

EXPERIENCE:  AFCPE

**NOW,
MORE
THAN
EVER.**

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION	Experience: Knowledge That Sets the Bar 02
	Experience: Knowledge That Values Equity and Inclusion 04
	Experience: Knowledge That Never Settles 06
EDUCATION & TRAINING	Experience: The Essentials 10
	Experience: Symposium 12
MEMBERSHIP	Experience: Community 16
	Experience: Resources 17
#AFCPEINACTION	Experience: Where Passion Meets Impact 18
IMPACT & AWARENESS	Experience: Awareness That Creates Opportunity 26
	Experience: Leadership That Cares 28
	Experience: Partnerships That Create Impact 30



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT HELPING
PEOPLE WITH THEIR MONEY SO THEY CAN
IMPROVE THEIR LIVES?**

WE ARE TOO.

When 2020 began, few people anticipated what an uncertain time it would be for individuals and families, not just nationwide, but worldwide. Few could have foreseen the devastating impact of COVID-19 or the magnifying glass it placed on issues of economic inequality and racial injustice.

The pandemic has affected people from all socioeconomic backgrounds, but the gap continues to widen for those who were already struggling. Yet, in the midst of it all, we are reminded of the important role that our organization and our professionals play in bridging these gaps and building a more equitable society for our future.

Now, more than ever...

You need certification and training that prepares you to meet people where they are. That helps you create a better plan to help individuals and families navigate their current economic instability and put them on a path toward financial well-being. That humanizes personal finance and enables you to better understand how diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences impact your clients' money behaviors.

Now, more than ever...

You need a community that embraces the whole continuum of personal finance. A community of education, research, and practice that introduces you to new tools, resources, and ideas to better support you, your clients, and your community.

Now, more than ever...

Our communities need more people like you. Professionals who are qualified and compassionate. Who are unbiased and trustworthy. Who have the education, empathy, and experience to help people from all backgrounds and walks of life. This has been a year of sorrow, of stress, and of loss. But it has also been a year of awareness, of grace, and of opportunity.

As we look back on what we accomplished this year, and forward to the work ahead, we want you to know that there is a place for you at AFCPE. We embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion, and we believe in a future where all people have access to highly qualified professionals and an opportunity to achieve financial well-being.

Join our community. Become a member. Get certified. Take an Essentials course. Use our resources to build capacity. Support our mission. Get involved. We invite you to experience AFCPE, **now, more than ever**.



REBECCA WIGGINS
AFCPE® EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

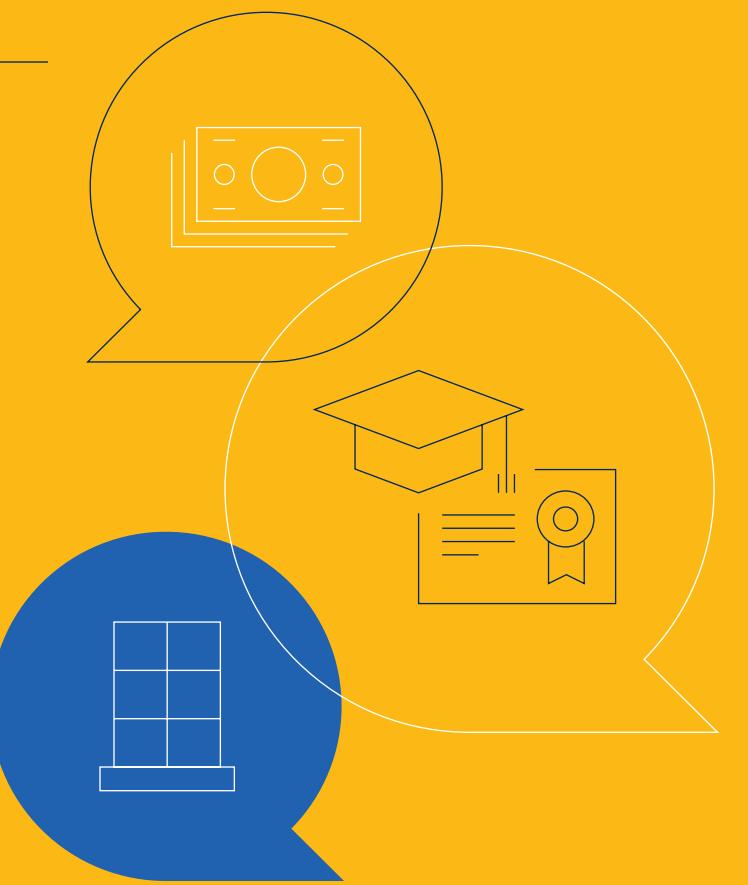
CERTIFICATION

EXPERIENCE:
KNOWLEDGE THAT SETS
THE BAR

Pages 06–07

EXPERIENCE:
KNOWLEDGE THAT
NEVER SETTLES

Pages 10–11



EXPERIENCE:
KNOWLEDGE THAT VALUES
EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Pages 08–09





EXPERIENCE:

KNOWLEDGE THAT SETS THE BAR

You settle for nothing less than excellence in your career—but it's not the only thing that drives you. With an AFC® certification, you turn your passion for people into the power to make a meaningful difference in your clients' lives.



