



National Association of Peer College Advisors
A Division of the NAPCA Foundation

Become a College CPCA Guidebook

PEER COLLEGE ADVISING CHAPTER PROGRAM

Join our global student movement by becoming a certified peer college advisor (CPCA) to empower high school and community college students to define their life's purpose/career path, break through their barriers, and prepare to enroll and complete some form of postsecondary education, specifically to be prepared to enter high skilled careers or trades.

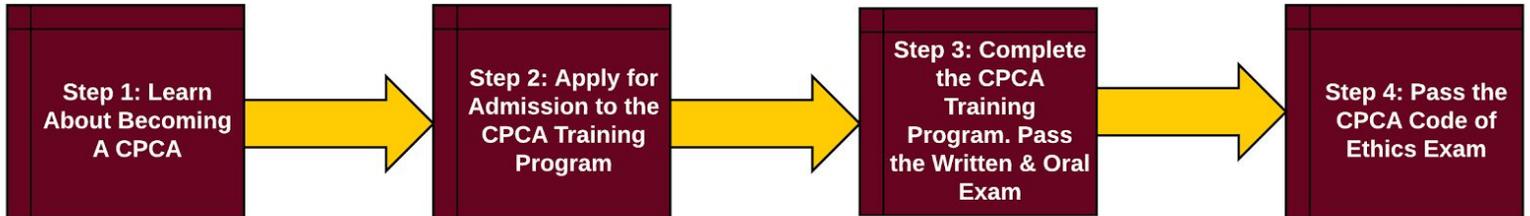


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4 Steps to Become a Certified Peer College Advisor



Step 1: Learn About Becoming A College CPCA.

What is a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA)?

Certified Peer College Advisors (College CPCAs) are part-time or full-time two-year and four-year college student leaders who are recruited and trained to assist professional school counselors at local high schools and academic counselors at community colleges. College CPCAs are supervised and monitored by professional school counselors and community college counselors.

College CPCAs Partner with High School & Community College Counselors

College CPCAs work with high school counselors to help their students from all backgrounds (including students with disabilities) build their college and career aspirations. They also help high school students develop a clear path to navigate through the complex processes of applying to, securing financial aid and scholarships, and enrolling into a regionally accredited two- or four-year college or career and technical training certificate or licensure program, specifically to be prepared to enter high skilled careers or trades. Additionally, College CPCAs help students register and complete college entrance exams and search for two- or four-year colleges that match their future education and career goals and fit their financial, social, and cultural needs.

College CPCAs work to tie college-going into the life of a high school, devise creative approaches to reach and connect with high school students, and most importantly, open the eyes of students and their families to the possibility of using college or postsecondary career or technical training to be prepared to enter and succeed in high skilled careers or trades. In addition, College CPCAs partner with community college counselors to help students transfer from a two-year college to a four-year college.

College-Going Teams Co-Led by College CPCAs

College CPCAs will co-lead a college-going team of 20 high school students (College CPCA to student ratio is 1:10) that they are accountable to and will work with each student in their college-going team to ensure they complete the critical steps to enroll in some form of postsecondary education. College CPCAs use a high-touch method, giving each student in their “college-going team” 18 - 36 hours of one-on-one peer college advising throughout the nine month school year. Furthermore, College CPCAs organize monthly college visits to help students experience different types of regionally accredited higher education institutions and identify what type of setting works best for them.

Four-Year University Transfer Teams Co-Led by College CPCAs

College CPCAs will co-lead a four-year university transfer team of 20 community college/two-year college students (College CPCA to student ratio is 1:10) that they are accountable to and will work with each student in their four-year university transfer team to ensure they complete the critical steps to successfully transfer from a two-year college to a regionally accredited four-year college or university. College CPCAs use a high-touch method, giving each student in their “four-year university transfer team” 18 - 36 hours of one-on-one peer college advising throughout the nine month school year. Furthermore, College CPCAs organize monthly college visits to help students experience different types of regionally accredited higher education institutions and identify what type of setting works best for them.

College CPCA Recruitment & Application Process

Recruitment typically takes place during late winter and early spring of the academic year. Prospective College CPCAs should be prepared to submit the CPCA Training and Certification Program Online Admissions Application along with the documents needed to apply. NAPCA recruits committed and highly influential college student leaders across the globe from all backgrounds to serve as a College CPCA for a minimum commitment of one school year but we encourage at least a two year commitment. However, there are many students who commit to a longer term.

