

# EPI Continuing Education (CE) Approval Process

*Program Application Guidelines & CEPA Renewal Standards*

Version: 2025.1

Prepared By: Exit Planning Institute

Contact Us:

Email: [memberexperience@beyondcepa.com](mailto:memberexperience@beyondcepa.com)] | Office: (216) 712-4244

Submission Portal: [Complete CE Submission Form](#)

## Table of Contents

1. **Introduction**
  - a. Purpose and Overview of Renewal Requirements
2. **CEPA Credential Renewal**
  - a. Continuing Education Hours
  - b. Approved Education Sources
  - c. Ethical & Membership Standards
  - d. Renewal Cycle Details
3. **Program Submission**
  - a. Specifications & Criteria
  - b. Review Timeline
4. **Credit Qualification Criteria**
  - a. Content & Delivery Requirements
  - b. Real-Time vs. Self-Study Formats
  - c. Credit Calculation & Recordkeeping
5. **Accepted CE Topics**
  - a. Exit Planning & Financial Strategies
  - b. Valuation, Optimization & M&A
  - c. Succession, Team Development & Client Engagement
  - d. Marketing, Legal, and Industry-Specific Topics
6. **Non-Accepted Topics**
  - a. Out-of-Scope & Regulatory Content
  - b. Low-Rigor or Unverified Sources
7. **Program Application Guide**
  - a. Required Fields & Learning Objectives
  - b. Format, Presenter Info & Approval Tips
8. **Submission Process**
  - a. How to Submit
  - b. Review & Notification
9. **Provider Responsibilities**
  - a. Recordkeeping, Certificates & Content Updates
10. **Contact Information**
  - a. Submission Support & General Inquiries

## EPI Continuing Education (CE) Approval Process

Continuing Education (CE) is a critical component of maintaining the Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) credential. It ensures that advisors stay current with industry trends, deepen their expertise, and continually sharpen the skills necessary to provide meaningful value to business owners and stakeholders.

This guide is designed to support CEPAs and education providers who wish to submit CE programs for approval by the Exit Planning Institute (EPI). It outlines the standards, requirements, and submission process for earning CE credit, whether you're submitting a course, webinar, workshop, or another form of qualifying education.

### What You'll Find in This Guide:

- The definition of CE and its importance to CEPA credential holders
- A breakdown of the CE requirements for maintaining certification
- Detailed guidelines on what qualifies (and what doesn't qualify) for CE credit.
- Instructions for submitting a CE program for review.
- Frequently asked questions to support a smooth submission process.

We recommend starting with the **CE Credit Qualification Criteria** to understand whether your program aligns with EPI's standards. From there, refer to the **Program Submission Guidelines** to walk through the approval process step by step. Each section is clearly labeled so you can quickly navigate to the information most relevant to you.

This guide is here to ensure your submission meets EPI's expectations and contributes meaningfully to the CEPA community's ongoing professional development.

This guide provides comprehensive guidelines for submitting a program for Continuing Education (CE) Credit through EPI. It outlines the requirements for program approval, including content specifications, delivery formats, and record-keeping responsibilities for education providers.

Additionally, it details the **Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) credential renewal process**, which must be completed every three (3) years through continuing education. To maintain the CEPA credential, certification holders must fulfill the following requirements:

### 1. Meet Minimum Continuing Education Requirements

- a) Complete a minimum of **40 hours** of exit planning-related professional development.
- b) EPI accepts reciprocal CE hours from CPE, CFP, and other approved certifications but **does not accept ethics courses as CE**.
- c) At least **20 hours must be Value Acceleration Methodology-based education (EPI-Hours)**, which can be obtained through EPI or its endorsed partners. Examples include:
  - i. **Exit Planning Summit**
    1. The Exit Planning Summit is the premier event for the exit planning profession. Hosted by EPI and powered by CEPAs, the Summit unites top advisors to strengthen relationships, expand knowledge in value acceleration, and share best practices. It's a strategic, growth-focused experience that's also fun and energizing.
  - ii. **EPI Academy Courses**
    1. Build, explore, and master new exit planning skills through online classes led by industry experts. EPI Academy offers a flexible learning experience designed for CEPAs who want to deepen their expertise, stay current with industry trends, and earn Continuing Education (CE) credits on their own schedule.
  - iii. **Chapter Events**
    1. The EPI Chapter Network plays a key role in advancing Continuing Education (CE) by fostering local communities of professional advisors who collaborate to address the unique needs of their region. Chapters deliver educational

