

What Is a Certified Professional Insurance Agent (CPIA)?

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Insurance agents who want to be more successful can acquire the knowledge they need while earning the Certified Professional Insurance Agent (CPIA) designation. This professional certificate program requires only a modest outlay of time and money, yet provides agents who complete it with practical tools for attracting and maintaining prospects and customers and building a successful insurance business.

The CPIA is aimed at agents and support staff at insurance agencies as well as insurance companies and other insurance-related businesses. The focus is on sales techniques and marketing communication, tailored specifically for the insurance industry. The material covered goes beyond that, however, encompassing reviews of state insurance marketplaces, insurance carrier underwriting criteria and more.

The CPIA is sponsored by the American Insurance Marketing and Sales Society (AIMS Society.) The society provides marketing and sales education for the insurance industry. The CPIA is the organization's only certificate program.

CPIA Certification Requirements

In order to receive a CPIA, insurance professionals have to attend a series of three seminars. Each of the Insurance Success Seminars, as they're called, lasts a day. It's not necessary to take them in order, but all have to be completed. The first course is "Position for Success" and covers business development, state insurance marketplaces, competitors, underwriting criteria and customer attitudes.

The second course, "Implement for Success," gives participants tools for gathering prospect information, analyzing customer needs, identifying risks and crafting customized insurance programs. The "Sustain Success" seminar discusses reviewing policies, providing proof of coverage, avoiding errors and omissions, processing claims and handling complaints. It also covers legal and ethical standards.

The courses are typically delivered in-person at day-long seminars. However, during the pandemic courses are offered online.

Participants don't have to take a test after completing the seminars. Nor do they have to pay any additional fees. They can immediately begin using the CPIA when they finish the educational component. AIMS will mail graduates a diploma after completion.

Attending the seminars will cost students from \$159 to \$259 for each seminar. The cost depends in part on whether the student is a member of the society and is taking the seminars online or face-to-face.

AIMS has no prerequisites for students taking the seminars. Students have three years to complete the entire series after taking the first one.

Every two years, CPIAs are required to update their certification. They can do this by re-taking any one of the Insurance Success seminars or by maintaining a membership in AIMS.

CPIA Certificate Holder Jobs

CPIA holders are often insurance agents working at insurance brokerages. However, they may also be members of agency sales support staffs or others employed in insurance-related businesses.

The CPIA doesn't confer any particular privileges on holders. It's an optional certification that signifies someone has attended specialized training on insurance sales and marketing. Most of the benefit is in the practical, hands-on business knowledge gained rather than in the prestige of being able to put the CPIA initials on a business card.

Comparable Certifications

There are a number of other certificate programs that teach the basics of the insurance business. Most are significantly more costly and time-consuming than the CPIA.

The Financial Services Certified Professional (FSCP) from the American College of Financial requires passing seven courses on financial services and ethics topics at a combined cost of \$3,230.

The Life Underwriter Training Council Fellow (LUTCF) managed by the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) involves taking three nine-week courses for a total cost of \$2,850.

The Registered Financial Associate (RFA) from the International Association of Registered Financial Consultants has no educational requirements beyond a life insurance or securities license, a bachelor degree or another financial services professional designation. RFAs only have to pay a \$250 fee and pass an ethics examination.

Bottom Line

While it's not considered a premier financial professional services designation, taking all three Insurance Success seminars can fulfill 21 hours of continuing education requirements of the more advanced certifications, while also adding a certificate to an agent's resume. By taking the three day-long seminar courses required for the CPIA, an insurance agent or sales support staff employee gets a well-rounded grounding in sales and marketing of insurance. The curriculum covers state insurance markets, prospecting, preparing coverage plans, handling complaints and more.

Tips on Insurance

- When you are in the market for insurance, having a trusted and experienced professional advisor on your side to guide you through the evaluation and purchase process greatly increases the chances of a satisfactory outcome. Finding the right financial advisor that fits your needs doesn't have to be hard. SmartAsset's free tool matches you with financial advisors in your area in 5 minutes. If you're ready to be matched with local advisors that will help you achieve your financial goals, get started now.
- Not all insurance policies are worthwhile. Some are a waste of money. Here's a list of the ones you don't need to buy: <https://smartasset.com/insurance/6-insurance-policies-you-dont-really-need#q=insurance>.

Link to Article: <https://www.kake.com/story/43171400/what-is-a-certified-professional-insurance-agent-cpia>

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