

Introducing a New Volunteer Structure for NCACPA

By D. Scott Showalter, CPA, CGMA

Blockbuster... Toys R Us... Polaroid... Borders... Pan Am Airlines... what do they have in common?

You guessed it; they all went out of business. And why? They had each been a major player in their respective industries but simply put, they failed to identify and respond to emerging trends.

If an organization does not look forward and make adjustments in anticipation of changes occurring in the marketplace, it will go backward or possibly, out of business. And this is precisely why NCACPA has looked at emerging trends in the accounting profession and concluded the association should take steps to take advantage of these opportunities. Doing so will help ensure our future sustainability.

This article will describe upcoming changes to the volunteer structure and how they will be implemented. Before describing those changes, it's important to consider our landscape.

Much has been written about the AICPA's CPA Evolution initiative approved in 2020, which becomes effective in January 2024. Per the AICPA, "the CPA Evolution initiative is transforming the CPA licensure model to recognize the rapidly changing skills and competencies the practice of accounting requires both today and in the future." This transformation includes expanding the skills needed for success in the accounting profession and the individuals necessary to deliver professional services.

Additionally, member-based organizations throughout the country are experiencing a sea change. There is no longer an interest in just being a dues-paying member. Rather, individuals want to receive from their association and purchase a variety of services as needed. Individuals may seek to purchase services without being a member. Member-based organizations must focus on providing services that meet industry needs.



IMPACT OF THESE TRENDS ON NCACPA'S STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

Reflecting the previously described changing accounting profession, NCACPA recently updated its vision and mission statements. The association envisions “a highly valued accounting profession advancing the success of individuals and organizations” and will achieve this vision by “enhancing the accounting profession and the community it serves through advocacy, connections, education, and resources.” The revised statements resulted in an association providing services to an expanded number of professionals with geographical coverage beyond North Carolina.

Along with the new statements was the need to change the operating structure to capture all the corresponding opportunities. A closer look at the structure revealed numerous unfilled opportunities to meet the evolving needs of accounting professionals. Like any business, to capture these opportunities with available resources, the association needed to focus its efforts. While the evaluation process began before the pandemic, it did influence the outcome.

It became evident the current committee structure needed to be better aligned with the association’s vision, mission, and strategic initiatives. The committee focused on organizing events rather than providing an array of services. Likewise, committees carried out efforts based on current committee membership rather than advancing the association’s strategy. It is imperative for there to be alignment between the association and the efforts of its volunteers and staff.

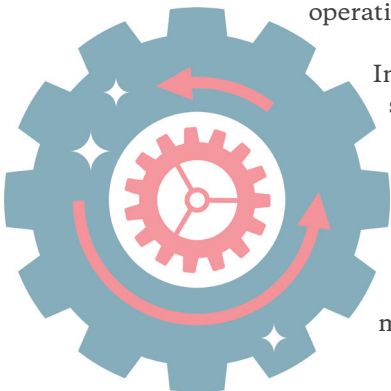
A more market-focused committee structure is required. Once implemented, the objectives and outcomes of the recent changes are to:

- ① Align the volunteer activities with the association’s strategy;
- ② Expand and enhance the market-facing activities of the association; and
- ③ Expand the influence (i.e., who and where) of NCACPA.

EFFORTS TO GET US WHERE WE ARE TODAY

While it may appear that these changes are coming out of the blue, looking back it has been a journey involving a series of interrelated efforts. As part of the Centennial in 2019, work began to ensure NCACPA’s sustainability for the next 100 years by confirming our strategy and aligning operations with strategic initiatives.

In 2016, the Governance and Effectiveness Task Force refined our strategic initiatives, provided recommendations to ensure the continuing effectiveness of board governance, and offered suggestions for successfully implementing the association’s strategy. The next effort was the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Definition Task Force in 2019, which did what their title suggested—developed a definition and provided recommendations for improving D&I throughout the association. One of the outcomes was the addition of equity, and now DEI sits squarely in the middle of our strategic roadmap.



On the heels of the DEI strategic addition were the efforts of the Vision & Mission Task Force. Soon after, the board appointed the Committee Restructure Task Force (CRTF) in 2020. The primary purpose of the task force was to determine the optimal structure to align volunteer efforts with strategy and provide recommendations where warranted. The CRTF recommended a phased approach to the board for approval:



The final efforts of the CRTF were to work with NCACPA's staff to ensure the successful transition of the recommendations with the ongoing efforts of the association. As you can see, a lot has been happening!

WHAT IS CHANGING?

