

CENTER FOR DUE DILIGENCE

P.O. Box 8 • Western Springs, Illinois 60558

(630) 662-0284 • Fax (630) 662-0286

E-mail: CFDD@TheCFDD.com

Web: <http://www.TheCFDD.com>

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SUBJECT: **CE Credits Applicable To 2009 Advisor Conference**

From: CFDD

As the industry matures, becomes more competitive and advisors seek to distinguish themselves, **designations, credentials and association memberships have become key components of the sales, marketing and selection process for professionals.**

Unfortunately, the terms Financial Analyst, Financial Advisor, Financial Consultant, Financial Planner, Investment Consultant, Wealth Manager, etc, are generic terms. These titles may be used by financial service professionals who lack related designations. They may also be used by individuals who lack securities licenses.

While **professional credentials are optional**, the requirements for obtaining designations and certification vary widely along with the monitoring process, including any applicable codes of conduct. As always, designations and/or credentials are only as good as the individual's character behind them. For a list of almost 100 financial service industry designations, visit <http://apps.finra.org/DataDirectory/1/prodesignations.aspx>.

Buyers are also becoming more cognizant of the differences between the various registration and licensing categories, including fiduciary standards, disclosure and conflict management. Just as the CRD system for the private U4/U5 forms applicable to B-Ds & IARs is different from the public ADV form, the mandated licensing and CE requirements for registered reps and IARs are very different.

As the CFDD's new online ERISA Advisor Evaluator service for plan sponsors professionalizes advisor selection, the EAE will become a center of gravity and a library of intellectual capital on how to select advisors. **The EAE will also help sponsors evaluate designations, licensing, registration status, fiduciary standards, disclosure, conflicts, insurance coverage, experience, recognition, collateral resources, organizational depth and much more.**

Based on increased business demands and the growing importance of professional development for competitive positioning, CE credits have become invaluable to overburdened advisors. To meet these needs, **the CFDD's conveniently located Chicago-based Advisor Conference is THE one stop shop for core CE credits.**

The industry is awash in a sea of credentials and some will no doubt consolidate. While **the designations of choice by retirement plan specialists in the CFDD's network are evolving**, they currently seem to be split between the CIMA[®] designation from the Investment Management Consultants Association (IMCA), the AIF[®] designation from fi360 and ASPPA's QPFC designation. To a lesser extent, the CRPS[®] from the College for Financial Planning also has some traction within the network.

The Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards' CFP[®] designation is also popular within the network. The CFP[®] designation is, however, less relevant to advisors who don't provide individual financial services. The American College's ChFC is probably the second most popular credential in the network among advisors who provide individual financial services.

The Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) is often considered the most prestigious and difficult to obtain investment related financial services credentials. The academic requirements, including three years of coursework, are second only to those for CPAs. Pass rates vary by year, but fewer than 20% of the candidates pass all three of the six-hour exams within three years. While the CFA is not that common within the CFDD's network, a growing number of accomplished specialists have expressed interest in having a staff member pursue the designation.

CE CREDITS APPLICABLE TO THE CFDD's 2009 ADVISOR CONFERENCE

Based on an outstanding agenda, CE credits applicable to the **IMCA, fi360, ASPPA, NIPA and FSS designations** are all available to conference attendees.

Widely known as the unbiased King of Content, the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference was also awarded an unprecedented 41 hours of CE credits by the **CFP Board** and 30 hours of credits by the **IBF**.

Additionally, CE credits also apply to various designations offered by **The American College** and the **College for Financial Planning**, including the CLU, ChFC and the CRPS.

While acceptance will vary on a case-by-case basis, **select B-D's will apply CFDD Advisor Conference CE credits to FINRA's annual Firm Element requirement.**

Information on **NASBA, SPARK & CFA Institute** credits will follow. For additional information & forms, visit: http://www.thecfdd.com/continuingeducation_2009.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION

Established in 1985, The Investment Management Consultants Association (IMCA) provides investment consulting and wealth management credentials to approximately 3,000 members.

The Certified Investment Management Analyst (CIMA[®]), the IMCA's cornerstone, is an advanced certification that was designed specifically for investment consultants in 1988. Launched in 2007, the Certified Private Wealth Advisor (CPWA[®]) was designed for wealth management specialists providing services to high net worth clients.

The Certified Investment Management Consultant (CIMC[®]) was a self-study program that was merged into the CIMA[®] program in 2002. New applicants are no longer accepted, but approximately 400 designees are still supported.

The CIMA[®] certification must be renewed every two years and requires 40 hours of CE credit. 20 of the required CE hours may be provided by a variety of non-IMCA sources. All CE hours must be processed by IMCA. To maintain the certification, the signed disclosure and payment must be submitted before the expiration date.

