



# 2017 State Society Diversity Initiatives Inventory



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Many thanks to all of the state societies who participated in the 2017 inventory. This report would not have been possible without your participation.

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# Executive summary

The following findings are based on responses collected from **18 state societies** that participated in the 2017 State Society Diversity Initiatives Inventory. The inventory was distributed in spring 2017, and includes statistics reported as of August 2017.

This report is designed to create awareness about what state societies are doing regarding diversity and inclusion (D&I). The inventory breaks down state society program offerings as they relate to the following groups: ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ, young professionals and retired CPAs. Among the state societies that had programs in each of the areas covered by the survey. Not all of the 18 state societies had programs in all areas or for all groups, but among those that did have offerings, here is the breakdown of the programs they had:

All state societies **surveyed had at least one** D&I council or committee.

Among the programs directed at high school student development or engagement, **91% were for ethnic minorities**.

**Eighty-seven percent** of the programs for college student development or engagement were for ethnic minorities.

About **60% of state societies** had scholarship programs for ethnic minorities, **24% for young professionals** and **18% for women**.

The majority of professional development programs at the state societies were **directed at young professionals**, but there were **also programs for women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ and retired CPAs**.

The available mentoring programs were **fairly evenly distributed among young professionals, women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ and retired CPAs**.

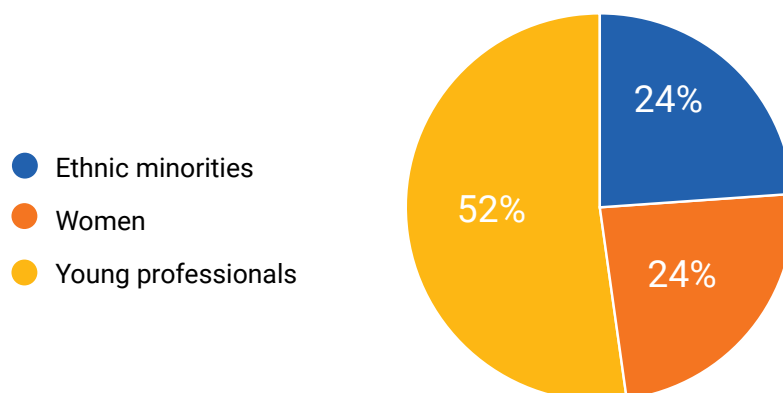
Most of the state societies had budgets for development or engagement programs. Nearly half were dedicated to programs for young professionals, **38% were for ethnic minorities, 15% for women and 4% for retired CPAs**.

Among the partnership programs, **over half were related to initiatives for ethnic minorities**, while a smaller number focused on young professionals or women.

# Councils and committees

Diversity councils or committees are effective vehicles to create organizational change and help establish focus on diversity and inclusion. They can be the driving force behind planning and implementing strategies, promoting awareness and generally championing the cause. They are most effective when they have the active and visible participation and support of state society CEOs as well as influential decision-makers.

All 18 state societies surveyed had at least one diversity and inclusion-related council or committee. Among those respondents, these are the percentages devoted to each area:



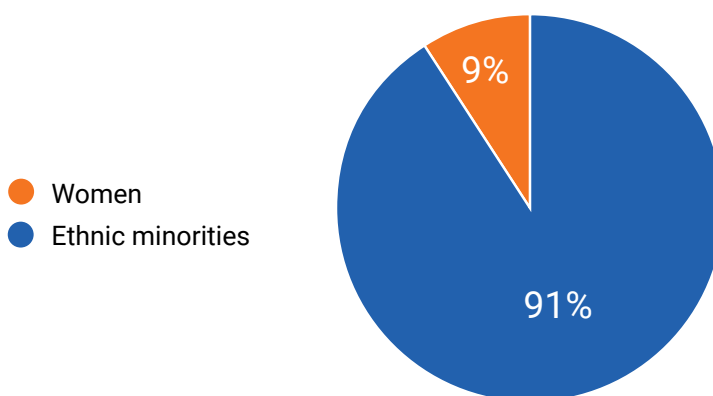
## Here is a sample of council or committee activities reported:

