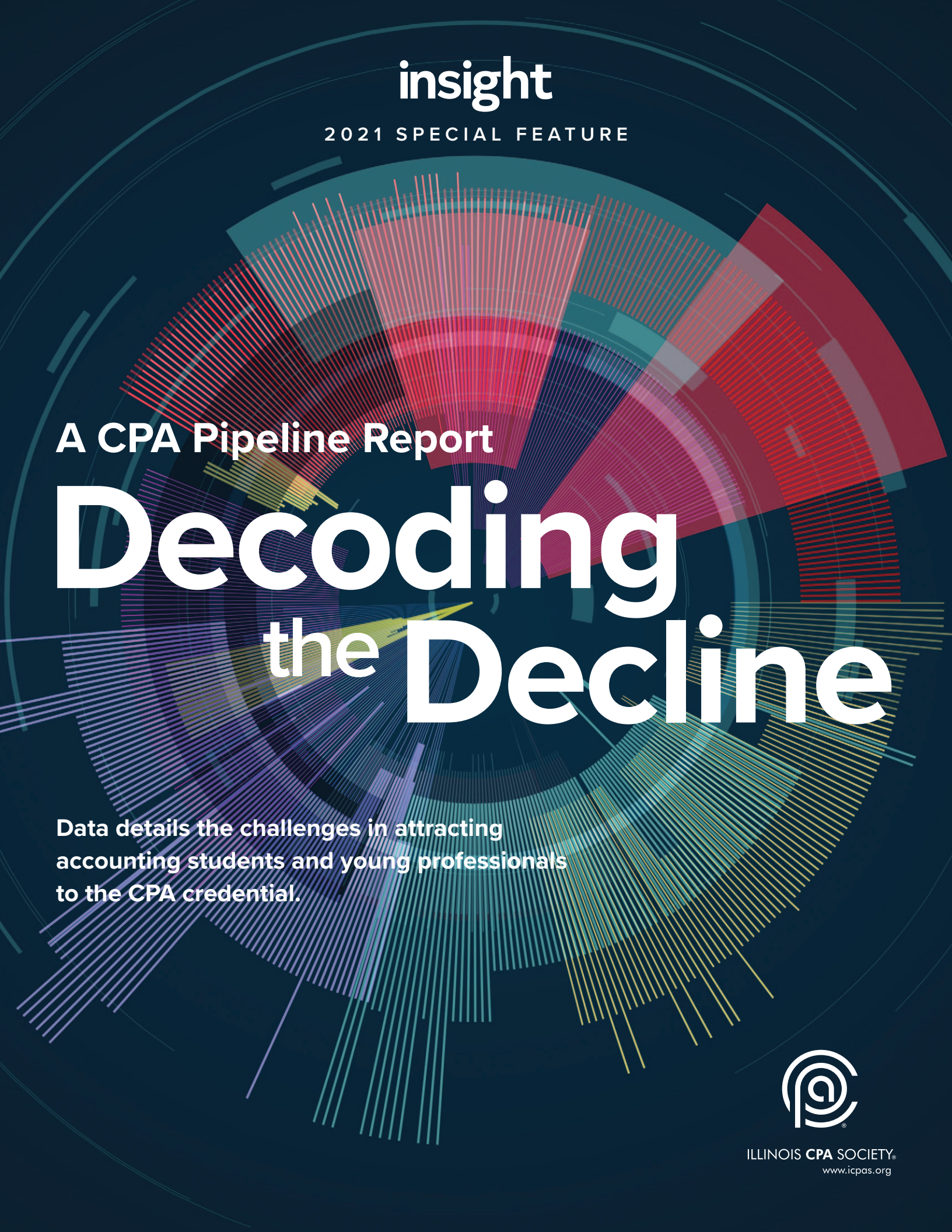




insight

2021 SPECIAL FEATURE

A CPA Pipeline Report

Decoding the Decline

Data details the challenges in attracting accounting students and young professionals to the CPA credential.



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY®
www.icpas.org

ABOUT US

Founded in 1903, the Illinois CPA Society is one of the largest state CPA societies in the nation, with the core mission of “enhancing the value of the CPA profession” through meaningful and convenient education, timely and relevant information, influential advocacy, and countless opportunities to make powerful professional connections.

The Illinois CPA Society serves an extraordinary community of more than 22,600 accounting and finance professionals in a variety of CPA and non-CPA roles positioned throughout the public accounting, corporate finance, not-for-profit, consulting, education, and government sectors.

insight

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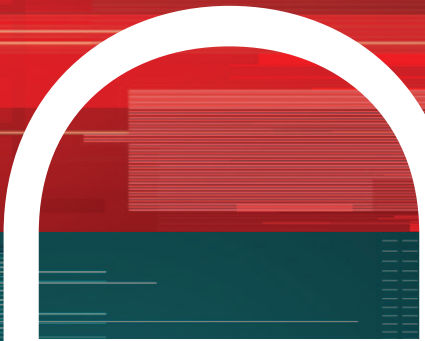
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Making Sense of Sliding Statistics

Is the CPA credential slipping behind in the race for relevance?

“A stagnating CPA pipeline is a threat. It’s an issue that will only get worse and grow more troubling without action.”

I delivered that warning in our 2016 Insight Special Feature, “Pipeline Disruption: The Search for Solutions to the Weakening Supply of CPAs.” Five years later the issue has, in fact, grown worse and more troubling.

Earning the CPA credential has historically been one of the most notable ways to establish a professional identity and exhibit a high level of competence in the accounting profession, yet we are witnessing a nationwide decline in not just new CPAs but also accounting program enrollments.

According to the most recent AICPA Trends Report published in 2019—a comprehensive biennial report tracking the supply and demand of U.S. accounting graduates—projected bachelor’s, master’s, and Ph.D. accounting enrollments were down 4 percent, 6 percent, and 23 percent in 2018, respectively, and the number of new CPA exam candidates hit a 10-year low. The AICPA suggests the continued declines are being driven by “both economic conditions and an expansion of the alternatives available” to potential accounting students, who are “opting to enter or remain in the workforce in lieu of pursuing an advanced accounting degree or to pursue other avenues for advanced education.” It is also widely acknowledged, though rarely discussed, that less than half of all accounting graduates ever sit for the CPA exam—and even fewer ever pass it.

The 2019 AICPA Trends Report also reported declining demand for new accounting graduates, with U.S. public accounting firms reducing accounting graduate hires by 11 percent. While not a troubling statistic on its own, it builds on a downtrend. Combined, the AICPA’s last two Trends Reports paint a dire picture—an approximate 30 percent slide in the hiring of new accounting graduates by public accounting firms. Meanwhile, their non-accounting recruits made up 31 percent of all new graduates hired—a 55 percent increase over prior levels.

Compounding the CPA pipeline’s troubling outlook is the waning presence of CPAs at the most visible and influential level of corporate finance—the CFO. In “Why You Don’t Need to Be an Accountant to Be a CFO,” the Wall Street Journal’s Mark Maurer highlights that just 36 percent of CFOs at the 1,000 largest U.S. public companies were CPAs in 2019, which is the lowest figure in the six years Korn Ferry has collected the data. Maurer reports: “Executives and recruiters trace this evolution to the aftermath of the global financial crisis, when companies increasingly wanted strategy-focused CFOs who would promote transparency and operational changes to spur growth and guard against threats. That was a change from the years after the

2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act, when companies—under pressure to improve their financial reporting—often picked chief accounting officers as their finance chiefs.” Clearly, corporate America does not think of CPAs as “strategic.”

I suspect these trends may continue, and I am not alone. When the Illinois CPA Society held its fall 2019 strategic planning meeting with its board of directors and senior staff, they came to the consensus that there will be significantly fewer CPAs in the next five-to-seven years.

As I have cautioned before, the CPA profession is facing a pace and type of change unlike any it has experienced before—the rules of the race are literally being rewritten by technological, economic, and social change, and we are falling behind. We are at risk of losing talent, influence, and opportunity. A large population of CPAs will be retiring. Artificial intelligence and robotic process automation, among other technologies, will forever change accounting, audit, finance, tax, and more. The ways services are provided to clients and companies, and the ways companies and firms are staffed, are shifting dramatically. Client and company expectations of their strategic business advisors are changing. And COVID-19 has only accelerated many of these changes and growing challenges.

We steadfastly believe the CPA credential and the CPA profession are in a race for relevance, and the time to act is now.

Many in and close to the CPA profession tend to make various anecdotal assumptions about what really influences the ebb and flow of the CPA pipeline: The 150-credit hour requirement is the biggest barrier; the CPA exam is too hard and outdated; earning the CPA credential takes too much time and costs too much money; other credentials have become more meaningful. None of these factors are new to the landscape. The truth is there have always been challenges that accompany becoming a CPA, and there have always been a variety of career paths and credentials for accounting students and professionals to pursue. So, why has interest in the CPA credential seemingly driven off a cliff in recent years? We must get away from supposition. We must ask those who can definitively answer why, so that is what we did.

