

Gaining Insight and Resources through the AICPA Not-for-Profit Certificate Program

At CapinCrouse, our core values include a commitment to professional excellence and lifelong learning. This enables us to provide insight and support that empowers our clients to achieve their mission.

So when the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) launched a Not-for-Profit Certificate Program last year, several of our managers enrolled. While CapinCrouse only serves nonprofits and our team has a strong background in this area, the certificate program is enhancing the managers' existing knowledge and providing them with new resources for assisting clients.

Rounding Out Our Tool Belt

The certificate program has two levels and offers professional development specifically for those who work for and with nonprofit organizations. Certificate I provides a comprehensive, foundational overview of not-for-profit organizations' unique financial needs. Certificate II is an intermediate/advanced program covering more complex accounting and financial reporting, tax compliance, governance, and assurance issues.

"The program has helped to supplement and round out our tool belt for serving nonprofits — and not just on the accounting and audit side, but operations and tax as well," said Chris Gordon, who serves as senior manager in the firm's San Francisco office.

Both Chris and Mark Hepner, an audit manager in the Indianapolis office, said that the nonprofit tax information provided in the program was helpful, including details on the various tax status types. Mark noted that while CapinCrouse has a dedicated nonprofit tax team, the information gained in the program helps to make him a well-rounded auditor with a better understanding of the tax nuances clients face.

"The information about governance issues has also been helpful," Mark said. "It's given me the perspective to better understand what the boards and audit committees at our

clients care about, and tailor my focus on the areas that are most important to them."

Kelsey Brooks, an audit manager in the Denver office, has found the program information useful in her work, including material on fair value and programmatic investments. She also said the program has given her a better understanding of the accounting issues clients deal with daily. "Many times we are looking at things from a high level when we're doing an audit, but we don't always get into the finite details our clients are working with," Kelsey said. "I've gained a better understanding and am able to come alongside clients when they are determining how to handle certain accounting areas well."

The certificate program is enhancing our existing knowledge and providing new resources for assisting clients.

Resources to Assist Clients

The managers also noted that the program has given them resources they can use in serving clients. "We've been able to use guides, transcripts, and other resources provided through the program to assist clients with specific issues," Chris said.

All three also said they would recommend the certificate program to those working in accounting or finance at nonprofit organizations. "I think this is a great program for clients. It would be particularly helpful for those who have come from a for-profit background and want to learn what makes nonprofits unique from for-profits," Chris observed.

Mark noted that the program would give clients a more thorough understanding of the results and recommendations of their audits. “It would also help clients to see how everything fits together, especially from a financial reporting perspective,” he said. “The information gained in this program would help some of our clients better understand the intricacies of their own financial statements, including how all the numbers tie in and the reason behind certain disclosures. Ultimately, seeing the big picture of how everything flows in the financial statements can help them prepare ahead of time for questions we might ask,” resulting in a streamlined audit process.

“The program is really convenient,” Kelsey added. “Rather than having to schedule a class, I can work through the materials when I have a free hour or two. And I can test my learning through the exams. I’m not just listening — I’m applying the information in real-time.”

Visit the AICPA website to learn more about the [Certificate I](#) and [Certificate II](#) programs. You can also learn more about CapinCrouse’s full range of audit and assurance, nonprofit tax, and consulting services on [our website](#).

About CapinCrouse

As a national full-service CPA and consulting firm devoted to serving not-for-profit organizations, CapinCrouse provides professional solutions to organizations whose outcomes are measured in lives changed. Since 1972, the firm has served mission-focused not-for-profit organizations, churches, and higher education institutions by providing support in the key areas of financial integrity and security. With a network of offices across the nation, CapinCrouse has the resources of a large firm and the personal touch of a local firm. Learn more at [capincrouse.com](#).

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