- Diversification of committees and boards
- Conducted research and analysis around dimensions of diversity
- Interviewed employees at companies in the state known for success in diversity
- Society president and CEO visited minority-owned and diversity-focused accounting firms and professionals
- Paired firms with diversity and inclusion consulting and training services
- Promoted the CPA profession to underrepresented groups
- Planned educational events for students, young professionals, staff-level accountants and managing partners
- CEO professional issues update spent time discussing society diversity initiatives as well as other diversity and inclusion information
- Advocated the business case for diversity and inclusion
- Negotiated partnerships with affinity organizations
- Worked to discover how firms define diversity and implement new strategies
- Proposed CEO video dedicated to diversity and inclusion advocacy to all members
- Included diversity and inclusion on board meeting agendas often

# High school students

Many of the state societies have general initiatives targeting high school students; more than half have initiatives specifically for ethnic minorities. According to the *2015 AICPA Diversity & Inclusion Young Minority Influencer & Pipeline Research (The Influencer Report)*, 50% of respondents reported their first interaction with the accounting profession occurred in high school as part of a finance class, bookkeeping class, or extracurricular activity.

Ten of the societies surveyed had high school development programs. Among those programs, these are the percentages in each area:



## Here is a sample of high school student engagement activities reported:

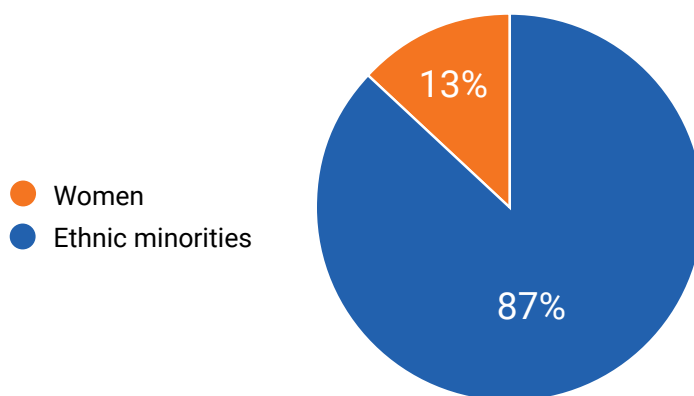
- Provided job shadowing opportunities
- Coordinated CPAs teaching financial literacy
- Supported summer programs in accounting (i.e., National Association of Black Accountants' (NABA) and Accounting Career Awareness Program)
- Conducted a scholars program, a year-long career awareness and mentoring effort
- Advocated awareness of CPA careers, connections to the profession and educational partnerships with accounting departments
- Coordinated Spanish-speaking CPAs to attend state Hispanic Educational Summit
- Created "CPAs in Action" video for high school students
- Special Feature Report on pipeline disruption and the diversity challenge, distributed to all society members

CPAs who interact with students can demonstrate the breadth and depth of accounting as a career choice.

# College students

AICPA research indicates that a third of minority accountants are first-generation college graduates. Affordability, mentorship, lack of role models and a sense of belonging are top obstacles for ethnic minority accounting students, which reinforces the importance of programs that address these challenges. They can be especially effective at a time when enrollment in undergraduate accounting programs is projected to be at an all-time high, according to the 2017 Trends in the Supply of Accounting Graduates and the Demand for Public Accounting Recruits.

A total of seven of the state societies surveyed had college student development or engagement programs, and the majority of them were for ethnic minorities.



## Here is a sample of activities around college students:

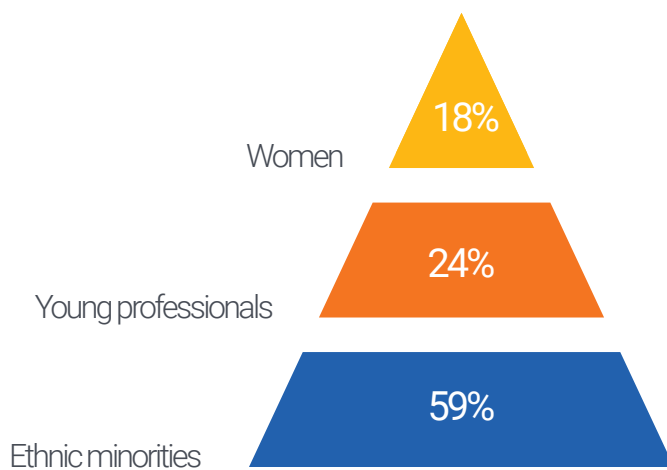
- Helped prepare and place minority students in internships
- Conducted community college outreach
- Hosted student conference specifically for diverse students and university professors
- Gave accounting career awareness presentations at HBCUs
- Hosted alumni workshop for graduates of society high school scholar program who are in college
- Supported local NABA chapters on campuses regarding the CPA Exam and the profession
- Worked with the AICPA and NABA to provide scholarship opportunities
- Hosted internship preparation program for students transitioning from student to professional: a three-day, all-expenses-paid event available to 25 qualifying college students annually

College is a crucial time to educate students about the benefits and career opportunities that come with being a CPA.