programming that builds awareness among business owners and advisors, encourages the adoption of best practices, and supports ongoing professional development. These efforts help ensure that advisors are better prepared to guide owners through successful business exits while strengthening the exit planning profession.

**iv. CEPA Think Tanks**

1. CEPA Think Tanks are dynamic learning and networking sessions designed to explore timely topics in the exit planning space. These sessions bring together CEPAs from across the EPI Community to share best practices, build strong referral networks, and gain actionable insights. Participation encourages deeper engagement with fellow advisors and equips CEPAs with tools to enhance their practice. CE Credit: CEPAs may earn Continuing Education credit through active participation and by meeting outlined Think Tank requirements.

**v. Webinars and other EPI-sponsored programs**

1. Live EPI Webinars offer 1 CE Credit for CEPAs who attend. Credits will be added to your CE Tracker within five business days after attending. If attending by phone, members must self-submit to receive credit.

**2. Maintain Professional & Ethical Standards**

- a) Certification holders must **agree in writing** to adhere to EPI's **Professional Standards and Code of Ethics**.
  - *For more details, refer to the EPI Code of Ethics [here](#).*
- b) They must also re-attest that they **have not been convicted of a felony** related to exit planning.

**3. Maintain Active Membership**

- a) CEPA credential holders must maintain an **Annual Membership Fee** to keep their credential active.
- b) Failure to pay the membership fee will result in **credential deactivation** and membership termination. **Applicants with past-due fees will be ineligible for renewal.**

The CEPA cycle expiration date varies for each individual, depending on when you first received your CEPA credential. For details on your specific renewal date, please contact your Dedicated Account Manager. As a CEPA, your Account Manager is a member of Team EPI, dedicated to helping you thrive. They will guide you with helpful tools and resources along the way, and they will also assist you in tracking your CEPA cycle and staying current with your continuing education (CE) requirements.

In addition to these renewal requirements, this document covers:

- a) **Program Submission Specifications** – Ensuring educational content meets EPI’s CE Credit Qualification Criteria and aligns with approved topics.
- b) **CE Credit Qualification Criteria** – Including program development standards, eligible formats, and credit calculation methods.
- c) **Program Records & Compliance** – Outlining record-keeping expectations for CE providers.
- d) **Accepted Continuing Education Topics** – Ensuring CE aligns with the professional development needs of CEPA certification holders.

**You are applying on behalf of:**

[Insert company name]

**Program Application Guidelines**

Submission Specifications:

A non-refundable application fee of \$99 is required for each program submission. Payment must be received before the review process can begin.

To qualify for CE credit, submitted programs must:

- Meet **EPI's CE Credit Qualification Criteria**.
- Cover at least one of the **Accepted Continuing Education Topics**.
  - *These topics are listed under Accepted Education Topics and Categories beginning on page 9 of this guide.*
- Have a minimum duration of **50 minutes**.
- Be structured so that **50 minutes of education equals 1 CE credit hour**. After the first credit hour, CE credit is calculated in **half-hour increments**, rounded down to the nearest half hour.
  - EPI follows the 50-minute hour model commonly used in professional education. This means:
    - 50 minutes = 1 CE credit
    - 75–99 minutes = 1.5 CE credits
    - 100–124 minutes = 2 CE credits
    - And so on...
  - Example: Please refer to the example below
    - A 1-hour session (50 minutes of actual instruction) = 1 CE credit
    - A 90-minute session = 1.5 CE credits
    - A 2-hour session (100+ minutes of instruction) = 2 CE credits

Once you submit your continuing education (CE) hours, our team will review your submission within five (5) business days to ensure compliance with EPI's requirements.

