



Financial Adviser Interview Questionnaire

1. Why did you become a financial planner?

To help people make financial and investment decisions with confidence.

We are dedicated to providing assistance without competing financial interests. We do not sell any products or earn any referral fees or commissions. We do not require that we manage your investments. We work with on their terms, not ours.

After spending nearly 30 years working with policy makers about savings behavior, pensions, social security, and virtually all aspects of our health and long-term care system, I wanted to work directly with families as they confront their financial life. I have always been a “planner” and an “investor”.

2. What is your educational and experiential background as it relates to personal financial planning?

I earned a Ph.D. in Economics, specializing in markets, generally, and financial markets in particular.

Early in my career, however, I left academia to work on public policy issues affecting the income security of people over the course of their lives. I specialized in public programs, insurance products, employer-provided benefits, and other arrangements that comprise our health and retirement systems. This has meant understanding the tax code, insurance regulations, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, pensions and other related programs all of which have direct implications for financial planning.

In 1984, I founded a public policy institute, which later I moved into Georgetown University. At Georgetown University I continue to conduct policy research, teach health economics, business statistics, and research methods at both the graduate and undergraduate level. In 2006, however, I started to reduce my involvement in research and teaching to open Friedland Financial Planning, Inc.

I have always been an active planner and sufficiently successful at investing to be confident that I could start a second career without jeopardizing my own retirement while still financing private school educations and college educations of my three children.

In addition to my prior professional and life experiences, I continue to take courses and seminars. Before I started working with clients, I passed the Series 65, Uniform Investment Advisor Law Examination, and last (July) I passed the examination necessary to become a Certified Financial Planner.

3. What are your financial planning credentials/designations and affiliations?

- Accredited Investment Fiduciary®
- Candidate for CFP® certification (passed the CFP® Certification Examination).
- Uniform Investment Adviser Law Examination, Series 65
- Courses taken at Boston University Financial Institute and through the Garrett Planning Network
- Member, Garrett Planning Network and the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors
- Doctorate in Economics, George Washington University

4. What are your areas of specialty?

- Developing individualized strategies to reduce debt, save for specific goals, and to make effective long-term investments.
- Assessing the asset allocation of investment portfolios to determine their diversification, costs, and appropriateness given your holding period and tolerance for risk.
- Devising an optimal and efficient investing strategy using one's current holdings and employer-based options.
- Developing strategies to finance retirement
- Designing retirement plans for employers, developing an appropriate Investment Policy Statement and implementing and monitoring the plan.

5. Please describe your most common engagement / service provided? And the type of client or client situation you target?

Most of our clients are looking for answers to two kinds of questions: Am I saving enough and am I making the right investment decisions? However, we meet with many people already retired who are concerned about the decisions they have already made and want help in ensuring that they will not outlive their savings.

We help clients sort and prioritize financial goals and then evaluate how well they are doing to meet those goals. We also evaluate financial holdings and offer specific suggestions as to how to align their portfolio to their goals relative to their risk tolerance.

Since the economic downturn, more and more clients have asked that we look over their shoulder and help them with their investment decisions over the course of the business cycle. We now offer a plan for monitoring investments without requiring that we manage your investments. This enables you to get a professional second opinion about all of your accounts at a reasonable cost.

6. **Are you a registered representative of any broker/dealer? No. We do not work for any other financial intermediaries. We do have accounts at a number of custodians so that we can either manage or over see your investments, but we do not represent these firms.**

Are you a licensed insurance agent with any company or agency? No, we do not sell any products for any company. However, we can work with you to help you choose the right type of product and to compare products from competing firms.

If so, which one(s)?

7. **Are you a registered investment adviser? Yes, with the State of Maryland.**

Friedland Financial Planning, Inc. is a Registered Investment Advisory firm with the State of Maryland, and Robert Friedland, Ph.D., is a recognized registered representative with Friedland Financial Planning, Inc.

8. **Are you a fiduciary? Yes. We have joined professional associations in which being a fiduciary is required and we are an Accredited Investment Fiduciary.®**

The law enables advisers with potential conflicts of interest to be a fiduciary by disclosing potential conflicts. We do not believe however, that the disclosure of a conflict is sufficient consumer protection. Because of the indirect reimbursement consumers do not know how much they are paying for the services they obtain and they can't always be sure in whose interest products or investment choices are being suggested.

We would like the consumer protection laws changed, but since 90 percent of financial planners earn their livelihood from selling commissioned products, we do not expect this will happen. So instead, we are working to build a very different business model.

