



A Guide
to Getting
Started in the
**Organizing &
Productivity**
Profession

In a world where technology is becoming more complex, schedules more hectic, and "stuff" more abundant, many people and businesses look to Organizing and Productivity Professionals to help bring order and efficiency to their lives. It's a great time to dive in and become part of this growing profession. Starting on your journey to a successful career doesn't need to be a daunting process. With over 3,500 members, The National Association of Productivity & Organizing Professionals (NAPO) can point you in the right direction and support you at every stage of your career.

What do Professional Organizers & Productivity Consultants do?

Professional Organizers

help their clients achieve function, order, and clarity by creating organizing systems and structure around objects, spaces, and data.

Productivity Consultants

help their clients achieve their goals, effectiveness, and priorities by creating organizing systems and structure around time, energy, and resources.

Professional Organizers and Productivity Consultants assist clients with home office organization, time management, corporate efficiency, specialty projects (from organizing photos to cataloging inventories), writing (whether blogs, books or lectures), virtual organizing, working with hoarding or chronically disorganized clients, clients with ADHD, downsizing, and moving and relocation—there are virtually no limits when it comes to what you can pursue within this profession.

Some professionals begin by focusing on residential clients (de-cluttering and organizing closets, pantries, garages, etc.), while others work with entrepreneurs, small business owners or corporate clients.

Is this the right career for me?

Whether they work full- or part-time, most Organizing and Productivity Professionals are sole-proprietors—meaning that it is important to have an entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to learn the skills necessary to run and market a successful, service-based business. The individuals who are the most successful are not in it just to make closets and filing cabinets look pretty. They are champions of personal transformation and strive to help their clients change their processes and lives in a positive manner.

Many clients can be reluctant and/or embarrassed to seek services and allow a stranger into the most private aspects of their lives or are going through a stressful life transition when they look to Professional Organizers for help. This requires patience, compassion, empathy, and flexibility; along with being an effective communicator and teacher and above all being a good listener.

What type of education or training do I need?

There are no specific educational or training requirements needed to become a Professional Organizer or Productivity Consultant. The background of NAPO members varies from interior design to event planning, project management, business administration, or even human resource management.

While success in this profession requires expertise in organizing and productivity principles, it also requires strong business acumen. As a sole-proprietor or consultant, you'll need to develop competency in running a service-based business or know professionals who are versed in the legal requirements for creating a company, contracts, taxes, and billing.

It would also be helpful to outsource such projects as accounting or even marketing if you are not strong in these areas. Sometimes it is more efficient to find a professional to help instead of wasting hours trying to understand book-keeping or website creation.

Do I need to continue in my education once I join NAPO?

The most successful professionals strive for continuous professional development and seek out training and continuing education opportunities. After some time in practice, some choose to sit for the Certified Professional Organizer® Examination. CPOs earn their credential by proving they embody the founding principles, adhere to a Code of Ethics, and pass the Board of Certification of Professional Organizers® (BCPO®) examination. Note: To be eligible to sit for the exam, individuals will need to document 1,500 of paid work experience.

How can NAPO help me?

NAPO understands the unique challenges of achieving success as a solo-entrepreneur or small business owner operating within the Productivity & Organizing professions. Many of our 3,500+ members have been in your shoes and were unsure of where and how to start their businesses.

"NAPO provides education, camaraderie, and the opportunity to grow beyond one's wildest imagination. I joined NAPO thinking I would be a Professional Organizer for a few years. I never dreamed it would become my life-long passion and profession as a leader and Productivity Coach. It is because of NAPO and my NAPO colleagues that I have been able to successfully sustain and stay engaged in my own business for over 18 years."

—Ellen Faye, CPO
NAPO Member since 2002



Learn. Apply. Succeed.



It is with those challenges in mind, that NAPO developed continuing education and online coursework through NAPO University, credentialing through The Board of Certification for Professional Organizers, and presents an annual conference featuring industry experts presenting the latest topics and trends in the industry.

For those just starting out, we recommend:

Professional Practices Coursework

Taught by experts in the industry, NAPO University's Professional Practices Coursework comprises of three introductory courses covering the fundamentals of the profession, including basic organizing theory, specific "how to" skills for the hands-on work that organizers do, and an introduction to the NAPO Code of Ethics, which includes provisions for ethical behavior towards colleagues, the public, and clients.

If you wish to advance to Professional Member Status, you must successfully complete the Professional Practices Coursework.

Business Resources Track

The Business Resources Track, offered by NAPO University, provides new or seasoned business owners with the fundamental knowledge and tools necessary to start and grow a successful and sustainable business. Designed to fill in any gaps in entrepreneurial knowledge, course topics include marketing, administration, client relationships, strategic planning, and the like.

NAPO Annual Conference

Held each spring in locations throughout the United States, the NAPO Annual Conference is the world's largest gathering of Organizing and Productivity Professionals. Join over 500 of your peers to learn from industry experts, network with like-minded professionals while gaining a fresh perspective on your business. You can customize your experience by choosing from breakout sessions, hands-on workshops, categorized by Education Levels and Session Tracks.

NAPO Membership

When you join NAPO, you are joining over 3,500 of your organizing and productivity colleagues who subscribe to our Code of Ethics, dedicated to working at the highest standards and have a passion for advancing our industry. Once you advance to Professional Member status, you will be listed in our Professional Directory, which allows the public to search for professionals in their area.

In addition to receiving discounted pricing on the resources listed on the previous page, top member benefits include:

Building Your Network

Connect with other professionals through our online member community (POINT) for invaluable resources, including peer-to-peer referrals, advice, and industry insights.

Join one of 30 chapters nationwide for local events, education, and volunteer opportunities or the virtual chapter if you aren't able to find a local chapter in your area.

Gaining Exposure & Credibility

The NAPO logo distinguishes our members and indicates their commitment to our standards and Code of Ethics. You can use the NAPO logo on your marketing materials, business cards, website, email signature and more.

Developing Professionally

Access discounted and free, members-only seminars and courses through NAPO University, including Specialist Certificate Programs. Members also receive discounts on Certified Professional Organizer® Exam Preparation.

** Note: All new members join NAPO as a Provisional Member. In order to advance to Professional Member status, you must pass the Professional Practices Coursework offered through NAPO University or hold a current CPO certification. Discounted memberships for full-time students attending an accredited college or university is available.*

“Joining NAPO both on a national and local level was similar to joining my local chamber of commerce. It was that necessary first step to legitimizing my business. The benefits that have come from membership have been far and above what I ever envisioned. Everything from when I first started out, getting that opportunity to subcontract with a veteran organizer, but also, finding peers that I connect with.”

—Emily Parks
NAPO Member since 2007