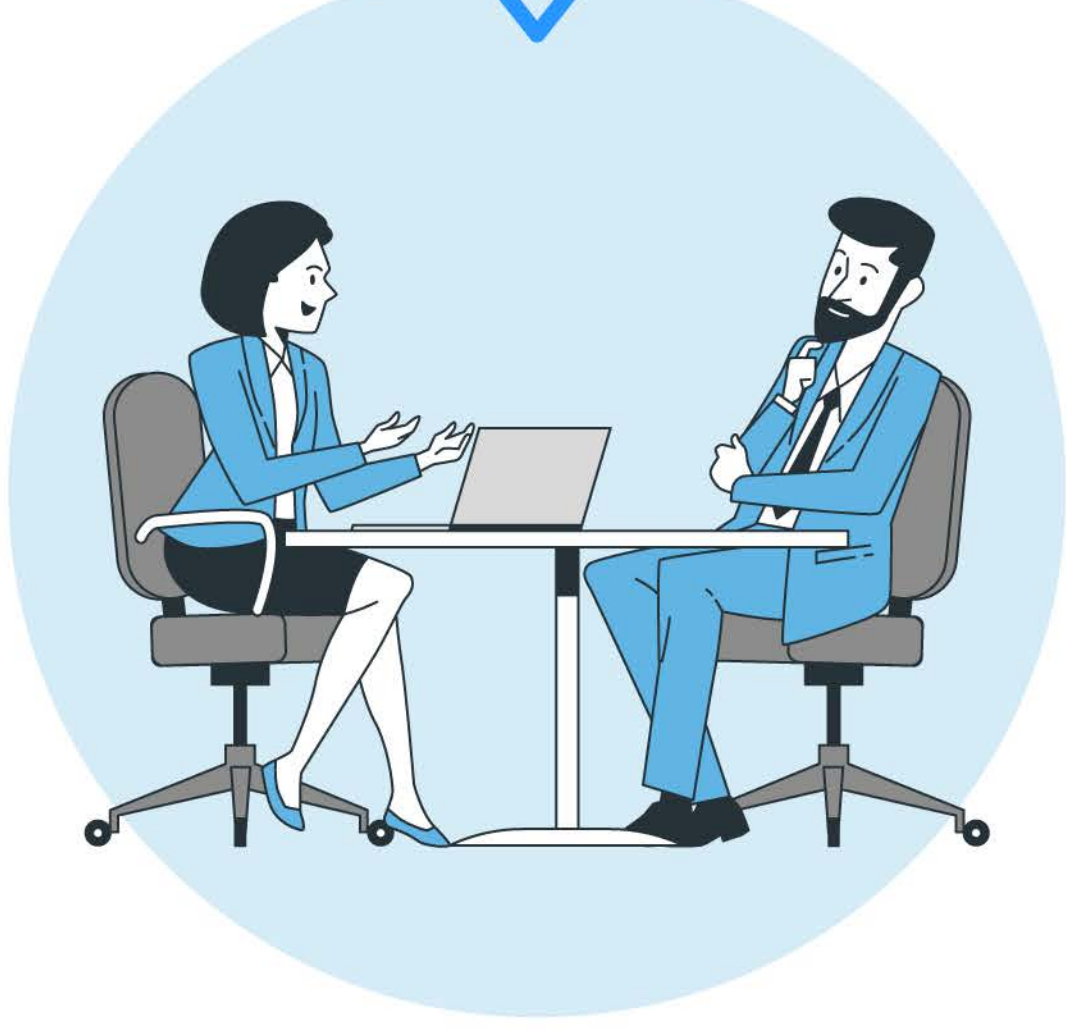
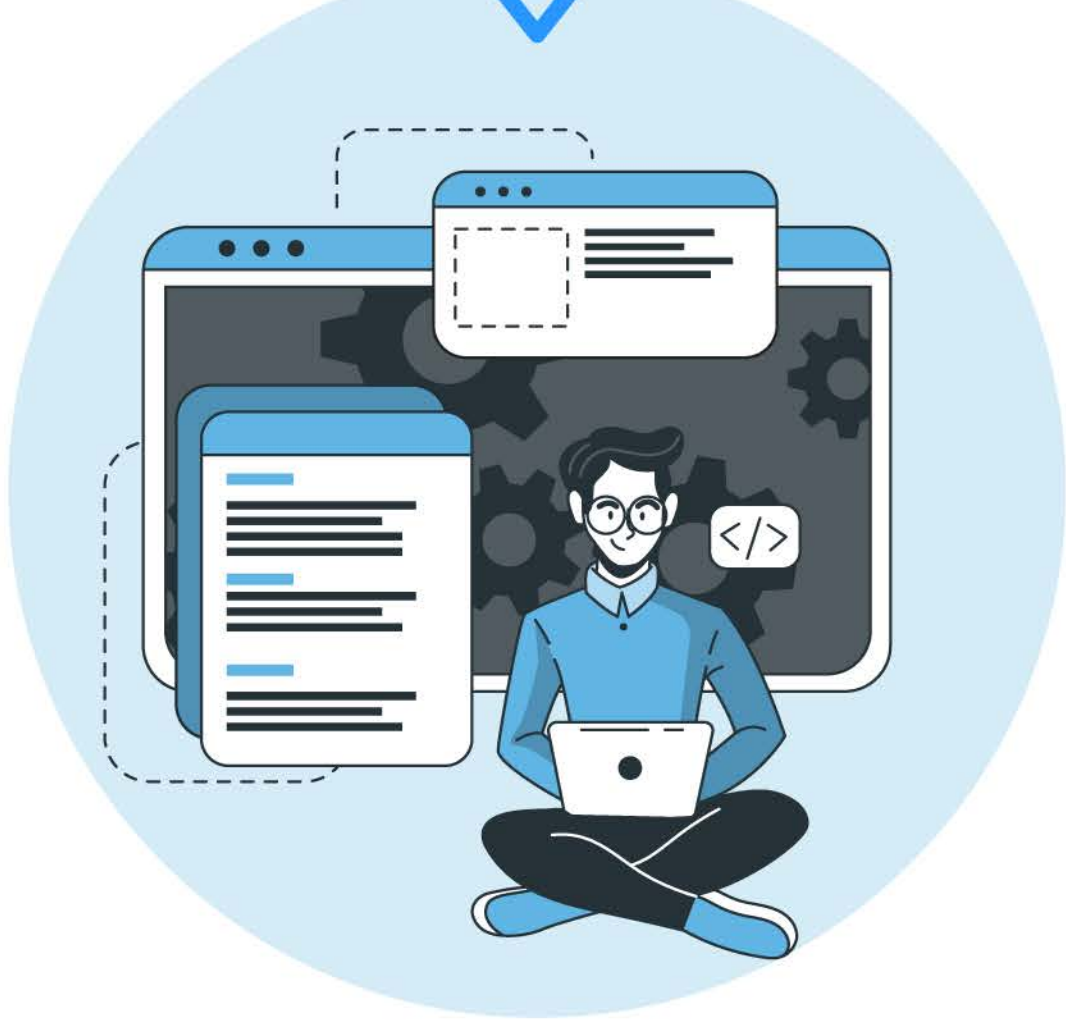