With input from various regional and national stakeholders, we developed a survey targeted toward accounting students, graduates, and professionals under the age of 35—including CPAs and non-CPAs—with the aim of gaining insight into what is truly driving the decline in individuals pursuing the CPA credential and understanding why so many accounting students and young professionals either do not finish the CPA exam or never take it at all.

The responses we received were as diverse as the 3,102 survey participants. I believe we succeeded in validating some common

assumptions and disproving others, while also revealing some themes we can use to better communicate the value of the CPA credential. However, I must acknowledge that this survey is likely just the starting line for deeper research—while we received a strong response from CPAs and others planning to earn the credential, we need to better understand the mindsets of accounting students and young professionals who decided not to complete the CPA exam and who do not plan on becoming CPAs at all. From this initial survey, we identified that they are not pursuing the CPA credential because they feel they can be successful in their anticipated or chosen careers without it and ultimately believe any value the CPA credential holds is outweighed by its lack of relevance to their personal endeavors and the time commitment necessary to obtain it. We also learned that they do not see the CPA credential as having value or relevance to their careers; they do not see the return on investment; they do not see their employers or prospective employers supporting or requiring it; and they see other credentials or specialties as being more valuable to their careers. But why is that? It used to be that if you earned an accounting degree, earning the CPA credential was the given next step regardless of career paths or time commitments.

Adding to the challenges of bringing more people into the CPA pipeline are the facts that the likelihood of becoming a CPA drops dramatically after age 22; many respondents do not have an interest in pursuing a credential at all; and accounting, auditing, and tax preparation are the words most associated with the CPA credential, further narrowing the credential’s scope and attractiveness.

As the survey findings shared in this report show, reversing the CPA credential’s downtrend will not be without its challenges. The race for relevance is faster and more competitive than ever. Our hope is that the firsthand insight gleaned from our survey respondents (versus our own suppositions) will aid us in fulfilling our organization’s mission of “enhancing the value of the CPA profession” and help all stakeholders in their efforts to develop effective strategies for both promoting the CPA credential and ensuring its sustainability and relevance for many generations to come. 🙏



Todd M. Shapiro

Todd M. Shapiro
President and CEO, Illinois CPA Society
To share your thoughts, email me at shapiro@icpas.org.

Top-Level Highlights

Respondents

The survey—which was deployed on Sept. 29, 2020 throughout Illinois and with national stakeholders—was targeted toward accounting students, graduates, and professionals under the age of 35, including CPAs and non-CPAs, and attracted 3,102 respondents and achieved an 81.5 percent complete response rate (2,527 completions). Respondents revealed unique perspectives across demographics, including age, gender, race, employment, education, and commitment to the credential. Although 88 percent of respondents identified themselves as either being a CPA, in the process of becoming a CPA, or planning on becoming a CPA, valuable insights were also gathered from the groups of those who started the process but decided not to complete the CPA exam, who do not plan on becoming a CPA, and who are unsure about becoming a CPA. A strong student response was also received, with 600 students participating in the survey.

Challenges

By and large, the most faced or anticipated barrier to becoming a CPA cited by respondents is the time commitment needed to study for and pass the CPA exam. In fact, workload time commitment was by far the top reason for deciding not to complete the CPA exam by those who started the process but did not complete the exam. Importantly, when breaking out responses from the individuals who do not plan to become CPAs, we gained the invaluable insight that their top reasons for not pursuing the CPA credential included not seeing value or relevance to their careers, not seeing the return on investment, their employers or prospective employers do not require it, and other credentials or specialties are more valuable to their careers. Contrary to popular belief, the costs associated either with obtaining the additional credit hours to meet the educational/licensing requirements or preparing for and taking the CPA exam were not the top barriers cited among any respondent category.

Perceptions

A key goal of this survey was to understand how accounting students, graduates, and young professionals value the CPA credential itself and if it is perceived to provide personal value to them. As expected, we clearly validated that the CPA credential's perceived value directly aligns with one's interest in becoming a CPA. More than 95 percent of respondents who are CPAs, are in the process of becoming CPAs, and are planning on becoming CPAs rate the credential as valuable or very valuable. Encouragingly, 86 percent of respondents who are still unsure about becoming CPAs view the credential as valuable or very valuable. And, surprisingly, the CPA credential is even acknowledged as being valuable or very valuable among those who started but did not complete the CPA exam (65 percent) and those who do not plan on becoming CPAs (68 percent). Respondents who see little or no value in the CPA credential feel they can be successful in their anticipated or chosen careers without it and ultimately perceive that any value the CPA credential holds is outweighed by its lack of relevance to their personal endeavors and the time and costs required to obtain it. Of further concern is the finding that 51 percent of all respondents have not obtained nor plan on pursuing other credentials—this was equally measured among respondents who do not plan on becoming CPAs (50 percent).

Influencers

Contrary to the common belief that an employer or prospective employer is the leading influencer on an accounting student's or young professional's decision to pursue the CPA credential, most respondents (53 percent) cited "self" as their primary influencer. As suspected, employer/prospective employer (39 percent) was validated as a significant influencer, which was closely followed by college professor (33 percent). It is worth noting that educators did outrank employers among respondents who plan on becoming CPAs and who are still unsure about becoming CPAs. Also challenging common belief was the fact that a higher-than-average salary was not identified as a top factor in deciding whether to become a CPA. Instead, career advancement opportunities earned the largest response, which was followed by greater marketability. In addition, we found a clear correlation between respondents either working or preferring to work in public accounting and deciding to pursue the CPA credential. Interestingly, though, just 27 percent of all respondents see themselves spending most of their careers in public accounting.

Survey Process and Demographics

To achieve the survey’s goal of gaining a deeper understanding of the perceptions and value drivers that separate those who decide to pursue the CPA credential early in their careers from those who do not, we made intentional efforts to target accounting and finance students, graduates, and professionals—including CPAs and non-CPAs—under the age of 35. In addition to seeking participation by Illinois CPA Society members fitting these criteria, we also asked regional and national stakeholders to pass along and encourage participation in this survey. We also made intentional outreach efforts to seek responses from individuals who are not interested in or unsure about becoming a CPA. Even though those audiences were harder to reach, it was important to see what we could learn from them. We engaged Association Management Center Consulting Services to conduct this market research.

Survey Metrics



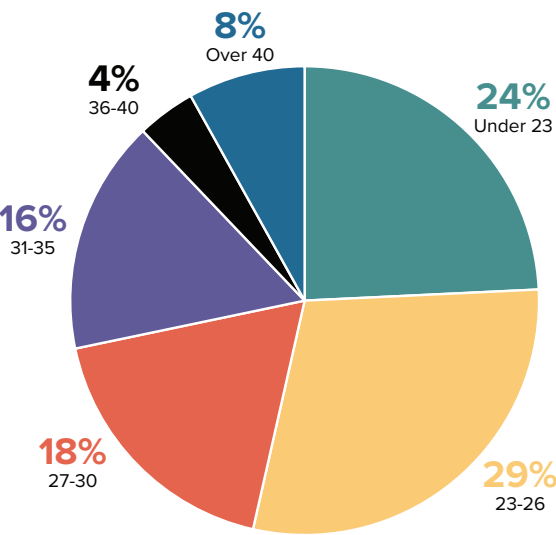
*Total may be higher due to pass-along distribution.

Survey Demographics

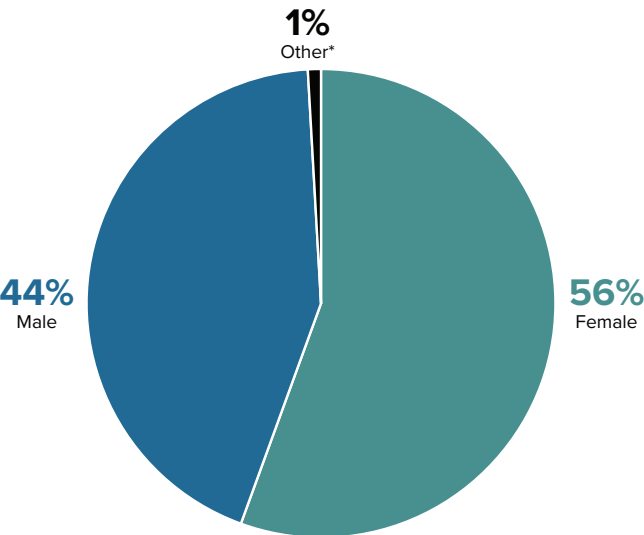
Respondents revealed unique perspectives across demographics, including age, gender, race, employment, and commitment to the credential. A key demographic question used to distinguish and analyze responses was “Are you planning on becoming a CPA?” Possible selections included:

I am a CPA
I am in the process of becoming a CPA
I have not started the process, but I plan on becoming a CPA
I started the process but decided not to complete the CPA exam
I have not started the process, and I do not plan on becoming a CPA
I am unsure about becoming a CPA

