

Core Competency: 1**Experience/Artifact/Work Product:** Participating in Public Meetings & Opelika Design Guide
What I Learned? Or Prompt?

The first NASPAA competency is to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to leading and managing in public governance. In relation to my internship with Opelika Main Street, I had several experiences and projects that I worked on that fulfilled this competency. For example, part of this competency is to deliver professional presentations and prepare and deliver reports for the workplace and citizen audiences.

During my time with Opelika Main Street I was tasked with creating a Downtown Opelika Design Guide, which focuses on rules and regulations. I created this guide for workplace and citizen use. It will eventually be posted online to be used as a quick guide to the rules and regulations that organizations and businesses must abide by when making changes in the downtown area. This work product directly applies to this first competency, as I was preparing and delivering a report and presentation for large and small citizen and workplace audiences. By creating this guide, I was challenged creatively and professionally.

Core Competency: 2**Experience/Artifact/Work Product:** Experience – City Meetings**What I Learned? Or Prompt?**

The second NASPAA competency revolves around participating and contributing to the public policy process. Through my internship, I was able to listen in on several meetings with city officials and citizens alike and listen to how they worked through certain policies. Specifically, when I was working on the Design Guide for Opelika, I had to look into how Opelika Main Street submits proposals for change and how they use the policy process to get their work done. For example, Opelika Main Street was applying for grants for new benches downtown. This project required permission and acceptance from difference groups and had to jump through several different policy hoops and I was able to experience the process first hand.

Core Competency: 3**Experience/Artifact/Work Product:** Experience – Gathering Data on Local Businesses in Database**What I Learned? Or Prompt?**

The third NASPAA competency is focused on analyzing, synthesizing, critical thinking, solving problems, and making decisions. I demonstrated these qualities in several different ways during my time at Opelika Main Street. For example, in order to create the Design Guide, I had to find the appropriate information and regulations, synthesize what I was reading, and make decisions on what was most important to highlight to citizens. I also had the experience of gathering and inputting local business data into the Main Street database. This task required me to reach out to many businesses, gather data, and try to find as much information as I could online. Since many businesses were closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, I was met with the problem of having no one to contact, so I had to find as much as I could online and then try every avenue possible of communicating to gather the necessary data.

Core Competency: 4**Experience/Artifact/Work Product: Experience – Gathering Public Opinions and Perspective
What I Learned? Or Prompt?**

The fourth competency of NASPAA involves articulating and applying a public service perspective. Opelika Main Street does a fantastic job of involving the public and gathering opinions for city plans, so I got to experience this first hand and learn from the techniques they use. For example, Opelika Main Street held a visioning and public mapping meeting where they invited all city officials, organizations, businesses, and local citizens to come and give their input on Opelika. They got to discuss what they love about Opelika, what they would change, and what they would like to see there in the future. Opelika Main Street took this information and later held a downtown plan presentation where they took some of these ideas and incorporated them into the plan. They keep the citizens and who they are planning for in mind in everything they do, and all decisions being made.

Core Competency: 5**Experience/Artifact/Work Product: Interacting and Working with Different People
What I Learned? Or Prompt?**

The last NASPAA competency is all about interacting productively with a diverse workforce and citizenry and Opelika Main Street was the perfect place for me to experience this. Not only did I have the opportunity to work with a diverse group of interns, but I was able to watch the executive director work with a very large and diverse group of people from Opelika. He had meetings with many people from different cities and place to get their input on Opelika's plans as well. He was able to truly develop an understanding of what Opelika is all about and what the people there want by respecting the opinions of everyone he came across. He served as a great example for me to follow in my future career where I will be working with a diverse group of people, as well.