procurement, so it is applicable and relevant learning
- Affordable

Members also want pathways that guide them on their current career path and prepare them for their aspirational career goals.

Members have also told us that they want similar choices in the way their achievements are publicly recognized through a variety of credentialing options. They want:

- Connections between learning and recognition so they are recognized for each major learning milestone
- Credentials without barriers
- Credentials that are integrated and laddered so there are intentional steps to move from one credential to the next

Multiple options for recognition – especially for a substantial number of professionals who don’t qualify for professional certification due to formal education requirements or time on the job. We believe that offering a choice of new credentials... digital badges, certificates, designations, specializations... in addition to professional certification provides maximum flexibility and access to professionals who are hungry for recognition.

*Benefits to Public Agency Managers*

We have also spoken with CPOs, CFOs, senior administrators, and elected officials. Here’s what we heard:
✓ They desire a highly educated, highly prepared, and highly skilled public procurement workforce that has both the technical knowledge of public procurement and the competencies to perform in the workplace.
✓ They are deeply concerned by the lack of intentional career development that provides pathways to promotion and, ultimately, to executive leadership.
✓ They are looking for an educational partner who can deliver a customized learning platform that...
  ▪ Provides standardized coursework on public procurement practices;
  ▪ Provides options for customized coursework that addresses their public entity’s specific regulatory or unique circumstances; and
  ▪ Provides choices for recognition.

The Articulation of “Why”

By listening to the critical voices of our members and their bosses, we have constructed new, innovative ways to deliver learning and new, publicly-facing ways to recognize those professionals who have demonstrated their knowledge, skill, and competency.

Members and public agency managers have spoken. They want:

• Choice and flexibility in selecting learning pathways; taking only what they need to be successful
• Cutting-edge learning that is forward thinking and aligned with the needs of the modern public procurement workforce
• Focus on skill development and competencies that drive results for the agency and the community they serve
• Learning and credentialing that is integrated and holistic
• Instant recognition for the achievement of learning outcomes

We heard you!

What is the purpose and guiding principles that are driving the new learning and credentialing system?

The central purpose of the system

• Address talent recruitment, development and succession planning
• Encourage young professionals interested in public service to set a pathway to the public procurement profession through learning and recognition
• Meet the evolving, unique needs of professionals by offering flexible options for learning (knowledge) and applying knowledge through abilities and skills (competencies)
• Provide optional pathways to learn, and be recognized for, advanced technical skills related to procurement and contracting
• Provide multiple, flexible approaches to public recognition through certificates (badges, core, designation, and specialty) as well as certification
• Align evolving content and evolving competencies to credentials to ensure currency and relevancy

The guiding principles for the system

• Must be perceived as valuable by public procurement professionals, their supervisors and their employing organizations (e.g., district superintendents, finance officers).
• Must value competency over years of experience.
• Must serve a significant portion of NIGP members.
• Achievement of the credential(s) must be rigorous and meaningful.
• Employers should be able to use it to find qualified employees.
• Must be flexible and adaptable to remain current and relevant.
• Resulting credential must be comprehensive of enabling competencies (i.e., soft skills) - not just technical competencies.
• Must advance the NIGP mission and strategic priorities.
• Follows credentialing best practices and is legally defensible.

What data is driving NIGP’s decision?

**NIGP’s educational programs are growing**

NIGP’s educational programs continue to grow. Between 2016 and 2018, classroom education participation grew by 9%, online learning grew by 31%, and overall student counts grew by 7%. NIGP’s Webinar program participation has grown 46% year-over-year and the Institute’s newest virtual conference offering – VCon – attracted over 1,500 attendees for the first three events.

**Only 21% of NIGP members are professionally certified by the UPPCC**

Conversely, professional certification among NIGP members is down. In 2016, 24% of the NIGP membership reported that they had a CPPO and/or CPPB designation. By 2019, that number fell to 21% - even though the percentage of members with an associates or bachelors + degree increased slightly. This means that, despite NIGP’s dedicated sponsorship of the UPPCC program since the late 1970s, 79% of NIGP’s membership is either ineligible to earn the CPPO or CPPB designation (or) hasn’t found value in achieving it. The fact that 9 out of 10 UPPCC certificants is a NIGP member is equally concerning.

**UPPCC Professional Certification is declining**

Further, the number of new applicants seeking professional certification has declined since the peak in 2014 when the UPPCC changed its eligibility requirements and required degrees. Overall new applications have declined 42% since the 2014 peak; a 44% decline in new CPPB applicants and a 36% decline in new CPPO applicants. Over the last three-year period, the UPPCC has averaged 265 new CPPB applications and 115 new CPPO applications each year.

**Professionals are seeking additional credentials**

And recent survey of public procurement practitioners revealed that even those who are currently certified are interested in another credential (51%). This percentage intensifies to 74% of those professionals under 40 years of age.

**What is the new NIGP learning system?**

**Learning Re-imagined**
We want public procurement professionals to re-imagine learning. NIGP’s traditional model of classroom training served us well in the past. And, in fact, adults maximize their learning experience when there are opportunities to network with colleagues and employ group discussions and activities. NIGP is not abandoning the classroom; rather, we are augmenting it with more choices to learn online… at your own pace and in your own space… literally anywhere, anytime, anyway. These options provide greater access to professionals who cannot be out of the office and/or who cannot travel and/or those who need flexibility to ensure a positive life/work balance.

*Take only what you need*

Re-imagining learning also means aligning learning to the specific skills and competencies you need today. There is no need to take a comprehensive list of training courses … just take exactly what you need based on the roles you serve in the public sector. This is laser-focused learning.

*The Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF)*

Thirty-three competency modules are contained within the Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF). The framework draws from a significant, well-respected research study conducted by Public Spend Forum (PSF) on behalf of a grant provided by the Volcker Alliance. In partnership with PSF, NIGP expanded the framework to incorporate both the technical knowledge required of public procurement professionals and the soft skills and ancillary competencies needed to be successful in the workplace.

The framework is organized with seven major focus areas: strategy, policy and legislation; planning and analysis; sourcing and solicitation, contract administration, leadership, and business principles.

*Competency Modules*

Multiple competency modules fall within each of these seven focus areas. For example, the focus area on strategy contains three competency modules: mission and benefit, transformation and vision creation, and social responsibility alignment. Each module stands alone and represents knowledge and skill development for a specific competency.

Each competency module will have a collection of assessment-based learning activities focused on building the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities. These activities could include reading assignments, case studies, videos, interactions between students and the instructor, experiential activities, etc. These combined activities constitute a learning module.

The modularity of the Framework provides maximum flexibility for both the entry-level professional and the seasoned professional. It also maximizes flexibility for the Chief Procurement Officer who wishes to design a career development path for her/his employees. It’s a menu of choices. It is important to note that some of the individual competency badges have multiple levels such as introductory and advanced. Envision an introduction to market analysis competency as well as advanced market analysis competency … two distinct courses for two levels of learning for two career paths and two competency badges. A key benefit of Pathways is that there are options available for everyone based on where they are in their career and the roles they currently perform (or aspire to perform). The flexibility of the independent competency modules allows each learner to establish her/his own pathway; perhaps in consultation with the procurement director. Maximum flexibility. Maximum choice. Take only those modules that are relevant to the work you do today. And take more modules as your career progresses.
Who is developing the new content?

The flexible and customized design of the learning system requires NIGP to repurpose our current content into smaller chunks of modular learning. NIGP has already begun this journey – in partnership with 35 highly-respected, senior-level procurement practitioners who are our Subject Matter Experts.

The NIGP staff has mapped existing content to the Framework. This exercise aligns (“maps”) all existing content to one of the competencies. This exercise also determines where there are gaps in the existing content that need to be built either internally or through third-party partnerships.

Eleven of the 33 modules made their debut in November 2019. The entire Framework will be available online and for a classroom event by June 2020.

What modes of delivery will you use?

Initially, these modules will be bundled into related themes and offered as an in-person class. However, as each module is completed, the module will be individually available as an online offering. All 33 competency modules will be available as a learning event by June 2020. Some of the modules will have sufficient content to stand alone as a classroom offering. However, in many cases, we will bundle related content into two and three-day classroom experiences – dependent on demand from our network of chapter affiliates and public agencies who have training contracts with us.

