



ASPPA SERVICE PROVIDER CERTIFICATION

WHY IS THIS PROGRAM IMPORTANT TO YOUR FIRM?

Just as ASPPA credentialed members have long enjoyed recognition as leaders in the retirement profession, the ASPPA Service Provider Certification recognizes firms that adhere to a standard of excellence and a dedication to best practices. The required annual renewal encourages a culture of good governance and oversight at certified firms. Once certified, your firm will be able to distinguish itself in a competitive marketplace and establish credibility with your current and prospective clients and advisors.

THE VALUE IN THE PROCESS

One of the most important aspects of seeking this certification is the assessment process undertaken by your firm. The assessment is based on the ASPPA Standard, which identifies specific criteria within a set of 17 best Practices. Pursuing this certification encourages your staff to be highly attentive to your business practices, through the establishment of controls, policies, operational reviews and up-to-date documentation.

The ASPPA Standard is comprised of 4 elements:

- ◆ **Organizational business structure review to develop and maintain an effective company**
 - Effective management structure and succession planning
 - Documented business planning
 - Risk assessment of all aspects affecting the continued success of your firm
 - Valuable human resource procedures
 - Demonstration of adequate resources and financials to support your operations
- ◆ **Formalized processes and controls**
 - Assessment of business partner selection and monitoring practices
 - Documentation of all processes to support your service agreement with plan sponsors
 - Transparent reporting of fees and revenue received from plan assets and plan sponsor
 - Marketing and sales practices
- ◆ **Implementation**
 - Documentation of all recordkeeping and transactional processes
 - Quality control process and reporting for accuracy and timeliness reviews
 - IT plans for data security
 - Disaster recovery plans and testing
- ◆ **Monitor the procedures that are put into place to demonstrate continuous evaluation**
 - Scheduled reviews of all processes, procedures and documentation for continued effectiveness
 - Demonstration of impartiality and objectivity with regard to reviews

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In a complex and continually changing retirement industry, independent verification is a necessary mechanism to increase trust with plan sponsors, advisors and retirement plan participants. The ASPPA Service Provider Certification provides the platform for your firm to publicly demonstrate its service provider excellence, including:

◆ **Differentiation: A certified firm receives a seal of Service Provider Excellence, which can be used to market and meaningfully differentiate your firm from the competition.**

"Our challenge is to hold ourselves out as credible professionals. The ASPPA Service Provider Certification process reinvigorates a company. We now have new systems, we boast the certification seal on our website, every presentation, our stationery, our business cards, and our newsletters. We're not shameless, but we're definitely proud, and our clients get it."

G. Patrick Byrnes, MSPA President, Actuarial Consultants, Inc., Torrance, CA, ASPPA – Past President, ACOPA – Leadership Council

◆ **Quantifies competency and improved risk management: The program uncovers procedural risks within your organization. Certified firms may qualify for errors and omissions and fiduciary liability insurance premium discounts.**

"Like the SAS-70, which grew into a necessity for major firms, we see the ASPPA Service Provider Certification going that route pretty quickly. We find ourselves in competition with the 'big boys' - thanks to the certification. It's all about transparency, credibility and fiduciary responsibility."

Kenneth Ingham, MSPA, President/CEO, Ingham Retirement Group Miami, FL

◆ **Improved performance: Certified firms run more efficiently and with increased employee morale.**

"We've gotten very positive responses from our clients after we informed them of our ASPPA Service Provider Certification. The certification will help us to be a better company since we can benchmark company and employee performance against industry best practices."

Craig Suemori, CPC, QPA, QKA President, Suemori & Inouye, Inc. Honolulu, HI

◆ **Establishes proof of quality: The Standard of Practice speaks for itself. A firm can only improve by going through the certification process.**

The ASPPA Service Provider Certification is a must-have for all good firms in our industry. It will ultimately be a disadvantage not being certified, especially in this era of service provider scrutiny and potential oversight.

John Blossom, President & CEO, Alliance Benefit Group of Illinois, Peoria, IL

For more information about the ASPPA Service Provider Certification and a list of certified firms, visit www.asppa.org/rkcertification.



The certification program is delivered by CEFEX Centre for Fiduciary Excellence, LLC.
Please visit www.cefex.org.