



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

Become a High School CPCA Guidebook

PEER COLLEGE ADVISING CHAPTER PROGRAM

Join our global student movement by becoming a certified peer college advisor (CPCA) at your high school to empower your peers 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.

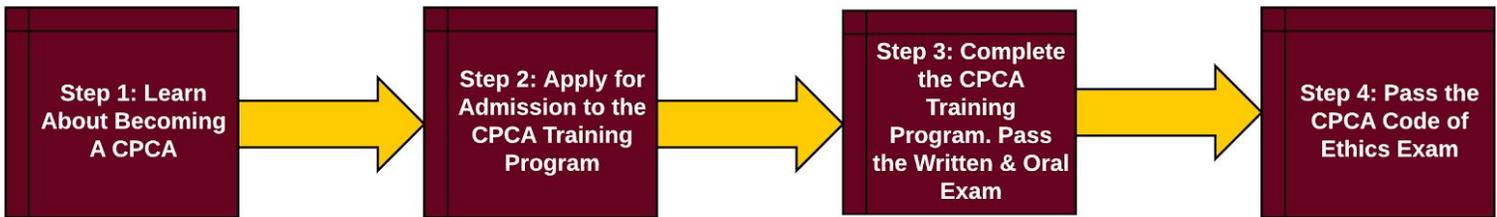


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4 Steps to Become a Certified Peer College Advisor



Step 1: Learn About Becoming A High School CPCA.

What is a High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS CPCA)?

High School Certified Peer College Advisors (HS CPCAs) are high school and college student leaders who are recruited and trained to assist professional school counselors and college counselors. HS CPCAs are supervised and monitored by professional college counselors and school counselors. HS CPCAs work with middle and high school students from all backgrounds (including students with disabilities) to build their college and career aspirations. They also help their peers navigate through the complex processes of applying to, securing financial aid/scholarships, and enrolling into a regionally accredited two- or four-year college or career/technical training certificate or licensure program, specifically to be prepared to enter high skilled careers or trades. In addition, HS 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. HS CPCAs work to tie college-going into the life of a school, devise creative approaches to reach and connect with students, and most importantly, open the eyes of students and their families to the importance of completing a regionally accredited undergraduate degree program or postsecondary career/technical training program to be prepared to enter and succeed in high skilled careers or trades.

High School CPCAs will co-lead a college going team of 20 students (HS CPCA to student ratio is 1:10) from all grade levels that they are accountable to and will work with each student to ensure they complete the critical steps to enroll in some form of postsecondary education within one year of their high school graduation. HS 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.

Additionally, HS CPCAs engage students in candid conversations about their future college and career goals through small group peer college advising, group workshops and classroom presentations. In addition, HS CPCAs provide group workshops and classroom presentations to middle school students that help prepare them for their transition to high school and college. The peer college advising materials such as college readiness handouts, powerpoints, and sign in sheets, will be developed and distributed to HS CPCAs by the NAPCA Headquarters.

Furthermore, HS CPCAs organize monthly college visits to help students experience a range of two- and four-year college campuses and identify what type of setting works best for them.

High School CPCA Recruitment & Application Process

Recruitment typically takes place during late winter and early spring of the academic year. Prospective HS CPCAs should be prepared to submit the CPCA Training and Certification Program Online Application along with the documents needed to apply. NAPCA recruits committed and highly influential high school and college student leaders across the globe from all backgrounds to serve as a NAPCA High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS 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. For instance, many high school student leaders serve as a HS CPCA at the beginning of 10th grade and continue their service until they graduate from high school. Additionally, many of our HS CPCAs look forward to continuing their commitment during their college years where they serve local high schools surrounding their college/university campus.

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

High School 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 HS CPCAs one-on-one. We maintain a force of part-time recruiters (many of our team members are HS 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.

High School CPCA Interview & Selection Process

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

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

Aspiring HS CPCAs will receive an admission decision letter along with the 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 high school student leaders.

High School CPCA Placement in Active NAPCA Chapters

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

High School CPCAs.

NAPCA places well trained HS CPCAs in public, private, and charter high schools including boarding schools across the globe. NAPCA will also place well trained HS CPCAs in community and faith based organizations that serve pre-teens (ages 10-12) and teens (ages 13-18).

