



How can I utilize my CFP skills outside of positions that sell product?

There are many opportunities for CFP professionals to enter the financial services field in roles that are not strictly "sales." Many firms – both large and small – hire salaried professionals that are designated to service a group (or "book") of clients. There are also firms that hire advisors to deliver advice virtually through call centers. These are usually salaried roles and provide a great way to get a broad understanding of clients from many backgrounds and situations. Finally, there are support positions at firms that help advisors in the field with technical questions around financial planning or how to use financial planning software (which requires financial planning expertise usually). Check out our Career Center ([careers.cfp.net](https://careers.cfp.net)) and use this thread to find out what role is right for you.



Can you discuss the career board more? I am trying to figure out the best way to uncover opportunities after the CFP is done.

There are many opportunities at a variety of firms. The link can be found here: [Career Center – careers.cfp.net](https://careers.cfp.net) It's not too early to start looking -- even prior to completing your CFP(r) certification. I would also call your attention to our upcoming Career Center Career Fair: [Career Center Career Fair – Sept. 27 -- https://www.careereco.com/Fair/EventDetails?fairId=7f7250f2-aea5-4c31-98a6-a711016db29f](https://www.careereco.com/Fair/EventDetails?fairId=7f7250f2-aea5-4c31-98a6-a711016db29f)



I am in a rather peculiar and frustrating situation. I passed the CFP exam and am about 900 hours short on the experience requirement from using the marks. I am contracted to be in Mexico for the next year and am desperately seeking a way I can complete my experience requirement from abroad. Any ideas? There are financial services companies here in Mexico but they generally offer European products to elite international people here.

I see that you're a professor. Could you teach online? Could you provide indirect support (which may qualify for experience) to a CFP(r) professional remotely from Mexico? I would start with CFP Education providers with an online presence.



How does the CFP Board evaluate the experience requirement?

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<http://www.cfp.net/become-a-cfp-professional/cfp-certification-requirements/experience-requirement>

I would suggest becoming familiar with these requirements, and then developing a plan on how to meet the experience within the 15-year allowable window.



My question is does my experience in Investment Banking (Operations, Futures & Options, Cash and Collateral Settlement) for over 14 years count towards the hours of experience required to gain the CFP certification?

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I would suggest you enter the details of this experience into our Experience tool to find out if it qualifies.



I am considering starting my own financial planning practice and am very much concerned about satisfying the CFP Experience requirement. I intend to target low-to-middle income individuals and families, offering financial planning services after developing the client-planner relationship through financial education. Therefore, it will take some time to move them to the financial planning stage. I am concerned about how to document this in such a way to meet the Experience requirement.

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I would suggest becoming familiar with these requirements, and then developing a plan on how to meet the experience within the 15-year allowable window. In addition, the traditional pathway does not require you to meet all six areas of financial planning, so your work with clients may still qualify.



I am in an advisor trainee role with a track to begin taking on some of my team's clients in 1.5-2 years. I am 21 and recently just graduated college. I will be taking the CFP in March. I am wondering if you have any advice on how I can get clients to trust me and my advice since they may see me as young and inexperienced.

Your question is an interesting one. I have often shared that I never felt more confident than the day after I passed the CFP(r) certification examination. I felt like I had the confidence and knowledge to talk to clients who were just starting, as well as clients with significant savings. This confidence is an intangible that clients will notice as you interact with them.



I am looking at my "encore" career at 60, that allows me to move from Corporate after 38 years and apply my strong financial planning/decision making into a personal finance role. Any advice on how to start/transition?

Sounds like you are entering a new phase and an exciting one at that! You are picking a great second career and one in big demand. Start with asking what appeals to you and what you are looking for? Are you the type that enjoys building your own practice and developing a business that provides you with independence? Does the analysis, advice and servicing of clients meet more with how you want

to spend most of your time? Start with finishing your CFP education and then check our career center ([careers.cfp.net](http://careers.cfp.net)) You want to speak to many firm types and gather information first.



- 1) I am not interested in sales. What are the opportunities for CFPs who primarily want to assist clients with planning and avoid selling products? Aside from higher income in the sales environment, what are some other tradeoffs with taking this path?
- 2) What are some of the best ways to stay connected with industry peers?