Age

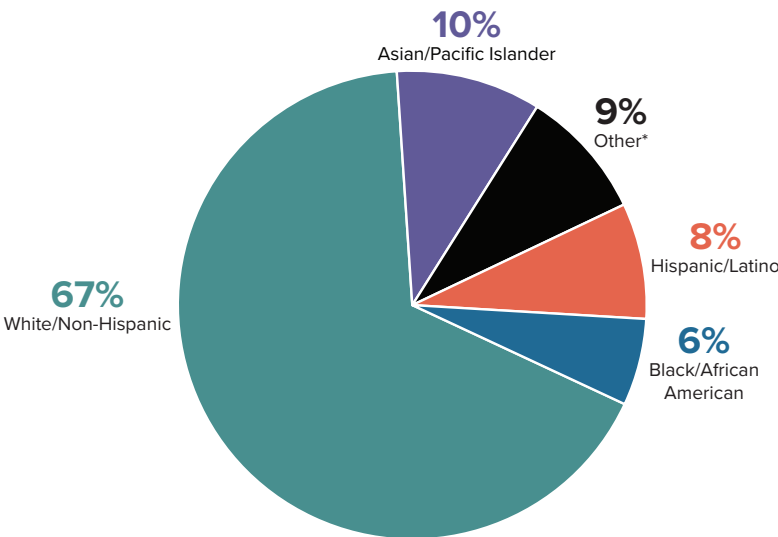


Gender

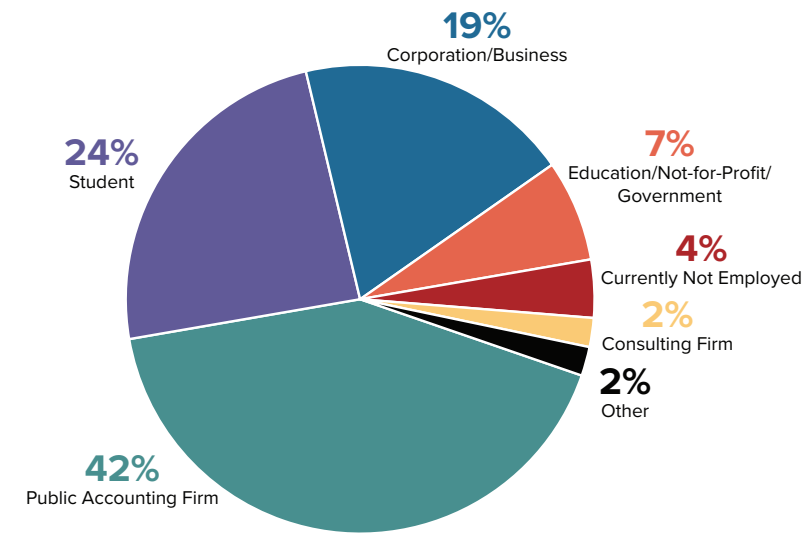


*Respondents could select non-binary, prefer not to answer, or prefer to self-describe.

Race



*Respondents could select Alaskan/Native American, two or more races, other, or prefer not to answer.