This year we submitted our reaccreditation application, reconfirming our commitment to ensure the AFC remains the gold standard in financial counseling certification.



At the end of the reporting period, 91% of AFCs remained in good standing.



By September, we had welcomed 6 new AFCPE Registered Education Programs, expanding the accessibility of AFC education requirements for both students and professionals.

EXPERIENCE:

KNOWLEDGE THAT VALUES EQUITY & INCLUSION

The best financial advice considers more than just dollars and cents. AFC® certification helps you better understand how **diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences** impact your clients' money behaviors.



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

MYCAA

Military spouses who are eligible for the myCAA program are now able to pursue the AFC designation for only \$50 in out-of-pocket costs when they select the Self-Study Pathway (AFC Online Study Guide & Webinar Review Session) option.

UPDATES TO AFC EXAM

From the 2019 Job Analysis results, we have made important updates to our AFC core competencies, ensuring that AFC professionals better understand the culture and values of their clients.

STUDENT EXAM DISCOUNT

Current university or college students studying full-time at the undergraduate, graduate, or PhD level are now eligible to receive 50% off the AFC exam.

CERTIFICATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to partners like the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and JPMorgan Chase & Co., AFCPE was able to provide more than 100 AFC scholarships to people of color and scholarships to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Thanks to generous donations to the Strategic Impact Fund, we also provided individual scholarships to influencers in the personal finance space and more than \$100,000 to nonprofit organizations to combine AFCPE certification and training to build capacity internally.



EXPERIENCE:

KNOWLEDGE THAT NEVER SETTLES

Amidst a global pandemic, AFCPE Staff remained **focused** on making **important updates** to better support AFC candidates.

2020 IMPROVEMENTS



NEW EXAM GUIDE

Taking the mystery and stress out of exam day, this guide provides candidates with helpful hints and study tips.



NEW EXPERIENCE HOURS GUIDE

A resource packed with great information to help candidates plan, earn, and report experience hours.



NEW CANDIDATE FORUM

An accessible online discussion board to help candidates share resources, find study buddies, and build their network.



EDUCATION & TRAINING

EXPERIENCE: THE ESSENTIALS

Pages 14–15

EXPERIENCE: SYMPOSIUM

Pages 16–17

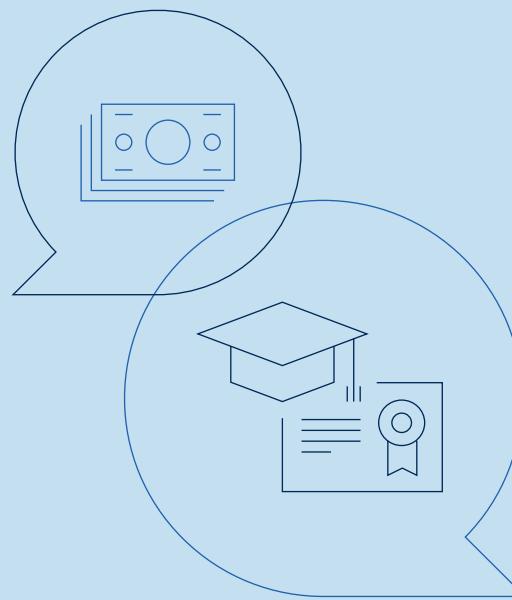


EXPERIENCE:

THE ESSENTIALS

**Building Knowledge.
Enhancing Capacity.
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.



LAUNCHED IN 2020

FINANCIAL INCLUSION ESSENTIALS

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. Developed in partnership with the National Disability Institute.

MILITARY ESSENTIALS (COMING DECEMBER 2020)

Designed to give you the tools to better support the unique financial challenges and opportunities of military service members, veterans, and their families. Developed in partnership with the FINRA Investor Education Foundation.

COLLEGE FINANCE ESSENTIALS

Covering 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.

GAIN THE KNOWLEDGE. COLLECT THE BADGES.

Essentials training fills gaps that other programs may not cover.



COMING SOON!