Graduating HS CPCAs.

Twelfth grade high school seniors that are graduating can continue to serve as a CPCA upon entering college by becoming a College CPCA. They will need to contact the NAPCA College Chapter on their college campus to learn how to join their NAPCA College Chapter. If a chapter does not already exist, then graduating HS CPCAs will be eligible to start a new NAPCA College Chapter at the college or university they plan to attend immediately after high school graduation.

NAPCA Regions and Districts

Currently the organization is made 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)

High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS CPCA) Designation

Build Credibility through HS CPCA Certification

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

NAPCA trains thousands of high school student leaders each year across the nation to become a High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS CPCA) through classroom and online training. In order to become a HS CPCA, students are required to complete a total of 140 hours of HS 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 high school student leaders.

In addition, HS 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 HS CPCA training. The on-going training will ensure HS CPCAs are providing quality peer college advising services to middle and high school students. Additionally, the on-going training will provide a space for HS CPCAs to come together as a peer group to discuss any challenges or needs that they are facing during their service as a HS CPCA. Each year, HS CPCAs will also be required to attend a one-day professional development conference where HS CPCAs will meet with other HS 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, HS 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 for high school student leaders, NAPCA offers a 3 week summer intensive CPCA training and certification program for student leaders aspiring to become a High School Certified Peer College Advisor. 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 HS 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. HS CPCAs will gain a broad understanding of the many postsecondary opportunities and career pathways that are available to students. HS CPCAs will also complete training exercises in educational psychology and learn how to effectively advise their peers and assist school counselors and college counselors. HS 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 HS 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 High School CPCA

As a High School 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”.
- Receive a certificate recognizing the total number of community service hours completed as a CPCA.
- Receive Academic Credit through their enrollment in NAPCAs CPCA Service Learning Elective Course. In California, CPCAs will receive academic course credit that counts toward the "g" college prep elective of the UC/CSU a-g requirements. (varies by high school).
- Be a part of a student movement that helps:
 - Build and sustain a strong college-going culture in your school community.
 - Increase your school’s college enrollment rate.
- Gain the satisfaction of making a difference in your school, community, and country.
- 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 HS CPCA for their service as a peer college advisor in their school and community. Scholarship funds from various donors will help HS CPCAs pay for their college education. The NAPCA Foundation encourages HS CPCAs to do online fundraising for the NAPCA Service Learning Scholarship Program. The NAPCA Service Learning Scholarship Program varies by chapter.

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 HS CPCA partial and full scholarships to help HS CPCAs with financial need to attend the CPCA Training and Certification Program. The NAPCA Foundation encourages HS 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.

Partial Tuition Scholarship

The NAPCA Foundation's CPCA Training Program Scholarship fund makes the CPCA training program more affordable for student leaders across the globe with a financial need. The scholarship fund helps cover the cost of tuition by providing a partial tuition scholarship to student leaders with an annual family income of less than \$150,000 a year.

To be considered for a partial tuition scholarship, student leaders will need to visit <http://studentleaders.napcaonline.org/cpca-training-program-scholarship-application/> to apply for a scholarship. Student leaders that receive the partial tuition scholarship are responsible for covering the remaining cost of tuition and the cost of student fees.

To determine the cost of your student fees, please see your school counselor, NAPCA campus representative, or connect with our Live Chat support team using our [Live Chat Form](#). If our Live Chat support team is unavailable, please visit <http://studentleaders.napcaonline.org/contact-us> to send us a message using our Online Contact Form.

Student Fees

- Course Materials & Supplies Fee
- College Tours Fee
- CPCA Certification Fee
- CPCA Examination Fee
- CPCA Commencement Fee

Note: Within 2 weeks of submitting a complete CPCA Training Program Scholarship application, student leaders will be notified of their scholarship award via email.

Full Tuition Scholarship

The NAPCA Foundation's CPCA Training Program Scholarship fund makes the CPCA training program more affordable for student leaders across the globe with a financial need. The scholarship fund helps cover the cost of tuition by providing a full tuition scholarship to student leaders with an annual family income of less than \$80,000 a year.

To be considered for a full tuition scholarship, student leaders will need to visit <http://studentleaders.napcaonline.org/cpca-training-program-scholarship-application/> to apply for a full tuition scholarship. However, student leaders that receive the full tuition scholarship are responsible for covering the cost of student fees.