### **CE Credit Qualification Criteria**

Educational programs must meet the criteria below for CE credit qualification:

1. **Program Development & Content**
  - a. Programs must be developed and facilitated by **qualified subject matter experts**.

- i. This means that the content should be created and/or presented by individuals who have relevant expertise, experience, or credentials in the topic being discussed. Qualified subject matter experts may include:
    - 1. Certified or licensed professionals (e.g., CEPA®, CPA, attorney, CFP®, CFA, CVA, etc.)
    - 2. Individuals with significant industry experience (typically 5+ years) in exit planning or related fields
    - 3. Published authors or recognized speakers in the exit planning space.
    - 4. Academic instructors or trainers with specialized knowledge in business, finance, succession planning, or related disciplines
  - ii. These qualifications ensure that CE programs maintain credibility, deliver high educational value, and support the ongoing development of CEPAs.
- b. The content must be **current, accurate, and relevant** to further the education taught in the CEPA Credentialing Program

## 2. Program Formats

### a. Real-Time Delivery

- i. May include:
  - 1. Live classroom settings
  - 2. In-person seminars
  - 3. Live webinars

### b. Online Self-Study Programs

- i. May include:
  - 1. Self-paced online modules
  - 2. Recorded webinars (the organization must be able to provide proof of completion of watching)

### c. Program Criteria

- i. Both real-time and self-study programs must provide a **minimum of 50 minutes of educational content** per CE credit hour.
- ii. **Q&A sessions and exams are NOT included** in the 50-minute education requirement.

- iii. If session duration evidence is unavailable, providers may use the following **word count formula** to determine CE credit eligibility:

$(\text{Number of words in printed material} \div 180) + \text{Number of minutes of audio/video content} \div 50 = \text{Credit Hours}$  (Ex. Walking to Destiny Book (73,000 words  $\div$  180)  $\div$  50 = 8 Credit Hours)

- iv. Self-study programs must include a scored quiz with the following requirements:
1. 5 questions per credit hour (or 3 questions per additional half-hour increment).
  2. A minimum passing score of 70% is required for acceptance.
3. CE providers must maintain records for three years following the program date, including:
- a. **Date, location, and format** of program delivery.
  - b. **Names of presenters or discussion leaders.**
  - c. **Program outline and/or educational materials.**
  - d. **List of CEPA certified professionals in attendance.**
  - e. **Proof of successful quiz completion**, if applicable.

### **Accepted and Not Accepted Topics**

Continuing education topics must align with the knowledge, skills, and competencies covered in the Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA®) program.

**Accepted** Education Topics and Categories (please note this is not an exhaustive list)

- **Exit Planning Strategy and Frameworks**
  - Core Focus: Foundational principles, methodology, frameworks, and strategic design. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Customizing Exit Planning Frameworks for Industry and Owner Type
    - Strategic Process Design for Scalable Exit Planning
    - Measuring and Communicating Value Planning ROI
    - Technology and Tools for Exit Planning Efficiency
    - Developing a Repeatable Exit Planning Service Model
- **Owner-Centric Financial and Tax Planning**
  - Core Focus: Personal wealth, tax, and financial planning integrated with exit strategies. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:

- Advanced Tax Strategies for Transition Events
- Coordinating Business and Personal Wealth Planning
- Estate and Legacy Planning for Private Business Owners
- Planning for Liquidity Events and Windfalls
- Tax-Efficient Exit Planning Structures
- **Business Valuation and Financial Diagnostics**
  - Core Focus: Understanding business value, financial readiness, and valuation tools. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Identifying and Reducing Valuation Risk Factors
    - Real-World Application of Valuation Techniques
    - Owner Dependency and Value Drivers
    - Using Benchmarking and Industry Comparisons
    - Communicating Valuation Results to Business Owners
- **Value Growth and Business Optimization**
  - Core Focus: Enhancing transferable value, operations, and strategic growth levers. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Growth Strategy Planning for Exit Readiness
    - Enhancing Transferable Value Through IP and Intangibles
    - Operational Improvements as Value Drivers
    - Recurring Revenue and Scalability Tactics
    - Leveraging Financial Advisory Tools for Value Acceleration
- **Exit Options and Deal Structuring**
  - Core Focus: Exit pathways, customizing strategy, and structuring owner outcomes. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Comparing Exit Strategies: PE, ESOP, Family, and More
    - Building Customized Owner Exit Blueprints
    - Structuring Exit Strategies Around Personal Goals
    - Exit Readiness Scoring and Strategic Decision-Making
    - Transition Path Education for Business Owners
- **M&A and Third-Party Sale Readiness**
  - Core Focus: Sale preparation, deal mechanics, and working with external buyers. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Navigating the M&A and PE Sale Process
    - Structuring PE Deals for Owner Retention and Growth

- Due Diligence Preparation for Sell-Side Advisory
- Emotional and Operational Prep for Third-Party Sales
- Bridging Valuation Gaps in Sale Negotiations
- **Succession and Internal Transitions**
  - Core Focus: Internal continuity, ESOPs, family transitions, and legacy planning. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Multi-Generational Transition Planning
    - Building Internal Successor Leadership Capacity
    - ESOP Structure, Implementation, and Communication
    - Governance and Continuity in Family Businesses
    - Choosing Between Internal vs. External Exit Strategies
- **Practice Growth and Team Development**
  - Core Focus: Building your advisory business and high-performing collaborative teams. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Structuring Advisory Teams for Effective Collaboration
    - Building and Managing Referral Partner Networks
    - Advisory Leadership and Internal Team Development
    - Creating Efficient Workflows Across Advisory Roles
    - Building Practice Infrastructure for Growth
- **Client Engagement and Facilitation**
  - Core Focus: Communication skills, workshop leadership, and client-facing dynamics. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Leading Effective Client Discovery & Engagement Sessions
    - Workshop Design for Exit Planning Education
    - Storytelling and Communication Skills for Advisors
    - Facilitating Difficult Owner Conversations with Confidence
    - Applying Behavioral Science in Advisory Relationships
- **Behavioral Finance and Owner Psychology**
  - Core Focus: Understanding how business owners think, make decisions, and respond emotionally during transition planning. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Psychology of the Business Owner: Motivators & Barriers to Exit
    - Behavioral Triggers in Exit Decision-Making

- Emotional Intelligence for Exit Planning Advisors
- Helping Owners Overcome Exit Readiness Denial
- Managing Stress and Identity Loss in Owner Transitions
- **Marketing and Business Development for Exit Planners**
  - Core Focus: Practice visibility, lead generation, and content strategy for CEPA advisors and firms. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Positioning Your Exit Planning Practice in a Crowded Market
    - Digital Marketing Strategies for Value Advisors
    - Educational Content Creation for Exit Planning Awareness
    - Leveraging Client Testimonials and Case Studies
    - Referral-Driven Business Development Models
- **Legal and Compliance Considerations**
  - Core Focus: Legal issues, regulatory trends, and ethical considerations relevant to exit planning professionals. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Legal Structuring of Exit Agreements: What Advisors Should Know
    - Fiduciary Responsibilities in Multi-Advisor Exit Teams
    - Exit Planning and Securities and Exchange Commission / the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Considerations for Licensed Professionals
    - Ethics in Exit Planning: Avoiding Conflicts of Interest
    - Drafting Memorandums Between Advisors and Clients in the Exit Process
- **Industry-Specific Exit Planning**
  - Core Focus: Tailoring exit strategies for niche industries with unique value levers or transition challenges. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
    - Exit Planning for Manufacturing and Industrial Businesses
    - Professional Services Firms: Partnership Buyouts and Internal Transitions
    - Exit Planning in Healthcare and Dental Practices
    - Navigating Exit in Tech and SaaS Companies
    - Agriculture and Family-Owned Farm Succession Planning
- **Infrastructure, Systems and Scalability for Advisors**

