

MANAGING YOUR MONEY

A Sound Financial Plan Will Help You Through A Turbulent Economy

(NAPSA)—The nerve-rattling volatility in the stock market and fears of a recession have made many Americans uncertain about the state of the U.S. economy. What is certain is that economic changes raise questions and pose complex personal finance choices for individuals. That is why it is now a better idea than ever to consult with Certified Financial Planner™ professionals for objective advice during these uncertain times.

Keep Focused On Long-Term Goals

“The Internet has made it incredibly easy for people to see short-term fluctuations in their investments,” said David G. Strege, CFP® of Des Moines, Iowa. “At times when there are broader concerns about the economy, it’s easy for short-term changes to seem bigger than they may be. It’s important to keep focused on long-term goals to put those daily fluctuations in perspective.

“Actions you take with your finances should be based on your personal goals—not what seems good at the moment or what your neighbor or co-worker suggests,” he said. “Having a financial plan allows you to take charge of your financial choices and avoid reactions that may be shortsighted.”

“No one approach will fit every situation,” said Marilyn Capelli Dimitroff, CFP® of Bloomfield Hills, Mich. “Financial goals vary,

based on factors such as a person’s age or tolerance for risk. But that’s just scratching the surface. Financial planners who hold the CFP® certification have the training and experience to help people make financial decisions based on their personal life goals, taking into account all aspects of their financial situation.”

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Questions To Ask

With more than 58,000 financial planners across the U.S. who have met CFP Board’s rigorous education, examination, experience and ethics requirements and attained CFP® certification, it’s easy to find a financial-planning professional who can help establish objective and attainable financial goals. Consumers can find local CFP® professionals through CFP Board’s Web site at www.CFP.net/search.

So how do you go about choosing a financial planner? Here are some questions you might ask:

What are your qualifications and history? Ask about credentials and licenses and whether the planner has ever been publicly disciplined for unlawful or unethical conduct.

What’s your approach to

financial planning? Some planners develop a plan that brings together all of your financial goals. Others provide advice on specific areas. Some may have attorneys, insurance agents or tax specialists assist in developing your plan.

How are you compensated?

Ask for a written description of services and associated fees, whether commissions, flat fees, percentage of assets or whether the planner receives a salary.

It’s important to select a CFP® professional with whom you feel comfortable, one whose business style suits your financial-planning needs. CFP Board has developed a Financial Planning Resource Kit that includes tips for finding a financial planner who meets your needs, including an interview questionnaire and checklist. To order a free kit, visit www.CFP.net/request.

“It can be scary to encounter words like ‘recession’ all over the news. Having a financial planner to turn to can help people get beyond the emotions and take an objective look at how current events may affect their situation,” said CFP® practitioner Dan Candura of Braintree, Mass. “When you feel secure that you have a good plan and a trusted professional to turn to for a big-picture view of your financial situation, you can take your thoughts away from your finances and put your focus back on living your life.”