

My APPA Young Professional Experience

By Nicole Sanderson, University of Washington, Bothell

Building my network outside of my home institution was a skill I struggled with when I first entered the facilities profession. Early on, I recognized the benefit of having a diverse network of facilities professionals when I wanted to bounce an idea off of someone else or to call on for advice when dealing with a challenging issue on campus. You will hear the phrase “we are all in this together” a lot in the facilities profession, and building your own network is important. For me, getting involved in APPA was one of the easiest ways to build my own network, and I’d encourage you to get involved in one of the following ways:

1. **Get involved locally:** In my area, I started attending the Northwest APPA (NWAPPA) local workshops. It was a quick, easy, and local way to meet other AYP’s in my immediate area and learn more about emerging facilities topics.
2. **Join a committee:** In my home region of PCAPPA, our board has many committees you can join to get your feet wet in getting involved and creating your own network. If you have an interest in research, professional development, and awards and recognition among others, joining a committee is a great way to start. Reach out to a board member in your local region to find out more about how to get involved.
3. **Attend APPA U:** Offered twice a year, the APPA U program is an immersive 4-week commitment that teaches you about the different aspects of facilities management. Because attendees come from all over the US, Canada, and Mexico, it also gives you an opportunity to meet AYP’s from outside your home region. Use your breaks to network and swap business cards.
4. **Sign-up as an AYP:** Being a young professional presents a unique challenge in facilities and signing up to participate in the AYP program has been incredibly beneficial to me. If you are already signed up, encourage those in your network to join as well.

I have found that taking the initial step in getting involved in APPA is the hardest part, but reach out to your fellow AYP’s or regional board members to get started. I’ve found that I have gotten so much more out of getting involved in APPA than I have put in. Once you start getting involved and building your network, I can promise you won’t want to stop!