- Core Focus: Operational improvements and back-end systems that allow CEPA professionals to grow sustainably. Some examples of acceptable topics are included below:
  - Scaling an Exit Planning Practice with Process Automation
  - CRM and Workflow Tools for Advisory Efficiency
  - Documenting & Delegating Client Deliverables
  - Hiring & Training a Support Team for Exit Engagements
  - KPIs for Exit Planning Practice Success

***Not Accepted*** Education Topics and Categories (please note this is not an exhaustive list)

- **Content Outside the Scope of Exit Planning Education**
  - Basic marketing skills or promotional techniques  
(e.g., how to use social media, cold calling strategies, ad campaigns)
  - Motivational or inspirational programs  
(e.g., personal vision boards, life coaching sessions, TED-style talks without frameworks)
  - General team building activities  
(e.g., escape rooms, outdoor retreats, or unrelated leadership bonding sessions)
  - Sales-focused content for proprietary products or platforms  
(e.g., sessions pushing CRM tools, advisor platforms, or insurance company software)
  - Standard business operating procedures  
(e.g., how to run payroll, onboarding staff, or filing quarterly taxes)
- **Regulatory Exam and Licensing-Related Education**
  - FINRA, NASAA, insurance, or securities licensing exam prep courses
  - Content focused solely on passing professional designations unrelated to exit planning.
- **Content Lacking Educational Rigor or Interactivity**
  - Programs less than 50 minutes in length  
(Fails to meet the minimum time requirement for structured learning)
  - Online courses or webcasts without an exam or proof of attendance
  - Self-paced videos (e.g., YouTube, DVDs, CDs, or streaming) without verification measures

- Client- or public-facing presentations/seminars not designed for peer education.
- General self-help, life balance, or productivity apps
- **Unverified or Non-Peer Reviewed Materials**
  - Self-published books or content without academic or peer review
  - Authorship of articles in newspapers, blogs, or non-reviewed sources
  - Submissions to newsletters or promotional publications
  - Grading or evaluating exams for other credentials (not educational for the grader)

### Instructions for Completing the Program Information Section

To submit your program for continuing education credit review, please complete the following fields with clear, detailed, and accurate information. All fields marked with an asterisk (\*) are required for review.

#### Program Information

Field	Instructions
<b>Program Title*</b>	Provide the full title of the program. It should reflect the educational content and not be promotional or brand centric.
<b>Start Date*</b>	Indicate the first date the program will be offered. For on-demand programs, list the initial launch date.
<b>End Date</b>	Optional. For recurring or multi-day sessions, indicate the last scheduled date. If unknown, leave blank.
<b>Frequency*</b>	Select whether the program is a one-time offering or will be offered multiple times (live or on-demand).
<b>Number of Continuing Education Hours Requested</b>	Calculate based on the length of educational content. One hour of CE credit is awarded per 50 minutes of instruction.

<b>Field</b>	<b>Instructions</b>
<b>General Hours*</b>	Enter the number of hours requested for general continuing education credit (i.e., core exit planning topics).
<b>Delivery Format*</b>	Choose from: Live In-Person, Live Virtual, On-Demand (recorded), or Hybrid. Clearly indicate the learning method.
<b>Program Length (50 minutes per credit hour) *</b>	Indicate the total instructional minutes, excluding breaks or promotional time. Multiply 50 minutes per credit hour requested.
<b>Program Presenters*</b>	List the full names, titles, and qualifications of all presenters. Include relevant expertise in exit planning or the topic covered.
<b>Program Description*</b>	Provide a concise summary of the program's content, purpose, and intended audience. This is what will be used in CE records.
<b>Program Learning Objectives*</b>	List 3–5 measurable learning outcomes.
<b>Detailed Content Outline*</b>	Include a structured breakdown of the session(s), including topics, subtopics, and time allocations. This helps validate the number of CE hours requested.