Our approach to selecting College CPCAs is based on our commitment to student success. College CPCAs are charged with very high-stakes work: helping their peers achieve the academic success that will expand their life opportunities. NAPCA recruits on college campuses across the globe. Our recruitment teams identify top prospects and cultivate them individually to apply to become a College CPCA and/or to start a NAPCA Chapter, while also raising campus awareness about NAPCA.

Our recruitment efforts start with the following question: What are the characteristics that define our most successful College CPCAs, and how can we identify

those student leaders? Through four years of research, and with the support of many people in the broader academic community, we have developed a recruitment/selection model based on qualities that we have found to be the most distinguishing characteristics of an effective College CPCA.

College CPCA Selection Criteria

- Leadership and achievement in academic, extracurricular, or volunteer settings.
- Perseverance in the face of challenges – demonstrated resiliency to break through barriers.
- Strong critical thinking skills: making accurate linkages between cause and effect and generating relevant solutions to problems.
- The ability to influence and motivate others.
- Organizational ability: planning well, meeting deadlines, and working efficiently.
- Respect for students and families in their school and community – commitment to serve all students regardless of their race and socioeconomic status, gender or religious affiliation.
- An understanding of NAPCA’s mission and vision and the desire to work relentlessly in pursuit of it.

Student leaders across the U.S. who fit this profile come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We deeply value each individual who commits to our mission and believe we need to enlist our nation’s student leaders in this important work.

We have learned that the best way to recruit the most talented student leaders is to meet with prospective College CPCAs one-on-one. We maintain a force of part-time recruiters (many of our team members are College CPCAs and NAPCA alumni - high school and college student leaders). Our part time recruitment team meets with student leaders across the country, striving to convince them to join NAPCA in the effort to build a college-going and college-completion student movement in thousands of high schools across the globe.

College CPCA Interview & Selection Process

After College CPCAs submit their application, an admissions committee will review applications and select candidates to interview. After the College CPCA interview, the admissions team will then select aspiring College CPCAs that meet our requirements and selection criteria to attend the CPCA Training and Certification Program.

CPCA Training & Certification Program for College Student Leaders- Admission Decision Letter

Aspiring College CPCAs will receive an admission decision letter along with the College CPCA Training and Certification schedule for the upcoming summer which provides specific training dates and locations. The letter will also provide details on the next steps needed to register and secure their enrollment in the CPCA Training and Certification Program for college student leaders.

College CPCA Placement in Active NAPCA Chapters

NAPCA places well trained College CPCAs in active NAPCA Chapters at urban and rural public and private high schools, charter high schools, boarding schools, community colleges/junior colleges and at community and faith based organizations that serve middle school, high school and community college students.

College CPCAs.

NAPCA places well trained “College CPCAs” in high schools to work alongside high school student CPCAs and high school counselors to build a college-going and college-completion student movement in thousands of high schools across the globe. Additionally, College CPCAs will be placed in community colleges or two-year degree granting colleges with low rates of students transferring to a four-year college or university. College CPCAs will work in partnership with community college counselors to help guide and support community college students through the process of successfully transferring to a regionally accredited four-year college or university. NAPCA will also place well trained College CPCAs in community and faith based organizations that serve pre-teens (ages 10-12) and teens (ages 13-18).

NAPCA Regions and Districts

Currently the organization is made of up of ten regions including their respective districts; each under the supervision of Regional Directors and District Directors. Regional NAPCA administration function within the constitution of the NAPCA Organization but may also create regional and district leadership structures, awards, and programs. Regional administration leads the membership and chapter operations of the region and are elected by NAPCA Board of Directors.

For more efficient administration, local peer college advising NAPCA Chapters are chartered through regional administration and assigned into one of our ten regions based on geographical location and density of population.

