

## Senior Certification Programs Help Advisors and Aging Clients



When Theresa Krueg's father-in-law was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, she had no idea where to turn for support. As a wealth manager and vice president of WealthTrust Arizona, she had a firm grasp of financial issues for retirees. Yet, she realized she also needed to learn about social and health matters to help her father-in-law and protect her clients from the inevitable realities of aging.

Krueg is one of an increasing number of financial professionals earning senior or financial gerontology certification. In recent years numerous professional organizations have begun offering these specialized programs, including the American Institute of Financial Gerontology, the Society Of Certified Retirement Financial Advisors and the Society of Certified Senior Advisors. Ohio State University, the American College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a number of other universities are also following suit.

### Courses Examine Issues Beyond Finances

The course structure and syllabus vary by organization. Programs typically offer information on many topics relevant to older Americans like the physical, psychological and social processes of aging; legal tools such as health care directives, wills and trusts; and health care options like long-term care insurance, assisted living, nursing homes and hospices. Online and self-study courses are available to accommodate busy professionals. (See Financial Gerontology Resources below.)

Krueg completed The Society of Certified Senior Advisor's program and earned her CSA designation. "I walked away with a clear understanding of key health, social and financial factors that are important to seniors — and how they are intertwined," says Krueg. "Being a wealth manager no longer means picking stocks and mutual funds, and calling it a day." She is now better suited to help seniors meet their needs both within and outside the portfolio, and has developed a network of professionals to bridge any gaps. Krueg believes being a CSA differentiates her from other advisors, enables her to offer a higher level of service and helps build a stronger bond with clients and their families.

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### Events

Come visit The Hartford at the Financial Planning Association's Annual Conference in Seattle September 8-11. We'll be at booth #609.

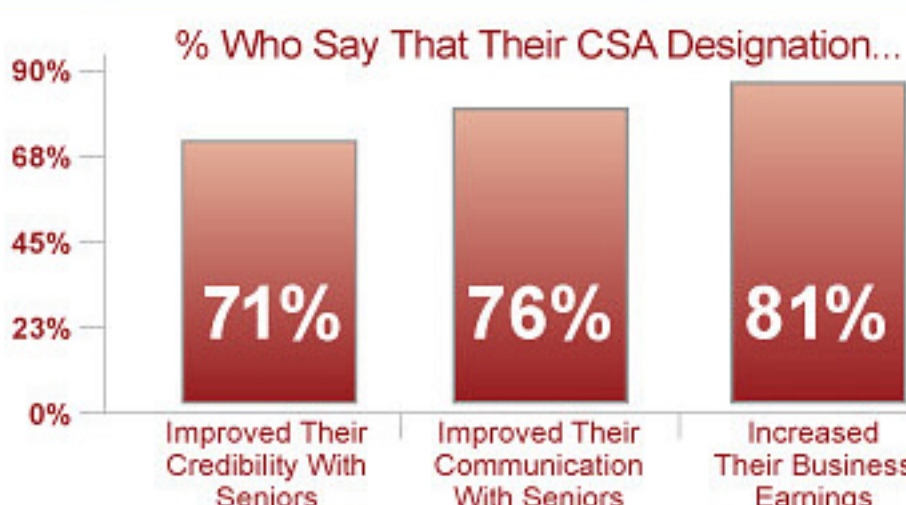
### Question of the Month

On which type of advisor do boomer business owners most often rely?

[Answer](#)

For more retirement information and resources, visit the [Hartford Investor Financial Professional Website](#).

## Designation Is Beneficial for Certified Senior Advisors®



### Independent Advisors and Large Client Companies Are Signing On

The American College in Bryn Mawr, PA, designed its Chartered Advisor For Senior Living (CASL) program in 2004 in response to corporate requests, says Nona Hillsberg, vice president of The American College and product manager for CASL. "They felt their reps and advisors did a good job of helping people save for retirement," says Hillsberg. But most weren't adequately prepared to help the growing number of retirees with financial needs, and needed to understand the behavioral, social and psychological aspects of aging.