# Scholarships

Six out of seven minority accounting students work at least part-time in college, according to *The Influencer Report*. Scholarships, which provide sustenance, motivation and accountability for undergraduate and graduate students, can make it possible for aspiring CPAs to complete their studies and ultimately join the profession.

Eleven of the state societies surveyed had scholarship programs. Among those programs, these are the percentages that offered scholarships in each area:



Scholarships are an investment in the future of the profession.

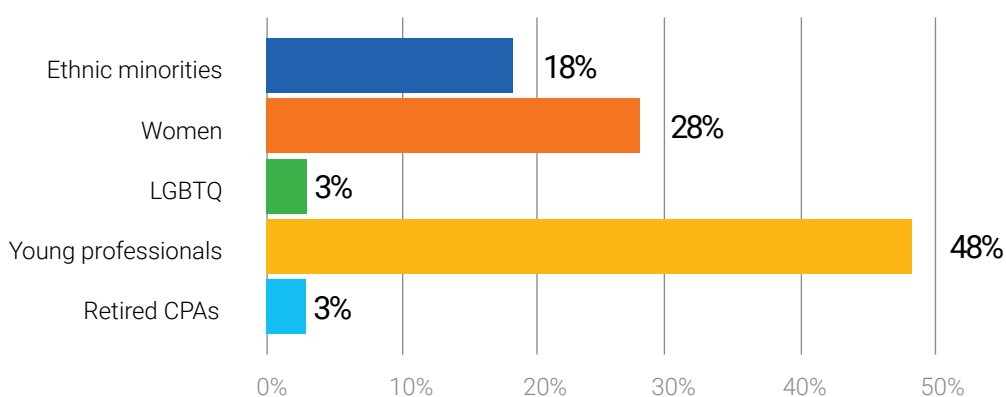
## Here is a sample of scholarship activities:

- Formed foundation to fund initiatives to address talent concerns, changing demographics and lack of diversity in the profession, in addition to the existing scholarship program
- Offered minority scholarships for undergraduate and graduate college students
- Worked with CPA Exam review companies to offer assistance for exam review materials
- Partnered with affinity organization to provide scholarships for their diverse student members and programs

# Professional development

Professional development programs can recognize outstanding professionals, provide training or other advancement opportunities and introduce younger CPAs to potential role models, among other benefits. Almost all of the state societies offered programs that included awards, service opportunities, networking events, conferences and online resources.

Sixteen state societies surveyed had professional development programs of some kind. Of those, here are the percentages in each area:



## Here is a sample of professional development activities reported:

- Women to Watch, Women of Note, 30 Under 30 and Diversity and Inclusion awards
- Service with technical task forces, community service events, student groups and leadership lunches
- New CPA and new member happy hours, annual fundraiser, volunteer activities, and professional spotlight sessions
- Networking and social opportunities, connection to other professionals, career advancement resources
- Monthly lunch with leaders series
- Diversity sessions incorporated into various conferences
- Conferences for women and young professionals
- Video library and articles on the website with diversity and inclusion resources
- Discounts and resources for the CPA Exam
- Article series, "Diverse CPAbilities"
- "Share Your Story" blog
- Toolkits