There are many opportunities for CFP professionals to enter the financial services field in roles that are not strictly "sales." Many firms – both large and small – hire salaried professionals that are designated to service a group (or "book") of clients. There are also firms that hire advisors to deliver advice virtually through call centers. These are usually salaried roles and provide a great way to get a broad understanding of clients from many backgrounds and situations. Finally, there are support positions at firms that help advisors in the field with technical questions around financial planning or how to use financial planning software (which requires financial planning expertise usually). Check out our Career Center ([careers.cfp.net](http://careers.cfp.net)) and use this thread to find out what role is right for you. Joining a LinkedIn group, an FPA chapter, or even the CFP Candidate Forum are all ways to stay connected. In addition, industry conferences are also great ways to connect and network with peers. I would also recommend reading industry publication, blogs and journals to stay sharp on what your peers are doing as well as the latest thinking and trends. You might also want to participate in the CFP Board Career Center Online Job Fair on Sept. 27 ([careers.cfp.net](http://careers.cfp.net)). Firms will be represented and it's a great opportunity to learn about them and the types of opportunities they offer.



What advice do you have for a middle-aged career changer looking to get a job in financial advisory? Most jobs I applied to are looking for younger applicants to fill support roles. Most jobs offered to me are in sales. I don't want to sell products that may not be suitable. I don't mind soliciting clients; however, I feel more confident and comfortable persuading prospective clients to join a firm if I had some experience under my belt. Please provide answer(s) other than networking through the local FPA.

I would suggest partnering with an established CFP(r) professional to get experience until you get a good idea which direction you want to take. I would visit our Career Center as a start: [careers.cfp.net](http://careers.cfp.net)



I've been working for the past 10 years in construction project management and would like to make a career change to financial planning. My professional experience involves client relations, budgeting, cost projections, contracts, insurance, etc., however, my degree is not from a business school. Would attaining the CFP be a good start to make this career change? Aside from utilizing the CFP Board Career Center, any other advice on how to successfully make this career change into becoming a financial planner?

Sounds like some great experience to make a transition to a financial planning career! Yes, start with the CFP certification – it is a great differentiator and will teach you the language and thinking around financial planning advice. In addition to the Career Center, look at company websites and job ads posted on more general job boards to get a feel for the many types of jobs available, the firm types, and the profile of the candidate they are looking for. While you are enrolled for the CFP education, be sure to remind prospective employers you have already started on that important step! Lastly, make sure you find firms that will start you in a role that provides or leads to a financial planning career.



If I wanted to teach financial planning, what credentials do I need? Do I need to get the CFP certification and attain a masters in financial planning or do I need to get an undergraduate and masters degree in financial planning?

Requirements to teach vary from university to university. The second part of your question -- CFP(r) certification is not required for an undergraduate or graduate degree in financial planning. These degrees generally cover the required courses required to sit for the CFP(r) exam.



Looking for advice on how to search for job opportunities. In addition, the CFP.net Career Center, what other job boards, or methods of searching for planning focused financial firms that value CFPs do you recommend?

Depending upon the firm you are looking for and your geographic preference, you may want to start with local firms – say RIA firms that are hiring in your area – or more national firms with known brand names to begin looking for what types of jobs. Checking other job boards (e.g. Indeed, efinancial etc.) will also help you expand your search. You are correct to start with firms that show a preference for CFP candidates or certificates. If they don't specify, ok to ask during the interview of course. Take your time and check many types of business models (e.g. banks, RIA, brokerage etc).



I'm pursuing the CFP as a career changer and will need the 2-3 years of Experience. I'm also interested in the non-profit space. Are there options for CFP candidates to get the necessary Experience in the non-profit sector? I understand that a Qualified Attester needs to approve the Experience hours, but I'm wondering if the CFP designation is a viable one for non-profit CFP-related careers in general. Do you have any resources/materials/websites that support CFPs in the non-profit sector? A list of non-profit companies that CFP candidates worked for or volunteered for to obtain the Experience hours?

There are many opportunities for financial planning, including both for-profit and non-profit. Our career center (<https://www.cfp.net/career-center>) has both types of opportunities (including government entities). We don't have any specific resources for non-profit careers, but if you search by organization in a job board, you can begin to see what they are looking for in terms of education and experience. In many cases, knowing how to work with mass market clients that need help in budgeting, cash flow, debt management will be key. Brush up on these areas and be prepared to show your ability to deliver that type of advice. Your CFP certification is great for the non-profit sector and you will find many jobs that specify CFP certification as a requirement in their job description.



I am 64-year-old, retired physician with MBA degree. I have been doing our own financial planning for years but not as career. My friends and family seek my advice about financial matters. I have passion for financial planning and plan to take CFP Board Exam in March 2018. I have two questions:  
1) Best way to get the experience needed in the next five years.  
2) I am interested in part time flexible career if possible virtual with limited liability. Is it a possibility? What could be the options?

