

# Description of Designations Held by The Colony Group Personnel

## Accredited Estate Planner (AEP®)

The AEP® designation is awarded by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC) to recognized estate planning professionals who meet special requirements of education, experience, knowledge, professional reputation, and character. To be eligible for the AEP® designation, an individual must:

1. Be currently licensed or designated as an attorney (JD), accountant (CPA), insurance professional (CLU®), financial planner (ChFC®/CFP®), or trust officer (CTFA);
2. Have 5 years of experience in estate planning activities and be currently and significantly engaged in estate planning activities;
3. Complete 2 graduate level courses, or alternatively pass the equivalent of two graduate level final exams, in estate planning (unless the candidate has 15 years of experience in the field);
4. Maintain a membership in a local or regional estate planning council;
5. Provide 3 professional references; and
6. Acknowledge a commitment to the NAEPC's code of ethics and the team concept of estate planning.

To maintain the AEP® designation, individuals must remain engaged in estate planning activities, remain in good standing with their professional organization and an estate planning council, acknowledge their continuing commitment to the code of ethics and the team concept of estate planning, and complete 30 hours of continuing education every 2 years, 15 hours of which must be focused on estate planning.

## Accredited Investment Fiduciary® (AIF®)

The AIF® designation certifies that the recipient has knowledge of fiduciary standards of care and their application to the investment management process. To receive the AIF® designation, individuals must first meet minimum education and/or relevant experience requirements. Individuals then must complete a training program taking approximately 15-20 hours, successfully pass a comprehensive, closed-book final examination under the supervision of a proctor, and agree to abide by the AIF® Code of Ethics. In order to maintain the AIF® designation, the individual must annually renew their affirmation of the AIF® Code of Ethics and complete six hours of continuing education credits. The certification is administered by the Center for Fiduciary Studies, LLC (a Fiduciary360 (fi360) company). The Center's AIF® training covers industry best practices for the investment management process, the fi360 fiduciary prudent practices and how to apply them, understanding the basis for fiduciary status, and identifying the legal standards that require fiduciaries to prudently manage investment decisions.

## Accredited Investment Fiduciary Analyst® (AIFA®)

The AIFA® designation certifies that the recipient has knowledge of fiduciary standards of care and their application to the investment management process, and the training to conduct assessments of a plan or firm's conformance to legal and regulatory obligations associated with fiduciary standards and professional best practices. A recipient must first receive the Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF®) designation, which requires meeting minimum education and/or relevant experience requirements, completion of a training program taking approximately 15-20 hours, passing a comprehensive, closed-book final examination under the supervision of a proctor, and agreeing to abide by the AIF® Code of Ethics. The AIF® training covers industry best practices for the investment management process, fiduciary prudent practices and how to apply them, understanding the basis for fiduciary status, and identifying

the legal standards that require fiduciaries to prudently manage investment decisions. After receiving the AIF® designation, individuals who have 8 years of relevant experience in the financial services industry may become an AIFA® by attending a three-day training on implementing and assessing prudent investment processes and fiduciary standards of excellence and passing a final examination. To maintain the AIFA® designation, an individual must annually complete ten hours of continuing education credits. The certification is administered by the Center for Fiduciary Studies, LLC (a Fiduciary360 (fi360) company).

### **Certified Financial Planner (CFP®)**

The CFP® certification is a voluntary certification. No federal or state law or regulation requires financial planners to hold the CFP® certification. It is recognized in the United States and a number of other countries for its: (1) high standard of professional education; (2) stringent code of conduct and standards of practice; and (3) ethical requirements that govern professional engagements with clients. In order to attain the right to use the CFP® marks, an individual must satisfactorily fulfill the following requirements:

1. Education – Complete an advanced college-level course of study addressing the financial planning subject areas that the CFP Board’s studies have determined are necessary for the competent and professional delivery of financial planning services, and attain a Bachelor’s Degree from a regionally accredited United States college or university (or its equivalent from a foreign university). The CFP Board’s financial planning subject areas include insurance planning and risk management, employee benefits planning, investment planning, income tax planning, retirement planning, and estate planning.
2. Examination – Pass the comprehensive CFP® Certification Examination. The examination, administered in 10 hours over a two-day period, includes case studies and client scenarios designed to test one’s ability to diagnose financial planning issues and apply one’s knowledge of financial planning to real world circumstances.
3. Experience – Complete at least three years of full-time, financial-planning-related experience (or the equivalent, measured as 2,000 hours per year).
4. Ethics – Agree to be bound by the CFP Board’s *Standards of Professional Conduct*, a set of documents outlining the ethical and practice standards for CFP® professionals.