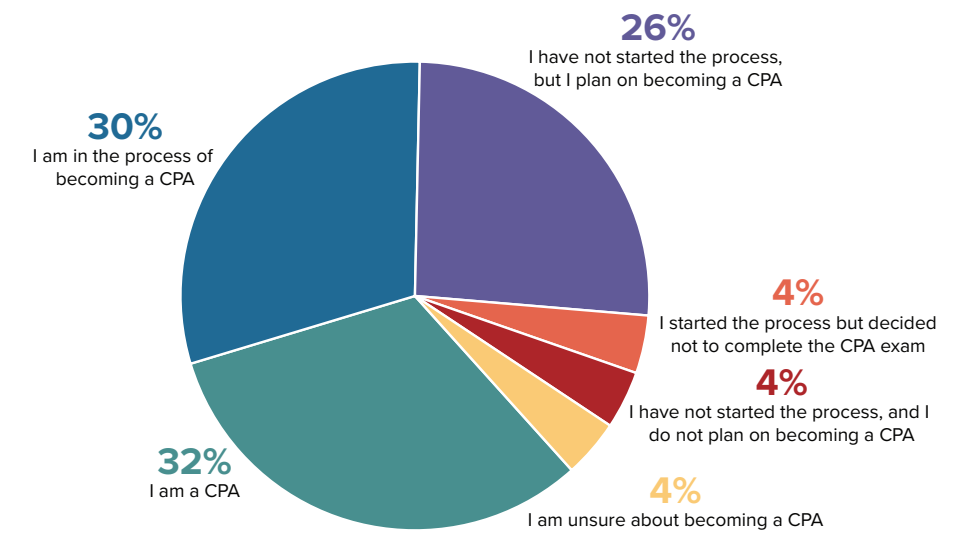
Current Employer Type

All Respondents

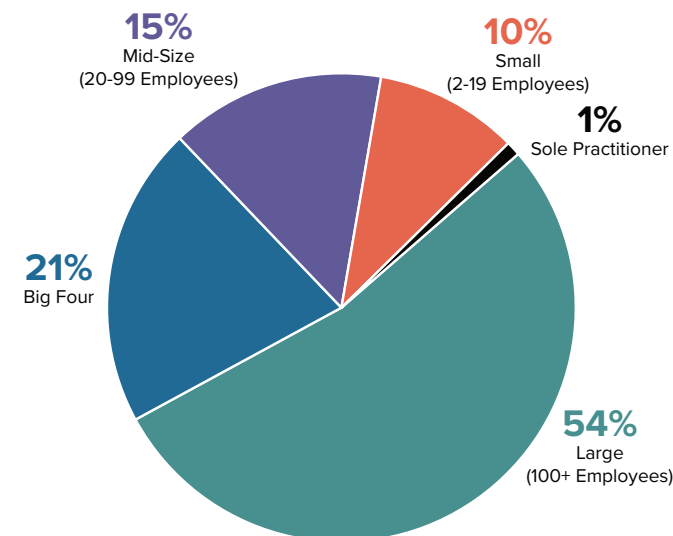


CPA Status

All Respondents

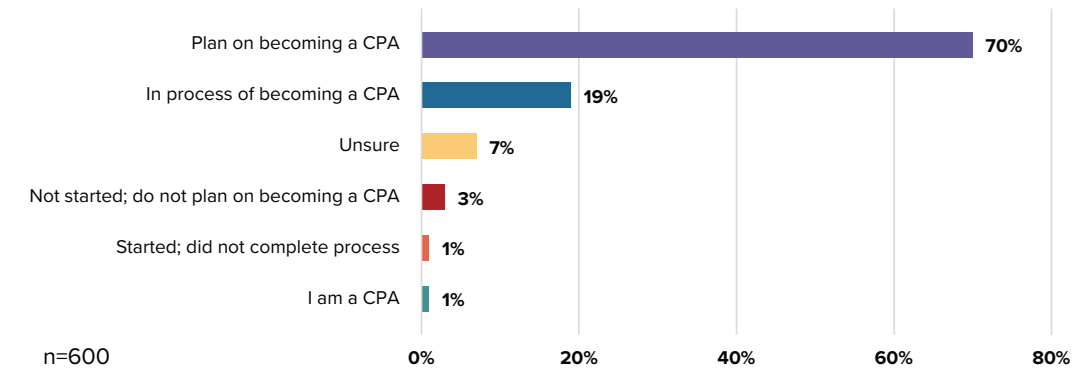


Student Respondents

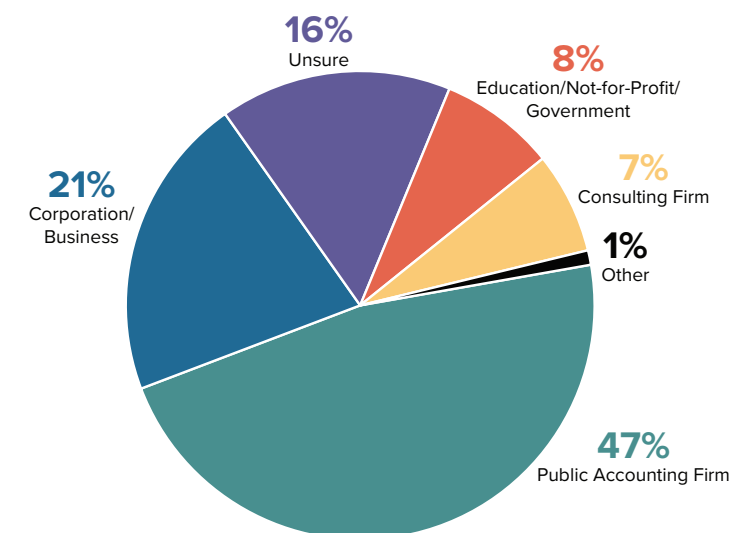


Current Employer Type

Public Accounting Firm

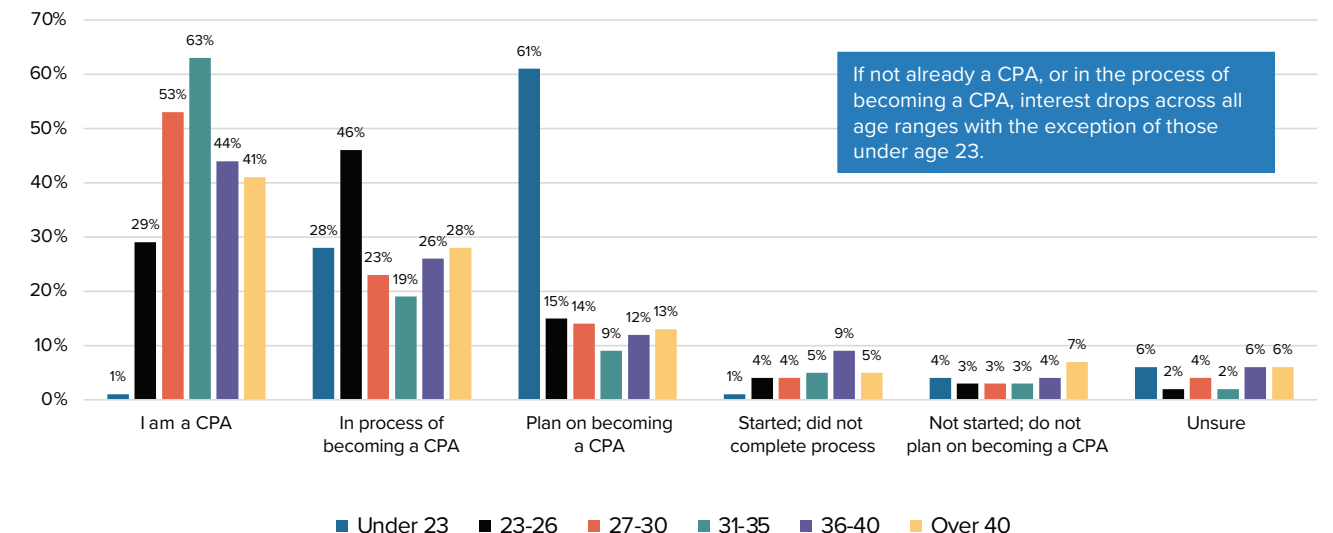


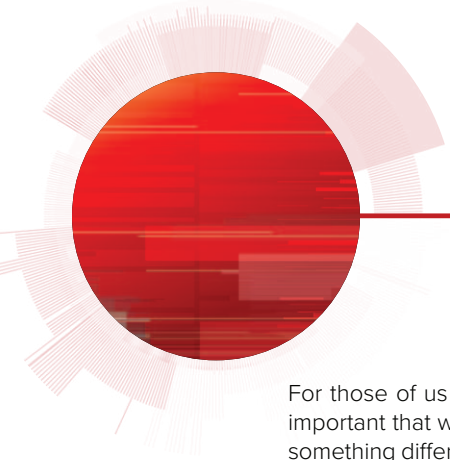
Age vs. Stage in Process



Preferred Employer Type

Student or Currently Not Employed





Challenges

For those of us who are passionate about ensuring a strong pipeline of CPAs, it is important that we validate our assumptions about what is weakening it—or discover something different—so we can effectively strategize to restore growth in the number of new CPAs. For this reason, we presented survey respondents with more than a dozen commonly known challenges and assumed barriers to the CPA credential to test which ones would rise to the top.

By and large, the most faced or anticipated barrier to becoming a CPA cited by respondents is the time commitment needed to study for and pass the CPA exam. In fact, workload time commitment was by far the top reason (63 percent) for deciding not to complete the CPA exam by those who started the process but did not complete the exam, which was followed by the personal time commitment (41 percent). Fear of failure and difficulty of the CPA exam content also emerged as surprisingly noteworthy challenges among CPAs, those in the process of becoming or planning on becoming CPAs, and those who are still unsure about getting the credential.

Importantly, when further breaking out responses to focus on the individuals who do not plan to become CPAs, we gained the invaluable insight that their top reasons for not pursuing the CPA credential included not seeing value or relevance to their careers (32 percent), not seeing the return on investment (28 percent), their employers or prospective employers do not require or support it (28 percent), and other credentials or specialties are more valuable to their careers (28 percent).

We also learned that one's plan on becoming a CPA significantly drops after age 22—just 15 percent or less of respondents in each of the older age groups plan on becoming CPAs. We believe this coincides with entry into the workforce, and therefore the leading challenges of workload and personal time commitments begin to play more significant factors in deciding whether to earn the CPA credential or not. Further supporting this finding is the fact that the top challenges student respondents anticipate facing include the workload time commitment and the difficulty of the exam content (each cited by 54 percent of student respondents), which was followed by fear of failure (51 percent). The fact that fear of failure emerged as a highly ranked obstacle among so many respondents across segments surprised us, as that was not on our radar as a significant challenge or anticipated challenge impacting their decision-making process.

We also found it notable that the common assumptions that the costs associated either with obtaining the additional credit hours to meet the educational/licensing requirements or preparing for and taking the CPA exam are top barriers were proven to be misconceptions—these were not the top barriers cited among any respondent category. In fact, these factors were ranked lower than we anticipated, which was interesting given how much emphasis we often place on them and how many resources we create to help deal with these expenses. Perhaps the takeaway is that these efforts have largely succeeded in easing various financial barriers already. Interestingly, 62 percent of CPA respondents found a way to have some or all of their CPA exam fees covered and 66 percent found a way to have some or all of their CPA exam preparation material costs covered. What is concerning, however, is that we found higher percentages of minority respondents—particularly Black/African American respondents—either have paid or would need to pay 100 percent of their CPA exam fees. We believe this may indicate that minority students and young professionals face additional barriers when it comes to seeking support or working for employers that provide financial assistance for pursuing the CPA credential. @

The Illinois CPA Society's recent student outreach efforts have centered on convincing accounting students to pursue the CPA credential upon graduation and providing financial resources to mitigate the costs associated with the exam. While the survey data indicates clear interest in the CPA credential among students—and a need to get them into the pipeline before their work and personal lives become more complicated—there is more we must do to help them achieve this important goal. In addition to removing what perceived barriers we can through offerings like scholarships, discounts, exam preparation help, and more, we also need to help students manage their perceived barriers better.

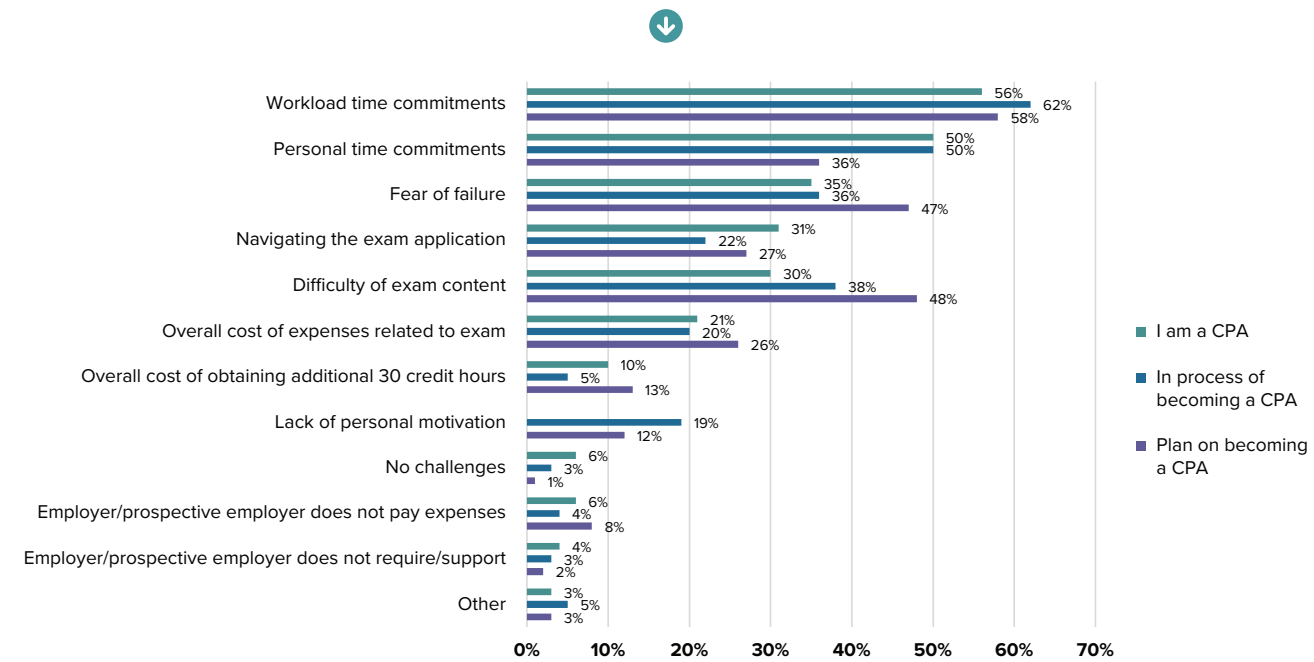
Moving forward, I believe organizations like ours have a unique opportunity to not only increase awareness of the CPA credential but to provide greater support and encouragement to students by helping them fully understand the rewards of earning it, the process of applying to take the CPA exam, and how to establish a simple, straightforward timeline for preparing for the exam so they make the best use of their time and can sit for as many sections of it as possible before working full-time. I believe these combined actions will not only help inspire the confidence many students need to stay on track but also help to bring more students into the CPA pipeline.



