

2026 COMPENSATION STUDY





Americans have many paths to choose from as they consider a career.

They can pursue careers that offer a sense of purpose, provide opportunities for professional and personal growth, and deliver a healthy work-life balance. They may lean toward a job that offers great compensation or generous benefits. As they search for a career, they will find that no two jobs are the same. Few professions bring those qualities together as fully as financial planning.

Financial Planning Careers Have:



Sense of purpose



Work/life balance



Career flexibility



Generous benefits



Ability to positively impact clients' lives



Rewarding compensation



Opportunities for career and personal growth



Financial planning is a rewarding career that offers extensive opportunities for those eager to enhance the lives of others. It combines meaningful work with the practical benefits professionals want from a long-term career. As a financial planner, individuals don't have to choose between making a positive impact on others and pursuing high earnings and strong benefits. The ability to achieve both significantly contributes to the satisfaction and sense of reward that many financial planners, especially CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals, experience in their work.

Financial planners assist individuals in navigating financial opportunities and problems. CFP® professionals stand out by understanding their clients and customizing financial strategies to match both financial goals and personal life aspirations. Planners with CFP® certification show a strong level of skill, dedication and integrity. CFP® professionals provide competent and ethical financial planning to millions of American households and commit to CFP Board to act in their clients' best interests.

CFP Board aims to gain clearer insights into the opportunities and benefits that make financial planning a rewarding career, benefiting clients, workers and employers. CFP Board's research team partnered with Industry Insights to gather compensation data for CFP® professionals and financial planners without CFP® certification across the U.S. From mid-January to mid-March 2026, Industry Insights collected compensation data from 1,624 financial planners. The data, which serve as the basis for this report, are subject to a margin of error of +/- 2.4% at a 95% confidence level.

CFP® Professionals' Earnings Outpace Other Financial Professionals



\$195,000 median

2025 total compensation for financial planners

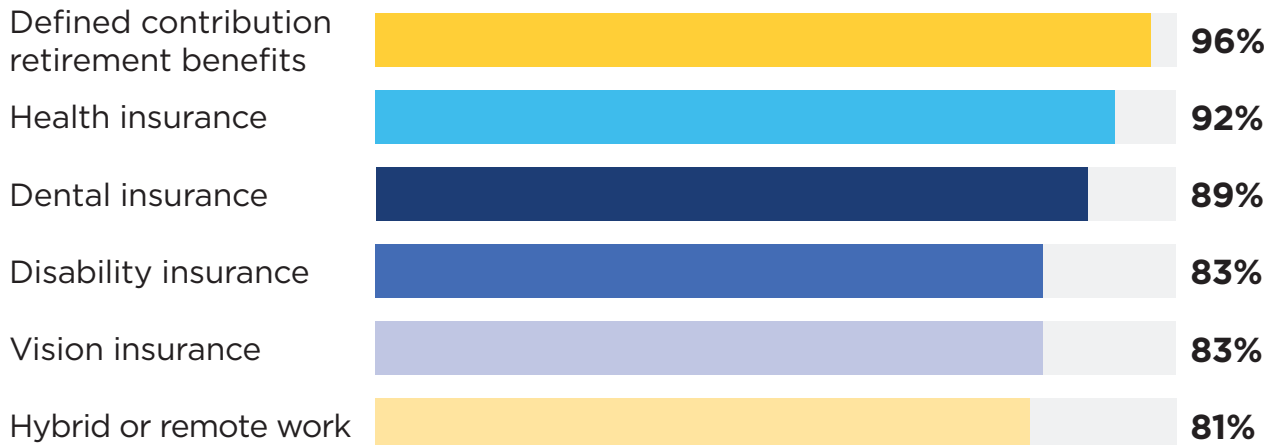


CFP® professionals **earn 11% more** than other financial planners



Financial planners are likely to earn more money if they: **Have more experience or supervise staff**

Most financial planners have access to generous benefits and flexible work arrangements:



85% of financial planners are highly fulfilled with their career, particularly with its:



Stability



Work/life balance



Advancement opportunities




Professional development

Financial planning is a career with purpose and great financial reward. As a career built on helping clients manage their finances, it's no surprise that compensation is a key topic of interest for current and future financial planners alike.

