

# It's Time to Find a Great Financial Planner



**Y**ou spend a lifetime working hard, saving to allow you to buy a home, send your kids to college and retire in comfort. Then once you get there, stock markets crash and burn while home values nose dive. So what do you do in order to protect what you have left?

A recent survey of professionals that work with seniors completed by the Investor Protection Trust and Investor Protection Institute reported that there are 44 different designations used by financial advisers specializing in helping older clients. Needless to say, the survey said that the alphabet soup of certifications is confusing at best.

Choosing a financial planner is as important as choosing a doctor or lawyer; it's a very personal relationship. So a great place to start is with one of the most prestigious designations...

**The CFP® or CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™**

These professionals are dedicated to using the financial planning process to serve the financial needs of individuals and families. Most have earned a four-year college degree in a finance related field and all have completed a course of study in financial planning approved by the CFP Board.

Many CFP's specialize in working with seniors in retirement and asset management, so make sure to interview those that are right to serve your needs. To earn this certification and remain certified as a CFP professional, individuals must meet four main requirements.

## **Certification Requirements Examination**

Certified Financial Planner Professionals must successfully complete the CFP's Boards comprehensive certification examination, which tests an individual's knowledge on various key aspects of financial planning.

## **Experience**

Certified Financial Planner Professionals must acquire three years of financial planning-related experience before receiving the right to use the CFP certification marks.

## **Ethics**

Certified Financial Planner Professionals must voluntarily ascribe to the CFP's Code of Ethics and additional requirements as mandated. CFP practitioners who violate the code can be disciplined, including permanent loss of the right to use the CFP certification marks.

## **Education**

Certified Financial Planner Professionals must complete 30 hours of continuing education every two years to stay current in financial planning knowledge, including ethics.

**So look for an individual who holds the CFP certification mark and you will get a well prepared and qualified professional to give you sound advice you can trust. ■**