

## Why work with a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional?

Most people think all financial planners are “certified,” but this isn’t true. Anyone can call himself or herself a “financial planner.” Only those who have fulfilled the certification and renewal requirements of CFP Board can display the CFP® certification marks. Individuals certified by CFP Board have taken the extra step to demonstrate their professionalism by voluntarily submitting to the rigorous CFP® certification process that includes demanding education, examination, experience and ethical requirements. These standards are called “the four E’s,” and they are four important reasons why the financial planning practitioner you select should display the CFP® certification marks.

### CFP® Certification Requirements: the four E’s

**Education:** CFP® professionals must develop their theoretical and practical financial planning knowledge by completing a comprehensive course of study at a college or university offering a financial planning curriculum approved by CFP Board. Other options for satisfying the education component include submitting a transcript review or previous financial planning-related course work to CFP Board for review and credit, or showing the attainment of certain professional designations or academic degrees.

**Examination:** CFP® practitioners must pass a comprehensive two-day, 10-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 the financial planning process, tax planning, employee benefits and retirement planning, estate planning, investment management and insurance.

**Experience:** CFP® professionals must have three years’ minimum experience in the 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.