The Investment Management Consultants Association (IMCA) approved the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference for 20 hours of Non- IMCA[®] continuing education credits.

The credits are available on a *conference* basis and applicable to the CIMA[®], CIMC[®] and CPWA[®] designations.

Designees attending the conference are individually responsible for submitting the CE documentation along with proof of attendance and a detailed agenda showing the times, topics and descriptions of each session claimed for credit. Upon request, the CFDD will confirm attendance.

The non-IMCA CE Hours Submittal Form may be downloaded at:

http://www.thecfdd.com/continuingeducation_2009.

To check their CE hours, designees should visit www.imca.org, log in to "My IMCA" and click on "CIMA" detail.

Fi360

While investment specialists often pursue hours of technical training, little time has been devoted to developing the expertise applicable to fiduciary standards of care in the past. Given the recent cases claiming fiduciary negligence as well as an evolving regulatory environment, awareness of fiduciary responsibility is continually growing.

Fi360 offers a full circle approach to investment fiduciary education, practice management and support.

The firm's professional designations cover a comprehensive investment process, related fiduciary standards of care and a commitment to excellence.

Since 2002, the Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF[®]) has often been viewed as the standard for fiduciaries. In response to a need for fiduciary assessment training, the Accredited Investment Fiduciary Analyst (AIFA[®]) was introduced in 2006. The AIF[®] is by far the more popular designation. On a combined basis, approximately 4,000 professionals have been certified by fi360.

Designees must renew annually. The AIF[®] requires 6 hours of CE credits while the AIFA[®] requires 10 hours.

Fi360 allows up to 2 hours of non-fi360 produced CE credits towards their AIF[®] designation and up to 4 hours for the AIFA[®] designation. While Fi360 does not pre-approve outside CE providers, these credits can be obtained by attending the CFDD's Advisor Conference.

Designees are responsible for tracking and reporting their CE requirements via the renewal form. For more information on submitting outside CE credits to fi360, see their Designation Renewal Guidelines & CE requirements located at: http://www.thecfdd.com/continuingeducation_2009.

For more information on fi360, visit: <http://www.fi360.com>.

ASPPA

Founded in 1966 as an actuarial organization, The American Society of Pension Professionals & Actuaries (ASPPA) has become a national organization for career retirement plan professionals. Members include administrators, actuaries, advisors, attorneys, accountants and other professionals who provide services to employer sponsored retirement plans.

The non-profit professional organization acts on behalf of their 6,000+ members to improve the nation's private pension system. ASPPA offers extensive educational opportunities and their Government Affairs department monitors legislative and regulatory activities. Over 5,000 members have earned more than 7,000 credentials, mostly in the administrative area.

ASPPA offers four primary credentialing tracks, supporting seven different credentials & two certificate programs, for retirement plan specialists. While additional credentials are also available, the QKA, QPA and CPC are the most popular designations held by members.

The "Plan Administration, Compliance & Consulting Track" supports the QKA, QPA and CPC designations. **The "Financial Consulting Track" supports the QPFC designation, the most common within the CFDD's advisor network.** The "Tax-Exempt & Governmental Plan Administration, Compliance & Consulting Track" supports the TGPC designation. The "Actuarial Consulting Track" supports the MSPA and the FSPA designations.

To maintain ASPPA credentials, designees must earn 40 hours of investment or employee benefit related CE credits during their two year cycle. Going forward, the CE requirement must include 2 hours on Ethics or Professionalism. While non-ASPPA Sponsored Programs may be used to satisfy 100% of the CE requirements, there is a limit of 15 credit hours per program. ASPPA does not pre-approve CE sponsors, but the content must be relevant to the industry.

ASPPA approved the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference with 15 hours of CE credits that may be applied towards any of their credentials.

ASPPA's new online reporting module is still developing. Prior to becoming active, members can download the CE Reporting Form from their website and submit it directly to ASPPA for processing at any time.

The Continuing Education Reporting Form is located at:

<http://www.asppa.org/Document-Vault/PDFs/Membership/CE-Program-Reporting-Form.aspx>.

The Attendance Verification Form is located at:

<http://www.asppa.org/document-vault/pdfs/ce/ce-verification-form.aspx>

Once active, ASPPA members seeking CE credits for the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference can painlessly record the event in ASPPA's new online CE requirement module. After logging in, members can locate this new section by selecting the CE Reporting Section of the member only menu and scrolling down to section III, Non-ASPPA events.

Members should then record CFDD as the event name, indicate the date & length of the event, and based on how many sessions they attended, ask for the appropriate credit hours. If all the sessions were attended, members would be asking for a total of 15 credit hours.