What is the new NIGP credentialing system?

We want you to re-imagine credentialing as a way of receiving public recognition for the accomplishment of knowledge, skills and competencies earned in the NIGP learning system. Learning and credentialing are intertwined – not separate. The purpose of learning is to enhance the performance of professionals in the workplace through acquired competencies. And the purpose of credentialing is to publicly recognize those professionals who have mastered those acquired competencies.

Three options

Recognizing that one size does not fit all, NIGP is building a credentialing system that provides three options for public recognition: certificates, specializations, and certifications. Each option will be explained in a separate section within this FAQ.

The reality is that not all professionals are eligible for professional certification – yet they desire to be publicly recognized for their achievements at various stages of their career. The new NIGP credentialing system will offer choices ... a range of certificates and specializations as well as a new NIGP certification program expressly for certified procurement professionals: NIGP-CPP.

Flexibility, accessibility, and choice are the tenets of both the new learning system and the new credentialing system.

How long has NIGP been working on this new credentialing system?
In June 2018, the NIGP Governing Board determined that the profession needed a variety of credentialing tools to address the unique needs of the profession.

In July 2018, NIGP engaged a highly-respected consulting firm with impeccable credentials for association-based credentialing systems. This firm has guided the NIGP Board and the NIGP Executive team on our project plan; evoking best practices in credentialing consistent with standards of compliance needed to be accredited.

In August 2018, the Board established its guiding principles for the system. During the 2018 Forum in Nashville, the Institute announced that Learning Re-imagined would become available; offering flexible learning as well as badges and certificates.

In September 2018, the NIGP Board formed a highly diversified Credentialing Design Team (CDT). The CDT was comprised of academic professors, Canadian public officials, state and local CPOs, collegial association executives, current and former Board leaders and presidents, young professionals, mid-level professionals, long standing CPPO and CPPB certificants, and NIGP Instructors.

The charge to the CDT was to assist the Board in two areas: (1) defining the inherent challenges of the existing learning and credentialing programs; and (2) recommending an array of options to consider when building a holistic learning and credentialing program. As the CDT began their work, they identified three major challenges to be addressed in a new credentialing system:

- Shortage of qualified public procurement professionals and the need for succession planning
- Failure to transition from practitioner to leader
- Failure to permanently establish procurement as a strategic function

In mid-November 2018, the CDT met in-person to finalize their recommendations.

In late November 2018, the NIGP finalized the recommendations and finalized the credentialing system components.

In February 2019, the NIGP team presented a comprehensive Strategic and Business Plan for the Credentialing System. The NIGP Board adopted the Plan in March 2019.

In April 2019, NIGP hired its Director of Certification who has decades of experience developing non-profit-based certification programs.

In May 2019, NIGP announced its plans for a comprehensive credentialing system.

In June 2019, the NIGP Certification Commission was appointed to set policies and practices related to the NIGP-CPP credential.

In August 2019, NIGP hosted a Pathways Pavilion at the NIGP Forum in Austin to inform members on the structure and benefits of the Pathways program. The first NIGP certificates were issued to individuals who successfully completed the Strategy and Policy Core Certificate program or the Procurement Technology specialization.

In September, the Practice Analysis study was concluded; providing statistical research that informed the NIGP Certification Commission on policies such as eligibility and exam content.

In December 2019, the Commission announced sweeping policies on NIGP-CPP eligibility requirements, exam content and test specifications, test format and delivery, and re-certification provisions.

Is NIGP following best practices for credentialing systems?
Absolutely. The purpose, products, governance structure, policies and practices ... literally everything contained in the credentialing system ... has been reviewed by our credentialing consulting firm.

**Will NIGP seek third-party accreditation of its credentialing system?**

This is ultimately a decision on the NIGP Governing Board based on cost and perceived value. However, it is logical for us to seek third party accreditation of our credentialing system; just as we have sought, and earned, third party accreditation of our educational program from the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET).

Organizations can seek accreditation of their credentialing systems one year after the program is operational. It should be noted that NIGP’s credentialing system has been designed to meet the compliance requirements of ANSI’s ISO 17024 standard. The principal of NIGP’s credentialing consulting firm is an assessor for ANSI’s Personnel Certification Accreditation Program. We hired the best to bring you the best!

**How does this affect the UPPCC?**

*Is NIGP separating from the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC)?*

The introduction of the NIGP-CPP program does not alter NIGP’s long-standing relationship with the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council; and this has been communicated to the UPPCC and our colleagues at NASPO.

NIGP will continue to appoint three professionals to the UPPCC Board of Directors.

NIGP will continue to offer foundational content that aligns with the UPPCC Body of Knowledge. It will continue to develop and offer new content that guides the professional in life-long learning which qualifies for re-certification points, and NIGP will continue to offer a wide range of certification preparation tools – from study guides to flashcards – from self-assessments to the prep courses available online and in-person.

The UPPCC certifications provide an optional pathway to attain the NIGP-CPP; and the NIGP-CPP offers public procurement practitioners choice – not a mandate - in the marketplace.

*What happens to the CPPO and CPPB designations?*

It is our hope that the UPPCC will continue to support the certification and re-certification process for current CPPOs and CPPBs in the foreseeable future. Professionals who endured the rigors of the CPPO and/or CPPB examination deserve to continue their right to maintain the credential with pride and honor. NIGP’s intent is to offer choices for all professionals; including those with a current professional certification. This is what our members have requested.

It is important to understand, however, that the UPPCC holds the intellectual property rights to the CPPO and CPPB brands as an asset; so, while NIGP is hopeful that the Council will continue to certify and recertify CPPOs and CPPBs, this is a decision to be made by the UPPCC Board of Directors.

*Why not continue with the UPPCC and enhance the CPPO and CPPB offerings?*

There are five essential reasons:
1. Learning and credentialing go hand-in-hand. Professionals want to learn and want to be recognized for what they learned. This holistic, integrated approach is best executed through a unified strategy under a single organizational structure; as proven by the Association of Production and Inventory Control Society (APICS), the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS), the Institute for Supply Management (ISM), the National Contract Management Association (NCMA), and the Supply Chain Management Association (SCMA) – all of which offer comparable certifications in the purchasing and contracting marketplace.

2. The NIGP-CPP certification will be more comprehensive in scope (assessing both the application of technical knowledge and the soft, critical skills needed to be successful.

3. The NIGP-CPP certification will focus on behavioral competencies needed to perform on the job rather than the application of knowledge. The certification will go further than what you know – it will also encompass what you do. Competency-based certifications are trending with non-profit associations.

4. The NIGP-CPP certification will be integrated into the other credentialing options offered by NIGP: certificates and specializations. This integration requires unified governance and policies.

5. The customer experience will be enhanced as the member’s learning record is integrated with his/her certification record under a single sign-on and a uniform technology platform. There will be no need to replicate the member profile in two separate systems. And educational contact hours earned in the member’s record in Aspire (NIGP’s Learning Management System) will auto-populate the member’s certification record – avoiding data entry replication.

What are the timelines for implementing Pathways?

The First Certificates were earned in August 2019

The first four modules were bundled into a 2-day course on Strategy and Policy which was first offered as a pre-Forum seminar at the 2019 Austin Forum and is available through Chapter Hosted education or directly to public agencies through a contract training arrangement. Participants taking this course and successfully passing the assessment earned the first Strategy and Policy Certification. (To learn more, see the specific section on Certificates).

The Next Three Certificates

The next series of seven modules were bundled into two additional certificate programs: Planning and Analysis and Sourcing and Contracting. Both certificates were released Fall 2019 and are available through Chapter Hosted Education or directly to public agencies through a contract training arrangement.

The fourth certificate on Warehousing will be available in January 2020.

All remaining modules will be available by June 2020.

The First Specializations were also earned in August 2019

The Institute also introduced its first Specialization - a three-day course on Technology Procurements – as a pre-Forum seminar at the 2019 Austin Forum.
The NIGP-CPP Timelines

The launch of the NIGP-CPP has a longer lead time (available late Spring 2020) for a few reasons:

- **Practice Analysis**
  Recognizable certification programs are reliant on a practice analysis (AKA a job analysis); a research process that determines the certification test specifications, including domains and relative weightings, test formats and delivery mechanisms. Much of this research was performed through member surveys and interviews in August and September 2019; when the NIGP Certification Commission garnered input from more than 1,200 public procurement professionals. The Practice Analysis was the catalyst for defining the eligibility requirements in accordance with ANSI standards.