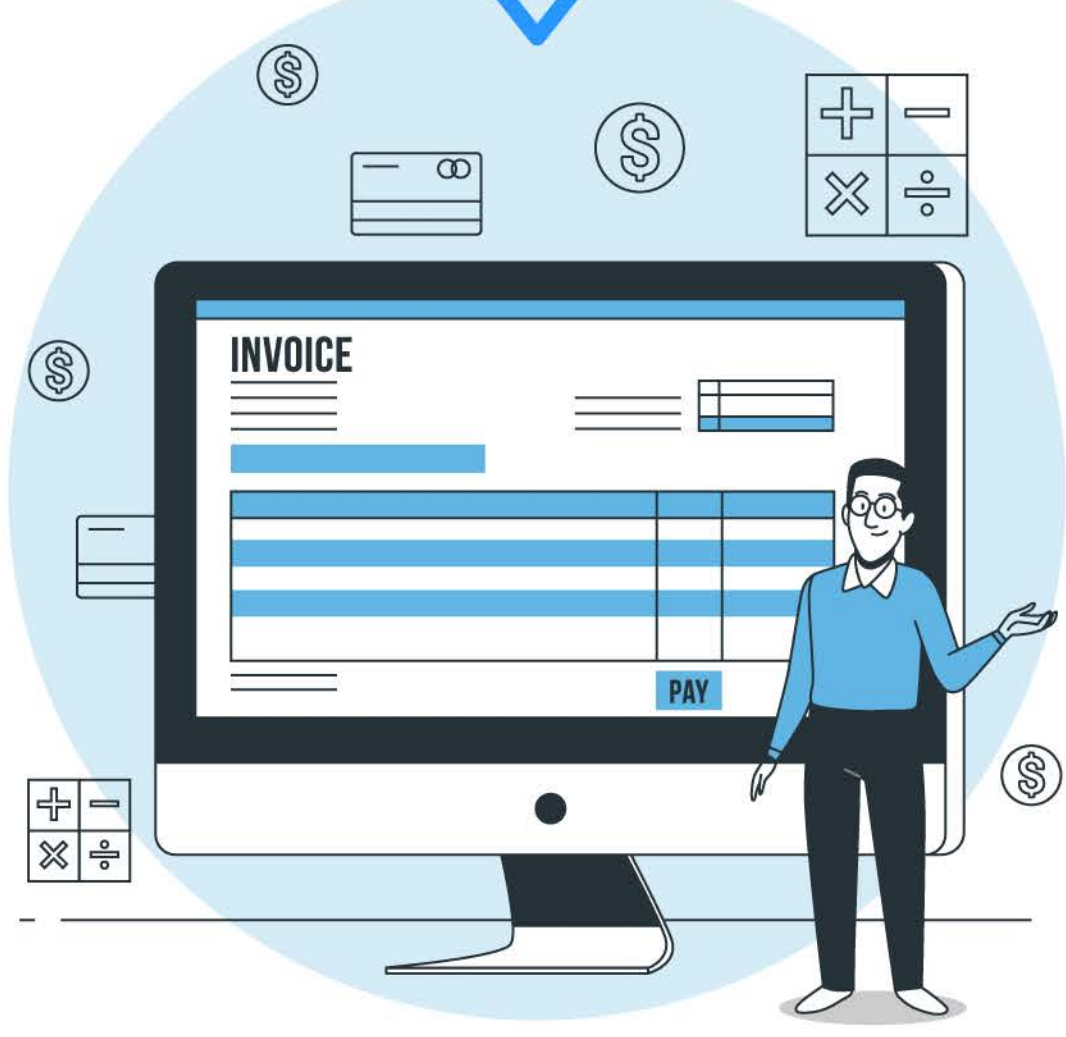


