

Benefits of Study Groups

(and How to Find One as you Pursue your CVA)

A **study group** is a way to study for your CVA exam with fellow candidates. Any study group for the CVA exam that you choose to participate in is **independent from the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA)**. CCVA does NOT accredit, endorse or approve any study group, but you are encouraged to find a study group that works for you.

How do study groups work?

CVA study groups usually provide a form of live discussion or connection and an opportunity to review the [CCVA Body of Knowledge and Competencies](#) together. Study groups are often run by local associations, volunteer centres, and/or existing CVAs looking to support potential certificants. Study groups may either charge a fee to participate, require participants to be members of the group, or are free. Each group is setup and run independently.



How can a study group help?

- By studying alongside other CVA candidates, you can create connections that expand your network of volunteer engagement professionals.
- You can get exposure to other ways of doing volunteer engagement. This can help you understand different contexts for working with volunteers outside of your own sector or approach.
- Study groups provide an opportunity to discuss the 7 competencies, Ethics, key topic areas and review resources from different perspectives. These conversations can make it easier to think about the “most right” answer when you are taking the exam.
- The CVAs leading study groups can share their own real-life exam experiences to help you better understand what to expect.
- A study group can give you the space to honestly talk about your concerns, fears, opportunities and more when it comes to preparing for and taking the exam.

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There are some **important disclaimers** you should know about joining a study group:

- Joining a study group DOES NOT guarantee that you will pass the exam. Any study group that claims to guarantee your success is not able to do so with 100% certainty.
- Look for study groups that match your existing availability so that you can join live online or in-person discussions. The conversation with peers is a core part of the study group experience.
- Study groups are engaging experiences, and you only get out what you put in. Be a regular and active participant to get the most benefit.

Where to find a study group

Not sure where to start? Look local: ask about a study group at your local association (AVA, DOVIA, regional, national). Some study groups may be made up of a small group of colleagues and peers in the same town or city, so ask around your own networks of volunteer engagement professionals. There may also be online study groups running through social media networks - LinkedIn would be a good place to start.

When in doubt, don't hesitate to [contact the CCVA](#) to ask for suggestions.

Here are some Study Groups that are currently running: [Tennessee CVA Study Group](#) (free), [ALIVE Study Group](#) (members only), [Volunteer Toronto/PAVRO Study Group](#) (registration fee), United Way of South Carolina/South Carolina State Service Commission (free for CVA candidates in South Carolina - contact Mallory at mallory.panuelo@uwasc.org), [Better Impact](#) (free for Better Impact Suite users).

Want to lead your own Study Group? Check out our [Tips for Leading a CVA Study Group](#).