Considering the evolving nature of the profession and the expansion of the role of NCACPA to meet those needs, soon after, the board appointed the Committee Restructure Task Force (CRTF) in 2020. In doing so, the following markets within the accounting profession were identified:

- ① Public Accounting
- ② Business & Industry
- ③ Government
- ④ Not-for-Profit
- ⑤ Advisory, Consulting, & Related Services
- ⑥ Education

To properly serve these markets, the roles and responsibilities of committees will expand and they will become “resource groups.” This change is more than semantics. Many of NCACPA’s activities will be directed and delivered by resource group volunteers.

Considering the reach and influence of the association, the CRTF recommended the expansion of the current geography-designated and affinity networking groups. These networking groups will expand the activities of the resource group and establish unique opportunities to meet professionals’ needs.

Reflecting different focuses, resource groups divide into three areas—Markets, Technical, and Association-wide.

While many resource groups will replace existing committees, some resource groups are new to meet our expanded vision and mission. Except for two committees¹, all existing committees will become part of a resource group, either one-for-one or combined with other

committees with similar roles. In almost all cases, the roles and responsibilities of the resource groups expand the activities of committees.

As previously mentioned, the roles and responsibilities of the geography-designated and affinity networking groups expand and are more structured. The “networking groups” include:

RESOURCE GROUPS

Markets

- Advisory, Consulting, & Related Services (outside public accounting)
- Business & Industry
- Education (including faculty and students)
- Government
- Not-for-Profit
- Public Accounting (small, medium, large)

Technical

- Accounting & Attestation
- Employee Benefit Plans
- Peer Review
- Tax

Association-wide

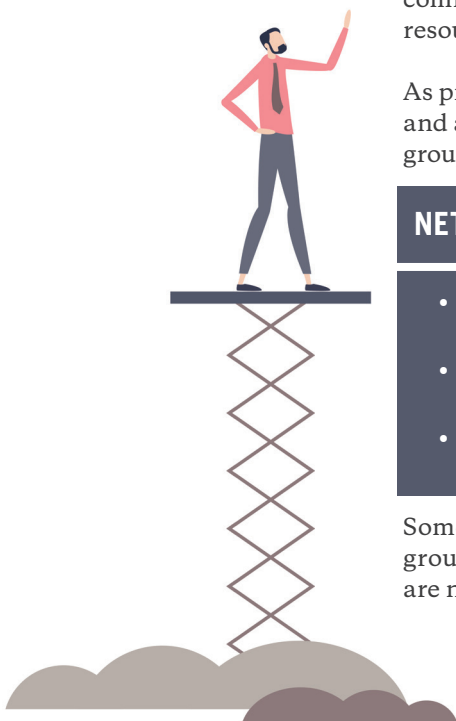
- Advocacy
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Innovation & Emerging Trends
- Interim Report Editorial Board
- Young Professionals

NETWORKING GROUPS

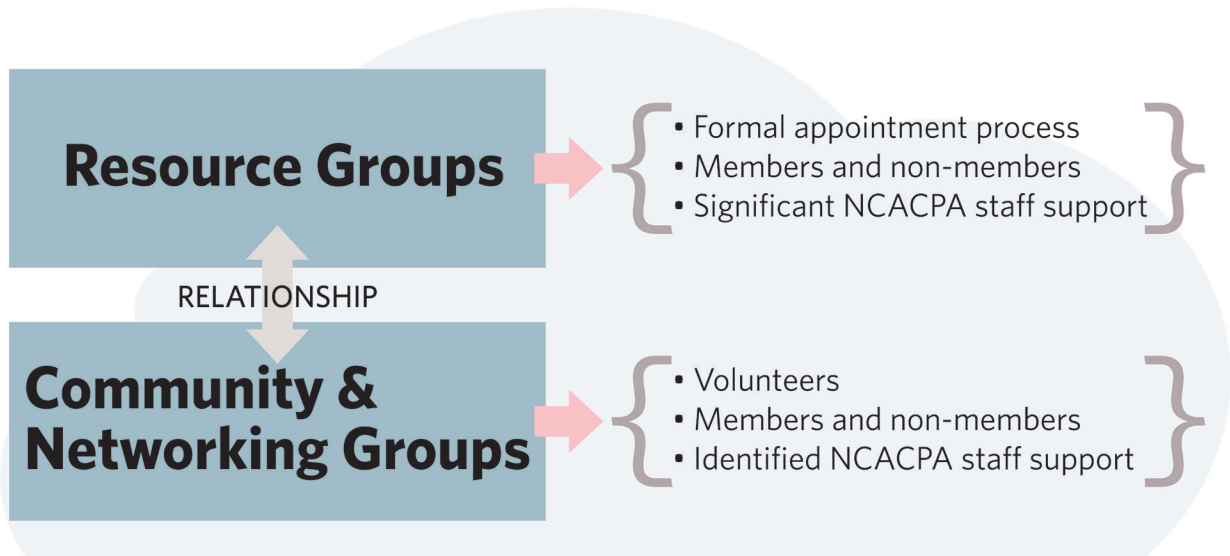
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Financial Planning
- Firm Administrators
- Geography (*i.e., Asheville, Charlotte, Triad, Triangle*)
- Students
- Women’s Initiative