Elizabeth W. Brown
Manager, Student & Diversity Outreach,
Illinois CPA Society

Challenges

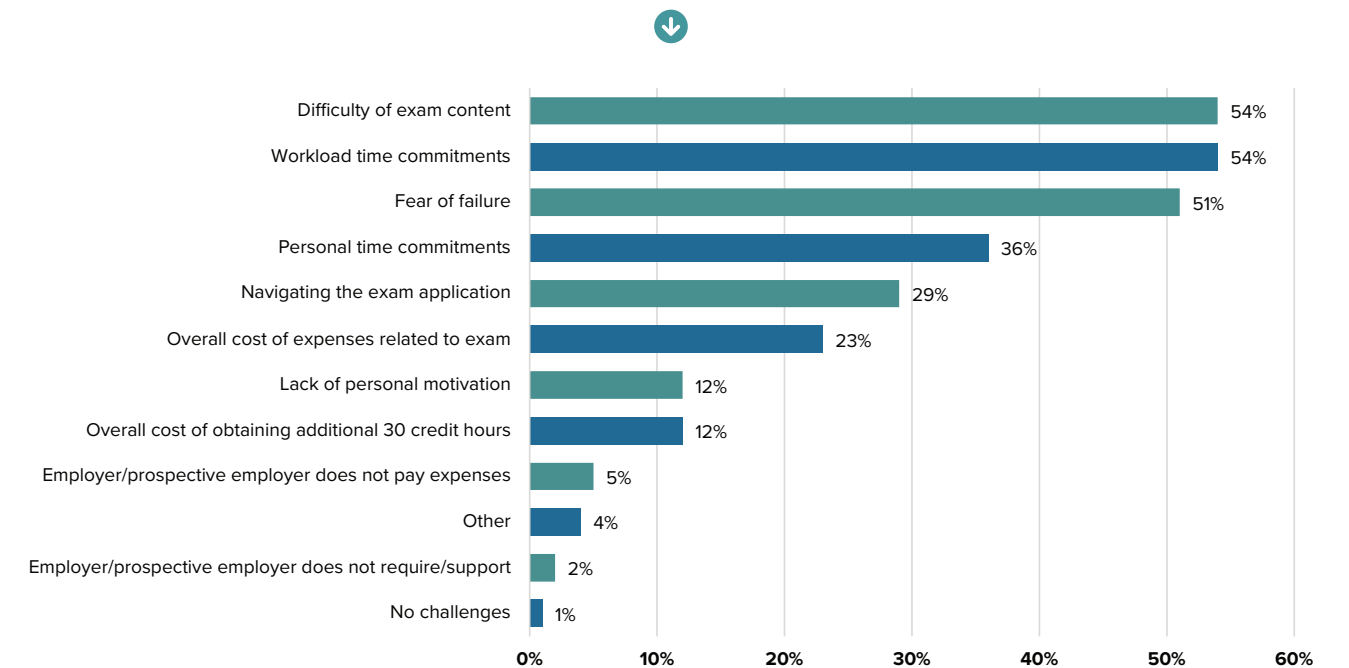
CPA | In Process | Plan on Becoming



Note: respondents had the option of selecting up to three challenges.

Students

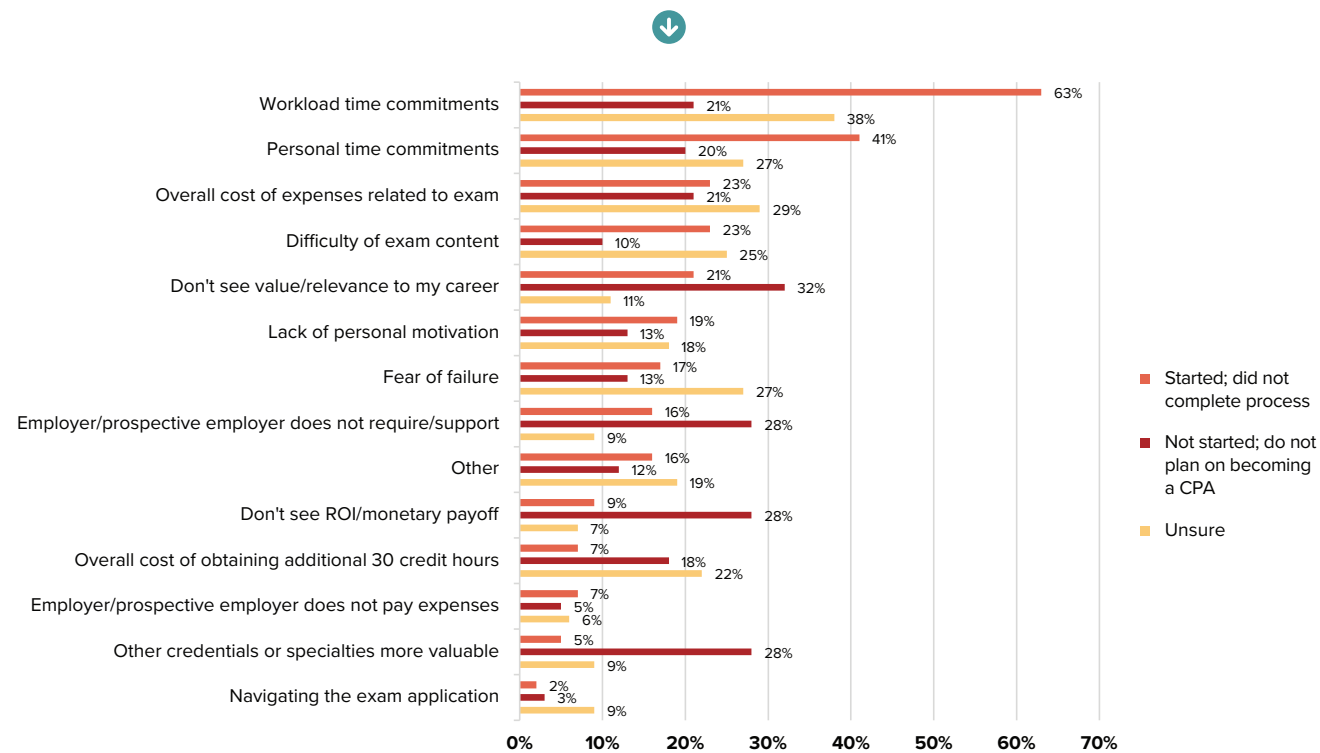
Top Anticipated Challenges



Note: respondents had the option of selecting up to three challenges.

Challenges

Did Not Complete | Do Not Plan | Unsure



Note: respondents had the option of selecting up to three challenges.

Perceptions

We believe understanding accounting students', graduates', and young professionals' perceptions and actions toward credentials will be key in guiding stakeholder efforts to reverse the declining number of CPAs.

As expected, we clearly validated that the CPA credential's perceived value directly aligns with one's interest in becoming a CPA. More than 95 percent of respondents who are CPAs, are in the process of becoming CPAs, and are planning on becoming CPAs rate the credential as valuable or very valuable. Encouragingly, 86 percent of respondents who are still unsure about becoming CPAs view the credential as valuable or very valuable, which gives us hope that they can be moved into the CPA pipeline with meaningful guidance. Surprisingly, the CPA credential itself is even acknowledged as being valuable or very valuable among those who started but did not complete the CPA exam (65 percent) and those who do not plan on becoming CPAs (68 percent)—it is just not personally valuable enough to them to acquire it.

That said, reviewing the responses from those who see little or no value in the CPA credential was particularly revealing. Write-in comments from these individuals indicate that they feel having "CPA" after your name does not mean you will do your job better or be more successful. Instead, on-the-job experience is more important and valuable. We also saw repeated themes from the "Challenges" section of this report: a lack of relevance to their careers, little to no return on investment, and employers do not require it. So, even though many of the respondents who started but did not complete the CPA exam or never planned on becoming CPAs acknowledged that the CPA credential carries weight and has value, it is just not valuable enough to them. Instead, they feel they can be successful in their anticipated or chosen careers without it and ultimately perceive that any value the CPA credential holds is outweighed by its lack of relevance to their personal endeavors and the time and costs required to obtain it. We found this interesting because across all segments most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the CPA credential opens doors with employers, has credibility in the corporate environment, and builds credibility with the people CPAs serve, coworkers, and peers.

Another surprising finding was that 51 percent of all respondents indicated that they have not obtained nor plan on pursuing other credentials—this was equally measured among respondents who do not plan on becoming CPAs (50 percent). Simply put, the popular assumptions that credential saturation and the pursuit of trending credentials are meaningfully driving the decline of new CPAs could not be validated. In fact, a common finding among write-in comments from respondents who do not plan on becoming CPAs was that they view the pursuit of credentials as a memorization task rather than a true test of knowledge or proof of ability to problem solve or think strategically. They also feel the CPA exam covers content that many do not use in the performance of their jobs. They perceive that they themselves or colleagues without a CPA can handle job responsibilities the same or even better than counterparts with a CPA.