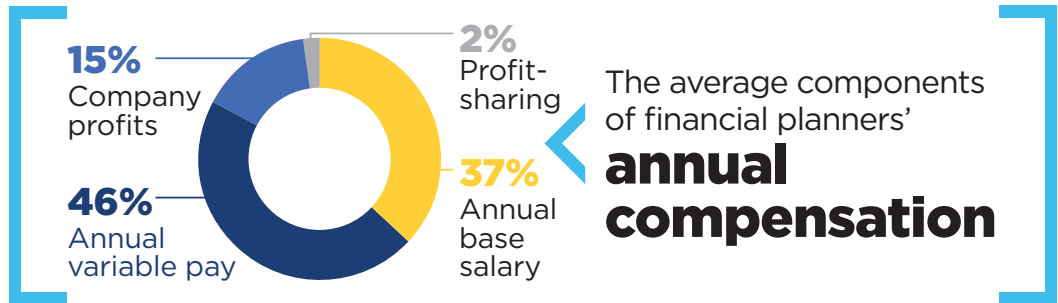
Individuals who earn CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® certification have completed rigorous coursework, passed a comprehensive exam and gained significant real-world experience. In addition, they commit to CFP Board to act in their clients' best interests.

CFP® certification provides the foundational tools that give CFP® professionals a tangible, competitive edge throughout their careers. In turn, CFP® professionals earn 11% more than financial planners without CFP® certification, after accounting for other factors such as years of experience, company size and job role. The higher earnings potential enjoyed by CFP® professionals reflects the value employers and clients place on their expertise and professionalism.



\$195,000 median

2025 total compensation for financial planners

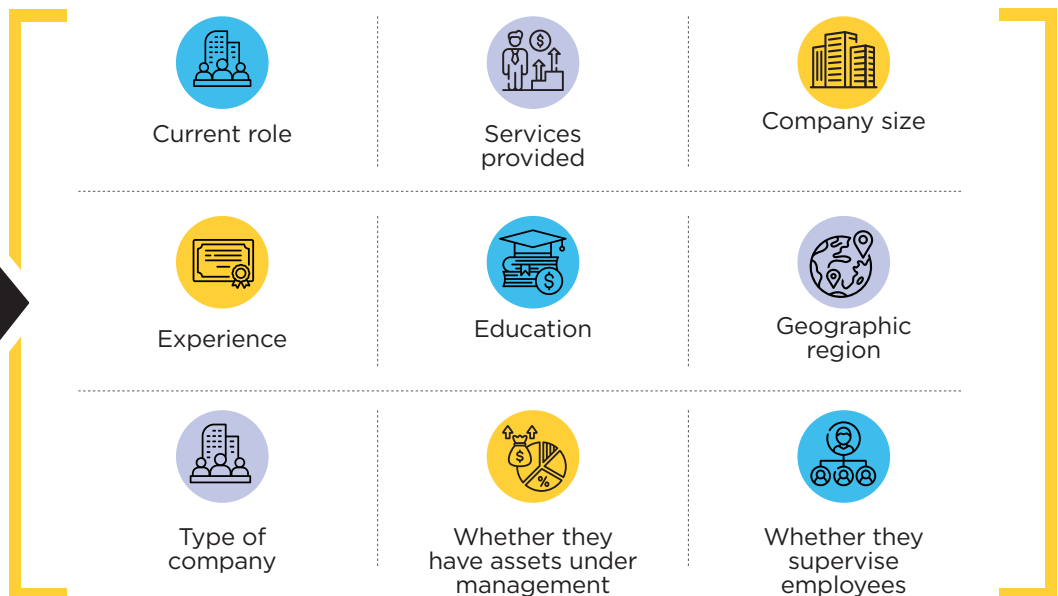


+15% 2024-2025 year-to-year **compensation growth outpaced inflation**



CFP® professionals earn 11% more

than other financial planners after controlling for:








Financial planner compensation can vary greatly and tends to grow as planners gain more experience and take on supervisory roles. Additionally, compensation varies by business channel, with financial planners employed by wirehouses and independent broker-dealers typically earning higher compensation.