The 10 NAPCA regions include:

- NAPCA West (AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, UT, WA)
- NAPCA Midwest (IA, NE, KS, MO, OK, CO, MT, WY)
- NAPCA Central (WI, IL, IN, KY, MN, ND, SD)
- NAPCA North Atlantic (MA, Eastern NY, Eastern PA, NJ, DE, CT, MD, DC, RI, ME, NH, VT)
- NAPCA Southwest (AR, LA, NM, TX)
- NAPCA Southeast (TN, AL, MS)
- NAPCA South Atlantic (SC, GA, FL)
- NAPCA Great Lakes (OH, WV, MI, Western PA, Western NY)
- NAPCA Mid-Atlantic (VA, NC)
- NAPCA International (All chapters located outside of the U.S)

Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA) Designation**Build Credibility through College CPCA Certification**

The Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA®) designation is a mark of distinction demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and commitment to the field of peer college advising. College CPCA® certification is recognized as the highest standard in peer college advising. Having College CPCA® certification enables you to stand out and communicate your expertise and credibility to the public. The College CPCA® certification provides the public with the assurance that student leaders with the College CPCA® designation are committed to maintaining the highest quality of peer college advising service to students.

Nearly 9 in 10 students say they would feel more confident working with a peer college advisor who completed extensive training to hold the designation as a Certified Peer College Advisor. The creation of the National Association of Peer College Advisors was the first global effort designed to increase the recognition of and establish

standards for peer college advising by high school and college student leaders across the globe.

CPCA Training & Certification Program Overview for College Student Leaders

NAPCA trains thousands of college student leaders each year across the nation to become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA) through classroom and online training. In order to become a College CPCA, students are required to complete a total of 140 hours of College CPCA training and certification, which consist of 100 hours of classroom training and 40 hours of supervised fieldwork while enrolled in the CPCA Training and Certification Program for college student leaders. In addition, College CPCAs are required to complete at least 20 hours of on-going training throughout the school year to reinforce a wide range of competencies learned from their College CPCA training. The on-going training will ensure College CPCAs are providing quality peer college advising services to high school and community college/two-year college students. Additionally, the on-going training will provide a space for College CPCAs to come together as a peer group to discuss any challenges or needs that they are facing during their service as a College CPCA. Each year, College CPCAs will also be required to attend a one day professional development conference where College CPCAs will meet with other College CPCAs in their region or local community to discuss on-going challenges, share best practices, and work together on professional development. After participating in the professional development conference, College CPCAs will receive credit towards the 20 hours of on-going training required per year. This conference will be offered multiple times throughout the year at local high school or college campuses.

In order to complete the 140 hour CPCA training and certification program, NAPCA offers a 3 week summer intensive CPCA training and certification program for aspiring student leaders to become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA). In addition, we offer CPCA training throughout the year (September through May), specifically during the weekend, winter break, and spring break. Training is usually held at the CPCA Training Facility in Los Angeles, local high school campus, or college campus. During the year, we will work with chapter founders and chapter advisors to plan specific training dates and times.

As part of the rigorous 3 week summer intensive CPCA training program, aspiring College CPCAs will visit and learn about the college admissions and financial aid processes at a variety of public and private regionally accredited four-year colleges/universities as well as two-year trade and technological schools and community colleges. College CPCAs will gain a broad understanding of the many postsecondary opportunities and career pathways that are available to students. College CPCAs will also complete training exercises in educational psychology and

learn how to effectively advise their peers and assist school counselors and college counselors. College CPCAs will also become familiar with web-based college and career focused programs such as College Board, Naviance, Educational Planner, FAFSA, and NCAA Clearinghouse.

The CPCA training program topics include but are not limited to: college affordability planning, college admission processes, college and career assessments, academic planning for college readiness, college aspirations, enrichment and extracurricular engagement, transition from high school graduation to college enrollment, advising culturally diverse students, and professionalism and ethical standards for College CPCAs. The CPCA training program will be facilitated by experts in college admissions and financial aid counseling, and postsecondary planning.

Benefits of Serving as a College CPCA

As a College Certified Peer College Advisor, student leaders will:

- Earn a Service Learning Scholarship Award to help pay for college.
- Gain the tools, hands on experience, and resources to become better prepared and a competitive applicant for admission to your top choice college.
- Earn certificates in “Peer College Advising” and “College and Career Readiness”.
- Gain the satisfaction of making a difference in your school, community, and country.
- Receive a certificate recognizing the total number of community service hours completed as a CPCA.
- Be a part of a student movement that helps:
 - Build and sustain a strong college-going culture in our partner high schools.
 - Increase our partner high schools’ college enrollment rate.
 - Increase our partner community colleges’ transfer rate.
- Develop the knowledge, confidence, and practical leadership skills required to achieve your educational and career goals.
- Help reduce your peers stress and anxiety with respect to completing the steps needed to effectively apply to and enroll in two- or four-year colleges and universities.
- Demonstrate - to your peers, families, and community - your dedication and commitment to helping more students in your community enroll and complete some form of postsecondary education or career/technical training, specifically to be prepared to enter high skilled careers and/or trades.

