

 AFCPE®



# LISTEN LEARN GUIDE IMPACT

## CONTENTS

4

BRIDGING THE GAP &  
MAKING AN IMPACT

6

AFC®  
CERTIFICATION

8

MEMBERSHIP

12

GRANT PROGRAMS

14

FINANCIAL  
COACHING PROGRAM  
IMPACT & REDESIGN

18

STRATEGIC  
PILLARS

20

#MYWHY CAMPAIGN

22

VALUE OF AN AFC®

24

AFCPE® SYMPOSIUM

28

LOOKING AHEAD

30

LEADERSHIP

“At AFCPE<sup>®</sup>, we set a standard, *the standard*, not just because it’s the best thing to do, but because *it’s the right thing to do.*”



**REBECCA WIGGINS**  
AFCPE<sup>®</sup> Executive Director

As we grow as an organization, so too does the influence and impact of each of you, our professionals. AFCPE<sup>®</sup> professionals play a critical role in our field and on national issues that impact financial security. More specifically, we have an important role and responsibility in addressing systemic and societal problems that plague the economic security of many across our nation; things like consumer protection, the rising levels of income and wealth inequality, rising student debt, declining wages and decreased savings.

At AFCPE<sup>®</sup>, we set a standard, the standard, not just because it’s the best thing to do, but because it’s the right thing to do. It’s right to demand rigor and excellence for all people, not just those with wealth. It is right to have a strong commitment

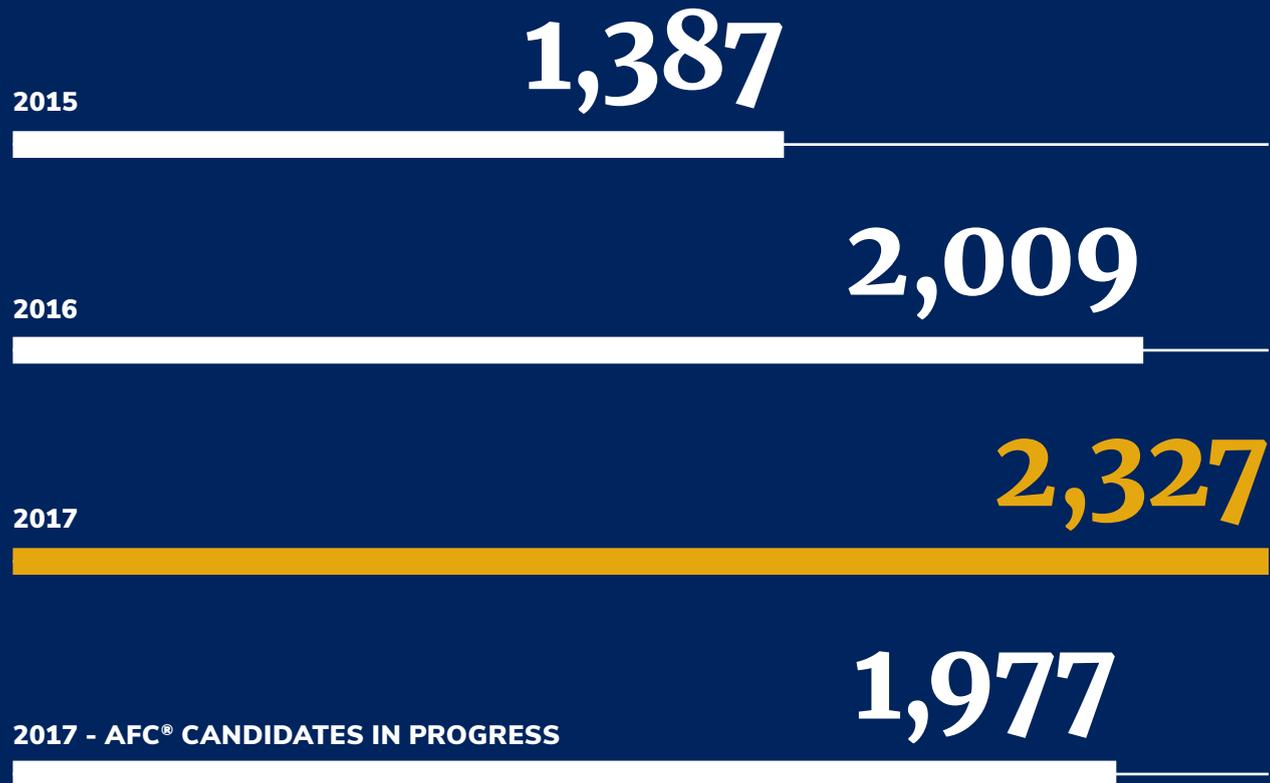
to a higher level of knowledge because each person is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to finances. It’s right to care about our clients and our communities, and use our expertise to help them reach their life goals and expand opportunities. It is the right thing to do to be forward-thinking and presently-living, to be focused and compassionate, to make a difference — not just in dollars and cents but in people’s lives.