- **Test Development**
  With the practice analysis completed, test development and standards setting begins in January 2020. It takes about 2 months to write and review the right mix of test questions. We anticipate that this work is completed by the end of February 2020. Preparatory coursework and support materials are completed in March 2020, the first bridging exams are likely released in April 2020 and the comprehensive exam is slated for June 2020.

What happens to the current educational programs offered through NIGP Chapters?

NIGP will continue to offer the in-person two and three-day foundational and specialty courses through the network of NIGP Chapter Affiliates and Contract Training in the foreseeable future. As the market continues to request these courses, NIGP will happily continue to deliver them.

As mentioned in this FAQ, NIGP will also bundle a series of competency modules into one, two or three-day courses for those who enjoy the option of an in-person/classroom experience. Some of these bundled competencies will result in a Certificate; adding to the value of the learning experience. The same scenario applies to the NIGP Specialization offerings. The bottom line: NIGP Chapters will continue to reap the benefit of hosting an expanded number of in-person learning programs while continuing to earn rebates.

Who do I contact for more information?

We are using the Pathways Microsite to capture questions or comments – so please use that function to post your thoughts.

Communications will be especially important in the next 6-8 months as decisions are made by the NIGP Certification Commission. We will broadcast all updates as they come available so keep monitoring your NIGP links including NForm and our social media feeds.

If you wish to speak to someone at the NIGP offices, here are four references:

- For strategy, policy and governance: Rick Grimm, Chief Executive Officer, rgrimmm@nigp.org
- For learning and content: Todd Slater, Chief Content Officer, tslater@nigp.org
FAQs: Professional Certification

What is the new NIGP-CPP certification stand for?

NIGP Certified Procurement Professional

What is the NIGP Certification Commission?

The NIGP Governing Board has established a NIGP Certification Commission that supports the NIGP Board in its strategic and visionary goals related to the professional NIGP certification program developed and administered by NIGP. The Commission independently makes essential certification decisions related to all NIGP certification schemes. These decisions are made without influence by any other individual or business entity within or outside of NIGP.

Purpose and Powers

The Commission is specifically empowered to:

1. Oversee and monitor the objectives, performance and results of the NIGP certification program.
2. Establish and monitor the NIGP certification schemes and scheme-related policies related to: (a) eligibility requirements for certification; (b) eligibility requirements to test; (c) requirements for re-certification; and (d) provisions and criteria for suspension or revocation
3. Provide direction and oversight to the NIGP Certification Test Development Committee, the NIGP Practice Analysis Panel and the NIGP Standard Setting Panel.
4. Address any candidate, credential holder, or volunteer ethics issues as they arise.
5. Serve as the final review board for appeals and disciplinary actions (suspensions and revocations) related to the NIGP certification program.

Independence

The NIGP Certification Commission is an independent body within the NIGP legal, non-profit structure. The Commission is empowered to take actions in accordance with the expressed authority granted by the NIGP Governing Board. The NIGP Certification Commission independently makes essential certification decisions related to all NIGP certification schemes. These decisions shall be made under no influence by any other individual or business entity within or outside of NIGP.
This independent structure within a single non-profit association mirrors the structure followed by APICS, ISM, NCMA, and SCMA where the educational programs are distinctly separate from the certification programs through appropriate firewalls. And this arrangement complies with ANSI standards for professional certification programs. There is a substantial benefit for placing professional certification within the overall strategic mission of NIGP.

**Composition**

The following individuals have been appointed to serve on the inaugural Commission:

- Don Buffum, CPPO, FNIGP: *Commission Chair*. Executive Director, Procurement & Contracts for Mississippi State University
- Carl Bonitto, CSCMP: *Commission Chair-Elect*. Manager of Purchasing and Risk Management Services for Northumberland County, ON
- David Billingsley CPSM, C.P.M.: *Member appointed by FAPPO*. Chief Procurement Officer for the City of Orlando, FL
- Sean Carroll: *Member appointed by NIGP*. Chief Procurement Officer for the New York State Office of General Services
- Stacy Gregg, CPPO, CPPB: *Member appointed by NIGP*. Procurement Manager for the University of South Carolina
- Etta Henry, CPPO, CPPB: *Member appointed by NIGP*. Director of Procurement Services for Old Dominion University, VA
- Barbara Johnson, CPPO, CPPB, MPA: *Member appointed by NIGP*. Director of Procurement for the State of Ohio Department of Corrections (retired)
- Zulay Vincenty Millan, CPPO, CPPB, FCCM: *Member appointed by NIGP*. Assistant Manager for the Procurement Division at Orange County, FL
- Jack Pellegrino, CPCM: *Member appointed by CAPPO*. Director of Purchasing and Contracting for San Diego County, CA
- Christina Pryor, CPPO, CPPB: *Member appointed by NPI*. Purchasing and Materials Manager for the City of Chandler, AZ
- Annie Teav: *Member appointed by NIGP*. Senior Contract Specialist for Multnomah County, OR
- Dr. Adam Williams, Ph.D.: *Voting Academic Advisor*. Director of the Master of Public Administration Program and Assistant Professor of Public Administration for the University of Illinois, Springfield
- Dr. Mohamad G. Alkadry, Ph.D.: *Non-Voting Academic Advisor*. Professor and Public Policy Department Head for the University of Connecticut

**What is the Framework of the NIGP-CPP?**

The Commission determined that the primary audiences for the NIGP-CPP are mid and senior level leaders in public procurement.

The Commission adopted the following principles to guide the program development:

- The NIGP-CPP must be perceived as valuable by public procurement professionals, their supervisors and their employing organizations (e.g., district superintendents, finance officers, etc.). Employers should be able to use the NIGP-CPP as a benchmark for finding qualified employees.
- The NIGP-CPP must value competency over years of experience.
• The NIGP-CPP must serve a significant portion of NIGP members and the public procurement community.

• The NIGP-CPP must be flexible and adaptable to remain current and relevant. It must also be rigorous and meaningful.

• The NIGP-CPP must be comprehensive to include enabling competencies (i.e., soft skills) - not just technical competencies.

• The NIGP-CPP must advance the NIGP mission and strategic priorities.

• The NIGP-CPP must follow credentialing best practices and be legally defensible.

What was the Basis for Determining Eligibility and Exam Content?

The Institute has prioritized accreditation by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a key objective for its professional certification program. ANSI accreditation requires that the program meet stringent global standards of ISO 17024 – an international standard which specifies criteria for personnel certification bodies. To this end, the standards and credentialing best practices of ANSI and ISO 17024 require research and ensuing data to inform the decision-making body on the certification scheme to include eligibility and exam content.

The Institute appointed a Practice Analysis Panel of 12 senior practitioners and stakeholders to spearhead the development of a comprehensive Practice Analysis Survey. The Commission released the Panel’s survey in August/September 2019 and received over 1,200 responses. A survey methodology was used to assess the frequency with which mid and senior level leaders in public procurement perform a range of responsibilities and the perceived importance of those responsibilities; in essence, validating what tasks professionals should be able to perform and the knowledge they need to accomplish those tasks. The data gleaned from this research informed the Commission on decisions related to eligibility (initial certification and re-certification) and exam content. Key conclusions from the survey include the following:

• Most of the responsibilities listed in the survey are performed by at least 75% of the public procurement professionals who responded.

• Professionals who have fewer years of experience in the profession, and those who have not attained a formal degree or certification, are less likely to perform many of the outlined responsibilities than their more experienced or educated peers.

• Many highly experienced and highly performing public procurement professionals reported that they do not have a bachelor’s degree.

• Only 19% of surveyed public procurement professionals believe that a bachelor’s degree or higher formal qualification is critically important as an eligibility requirement for the NIGP-CPP certification.

What are the NIGP-CPP Eligibility Requirements?

