

AFCPE®



AFCPE



AFCPE

CT

POWER

IMPACT



AFCPE

**YOU'RE IN  
THE RIGHT  
PLACE.**

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**YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE.**

A LETTER FROM  
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**More than any milestone or achievement,  
I am proudest of the culture of belonging  
we have built with a focus on *transparency,  
collaboration, and inclusion...***

AFCPE® remains a beacon of hope for what's possible for our world when we come together across our differences to seek new perspectives, challenge our assumptions, and strive to find the common ground that elevates our work, communities, and shared humanity.

The instability and struggle over the past two years has illuminated the incredible need for our profession, and reminded us about the importance of building community and cultivating connection. As I reflect on the hardships, challenges, and lessons we have collectively faced and learned, I feel immense appreciation for you - our AFCPE Community. During an unprecedented time, you remain committed to meeting your clients where they are; you volunteer your time and share your expertise in order to serve others; and you continue to learn and grow to ensure that your clients and communities have the opportunity to achieve financial well-being. I also want to thank our dedicated AFCPE Staff Team. They too have navigated these uncertain times with an unwavering commitment to our mission and to serving you, our professionals.

AFCPE has never been stronger - our community is more integrated and passionate than ever. Our team is talented, engaged, and excited about advancing our mission. With the new strategic plan, a dynamic staff and a committed network of professionals, the organization is poised to flourish in the years to come. There is no better time to join our community, get certified, or take an Essentials course. No matter where you start, AFCPE is the place to find your people.

Help us spread the value of AFCPE Membership, Certification, and Education to your colleagues and clients.

***If you are passionate about helping people with their money so they can improve their lives, you are in the right place.***

REBECCA WIGGINS,  
AFCPE® Executive  
Director



# Do well and do good

If you measure your career growth by the impact you have on your clients, you've come to the right place. An AFC® certification empowers you to build deeper trust with clients, foster respect among colleagues, and expand your skillset to gain confidence and make a bigger difference.

## WE MEET YOU WHERE YOU ARE.

Offering multiple pathways to fit your lifestyle, learning style, and current life situation:

- **Self-Study:** Our most popular option allows you to get the course materials and study at your own pace.
- **Distance Learning:** There are now more than 30 AFCPE Registered Education Programs that offer the educational requirements to earn the AFC designation. This year we welcomed:
  - Park University
  - South Dakota State University
  - Taylor University
  - University of Kentucky

• **Challenge:** If you have completed applicable coursework from a regionally-accredited college or university, or if you hold a CFP®, CPA, ChFC or CFA designation, this pathway provides a cost savings on the educational component of the AFC.

• **Independent Trainer:** Groups and organizations can now work with a registered AFC independent trainer to satisfy the educational competencies required to sit for the AFC exam.



“

*I have had my AFC® for about a year and passed my exam about two years ago now and decided to complete my bachelors in finance to make myself more marketable. In my 400 level finance classes I am getting a lot of awesome feedback from my professors about the value of the education I received from AFCPE. I am able to contextualize the information in a practical manner and several students have even reached out to me about becoming an AFC. Study hard! It matters and will make you a better counselor. ”*

~ Lindsay Wilson, AFC®  
#ValueOfAnAFC



# The financial world is never stagnant, *and your financial certification shouldn't be either.*

## **AFCPE® Achieves NCCA Re-Accreditation.**

The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence, created a unique set of standards in 1977 and use these standards to ensure that certification programs adhere to modern standards of practice for the certification industry.

AFCPE joins an elite group of more than 120 organizations, representing over 270 programs, that have received and maintained NCCA accreditation. This achievement ensures that the AFC® program aligns with the best practices from an outside accrediting body and demonstrates AFCPE's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

## **New Independent Trainer Pathway**

### **Expands Accessibility.**

Launched in 2021, this new pathway is ideal for group training! Organizations can hire an AFC Independent Trainer to deliver customized learning experiences while controlling costs and maximizing investment. It also offers more educational options for those who struggle with self-paced learning and opens opportunities to build capacity in underserved communities.

## **More Resources and Support for Candidates:**

- **Office Hours.** Led by AFCPE's Education team, office hours are an opportunity to ask questions related to content that may have you stumped.
- **Redesigned Certification Dashboard.** Now candidates have easy access to all certification resources in one place.
- **Navigating the AFC webinar.** Every month, the Certification team hosts a webinar both for candidates, and those interested in joining the program. This webinar covers the "Four E's" of certification: Education, Exam, Experience, and Ethics.
- **Updated CEU Guide.** New and improved guide to provide answers to questions about continuing education and help AFC professionals create a plan for maintaining certification.