Diversity,
Equity, Inclusion
Essentials



Communication
Essentials



Coaching
Essentials



EXPERIENCE:

SYMPOSIUM

The **Symposium** is the highlight of our year. Which is why, amidst a global pandemic, it was a tough decision to reimagine our in-person event. But with the health and safety of our community being a top priority, we turned a setback into an opportunity.



In addition to more than 50 hours of high quality educational content, the November 2020 virtual Symposium included unique engagement activities designed to bring our community closer together even when geographically, we were far apart.



AND WE MADE SURE IT WAS ACCESSIBLE!



SCHOLARSHIPS

More than 400 given, including specific funds for the military, students, those serving underserved populations, people of color, and individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.



ADA COMPLIANT

Keynote sessions included a sign language interpreter and all breakout sessions were closed captioned.



LOWER COST, GREAT VALUE

No travel costs. **Registration fees were cut in half.** And attendees received a 2021 AFCPE Membership and access to Symposium content through October 2021!

MEMBERSHIP



EXPERIENCE: COMMUNITY

Page 20

EXPERIENCE: RESOURCES

Page 21



EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY

AFCPE® is the place to find your people. We are diverse in experiences but like-minded in purpose. Our members are spread across the country, but you'll never notice the distance. We aim to bring the support of a tight-knit community to you—no matter where you call home.

**IN 2020, WE LAUNCHED****AFCPE CONNECTED COMMUNITY**

The new message board provides members with a platform to problem-solve similar struggles, share new perspectives, and talk best practices with other members who share both their passion for helping people and their demand for excellence.

VOLUNTEER PLATFORM

A place for AFCPE Members to find new opportunities to utilize their skills, expertise, and passion to elevate the mission and vision of AFCPE!

EXPERIENCE:

RESOURCES

**2020 BROUGHT YOU****A PODCAST! REAL MONEY, REAL EXPERTS**

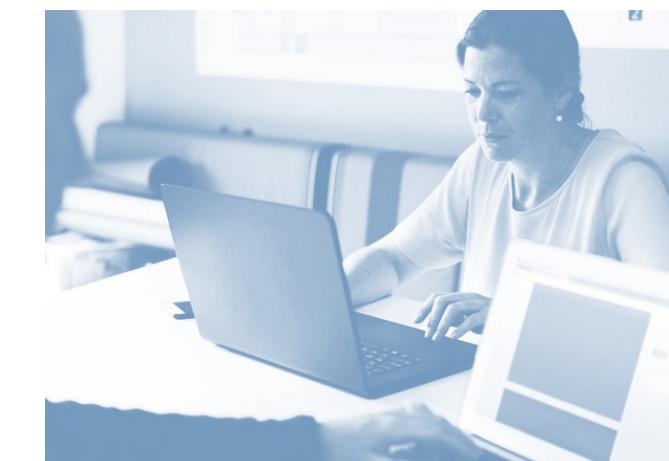
AFCPE's podcast covers real stories about how professionals like you are impacting clients, and offers tips from real experts on how to improve client interactions and grow your business.

**MORE VIRTUAL LEARNING**

Webinars on important topics like Self-Awareness and Cultural Responsiveness, Navigating Change and Uncertainty, Taxes, Student Loans, Unconscious Bias, Credit Updates, and more—all free to AFCPE Members.

MORE VIRTUAL MEET UPS

Introducing you to new technology, ideas, and innovation.

**COMING IN 2021****AFCPE INTERNSHIP PORTAL**

Connecting our Candidate and Student Members with opportunities to earn their certification experience hours, expand their skills, and become more marketable in their emerging careers.

UPDATES TO THE MENTORCONNECT PROGRAM

Bringing more structure to our existing program to provide more meaningful relationships and enhance professional growth.

EXPERIENCE:

#AFCPEINACTION

AFCPE'S RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC: WHERE PASSION MEETS IMPACT

Thanks to the generosity of Wells Fargo, and in partnership with The Yellow Ribbon Network, AFCPE® certified financial counselors and coaches began providing free, unbiased virtual financial counseling and coaching sessions early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year-long initiative continues to grow and create lasting impact for those in need.



WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING:

“Tricia was detailed in her communication and clearly explained to me what I needed to understand [in order] to tackle my debt. The financial counseling she provided was helpful, productive, and understandable. I did not feel stupid asking the questions I did because her personality, financial approach, counseling game plan, and methods made sense.”

—JEFFREY S.

WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING:

“Loren was awesome in getting me back on track with my finances. Highly recommend.”

—DAN S.

“I had two calls with a woman who has really been great. We [created] a new budget for me. She also asked me to pick short-term goals that are easy to achieve in the next week and long-term goals.”

—ED M.



