

**NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release  
March 30, 2011

CONTACT: Andrew Younger

+1.312.673.5469

[ayounger@credentialingexcellence.org](mailto:ayounger@credentialingexcellence.org)

**ACCREDITED TAX AND FINANCIAL ADVISORS HELP CONSUMERS COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS, PLAN FOR FUTURE**

WASHINGTON, DC – With tax day fast approaching, consumers are forced to face the ever-present reality of managing personal finances. With the help of accredited tax preparers and financial planners, consumers can minimize their headaches, maximize their tax returns, avoid costly mistakes and plan a financially secure future.

Preparing and filing taxes has become an increasingly daunting task each year. IRS data shows that Americans spent [6.1 billion hours](#) complying with tax-filing requirements last year. With tax codes becoming increasingly complex, it is no surprise that the [IRS recommends](#) taxpayers choose a preparer that is “affiliated with a professional organization that provides its members with continuing education and resources and holds them to a code of ethics.”

By working with properly credentialed tax professionals, consumers can greatly reduce the risk of mistakes that may lead to costly penalties. The IRS audited a record 138.9 million Americans last year, collecting \$48.9 billion in enforcement costs. Using a qualified tax preparer can give consumers confidence that in the event of an audit, the process will likely be less painful and less costly. Consumers can count on certified tax advisors and preparers to comply with laws and ensure that they are paying no more than legally required.

“With so much at stake, consumers looking for sound tax and financial guidance should seek accountants and tax professionals with credentials from an NCCA-accredited program,” said Melissa Murer Corrigan, President of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). “Properly certified financial professionals have demonstrated mastery of a broad range of accounting and taxation procedures and practices. Credentials offer evidence that a financial professional has met the national standard for the knowledge that underlies the accounting and taxation field.”

Looking beyond this year’s tax season, consumers face the prospect of planning for retirement and other long-term financial goals. Certified financial professionals can help make sense of the many savings and investment options that exist for consumers.

Recent surveys by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards (CFP Board) show that despite an increase in concern about finances, 93 percent of consumers who had worked with a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ strongly believe their financial professional provides them with credible and competent services.

“People rely on financial professionals who have designations from an NCCA-accredited program to help pull their financial lives together and provide sound advice at a fiduciary standard of care,” said Kevin Keller, CAE, CEO of the CFP Board. “Accredited programs have demonstrated that they meet the industry standard for properly assessing the skills and abilities of professionals. For instance, the CFP Board’s CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ assessment includes the requirements of examination, education, experience and ethics. This ensures that financial professionals with our certification not only are ethical, but competent and do what’s in the best interest of their clients.”

Consumers looking for accounting and financial guidance can find accredited programs with directories of certified tax professionals, financial planners, and other financial professionals by visiting the ICE Web site, at [www.credentialingexcellence.org](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org).

## **About the Institute for Credentialing Excellence and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies**

Established in 1977, ICE (formerly the National Organization for Competency Assurance) is the leading international membership organization representing the credentialing community. ICE fulfills its mission through the delivery of education and training programs, in setting quality standards for credentialing, and by providing accreditation services through its accreditation division, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The ICE membership is composed of credentialing organizations, testing companies, and individual professional development consultants. Through its annual conference, Webinars, and publications, ICE serves as the source for information on the latest trends and issues of concern to practitioners and organizations focused on certification, licensure education/training and workforce development. ICE and NCCA are based in Washington, DC. For further information, please visit [www.credentialingexcellence.org](http://www.credentialingexcellence.org).

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