### **Tips for Approval**

- Be specific and strategic in your learning objectives and outline.
- Avoid promotional content or vague course descriptions.
- Include clear links to business owner transition planning, value acceleration, or advisor development.

### **Final Notes and Submission Process**

Thank you for your interest in contributing to the professional development of CEPAs. EPI is committed to maintaining the highest standards for continuing education. To support this,

all programs submitted for CE approval must be aligned with the principles and practices of exit planning as defined in this document.

**Please ensure your submission:**

- Meets the minimum 50-minute duration per CE hour.
- Aligns with accepted topic categories and avoids disqualified subject areas.
- Is supported with a complete and detailed application, including all required fields listed in the Program Information section.
- Includes a learning-focused agenda or content outline that demonstrates educational rigor and relevance.

**How to Submit Your Program**

- Submit completed CE program applications via [Insert Submission Portal].
- Ensure all supporting documents (e.g., outline, presenter bios, quiz questions if applicable) are attached.
- Incomplete submissions will be returned for revision before review.

**Review Timeline**

- A member of the EPI team will review your submission within five (5) business days.
- You will receive an official approval notification, including the number and type of CE hours awarded.
- Approved programs may be listed on the EPI website and shared with CEPA members if applicable.

**If a Program Submission Is Denied**

When your CE program submission does not meet EPI’s standards, you will receive a formal denial notice within five business days that:

**Identifies the deficiencies**—specific reasons your application failed (e.g., topic misalignment, insufficient instructional time, missing learning objectives, unqualified presenters, incomplete fields, or non-compliant delivery format).

**Common Denial Reasons**

**Content Misalignment:** Topic outside accepted areas or objectives not tied to CEPA competencies.

**Educational Rigor:** Under-50-minute sessions without proof of additional content; self-study lacking quizzes or attendance verification.

**Incomplete Application:** Missing required fields (learning objectives, presenter bios, credit calculations) or vague descriptions.

**Format Issues:** Counting Q&A/exam time toward credit; unsupported streaming formats without interactivity.

**Compliance Gaps:** No plan for attendance tracking/certificate issuance; lack of required disclosures.

### Next Steps

**Revise & Resubmit:** Update your application to address each listed issue. Once resubmitted, the review timeline resets (another five business days).

**Seek Guidance:** If denied a second time, request a one-on-one consultation with the EPI CE team for targeted feedback.

By systematically correcting the noted deficiencies and aligning your program with the Guide's criteria, you can secure approval and earn CE credits for your participants.

**Please Note:** If a program submission is denied, the application fee is non-refundable.

### Provider Responsibilities

Approved CE providers are expected to:

- Maintain accurate attendance records and program materials for at least three (3) years.
- Distribute completion certificates to participants, if applicable.
- Ensure content remains current and relevant to exit planning professionals.
- Notify EPI of any program changes or updates.
- Understand that approved CE content is typically valid for a period of **three (3) years** from the date of approval, **unless significant industry changes occur that impact the accuracy or relevance of the material.**

EPI reserves the right to review CE content at any time to ensure it continues to meet professional standards. If updates or revisions are required, providers will be notified and

given the opportunity to refresh and resubmit materials. Providers are also encouraged to proactively review and update their content as needed to reflect current best practices, market trends, and regulatory developments.

This process ensures that Continuing Education offerings remain timely, credible, and impactful for CEPAs and the broader exit planning community.

For questions or assistance with your CE submission, please contact a member of the EPI team at:

Email: [memberexperience@beyondcepa.com](mailto:memberexperience@beyondcepa.com)

Office: (216) 712-4244

### **Continuing to Advance the Exit Planning Profession**

By aligning your program with EPI's standards, you are helping CEPAs stay informed, deliver value to their clients, and elevate the profession of exit planning. We thank you for your commitment to excellence and look forward to reviewing your submission.