We take from this insight that the CPA credential's perceived value directly aligns with one's chosen or anticipated career path and whether it will help them perform their job better. We also believe these findings validate our publicly stated opinion that the CPA profession is in a race for relevance. When questioned about the CPA brand, the words most associated with the CPA credential by all survey respondents were accounting, auditing, and tax preparation. This indicates respondents have a narrow view of what CPAs do and a limited perception of the value CPAs bring to clients and companies as trusted and strategic business advisors. 🌐

A strong pipeline of new CPAs is not only the lifeblood of the CPA profession but of organizations like ours. So, it is concerning to see—and hard to grasp—the waning desire or appeal for professional credentials among the generations of students and young professionals joining the workforce now. The survey responses make it clear to me that until students and young professionals see immediate benefits from pursuing the CPA credential—or any professional credential for that matter—the messages we use to promote the credential will not meaningfully resonate. We need to reignite the spark for advanced education, credentials, and ongoing upskilling, and consider these in tandem with professional experience and job performance. In my opinion, that calls for educators, career advisors, employers, and professional associations to collectively work together to reach a common understanding of how to communicate the importance of credentials like the CPA and illustrate the distinct personal and career benefits that accompany them.

Simultaneously, more work is needed to change the perception of CPAs and show that their importance and influence reach well beyond the scope of accounting, audit, and tax. We must do more to educate prospective CPAs about how earning the CPA credential proves not just one's dedication or perseverance, but an advanced skill set desired by employers regardless of where their career path leads. I believe if we move forward together, we can address the negative perceptions associated with credentials and ultimately restore strength to the CPA pipeline.

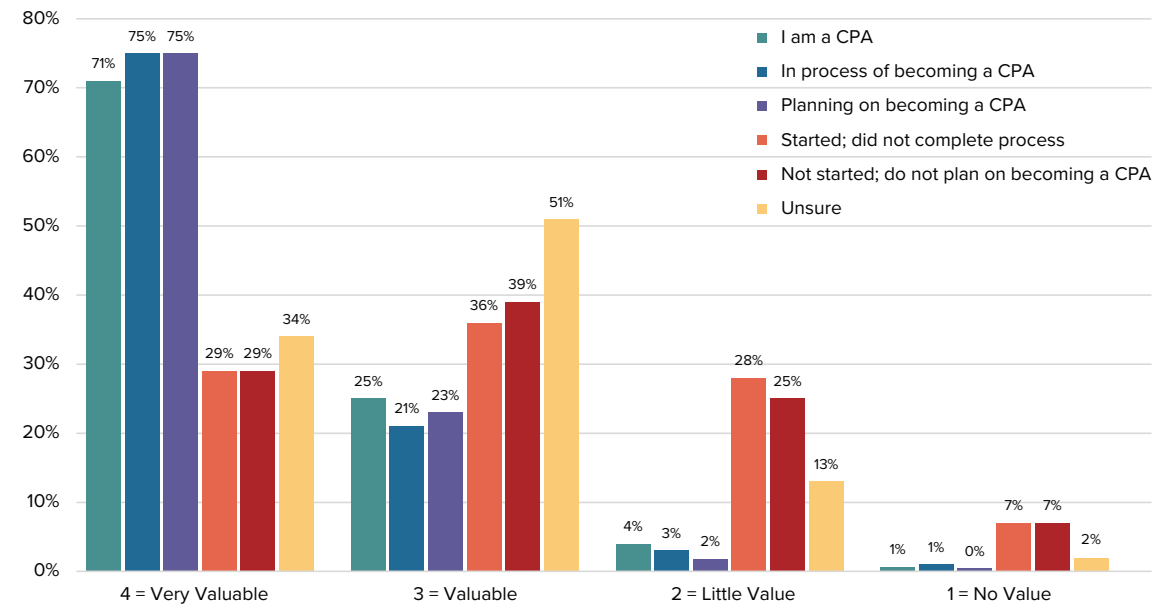


Kristin N. McGill, CAE
Senior Director, Membership
& Corporate Outreach,
Illinois CPA Society

Value



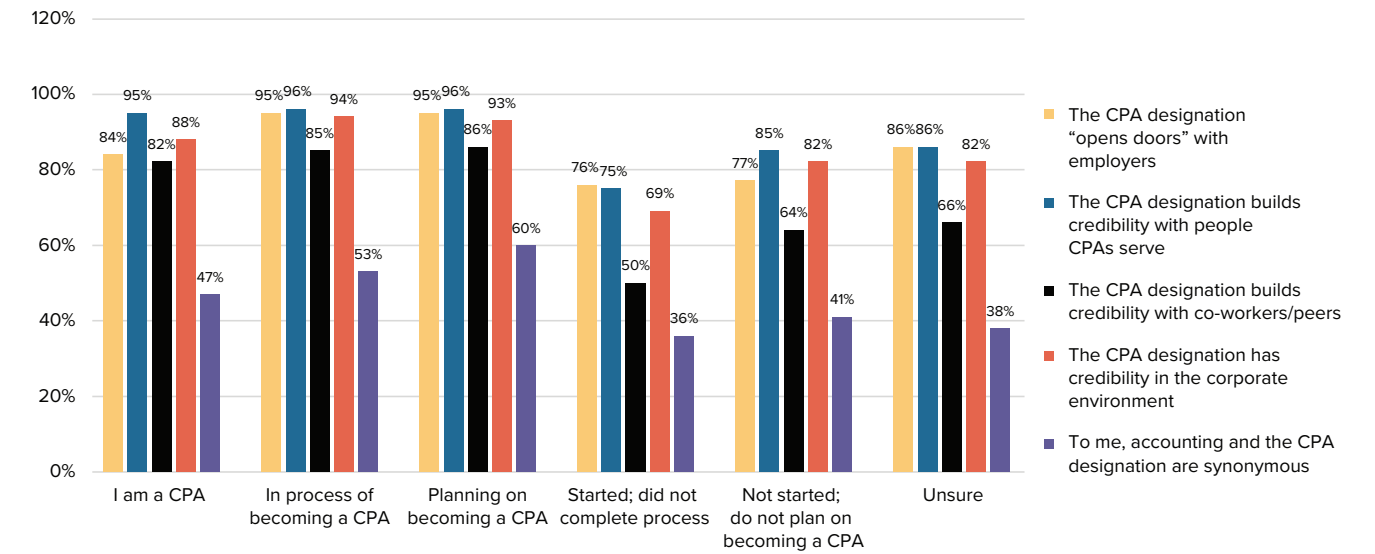
Rate the value of the CPA credential on a scale of 1-4



CPA Perceptions



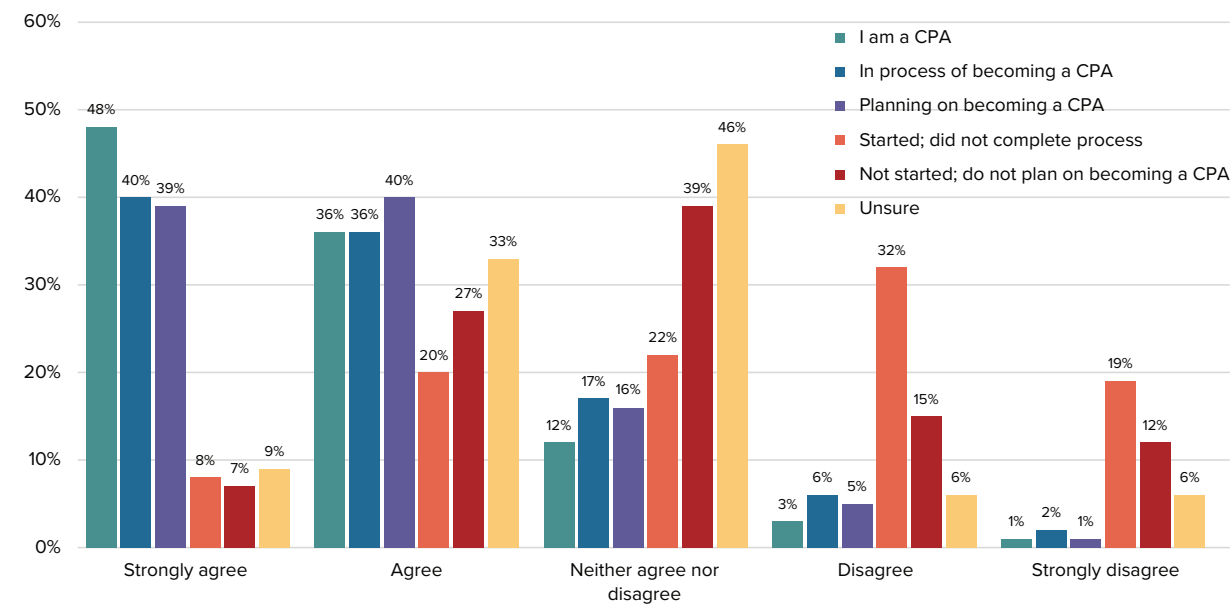
Agree/strongly agree with statements related to the CPA credential



