

What is a CFP®?

The CFP® marks represent a Certified Financial Planner® designation. An individual who has earned these marks has met the education, examination, experience and ethics standards established by the Certified Financial Planners Board of Standards (CFP® Board). Therefore, a financial planner who has earned the CFP marks should be distinguished from a financial planner who has not. Consumers need to be aware that there is nothing preventing a person from declaring themselves a "Financial Planner", and it is therefore incumbent upon the consumer to differentiate between a planner who has earned the marks and one who hasn't.

If a financial planner has earned the right to use the CFP® marks, this means that he or she has met the following requirements:

- **Education:** There are three ways to meet the CFP® certification education requirement:
 1. Completing an education program at a college or university whose curriculum is registered with the CFP® Board; or
 2. Submitting a transcript of previous financial planning-related course work to the CFP® Board for review and credit; or
 3. Showing the attainment of certain professional designations or academic degrees.
- **Examination:** Candidates for the CFP® certification must pass a rigorous two-day, 10-hour CFP® Certification Examination administered by the CFP® Board that covers the financial planning process and includes such topics as tax planning, employee benefits and retirement planning, estate planning, investment management and insurance.
- **Experience:** Candidates for CFP® certification must prove they have experience in the financial planning process before being authorized to use the CFP® marks.
- **Ethics:** Candidates for CFP® certification have their backgrounds checked by the CFP® Board, and must also disclose any investigations or legal proceedings related to their professional or business conduct. The CFP® Board reviews all such disclosures and investigates those statements that indicate areas of concern.

Candidates must also adhere to the CFP® Board's Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility and Financial Planning Practice Standards.

Additionally, once certified, CFP® certificants must fulfill a biennial continuing education requirement to stay up-to-date on planning strategies and financial trends affecting their clients.