The Practice Analysis research study concluded that relevant work experience was of equal importance to formal education. Therefore, the Commission has established six different pathways for eligibility based on a combination of formal education and relevant work experience:
Pathway A  
Graduate degree related to public administration, public policy, supply chain, procurement, or economics  
Plus 2 years (24 months) of relevant work experience involved with procurement (public or private, purchaser or seller) within the past 10 years

Pathway B  
Bachelors or higher degree (any discipline) and a graduate level certificate in public administration, public policy, supply chain, or procurement  
Plus 3 years (36 months) of relevant work experience involved with procurement (public or private, purchaser or seller) within the past 10 years

Pathway C  
Bachelors or higher degree (any discipline)  
Plus 4 years (48 months) of relevant work experience involved with procurement (public or private, purchaser or seller) within the past 10 years

Pathway D  
Two-year post-secondary diploma (or) associate degree (any discipline) (or) a NIGP Public Procurement Associate designation (see the FAQs for NIGP’s Certificate Program for more details)  
Plus 6 years (72 months) of relevant work experience involved with procurement (public or private, purchaser or seller) within the past 10 years

Pathway E  
No Post Secondary Diploma  
Plus 8 years (96 months) of relevant work experience involved with procurement (public or private, purchaser or seller) within the past 10 years

Pathway F  
Current holder of the Certified Public Procurement Officer (CPPO) or Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB) designation; or recently lapsed within one year of the expiration date of the certification  
Proof of formal education or relevant work experience is not required for candidates seeking the NIGP-CPP via Pathway F

For all education standards, global equivalents are acceptable.  
“Relevant work experience” is defined as experience that aligns with one or more of the competency statements contained in the NIGP-CPP exam. This is explained further under Exam Content and Application Fees.  
Education and relevant work experience are the only two requisites for the NIGP-CPP. There are no requirements for procurement coursework/training. Candidates will have the flexibility to sharpen their skills and competencies without any mandate; including NIGP’s learning program which aligns with the Public Procurement Competency Framework. NIGP is releasing new competency modules via the Institute’s Certificate Program in December 2019, January 2020, and March 2020; and all learning modules will be available in-person or online by June 2020.
What is the Exam Content for the Comprehensive NIGP-CPP Exam?

The NIGP-CPP exam is a competency-based exam that aligns with the competencies embedded within the seven major focus areas from the Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF). The research produced through the Practice Analysis determined the percentage of the exam that will relate to each of the seven focus areas.

Note: Professionals who have earned their CPPO and/or CPPB credential through the UPPCC are eligible to also earn their NIGP-CPP credential via an abbreviated process through Pathway F. The application process is condensed and the requisite exam (referred to as a 'bridge') only covers the test content within the NIGP-CPP that was not assessed in the CPPO and/or CPPB. Refer to a separate FAQ section for current or aspiring CPPO and CPPB holders for details.

Within each focus area, the Commission has defined specific competency statements that will be assessed through the exam:

*Focus Areas (7) NIGP-CPP Competency Statements*

**Strategy (10%)**
- Create procurement’s strategic goals, objectives, and policies in alignment with the entity-wide strategic plan
- Choose and implement strategic improvements for the procurement function
- Manage efficiency and effectiveness in achievement of procurement’s mission
- Identify, evaluate, and implement social and environmentally sustainable procurement policies and other procurement priorities

**Policy, Legislation and Program Oversight (14%)**
- Engage the legislative process to further procurement interests
- Ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations from the various branches and levels of government
- Create, implement, and maintain fair, accessible, and transparent policies and procedures that align organizational behaviors, priorities, and professional procurement values
- Advise the entity on how to resolve procurement-related issues
- Manage stakeholder expectations by communicating requirements, responsibilities, and outcomes
- Create, lead, and provide holistic procurement program oversight

**Planning and Analysis (11%)**
- Analyze information from multiple sources to create a procurement plan to meet the overall entity’s goals
- Analyze current market trends and the impact on procurement planning
• Identify opportunities for strategic contracting initiatives
• Use procurement priorities and best value considerations in addition to cost, price, and spend analysis methods to inform decisions
• Assess risk and implement appropriate risk management approaches
• Determine most advantageous sourcing, solicitation, and award method

**Sourcing and Solicitation (14%)**

• Determine the most favorable contract structure and content
• Manage all stages of the selection process (from receipt to award)
• Develop a negotiation strategy that maximizes advantages for all involved
• Manage a protest consistent with the law and the entity’s policy
• Manage the issues distinct to international business

**Contract Administration (11%)**

• Establish policies and procedures for contract administration
• Establish policies and procedures to promote acceptable contract performance
• Establish policies and procedures to address contract performance issues
• Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of asset management, warehousing, and logistics programs
• Recommend options to dispose of assets to maximize residual value

**Leadership (26%)**

• Create and foster a professional, ethical culture
• Create policies and procedures to support an ethical workplace
• Create a culture and system to foster continuous improvement
• Provide procurement professional development opportunities
• Provide educational opportunities related to procurement best practices to all (non procurement)
• Engage stakeholders in development of entity key performance indicators to achieve change implementation
• Communicate programs, policies, and procedures in support of entity’s continuous advancement
• Develop criteria for evaluation of internal and external relationships and procurement’s performance
• Align procurement change with entity goals
• Recruit, hire, develop, retain, and promote procurement professionals
• Identify and address challenges and conflicts

Business Principles and Operations (14%)
• Establish a continuous improvement plan
• Identify how changes in global, national and regional economies will affect operations
• Develop and manage a thriving and resilient workplace
• Select and implement technology to further procurement goals
• Obtain and manage budgetary resources to further procurement goals
• Develop and implement a communication plan to enhance the image of the procurement function

What is the NIGP-CPP Exam Format?
The Commission has determined that the NIGP-CPP will be a two-part, modular exam. The bridge exam will likely constitute one of the modules. A modular exam provides the flexibility for a candidate to either take both modules or just one of the modules in a single setting. It also means that a candidate’s test scores will be based on each module; if the candidate passes Module A but is not successful in Module B, she/he only needs to retake the Module B exam.

The Commission has also determined that it will use local testing centers administered by a third party and exams will be offered more frequently throughout the year rather than segmented into two test administration periods.

The Commission has not yet determined its policies with respect to re-testing when a candidate fails to achieve a passing score. Those policies would include the waiting period between exams and re-testing fees.

What is the application process and related fees to earn the NIGP-CPP?

The application process
The NIGP-CPP Certification Handbook and application for the NIGP-CPP program should be available mid-February 2020. The Commission is dedicated to a single, simplified application process that verifies the eligibility of the candidate through minimal but critical documentation. The application will be online and supporting documents (such as copies of diplomas, certificates, certifications, and/or transcripts conferring a degree) will be uploaded by the candidate as PDF attachments.

Candidates who are eligible for the bridge exam as CPPO or CPPB certificants will simply submit proof of their current certification status. They do not need to verify formal education or relevant work experience. For these candidates, there are no application fees and no initial testing fees through June 2021. However, if the candidate retakes the exam, fees will apply. Additionally, these candidates can take advantage of complimentary NIGP-CPP online prep courses through June 2021.
The Commission is committed to the premise that years in a position do not necessarily prove the expertise of the individual; and that competency-based work experience is a better measure of one's ability and future success. Therefore, candidates who are not eligible for the bridge exam will demonstrate their relevant work experience via an Experience Verification Form. The amount of work experience (measured in months) is determined by the Pathway selected by the candidate. For example, those candidates who have earned a master's degree in public administration, public policy, supply chain, procurement, or economics (Pathway A) need to demonstrate relevant work experience over a 24-month period within the last ten years.

For work experience to be 'relevant' for eligibility, each work experience must align with a minimum of 20 of the 43 competency statements identified in the NIGP-CPP exam content. And the experience must be earned within the past ten years. Using the Experience Verification Form, the candidate will self-attest which competency statements within the total of 43 that she/he performed (or is currently performing) within each work position; and this information must also be verified by the direct supervisor or Human Resources representative via the Form. There are no minimum percentages of time that must be dedicated to the competency statement for it to qualify as relevant work experience. This activity takes the guesswork out of the application process since a candidate performs his/her self-assessment, obtains verification by a specified third-party, and instills confidence in her/his eligibility before submitting an application and paying fees. In fact, the candidate does not submit official or working position descriptions with her/his application; but may be required to do so during the assessment process via a trigger audit.