At AFCPE<sup>®</sup> we are setting the standard, not because it is easy, but because it’s what we are inspired to do. We believe in motivating change, in bridging gaps, in making connections with knowledge and empathy. Because we know that the best way to impact our culture is by improving individual lives.

As we look toward a new year, it is my hope and vision that we combine our individual passions and areas of expertise with the issues we face collectively as a society, that we understand the complex issues of our time and that they go beyond the individual level to the collective. We are facing uncertain times in our country and around the world. Our field and our professionals, in particular, are a vital part of the solution.

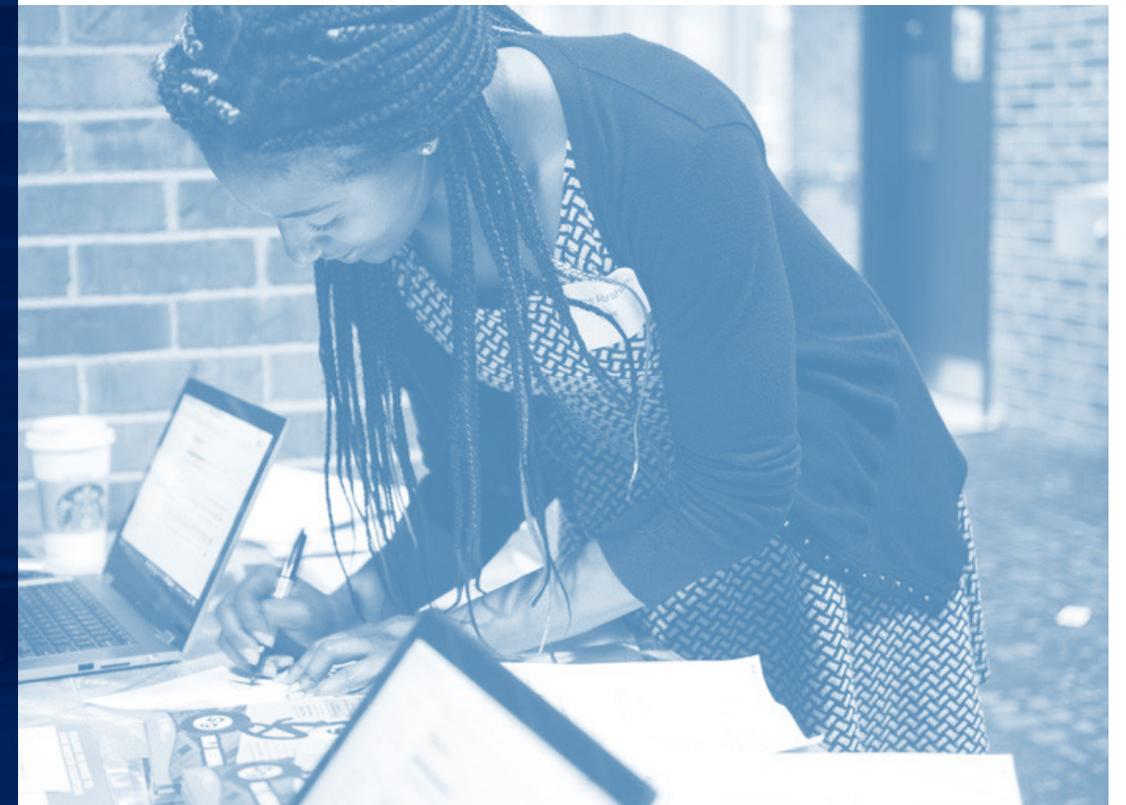
Let us recommit to setting the highest standards for our field and the people we serve, with the fundamental belief that all people, regardless of their income or background, deserve access to professionals who uphold these standards. Our communities, our country, and the world depend on it for economic security and a brighter future.

