

Your State Board of Accountancy or Your State CPA Society?

By Andrew Grow, CAE

Given the complexity of the accounting ecosystem in the United States, it can be challenging to identify all the related entities, and the purpose and roles of each. Because your individual CPA license and all CPA firm permits are governed at the jurisdictional level, a lot of the operational regulatory landscape in the profession resides at the “local” (jurisdictional) level. Each jurisdiction has a corresponding state-based regulatory body and a state-based advocacy organization. In our state, it’s the Missouri Society of CPAs (MOCPA) and Missouri State Board of Accountancy (MOSBA). They work in concert to address profession issues.

MOSBA Roles and Responsibilities

MOSBA ensures that the public is protected by monitoring individual CPA licensing, continuing education requirements (CPE), and ethical behavior of CPAs and CPA firms. Protecting the public may not immediately come to mind when CPAs are busy applying for licensure, submitting CPE certificates, or undergoing a peer review; but it is perhaps the #1 reason why regulated professions like CPAs command high public respect and prestige. MOSBA establishes and enforces rules that explain statute requirements by which our profession operates in Missouri. Statutes and rules that govern the profession are developed separately, respectively by the Missouri Legislature (Statue)¹ and MOSBA (Rules)². The types of statute and rule-making/enforcement activities that MOSBA engages in are covered at a high level through:

- Individual CPA examination eligibility and process;
- Initial CPA licensure and renewal;
- CPA firm permit issuance and renewal;
- CPA privilege and *Code of Professional Conduct*,³
- Peer review; and
- CPE.

MOSBA also regularly takes up timely profession-related issues that govern CPAs, CPA candidates, and CPA firms in Missouri such as:

- Individual and CPA firm mobility;
- Definition of attest;
- Changes to CPA exam eligibility requirements; and
- Positions on ethical practice.

As a regulatory body, MOSBA also holds the authority to enforce these statutes and rules. MOSBA has full subpoena and summons powers to ensure effective profession oversight and regularly investigates licensee complaints; conducts examinations; hears testimony; and issues disciplinary actions. The most common infractions for licensees include: CPE infractions; CPA firm permit-related compliance issues; and improperly holding oneself out as a CPA.


MOCPA Roles and Responsibilities

State CPA societies like MOCPA are the largest local CPA advocacy-based membership organizations. MOCPA performs many different profession-related functions, focused on empowering CPAs, CPA firms, and Missouri-based companies/entities. MOCPA leaders, members, and staff collaborate to build initiatives, run programs, gather communities, and promote CPAs as the premier business advisers and professionals in all accounting, auditing, tax and adjacent fields. State societies represent their membership bases, and their state-based firms/companies/entities. At a grassroots level, some of the core activities revolve around supporting CPAs through:

- Profession thought leadership;
- Community-building;
- Pipeline and profession image development;
- Professional development; and
- Legislative and regulatory advocacy.

These manifest through an array of initiatives, activities, and programs at the local level. The last on this list is not the least because it represents the high degree of collaboration with state boards of accountancy. State societies work hand and glove with state boards of accountancy because they represent the voice of their member leaders, firms, companies, and other entities. State society staff listen a lot, aggregate directional advice, and share to positively impact the health and wellbeing of the profession. The chart below summarizes the relationship between and roles/responsibilities of both MOSBA and MOCPA here in Missouri.


Conclusion

When there is a high degree of collaboration between and among groups like MOSBA and MOCPA, the local ecosystem is stable, healthy, and balances protecting public interest with empowering CPAs to achieve their full potential. Regular, open dialogue helps to harmonize the values that underpin both compliance and advocacy work in Missouri, and for practitioners, oftentimes simply being aware of the ecosystem you are operating in will best help you navigate and thrive. To learn more about either organization and to get involved in helping to power the profession in Missouri, reach out to me at (314) 997-7966 or Patty Fenger, MOSBA, at (573) 751-0012. 



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The Relationship Between MOSBA and MOCPA

	Missouri State Board of Accountancy	Collaboration	Missouri Society of CPAs
Established	1909	Historically tied together since 1909	1909
Location	Jefferson City		St. Louis
Purpose	Serves individual CPAs, CPA organizations, and public interest regulation	Advance CPAs as premier finance, accounting, and advisory services professionals in Missouri	Serves individual CPAs, CPA firms, companies, entities, and public interest advocacy
Structure	Board runs, staff supports Seven board members, six staff	Staff regularly meet on behalf of both boards, to work on rule amendments	Board runs, staff supports 18 board members, 18 staff
Activities	Create, amend, interpret, enforce rules; issue and renew CPA/CPA firm licenses; investigate complaints; take disciplinary action; administer CPA exam in Missouri	Missouri-specific legislation and broad profession issues arenas	Provide professional learning to CPAs; protect the profession legislatively; build community and engagement; keep CPAs informed; support talent pipeline and image enhancement

1 Missouri Title XXII §326: Accountants (Missouri Accountancy Act)

2 Code of State Regulations 20 CSR-2010, Missouri State Board of Accountancy

3 In Missouri, AICPA *Code of Professional Conduct*.