The application fee for comprehensive exam candidates is:

- $150 for NIGP members
- $250 for non-members

Testing fee (initial exam and re-exam) is anticipated to be:

- $100 per testing module with no differentiation between Members and Non-Members. The Commission is currently negotiating testing fees with a third-party test administrator and this will be a pass-through fee.

When can I sit for the NIGP-CPP examination?

The timelines are different for CPPO and CPPB holders seeking the bridge exam.

For those persons taking the full exam (non CPPO or CPPB holders)

At the present time, the Institute plans to make the NIGP certification application available by April 2020 and all NIGP-CPP Certification Prep tools available by May 2020. Prep courses will be available for the classroom or online experience. The first exams should be available in June 2020 and the first certifications conferred during the 75th Annual Forum Diamond Jubilee in Chicago in August 2020.

For those persons taking the bridge exam (CPPO or CPPB holders)

NIGP plans to make the NIGP certification application available by February 2020 and all NIGP-CPP Bridge Certification Prep tools available by March 2020. Prep courses will be available for the classroom or online experience. The first bridge exams should be available in April 2020 and the first certifications conferred during the 75th Annual Forum Diamond Jubilee in Chicago in August 2020.
What are the differentiators between the NIGP-CPP and the current CPPO and CPPB Programs?

The Differentiators

There are differences that distinguish the NIGP-CPP from the current CPPO and CPPB programs and these differentiators should guide potential candidates as they consider their pathway to attaining the NIGP certification:
• The NIGP-CPP is a competency-based exam based on the Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF) which focuses on knowledge, skills and performance.

• The NIGP-CPP is based on 43 competency statements within seven areas of focus within the PPCF.

• The NIGP-CPP eligibility provides optional pathways for candidates who neither have a post-secondary diploma nor an associate’s, bachelor’s or advanced degree.

• The NIGP-CPP does not require procurement coursework or training as an eligibility requirement.

• The NIGP-CPP is a two-part modular exam.

• The CPPO and CPPB are knowledge-based exams based on the Public Procurement Body of Knowledge (PPBOK).

• The CPPO and CPPB are based on 88 knowledge statements within six major domains. The knowledge statements are the same for the CPPO and CPPB; although the weighted percentages are different.

• The CPPO requires a bachelor’s degree while the CPPB requires a 2-year post-secondary educational program or two additional years of work experience.

• The CPPO application requires 96 contact hours of procurement-related coursework/training and the CPPB application requires 72 contact hours.

• The CPPO and CPPB are single exams.

All three exams focus on public procurement’s technical aspects: sourcing, negotiation, contract administration, and supply management. However, the emphasis placed on these 4 PPBOK domains is different. These 4 domains make up:

• Only 25% of the NIGP-CPP exam.

• Half of the NIGP-CPP exam will cover three focus areas: Strategy (10%), Business Principles and Operations (14%) and Leadership (26%).

• NIGP-CPP re-certification is every three years with a minimum requirement for 36 Continuous Education Hours.

• NIGP will automatically upload all CEHs earned through all NIGP educational programs (seminars, learning modules, webinars, virtual conferences, the annual Forum, etc.) to the candidate’s secure certification portal; saving time and effort in tracking CEHs.

• 55% of the CPPO exam and 72% of the CPPB exam.

• The UPPCC requires re-certification every five years with a requirement for a minimum of 45 contact hours; and there are options to earn points in continuing education and professional development, employment experience in public procurement (1 contact hour per year) and professional contributions in procurement (20 contact hours minimum).

• The UPPCC requires manual, online data entry via MyUPPCC for each activity earning re-certification points.

Once I receive notification that I passed my exam, can I use the designation after my name?
Absolutely, with pride! Jane Doe NIGP-CPP

For the NIGP-CPP designation, will the certificants be issued a physical, hard copy certificate or physical document (i.e. to frame or provide to future potential employer, etc.) as well as a digital certification?

Yes, on demand via the individual’s profile in Aspire (NIGP’s Learning Management System) and available 24/7. Certificants will be able to independently download a PDF of their certificate or certification for framing or documentation.

What are the re-certification requirements to maintain my NIGP-CPP?

Once a candidate achieves his/her NIGP-CPP certification, he/she will need to recertify the credential every three (3) years.

During the re-certification period, the individual must earn a minimum of 36 Continuing Education Hours (CEHs). Individuals may earn up to 25% of their CEHs via teaching, instructing or developing public procurement content. While the Commission values volunteer leadership and service to the profession, the purpose of NIGP-CPP re-certification is to ensure that certificants remain current on best practices and trends and are committed to continuous learning. Therefore, CEHs are limited to continuing education only.

NIGP will automatically upload all CEHs earned through NIGP’s Learning Management System (Aspire) into the NIGP-CPP certificant’s record. The candidate can enter additional CEHs at any time by accessing her/his online NIGP-CPP portal.

The candidate is not required to remain employed in the procurement profession at the time of re-certification but must confirm adherence to the NIGP-CPP Code of Ethics.

The Commission has not yet determined the fee structure for re-certification, but it will likely be introduced in the $125 to $150 range. The Commission is also discussing the parameters for issuing a NIGP-CPP Retired Certification. A lifetime NIGP-CPP Certification will not be available because the Commission believes that continuous education is critical for those still practicing in procurement.
FAQs for Current CPPO and CPPB Certificants and for Candidates preparing to sit for their CPPO or CPPB Exam

I have my CPPO or CPPB or have plans to attain my CPPO or CPPB certification in the near future. Are there benefits for seeking the NIGP-CPP through Pathway F?

Access to the Bridge Exam

Yes, the Commission will offer a bridge for those holders of the UPPCC’s CPPO or CPPB designations who wish to attain their NIGP-CPP Certification. To be eligible for the bridge exam, candidates must submit a copy of their certification at the time of application which reflects either active status or lapsed status within one year after the expiration date on the certificate. At present, the bridge will be available through 2024. A bridge from other professional certifications may be considered in the future.
Purpose of the Bridge Exam

In general terms, the key differences and weighted percentages between the CPPO, CPPB, and NIGP-CPP Certification, as defined in the domains and focus areas, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain/Focus Area</th>
<th>CPPO</th>
<th>CPPB</th>
<th>NIGP-CPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Administration</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Administration</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Management</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Procurement Planning</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Legislation and Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Principles and Operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the bridge exam is to differentiate between these programs by assessing candidates on competency and knowledge statements incorporated into the NIGP-CPP exam which were not included in the CPPO and CPPB exams. This requires the Commission to perform a gap analysis (currently underway) between the CPPO and CPPB program and the NIGP-CPP program. The outcome of the analysis will set into motion the content of the bridge exam including whether a different exam will be established separately for the CPPO and CPPB holders. That decision should be made by the Commission in February 2020.

The preliminary gap analysis, based on the 43 NIGP-CPP competency statements, reflects the following – consistent with the premise that more than half of the NIGP-CPP is based on new content and competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NIGP-CPP Focus Area</th>
<th># Technical Statements</th>
<th># Covered in CPPO/CPPB</th>
<th># New to NIGP-CPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy (10%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Legislation (14%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Analysis (11%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing (14%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Administration (11%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership (26%)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Principles (14%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am currently preparing for the CPPO or CPPB exam. What should I do?

Stay the course! Continue to study for your exam and successfully complete the eligibility and examination requirements so you earn your CPPO or CPPB certification.

**NIGP Support**

NIGP will continue to support your efforts by providing educational offerings that align with the UPPCC’s Body of Knowledge and test domains. Those educational offerings will continue in the foreseeable future – at least through June 2020. And NIGP will continue to provide certification prep tools to aid your studies – from self-assessments and flash cards to prep courses online and in the classroom. NIGP is offering the CPPO and CPPB prep courses as pre-Forum seminars this August in Austin. NIGP will continue to provide these certification prep tools through at least the Fall 2019 UPPCC test administration period; perhaps further depending on demands.

*Leverage your CPPO or CPPB to bridge to the NIGP-CPP*

For persons holding a current CPPO and/or CPPB, NIGP will be offering the option of a unique bridge to the NIGP-CPP designation – so earning your CPPO and CPPB reduces the requirements for earning your NIGP-CPP. The bridge option is discussed below.

