

CalCPA Modernization FAQs

General Q&As (for all audiences)

Q: What is CalCPA Modernization?

CalCPA is modernizing across three pillars: Membership, Knowledge, and Community. This is an organization-wide effort to stay relevant and valuable by aligning with member expectations and professional trends.

- **Membership:** clearer value and access, with flexible participation options such as the Community Pass.
- **Knowledge:** modernized and integrated through Brainfood Bytes, webinars, the AI Assistant, and bundles for outcome-focused learning that connect to Community.
- **Community:** reimagined as borderless and interest-driven, with hubs, member-led meetups, signature events, special interest communities, statewide collectives, and advisory councils—supported by data and technology.

Q: Why is CalCPA making these changes now?

Engagement across the membership is very low. Events that were once successful are harder to fill, attendance has steadily declined over the last decade, and many members are not connecting in the current structure. The leadership pipeline has been difficult to sustain, with chapter boards shrinking in size and with numerous positions left unfilled. Member expectations have shifted toward flexible, interest-based, micro and/or project based volunteering and technology-enabled opportunities. Incremental change is not enough — bold, intentional modernization future-proofs CalCPA.

Q: Is this replacing chapters?

Yes. The formal chapter board governance structure and geographic borders are ending. What is not being lost is the local spirit and engagement. Members will still connect in their regions and local communities host signature events, plan meet-ups, volunteer in the community and support scholarships.

Q: What is staying the same and expanding?

Local connections, signature events, scholarships, and CalCPA's focus on community and belonging remain central. Members will continue to experience the same touchpoints they value most. Volunteer opportunities and options are expanding to meet changing needs of how people participate and give back. Whether it's a long-term multi-year commitment someone is looking for, something strategic or a hyper-local micro opportunity, there will be something for everyone—meeting them where they are.

Q: What is changing?

The governance structure. Instead of every chapter maintaining its own board, bylaws, budget, committees, etc, CalCPA is moving to a streamlined CA-wide model with collectives and pathways that provide more ways to engage and lead, without overburdening volunteers.

Q: What is new for members?

Members gain access to new commonality-based pathways: CA-wide collectives, special interest communities, and meetups that reflect professional and personal interests. Local engagement continues, and members can now connect across the state. Geography becomes one way of engaging, not the only way.

Q: Who runs signature events under the new structure?

CalCPA staff and professional partners manage logistics and execution. Leaders and collectives help influence the strategic experience and focus on outreach, ensuring events reflect local flavor and creating CalCPA super fans.

Q: What about key events our chapter has always held?

Signature events such as ABC Nights, Golf Tournaments, Student Nights, and others will remain part of the calendar. CalCPA handles planning and execution. Leaders guide outreach and help ensure strong attendance and sponsorship support.

Q: How will scholarships and student outreach be handled?

Scholarships continue to be a priority for CalCPA, how we fundraise will be a priority. The money will stay in existing chapter funds and will continue to be distributed to the specific schools/students within that area. We want to make sure to put as much thought, effort and intention into scholarships that have gone into the whole modernization framework. We want to take our time and do this right – it's important to everyone and we want to be intentional about how we handle going forward.

Beginning in FY 2026, the Pipeline Collective will evaluate applications. We are currently looking for passionate pipeline people to help us determine what this will look like operationally.

Q: What about sponsors, will they still support local events?

Yes. Sponsorship remains vital. Statewide packages will be developed and offer a more consistent opportunity for sponsors who desire that level of commitment, while also still enabling and growing local sponsor presence and participation..

Q: What role will technology play?

Technology is the enabler. The new community engagement app increases visibility of CA-wide and local opportunities and makes participation easier, as well as enables a “do-it-yourself” aspect for local meet-ups and gatherings. It will launch with core features and be refined based on feedback.

Q: How can members propose a new idea, meetup, or circle?

There will be a clear process for submitting new event/program ideas through CalCPA. The framework is designed to support and elevate member-driven initiatives. The community engagement app enables a “do-it-yourself” aspect for local meet-ups and gatherings. Once simple processes are finalized, CalCPA will share in various ways.

Q: How can members give feedback?

Input and ideas are welcome on the “how” to execute. Please contact:

[Jill Pitchenik](#)

[Janessa Stephens](#)

[Denise Froemming](#)

Q: When do these changes go into effect?

All changes are officially effective May 1, 2026, but certain elements might be incorporated sooner if necessary from an operations standpoint..

Q: Who made the decision to move away from chapter boards?

The CalCPA Board of Directors decided, informed by member input, governance experts, and ongoing review of association leading practices. CalCPA chapters are not separate legal entities, so all structure changes are operational in nature and within the purview of the Board.

Q: How will success be measured?