Some of the newly designated networking groups will replace existing networking groups (such as Geography and Women’s Initiative), while some networking groups are new (such as DEI, Firm Administrators, and Students).

¹ The resource groups will provide the roles of the Membership Committee and the Professional Development Advisory Council.



The following chart depicts the relationship between the resource groups and networking groups:



The roles and responsibilities for each group are defined to ensure efforts align with NCACPA's strategy. The roles and responsibilities of each group are:

RESOURCE GROUPS

- Environmental scan, including innovation
- Professional development
- Awareness
- Advocacy, including responding to technical standards
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Products and services

NETWORKING GROUPS

- Environmental scan, including innovation
- Professional development
- Awareness
- Respond to technical standards
- Advocacy
- Oversee peer review process (only for peer review)

The roles and responsibilities will vary based on the specific focus and maturity of each group. While each group will need to address each designated role and responsibility during its annual planning process, the nature and extent will vary, especially during the initial years of implementation.

NCACPA staff responsibilities are clearly defined to facilitate the restructuring. As part of the realignment of responsibilities, staff will be responsible for sharing information between the resource and networking groups and be the main conduit for sharing information with the board.

Key restructuring elements include:

- ① Resource groups and networking groups will focus on serving the needs of designated markets.
- ② Association services are directed to members and non-members, and to individuals in the expanding accounting profession—including CPAs and other professionals.
- ③ Activities of the resource groups and networking groups will align with the association's strategy.
- ④ Expanding networking groups will increase the association's reach and influence.
- ⑤ Networking groups are supported by designated NCACPA staff.
- ⑥ There is a clear link between the resource groups and the networking groups.

Operating procedures provide consistency in operations between resource groups and networking groups. A few key elements include:

- ① **Environmental scan:** At least annually, each resource group will perform an environmental scan specific to their respective area to identify and consider trends to update the association's strategy.
- ② **Identified roles and responsibilities:** The responsibilities of resource group members and staff are specified to help volunteers understand expectations and to ensure consistency across the association.
- ③ **Resource group chair term:** To increase opportunities for leadership development among volunteers, term limits are added for resource group chairs.
- ④ **Vice-chair roles clarified:** Clarified role of vice-chair for resource groups to provide a clear succession of leadership.
- ⑤ **Resource group term limits:** To provide opportunities for volunteers and to encourage new ideas and perspectives.
- ⑥ **Volunteer recruitment:** To meet volunteer needs of expanding the roles of resource groups, recommended activities to solicit volunteers.
- ⑦ **Networking groups steering group protocol:** To ensure consistency in the ongoing leadership of the networking groups, policies were developed for the appointment of steering group volunteers and leadership.
- ⑧ **Code of conduct:** Establish clear expectations for volunteer service.



