

Finding Financial Adviser Help

I answer several retirement questions each day from people who have gone to www.analyzenow.com for help. Unfortunately, there are too many people who have not saved enough. But your heart has to go out to those who previously saved and then lost it because of personal, health or emergency situations. Here is an example:

Hello Bud,

Can you recommend a company or individual planner down here in [Deleted location] that wouldn't cost a teacher an arm and leg?

We are in our mid 50's and are just now financial doing well enough to even begin this process. We had bankruptcy 5 yrs ago due to unforeseen circumstances (crime and health issues resulting from that). We need someone to assess what we can do to optimize our situation. We don't have much wiggle room on this and cannot afford to miss calculate the entire picture. I also need to know how to track paying off a mortgage such as, should I put funds into that or somewhere else? We do not qualify for refi since we have managed this well since bankruptcy. If I managed things worse we would qualify for help to refinance the mortgage from 5.99% to 3%. Would a bankruptcy lawyer be someone we should go for financial planning? It cost us \$600.00 for the bankruptcy which is a lot and we only met with them like once and then at the court hearing.

I have looked around your site and played around with the software but I really think we need to talk to someone who grasps this much better than we do.

I googled locally and I get a lot of [Deleted financial site name] folks listed as financial planners in our area. So many selling stuff and not sure they will make the best recommendations to us. I can collect all the needed info but sometimes I am not sure which box in falls into. I am not lazy and would do the work but I just don't think mentally I can track it well enough and my memory is like Swiss cheese.

I want to also ask someone questions to see if I am understanding the benefits right for instance. Our financial situation was so bad I gave up worrying about it since nothing I could do. But I think it is time to address this head on and see what is the best we could hope for and make the necessary changes. We have at least 10 yrs before my husband reaches 65 and 15 yrs if he can make it to 70 for retirement. We don't hope for a lot in retirement but to be able to get by simply.

Thank you for any referrals you can provide.

[Name deleted]

Bud's response:

Thank you for asking. I have heard from others with similar problems. Things may not turn out as badly as you think, particularly if you can find a way for the high wage earner to wait until 70 to start Social Security and the spouse till 66. If you can supplement that with a little part-time work it would be helpful. And, of course, any money you save in between would be of enormous help.

I suggest that you try www.napfa.org to locate a fee only planner near you. They are the most honest as a group and take an oath to put client's interest above their own. [Financial firm's

name deleted] doesn't always do that, but you may be able to reduce costs by not accepting funds with front-end or back-end loads and negotiating the fee to something less than 1.5% of assets managed every year. If you have a local [Deleted a different financial firm's name] office near you, you might also try them.

Hope this helps. Bud

The questioning person responded with:

Bud you are a sweet heart. Thanks for responding. I had no idea about NAPFA and this does sound like a good way to search for a fee based planner. I found a planner company down here in [Deleted city's name] and I was impressed particularly with this one planner's background. There are two who work from this company and [Deleted adviser's name] background appealed to me and I emailed him. My situation will certainly test his skill set!

I do think my husband could wait till 70 since he is a teacher and physically he wouldn't be too old to do that kind of work. He could sub for teachers from time to time possibly too. Yes savings is key to this too.

Yes this really did help.

[Deleted name]

Then there are people who are nearing retirement who wisely ask for help. Here is an example of a recent request:

Hi Bud,

Quick question..

Do you have a standard list of questions when interviewing a perspective Financial Advisor to ensure that they are a good fit for either a conservative, medium, or high risk portfolio?

Mom and I are going to be looking for an Advisor over the holidays – we're going to start with Fidelity, but also try her credit union..

Thoughts??

Thanks

[Deleted name]

Bud responded with:

You are looking for a CFP (certified financial planner) that is a fee-only planner. You do not want a broker or insurance person.

A good list of questions is on:

<http://www.fpanet.org/FindaPlanner/ChoosinaPlanner/QuestionstoAsk/>

There is more that you can do as enumerated in Chapter 10 of the book *Getting Started in a Financially Secure Retirement* (Wiley, 2007) available from Amazon.

Hope this helps.

Bud

[Her thank you note was too flattering to include here.]