*Are current CPPO and CPPB holders required to attain the NIGP-CPP?*

Absolutely not! These are stand-alone certifications that demonstrate mastery over the Public Procurement Body of Knowledge (UPPCC) and competency in the seven areas of focus captured in the Public Procurement Competency Framework (NIGP). NIGP is providing options for CPPO and CPPB holders to consider. (The differences and value will become clearer once the NIGP Certification Commission finalizes the certification scheme in November 2019). CPPO and CPPB certificants will continue to display their designations with pride; just as many C.P.M. holders display their ISM credential alongside the UPPCC credentials.

*If have both a CPPO and a CPPB. How do I bridge?*

If you hold dual certifications as a CPPO and a CPPB, you may have the additional option of bridging either via the CPPO or the CPPB; assuming there are different exams for the CPPO and CPPB. This is yet to be determined through a gap analysis. If the analysis shows substantial differences between the CPPO and CPPB as compared to the NIGP-CPP, there will likely be two bridge exams. There is no need to make this decision now. Wait until the ‘gap analysis’ is performed in January 2020 and then decide which bridge exam to take based on the exam content and your professional comfort level.
Why can’t current CPPO and CPPB certificants be ‘grandfathered’ to the NIGP-CPP without taking an exam?

In order to achieve third-party ANSI certification, NIGP must demonstrate that its NIGP-CPP certificants have mastered the competencies of the NIGP-CPP exam. Assuming that there will be ‘gaps’ between the CPPO, CPPB and NIGP-CPP testing domains, a CPPO or CPPB would need to participate in an assessment to demonstrate that mastery; and the only way to do this is through an abbreviated exam.

Is NIGP treating CPPO and CPPB certificants the same?

Yes, except for the possibility of a different bridge exam. The bridge from the CPPB to the NIGP-CPP will be based on gaps between the CPPB domains and the NIGP-CPP competencies. The bridge from the CPPO to the NIGP-CPP will be based on gaps between the CPPO domains and the NIGP-CPP competencies.

How will NIGP help me to bridge to the NIGP-CPP?

Just as the Institute has helped countless professionals with their UPPCC certification journey, we will develop the same tools to help you be successful in earning your NIGP-CPP. We will offer unique preparatory classes (both in-person and online) for the bridge. We will offer study guides. And based on our capacity and market demands, we may also develop a self-assessment tool as well as flashcards.

What will the bridge cost?

The NIGP Governing Board is deeply committed to helping current CPPO and CPPB holders bridge to the new NIGP certification if they desire. Therefore, the Board has determined:

- Free access to online NIGP-CPP prep courses through June 2021
- Waived application fees ($0) through June 2021
- Waived exam fees for the initial exam ($0) through June 2021. Candidates who need to re-test will pay an exam fee to be determined.

Effective July 2021, the bridge application fee will be $150, and the examination fee will likely be $100 per test module. (It is anticipated that the bridge exam will encompass a single module).

How long will I have to bridge?

The NIGP Governing Board plans to have the bridge exams available through June 2024. This gives current CPPO and CPPB certificants four years to earn the NIGP-CPP ... essentially to coincide with a holder’s re-certification period.

How many "free" attempts will an individual have to pass the Bridge exam?

One. However, a candidate can re-take the Bridge exam multiple times by paying the exam fees (these fees are a pass-through from the local/regional testing center that administers the exam). While the NIGP Certification
Commission still needs to deliberate on policies governing the test administration windows, the plan is to offer the exam multiple times throughout the year (not just twice each year) with a shorter waiting period to re-test. Look for an answer by no later than February 2020.

**Do I have to forego my CPPO or CPPB if I bridge to the NIGP-CPP?**

Absolutely not. You exerted considerable resources and effort to earn your CPPO and/or CPPB designation. Continue to carry your designation with pride. Similarly, we want professionals to publicly display their certifications earned through APICS, CIPS, ISM, NCMA, or SCMA.

**Do I need to re-certify my NIGP-CPP credential?**

Yes, every three years. Please refer to the NIGP-CPP program FAQs.

**I have a lifetime certification from the UPPCC. Are there options to also receive a lifetime NIGP-CPP?**

No, the NIGP Certification Commission will not offer a Lifetime Certification; however, there will be provisions for applying for retired status. Those details are still being deliberated by the Commission. A Lifetime certification is typically a certification that no longer requires re-certification once the candidate completes a significant number of years of work experience and/or years as a certificant. The Commission has affirmed that continuous education is essential for professionals who continue to work (based on data generated through the Practice Analysis; therefore, re-certification will be required as a condition for maintaining the NIGP-CPP until the certificant retires from his/her career.
FAQs for NIGP’s Certificate Program

What is NIGP’s Certificate Program?

Our goal is to provide options and pathways for earning public recognition regardless of whether you are just entering the public procurement profession or are a seasoned professional; and regardless of the role you play (and aspire to play) in your public entity.

We are giving you total flexibility based on what you want or need to learn – and then integrating our credentialing system around that learning to give you the recognition you deserve.

Three levels of certificates

You have options … three levels of certificates to fit your specific professional development goals:

• Level One: Competency Badges
• Level Two: Core Certificates
• Level Three: Designations

These levels are based on the concept of stacking credentials to achieve a higher level of recognition. Therefore, you begin by earning competency badges (level one) that are stacked to earn a core certificate (level two) that are stacked to earn a designation (level three).

Not everyone is seeking a certificate or designation. That’s perfectly ok. This is about choice and pathways. The bottom line: there is a level of publicly recognized credential for everyone who learns and successfully completes the assessment.

What is the difference between a certificate and a certification?

Let’s keep this simple.

The purpose of a certificate is to educate you on specific learning objectives and assess you on the attainment of those objectives. You must participate in learning event(s) and pass an assessment demonstrating achieving of program learning objectives. The result is a certificate that does not expire and has no continuing requirements.

The purpose of a certification is to assess your current education, experience, knowledge and skill. Therefore, you must meet eligibility requirements and pass an examination demonstrating current knowledge and skills as defined in the test content outline. The result is a certification that also requires meeting the ongoing requirements such as continuing education at specified intervals and adherence to the code of ethics.

Certificate = engaging in learning events and successfully completing the assessment; no additional requirements

Certification = meeting eligibility requirements and obtaining a sufficient score on the exam; additional ongoing requirements
Level 1: Competency Badges

What is a competency badge?
A competency badge recognizes your achievement in completing all the learning activities and passing the assessment for any competency module. The assessment component is a critical indicator of success – so a competency badge is not earned until the assessment is successfully completed. The badge is instant and automatic – a way to earn public recognition for achieving the specific competency.

Variety and Relevancy
There will be 33 competencies to choose within the Public Procurement Competency Framework. And within some of the competencies, there may also be two learning levels, if necessary, to reflect the degree of complexity – imagine baseline and manager levels. The Framework is all about the flexibility of aligning the competencies to your current role in public procurement... so you may opt for a baseline level competency badge for Business Management and Continuity while seeking a manager level competency badge for Negotiations.

What are the benefits of competency badges to the professional as well as the CPO or public service manager?
Competency badges achieve several goals:

- Public procurement professionals have no barriers to entry when enrolling in a competency module and can achieve public recognition via the competency badge relatively quick.
- Public procurement professionals can select from among any combination of Framework competencies to align with her/his current and aspirational goals; earning competency badges as each module is completed. For some competencies, separate modules will be available for baseline level and advanced-level learning; providing even more tailored opportunities.
- A public procurement director/manager can develop a customized, professional development plan and pathway for each employee or a group of employees within job functions; aligning the Framework competency modules to a training program based on related roles and responsibilities and the employee. The employee, in turn, will earn competency badges along this pathway.

Are their requisites or barriers for earning a badge?
None. There are no pre-requisites... no educational requirements... no work experience requirements. And there is no application or screening process. You simply complete all the learning activities and pass the assessment for any competency module.

How will I receive the badge?
NIGP will issue you a digital badge directly to your profile in Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.

What is a digital badge?
Digital badges are one of the newer offerings in the education marketplace that blend learning with technology. A digital badge is not only a validated indicator of accomplishment, skill, quality, or interest that can be earned in many learning environments. It is also an easy way for NIGP to issue, and learners to earn and display, badges across the web—through an infrastructure that uses shared and open technical standards. NIGP will employ an open badge system; meaning that you can also digitally display your badges on social media platforms such as LinkedIn using Mozilla Backpack (an enhanced feature of Aspire).