# AFC® Professionals In Good Standing



Recognizing that funding can be a barrier to certification for nonprofit groups, in 2018 we began to bridge these gaps in a couple of ways.

First, by creating an AFC® Exam Scholarship for Nonprofit Professionals, designed for those who work for a 501(c)3 organization that provides financial and/or social services to low to moderate income individuals. Secondly, by developing a new comprehensive training program, Money Management Essentials. This new training provides an important holistic base level of financial knowledge - perfect for individuals who volunteer for your nonprofit or social service organization.



MEMBERSHIP

# AFCPE® Member Growth

2015

872

2016

1,100

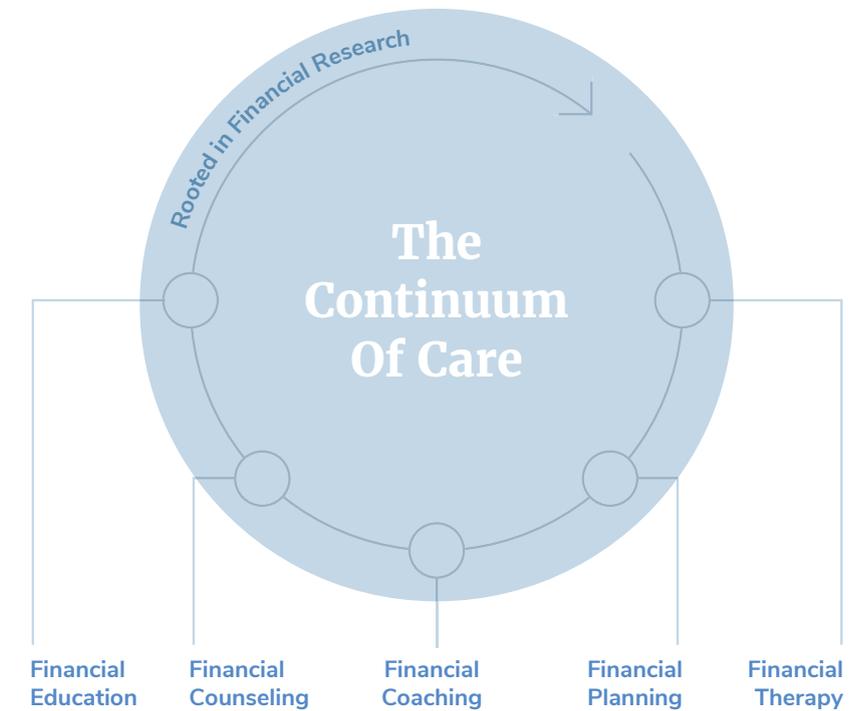
2017

1,350

## Working Together to Strengthen the Continuum of Care

The AFCPE® professional membership network is made up of professionals from diverse areas of expertise, uniquely convening professionals across a vast continuum of care. To better serve our clients and positively impact financial well-being in our country, we believe it is essential that we work together to build a more integrated and inclusive continuum of care.

This is why we teach our AFC® professionals to understand the complete and comprehensive financial lifecycle for the clients that they are serving.