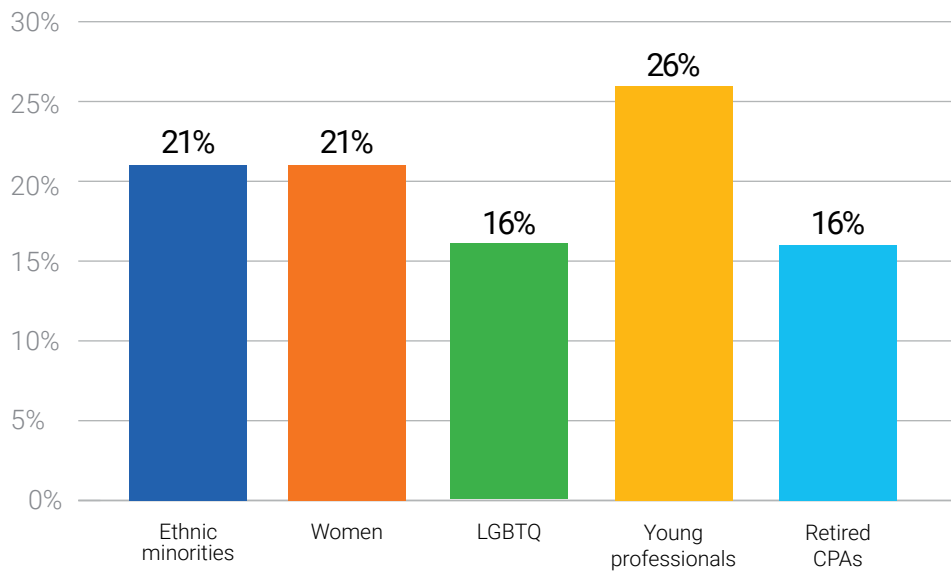
A variety of professional development opportunities assist in the recruitment and retention of all CPAs in the profession.



# Mentoring

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial way for seasoned CPAs to help diverse professionals achieve their greatest potential. It also has proven value: 87% of the firms surveyed in the 2017 *CPA Firm Gender Survey* thought it was making an impact on attracting and retaining talent.

A total of seven state societies had mentoring programs. Among those programs, here's how many were devoted to each area:



## Here is a sample of mentoring activities reported:

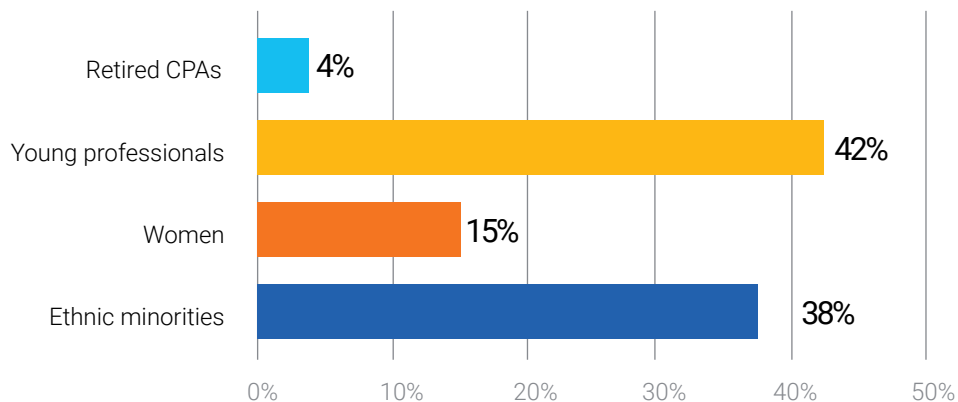
- Mentor/mentee match program that is open to all members
- Women's mentoring circles that benefit women of all ages and in all stages of professional development
- Students in society scholars program are paired with mentors and are required to talk, email, text and meet throughout the year

CPA professionals are encouraged to be mentees and become mentors throughout their careers.

# Budget

Diversity and inclusion programs are most successful when they have the necessary resources. Gary Bolinger, past CEO and president of the Indiana CPA Society, has challenged state societies to devote 10% of their budgets to diversity and inclusion programs. The survey found that a majority of them do have budgets for these efforts.

Fourteen of the societies surveyed had budgets for development or engagement programs. Among those programs, roughly 40% had budgets for young professionals and ethnic minorities, while a smaller number had them for women or retired CPAs.