Financial Planner Compensation Rises With Experience

Years of Financial Planning Work Experience	Median 2025 Total Compensation
Less than 5 years	\$115,000
5 to 10 years	\$160,000
11 to 20 years	\$255,000
More than 20 years	\$360,000

Financial Planners Who Supervise Other Planners Earn Higher Incomes

Number of Staff Supervised	Median 2025 Total Compensation
None 	\$145,000
1 to 4 	\$250,000
5 or more 	\$452,135

Compensation Varies by Business Channel

Business Channel	Median 2025 Total Compensation
Registered Investment Adviser (RIA)	\$175,000
Hybrid RIA	\$181,500
Bank	\$206,000
Wirehouse/Brokerage	\$213,760
Independent Broker-Dealer	\$226,500

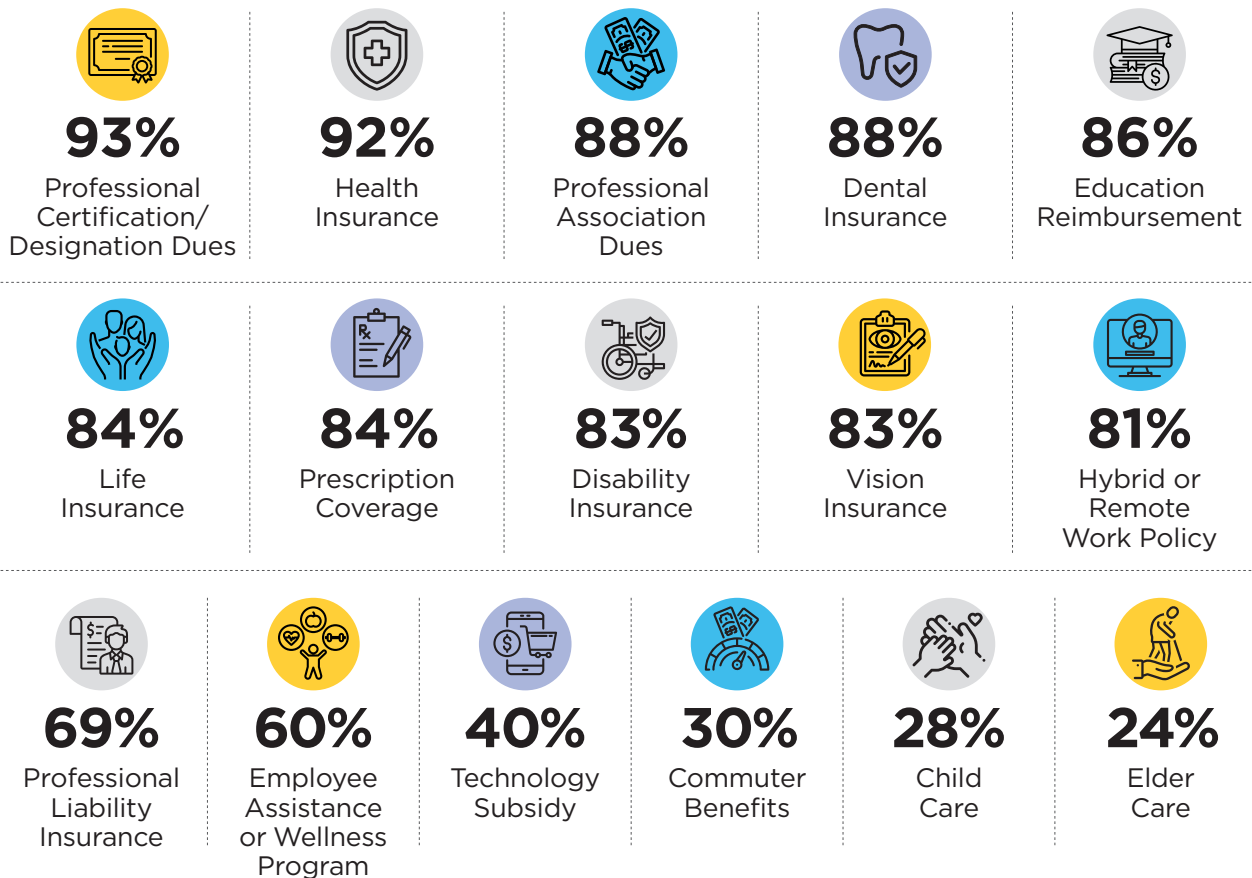
In addition to cash salaries and bonuses, employee benefits are an essential part of financial planners' compensation packages. These benefits include health insurance, professional development opportunities and retirement plans. Altogether, employer-provided benefits add thousands of dollars to cash compensation each year, helping to attract and retain top talent.