**AFC®  
Certification  
Renewal Rate  
in 2021:**

**95%**



# The Essentials:

## *Increasing Knowledge.*

## *Strengthening Communities.*

At AFCPE® we recognize that budgets and resources might be limited, but your commitment to helping people achieve lasting financial well-being is not. Essentials courses are online and self-paced to meet you where you are – giving you the tools and resources to make a lasting impact in the lives of those you serve.

### EDUCATION

#### **Money Management Essentials**

A professional development course that takes you through the essential steps of money management. Providing a firm financial foundation – for you and those you serve.

#### **Financial Inclusion Essentials**

A self-paced online course for financial counselors, financial coaches, disability service providers, and others who want to learn more about building the financial well-being of people with disabilities.

#### **College Finance Essentials**

A professional development course that covers all aspects of college finance, including choosing the right school, the tax benefits of higher education, applying for and paying back student loans, and preparing for a career.

#### **New in 2021!**

#### **Military Essentials**

An online course giving you the tools to better support the unique financial challenges and opportunities of military service members, veterans, and their families.

#### **Coming Soon!**

#### **Communication Essentials**

#### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Essentials**

#### **Coaching Essentials**





CAPACITY BUILDING



# Building capacity- *for you, your organization, and your community.*

Creating lasting impact through capacity building is not one-size-fits-all, but we do have some great suggestions to get you started.

## **Begin with Money Management Essentials.**

The 10-12 hour self-guided, web-based course is affordable and accessible. It provides you with a breadth of financial knowledge, and once completed, can be used as a credit to help offset the cost of the AFC® exam. For organizations, it's a great way to identify which candidates have the passion and aptitude to go on to earn the AFC, while providing volunteers and entry level staff a strong knowledge base.

## **Have an AFC® on Staff.**

By having a content expert on staff, you build a strong team from within. An AFC can help navigate more complex financial issues that clients may be facing. And an AFC who has been certified at least 4 years is eligible to become an Independent Trainer, which allows you to more cost-effectively certify your entire team.

## **Set Yourself Apart with Essentials Training.**

Essentials courses provide specialized knowledge and training to help you better serve specific populations – from navigating college planning and student loans, to better serving people with disabilities, to addressing the unique financial needs of the military community.

# AFC® Certification helps you support your clients.

# *AFCPE® Membership supports you.*

## Find Your People.

Whether you are new to the field or have been working in financial education, research, or practice for years, the AFCPE community has a place for you. AFCPE Members are diverse in experiences but like-minded in purpose. Membership offers networking and connection - to discover new ideas, solve problems, and exchange best practices.

- **Mentorship.**

In 2021, the redesigned AFCPE MentorConnect program made more than 100 mentorship matches.

- **Connected Community.**

Need support navigating a client issue? Want to learn more about a new resource for your practice? Lean on the knowledge of our diverse and welcoming community. The Connected Community discussion board is a great place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange ideas.

- **Virtual Meet Ups and Continuing Conversations.**

AFCPE hosts virtual networking events multiple times per month. We may gather over a new resource, a hot topic, or just to catch up. Check out the calendar and join us for the next event.



“

*[My Mentor] took it very seriously, and gave me lots of thoughtful and relevant insights into the field. Additionally he researched job leads, local resources, etc. for me. I greatly appreciate his time and efforts, and am glad AFCPE is running this program.”*

~ Tom Whiteside  
(Mentee)  
on Ryan Ritter,  
AFC® (Mentor)



### **Stay Sharp.**

Your clients' needs are constantly evolving — and your skill set should be too. Membership gives you access to relevant (and free) continuing education so you can be confident that your expertise is applicable and up-to-date.

### **Popular Webinar Topics in 2021.**

- Peeling Back the Curtain on Money Beliefs
- Cracking the Code to College Finance
- Don't Say That! Navigating the Fine Line between Investment Education and Advice
- Social Security: Spotlight on Spouse and Survivor Benefits

Did you miss one of these? Access them on demand!

### **More Research to Inform Your Practice.**

- More Quickly: Accepted papers are now published on our website prior to formal publication - giving you early access.
- More Often: In 2021, the Journal for Financial Counseling and Planning published three issues - one online only.
- More Bridging the Gap: From research briefs to "aha moments", AFCPE Members contributed articles to AFCPE's blog and The Standard Newsletter to raise awareness and understanding of research.