## Here is a sample of budget allocation:

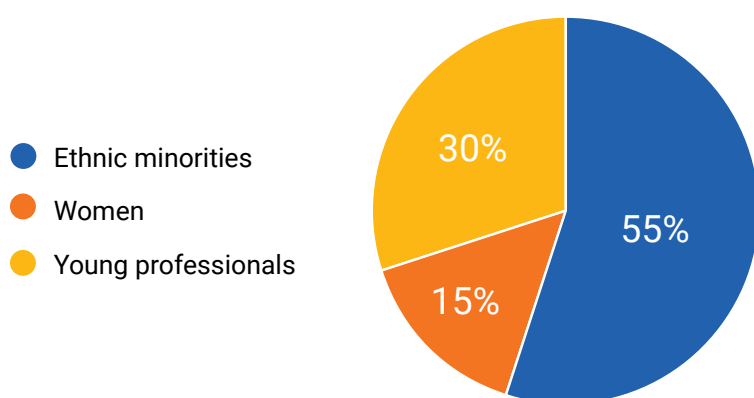
- Society foundation offered minority scholarships for undergraduate and graduate minority college students
- Obtained sponsorships for programs and events
- Had a budget-line item for diversity and inclusion task force activities
- Members volunteered for programs, such as mentoring, for mentees from high school through professional level
- Was able to use funds from a bequest from a member's estate to attract diverse students to the profession
- Offered complimentary membership to students and educators
- Although professional development activities were funded by the budget, they also generated revenue
- Offered reduced membership rate for retired CPAs

Leadership and member support are crucial to initiate and sustain diversity and inclusion initiatives.

# Partnerships

Partnerships can enhance and strengthen a diversity and inclusion effort. Many state societies run programs with affinity organizations and have general partnerships with other professional organizations and associations.

Twelve of the societies surveyed were engaged in partnerships. More than half of them had partnerships related to initiatives for ethnic minorities, while a smaller number used them for activities aimed at young professionals or women.



Partnerships make a collective impact from the state to the national level.

## Here is a sample of partners reported:

- AICPA
- Chambers of commerce
- Bar associations
- Banker organizations
- NABA Accounting Career Awareness Program (ACAP)
- CPA Exam review companies
- Tax associations
- Affinity groups

## Accounting affinity organizations:

- Ascend
- Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA)
- International Society of Filipinos in Finance and Accounting (ISFFA)
- National Association of Black Accountants Inc. (NABA)
- Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA)
- National Council of Philippine American Canadian Accountants (NCPACA)

# Inventory participants

The following state societies participated in the inventory. Please direct any questions regarding the information presented in this report to [diversity@aicpa.org](mailto:diversity@aicpa.org).

Society	Council or committee				High school student engagement			College student engagement			Scholarships or financial support			
	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Young professionals	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Young professionals
Alabama Society of CPAs	●			●							●			●
Alaska Society of CPAs				●										
Arizona Society of CPAs				●										
California Society of CPAs		●		●	●									
Georgia Society of CPAs	●			●	●			●						
Illinois CPA Society	●	●		●	●			●			●		●	
Indiana CPA Society	●			●	●			●			●			
Iowa Society of CPAs				●										●
Maryland Association of CPAs	●	●		●	●	●		●	●		●	●		●
Michigan Association of CPAs		●		●	●						●			
Nevada Society of CPAs				●										
New Jersey Society of CPAs				●	●			●			●			
North Carolina Association of CPAs	●	●		●	●			●			●			
Ohio Society of CPAs		●		●	●			●						
Pennsylvania Institute of CPAs	●	●		●	●						●	●		●
Society of Louisiana CPAs		●		●										
Texas Society of CPAs	●			●							●			
Virginia Society of CPAs				●							●			

# Inventory participants

For more resources on diversity and inclusion in the profession, go to [aicpa.org/diversity](http://aicpa.org/diversity)

Society	Professional development					Mentoring program					Budget					Affinity partnerships				
	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Young professionals	Retired CPAs	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Young professionals	Retired CPAs	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Young professionals	Retired CPAs	Ethnic minority	Women	LGBTQ	Young professionals	Retired CPAs
Alabama Society of CPAs				●							●			●		●				●
Alaska Society of CPAs									●					●						
Arizona Society of CPAs				●		●	●	●	●	●	●			●						●
California Society of CPAs		●		●							●	●		●		●				
Georgia Society of CPAs											●					●				
Illinois CPA Society	●	●		●			●				●	●		●		●				●
Indiana CPA Society	●					●					●			●		●				
Iowa Society of CPAs				●					●					●						
Maryland Association of CPAs				●		●	●	●	●	●						●				
Michigan Association of CPAs	●	●		●	●											●	●			
Nevada Society of CPAs				●										●						
New Jersey Society of CPAs	●	●		●							●					●				●
North Carolina Association of CPAs		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●						
Ohio Society of CPAs		●		●												●	●			●
Pennsylvania Institute of CPAs	●	●		●							●	●		●		●	●			●
Society of Louisiana CPAs		●																		
Texas Society of CPAs				●										●		●				
Virginia Society of CPAs				●							●				●					



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