For more information on ASPPA's continuing education requirements, go to:

<http://www.asppa.org/Main-Menu/Knowledge/ContEd.aspx>.

CFP Board

The Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) designation is probably the most widely recognized credential in the financial planning industry.

The program is administered by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (CFP Board), a non-profit regulatory organization actively engaged with their 60,000 CFP® certificants.

Certificants are required to complete 30 hours of CE during a two year reporting period ending the day of individual's renewal month. While 28 hours may be earned from a variety of sources and topics listed on the Board's *Subject Topics Accepted for CE Credits*, two hours must be earned from pre-approved courses specific to the Board's *Code of Ethics* or *Practice Standards*."

Applicable to the CFP® certification, the CFP Board approved the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference for up to 41 hours of CE credits.

The CFP Board now **requires CE Sponsors to report attendee lists electronically**. This value added service precludes the hassles of missing CE certificates, lost attendee lists, audits and phone calls from certificants trying to report their CE hours.

After batch processing, **the CFP Board sends an email to each individual detailing the CE hours that have been credited to their accounts**. Within two business days of transferring the information, certificants can also check the status of their CE hours on the CFP Board's website.

Conference attendees seeking CFP credits should call or email their CFP Board ID, full name (first, last & middle) and the last 4 digits of their SS# to the CFDD at: CFDD@TheCFDD.com.

For more information on the CFP Board's renewal and CE requirements, go to: www.CFP.net/certificants/renew.asp.

College for Financial Planning

The College for Financial Planning (College) offers six professional designation programs spanning the asset management, retirement, mutual fund and financial planning sectors. The designations include the AAMS[®], AWMA[®], CMFC[®], CRPC[®], CRPS[®] and RP[®]. The Chartered Retirement Plans Specialist (CRPS[®]) is the most relevant to retirement plan specialists.

The College does not maintain a list of pre-approved continuing education sponsors and their courses. It is each designee's responsibility to obtain CE credits from a credible source whose programs meet the standard set forth in the College's *Professional Designation Requirements* document.

CE credits may emanate from a wide variety of sources and delivery methods. Conference sessions must address the Subject Topic Lists for CE Credit applicable to the different designations.

As part of the online renewal process, designees must execute an electronic statement (attestation) affirming appropriate CE credits have been earned during their two-year authorization period. If audited, designees must submit documentation confirming the appropriate CE standards have been met.

In addition to meeting many of the topics covered under the College's topic guidelines, the CFDD will provide confirming documentation upon request. Each acceptable CFDD conference breakout session is equal to 1 (One) CE hour.

To view the Subject Topic Lists for CE Credit and/or begin the online renewal process, go to: <http://www.cffpalum.org/Info/Renewal>.

The American College

The non-profit American College has a rich history in the financial services education arena. Since the creation of the first financial designation in 1927, The Chartered Life Underwriter CLU[®], more than 150,000 financial professionals have earned designations at the American College.

The American College offers a wide variety of leadership, specialized and fundamental programs, including the CLU[®], ChFC[®], CASL[®], CLF[®], CAP[®], REBC[®] and RHU[®].

The Chartered Life Underwriter CLU[®] and the Chartered Financial Consultant ChFC[®] are by far the most popular of their designations within the CFDD's network. The two designations require more coursework than the CFP[®], but they do not require a comprehensive exam.

As a competing organization, the American College introduced the ChFC[®] in 1982 as an alternative to the CFP[®]. The CLU[®] is widely viewed as the industry's most respected insurance designation and has been pursued primarily by agents specializing in life insurance applications for business and estate planning.

Like the College for Financial Planning, the American College does not maintain a comprehensive list of pre-approved continuing education sponsors and their courses. It is each designee's responsibility to obtain CE credits from credible sources whose subject matter is acceptable to PACE (Professional Achievement in Continuing Education) Recertification.

CE credits may emanate from a wide variety of sources and delivery methods. Conference sessions must address the subject matter acceptable to the college for CE credits.

To satisfy CE requirements, designees must sign the Statement of Compliance Section of the 2008-09 PACE Recertification Status Form and return it to the college by 12/31/09. In the event of an audit, designees must provide independent verification of their CE hours.

In addition to meeting many of the topics covered under the college's subject matter acceptable for CE credits, the CFDD will provide confirming documentation upon request. Each acceptable CFDD conference breakout session is equal to 1 (One) CE hour.

The renewal application and PACE guidelines can be viewed at:

<http://www.theamericancollege.edu/docs/47.pdf>

IBF

Founded in 1988, The Institute of Business & Finance (IBF) offers five of the oldest financial designation programs in the industry.