### **Grow in Your Career.**

#### **New in 2021!**

##### **• AFCPE Career Week + Job Fair.**

A week-long virtual event focused on career-building, networking, and job seeking. We offered webinars to help members explore career paths, elevate their elevator pitch, navigate changing careers, and deliver their best resume. And the week culminated in our first ever job fair!

##### **• Continuing Conversations.**

Although members are spread across the country, you'll never notice the distance. Building upon the success of Symposium Topic Chats, Continuing Conversations brought members another opportunity to connect virtually.

#### **Coming in 2022:**

##### **• Virtual Internship and Experience Hour Fair.**

Whether you are an AFC candidate looking to earn experience hours, a student hoping to build your resume, or a seasoned professional wanting to give back, this event is for you!

##### **• Affinity Groups.**

An expansion of our Connected Community that will allow AFCPE Members to come together around a common interest. These groups will be member driven for optimum connection.

# Social Responsibility

In March of 2020, with the generous support of the Wells Fargo Foundation, and technology provided by the Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN), AFCPE quickly mobilized passionate professional volunteers to offer virtual financial counseling to individuals facing financial insecurity. This program has continued to grow, with hopes of continuing into 2022.

Since the program's inception, the two most common issues AFCs and FFCs have addressed with clients:

- Budgeting
- Debt Management

## IMPACT:

As part of the post counseling questionnaire, clients identified the benefits they received from the free counseling sessions:

- **74.7%**

reported having a financial plan or strategy in place to achieve their financial goals after completing their sessions with their assigned counselor

- **48.4%**

indicated they are now confident in their ability to navigate this financial crisis

- **47.6%**

feel less worried about their finances

- **71%**

feel more in control of their finances

- **57%**

have increased, or have a plan, to increase their savings

- **58%**

have improved, or have a plan to improve, their credit



Loren Flood, AFC®



“Loren was awesome! She provided me with the necessary tools and resources I didn't even know were available. She was fantastic in counseling me through fine tuning a budget and in fine tuning paying off my debt in the most efficient way.”

**“It was a great experience working with Heath! He gave me the time and attention I needed to make a plan to get myself back on track financially. The meetings were more interesting than I initially thought they would be. And they often did not only revolve around finance and accountings but also around personal growth and spirituality. He made me realize that finance is heavily connected with what we put importance on: we like to spend money on things that we think are important. I'm grateful.”**

Heath Carelock, AFC®



Joseph Glaser, AFC®



**“Joseph was excellent. Listened well, tailored the whole hour to exactly what I needed to hear. I got the advice I wanted and more. Wish I could have access to him anytime I had questions!”**

**“Gerika was extremely helpful. Her friendly approach put me at ease, and her guidance was both pragmatic and positive. I left the meeting with a clear plan that I feel good about. Thank you Gerika and thank you CAN (Coordinated Assistance Network).”**

Gerika Ballard Espinosa, CFP®, AFC®



# Scholarships provide much needed access to *personal finance certification and training*

## For Individuals

Thanks to the generous support of partners like NEFE and JPMorgan Chase, the AFCPE® Strategic Impact Fund continues to provide scholarships to grow access to certification and training in underserved communities.

In 2021, 50 AFC certification scholarships will be granted to the following groups:

- People of color
- LGBTQ+
- Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing\*
- Persons with a disability
- Individuals who are fluent in more than one language
- Need based

\*Includes Money Management Essentials scholarships.

Scholarships cover the cost of books and materials, and provide guided support from cohort groups led by experienced AFC professionals.



JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



“ The AFC certification scholarship was a validation from AFCPE that they are serious about diversifying the Financial Coach profession. As a Deaf person, this gave me even more fuel to blaze through the self-paced study program, the exam, and working towards my experience hours. ”

~ *Manny Johnson,*  
AFC® Candidate



### For Groups

Building upon the success of the Capacity Building Scholarships in 2020, this year AFCPE's Strategic Impact Fund was able to provide \$125,000 in group capacity building scholarships.

Groups were able to design their scholarship proposals to meet their unique needs. All requests had to include at least one AFC certification, but organizations could also select one or more Essentials Courses, including Money Management, Financial Inclusion, College Finance, or Military, as well as a stipend to offset the cost of staff study time.

