

CUPA-HR Ignite Program

July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027



About the Program

For more than 10 years, this 12-month immersive experience, known as the Ignite program, has connected a small, select group of early-career higher ed HR professionals with CUPA-HR, and key leaders in the association and the higher education human resources profession, while providing multiple learning opportunities.

Expectations

By applying for the Ignite program, applicants acknowledge and confirm that, if selected, they will commit to participating in all program components. Applying also confirms that applicants have support and approval from their supervisors to attend applicable events and participate in the program. To be successful in the program, Ignite participants must be:

- Fully supported by their direct supervisors to participate in all components of the program.
- Willing and able to commit the required time to the program and fully participate in all program components.
- Committed to using their leadership skills and knowledge for the long-term benefit of the higher ed HR community.
- Willing to remain engaged with CUPA-HR after the program in a volunteer capacity.

Required Deliverables

Ignite Development Plan

Participants will create this plan document and use it to guide their individualized development throughout the program year.

Ignite Project Outline and Execution

The project outline is a planning document that includes:

- The objective of the project and how it will benefit the participant and/or the institution
- The related HR competencies from the [CUPA-HR Learning Framework](#) that will be developed by working on the project
- The name or names of those involved, if applicable
- Target dates for each step leading up to implementation.

A summary of the steps taken in implementing the Ignite project will be due by end of the program year - June 30, 2027.

Ignite Shadow Experience Summary

Participants will share a 1-2-page summary of their experience shadowing a CUPA-HR leader.

Optional Contributions to CUPA-HR Publications and Content

Participants may be asked to contribute their body of knowledge in specific higher ed HR topics for CUPA-HR. These contributions are typically related to a participant's Ignite project.

Program Cost

The program is essentially free for participants. CUPA-HR pays for all costs directly associated with the program, including event registrations, travel, meals and accommodations. **Some limits may apply.*

Program Schedule*

*Dates and times are subject to change. Participants will be notified in a timely manner of any changes.

Month	Topic/Event	Description	Date
JUNE	Introduction Call	90-minute Ignite program introduction	June 10, 2026 3 p.m. ET
JULY	Learning Event / Program Orientation	Attend the Association Leadership Program (ALP) in Bethesda, MD.	July 15-16, 2026
AUGUST	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, August 19, 2026 3 p.m. ET
	Individual Development Plan Due	Participants will create a development plan to share with CUPA-HR staff and program leaders for guidance.	By August 31, 2026
SEP/OCT/NOV	E-Learning Event	Participate in the CUPA-HR Boot Camp e-learning course with facilitated discussion	SEP/OCT/NOV
SEPTEMBER	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, September 16, 2026 3 p.m. ET
OCTOBER	Learning Event	Attend CUPA-HR Annual Conference and Expo in Philadelphia, PA. • Arriving on Sunday, October 4 and departing on Wednesday, October 7.	October 4 – October 6, 2026
	Monthly Topics of Interest Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, October 21, 2026 3 p.m. ET
	Ignite Project Outline Deadline	Ignite program project outline due	By October 30, 2026
NOVEMBER	Individual Project Discussion Calls	Half hour call where participants will interact individually with program leaders and CUPA-HR staff to fine-tune project plans and next steps	November 2026
	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, November 18, 2026 3 p.m. ET
DECEMBER	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders. (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, December 16, 2026 3 p.m.
JAN - MAY	Shadow Visit Learning Event	Shadow experience and campus connection. Visits must be completed by May. Summary write-up due within two weeks of your visit.	Jan - May

Month	Topic/Event	Description	Date
JANUARY	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, January 20, 2027 3 p.m. ET
FEB/MAR/APR	Learning Event	Participate in the Understanding Higher Education e-learning series with facilitated discussion	FEB/MAR/APR
FEBRUARY	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, February 17, 2027 3 p.m. ET
MARCH	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, March 17, 2027 3 p.m. ET
APRIL	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, April 21, 2027 3 p.m. ET
MAY	Monthly Topics of Interest Learning Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, May 19, 2027 3 p.m. ET
JUNE	Monthly Topics of Interest Call	Call where participants interact with and learn from CUPA-HR thought leaders (1.5 hours)	Wednesday, June 16, 2027 3 p.m. ET
	Ignite Project Summary	A 1–2-page summary of the steps taken in implementing the Ignite project.	By June 30, 2027

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