	DESIGNATIONS & EXPLANATIONS
ABA	**Accredited Business Accountant –** The individual has passed an examination covering financial accounting, reporting, financial statement preparation, taxation business consulting services, business law, and ethics. The certification is issued by the “Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation”.
ABV	**Accredited in Business Valuation** – Issued by the AICPA to indicate a CPA specializing in this field.
ATA	**Accredited Tax Advisor –** The individual must have a CPA or EA and five years of experience in tax preparation, compliance, tax planning and consulting. The individual may also qualify by taking and passing Surgent and Associates’ eight-course program on the handling of complex tax planning issues, including planning for owners of closely held businesses, planning for the highly compensated, and estate planning. The certification is issued by the “Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation”.
ATP	**Accredited Tax Preparer –** The individual must have three years of work experience in tax preparation. The individual may also qualify by taking and passing Surgent and Associates’ two-course program that covers critical compliance issues, the mechanics of tax returns, and a thorough review of the concepts behind the tax code and how to apply them. The certification is issued by the “Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation”.
AVA	**Accredited Valuation Analyst –** Similar to the CVA (below) and administered by the NACVA as well, this certificate is awarded to non-CPAs.
CB	**Certified Bookkeeper –** An individual must pass a four part monitored examination and have at least two years of full time experience. Issued by the American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers.
CDFA	**Certified Divorce Financial Analyst –** An individual must take prescribed courses and pass a written exam. The certificate is issued by the Institute of Certified Divorce Financial Analysts. A prior designation, the Certified Divorce Planner (CDP), was issued by the Institute of Certified Divorce Professionals, which is now linked to the new institute.
CEBS	**Certified Employee Benefits Specialist –** Established by an International Foundation and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, there is an eight course curriculum covering the entire spectrum of employee benefits, with a comprehensive examination.
CFA	**Chartered Financial Analyst –** A candidate must pass Level 1, II and III exams which require a minimum of 250 hours of study, and substantially more depending on educational background. Also must meet work experience requirements. Administered by the Charter Financial Institute.
CFDA	**Certified Fraud Deterrence Analyst –** Issued by the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts for professionals rendering fraud deterrence and analytical forensic services.
CFE	**Certified Fraud Examiner –** Issued by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, an individual must meet work experience requirements, pass a written exam and meet continuing education renewal requirements.
CFP	**Certified Financial Planner –** The individual must have met the CFP Board’s education requirement, passed an extensive examination covering the financial planning process, tax planning, employee benefits and retirement planning, estate planning, investment management and insurance, and have three years minimum experience in the financial planning process. The CFP Board has biennial certification requirements, including continuing education.
ChFC	**Chartered Financial Consultant** – Regarded by many as fully equal to the CFP, this designation requires up to two years of study and a comprehensive examination in all aspects of the financial planning process. Administered by the American College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, it has extensive continuing education requirements as well.

CITP	**Certified Information Technology Professional** – Issued by the AICPA to CPS specializing in this field.
CMA	**Certified Management Accountant –** An individual must pass a rigid four part test similar to the CPA test and have two years of management accounting experience to receive the designation. Exam topics include economics, business finance, situational analysis and decision making. The Institute of Management Accountants bestows the certification.
CPA	**Certified Public Accountant –** The individual has passed a four part examination covering Auditing and Attestation; Business Environment and Concepts; Financial Accounting & Reporting; and Regulation (taxation, law, ethics, etc.). Licensed by state.
CSA	**Certified Senior Advisor –** Bestowed by the Society of Certified Senior Advisors located in Denver, Colorado. Requires extensive study, interviews, written essay and a final exam.
CTA	**Certified Tax Accountant –** Acquired from the Certified Tax Accountants Association, Springfield, Massachusetts. The designation is earned from a study of taxation and passing a final exam.
CTP	**Certified Tax Practitioner –** granted by NSTP upon the successful completion of a comprehensive examination.
CTPx **CVA**	**Certified Practitioner of Taxation –** granted upon the successful completion of an examination by “Tau Alpha Chi” formerly the “Institute of Certified Practitioners”, or by a waiver of the examination based on a combination of education, continuing professional education and work experience. **Certified Valuation Analyst –** Issued by the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts (NACVA), this is the original valuation credential. An individual must attend a series of courses, take a comprehensive examination and meet continuing education requirements for renewal. Available to CPAs only.
EA	**Enrolled Agent –** The individual passed a test prepared by IRS. Authorizes individual to represent tax payers before the IRS.
ECS	**Elder Care Specialist –** This is an Accreditation from the “Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation” (ACAT) established and governed by the National Society of Accountants (NSA)
MBA	**Master in Business Administration –** College graduate degree
MS	**Master of Science –** Masters degree in taxation granted by the Washington School of Law
MT	**Master of Law Degree in Taxation –** Awarded by the University of Denver – Strum College and the Daniels College of Business. The MT designation is essentially the same as the LLM designation that the tax attorneys possess (same exact education requirements) but is awarded as MT to those who do not have a JD designation.
PA **PFS** **RFA**	**Public Accountant –** Use of this designation varies by state law, and may involve no licensing or registration requirements up to educational and testing conditions equivalent to the CPA certificate. **Personal Financial Specialist –** Issued by the AICPA to CPAs specializing in financial planning. **Registered Financial Associate –** An individual must graduate from an approved academic curriculum in financial services and meet continuing education requirements. Issued by the International Association of Registered Financial Consultants.
STC	**Specialist in Tax Controversies –** Granted by the National Center for Professional Education on completion of all 3 levels of their Taxpayer Representation series.