**What will it cost to earn each badge?**

The badge is complimentary and automatic for anyone who completes all the learning activities and passes the assessment for any competency module. However, we do not know the cost of taking a module ... yet.

**Building Out the Competency modules**

NIGP is currently building out each of the competency modules—an arduous process that will continue through June 2020. Not all competencies are alike—and therefore, modules could range from a 30-minute tutorial and assessment to a more intensive learning event that requires multiple hours of engagement and study.

**Pricing based on Contact Hours**

Our plan is to set pricing based on the number of hours needed to achieve the learning results—just as we currently charge different rates depending on whether a course is for 8 hours, 16 hours, or 24 hours. One final comment: the Institute is price-sensitive based on feedback we have received from members. We want to ensure that funding is not a significant barrier to learning. For the fiscal year beginning July 2019, we lowered our pricing for in-person and online learning events by more than 15%.

**Initial bundling for in-person courses**

Initially, we will bundle related competencies into a single two-day course that is offered in-person and online. This helps you achieve four competencies in one setting. The fee for these two-day courses is $425.

**When can I earn a competency badge?**

The NIGP Content Team will roll out the competency modules on a phased basis—with the end game of having all 33 competency modules available by June 2020. Watch for periodic announcements as these learning modules are released.

While all competency modules will be available online, many will be bundled for an in-person learning experience. Keep in mind that some modules are short tutorials (less than an hour) while others could require several hours of engaging activities. By bundling related modules together for a classroom setting, you experience several competencies in a single setting.

The first bundled competency modules have been stacked into certificates that are currently available as an in-person offering:

Certificate in Strategy and Policy Mission, Public Benefit, Advocacy, Placement
- Enabling Regulations and Compliance
- Ethics and Transparency
- Legal Principles

Certificate in Planning and Analysis Requirements Planning and Understanding
- Standardization
- Cost, Price, and Value Analysis

Certificate in Sourcing and Contracting Sourcing and Contracting Methods
- Specification Development
- Evaluation Methods
- Negotiation Strategies

Approximately 60 days following the release of competency modules for an in-person experience, you will be able to take the related learning module online over a two or three-week session.

Do competency badges expire?
No

Will the competency learning modules help with achieving the CPPB/CPPO certifications?
Yes, several of the focus areas in the Public Procurement Competency Framework align with the UPPCC’s Body of Knowledge such as: Planning and Analysis, Sourcing and Solicitation, Contract Administration. These focus areas incorporate 17 of the 33 competencies. Just as the current NIGP core curriculum prepares candidates who are seeking their UPPCC certification, the competency modules under the Framework will do the same – while earning competency badges along the way for instant recognition.

Level 2: Core Certificates

What is the value of a certificate?
A certificate program is traditionally developed to educate individuals in achieving specific learning objectives. Educational institutions (colleges and universities), trade schools, for-profit training organizations, and non-profit professional societies have long been excellent providers of certificate programs based on stakeholder needs.

NIGP will be offering core certificates to reflect the achievement of specific learning objectives anchored in the competency modules.

Depending on your pathway, a certificate may earn you sufficient contact hours when applying for certification. And if you cannot meet the specific eligibility requirements for certification, a certificate provides you public recognition. These are policies to be determined by the NIGP Certification Commission.

What is a Core Certificate?
A Core Certificate is recognition you earn once you achieve all the pre-determined competencies that are stacked into the certificate. The core certificate is an instant, public recognition for achieving specific competencies.
Who decides what competencies are stacked into a certificate?

*The NIGP Content Management Committee*

The NIGP Content Management Committee makes these decisions. The Committee is comprised of NIGP members who are either currently employed by a public sector agency or retired from public service. The Committee may also include industry leaders who have expertise in the discipline that is being considered for a certificate program. Although the inaugural Content Management Committee has been appointed, there will always be future opportunities to share your time, talents, and passion. Your first step is to complete a Volunteer Leadership Application with NIGP.

**Purpose of the Committee**

The key purpose of the NIGP Content Management Committee is to establish policies and practices for NIGP’s certificate and designation programs. This Committee creates new certificates based on recommendations from the NIGP staff, validates topics and related courses to be bundled into a certificate, and issues all NIGP certificates.

**The power of stacking competencies**

Since there are 33 competencies within the Public Procurement Competency Framework, the Content Management Committee can stack individual competencies in almost an infinite number of ways to create certificates. However, it makes most sense to create certificates based on market demand.

**Are their requisites or barriers for earning a Core Certificate?**

None. There are no pre-requisites... no educational requirements... no work experience requirements. And there is no application or screening process. You simply complete all the learning activities and pass the assessment for all pre-determined competency modules that have been stacked by the NIGP Content Management Committee.

**Do I need to take a separate assessment in order to attain the Core Certificate?**

No. Each competency module includes an assessment; so successfully earning the competency badges satisfies any need to pass further assessments.

**If I have previously taken a NIGP course which has a corresponding competency in pathways, will I need to retake the course?**

Yes, if you plan to earn a core certificate. ANSI standards require that an individual take all the related coursework and assessments in order to earn the certificate. Remember... the certificate is an option; not a requisite.

**How will I receive the Core Certificate?**

The Certificate will be displayed as a digital badge that will be issued by Content Management Committee directly to your profile in Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.
What will it cost to receive the Core Certificate?

Nothing. The certificate is complimentary for anyone who earns all the pre-determined competency modules.

Can I get a printed copy of the Core Certificate?

Yes, you will be able to print certificates directly from your profile on Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.

When can I earn a Core Certificate?

The first Core Certificate is the Strategy and Policy Certificate that stacks four competencies into a single two-day course:

- Mission, Public Benefit, Advocacy, Placement
- Enabling Regulations and Compliance
- Ethics, integrity, transparency
- Legal principles

The fee for this 2-day course is $425.

This is an in-person offering that can be replicated based on demand. NIGP Chapter affiliates may wish to make this offering available to their members as a chapter-hosted seminar. Regardless of the venue, participants who take the course and pass the assessment will earn the Strategy and Policy Certificate.

In addition to the Strategy and Policy Certificate, we rolled-out two additional core certificates in the fall 2019:

- Core Certificate in Planning and Analysis - $425 fee (2-day course)
- Core Certificate in Sourcing and Contracting - $595 fee (3-day course)

By early 2020, the competency modules aligned with these three certificates will be available online. Stay tuned.

Do competency badges disappear when I earn a core certificate?

No, badges stay on your member record. However, they are no longer relevant; simply because the certificate includes those competencies. Like the competency badges, the certificates will be digitized – meaning that anyone can view the digital certificate to see what rigor of competencies are included in the certificate.

Do Core Certificates expire?

No
Are the core certificates a building block for specializations?

No, these programs stand-alone with no requisites or entry. Anyone can take any of the competency learning modules and can opt to earn stacked competencies and attain a core certificate. Take only what you need. Similarly, there are no prerequisites for specializations; so, you don’t have to earn a core certificate before enrolling in a specialization.

Can I stack my own competency badges into a Core Certificate?

No, this is the authority of the NIGP Content Management Committee; consistent with standard policies and practices they establish. However, you can recommend new core certificates to them for consideration.

Can a public agency independently stack competency badges into a Core Certificate?

No, this is the authority of the NIGP Content Management Committee. However, the Committee will definitely engage with public agencies who wish to create agency-based recognition of learning pathways for their employees; using the very flexible series of competency modules within the Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF). Imagine credentialing where a core certificate is co-branded by NIGP and the public entity to reflect the achievement of competencies.

Level 3: Designations

What is the value of a Designation?

A designation distinguishes you as having demonstrated a strong grasp of learning or competencies in multiple functional areas (often referred to as macro learning). Because designations require extensive coursework, only an elite number of professionals will likely achieve a designation. By doing so, a designation is intended to identify and distinguish the culmination of an achievement.

A designation also enhances credibility of those professionals engaged in specific roles within public procurement. Additionally, a designation may be a suitable pathway for individuals who cannot earn a certification due to eligibility requirements.