To determine the cost of your student fees, please see your school counselor, NAPCA campus representative, or connect with our Live Chat support team using our [Live Chat Form](#). If our Live Chat support team is unavailable, please visit <http://studentleaders.napcaonline.org/contact-us> to send us a message using our Online Contact Form.

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Note: Within 2 weeks of submitting a complete CPCA Training Program Scholarship application, student leaders will be notified of their scholarship award via email.

Requirements to Become a High School CPCA

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

- Enrolled as a full-time high school student where an active NAPCA Chapter is located on a school campus. If your school has no active NAPCA chapter, you may be eligible to start a NAPCA chapter at your school.
- Have at least a 2.7 cumulative GPA.
- Complete at least one academic semester of high school.
- Complete and submit the CPCA Training and Certification Program Online Admissions Application.
- Submit two HS CPCA Recommendation Online Forms from a teacher 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 high school student leaders.
- Pass the HS CPCA oral exam and written exam which covers the competencies needed to perform the role of a HS CPCA.
- Pass the HS 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 attending NAPCA's Summer Academy for at least one summer at one of our university locations (i.e., Harvard University, UC Berkeley, UCLA).
- Commitment to enrolling and completing a high quality postsecondary degree, workforce relevant certificate, or credential within six years after high school graduation.
- Commitment to working with diverse populations.
- Create a solid school wide action plan to build and sustain a strong college-going culture and increase college enrollment rates within their school community.
- Friendly, approachable, self-motivated, creative, enthusiastic, and passionate about higher education.

To learn more about the CPCA Training and Certification Program for high school student leaders, 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 High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS 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 HS 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 High School Certified Peer College Advisor

- **Academic Requirements**

We are looking for highly influential and college bound students in grades 9 - 12 with at least a 2.7 cumulative GPA or higher (on a 4.0 scale) in their academic courses. In addition, aspiring HS CPCAs will need to have completed at least one academic semester of high school.

- **Personal Commitment Requirement**

A student's commitment to taking ownership of their future college and career goals is the most important factor in our process of selecting students for admission to the CPCA Training & Certification Program for high school student leaders. We admit students that show a high commitment to serve their school community and high aspiration to get trained to help their peers navigate the college admission process and secure the financial aid and scholarships needed to pay for college.

- **Admissions Essay**

Each aspiring high school certified peer college advisor (HS 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.

HS 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 High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS CPCA) at your high school? What do you expect to learn, experience, and contribute through your role as a HS CPCA on your high school campus?

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 High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS CPCA) at your high school? What do you expect to learn, experience, and contribute through your role as a HS CPCA on your high school campus?

Notes: Please put your full name, school name, grade level, 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 High School Certified Peer College Advisor (HS 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 along with their parents will have an opportunity to ask specific questions about the NAPCA High School Chapter Program. The interview will help us determine if the student leader is a good fit to become a HS CPCA.

- **Parent Interview**

The parent interview (Telephone, Via Skype, or In-Person) typically takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. During the interview session, we will ask questions to get a better insight from the student's parent on where their son or

daughter is today as it relates to their college and career path. The parent interview will help us determine if their son or daughter is a good fit for our program.

- **Upload Unofficial Transcripts**

Ask your School or Counselor to provide you with an electronic copy (PDF file) of your unofficial high school transcript as you will need to upload to your CPCA Training & Certification Program Online Admissions 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 report card.

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

We require two online HS 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 in your school community. Your recommenders can include but are not limited to teachers, counselors, school administrators, mentors, or community leaders. The online HS CPCA recommendation form can be found at studentleaders.napcaonline.org/hs-cpca-recommendation-form.

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

CPCA Student Leader Exam

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

- **Part I** is a comprehensive written exam offered online and proctored by local personnel. Two hours will be given to complete Part I of the exam.
- **Part II** is an oral exam offered in a classroom or online via Skype or Adobe Connect. 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 high school CPCA must pass the CPCA code of ethics exam. Each High School 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 High School 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/high-school-chapter-resources. To sum up the most important code of ethics, CPCA's agree to put their students' interests ahead of their own, and always act in a professional manner.