# Proposed Changes to ICCA Amnesty Program

To: ICCA Board

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May 2025

**Background:** In recent years, CCA program numbers have declined, and this is at least partially due to lapsed renewals. The amnesty policy is a one-time opportunity for lapsed CCAs to return to the program, given the challenges of recent years – the pandemic and the economy. Nearly 2000 people are eligible for this program, but to date, only 10 have applied. Given the low application numbers, staff offer the following suggestions for the Board’s consideration as possible refinements to the current policy.

Below is a side-by-side summary of the current and proposed requirements for comparison. These suggestions preserve the framework established by the Board-appointed task force while refining a few elements to increase accessibility.

**Current vs Proposed Amnesty Application Requirements**

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| --- | --- |
| **Current Policy** | **Proposed Policy** |
| Certification lapse between 2-5 years | Certification lapse between 2-5 years |
| First time requesting amnesty | First time requesting amnesty |
| Left program voluntarily | Left program voluntarily |
| Letter of explanation | Letter of explanation |
| Two letters of reference, employer and client | **No letters of reference required** |
| Signed copy of the CCA Code of Ethics | Signed copy of the CCA Code of Ethics |
| Approval by local board within 45 days | Approval by local board within 45 days |
| Pay exam fee within 30 days  | Pay exam fee within 30 days  |
| Earn 50 CEUs within 2 years | Earn 50 CEUs within 2 years |
| Program offered indefinitely | **Sunset policy by June 30, 2026** |

Rationale:

We propose only **two changes** to current policy, but we believe these changes will reduce barriers to entry, while streamlining the application process.

1. We suggest **removing the requirement for two reference letters (client and supervisor) for the 2–5-year lapse group,** and keeping the personal statement and signed Code of Ethics**.** Removing this requirement does not mean lowering standards; it is a shift in *how* we affirm a returning CCA's intent to recommit. The written explanation and re-signing the Code of Ethics remain critical points of accountability.
2. To ensure fairness to current CCAs and reinforce that this is a one-time opportunity, we recommend **sunsetting the Amnesty Program by** **June 30, 2026.** This ensures the program addresses temporary circumstances—such as disruptions from the pandemic and economic instability—without becoming a recurring option. The time limit may also increase the incentive to apply; we have seen a similar effect by offering exams in windows rather than all-year round.

Maintaining high standards for the CCA credential is non-negotiable. So is making sure our program evolves to reflect today’s workforce realities. This refinement aims to welcome back professionals who continue to work in agriculture, but temporary circumstances led them to lapse.

Our hope is that this program strengthens—not weakens—the credential by restoring relationships, renewing commitments, and reinforcing our shared values. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and working together to ensure the amnesty program fulfills its promise – to reconnect capable professionals with a credential that reflects their expertise and values.