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The [American Institute of CPAs \(AICPA\)](#) and the [National Academy Foundation \(NAF\)](#) have launched a new program aimed at educating and preparing a diverse workforce that is ready to enter the accounting profession. The AICPA/NAF Recognition Program combines a variety of learning platforms and experiences designed specifically to engage NAF Academy of Finance high school students, who are concentrating on accounting, early in their career decision making process.

The nationwide recognition program will teach students both soft skills – such as communication, time management, and leadership – as well as the technical accounting and finance skills that will encourage and prepare them to pursue an accounting degree at a post-secondary institution. In addition, students will learn about the career possibilities available to Certified Public Accountants.

“By focusing on a combination of technical accounting skills and soft skills, the AICPA/NAF Recognition Program will help strengthen the pipeline of diverse students entering the accounting profession,” said Kim Drumgo, AICPA director of Diversity and Inclusion and vice chair of the National Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. “The program will expose high school students early in their career decision making process to the opportunities that being a CPA offers, as well as the support they’ll receive from the accounting profession as they work to earn their CPA license and throughout their careers. The AICPA is excited about our partnership with NAF and we look forward to implementing the program and growing it in years to come.”

A pilot program will begin in the fall of this year, with academies in districts in

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than 25,000 students annually, 61% of whom are from low- to moderate-income families (determined by eligibility for free and reduced price lunch).

The [U.S. census projects](#) that minorities will comprise the majority of the population in the U.S. by 2045. The AICPA/NAF Recognition Program seeks to address these changing demographics and shifts in entrepreneurial capital by broadening the pipeline of talent and creating a more inclusive profession.

“What makes NAF academies so special are the relationships we have with the business community,” said JD Hoyer, President of NAF. “With the NAF/AICPA Recognition Program we are adding value to an educational experience that we know works. Industry alignment and recognition is the key to the development of an educated and skilled workforce.”

Students will be recognized upon completion of following requirements:

- Complete and pass at least two finance or accounting courses
- Participate in a paid internship facilitated by NAF
- Complete an online enrichment program designed to help develop soft skills and provide exposure to various careers in accounting.
- Register as a student affiliate member on AICPA's [Start Here, Go Places. website](#).
- Complete an AICPA online pre- and post-program survey to assess their perceptions of the accounting profession and their likelihood to take future accounting courses.

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