



CPAFMA Firm Manager Competency Framework

The assessment provides insight into your mix of hands-on work, supervisory responsibilities, and strategic/ownership accountability across key competencies. You will select the role level that best reflects your current responsibility for each task within the competency: **Execute, Lead, or Own.**

Please note: You do not need to perform every task listed within each competency area to qualify for the PAFM certification. We recognize that many firms have specialized departments or shared responsibilities that support these functions. The application will provide an opportunity for you to explain how responsibilities are structured within your firm and identify the areas where you contribute most significantly.



Strategic Planning

Supporting leadership in analyzing, planning, and implementing long-term firm initiatives.

- Coordinate execution of strategic plan initiatives
- Track milestones, KPIs, and initiative progress
- Prepare materials and data for partner retreats and planning sessions
- Support integration of mergers, acquisitions, or service-line expansions
- Develop and maintain business continuity and disaster recovery plans
- Coordinate periodic testing and updates to continuity protocols
- Participate in national benchmarking surveys



Practice Management & Reporting

Managing client billing, practice metrics, and performance reporting to support leadership decision-making.

- Oversee client billing processes and ensure timely invoice delivery
- Manage WIP, accounts receivable, and collections follow-up
- Review realization and utilization metrics
- Generate practice management reports and dashboards
- Monitor capacity, scheduling, and productivity indicators
- Provide partners with actionable financial and operational data



Finance & Accounting

Overseeing the firm's financial operations to ensure accuracy, compliance, and strategic insight.

- Approve accounts payable and staff expense reports
- Authorize disbursements below established thresholds
- Review and sign checks or electronic payments
- Establish staff billing rates in coordination with leadership
- Authorize billing write-downs above set limits
- Maintain firm-wide financial policies and controls
- Maintain accounting files, ledgers, and supporting documentation
- Oversee month-end closing processes
- Support budget preparation and financial forecasts



Human Resources

Managing the full employee lifecycle, workplace compliance, and staff relations.

- Coordinate recruiting, interviewing, and selection processes
- Develop onboarding programs for new hires
- Maintain job descriptions and personnel files
- Ensure compliance with federal and state labor laws
- Administer worker's compensation documentation and claims
- Maintain the employee handbook and HR policies
- Coordinate performance evaluation cycles
- Administer corrective action processes with leadership



Employee Benefits

Administering employee benefit plans and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations.

- Administer employee benefit plans (health, dental, vision, disability, retirement)
- Manage open enrollment communication and processes
- Maintain benefit plan records and documentation
- Ensure compliance with ERISA, ACA, COBRA, and other regulations
- Coordinate annual filings such as Form 5500
- Collaborate with brokers, carriers, and advisors to optimize benefit plans



Professional Development

Supporting staff in building skills, advancing careers, and maintaining required credentials

- Coordinate firm-wide training and development programs
- Support managers and staff in growth planning
- Ensure training resources are accessible and applicable
- Facilitate mentoring and coaching programs
- Promote career-path clarity and skills progression
- Track professional designations and renewal deadlines
- Support specialization pathways and learning opportunities
- Leadership in professional CPA organizations or outside boards



Quality Control & CPE

Maintaining firm compliance with professional standards and supporting credentialing requirements.

- Maintain quality control documentation and procedures
- Coordinate internal file inspections and peer review preparations
- Track CPE compliance for credentialed staff
- Coordinate training sessions for audit, tax, and specialty areas
- Maintain CPE records and ensure licensing compliance



Scheduling & Accountability

Managing administrative and operational staff schedules, workload distribution, and accountability for meeting deadlines.

- Develop and manage annual and seasonal staffing plans
- Assign workloads based on capacity, skills, and deadlines
- Manage task assignments through workflow platforms
- Monitor task completion status and escalate delays
- Ensure accountability for deadlines, responsiveness, and deliverables
- Identify capacity constraints and recommend resource adjustments



Technology & Cybersecurity

Managing firm technology systems, infrastructure, and security to ensure reliability, efficiency, and protection.

- Oversee hardware and software acquisition and maintenance
- Ensure standardized onboarding/offboarding across tech systems
- Maintain vendor relationships with IT consultants and providers
- Maintain cybersecurity policies, training, and regulatory compliance
- Ensure regular data backups and restoration testing
- Oversee access controls, MFA, encryption, and security patching
- Oversee practice management, workflow, and document management systems
- Coordinate technology projects, upgrades, and user training
- Evaluate automation and AI opportunities



Practice Development & Public Relations

Supporting the firm's visibility, reputation, and growth through marketing and community engagement.

- Coordinate marketing initiatives, campaigns, and PR activities
- Oversee branding consistency across platforms and materials
- Support proposal development and RFP responses
- Coordinate firm participation in community and professional events
- Support networking and referral development efforts
- Facilitate publication of articles, presentations, and speaking engagements
- Maintain the firm's online presence and reputation



Facilities Management

Ensuring the firm's physical environment is functional, efficient, safe, and aligned with firm growth needs.

- Maintain integrity, functionality, and appearance of office facilities
- Analyze space needs and recommend expansions or reconfigurations
- Coordinate office moves, relocations, and workspace assignments
- Negotiate office leases or purchase arrangements and maintain records
- Manage tenant/subtenant relationships
- Select, purchase, and maintain office furniture and equipment
- Ensure adherence to safety, emergency preparedness, and building requirements
- Coordinate facility access, keys/badges, and security systems



General Operations

Managing the daily processes and operational systems that enable effective workflow and firm productivity.

- Develop and maintain firm-wide operational procedures
- Ensure consistent application of standardized processes
- Monitor workflow systems and ensure efficient task flow
- Oversee mailroom, supplies, and office logistics
- Coordinate operational vendors and service agreements
- Maintain protocols for internal communications and office procedures
- Maintain firm insurance policies and manage operational risk exposures



CPA FMA

CPA Firm Management Association

CPA Firm Management Association is leading the management of CPA firms by empowering and equipping them to succeed by providing community + connections, inspiring to advocate + elevate, sharing resources + tools, offering education + knowledge, and exchanging strategy + implementation.