

The logo for The AC Group features a teal square with a white 'A' and a black square with a white 'C'. To the right, the text 'The AC Group' is in a large, bold, black sans-serif font, with a teal horizontal line underlining 'The AC'. Below this, 'Of Independent Accounting Firms Limited' is written in a smaller, bold, black sans-serif font. The background is a collage of various photos showing people in professional settings, with a teal vertical bar on the left side.

The AC Group

Of Independent Accounting Firms Limited

As an alliance of independent accounting firms across Atlantic Canada, we support each other through collective action and a spirit of cooperation.

Structure

The AC Group of Independent Accounting Firms Limited, established in 2005, currently has 13 member firms and 1 associate boutique tax firm, with 24 offices across Atlantic Canada and over 300 employees. Our CEO, Angus Bonnyman CPA, CA, ICD.D is accountable to our Board of Directors (one member from each firm), and works alongside our Director of Operations, Shirley Jollimore.

In addition to the Executive Committee, we currently have seven active standing committees of the Board. Each firm is encouraged to provide a representative on committees, which include:

- Conference Committee
- Education Committee
- HR Committee
- IT Committee
- Practice Management Committee
- Standards Committee
- Tax & Advisory Committee

Benefits

One of the key benefits of The AC Group is having access to a supportive network of member firms as well as experienced staff at the Group level. Relationships are strengthened through participation on committees, the annual conference, group training both in person and virtual, and other events.

We believe that the value of this connection is important for team members, so we engage beyond the partnership group and designated staff through training and events. In addition to hosting an annual **A&T Conference** for administrative and technical staff, we created an **Administrative Forum** that meets virtually on a quarterly basis to share tips & tricks, challenges in search of a solution, and training needs. We have also launched a quarterly **Technical Forum** to provide a similar space for bookkeepers and technical staff.

As a way to bring staff together regardless of their role within their respective firm, we also host a series of **Lunch & Learn** events virtually. Topics range from technical issues to personal and professional development. Having opportunities to work together on common goals is a key way our member firms grow strong together, while maintaining their local, community-based focus.



“What I like about The AC Group is that you aren’t just on your own working in a firm, you have the connection to other people, you’re part of a team... you develop relationships over the course of your career that you can rely on.”

*– Emily Parlee, CPA, Senior Tax Manager,
McIsaac Darragh Inc.*

Student support – For the past 3 years, the pass rate of The AC Group’s first-time CFE writers has surpassed the national average. CPA students from across The AC Group enjoy support for their modules and prep for the CFE with an experienced instructor. This includes group sessions (in-person or virtual) for modules, practice questions marked for feedback and debrief, and one-on-one sessions available as needed.

Recruitment – The AC Group sponsors a scholarship program for post-secondary students, as well as a number of on-campus events, and participates widely in career fairs with representatives from member firms. This year, The AC Group is hosting an **Innovation Challenge** with Saint Mary’s University to work with students to refresh our approach to recruiting and on-campus engagement.

AC Leaders – Introduced over a decade ago, this program provides leadership training to participants through three sequential modules (**Leading Yourself; Leading Your Team; Leading Your Organization**). Participants are not required to complete all three modules, which helps provide customized training suitable to a wide range of designated professionals as well as admin and technical staff. Many of our current partners are graduates of the AC Leaders program.

Tax Mentorship – We have recently introduced a four-step mentorship ladder to offer those pursuing a career in tax the support they need to inspire and encourage collaboration that will allow them to thrive. Rather than teaching technical skills, it addresses soft skills and provides a forum for sharing tools and best practices.

Member Portal – In early 2024, we launched a new website with a robust member portal on the back-end to support enhanced communication and collaboration amongst member firms and their staff. With dedicated sections for resources, templates, recorded education sessions and a message board for firm-to-firm communication, the portal is a valuable tool for communication.

Member Pricing – While member firms generally prefer to purchase within their local communities, member firms enjoy preferred pricing from **Intuit, VideoTaxNews, Staples, and CFIB**, as well as significant discounts from a number of professional development providers.

Training and other events – These are billed on a cost-recovery basis. Some of the events held recently include:

- **4-day Annual Conference** for designated and senior staff, including all meals (excluding accommodation and golf tournament/optional excursions)
- **2-day Admin & Technical Conference**, including all meals (excluding accommodation)
- **Half-day internal training**, many of which have the price capped for firms sending 5 or more participants
- **AC Leaders** –
Leading Yourself (2.5 days, in-person)
Leading Your Team (2.5 days, in-person)

Do you see yourself as an AC Group member firm?

The AC Group welcomes interest from firms who share these values:

Our members are leaders in their communities and their profession, with a growth mind-set, and commitment to excellence. They have a desire to collaborate with other Atlantic Canadian accounting firms and complementary services, while retaining their independence over the work they do and the clients they serve.

Might this be you? Our CEO would be pleased to discuss membership.

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CEO of The AC Group

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Meet our member firms at acgca.ca

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