NEXT STEPS

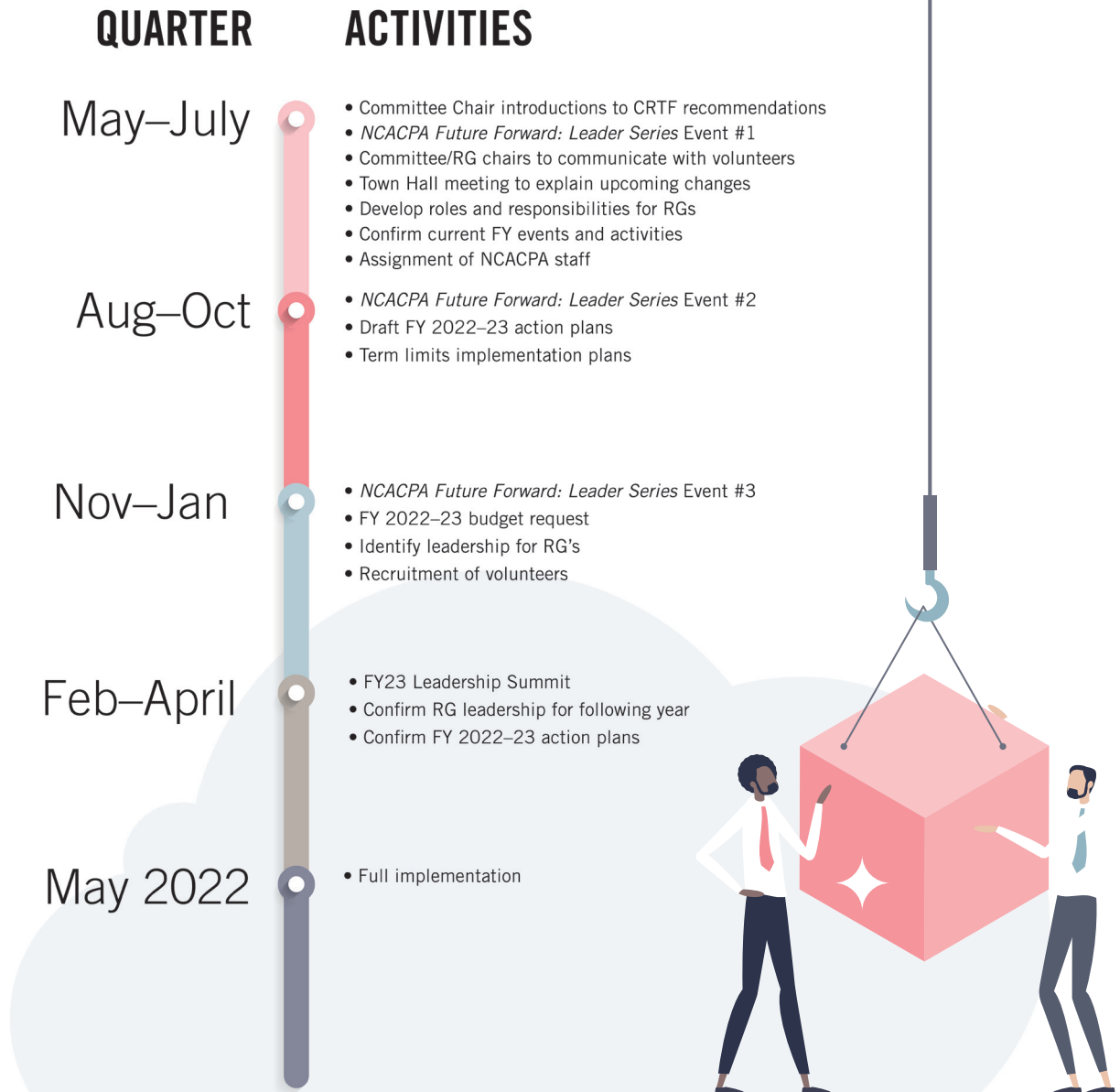
Changes announced now will be fully implemented starting May 1, 2022. The board decided to execute the changes over time rather than all at once. Fiscal year 2021-22 will be the year we transition from committees to resource groups, and as it will be a year of learning, new resource groups and networking groups are targeted for fiscal year 2022-2023. Having said that, we are always open to a group of volunteers stepping forward to implement a new resource group or networking group.

A series of events and tools will help with the transition.

- ① NCACPA Future Forward: Leader Series replaces the annual Leadership Summit. Current volunteer leaders will receive additional restructuring details during these three Leader Series events.
- ② A Town Hall meeting will take place in July. It will explain the restructuring and its implementation, as well as answer questions.
- ③ Pilot groups: A few existing committees and networking groups will accelerate the restructuring to identify any issues before the association-wide implementation.
- ④ White papers: Volunteers will receive guidance to assist with the restructuring, including Implementation Guides and toolkits for both resource and networking groups. Further, a Pathways Guide will help volunteers continue their heightened engagement and leadership within the association by providing volunteer service suggestions.
- ⑤ A SWAT team of NCACPA staff will support resource groups and networking groups implementing the revised structure and serve as a central collection point for questions and suggestions.
- ⑥ A campaign will launch to recruit volunteers to serve on existing and planned resource groups.



The following timeline explains the activities occurring during 2021–22 for committees transitioning to resource groups.



As with any significant change, there will be questions that arise, and some recommendations may not develop as envisioned. Understanding the objective of the changes and exhibiting flexibility will be key traits as we move forward. Restructuring volunteer activities into market-focused resource groups and networking groups and aligning the

NCACPA staff to support these volunteer activities, will position the association for sustainable success for years to come—hopefully another 100 years! To ensure the success of these efforts, actively participate in the transformation activities, and feel free to ask questions and provide suggestions. We cannot wait to see what May 2022 will look like!