

# **Accredited Financial Counselor AFC**

*A Program Administered by the  
Institute for Personal Finance (IPF)*

An Educational Service of the  
Association for Financial Counseling and  
Planning Education (AFCPE)

# REGISTRATION INFORMATION

## **An Accredited Financial Counselor**

- is a financial counselor who has certified skills to assist individuals and families in the process of financial decision making.
- is a financial counselor who agrees to maintain the highest ethical standards as written in the AFC Code of Ethics.
- is a financial counselor who maintains up-to-date knowledge in the fields of personal finance and financial counseling.

## **AFCPE and IPF**

The Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education (AFCPE) was formed by a group of financial counseling educators and practitioners to promote the education, training, and professionalism of financial counselors. The organization is unique because its membership attracts both practitioners and academicians.

Membership has grown steadily among military counselors, employee assistance program providers, extension and college educators, financial counselors employed by credit unions and the Consumer Credit Counseling Services, as well as private practitioners. AFCPE publishes a newsletter and a professional journal, and holds a national conference each year. AFCPE members are working together to enhance their own professional abilities and commitments while building the overall stature of the profession.

One of AFCPE's objectives is to promote the education and training of the professional in financial management. This objective is accomplished through the Institute for Personal Finance (IPF) which is an educational service of AFCPE. IPF administers the Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC) and Certified Housing Counselor (CHC) programs.

## **The Abilities of an Accredited Financial Counselor**

Accredited Financial Counselors have certified skills to assist individuals and families in the complex process of financial decision making, including the ability to:

- Educate clients in sound financial principles.
- Assist clients in the process of overcoming their financial indebtedness.
- Help clients identify and modify ineffective money management behaviors.
- Guide clients in developing successful strategies for achieving their financial goals.
- Support clients as they work through their financial challenges and opportunities.
- Help clients develop new perspectives on the dynamics of money in relation to family, friends, and individual self-esteem.

## **About the AFC Curriculum**

The Institute for Personal Finance (IPF) offers a self-study curriculum to prepare individuals to sit for the AFC examinations. The first course of the two course curriculum is Personal Finance which includes in-depth analyses of financial management principles and strategies. The course focuses on developing a full understanding of the mechanics and techniques of personal financial management.

The second course in the AFC curriculum is Financial Counseling which examines the components of financial counseling, including counseling, budgeting, debt reduction, collection policies and practices, bankruptcy, and government assistance programs.

## **Course Requirements**

The courses are designed as self-study. Once an individual has enrolled in the AFC curriculum and paid the registration fee and tuition, the necessary books and study materials for the first course are sent to the student. After the first course is completed and the student passes the corresponding examination, the second course materials are sent. The student studies at his or her own pace.

## **Examinations**

Each examination includes 100 multiple choice questions and takes approximately two hours to complete. A candidate must correctly answer a minimum of 70 questions to earn a passing grade on each examination.

Candidates may sit for examinations at the college (community or university) of their choice. Candidates are asked to contact the IPF office 30 days before the examination date and send the college name, address, and phone number. Within 14 days, the candidate will be notified of a college official who will administer the examination. Thirty days before a military counselor is ready to take an examination, he or she should send the name of the Test Control Officer (TCO) to the IPF office. IPF will then forward the examination to the TCO at the DANTES testing office.

## **Becoming an Accredited Financial Counselor**

To become an Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC), candidates must:

- Earn a passing grade on each course examination.
- Subscribe to the AFC Code of Ethics.
- Submit three letters of reference attesting to professional competence--at least one must be from a client and at least one must be from a fellow professional.
- Have two years of admissible financial counseling experience.

## **AFC Code of Ethics**

Accredited Financial Counselors pledge to maintain the following ethical standards:

- Take responsibility for conducting themselves in a credible manner, striving for excellence in providing services with competence, diligence, promptness, and care to the best of their abilities.
- Continue to grow in professional practice, keeping abreast of industry developments and striving to improve professional competence through continuing education.
- Exhibit personal and professional honesty and integrity in advising and counseling clients.
- Maintain high standards of ethical conduct according to the objectives of the institution with which they are affiliated.
- Recognize their limitations, referring clients when appropriate.
- Respect client privacy and the confidentiality of the client-counselor relationship in all matters pertaining to the course of professional service and revealing client information of any kind to others only with the expressed consent of the client.
- Establish compensation that is fair and reasonable and assist clients in finding other services if their fees are not affordable.

## **Maintaining the AFC Designation**

To continue to use the AFC designation, counselors must uphold their Code of Ethics, earn 30 hours of approved continuing education credits every two years, and pay an annual fee of \$45.

**For More Information, contact:** Sharon A. Burns, IPF Director, 2121 Arlington Ave., #5, Upper Arlington, OH 43221. Telephone: 614.485.9650, FAX: 614.485.9621, E-mail: sburns@finsolve.com.

**To Enroll, contact:** IPF Program Manager, 2121 Arlington Ave. #5, Upper Arlington, OH 43221, Telephone: 614.485.9650, FAX: 614.485.9621, E-mail: sburns@finsolve.com

## **What Does the AFC Designation Mean to a Client?**

An individual who seeks the services of an Accredited Financial Counselor will know that:

- the financial counselor has passed comprehensive examinations on personal finance and financial counseling.
- the financial counselor has signed a code of ethics and agrees to abide by the highest ethical standards; and
- the financial counselor maintains the most current knowledge in the fields of personal finances and financial counseling, through continuing education.

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**Institute for Personal Finance  
Financial Counseling Course Registration Form  
For Employees of  
Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person at Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Registration Fee</b>	\$ 25
<b>AFC Financial Counseling Course</b>	<u>\$225</u>
<b>Total</b>	\$250

Only employees of Association of Independent Consumer Credit Counseling Agencies qualify for this rate. To qualify for this rate, the member agency must pay for all proctoring costs associated with this individual taking the examination over the Financial Counseling course. Make check or money order payable in U.S. dollars to IPF or use credit card.

Credit Card:    \_\_\_\_\_ Visa                    \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard                    \_\_\_\_\_ American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:           **Institute for Personal Finance**  
2121 Arlington Ave., #5  
Upper Arlington, OH 43221

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E-mail: sburns@finsolve.com

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