### Groups Awarded in 2020

- Appalachian Opportunity Fund – Kingsport, TN
- Catalyst Miami, Inc. – Miami, FL
- Community Action Pioneer Valley – Greenfield, MA
- Community Financial Resources – Oakland, CA
- FreeFrom – Los Angeles, CA
- Knoxville Area Urban League – Knoxville, TN
- Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society – Arlington, VA
- New York Legal Assistance Group – New York, NY
- Samaritan House – San Mateo, CA
- Society for Financial Education and Professional Development, Inc. – Alexandria, VA
- Urban Upbound – Long Island City, NY

“AFCPE is financial education in its purest form. The pursuit of this certification is helping our team create safer spaces for clients where they can foster healthy financial habits and gain confidence to pursue cycles of prosperity independently. Additionally, it is also encouraging higher self-awareness amongst staff, facilitating growth at both professional and personal levels.”

~ Alyssa Delgado,  
Sr. Prosperity Coach  
at Catalyst Miami

### Funding Spotlight: Healing Broken Circles

This program provides both financial and educational support to graduates of AFCPE's Money Management Essentials course as they transition out of the justice system. With two individuals transitioning out in 2020, Healing Broken Circles was able to test the Release Counseling Continuation Program for effectiveness in the hopes that it can be a model to replicate in the future.

With the support of AFCPE, two men were provided a small stipend to establish savings and financial security during this transition, plus six counseling sessions with an AFC professional to help them navigate employment, housing, and cash flow changes they encountered upon release.

### Outcomes

- Increased earnings from \$35K to \$50K
- Increased awareness of expenses
- Increased savings
- Decreased debt

“I expected to learn about how to budget, and use my money. I learned that, plus a grocery list of other things that I didn't even know that I needed to pay attention to.”

~Healing Broken Circles participant



# Impact:

## Real Money, Real Experts

AFCPE®'s podcast was designed to share real stories from professionals like you! Our show combines real-life storytelling with expert tips and engaging interviews, and it encourages open dialogue on issues and topics that matter to financial professionals. From building your practice to strengthening your communities, we cover topics that help you grow in your work and your career.

**Launched in May 2020**

More than **13,000** downloads to date

**Hot Topics:**

- Financial Empathy:  
What it means and how to show it
- Coaching in the Field of Finance
- Helping Americans financially  
during the COVID-19 pandemic
- AFC® + CFP®: Complementary  
credentials for maximum impact
- Recognizing the Issue of  
Intimate Partner Violence

**Be a guest on the show!**

If you're doing interesting work in the field and would like to share your story, please fill our podcast guest form.



# Impact: AFC® and AFCPE® in the News

AFCPE and AFCs have been featured across publications like:

**The New York Times**

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

**Forbes**



**ESSENCE**

**npr**

**U.S. News**

**yahoo!**  
finance

**Aol.**

**Parents**



IMPACT: ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY



# Impact:

## *Accessibility and Equity*

AFCPE® is committed to expanding accessibility and improving equitability in financial counseling and education. Below are some of the important strides we've made this year:

### **AFC® Webinar Reviews**

- Updated all slides to make them more accessible
- Now offering at least one webinar review session per year that includes an ASL interpreter

### **AFCPE Virtual Symposium**

- Speaker guides include accessibility instructions
- ASL interpreters available for General Sessions
- Closed captioning on session recordings

### **National Heritage Months**

With the support of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, we embraced heritage months with a focus on celebrating the diversity of our professionals and sharing tools, resources, and knowledge to better serve all individuals and communities.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training for Board and Staff**

- Participated in trainings focused on the history of racism, individual unconscious bias, and systemic inequality
- Took part in small group workshops to analyze our programs and services through the lens of underrepresented populations
- Surveyed membership network to share ideas and areas of opportunity for improvement
- Developed action plan to address gaps and continue being responsive and inclusive

# Values and Guiding Principles

## Highest Standards

Accreditation through NCCA sets the AFC® certification mark apart and emphasizes the highest standard of excellence that AFCPE has built for this field. AFCPE certified professionals and members are committed to ongoing education and professional development to provide a higher quality of expertise and skill for the clients whom they serve.

## Integrity

AFCPE professionals abide by a strong Code of Ethics and work with each client to better support their unique needs and goals.

## Accessibility

AFCPE believes in an inclusive financial system that eliminates barriers to entry and ensures that all people have access to education and professional services that meet their needs and goals.

## Equity

AFCPE partners with organizations that share our values and vision around the highest standards of excellence in the field, ethics in business practice and professional conduct, and measurable and meaningful impact in our society.

## Sustainability

AFCPE continually strives to offer programs and services that make positive financial, social, and environmental impacts.



# 2021 Strategic Plan *Update*

Every two years, the Association engages in strategic planning discussions with Board and Staff, along with feedback from Members and Partners. The primary areas of focus for the organization's strategic direction include marketing and brand awareness for our programs and professionals; research initiatives to better lead the field and connect research to practice; internship and career development support; technology and innovation to improve program delivery; and continued focus on equity and inclusion.