We deliberately avoid many potential conflicts of interest by not selling products, not accepting referral fees, and not requiring that we manage your investments. This enables us to make investment choices, help you compare insurance products, and render our honest evaluation since we are not compensated by any of the companies that provide these products.

9. **How are you compensated?**

- a. **Fee-Only, please define method of determining fees: Yes, but for us the fee is not based on a percentage of your holdings we manage but rather the amount of time we expect to need to meet complete a set of defined tasks.**

We prefer not to use the word "Fee-Only," since many of our colleagues use this term to mean charging a fee based on the size of the portfolio they are managing. In this case the "fee" is based on percentage of your savings they are managing.

While we prefer that consumers only choose advisers that do not accept commissions, most "fee-only" financial planners reserve assistance to those who are willing to have them manage their investments.

We prefer to be available to anyone who values our assistance and not just those who are willing to have us invest their savings for them. **Therefore, when asked to say how we are compensated, we prefer to say that we are compensated by a fixed fee based on our estimate of how much time it will take to help you meet your goals.**

Although you can hire us to work for you by the hour, we prefer to provide you with a fixed project price. Your goals might be to answer a few questions; to conduct a comprehensive financial plan; to assess your portfolio, or to manage your portfolio. Our fee is based on the expected time we think it ought to take to help you. We charge this one flat fee, regardless of how long it actually takes us.

- b. **Commissions only: No.**
- c. **Fee and Commissions (fee-based), provide typical breakdown: No.**
- d. **Other: Hourly, project based: Yes,** while you can hire us on an hourly basis, we prefer to convert our estimate of how long an “hourly” project might take to a fixed-priced contract. **We will work with you for as long as it takes to satisfactorily answer the questions you hired us to help you resolve.**

10. Do you have minimums for assets, account size, annual fees paid, etc? No.

No. There are no minimums of any kind. We will work with you to answer a particular set of questions or provide a comprehensive plan. You do not need to have us manage your savings. If you want us to manage your savings, there are no minimums.

11. What is your typical fee or charge for an initial engagement?

There is no charge (or obligations) for our initial meeting. We will initially meet with you to get to know you and better understand what your needs are. At this meeting we will provide you with a list of documents we will need to conduct the work and a contract for the project. We expect you to take this contract home to review before signing.

Depending on the number and complexity of your issues; your proximity to retirement, a plan to evaluate whether you are on track and to review your portfolio, or a plan to finance college or retirement might cost between \$1,400 and \$4,500. Typically, for those within a year or two of retirement, the cost for a comprehensive portfolio review and financial plan may be around \$3,500, plus or minus \$600, depending on how many different investment holdings need to be evaluated.

Following a comprehensive portfolio review (\$800-\$1,800), an ongoing review of all of your holdings on a bi-annual or quarterly basis, might cost about \$600 (plus or minus \$150) per review. With this type of arrangement we can help you take advantage of the relative changes in asset prices during different phases of the business cycle. Managing your portfolio directly might cost about \$800-\$1,200 per quarter, per account, and is based on the number of different holdings and not the value of your holdings.

11. Do you provide a written agreement detailing the total amount of compensation and services that will be provided in advance of an engagement? Yes.

12. Do you provide a thorough written analysis of one’s financial situation and recommendations? Yes, including specific investment choices based on your employer’s retirement plan and the custodian for your accounts.

13. Do you offer assistance with implementation with the plan? Yes.

Please elaborate.

We provide a list of action steps organized in chronological order. In addition, we provide justification and explanation of each of those action steps. You can always call us to discuss specifics related to these action steps after receiving the plan without incurring any additional charges.

If you prefer that we implement the plan for you, we will do so, although we do reserve the right to undertake the implementation on an hourly basis rather than as a fixed-priced project.

14. Will you provide a second opinion or one time review? Yes, absolutely.

Since we have no minimums our contractual relationship can be for one project or for ongoing assistance. The choice is dictated by your needs and preferences.

15. It is important to us that we exceed your expectations. As a result we provide a satisfaction guarantee.

All we charge to start a project is a deposit equal to the smaller of either one-half the project price or \$500.

If you are not satisfied with the work we are doing for you let us know or do not accept the final report and you will not have to pay the balance due on the project.

Signature of Planner: Robert B. Friedland Date: November 25, 2010

Firm Name: Friedland Financial Planning, Inc.
Office address: 2275 Research Blvd., Suite 500
Rockville, MD 20850

Please visit us at: www.FriedlandFinancial.com

When you are ready or if you want additional information call us at: **(301) 309-1988**, or email us at: **info@FriedlandFinancial.com**

If you would like a blank copy of these questions to use when you are interviewing other financial planners, just ask and we can send you a copy.