NAPCA Service Learning Scholarship Program

NAPCA's Service Learning Scholarship Program awards each College CPCA for their service as a peer college advisor in their school and community. Scholarship funds from various donors will help College CPCAs pay for their college education. The NAPCA Foundation encourages College CPCAs to do online fundraising for the NAPCA Service Learning Scholarship Program. The NAPCA Service Learning Scholarship Program varies by campus.

NAPCA expects each chapter member to pay it forward by fundraising at least \$100 per year to support the Service Learning Scholarship Program. In addition, NAPCA expects each school partner to pay it forward by fundraising to help support the NAPCA Service Learning Scholarship Program.

NAPCA CPCA Training & Certification Scholarship Program

NAPCA's CPCA Training and Certification Program awards each College CPCA partial and full scholarships to help College CPCAs with financial need to attend the CPCA Training and Certification Program. The NAPCA Foundation encourages College CPCAs to do online fundraising to secure the funds needed to enroll in the CPCA Training and Certification Program.

NAPCA expects each chapter member to pay it forward by fundraising at least \$100 per year to support the CPCA Training and Certification Program. In addition, NAPCA expects each school partner to pay it forward by fundraising to help support the CPCA Training and Certification Program.

Requirements to Become a College CPCA

In order to receive CPCA certification, College CPCAs will need to complete the following:

- Enrolled as a full-time college student where an active NAPCA Chapter is located on a school campus. If your school has no active NAPCA college chapter, you may be eligible to start a NAPCA college chapter at your school.
- Have at least a 2.7 cumulative GPA.
- Complete at least one academic semester of college.
- Complete and submit the CPCA Training and Certification Program Online Admissions Application.
- Submit two College CPCA Recommendation Online Forms from a professor or counselor.
- Complete 100 hours of NAPCA's certified peer college advising classroom training and 40 hours of peer college advising fieldwork experience while enrolled in the CPCA Training and Certification Program for college students.

- Pass the College CPCA oral exam and written exam which covers the competencies needed to perform the role of a College CPCA.
- Pass the College CPCA code of ethics exam: rules of conduct and peer college advising practice standards.
- Commitment to visiting a minimum of 15 four-year degree granting colleges/universities and 3 community colleges/two-year degree granting colleges within the first two years of receiving certification.
- Commitment to enrolling and completing a high quality postsecondary degree, workforce relevant certificate, or credential.
- Commitment to working with diverse populations.
- Create a solid campus-wide action plan to increase college transfer rates at our partner community colleges.
- Friendly, approachable, self-motivated, creative, enthusiastic, and passionate about higher education.

To learn more about the CPCA Training and Certification Program for college students, go to studentleaders.napcaonline.org/cpca-training and download the CPCA Training and Certification Program Overview.

Step 2: Apply for Admission to the CPCA Training & Certification Program.

In order to become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA), you must first complete and submit the Notice of Intent to Apply to Become a CPCA Form. To complete the online form, go to studentleaders.napcaonline.org/notice-of-intent.

Additionally, the next step is for you to complete and submit the CPCA Training and Certification Program Online Admissions Application. To complete the online admissions application, go to studentleaders.napcaonline.org/CPCA-training. There is no application fee for the CPCA Training and Certification Program Online Admissions Application. If you have questions about becoming a College CPCA, please contact the NAPCA Headquarters at 310-361-8585 or email us at Support@NAPCAonline.org.

Application Requirements & Documents Needed to Apply to Become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA)

- **Academic Requirements**

We are looking for highly influential college students with at least a 2.7 cumulative GPA or higher (on a 4.0 scale) in their academic courses. In addition, aspiring College

CPCAs will need to have completed at least one academic semester of college.