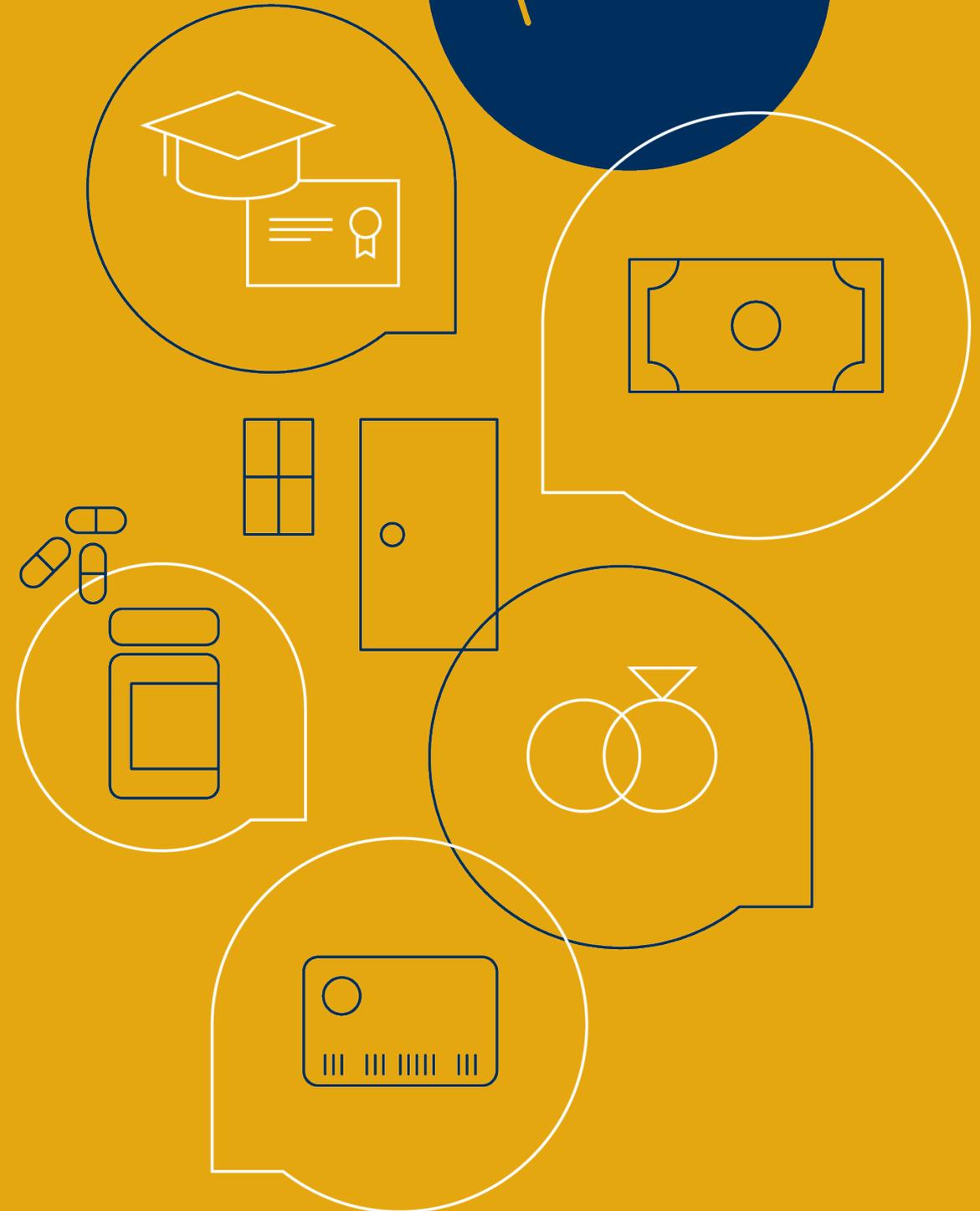
MEMBERSHIP

“I became an AFC® to give opportunities to clients that want financial change.”



BEN A MERCADO  
AFC®

My work requires professional development and to implement methods that promote that social change. I feel that AFCPE® sets high standards for professionals to achieve.





## GRANT PROGRAMS

# Building the Bridge to Investor Education and Protection for all Ohioans

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Commerce - Division of Securities, the Investor Protection Trust (IPT), and Detroit Public Television (DPTV), the statewide campaign featured the airing of the DPTV documentary "When I'm 65" on Ohio public television stations and three community events in Columbus, Dayton and Cleveland that brought together community leaders, financial professionals and consumers to connect more individuals and families to trusted resources and financial professionals.

### Bring the Program to Your State!

From this event, we've created a model and toolkit that will allow the program to be replicated in other states to address the lack of financial literacy across the nation.

### Help us Facilitate the Conversation in Your Community

Download our [discussion guide](#) and host a "When I'm 65" screening - with friends, family, neighbors, or in a financial education setting through your organization.

## PARTNERS



# The Financial Fitness Coach (FFC®) program redesign meets you where you are and continues to professionalize the field

AFCPE® and Sage Financial Solutions partnered to develop a program that provides you with the skills and techniques to build upon your financial foundation and support clients as they make lasting financial behavior change.



## BRANDY BAXTER AFC®, FFC® CANDIDATE

The FFC® is the perfect complement to the AFC®. After acquiring the foundational financial information needed to be of value to my clients, the FFC® allows me to partner with clients in a way that gives them a safe space to journey deeper into their relationship with money. Rather than telling the client what to do, I have the privilege of experiencing the why they do what they do on their journey to how they plan to change.

## FFC® BUILDING BLOCKS



Build the skills.



Deepen the learning.



Focus on mastery.



Financial Fitness Coach

- Interactive. Experiential. Client Driven.
- Three modules of training that build upon the last to enhance effectiveness with clients.
- Requiring that you are a financial expert so you can build skills upon a strong knowledge base.





