

OVERVIEW

Profession Ready.

Closing the skills gap for early-career CPAs. An AICPA-led initiative shaping how employers, educators, and professional bodies prepare the next generation of accounting talent.

WHY THIS, WHY NOW

Workforce readiness at the early-career level has become a pivotal challenge as the business environment grows more complex and technology continues to reshape how CPAs work. The **Profession Ready Initiative** is designed to identify the skills early-career CPAs need to succeed today, pinpoint where gaps exist, and offer practical solutions that can be applied by employers, educators, and professional bodies alike.

The goal: make sure CPAs entering the profession are prepared to adapt to emerging technologies like AI and thrive across public accounting, business and industry, government, and nonprofit organizations. This work is spurred by direct requests from the profession and reinforced by the AICPA's **Rise2040** findings on long-term workforce transformation.

The initiative will produce a research-based view of early-career CPA skills and competencies, regularly updated to reflect changing conditions. The AICPA will then develop and curate resources for academic institutions and support employers in offering targeted learning solutions, serving as a foundational resource for firms, educators, and other stakeholders transforming the CPA talent pool.

WHAT WE'LL DISCUSS AT THE EDUCATORS CONFERENCE

01

Professional Competencies

Communication, critical thinking, collaboration, adaptability, professionalism.

02

Technical Competencies

Accounting knowledge, business acumen, foundational technical ability.

03

Technology & AI

AI tools, data analytics, automation, tech-enabled problem-solving.

04

Looking to 2030

The hard and soft trends you're watching. What needs to change.

This is not about CPA licensure. It's about understanding how the technology-driven shift in the profession is changing the skills early-career CPAs need, and giving stakeholders the resources to develop the future talent pool.

HOW THE RESEARCH WORKS

The AICPA has convened an **advisory group** of representatives from firms of all sizes, business and industry, state CPA societies, academia, and regulators to ensure a broad, balanced perspective. A **third-party research firm** is conducting a comprehensive review of job descriptions, firm training and competency models, academic curricula, and related resources through the first half of 2026.

The initiative will engage stakeholders across the profession through focus groups, interviews, and surveys to inform the research, validate emerging themes, and shape final recommendations.

WHY YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Input from practicing CPAs, educators, and learning experts across Indiana is essential to understanding the real-world skills needed for success. **The Profession Ready Initiative is for the profession and should reflect your experiences.** Your perspective as an educator, what you see in your classrooms, what employers tell you, where your graduates struggle, is exactly what this work needs.

WHAT'S AHEAD

01 H1 2026 Research review, surveys, focus groups	02 LATE 2026 Analyze inputs; validate emerging themes	03 2027 Exposure draft for public comment	04 LATE 2027 Final recommendations and resources launched
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CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION



Profession Readiness: Skills, Capabilities & Mindsets for What's Next

May 7, 2026 | 1:30–4:30 p.m. | Happy hour to follow
Cinderwood Event Center, Indianapolis, Ind.

Featuring Durrant Dunn, Partner, Bennett Thrasher LLP & Profession Ready Initiative Advisory Group Chair

An interactive session introducing the Profession Ready framework, organizing thinking around technical skills, human skills, and adaptability across career stages, and inviting attendees to reflect on where gaps exist between current preparation and future needs.



SCAN TO RSVP
AGENDA &
REGISTRATION

TOPIC 1

01

Professional Competencies

Communication, critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, adaptability, professionalism.

Discuss these questions as a group. Capture your best ideas on the post-its. Use the space below for personal notes, questions to raise, or examples you want to remember.

- 1** What professional competencies are you intentionally developing in your program?
- 2** What gaps are you hearing from employers or seeing in your graduates?
- 3** What's working well? What's been challenging?
- 4** How have these expectations changed in recent years?

TOPIC 2

02

Technical Competencies

Accounting knowledge, business acumen, industry-specific skills, foundational technical ability.

Discuss these questions as a group. Capture your best ideas on the post-its. Use the space below for personal notes, questions to raise, or examples you want to remember.

- 1** Beyond core accounting courses, what technical competencies are you prioritizing?
- 2** Where do students seem underprepared when they graduate?
- 3** What have you added or changed recently based on employer feedback?
- 4** What technical skills are hardest to develop in the classroom?

TOPIC 3

03

Technology & AI

AI tools, data analytics, automation, software proficiency, tech-enabled problem-solving.

Discuss these questions as a group. Capture your best ideas on the post-its. Use the space below for personal notes, questions to raise, or examples you want to remember.

- 1** How are you integrating technology and AI into your courses?
- 2** What technological competencies do students need before graduation?
- 3** What barriers do you face in teaching these skills?
- 4** What are you hearing from employers about technology expectations?

TOPIC 4

04

Looking to 2030

The hard and soft trends you're watching. What's coming. What needs to change.

Discuss these questions as a group. Capture your best ideas on the post-its. Use the space below for personal notes, questions to raise, or examples you want to remember.

1 How do you expect the competencies students need to change by 2030?

2 What curriculum changes are you planning or considering?

3 What will be most challenging to adapt?

4 What support or resources would help you better prepare students?

