CDFA® PRACTICE STANDARDS

The CDFA practice standards establish the level of professionalism that is expected of CDFA practitioners. These principles-based standards have been developed to provide guidance to those involved in divorce financial analyst services.

The practice standards are intended to:

1. Assure that CDFA practitioners use a high standard when providing professional services in a divorce financial analyst capacity.

2. Assure that the process used by CDFA practitioners is based on established norms of practice.

3. Advance the profession of divorce financial analyst services for the ultimate benefit of clients, the legal and judicial community, and the public at large.

4. Elevate the CDFA credential so that it will be recognized for its commitment to the understanding and knowledge of divorce related financial issues, high professional standards, and value for those going through the process of divorce.

CERTIFICATION

The CDFA certification process conveys to the public that those individuals who have been authorized to use the CDFA designation have met stringent professional standards and have agreed to adhere to the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility.

CDFA candidates must meet the following certification requirements:

- Experience
- Education
- Examination
- Ethics

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Candidates must now have a bachelor's degree with three years of on-the-job experience or, if no bachelor's degree, five years of relevant experience.

Experience has been defined as the following:

- Financial planning,
- Family law practice, or
- Experience in the three or more of the following:
    - Tax code
    - Investment advisory or management
    - Real estate, mortgage, and reverse mortgage lending
    - Life and disability insurance
    - Financial therapist or coach

EXAMINATION

CDFA candidates must complete the certification exam (s) with a passing score.

ETHICS

CDFA practitioners agree to abide by a strict code of professional conduct known as the IDFA Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility, which sets forth their ethical responsibilities to the public, clients, employers, and other professionals. IDFA may perform a background check during this process and each CDFA candidate must disclose any investigations or legal proceedings relating to his or her professional or business conduct.

PROCESS

Although the scope of service for divorce financial engagements will vary, CDFA practitioners should use the following 5-step process:

Step #1: Establish and define the relationship with client or prospective client.

- Mutual agreement regarding the scope of service(s) to be provided.
- Agreement regarding fee arrangement and/or compensation.
- Disclose any limitations or conflicts of interest.
- Determine client's and practitioner's responsibilities.
- Providing any additional information necessary to define or limit the scope of service.

Step #2: Gather client data and information relevant to the engagement.

- The practitioner shall obtain sufficient quantitative and qualitative information and financial documents relative to the scope of service.
- If the CDFA practitioner is not able to obtain sufficient case information, financial records, or applicable documents which could impact the completion of the assignment and/or conclusions and opinions that can be reached, this shall be communicated by the CDFA practitioner to the client.

Step #3: Completion of analysis/assignment.

- CDFA practitioners must use reasonable, unbiased judgment when arriving at conclusions and/or developing a financial opinion relative to an assignment.
- Assumptions used should be based on sound economic/financial principles.

Step #4: Presentation and delivery of the work product/assignment.

- Analyses and reports completed by CDFA practitioners should be done in a professional and competent manner to reflect the high standards of the divorce financial analyst profession and the IDFA.

Step #5: Completion of engagement.

- At the conclusion of a divorce financial analyst engagement, CDFA practitioners should send written correspondence to their respective client to confirm the completion of the engagement.