Top Tips for Starting an Accounting Firm



Thinking of launching your own accounting practice? Whether you're a seasoned CPA or an ambitious accountant ready to go solo, here's a streamlined guide to help you navigate the journey.



Legal & Licensing



Choose a legal structure (LLC or PLLC are popular for accounting firms) and register your business with your state and obtain your EIN from the IRS.



Open a business bank account and merchant account to accept payments.



Get required licenses at the state, county, and city levels, then buy mandatory business insurance—general liability, professional liability, and workers' compensation.

Education & Experience



Pass the CPA exam and meet your state's educational and experience requirements.



You can manage a firm without being a CPA, but most successful firms are led by licensed professionals.



Prior experience in general practice helps avoid burnout and costly mistakes.



Build a strong internal governance handbook and HR policies early.

Services and Specialization



Define your service offerings: tax prep, audits, bookkeeping, payroll, or advisory. Consider niching down as specialist firms often grow faster.



Payroll services are in high demand and a great value-add for small business clients.

Financial Planning



Budget for 6 months of expenses; startup costs range from \$2.5K (home office) to \$25K+ (commercial office).



Self-funding gives you full control but higher risk.



Bank loans or SBA funding may require a business plan and early client traction.

Tools & Technology



Use accounting-specific practice management software to streamline your workflow.



Automate recurring tasks like invoicing, time tracking, and document storage.



Cloud-based systems help with client data security and remote team collaboration.

Branding and Client Acquisition



Build a clean, professional website with a clear call to action.



Network with local businesses and industry groups for referrals.



Offer value-first marketing; think webinars, checklists, or free consultations.

Bonus Facts and Warnings

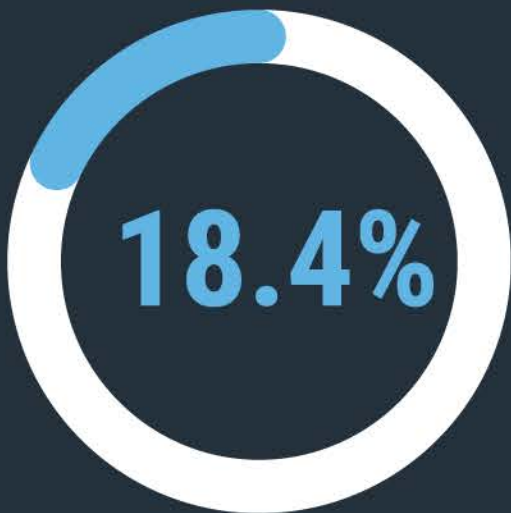


The number of CPA exam takers has dropped by 50% since 1990, making talent harder to find.



88,000

There are over 88,000 accounting firms in the U.S.—standing out takes more than good service.



Accounting firms have an average profit margin of 18.4%, compared to 8.9% across other industries.