Designations may positively impact eligibility requirements for the NIGP-CPP certification. For example, professionals earning the NIGP Public Procurement Associate designation can qualify for NIGP-CPP certification under Pathway D. This reduces the time that a candidate must demonstrate relevant work experience if she/he holds a high school diploma or GED by 24 months.

How is a designation earned?

A designation is automatically earned once you earn all the pre-determined certificates that are stacked into the designation. The designation is an instant, public recognition for achieving specific competencies.
Who decides what certificates are stacked into a designation?

The NIGP Content Management Committee establishes policies and practices for NIGP’s certificate and designation programs. This Committee creates new designations based on recommendations from the NIGP staff, validates topics and related certificates to be stacked into a designation, and issues all NIGP designations.

Are their requisites or barriers for earning a designation?

None. There are no pre-requisites... no educational requirements... no work experience requirements. And there is no application or screening process. You simply earn all the pre-determined certificates stacked by the NIGP Content Management Committee.

Do I have to take an examination in order to earn a designation?

No. Since you successfully complete assessments for each competency badge that is stacked into a certificate and further stacked into a designation, you have already demonstrated assessment at the micro-level.

What will it cost to receive the designation?

Nothing. The designation is conferred for anyone who earns all the pre-determined certificates.

How will I receive the designation?

The designation will be displayed as a digital badge that will be issued by Content Management Committee directly to your profile in Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.

Can I get a printed copy of a designation?

Yes, you will be able to print a designation (in the form of a certificate) directly from your profile on Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.

When will the first designations become available?

The first designation will be a Designated Public Procurement Associate and is currently available. This designation will represent a stack of three certificates:

- Certificate in Planning and Analysis (available October 2019)
- Certificate in Sourcing and Contracting (available November 2019)

The Designated Public Procurement Associate qualifies under Pathway D for the NIGP-CPP certification; translating into 24 fewer months of relevant work experience for candidates who do not have a two-year post-secondary diploma or an associate’s degree,
Are there plans for other designations?

Yes, we may offer an on-line designation program for suppliers based on demand. We are still researching whether there is significant interest. There have also been preliminary discussions on a potential designation for contract officers and/or for warehouse and inventory control personnel.

Will there be an immersion course that fast-tracks the competencies included in a designation?

Yes, we plan to pilot a bootcamp that covers all the competency modules that lead to the Designated Public Procurement Associate. The bootcamp will be offered as an intensive 4-day, in-person course or an 8-week online course. The registration fee is $1,295 – about a 10% savings – regardless of whether you take the course online or in person. The combined fees to take courses for each of the three certificates is $1,445.

Does the designation translate into an acronym that I can display behind my name?

No, however you should use the title of the designation next to your name on official letters and business cards:

Jane Doe
Designated Public Procurement Associate

Do core certificates disappear when I earn a designation?

No, badges and certificates stay on your member record. However, they are no longer relevant; simply because the designation includes those related certificates and competencies. Like the competency badges and certificates, the designations will be digitized – meaning that anyone can view the digital certificate to see what rigor of competencies and certificates are included in the designation.

Do Designations expire?

Yes. Due to the comprehensive nature of the designation reflecting the public procurement practice, designations will likely have an expiration date. However, they will likely have a renewal option that requires individuals to take limited coursework to update their knowledge, skills and competencies on the newest public procurement practices and standards. These determinations will be made by the Content Management Committee.

Can I stack my own certificates into a designation?

No, this is the authority of the NIGP Content Management Committee; consistent with standard policies and practices they establish. However, you can recommend new designations to them for consideration.

Can a public agency stack certificates into a designation?

No, this is the authority of the NIGP Content Management Committee. However, the Committee will definitely engage with public agencies who wish to create agency-based recognition of learning pathways and unique
designations for their employees based on the competency modules within the Public Procurement Competency Framework (PPCF). Imagine credentialing where a designation such as the “Designated City of ___ Professional Contract Officer” is co-branded by NIGP and the public entity.
FAQs: Specializations

What are specializations?

Specializations are one of three distinct offerings within the NIGP Credentialing System.

In many professions, a professional will initially learn and practice the foundational aspects of the profession and then specialize in a specific discipline and skill through advanced learning and education to practice within a particular purpose or area of knowledge. As an example, in medicine, physicians specialize in areas such as sports medicine or oncology.

Within the public procurement network, specializations are specific learning programs that are focused on emerging competencies that are valuable to public procurement professionals based on the roles they play within the public entity. Specializations stand apart from the certificate and designation program and are not designed to be stacked or combined with any other learning program.

What is the value of specializations?

Specializations address the need for life-long learning by offering advanced knowledge and skill development within a specific procurement specialty. Since these are optional learning programs that target a very specific procurement function, the learning is laser-focused and concentrated.

Specializations are a value to seasoned professionals who are seeking specialized learning to either enhance their overall learning portfolio or prepare them for new roles within the public entity. Specializations are also a value to CPOs and public service managers who seek advanced level competencies to specific employee groups.

Like the other NIGP credentialing system offerings, specializations include a public recognition that validates advanced knowledge and competency and distinguishes the professional as having expertise in a specific procurement function.

What are some examples of a specialization?

- Technology Procurements (currently available)
- Public Construction Procurement (available August 2020)
- Supplier Diversity (future)
- P-Card Programs (future)
- Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery (future)
- Federal Grants Compliance (future)
- Sustainability (future)

Who decides when specializations should be offered?

Our NIGP Content Team continually assesses member needs based on research analysis and member feedback.

A key function of an educational program is to anticipate what knowledge, skills and competencies are needed today and in the near future and to build learning events that prepare public procurement professionals to successfully...
perform those competencies. Those learning events may be developed by NIGP’s Content Team in partnership with subject matter experts and/or third-party educational providers with expertise in the specialization.

Our Content Team will engage the NIGP Content Management Committee in the decision-making process since the Committee is responsible for issuing the Specializations to individuals once they complete the learning program and successfully pass the assessment.

**Are there requisites for earning a Specialization?**

Possibly. The Content Management Committee, in partnership with the NIGP Content Team, will need to determine whether baseline knowledge contained within one or more competency modules of the Public Procurement Competency Framework is required before an individual register for a Specialization.

As an example, a specialization in construction procurement may require that the individual understand the fundamentals of sourcing before registering for the specialization. The best way to demonstrate this would be through a competency badge or a certificate that incorporates sourcing; or obviously, a NIGP-CPP certification. Each specialization will have different requisites depending on the importance of baseline knowledge.

**Do I need to take an assessment in order to earn the Specialization?**

Yes. At the conclusion of the learning event there will be an assessment to ensure that you can apply the learning and competency. You need to successfully complete the assessment in order to earn the specialization.

**How will I receive the Specialization?**

The Specialization will be displayed as a digital badge that is issued by Content Management Committee directly to your profile in Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.

**Can I get a printed copy of the Specialization?**

Yes, you will be able to print specialization certificates directly from your profile on Aspire – NIGP’s Learning Management System.

**When can I earn a Specialization?**

NIGP intends to offer one new specialization every year – with a launch to coincide with the annual NIGP Forum and Products Exposition.

The first Specialization concentrates on Technology Procurements and is currently available as an in-person, three-day seminar.

The second specialization will concentrate on Public Construction Procurements and will be offered in-person as a three-day, pre-Forum seminar in Chicago in 2020.

We will continue to offer all specializations until the market demand is no longer sustainable.
Specialization courses offered in-person at the annual Forum can be replicated based on demand. NIGP Chapter affiliates may wish to make this offering available to their members as a chapter-hosted seminar. Regardless of the venue, participants who take the course and pass the assessment will earn the Specialization.

**What will it cost to earn the Specialization?**

Each specialization will have its unique attributes that require intensive learning and multiple hours of engagement and study. Our plan is to set pricing based on the number of hours needed to achieve the learning results – just as we currently charge different rates depending on whether the course is for 8 hours, 16 hours, or 24 hours.

The registration fee for the first specialization on Technology Procurements is $595.

**Do Specializations expire?**

Yes. They will likely have an expiration date; but this is yet to be determined by the NIGP Content Management Committee. Since specializations are typically focused on emerging procurement topics, it is likely that they can be renewed if additional coursework is taken to update knowledge, skills and competencies on the newest trends and best practices centered on the specialization.