**FINANCIAL COACHING  
PROGRAM IMPACT & REDESIGN**

# Creating Partnerships & Lasting Impact

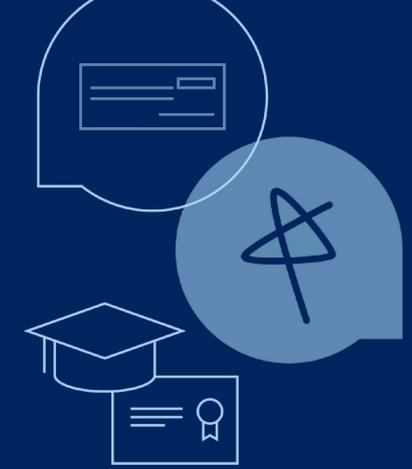
Thanks to significant funding from Citi Community Development and additional support from JPMorgan Chase, **United Way of California Capital Region**, has provided financial coaching grants. These grants are allowing professionals at 5 area organizations to earn their AFC® and FFC® certifications, thus creating a strong support network for low-to-moderate-income people seeking support with financial concerns and goals.

**The CFPB Financial Coaching Initiative** entered its third year of significant impact. Sixty financial coaches continue to work in locations throughout the country to provide guidance to recently-transitioned veterans and economically vulnerable families. Coaches are required to hold or acquire both the AFC® and FFC® certifications.

**The Brilliant Baby Program** is a unique initiative in Oakland, CA to help parents raise thriving children by reducing financial stressors, providing a supportive community and establishing a college savings account as an early investment in every baby's bright future. Generously funded by members of the Oakland community, Sandra Davis, founder of the FFC® certification, is the master financial coach on the project which requires all coaches to obtain the AFC® and FFC® certifications.

**SAGE**  
Financial Solutions

Out of our 2016 strategic planning meeting, came a focus on four strategic pillars.



PILLAR ONE

# Quality Research

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**Research Partnership  
With Wells Fargo**

In 2017, we partnered with Wells Fargo, embarking on a two-year research project that will analyze the effectiveness of financial education, counseling, and coaching approaches.

PILLAR TWO

# Evolved Technology

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**Money Management Essentials  
Training Program**

Developed in a new online learning management system, this professional development course takes you through the essential steps of money management. Rooted in the core competencies of the AFC<sup>®</sup>, the program is ideal for financial or service professionals who want to enhance their financial knowledge, but who do not require a certification in their role. Also a great stepping-stone to AFC<sup>®</sup> certification.

PILLAR THREE

# Authentic Marketing

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**Revived Focus On Telling Our Story:  
Who We Are, What We Do, Why It Matters**

Worked with an outside design group to create an evolved brand story and visual experience for AFCPE<sup>®</sup>. Elements of this refresh will begin to be integrated into our marketing in 2018.

Partnered with a local public relations firm to develop a PR strategy to raise both professional and consumer awareness for AFCPE<sup>®</sup> and the work of our professionals.

Launched the #MyWhy Instagram campaign and #BridgingtheGap social campaign because no one tells our story of impact better than you - our professionals.

PILLAR FOUR

# Government Relations

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**Formed Ad-Hoc  
Task Force**

Hired a Government Relations consultant to guide our efforts, and held several meetings on Capital Hill with staffers to introduce AFCPE<sup>®</sup> as a leader and authority in the field and advocate for issues like consumer protection.

## #MYWHY CAMPAIGN

# We all love stories that can inspire, motivate & connect.

In honor of National Financial Literacy Month, we asked AFCPE® professionals to share their stories. To tell us their “Why”. What inspired them to become financial educators, counselors or coaches.

[Read more stories online at the AFCPE® Blog](#)



**BARBARA LANG, AFC®**  
From Apprehension to Purpose

I remember my “why” day vividly — even though it was over 15 years ago. Having only been a financial counselor for a year, I was apprehensive about the new role I had taken on. My biggest fear was meeting with a client and not being able to provide them with the help they needed. Then it happened — a high-ranking individual scheduled an appointment to see me. To say I was anxious was an understatement.

The day finally arrived. I proceeded to ask him what brought him in to see me that day. He looked up at me with tear filled eyes and said “Barbara, I have almost 30 years in the Air Force and I am being forced to retire due to high year of tenure. I have less disposable cash today than I had 30 years ago as an airman. I’m petrified. I can’t afford to retire. I don’t know what to do!”