Continuing Education and Ethical Standards. Individuals who become certified must complete the following ongoing education and ethics requirements in order to maintain the right to continue to use the CFP® marks:

- Continuing Education – Complete 30 hours of continuing education hours every two years, including two hours on the *Code of Ethics* and other parts of the *Standards of Professional Conduct*, to maintain competence and keep up with developments in the financial planning field.
- Ethics – Renew an agreement to be bound by the *Standards of Professional Conduct*. The *Standards* require that CFP® professionals provide financial planning services with a fiduciary standard of care. This means that CFP® professionals must provide financial planning services in the best interests of their clients.

CFP® professionals who fail to comply with the above standards may be subject to the CFP Board's enforcement process, which could result in suspension or permanent revocation of their CFP® certification.

## **Certified Investment Management Analyst® (CIMA®)**

The certification CIMA® signifies that an individual has met initial and on-going experience, ethical, education, and examination requirements for investment management consulting, including advanced investment management theory and application. Prerequisites for the CIMA certification are three years of financial services experience and an acceptable regulatory history. To obtain the CIMA certification, candidates must pass an online Qualification Examination, successfully complete a one-week classroom education program provided by a Registered Education Provider at an AACSB accredited university business school, pass an online Certification Examination, and have an acceptable regulatory history as evidenced by FINRA Form U-4 or other regulatory requirements. CIMA designees are required to adhere to IMCA's Code of Professional Responsibility, Standards of Practice, and Rules and Guidelines for Use of the Marks. CIMA designees must report 40 hours of continuing education credits, including two ethics hours, every two years to maintain the certification. The designation is administered through Investment Management Consultants Association (IMCA).

The CIMA certification has earned ANSI® (American National Standards Institute) accreditation under the personnel certification program. The American National Standards Institute, or ANSI, is a private non-profit organization that facilitates standardization and conformity assessment activities in the United States. CIMA is the first financial services credential to meet this international standard for personnel certification.

## **Certified Private Wealth Advisor® (CPWA®)**

The CPWA® designation signifies that an individual has met initial and on-going experience, ethical, education, and examination requirements for the professional designation, which is centered on private wealth management topics and strategies for high-net-worth clients. Prerequisites for the CPWA designation are: a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university or one of the following designations or licenses: CIMA®, CIMC®, CFA®, CFP®, ChFC®, or CPA license; have an acceptable regulatory history as evidenced by FINRA Form U-4 or other regulatory requirements and five years of experience in financial services or delivering services to high-net-worth clients. CPWA designees have completed a rigorous educational process that includes self-study requirements, an in-class education component, and successful completion of a comprehensive examination. CPWA designees are required to adhere to IMCA's Code of Professional Responsibility and Rules and Guidelines for Use of the Marks. CPWA designees must report 40 hours of continuing education credits, including two ethics hours, every two years to maintain the certification. The designation is administered through Investment Management Consultants Association (IMCA).

## **Certified Public Accountant (CPA)**

CPAs are licensed and regulated by their state boards of accountancy. While state laws and regulations vary, the education, experience and testing requirements for licensure as a CPA generally include minimum college education (typically 150 credit hours with at least a baccalaureate degree and a concentration in accounting), minimum experience levels (most states require at least one year of experience providing services that involve the use of accounting, compilation, management advisory, financial advisory, tax or consulting skills, all of which must be achieved under the supervision of or verification by a CPA), and successful passage of the Uniform CPA Examination. In order to maintain a CPA license, states generally require the completion of 40 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) each year (or 80 hours over a two-year period or 120 hours over a three-year

period). The vast majority of state boards of accountancy have adopted the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) *Code of Professional Conduct* within their state accountancy laws or have created their own.

### **Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst (CAIA®)**

The CAIA® charter is awarded by the Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst Association, which offers an education program uniquely designed for individuals specializing in alternative investments. The charter is granted to individuals who:

1. Pass both the CAIA Level I and Level II exams;
2. Hold a bachelor's degree and have more than one year of professional experience, or alternatively have at least four years of professional experience, within the regulatory, banking, financial, or related fields;
3. Agree on an annual basis to abide by the Member Agreement;
4. Provide two (2) professional references; and
5. Submit payment for the annual CAIA Association membership fee.

The Level I exam assesses the applicant's understanding of various alternative asset classes, such as hedge funds, private equity, commodities, real estate, and managed futures, and the applicant's knowledge of the tools and techniques used to evaluate the risk-return attributes of each one. The Level II exam assesses how the applicant would apply the knowledge and analytics learned in Level I within a portfolio management context. Both levels include segments on ethics and professional conduct.