- **Personal Commitment Requirement**

A student's commitment to taking ownership of their future education and career goals is the most important factor in our process of selecting students for admission to the CPCA Training & Certification Program for college student leaders. We admit students that show a high commitment to serve their campus community and high aspiration to get trained to help high school students navigate the college admission process and secure the financial aid and scholarships needed to pay for college. Additionally, to help community college students successfully transfer to a regionally accredited four-year college or university.

- **Admissions Essay**

Each aspiring certified peer college advisor (College CPCA) must complete and upload an admissions essay to their CPCA Training & Certification Program Online Admissions Application. The Admissions Essay is your opportunity to tell us about yourself — your hopes, extracurricular activities outside the classroom, ambitions, life experiences, and future college and career goals. It tells us something about you beyond your grades.

College CPCA Admission Essay Instructions

Choose one essay prompt out of the two prompts below and respond. Do not respond to more than one essay prompt. Responses to your chosen essay prompt must not exceed 1,000 words total (single spaced or double spaced, 12pt font).

Prompt A: What is your future career goal? Discuss how your career interest developed and describe any experience you have had in your career of interest - such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities - and what you have gained from your involvement. In addition, please explain why you want to become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA)? What do you expect to learn, experience, and contribute through your role as a College CPCA?

Prompt B: Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are? In addition, please explain why you want to become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA)? What do you expect to learn, experience, and contribute through your role as a College CPCA?

Notes: Please put your full name, school name, year in college, and phone number in the header (top right hand corner) of your admissions essay. Please compose your

admissions essay in Microsoft Word and upload in your online admissions application.

- **Student Interview**

The student interview (Telephone, Via Skype, or In-Person) typically takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. During the interview session, we will ask questions about the student's academic and career goals, why they decided to apply to become a Certified Peer College Advisor (College CPCA), and the activities they are involved in at their school and outside of school. Please be prepared to do most of the talking! Additionally, applicants will have an opportunity to ask specific questions about the NAPCA College Chapter. The interview will help us determine if the student leader is a good fit to become a College CPCA.

- **Upload Unofficial Transcripts**

You will need to upload your unofficial transcripts to your CPCA Training & Certification Program Online Application. Alternatively, students who are not able to obtain their transcript due to circumstances beyond their control may provide us with their most recently completed academic semester grades.

- **Submit Two Online College CPCA Recommendation Forms**

We require two online College CPCA recommendation forms to be completed and submitted by your recommenders. It's best to select people who can attest to your commitment to completing a high quality college degree or credential, your personal character of integrity, honesty, and high ethical and moral standards, and your potential to be a successful peer college advisor. Your recommenders can include but are not limited to professors, counselors, school administrators, mentors, or community leaders. The online College CPCA recommendation form can be found at studentleaders.napcaonline.org/College-CPCA-recommendation-form.

Step 3: Complete the CPCA Training & Certification Program. Pass the Written and Oral Exam.

CPCA Student Leader Exam

The CPCA® Student Leader Exam is a rigorous, certified peer college advising exam administered by the CPCA Governing Council. The exam has two parts:

- **Part I** is a comprehensive written exam offered online and proctored by NAPCA Staff. Two hours will be given to complete Part I of the exam.

- **Part II** is an oral exam offered in a classroom by NAPCA Staff. No longer than 45 minutes will be permitted for the oral exam.

Candidates that take the exam will receive a Pass or Not Pass. The emphasis of the exam is to determine whether the test-taker is able to competently apply their knowledge of College Admission and Financial Aid Advising. After you finish your training and certification program, you must apply to take the Exam, and there is a fee, currently \$50 which is included in the student fees.

Step 4: Pass the CPCA Code of Ethics Exam.

Ethics

Aspiring College CPCAs must pass the CPCA Code of Ethics exam. Each College CPCA candidate must abide by the CPCA Code of Ethics, and further, agrees to the CPCA Governing Council's right to enforce the CPCA Code of Ethics. This lets the public know that the Certified Peer College Advisor who carries the CPCA designation adheres to the highest ethical standards. Any College CPCA who is found by the governing council to be involved in serious misconduct can be stripped of the CPCA designation/certification and will no longer be a member of NAPCA.

You can download and read the NAPCA Code of Ethics for CPCA's at studentleaders.napcaonline.org/college-chapter-resources. To sum up the most important code of ethics, College CPCA's agree to put their students' interests ahead of their own, and always act in a professional manner.