**From that moment on, I knew my destiny.** I knew why I had to learn all that I could so that I could share my knowledge to help others avoid the same plight.



**NASHIRA LYNTON, AFC®**  
Breaking Cycles

When I became pregnant at 18, people close to me said, “Don’t go to college. Get on welfare.” Knowing the statistics, I went to my local public assistance office, and nearly 4 hours later was denied benefits for being too young – my mother should still be supporting me. What statistics didn’t discuss were teen moms who still accomplished their goals. I set out to prove the world wrong.

I eventually graduated with my master’s degree and close to \$60k in debt. Although I was making a decent income, I was also raising two kids in NYC. **Then everything changed for me when I gave my life to the Lord. I set out to change my negative financial behaviors.** I am so thankful to have found AFCPE®. They provided the tools and education to help me get started. This past February I completed my certification as an AFC®. Now I am opening my business, Breaking Cycles, to help others obtain financial health and live the life they were created to live.



**MEGHAN GARDNER, AFC®, FFC®**  
Providing the Tools For Success

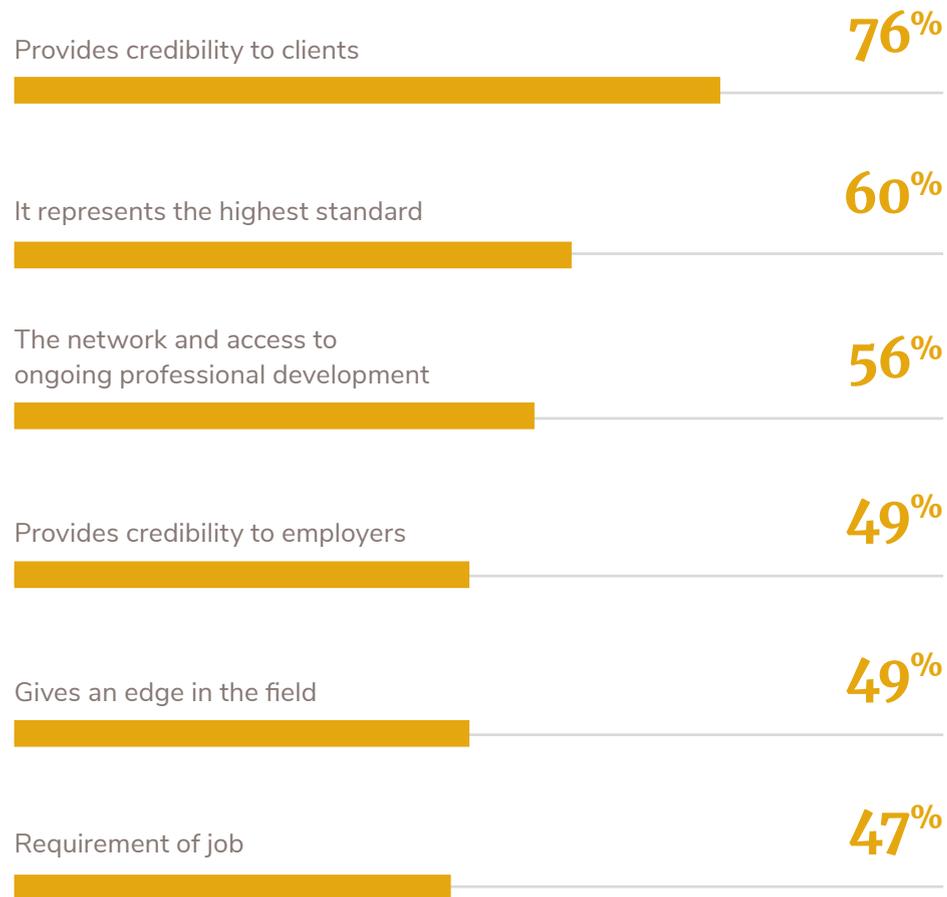
Many Americans are not financially prepared because they have not been provided all of the tools needed for success. My “why” is so simple and yet complex... **Having seen both sides of the spectrum, I want to be a part of the solution. I want to be a guide to help others reach their dreams.**

I have earned both my AFC® and FFC® designations and now work hard to help veterans, service members, and the undeserved populations in the St. Louis region gain the tools needed to be financially prepared. I now walk with others as they overcome the payday lending trap, learn to create workable budgets for the first time, and achieve the American dream of home buying. I not only believe that this work helps individuals, but I believe it is leading to a more financial stable St. Louis, one person at a time.

