

## Definitions: Professional Designations

At Heritage Wealth Advisors, we take great pride in hiring professionals that have attained or are in the process of attaining advanced credentials. These credentials are a testament to the education, experience and commitment that we bring to our work. Below is a brief description of these designations and the initial and continuing education required to maintain them.

**Certified Public Accountant (CPA)** is the statutory title of qualified accountants in the United States who have passed the Uniform Certified Public Accountant Examination and have met additional state education and experience requirements for certification as a CPA. In most U.S. states, only CPAs who are licensed are able to provide to the public attestation (including auditing) opinions on financial statements. In order to become a CPA in the United States, a candidate must sit for and pass the Uniform Certified Public Accountant Examination (Uniform CPA Exam), which is set by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and administered by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy. In addition to the CPA exam, most states also require the completion of a special examination on ethics and that specific education and work experience minimums are met. CPAs are also required to take continuing education courses in order to renew their license. Requirements vary by state but the majority of states require 120 hours of CPE every 3 years with a minimum of 20 hours per calendar year.

The **Personal Financial Specialist (PFS)** is a credential established by the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) for CPAs who specialize in personal financial planning (PFP). The PFS credential is granted solely to CPAs with considerable PFP education and experience who want to demonstrate their knowledge, skill and experience. In order to obtain the PFS credential, a candidate must meet the following criteria: obtain a CPA license, join the AICPA and be a member in good standing, complete a minimum of 80 hours of personal financial planning education in 9 different practice areas, attain at least 2 years of full-time experience in personal financial planning, and successfully pass a PFP exam.

The **Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®)** designation is a professional certification mark for financial planners conferred by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board). To earn the CFP designation, candidates must meet several requirements — the first of which is the educational requirement, which requires candidates to have a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited U.S. college or university. CFP candidates must master a list of nearly 100 topics on integrated financial planning. The topics cover major planning areas such as: General Principles of Finance and Financial Planning; Insurance Planning; Employee Benefits Planning; Investment and Securities Planning; State and Federal Income Tax Planning; Estate Tax, Gift Tax, and Transfer Tax Planning; Asset Protection Planning; Retirement Planning; and Estate Planning. Students are required to complete course training in the above listed topic areas in order to meet the first requirement to sit for the 10 hour CFP Board Certification Examination. Even after the student passes the exam, he or she must also have three years full-time or equivalent experience in the financial planning field and be approved by the CFP Board during initial certification, which involves an extensive background check—including an ethics, character and criminal check. Students and license holders are required to adhere to the CFP Board Code of Ethics and

Professional Responsibility and to the Financial Planning Practice Standards. To maintain certification, license holders are also required to complete certain continuing education requirements on an on-going basis in addition to paying a licensing fee every two years.

The **Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)** designation is an international professional certification offered by the CFA Institute (formerly AIMR) to financial analysts who complete a series of three examinations. To become a CFA Charterholder, candidates must pass each of three six-hour exams, possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution (or have equivalent education or work experience) and have 48 months of qualified, professional work experience. The CFA curriculum includes these topic areas: Ethical and Professional Standards; Quantitative Methods (such as the time value of money, and statistical inference); Economics; Financial Reporting and Analysis; Corporate Finance; Analysis of Investments (stocks, bonds, derivatives, venture capital, real estate, etc.); Portfolio Management and Analysis (asset allocation, portfolio risk, performance measurement, etc.) CFA Charterholders are also obligated to adhere to a strict Code of Ethics and Standards governing their professional conduct.