More than 13,000 members of the financial services industry have completed one or more of their programs, including numerous Fortune 500 Companies. The IBF's flagship Certified Fund Specialist (CFS[®]) is the fourth oldest designation in the industry and THE oldest mutual fund designation.

The Institute of Business & Finance (IBF) awarded 30 hours of CE Credits to active IBF members who attended the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference. The 30 CE Credits apply to all five of their designations, including the CFS[®], CAS[®], BCE[™], CIS[™] and CTS[™].

To submit, please provide your first and last name along with your email address to: student services by phone at (800) 848-2029 or by email at: studentservices@icfs.com.

For more information on the IBF, go to: <http://www.icfs.com>.

FINANCIAL SERVICE STANDARDS

Founded in 2005, Financial Service Standards, LLC is devoted to identifying and raising the service standard of financial professionals.

The Professional Plan Consultant (PPC[™]) is a training program designed to set retirement plan service standards and provide the knowledge and tools to meet those standards.

FSS allows up to 8 hours of non-FSS produced CE credits towards their PPC designation for each CE reporting period. The majority of the CFDD's 2009 Advisor Conference sessions meet the continuing education guidelines set forth by Financial Service Standards.

PPC designees are responsible for reporting and documenting the sessions attended during the applicable renewal periods. Designees must submit their renewal application, licensing agreement extension and dues on an annual basis. To locate forms and process CE credits, login to the PPC designee portal at www.ppclogin.com.

SECURITIES INDUSTRY CE REQUIREMENTS

The Securities Industry/Regulatory Council (Council) requires each B-D to maintain a CE program for its covered registered persons to enhance their securities knowledge, skills and professionalism. FINRA's CE requirements consist of a Regulatory Element and a Firm Element.

The Regulatory Element consists of periodic computer-based training on regulatory, compliance, ethical and supervisory subjects. The Firm Element consists of a firm developed and administered training program.

The Firm Element requires each B-D to evaluate and prioritize their training needs by conducting a Needs Analysis as well as developing a written training plan. The annual training plan must update and inform covered persons of job and product related subjects relevant to the firm's business.

When developing and implementing the plan, each B-D must consider its size, structure and scope of business activities as well as regulatory developments and the performance of its registered employees.

The B-D may develop training internally or use external sources, including CE or professional designation programs related to the securities industry, for some or all of its training needs. When using outside vendors or external training materials, the B-D must ensure that the content, delivery and documentation are appropriate for their needs.

Neither FINRA nor the Council pre-approves training materials or programs. While there is no required number of hours, the firm may prescribe training measured in hours or credits for management purposes.

B-Ds use a variety of solutions for their Firm Element securities license requirements, including in house programs, online programs, monitored testing sites, RegEd, WebCE and other programs. Acceptance will no doubt vary on a case-by-case basis, but **select B-D's will apply CFDD Advisor Conference CE credits to FINRA's annual Firm Element requirement.**

As a large, unbiased and content-rich conference host for retirement plan advisors, a growing number of B-Ds have determined that **the CFDD's Advisor Conference agenda covers topics of relevance to the securities industry - including topics that go beyond ERISA - and is populated with recognized/credible industry experts.**

Upon request, the CFDD will provide unalterable basic documentation and attendance certification.

NIPA

The National Institute of Pension Administrators (NIPA) is a national association representing the retirement and employee benefit plan administration profession.

Founded in 1983, the 800 member organization designs, implements and administers programs for the benefit of members, the industry and the public. NIPA is also a provider of education programs for retirement plan professionals.

Designed for pension administrators, relationship managers and ERISA compliance specialists, the Accredited Pension Administrator (APA) provides insight into the daily administration of retirement plans.

Designed for financial consultants/planners, retirement plan personnel and RIAs, the Accredited Pension Representative (APR) provides a general survey of all retirement plan types and engages in advance design.

The APA requires 15 hours of annual CE and the APR requires 10. Multiple designations require a combined 15 hours of CE. CE credits can be earned from a variety of sources, including non-NIPA sponsored programs. 100% of the CE requirements can be obtained from non-NIPA sources.

There is no pre-approval process for non-NIPA sponsored programs, but they must meet established educational requirements. **The CFDD's program is designed to meet NIPA's CE requirements.** Upon request, the CFDD will provide program documentation and verification of attendance.

To report non-NIPA CE credits, designees should complete and return the Continuing Education Annual Reporting Form with their annual dues. Retention of attendance records and written outlines are the designee's responsibility.

For a copy of the Continuing Educational Policy, including the Annual Form, go to: https://www.nipa.org/Images/pdf/NIPA_ContEdProg06.pdf.

NASBA

Details to follow.

SPARK

Details to follow.

CFA INSTITUTE

Details to follow.

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