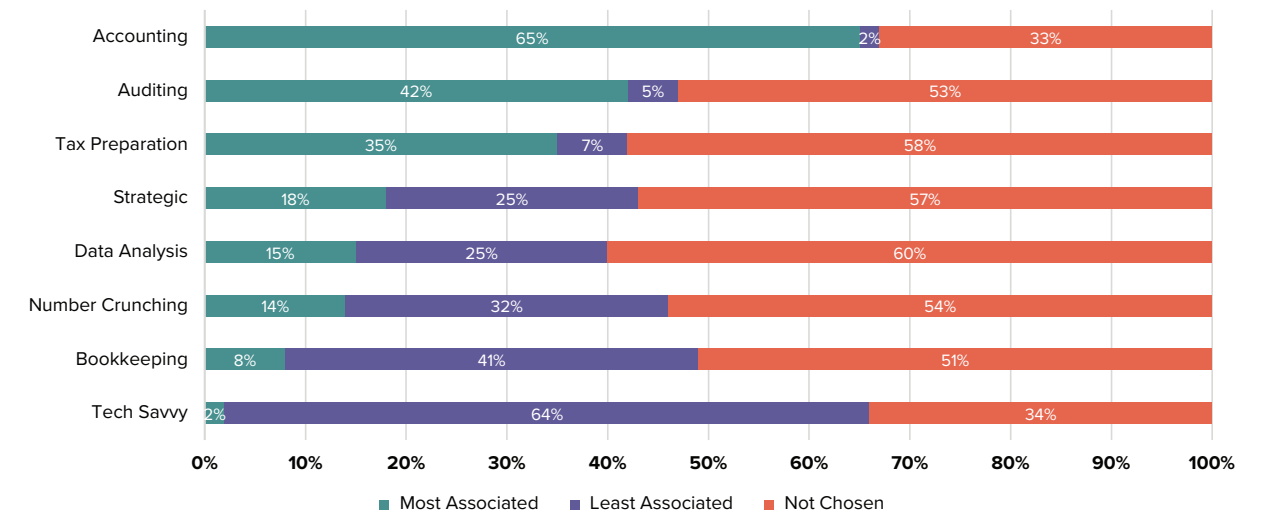
ROI



Level of agreement to the statement: "The value of earning a CPA outweighs the time and cost of acquiring the credential."



Words Most Associated With the CPA



Influencers

Gaining a clear understanding of who and what has a strong influence on an accounting student's, graduate's, or young professional's decision to pursue the CPA credential is necessary for helping us learn how we can better attract future candidates and better market the CPA credential. By testing some of our common assumptions, we were able to reveal what does and does not resonate with respondents.

We always assumed that an employer or prospective employer is the leading influencer on one's decision to pursue the CPA credential. By a surprisingly wide margin, we found that most respondents (53 percent) cited "self" as their primary influencer. This was also the top selection across all segment groups regardless of the respondent's plans for becoming a CPA. That said, we did validate that an employer or prospective employer is highly influential in the decision-making process. As the runner-up, 39 percent of all respondents indicated their employer or prospective employer most influenced their decision on whether to pursue the CPA credential or not. Hence, it appears that an individual's perception of the credential's value to their career and the time commitment to achieve it are central to the decision whether to pursue the credential even if their employer is pushing it. A college professor (33 percent) and family (27 percent) rounded out respondents' top influencers, and these were the last notable influencers of the 10 selections available to respondents (respondents were able to make two selections). An insight worth noting is that respondents who plan on becoming CPAs and who are unsure about becoming CPAs ranked their college professors as slightly more influential than their employers or prospective employers.

By also testing if things like career advancement opportunities, greater marketability, credibility, employer bonuses, higher-than-average salaries, or job stability had a significant influence on one's decision to become a CPA or not, we sought to learn which of these factors, if any, are relevant in our CPA credential marketing campaigns. Contrary to the common belief that a higher-than-average salary is a primary influencer, we found that career advancement opportunities and greater marketability are more significant, particularly among current CPAs and those in the process of becoming CPAs or that are planning on becoming CPAs. Not surprisingly, none of the options had a significant influence on the group of respondents who do not plan on becoming CPAs.

We also wanted to confirm if a clear correlation exists between respondents' professional areas of interest and their decisions about becoming CPAs. We found that respondents who are already CPAs or are in the process of becoming CPAs overwhelmingly work in a public accounting firm. We also found it notable that those who do not plan to become CPAs more often work in a corporation or business. When asked to think ahead, only 27 percent of all respondents see themselves spending most of their careers in public accounting. When examining the data from those who started the process but decided not to complete the CPA exam and those who do not plan on becoming CPAs, we find low percentages of respondents who expect to spend most of their careers in public accounting. While these results are not surprising, they do reinforce the hypothesis that the recent decline in people becoming CPAs could be affected by growing opportunities and demand for accounting and finance professionals in industries outside of public accounting. ©

Students and young professionals are telling us they have the most influence in their own lives. To me, this means they rely on their personal experiences, beliefs, and desires to determine what they want and guide them in their decision-making processes as they work toward their personal goals. Although others—like colleagues, educators, family, and friends—may have some influence, it seems clear that our respondents do not make decisions based on what others may think or suggest. So, what if we can help these individuals better understand what it is they really want and why the CPA credential may be important to those goals? Instead of trying to convince them of what they should do or why the CPA credential may be important to an employer, perhaps we stand a better chance of naturally showcasing the relevance and benefits of the CPA credential. I see an opportunity for us to shift our strategies from giving presentations on the CPA credential's benefits to directly asking prospective CPAs what they want out of their careers and illustrating how the CPA credential could help them achieve those goals.

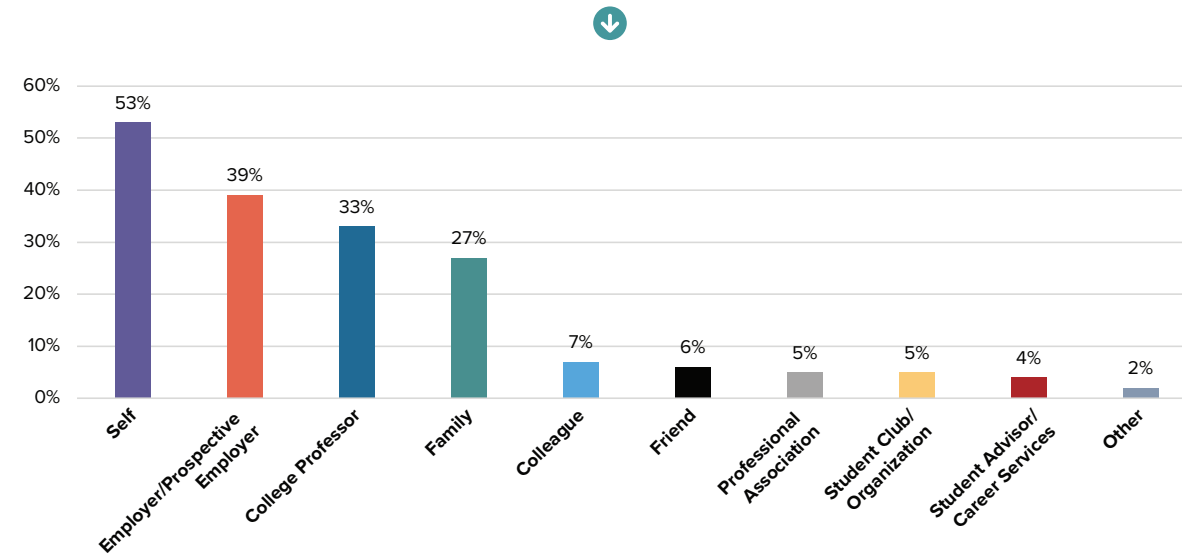
Further, I believe the data on influencers and interests shows that our greatest opportunity for bringing new candidates into the CPA pipeline is to focus on supporting students and those that are still unsure about becoming a CPA. There is a strong interest in earning the CPA credential and in working in public accounting among these respondents, which suggests we could best support them in making their decisions prior to entering the workforce. Before time becomes a significant challenge or concern, accounting educators, job recruiters, managers of interns, and organizations like ours have an opportunity to not only advocate for what is in their best interest regarding the value of the CPA credential but to also advise prospective CPAs on the best path to take to earn the credential.

I also find the data on where respondents plan to spend most of their careers to be eye-opening and is an area where I suggest we focus additional research. If a career outside of public accounting is the end goal for most, we need a stronger understanding of why that is so that we can develop more influential communication plans around how the CPA credential is still relevant outside of public accounting.