WHAT COUNSELORS ARE SAYING:



“It was incredibly rewarding to help individuals and couples realize they are doing better than they actually thought they were. I was able to provide my clients with a vast amount of resources they were not aware of but could really help them.”

—SHAY COOK, AFC®, FFC®

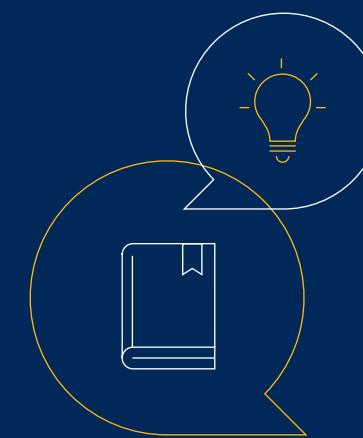
“A general theme from the individuals I spoke to was that they just needed someone to talk to. Many were not directly affected by COVID-19 (i.e. a job loss, etc.), but the social and emotional implications were affecting their finances. They all appreciated the ‘ear’ I provided, almost as much as the counseling.”



—TRICIA DELAPAZ, AFC® CANDIDATE



#AFCPEinAction: Other ways AFCPE worked diligently to connect individuals and families with the support of an AFCPE-certified professional and better equip our professionals to answer the call.



CONSUMER WEBINARS

Providing practical tips to help navigate the pandemic—furloughs to the CARES Act.

A COVID-19 RESOURCE HUB

A webpage designed to keep our professionals up-to-date on resources and initiatives to support the work they do.

FREE FINANCIAL INCLUSION ESSENTIALS COURSE

All AFCPE professionals who volunteered for the COVID-19 initiative had the opportunity to complete Financial Inclusion Essentials for free!

VIRTUAL MEET UPS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On topics like virtual considerations for counselors and exploring the pandemic from a racial and gender lens.

IMPACT & AWARENESS

**EXPERIENCE:
AWARENESS THAT CREATES
OPPORTUNITY**

Pages 30-31

**EXPERIENCE:
PARTNERSHIPS THAT
CREATE IMPACT**

Pages 34-35



**EXPERIENCE:
LEADERSHIP THAT
CARES**

Pages 32-33





EXPERIENCE:

AWAWARENESS THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITY

COVID-19 underscored the importance of bridging the gap between AFCPE and consumers. AFCPE remains committed to growing our reach with consumers to raise awareness for the **#ValueofanAFC**.

NEW INVESTMENTS IN 2020



LAUNCHED REAL MONEY, REAL ANSWERS

Bi-weekly consumer videos available on YouTube—taking a consumer question and breaking it down to an actionable takeaway.



STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH TO ENHANCE OUR MESSAGING

After interviewing stakeholders and those less familiar with AFCPE, we are incorporating our findings into our marketing materials and messaging.



PAID SOCIAL

This year, we implemented Facebook ads that focused on both consumers and professionals. As we head into 2021, these types of paid campaigns will run year-round on social media.

EXPERIENCE:

LEADERSHIP THAT CARES



AFCPE STAFF

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MICHELLE STARKEY

Certification Program Director

JAROD TAYLOR

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Director of Communications
& Member Services

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Professional Development
Manager

SARA MARTIN-FULLER

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AMANDA WILSON

Financial Industry

ANDI WRENN

Government/Military

HOLLY ZUGAY

Service



EXPERIENCE:

PARTNERSHIPS THAT CREATE IMPACT

While 2020 was a year of hardship and uncertainty for many, it was also a strong reminder about the importance of our field, our professionals, and this work. This year renewed relationships and strengthened partnerships. With the generosity and support of strong partners, we took important steps to meet needs, close gaps, and create positive impact for those who are struggling the most.

A special thank you to...

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

For supporting important work around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Their support is:

- 1) Allowing AFCPE to develop programming focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 2) Supporting organizational equity training for AFCPE staff, board, and members.
- 3) Providing scholarships to certify and train professionals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- 4) Giving scholarships to diverse professionals to attend the 2020 AFCPE Symposium.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATION (NEFE)

For fully sponsoring the training and credentialing of 100 new Accredited Financial Counselors®, all people of color. And, for the second year in a row, NEFE also provided scholarships for nonprofit professionals to attend the Symposium, and sponsored an Award that supports the bridging of research and practice.

WELLS FARGO FOUNDATION

For providing grant funding that allowed us to quickly roll out a free virtual counseling initiative to support individuals and families during COVID-19. Volunteer counselors and coaches received a stipend, as well as free access to our Financial Inclusion Essentials course. Thank you to Yellow Ribbon Network for providing the platform to make this possible!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



**NOW,
MORE
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EVER.**

EXPERIENCE:  AFCPE

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