## Organizational Goals

- The AFC® becomes a national brand and the gold standard of professional certification
- Increased consumer demand for AFC professionals and AFCPE® services
- Career development support available and accessible for emerging and transitioning professionals
- AFCPE is nationally recognized as the expert in personal finance research and for its library of resources accessible to AFCPE Members and Certificants

## AFCPE Strategic Pillars

As we head into 2022, we have a clear vision and roadmap and are poised for growth. Short and long term goals coming out of strategic planning fit into 5 distinct pillars.

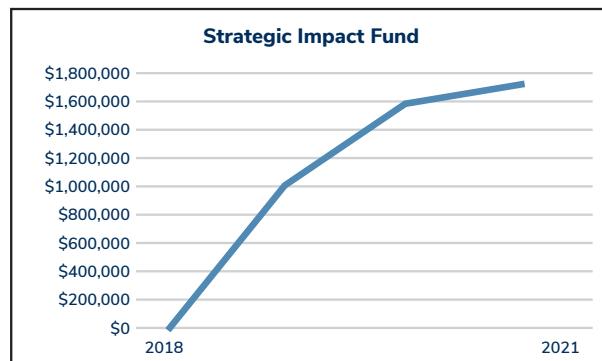
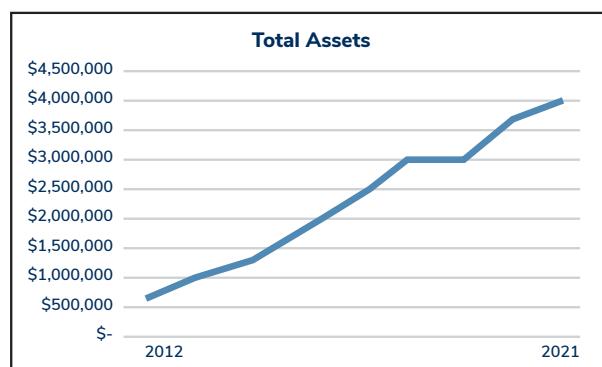
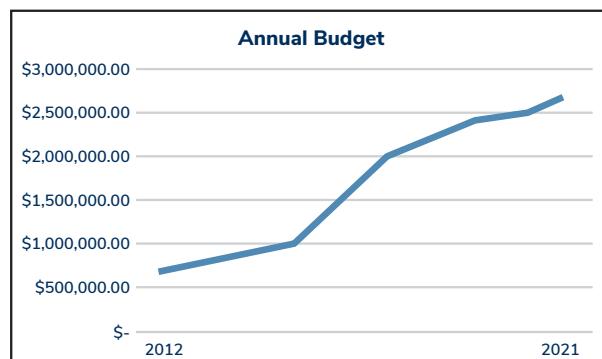
- Applied Research
- Career Development
- Innovation and Technology
- Brand Marketing
- Accessibility and Equity

## The AFCPE Team is Growing!

We are at an important inflection point for the organization's future, and are in a position to reinvest some of our assets for the express purpose of growth and expansion. In 2021 and into 2022, AFCPE is hiring positions across Membership, Certification, Education, and Communications.

## Financial Health

### Trend Charts



# AFCPE *Staff*

**Rebecca Wiggins**  
Executive Director

**Michelle Starkey**  
Sr Director Certification

**Jarod Taylor**  
Certification Program Manager

**Ann Hamilton**  
Certification Coordinator

**Heather Baker**  
Military Spouse Fellowship

**Rachael DeLeon**  
Sr Director Member Services  
& Communication

**Summer Red**  
Education Manager

**Sara Martin-Fuller**  
Special Events Manager

**Zulairam Ruiz-Agosto**  
Member Services Coordinator

**Luisa Singletary**  
Communications Associate Manager

**Sherry Wallace**  
Finance Coordinator

**Jing Jian Xiao, PhD**  
Journal Editor

**Stephanie Yates, PhD**  
Newsletter Editor

# Board Of *Directors*

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President

**Michele Godfrey**  
President Elect

**Ryan H. Law**  
Past President

**Starlett Henderson**  
Secretary

**Andi Wrenn**  
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Michael Thomas  
Amanda Wilson  
Holly Zugay



# 2021 Sponsor and Funding Partners

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# 2021 Program Partners

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YOU'RE IN  
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Association for  
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79 S. State Street, Suite D3  
Westerville, OH 43081

614-368-1055

[www.afcpe.org](http://www.afcpe.org)