Well-designed benefits packages can make a significant difference for employees and their families. For financial planners, many of these benefits are not only essential to a strong career but also contribute to their personal well-being, mental health and long-term stability.

Most financial planners have access to health, dental, vision, disability and life insurance. Financial planners also receive support from their employers for professional development, including professional certifications, association dues and education reimbursements. Many financial planners indicate that they work in a flexible workplace, with either a hybrid (part in-office, part remote) or fully remote arrangement.

CFP® Professionals Receive Generous Benefits

(Percentage of Financial Planners Employed by a Company)



Additionally, nearly all financial planners have access to retirement and other deferred compensation plans that provide financial security and prosperity upon retirement, offering peace of mind that their long-term future is secure.

CFP® Professionals Have Access to Retirement and Other Deferred Compensation Plans

(Percentage of Financial Planners Employed by a Company)



96%

Defined Contribution
(including 401(k) and IRA)



39%

Profit-Sharing



16%

Stock
Options



8%

Employee Stock
Option Plan (ESOP)



7%

Pension



An essential part of a complete compensation package is having time away from work. Paid time off allows employees to focus on work-life balance, supporting their health, wellness and job satisfaction. This creates a healthy, positive workplace where employees feel empowered to prioritize their well-being. For employers, implementing a robust paid leave policy can lead to a more satisfied and productive workforce.

Financial planners typically work a 40-hour week without sacrificing their personal lives. With a median of 20 paid leave days and 10 paid holidays annually, planners highly value work-life balance. These scheduled breaks allow employees to recharge, enabling them to return to work at their best.

Paid leave is not just for mental health; parental and family leave are essential for employees to care for dependents and loved ones. With home life prioritized, all aspects of one's life improve.

Employed financial planners report:



20 days

Median paid leave per year



14%

Reporting access to unlimited PTO



10 days

Paid holidays annually

Access to:



85%

Maternity Leave



82%

Paternity Leave



82%

Adoption Leave



76%

Family Medical Leave

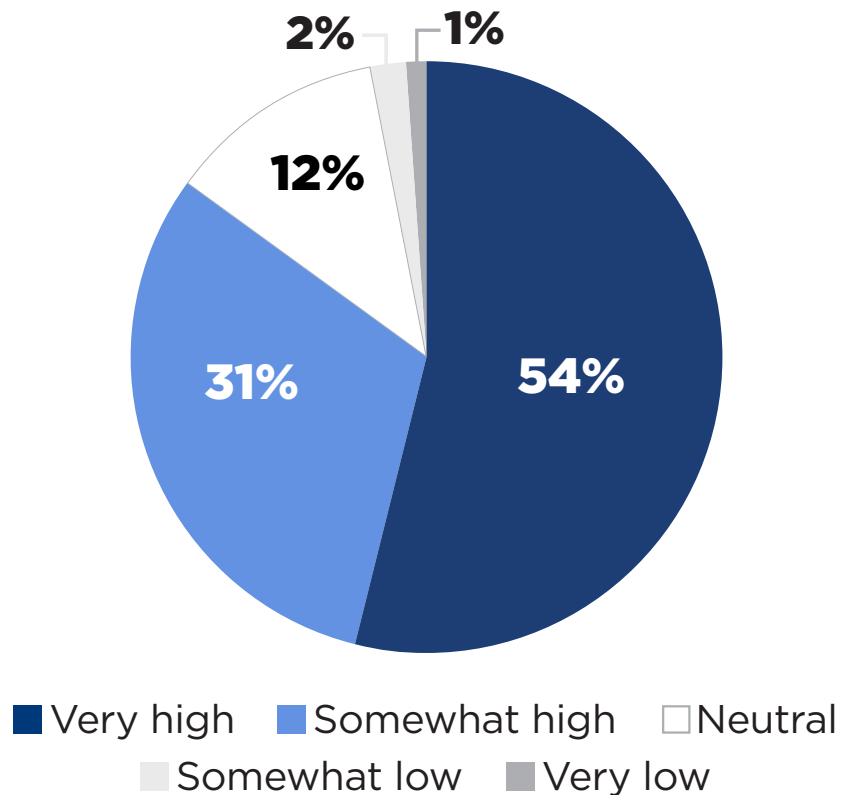


Why CFP® Professionals Find Their Careers Rewarding

First, financial planning is an inherently financially rewarding career. As shown earlier, CFP® professionals enjoy competitive pay, excellent benefits and a flexible work environment.

Second, CFP® professionals pursue a purpose-driven career dedicated to helping clients identify and realize their financial and life goals. They analyze clients' financial situations to chart a course toward both short-term and long-term objectives. Topics may include saving for education, retirement planning, tax strategies and risk management. Financial planners support their clients in turning their dreams into reality.

85% of CFP® Professionals Are Professionally Fulfilled With Their Careers
(Percentage Distribution)



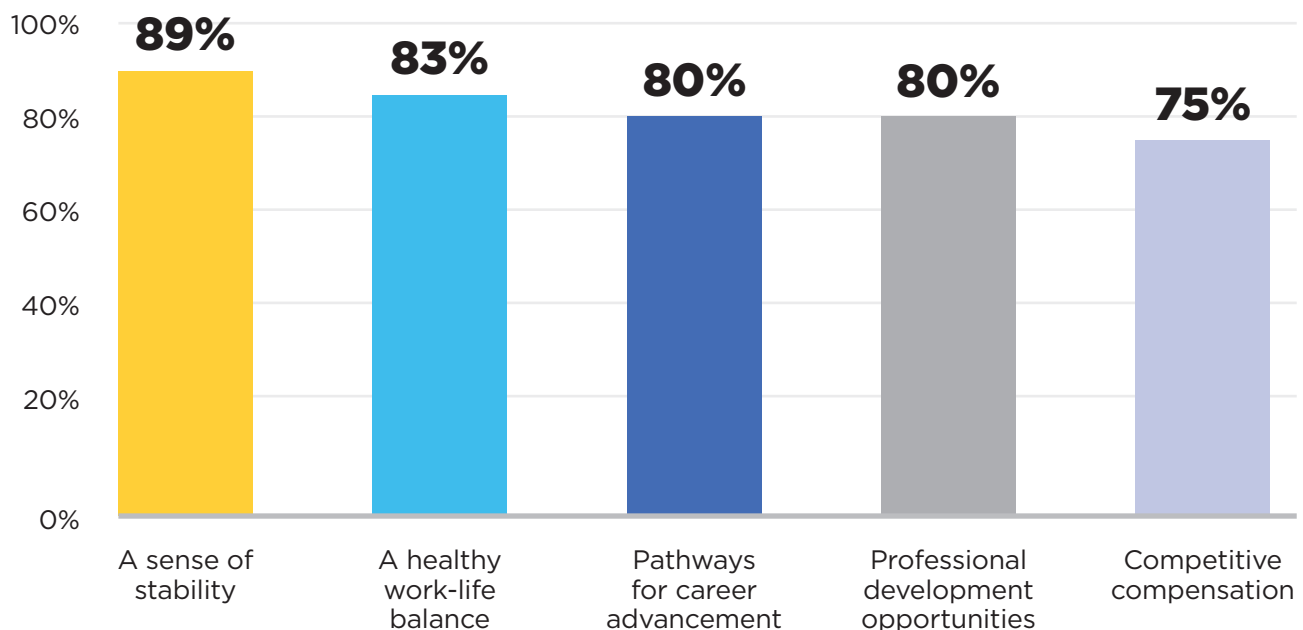
CFP® professionals value the overall quality of life that a career in financial planning can provide, including:



Access to opportunities and benefits demonstrates the high trust and responsibility clients and employers assign to CFP® professionals. Satisfaction with these key aspects signifies a mutually rewarding career for both financial professionals and their clients. When financial professionals feel fulfilled in their careers, they tend to serve their clients more effectively.

Career Stability, Work-Life Balance, Advancement Pathways, Professional Development Opportunities and Compensation Drive CFP® Professionals' Satisfaction

(Percentage of Respondents Rating Their Satisfaction With Either a 4 or 5 on a 5-Point Scale)

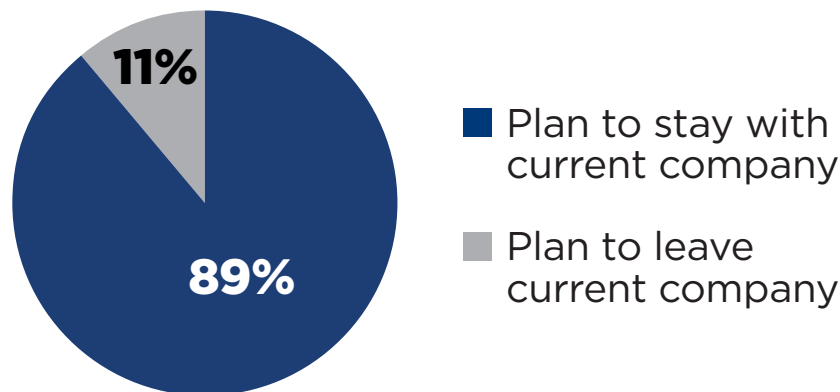


CFP® professionals choose to enter and stay in the financial planning field for a variety of reasons, including job satisfaction derived from benefits, opportunities and competitive pay. Companies that retain CFP® professionals benefit from their highly qualified and passionate staff.

Job satisfaction significantly contributes to the high retention rates among CFP® professionals at financial firms. Most plan to continue in the financial planning profession and at their current employers, indicating a positive outlook on their careers. Those who plan to stay often have a growth mindset, with nearly three-quarters aiming to grow their client base or responsibilities. Financial professionals are driven by ambition and purpose, motivated by the chance to forge long-term client relationships and enhance clients' financial well-being. Even among those considering moving to a new firm, nearly two-thirds intend to remain in the financial planning profession — a strong signal of the field's ability to attract and retain talented professionals.

9 in 10 CFP® Professionals Plan to Stay With Their Current Employer Over the Next 2 Years

(Percentage Distribution)



Whether financial planners intend to stay at their current company or leave, they express a positive, ambitious outlook for their careers. Financial planners want to advance their careers and continue helping their clients — regardless of where they might be.

Of those planning to stay with their current companies:

- 72% plan to remain in the same role.
- 19% aim to be promoted within their company's financial planning function.