VALUE OF AN AFC®

# 2017 AFC® Professional Survey Results

## TOP REASONS THAT PROFESSIONALS BECOME AFC® CERTIFIED



## PROGRESS CLIENTS HAVE INDICATED AS A RESULT OF WORKING WITH AN AFC® PROFESSIONAL

68%

↓ Feeling less stressed

58%

↑ Increase in savings

77%

Increase in financial knowledge

51%

↑ Increase in credit score

26%

↓ Fewer relationship problems

74%

Feeling more confident about their financial situation

## TOP 3 FINANCIAL CHALLENGES CLIENTS FACE

- Lack of a Financial Plan
- Lack of Savings
- Excessive Credit Card Debt

## TOP 3 SERVICES AFC® PROFESSIONALS PROVIDE

- How to create a spending plan
- Money management education
- How to reduce debt

AFCPE® SYMPOSIUM

# The AFCPE® Symposium embodies the diversity of AFCPE®.

Bringing together a dynamic network of individuals and organizations from across the financial continuum, this network is a hallmark of AFCPE®.



## The Symposium helps #BridgetheGap between:

- Research, Education and Practice
- Financial Advice and Behavior Change
- Issues of Systemic Inequality
- Professionals in the Larger Continuum of Care

### GIVING BACK

Each year we organize a community event to give back to the cities who host our Symposium. AFC® professionals volunteer their time and expertise to provide pro-bono financial counseling, helping individuals and families address personal financial issues, assess financial health and begin the process of developing successful strategies for achieving their financial goals.

### RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENTS

On the final day of the Symposium, the Awards Luncheon offers the opportunity to recognize the incredible work, impact and innovation of AFCPE® Members.

### FOSTERING THE GROWTH OF FUTURE LEADERS

Through Student Scholarships and a Financial Counseling Knowledge Bowl, AFCPE® provides funding for university students to attend the Symposium, access career exploration and mentorship and a build a strong professional network.

# Sharing knowledge, research, experiences, and lifelong connections



**ANGELA MAZZOLINI**  
AFC®

Attending the annual AFCPE® Symposium allows me to network with other professionals from around that country. I leave the Symposium re-energized about my work and I can't wait to put all I have learned in to practice back home!



**KATIE LEIVA**  
AFC®

At the AFCPE® Symposium I feel validated and enriched by a community of like-minded professionals who really want to help people. Most of us spend our time focused on others but for those few days as we focus on our own professional development, learning and networking, it's a great feeling.



**TERRI BAILEY**  
AFC®

This symposium was a game changer! It opened my mind to new ideas and mechanisms to carry into my work with clients. The icing on the cake - meeting colleagues and making new friends!



**PJ GUNTER**  
AFC®

There is no substitute for eye-to-eye contact, handshakes, and hugs. We are building an industry and it takes lots of hands to put it together, and those hands come together at the Symposium.



LOOKING AHEAD

# The Future of AFCPE®

As we move into the new year, we are excited about our continued growth and momentum. 2018 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> year that the AFC® certification has set the highest standards in the field of financial counseling and education, rooted in research.

#### WE REMAIN:

- Focused on building awareness for the certification mark and providing you with the tools you need to help us share the value of the AFC®.
- Committed to growing our professional reach to expand our impact in the field.
- Diligent in enhancing our continuing education and training programs to deliver professional development that enhances your work and your effectiveness with those you serve.
- Passionate about our mission and vision for this field and committed to collaborating with trusted partners to move us closer to a future where all people have the access and the opportunity to achieve lasting financial well-being.

## LEADERSHIP

**At AFCPE<sup>®</sup>, we are setting the standard because it's what we are inspired to do.**

AFCPE<sup>®</sup> STAFF

**Rebecca Wiggins**  
Executive Director

**Michelle Starkey**  
Certification Program Director

**Ashlee Abraham**  
Certification Program Coordinator

**Katy Carlsward**  
Certification Administrator

**Judy Obiofuma**  
Post-Certification  
Program Coordinator

**Heather Baker**  
Military Spouse Fellowship

**Thomas Duffany**  
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**Katie Tornow**  
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**Sara Martin-Fuller**  
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Journal Editor

**Jill Spence**  
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## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

consumeraction

cfpb





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## 2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

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