Unfortunately, your own financial planning, as well as advice to family and friends, would not qualify. CFP Board recognizes relevant personal financial planning experience 10 years prior, and 5 years after, passing the CFP® certification examination. Experience can be met in more traditional

client-facing roles, as well as teaching, journalism, apprenticeship pathway, and others. We have a lot of information on our website that covers the experience requirement:

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I would suggest becoming familiar with these requirements, and then developing a plan on how to meet the experience within your 5-year allowable window. Your second question, while possible, is not common for new professionals in the industry. I would suggest becoming familiar with current opportunities at [cfp.net/career-center](http://www.cfp.net/career-center)



If you were starting out your career as a CFP today, what would your ideal career path be? Would it be different than your actual career path?

That's a tough question, but a good one. I was a financial advisor for almost 14 years and ended up working for CFP Board as my next career. What is interesting is that there are so many opportunities in the financial services industry and there is no rule that says you have to stay in one spot. I suggest always to keep asking yourself if your current position is helping you to grow and gives you great satisfaction. If not, always good to start thinking about where you might go next. I think you are thinking about careers the right way, so thanks for this question.



In addition to learning the core curriculum, what skills are important for new planners?

Depending upon the role you eventually pursue, good organizational skills, communication skills and relationship management skills are all important for success. By the way, we just published a book through our Center for Financial Planning on Communications. Listening, I think, is one of the most important skills that in many cases is never taught in traditional schools. Empathy, focus, and loyalty are of course other skills and characteristics that clients appreciate in their advisor. Client Psychology/Behavioral Finance is another area I would read up on. Probably many more if I had more time, but you can see that it's not all about the technical side. Great question.



What is the name of the book that was published through the board regarding client communications?

The exact title is "Communication Essentials for Financial Planners" and can be found on Amazon and other bookselling locations. The authors are Grable and Goetz.



I am currently retired, but recently pulled my CFP® license out of escrow. I would be interested in working alongside investment advisors (I gave up my series 7, etc. securities licenses a few years ago) to do financial plans for their clients. I thought I had read where Vanguard would be hiring 250 planners/year to do just that, but have been unable to get more information. My ideal situation would be to work from home (or wherever I am) on a contract basis, per plan. I would need to use their financial planning software, and be trained in it, of course. And, there are questions about liability (errors and omissions) insurance. I have Apple computer equipment, and can FaceTime, so our planning appointments can be more personal, than merely telephone and email communications.

I can't speak for Vanguard to see if they are allowing advisors to work from home, but I can say that more employers are willing to have flexible work arrangements for the right talent. Remember that working from home sometimes is not all it's cracked up to be, so having face time with co-workers can help build your knowledge and improve your career path. If you are set on working from home, make this clear in your cover letter when applying. Increasingly, more employers in need of talent are willing to be flexible in such arrangements. I would start your search on our Career Center: [careers.cfp.net](https://www.cfp.net/careers.cfp.net)



I truly feel a calling towards helping the middle class. I believe that the typical financial planning client is one who has the resources to pay for services - either in assets that can be under management or the cash to pay a \$2,000 a year planning fee. There are also programs available for low income people to get help with their finances. We have a bubble in the middle that needs to be addressed. These folks need financial guidance but do not have the resources to pay for it. I have been looking for companies that provide companies with financial wellness programs to employees as an employee benefit. Will the experts please offer their view on financial wellness programs as well as where to find these financial planning companies as this appears to be more of a nontraditional route to financial planning?

Several different types of firm types have sprung up over the last 10 years to handle more people who are underserved from a financial planning standpoint. Some provide education to employers, without selling products or services. Others are more digital advice providers that may charge a small monthly fee to provide basic advice for this group. Some firms specialize in providing advice to people in their 20s and 30s (e.g. XY Planning Network) that you can check out. Lots of options so hopefully this will help you get started. Check out <https://www.cfp.net/career-center> to find these types of firms.



I have failed the CFP test twice. I am unable to find a tutor. I have attended reviews from Kaplan and Zahn. Do they have any suggestions on how to get a personal tutor? Any tips would be very helpful.

Since you attended reviews with Kaplan and Zahn, I would start there and ask Kaplan and Zahn if they offer tutoring or have recommendations. You might also ask CFP® professionals at your workplace if they have recommendations. Best of luck!



It is so expensive and I have a Finance degree plus MBA. How does this make an educational difference?

