

# CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR PLANNER IS A CFP® PROFESSIONAL

To verify that your planner is authorized by CFP Board to use the CFP® certification marks and to learn more about financial planning, visit [letsmakeaplan.org](http://letsmakeaplan.org) or call toll-free 800-487-1497.



The information in this brochure is provided as a public service by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board). A nonprofit, professional regulatory organization, CFP Board fosters professional standards in personal financial planning so that the public values, has access to, and benefits from competent and ethical financial planning.

CFP® certification marks are owned by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board). Individuals certified by CFP Board have taken the extra step to demonstrate their professionalism by voluntarily submitting to the CFP® certification process that includes education, examination, experience and ethical requirements.

**CFP BOARD**

# WHAT IS THE CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ CERTIFICA TION?



**CFP BOARD**

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER BOARD OF STANDARDS, INC.

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## CFP® CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Working with a CFP® professional is an important first step toward reaching your financial goals. Not only do these advisors meet rigorous education and experience requirements, but they are also held to the highest ethical and professional standards in the industry.

### EDUCATION

CFP® professionals must master nearly 100 integrated financial planning topics, including:

- Investment planning
- Tax planning
- Retirement planning
- Estate planning
- Insurance planning
- Financial management

In addition to completing a comprehensive financial planning curriculum approved by CFP Board, or equivalent academic coursework, CFP® professionals are required to complete continuing education coursework, including a CFP Board approved code of ethics course, to ensure their competence in financial planning.

### EXAMINATION

CFP® candidates must pass a comprehensive 6-hour CFP® Certification Examination that tests their ability to apply financial planning knowledge in an integrated format. Based on regular research of what planners do, the exam covers:

- Establishing and defining the Client-Planner relationship
- Gathering information necessary to fulfill the engagement
- Analyzing and evaluating the client's current financial status

- Developing recommendations
- Communicating recommendations
- Implementing recommendations
- Monitoring the recommendations
- Practicing within professional and regulatory standards

### EXPERIENCE

CFP® professionals must have a minimum of three years experience in the personal financial planning process prior to earning the right to use the CFP® certification marks. As a result, CFP® practitioners possess financial counseling skills in addition to financial planning knowledge.

### ETHICS

As a final step to certification, CFP® practitioners agree to abide by a strict code of professional conduct, known as CFP Board's *Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility*, that sets forth their ethical responsibilities to the public, clients and employers. CFP Board also performs a background check during this process, and each individual must disclose any investigations or legal proceedings related to their professional or business conduct.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING WITH A CFP® PROFESSIONAL

It is important to understand how CFP® professionals deliver their services and how they are compensated. Planners are compensated for the services they provide in different ways. Some are paid through commissions and others through fees or a combination of both. While all CFP® practitioners are trained to provide you with comprehensive financial planning services, some specialize in one or more areas, or work with specific types of clients. Be sure to ask the planner how he or she is paid.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I REMEMBER WHEN SELECTING A PLANNER?

As more people call themselves "financial planners," finding the right professional to address your financial planning needs isn't always easy. Become familiar with the planner's business style and understand the level of services he or she provides. Look for a measure of the planner's commitment to ethical behavior and adherence to high professional standards. Look for a financial planner who will put you and your needs at the center of every financial planning engagement.

## WHAT IS CFP BOARD'S CODE OF ETHICS?

Through the *Code of Ethics*, CFP® practitioners agree to act fairly and diligently when providing you with financial planning advice and services, putting your interests first.

The *Code of Ethics* states that CFP® practitioners are to act with integrity, offering you professional services that are objective and based on your needs. They are required to provide you with information about their sources of compensation and conflicts of interest in writing.