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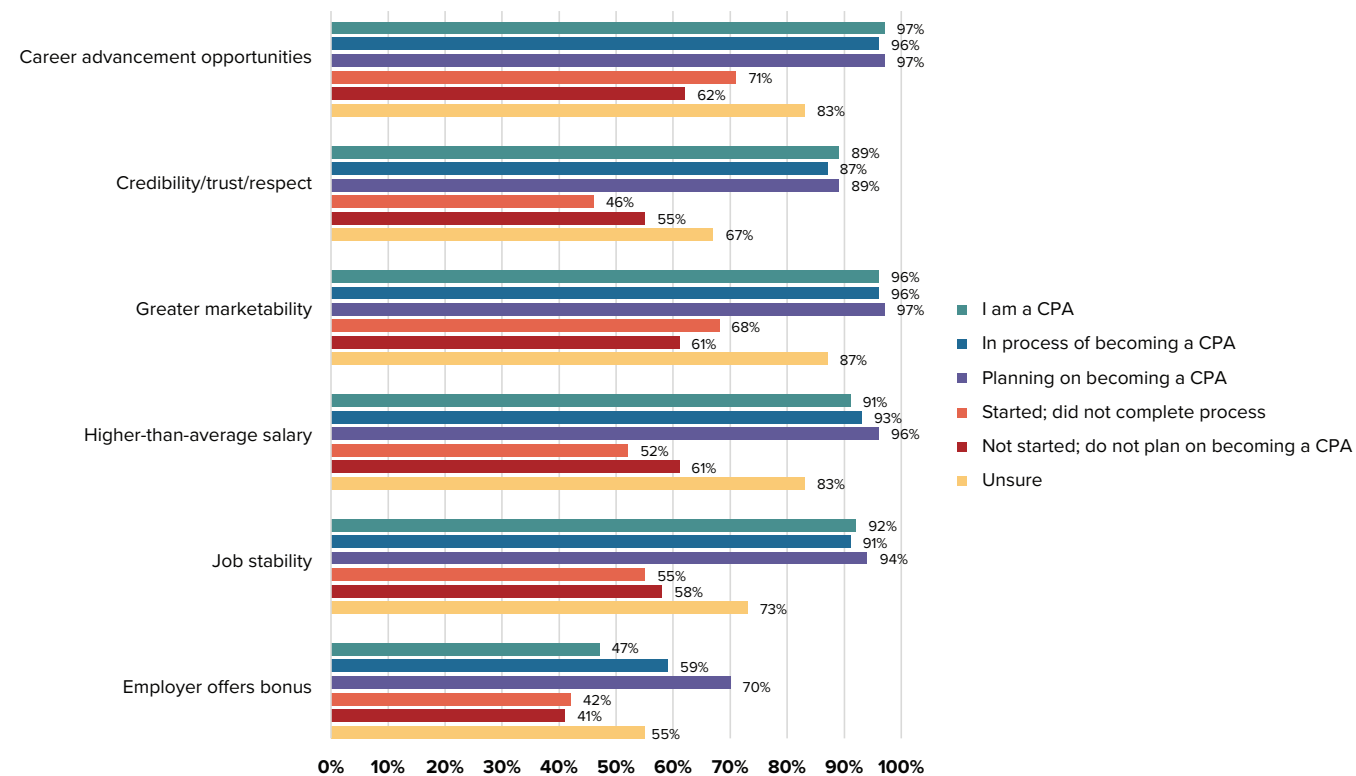
Individual(s) Who Most Influenced Decision



Note: Respondent could select a maximum of 2 responses

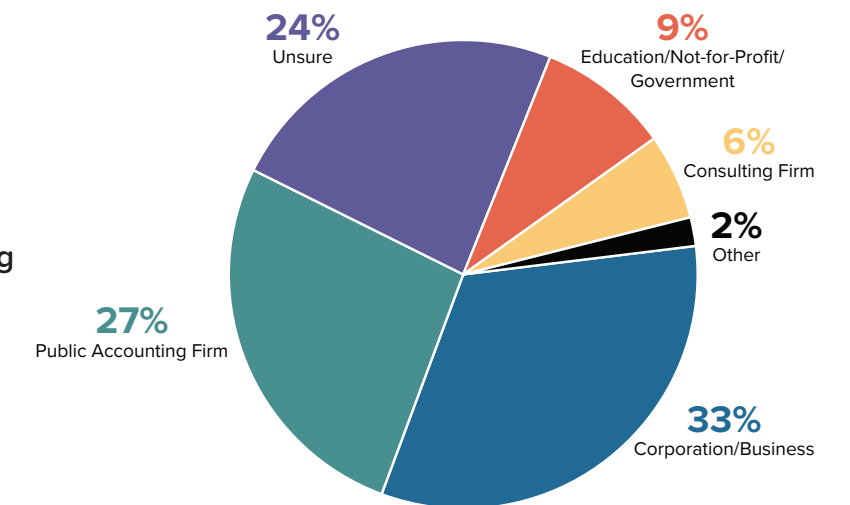
Factors

Factors that influence the decision to become or not to become a CPA (moderate to significant influence)



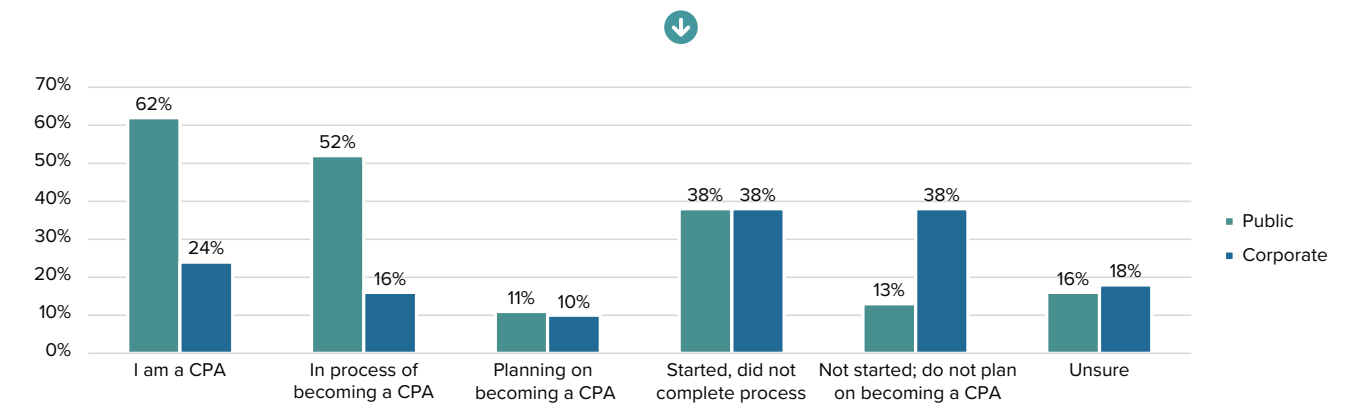
Thinking Ahead

Where do you see yourself spending most of your career?



Current Employer Type

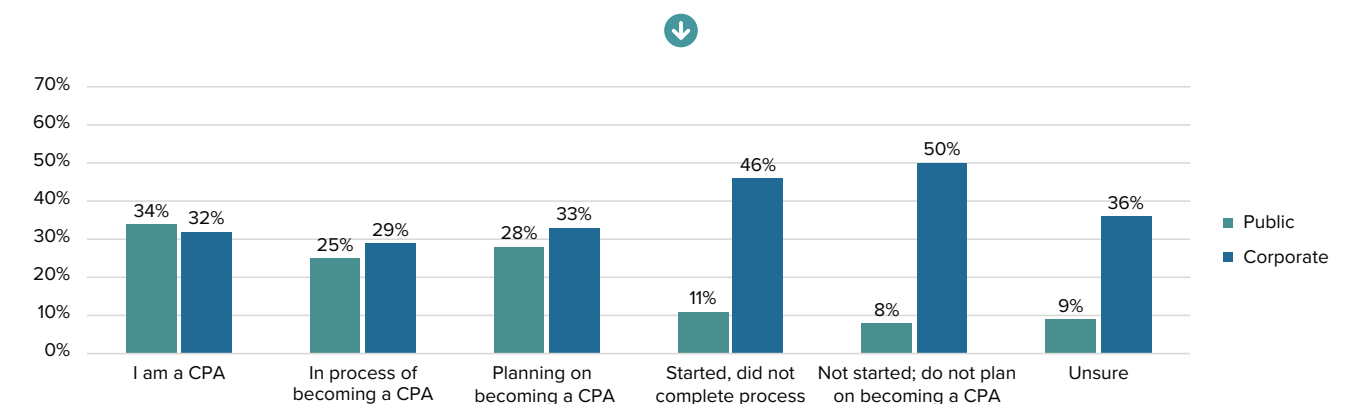
All Respondents | Public vs. Corporate | Stage in Process



Note: Respondents could select I am still in school, currently not employed, consulting firm, corporation/business, educational institution, governmental body, not-for-profit organization, public accounting firm, or other.

Where Do You See Yourself Spending Most of Your Career?

All Respondents | Public vs. Corporate | Stage in Process



Note: Respondents could select consulting firm, corporation/business, educational institution, governmental body, not-for-profit organization, public accounting firm, or other, or unsure.



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