In various ways, CalCPA will track engagement, volunteer participation, sponsorship health, event attendance, and member satisfaction. KPIs and success metrics are being finalized. Regular updates will be shared with leaders and the CalCPA Board of Directors.

Q&As for All Chapter Leaders

Q: Why this framework vs. others we could have adopted?

CalCPA discussed, analyzed, and reviewed multiple options through chapter debates, focus groups, and Board discussions. This framework balances CalCPA consistency while also spotlighting local connections and opportunities. It reduces volunteer burnout, creates clear leadership pathways, and aligns with CalCPA's strategic priorities, while keeping member experience central.

Q: Will chapter leaders get to vote on this decision at Council?

No. Chapters are not separate legal entities, so this is an operational decision and within the purview of the Board of Directors.

Q: What risks did the board consider in moving forward?

Risks include losing local identity, over-centralization, and member pushback.

Mitigations include clear communication, consistent support, maintaining signature events and scholarships locally, and ongoing measurement of engagement and satisfaction. CalCPA will be monitoring and evaluating engagement consistently, pivoting when needed.

Q: What about Council representation?

Council composition will be impacted by the various changes being made. Overall composition is still being defined by the Governance Committee, legal counsel and governance experts, with a focus on aligning to leading practice and competency-based representation.

Q: What is still being defined?

An eventual CA-wide scholarship program, sponsorship expansion, Council composition, Nominations Committee composition, State Committee composition, new volunteer roles and responsibilities, and KPIs and success metrics.

Q: How will success be measured and reported back to the board?

Member engagement, volunteer participation, sponsor revenue, event attendance, and satisfaction (NPS). Reports will be shared regularly so the board can track progress and adjust if needed. Exact success metrics are currently under development.

Q: How should CalCPA board members respond to possible pushback?

Acknowledge the concern a person has, share the why behind the decision, and point to what is staying the same or expanded, including local events, scholarships, and community connection, plus more customizable volunteer opportunities. Remind members that this shift reduces burdens, expands opportunities, and keeps CalCPA future-focused.

Chapter Leaders who attended the 9/30 meeting

Q: How should I respond when colleagues ask, “What did you hear at the meeting?”

Use the key messages to share the big picture: CalCPA is modernizing across Membership, Knowledge, and Community; chapter boards and borders are ending; engagement and volunteer opportunities are expanding; signature events remain; leaders have new CA-wide pathways.

Q: What is my role now that chapter boards are gone?

Leadership pathways are evolving. You can find many new ways to contribute and connect, lead and facilitate, or shape and strategize in CA-wide collectives, new local opportunities and advisory councils. The new Officer Collective also preserves prestige and purpose for past presidents and officers.

Q: How do leadership opportunities look now?

Modern, flexible, customizable, and scalable leadership pathways replace outdated and one-size-fits all board roles. Volunteers can contribute and connect, lead and facilitate, or shape and strategize across the CA-wide model.

Q: What is the Officer Collective?

This group preserves prestige and purpose for past chapter presidents and officers. Members of the Officer Collective serve as ambassadors, providing mentorship, outreach, and strategic counsel.

Q: How do I redirect conversations when people get stuck in details?

Use the “knowns and unknowns” framing. Remind people the framework is set, but input is welcome on implementation.

Q: What do I do if I get a question I cannot answer?

Be transparent. Acknowledge the question, note whether it is known or in progress, and direct it to [Jill Pitchenik](#), [Janessa Stephens](#) or [Denise Froemming](#) or.

Q: What is the process for getting involved in a Steering or Officer Collective?

The exact process is still being identified. If you are interested, please contact: [Janessa Stephens](#).

Chapter Leaders unable to join the 9/30 Meeting

Q: What was discussed at the meeting I missed?

Leaders were introduced to CalCPA's full modernization framework - membership, knowledge and community. For community specifically, CalCPA will not have chapter borders or chapter boards, instead community will be organized statewide with local and hyper local opportunities. This includes signature events continuing with CalCPA support, and new leadership pathways. Leaders also had an opportunity to reflect, ask questions, and provide input on elements such as the community engagement app.

Q: Why was this meeting so important?

It marked the transition from decision-making to implementation. It was the first opportunity for leaders to see the full framework and discuss their role in it.

Q: How can I get up to speed if I wasn't there?

Talking points and a recap will be sent immediately following the meeting. We're also working to share additional context via video with anyone unable to attend.

Q: What are my opportunities to participate going forward?

Leaders are invited to shape implementation by informing the signature event experiences, interest-driven meetups, and CA-wide collectives.

Q: Who can I reach out to if I feel unclear?

Direct your questions to [Jill Pitchenik](#), [Janessa Stephens](#) or [Denise Froemming](#).