### **Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA®)**

The CFA charter is a globally respected, graduate-level investment credential established in 1962 and awarded by the CFA Institute - the largest global association of investment professionals. To earn the CFA charter, a candidate must:

1. Pass three sequential, six-hour examinations;
2. Have at least four years of qualified professional investment experience;
3. Join the CFA Institute as a member; and
4. Commit to abide by, and annually reaffirm, their adherence to the CFA Institute Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct.

**High Ethical Standards.** The CFA Institute Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, enforced through an active professional conduct program, require CFA charter holders to:

- Place their clients' interests ahead of their own
- Maintain independence and objectivity
- Act with integrity
- Maintain and improve their professional competence
- Disclose conflicts of interest and legal matters

**Global Recognition.** Passing the three CFA exams requires extensive study (successful candidates report spending an average of 300 hours of study per level). Earning the CFA charter demonstrates mastery of many of the advanced skills needed for investment analysis and decision making in today's quickly

evolving global financial industry. Additionally, regulatory bodies in 22 countries and territories recognize the CFA charter as a proxy for meeting certain licensing requirements, and many colleges and universities around the world have incorporated a majority of the CFA Program curriculum into their own finance courses. To learn more about the CFA charter, visit [www.cfainstitute.org](http://www.cfainstitute.org).

### **Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC)**

The ChFC designation is a financial planning credential awarded by the American College to individuals who satisfy educational, work experience and ethics requirements. Recipients of the ChFC certification have completed, and passed examinations, on at least seven mandatory college-level courses in the areas of financial, insurance, retirement and/or estate planning, as well as income taxation and/or investments. Additionally, recipients have completed at least three elective courses on the financial system, estate planning applications, executive compensation, and/or retirement decisions. In order to maintain this designation, ChFC holders must satisfy the ongoing requirements of the Professional Achievement in Continuing Education ("PACE"), which includes at least 30 hours of continuing education every two years.

### **Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU®)**

CLU® is a professional designation for individuals who wish to specialize in life insurance and estate planning. For 84 years, the CLU® has been the respected risk management credential for advisors. Designees have completed eight or more college-level courses representing an average study time of 400 hours, and eight two-hour, 100-question examinations in order to receive the designation. Topics for required courses include insurance and financial planning, life insurance law, estate planning, and planning for business owners and professionals. Elective courses include such advanced topics as income taxes, group benefits, retirement planning, and health insurance. CLU® designees must meet experience and continuing education requirements and must adhere to a high ethical standard. The mark is awarded by The American College ([www.theamericancollege.edu](http://www.theamericancollege.edu)), a non-profit educator with the top level of academic accreditation.

### **Chartered Market Technician (CMT)**

CMT is a professional designation that confirms proficiency in technical analysis of the financial markets. To hold the designation, membership in the Market Technicians Association is required. The CMT designation requires completion of an education program and examination series in technical analysis. The Market Technicians Association (MTA, [www.mta.org](http://www.mta.org)) oversees the program curriculum and administration of exams. Candidates who pass all three examination levels of the program can earn the Chartered Market Technician designation, which certifies that the individual is competent in technical analysis.

The Chartered Market Technician program is a primary part of the MTA's larger mission to:

- Educate the public and the investment community to the value and universality of technical analysis
- Attract and retain a membership of professionals devoting their efforts to using and expanding the field of technical analysis and sharing their body of knowledge with their fellow members
- Establish, maintain and encourage the highest standards of professional competence and ethics among technical analysts.

The MTA began to develop the CMT program in 1985. Just as other professional organizations have standards of competence for members, so the CMT designation provides a recognized standard of proficiency for technical analysts.

The three-part CMT examination includes:

1. Definitions ("terminology, charting methods, and ethics");
2. Application ("concepts such as "Dow Theory, Elliott Wave, inter-market, etc."); and
3. Integration ("competency in ethics and in rendering technical opinions integrating multiple aspects of technical analysis. Essay responses should be of the quality of technical research published by practicing CMT charter holders.")

### **Personal Financial Specialist (PFS)**

PFS is a designation granted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) to individuals that are CPAs and meet its examination, work experience and reaccreditation requirements. The candidate must pass an examination, have at least three years of financial planning experience, and be an AICPA member in good standing. To maintain the PFS designation, the AICPA requires individuals to be reaccredited every three years, which includes meeting continued professional education requirements.