The CFP certification not only provides you with a strong background in all areas of financial planning, but also helps you synthesize and integrate these financial areas into a comprehensive financial plan. The CFP certification demonstrates through a certifying body that you are qualified to deliver these services. It is also one of the most recognized by the industry and public as the standard for financial planning. Lastly, there is research that says it will make you more successful: <http://www.cfp.net/docs/default-source/news-events--research-facts-figures/2016-cfpboard-aite-white-paper.pdf>



After completing the CFP educational requirements earlier this year, I've put the exam on hold. The CFP Board rejected my previous work experience (older than 10 years) and the CFP experience requirement has become too onerous for someone like me. I spent 15 years in corporate finance/business development, have an MBA, but do not plan to return to work full-time. Therefore, it is unlikely that I would be able to complete the experience requirement in five years. My question is "What are the available CFP paths for someone like me (15 years experience, finance undergrad, MBA) who wants to work part-time or do project work?"

Increasingly, there are more opportunities for part-time work in the financial planning profession. If you don't think you can get the requisite CFP experience in time, you may want to consider becoming a Paraplanner, which can help you support advisors in the formulation and delivery of financial plans. I would suggest applying for jobs, and being upfront about your desire and need to work part-time. Employers are becoming more flexible to such arrangements, so good luck.



The biggest challenge I am facing in figuring out my career path is owning my own business. Should I stay at the company where I am currently as an associate Financial Planner and not have to worry about all the headaches associated with business ownership? Do I go out on my own and start a business that I love, helping the people that I am passionate about working with and build value in my business.

This is a difficult question, and one that only you can make. I would suggest, however, that you really do your research to see if owning your own business is right for you. There are advantages and disadvantages to going out on your own, so you need to understand what you are getting into. And you need to get answers to questions such as 1) What are the regulatory/compliance requirements? 2) What are the startup costs? 3) Do I have the right mindset to be my own boss? 4) Am I comfortable spending much of my early months/years developing a clientele? 5) Are the benefits worth the risks? The good news is there are many firms that specialize in helping advisors make this transition, including purchasing another practice if you have the capital to do that. In short, do your homework first!



My question is, am I more vulnerable for giving advice as a CFP because I am held to a higher standard than if I were a financial planner because of the DOL?

CFP Board looks for candidates to fulfill the experience requirement within 5 years after passing the CFP® exam. My best suggestion would be to pursue a part-time role or internship, in addition to your current job, to satisfy the experience requirement. The following graphic is a good overview of the two main pathways for experience:

<http://www.cfp.net/images/default-source/infographics/experience-infographic-web.jpg?sfvrsn=4>



I passed the exam a few years ago but the current work that I do would not qualify for the experience requirement. I can't afford to quit my job to pursue the experience requirement. Is there any practical way to fulfill the experience requirement without having to quit the job I have?

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I would suggest becoming familiar with these requirements, and then developing a plan on how to meet the experience within the 15-year allowable window.



How difficult is it to qualify prior experience to the work experience requirement? After 30 years, I retired as Director and President of a family office that was a Registered Investment Advisor and dealt primarily in complicated bond investments. In addition to trading stocks and bonds and managing all staff through the years, I managed the investment team, laid out investment directives and was an integral part of the Investment Committee. My degree is in accounting and I am currently taking the personal financial planning certificate course at Metro State University in Denver.

CFP Board reviews relevant work experience 10 years prior, and 5 years after, passing the CFP® certification examination. If your experience qualifies and is within this window, it would satisfy our experience requirement.



I do have a question as I get started in my CFP program. Since I already have a professional career that's not been in finance, I'm interested in the current and future job experience requirements the Board has for achieving the credential. How is the board recognizing that not all people who are considering the CFP are pursuing it as their first job? What flexibility is currently built into the credential requirements, or will be considered in the future, for the number of people pursuing the CFP as a second (or third) career? If the requirement is strictly that one has to work in finance before being able to use the CFP designation (even after passing the test and meeting the educational requirements), then that sets up a kind of barrier into entering the financial field as one would ideally want to use the CFP credential in the job interview process. So I would like a clarification of what the employment requirement is for the CFP and if there will be changes to that requirement considered in the future.

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Roles are not that readily available for mid-career transitions like myself. I'm finding that additional requirements like have your CPA and a law degree otherwise must take a very junior role in which case I'm not being considered for. My experience so far, making me seriously think of what I will do next.

Most of the people who enter a career in financial services today are in fact career changers so you are not alone! There is great demand for CFP professionals, and that does not mean having a CPA or Law degree as well. If you check out our Career Center(careers.cfp.net), you will see the

requirements are very reachable for someone making a career transition like yourself. I would suggest you look for a firm that supports and reimburses your CFP education/exam. It demonstrates that they value financial planning and are willing to invest in your training.