

How to Choose A Financial Planner Necessary Questions To Ask

When thinking about hiring a financial planner or investment manager, it is important to find someone that you trust, who will adapt the services they provide with what you actually need.

The National Association of Professional Financial Advisors created a list of 'Tough Questions To Ask' your manager, to assist in selecting a personal financial adviser. I have completed the answers to these questions below to help you with this process.

Background & Experience

The backgrounds of financial advisers can vary as much as the services offered. The planner's education and experience should demonstrate a solid foundation in financial planning and a commitment to keeping current.

What is your educational background?

- Graduated with an MBA in Accounting and an MA in Teaching from Emory University.
- Graduated with a BA in French from Amherst College.

What are your financial planning credentials/designations and affiliations?

- NAPFA-Registered Financial Advisor (contingent upon 60 hrs. continuing educ. every 2 yrs.)
- Certified Financial Planner Professional (contingent upon 30 hrs. continuing educ. every 2 yrs.)

How long have you been offering financial planning services?

For more than 25 years.

Do you have clients who might be willing to speak with me about your services?

Yes

Will you provide me with references from other professionals?

Yes

Have you ever been cited by a professional or regulatory governing body for disciplinary reasons?

No.

Describe your financial planning work experience.

I have owned and operated a successful financial advisory business since 1991. I have worked with a variety of clients with issues ranging from investment management needs, financial planning goals, tax and retirement planning and insurance needs. Prior to 1991, I owned and operated a successful property casualty insurance agency.

Business Practice

How many clients do you work with?

25 to 50 on an annual basis.

Are you currently engaged in any other business, either as a sole proprietor, partner, officer, employee, trustee, agent or otherwise?

No

Will you or an associate of yours work with me?

I work directly with clients.

Will you sign the Fiduciary Oath below?

Yes

FIDUCIARY OATH

The advisor shall exercise his/her best efforts to act in good faith and in the best interests of the client. The advisor shall provide written disclosure to the client prior to the engagement of the advisor, and thereafter throughout the term of the engagement, of any conflicts of interest which will or reasonably may compromise the impartiality or independence of the advisor. The advisor, or any party in which the advisor has a financial interest, does not receive any compensation or other remuneration that is contingent on any client's purchase or sale of a financial product. The advisor does not receive a fee or other compensation from another party based on the referral of a client or the client's business.

Do you have a business continuity plan?

Yes

Compensation

Financial planning costs include what a client pays in fees and commissions. Comparison between advisors requires full information about potential total costs. It is important to have this information before entering into any agreement.

How is your firm compensated and how is your compensation calculated?

Financial planning fees are calculated based upon a charge of \$100 per hour or on a flat fee basis. Typically, flat fees range from \$100 to \$500 depending upon the complexity of the work. Clients are then billed upon the completion of the work.

Money management clients are charged an annual fee of 0.10 of one percent calculated on a quarterly or monthly basis and charged in arrears. The ending balance of the previous quarter determines the base upon which the fee is charged. Clients are billed directly by the advisor. Fees are not deducted from the clients' accounts.

Do you have an agreement describing your compensation and services that will be provided in advance of the engagement?

Yes

Do you have a minimum fee?

No

Does any member of your firm act as a general partner, participate in, or receive compensation or ongoing income from any investments you may recommend to me?

No

Do you receive referral fees from attorneys, accountants, insurance professionals, mortgage brokers, or others?

No

Are there any financial incentives for you to recommend certain financial products?

No

Services

Financial planners provide a range of services. It is important to match client needs with services provided.

Services offered by Fee-Only Financial Planning:

- Goal setting
- Tax planning
- Retirement & Estate planning
- Investment planning, management & review
- Insurance needs in the area of life, disability, long-term care, health and property/casualty
- Education funding

Do you provide a comprehensive written analysis of my financial situation and recommendations?

Yes

Does your financial planning service include recommendations for specific investments or investment products?

Yes

Do you offer assistance with implementation with the plan?

Yes

Do you offer continuous, ongoing advice regarding my financial affairs, including advice on non-investment related financial issues?

Yes

Do you take custody of, or have access to my assets?

No. FOFPP does not retain custody of clients' assets and is prohibited from withdrawing funds from clients' accounts.

If you were to provide me ongoing investment advisory services, do you require "discretionary" trading authority over my investment accounts?

No

Regulatory Compliance

Federal and state laws require that, under most circumstances, individuals or firms holding themselves out to the public as providing investment advisory services are required to register with either the U. S. Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) or the regulatory agency of the state in which the individual/firm conducts business.

Fee-Only Financial Planning is a Registered Investment Advisor with the state of Massachusetts. Please see my Form ADV Part II for more detailed information about Fee-Only Financial Planning.

Investment Advisor: David T. Martula
Firm Name: Fee-Only Financial Planning

Please Note:

A yes or no answer requiring explanation is not necessarily a cause for concern. We encourage you to give the advisor an opportunity to explain any response.