The CASL program is based on five self-study courses that take about three months each to complete. Nearly 2,000 individuals have earned the CASL designation. According to Hillsberg the number of enrollees is increasing substantially and includes both independent financial advisors as well as large client companies like Prudential, MassMutual and State Farm.

The American College also offers post-graduation support services. CASLs receive a designation letter and brochures they can share with clients that highlight the virtues of the certification. They are also listed in an online database available to consumers searching for financial professionals. In addition, students and alumni receive a regular newsletter covering topics of interest for advisors such as health care and investment withdrawal strategies.

### Advisors Prevent Financial Blunders and Ease Family Burdens

Gary Crooms, president and owner of Senior Information Services of America in Lewisville, TX, earned his Registered Financial Gerontologist certification from the American Institute of Financial Gerontology. Crooms focuses on late life and estate planning for seniors, but believes a wider segment of financial planners will begin focusing on the "wealth decumulation phase."

Crooms deals with a lot of people who are facing serious health issues and their families are scrambling to understand how things like Medicaid and Veteran's benefits work. "If people don't seek professional advice, they can make tragic financial mistakes," he says. I am trying to relieve the burden of worrying about money so family members can spend their time giving love and support instead of dealing with red tape.

### Financial Gerontology Resources for Advisors

Considering the impending wave of baby-boomer retirees, it's no surprise that an increasing number of financial planners are gaining senior expertise. Numerous universities and non-profit organizations are now offering accredited programs for advisors who want to learn about the social, psychological and financial issues facing today's seniors and aging baby boomers. Classroom, self-study and online learning options are all available to accommodate busy financial professionals. Here's a sampling of the available programs.

#### The American College in Bryn Mawr

##### [Chartered Advisor for Senior Living Designation program \(CASL™\)](#)

The CASL designation is earned by completing five required courses: Understanding the Older Client, Health and Long-Term Care Financing for Seniors, Financial Decisions for Retirement, Investments and Fundamentals of Estate Planning.

Tuition: \$535 per course.

#### American Institute of Financial Gerontology (AIFG)

##### [Registered Financial Gerontologist \(RFG\)](#)

RFG certification is issued by AIFG to enrollees who complete four required courses and two electives. Studies include boomer demographics and elements of wealth span planning; the physical, psychological and social aspects of aging; ethical and legal issues that affect financial advisors and their clients; and financing longevity by transforming accumulated wealth into lifelong income. Electives include the family and intergenerational aspects of aging, financing long-term care solutions and marketing to the 50+ consumer.

Tuition: \$1,250.

#### Society of Certified Retirement Financial Advisors

##### [Certified Retirement Financial Advisor™ program](#)

Students can choose to take classes or follow a self-study program, which focuses on taxes, mutual fund selection, fixed income investments and annuities, training in estate planning and asset protection, and marketing topics such as direct mail and public relations.

Tuition: \$1,995 for live classes or self-study.

#### Society of Certified Senior Advisors (SCSA)

##### [Certified Senior Advisor \(CSA\)](#)

SCSA confers the CSA certification. More than 14,000 people have taken the course, which covers topics ranging from Alzheimer's disease to taxes, housing, long-term care and marketing. Graduates also receive promotional support and ongoing communications. A financial background is not required.

Tuition: Fees range from \$1,200 to \$1,400 for classroom, self-study and online courses.

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Sales Ideas from The Hartford

## Grow Your Business



To help time-stretched business owners, The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. created the 40-page *Business Owner's Playbook: A guide to protecting your business, growing your assets and planning for your future*. The Playbook also identifies the types of advisors — attorneys, accountants, insurance agents, financial professionals and others — who can provide more specific guidance based on particular circumstances and different stages of the business life cycle. For more information or to get your copy, visit the [Hartford's Business Owner's Playbook website](#).

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