Of those who intend to leave their current companies:

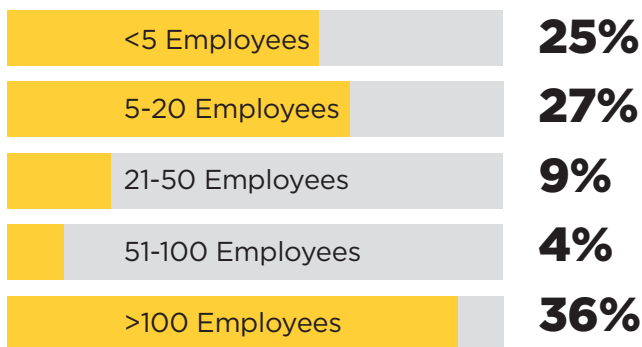
- 63% will remain in the financial planning profession or plan to operate independently.

CFP® professionals work within a diverse range of financial services firms, spanning a broad spectrum of sizes and business types. This variety enables the financial planning profession to offer a wide range of services tailored to meet clients' specific needs.

The most common services include wealth management/investment planning, comprehensive financial planning and retirement planning. While some services are more common than others, financial professionals can specialize in various areas. The variety of services allows CFP® professionals to tailor their advice to specific life stages, individual life goals and unique financial circumstances.

Whether at a small or large firm and regardless of the focus area, CFP® professionals' top priority is always the client.

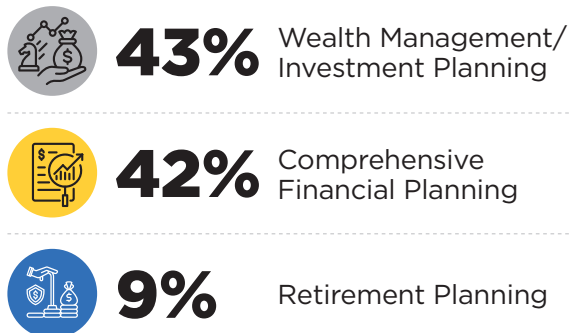
Financial Professionals Work for Small and Large Firms (Percentage Distribution)



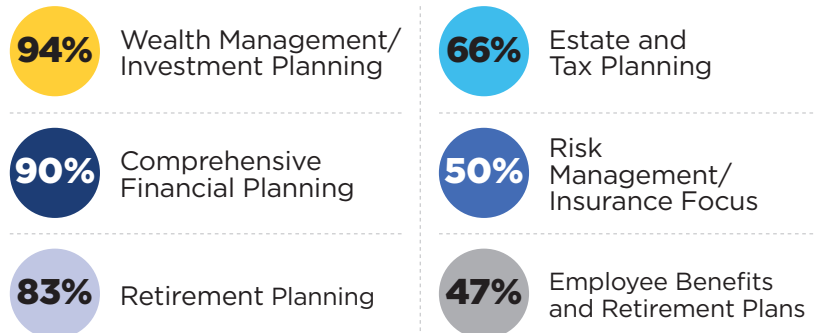
3 in 5 Financial Professionals Are Employees of a Company



Financial Professionals' Primary Business Focus



Leading Services Provided by Financial Professionals





CFP Board contracted research partner Industry Insights to collect and compile compensation data from financial advisors across the U.S.

CFP Board emailed a link to an online questionnaire to CFP® professionals and financial planners who do not hold CFP® certification in January 2026. The firm received responses from 1,624 respondents by mid-March. Responses received after the deadline and questionnaires with incomplete information were not included. The data presented in this report have a margin of error of +/- 2.4% at a 95% confidence level.

The Industry Insights team reviewed the data manually and with a specially designed computer procedure. Strict confidentiality of survey responses was maintained throughout the project.



CFP Board is the professional body for personal financial planners in the U.S. CFP Board consists of two affiliated organizations focused on advancing the financial planning profession for the public's benefit. **CFP Board of Standards** sets and upholds standards for financial planning and administers the prestigious CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® certification — widely recognized by the public, advisors and firms as *the standard* for financial planners — so that the public has access to the benefits of competent and ethical financial planning. CFP® certification is held by more than 109,000 people in the U.S. **CFP Board Center for Financial Planning** addresses diversity and workforce development challenges and conducts and publishes research that adds to the financial planning profession's body of knowledge.

