



# Why You Should Partner With a 100% Fiduciary Financial Advisor

## How Planning Increases Wealth and Leads to a Better Retirement

An Educational Guide by ProsperPlan Wealth co-founders Chris Grellas,  
MSFA, CFP® & Lauren Williams, MBA, CFP®



**ProsperPlan**  
*Wealth*

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# INTRODUCTION



Today's financial decisions are more complex and consequential than ever. Markets move faster, products are increasingly intricate, and the volume of financial information can overwhelm even experienced investors. In this environment, trustworthy advice isn't a luxury; it's a necessity.

**“Our goal is to take the complexity out of your financial life so you can focus on what matters most: your family and your goals.”**

- Chris Grellas

Money touches every aspect of life from family and long-term goals to opportunity and peace of mind. Yet not all advisors operate under the same legal standard, and understanding that difference can shape your entire financial future.

**At ProsperPlan Wealth, we believe everyone deserves transparent, conflict-free, and personalized financial guidance.**

**This eBook explains why that commitment matters.**

**“Trust is earned by putting the client's interests first, always. That's the foundation of our philosophy at ProsperPlan Wealth.”**

- Lauren Williams, MBA, CFP

# WHAT “FIDUCIARY” REALLY MEANS



The word “fiduciary” carries significant weight, yet many investors still misunderstand what it truly means. A fiduciary advisor is legally and ethically required to act solely in your best interest. Every recommendation, every decision, every time.

In this chapter, you’ll learn why this standard matters, how it eliminates conflicts of interest, and how it creates a foundation of trust that shapes the entire advisory relationship.

## A FIDUCIARY ADVISOR IS LEGALLY OBLIGATED TO:

- Put your interests first
- Avoid or fully disclose conflicts of interest
- Offer advice based solely on your needs not compensation
- Operate with full transparency
- Act with loyalty and care in every decision

This is the highest ethical standard in the financial industry. By contrast, many advisors operate under the lesser “suitability standard,” which allows them to recommend products that are merely suitable, not necessarily the best choice.

This single distinction can drive vastly different financial outcomes over a lifetime.





“

Being a fiduciary is not just a title; it's a commitment to prioritize the client above all else.

- Chris Grellas, MSFA, CFP

”

“

Clients often don't realize how much small conflicts of interest can impact their long-term wealth.

A fiduciary advisor removes that worry entirely.

- Lauren Williams

”



# HOW ADVISORS DIFFER ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

Not all financial advisors operate under the same rules, standards, or incentives. Brokers, insurance agents, dual registrants, and fee-only advisors all approach planning differently.

Here, we break down how these models work and why their compensation structure influences the guidance they give. By understanding these differences, you'll be better equipped to choose an advisor aligned with your goals, not someone else's.

100% Fiduciary Advisors	Commission-Based Advisors	Dual-Registered Advisors
Always act in your best interest	Can recommend products that pay them more	Sometimes fiduciaries
Never earn commissions	Often tied to insurance companies or broker-dealers	Sometimes product salespeople
Provide transparent pricing	May not be required to put your interests first	Switching roles can create confusion and potential conflicts
Offer unbiased advice	Operate under the suitability standard	
Are free from product sales requirements		

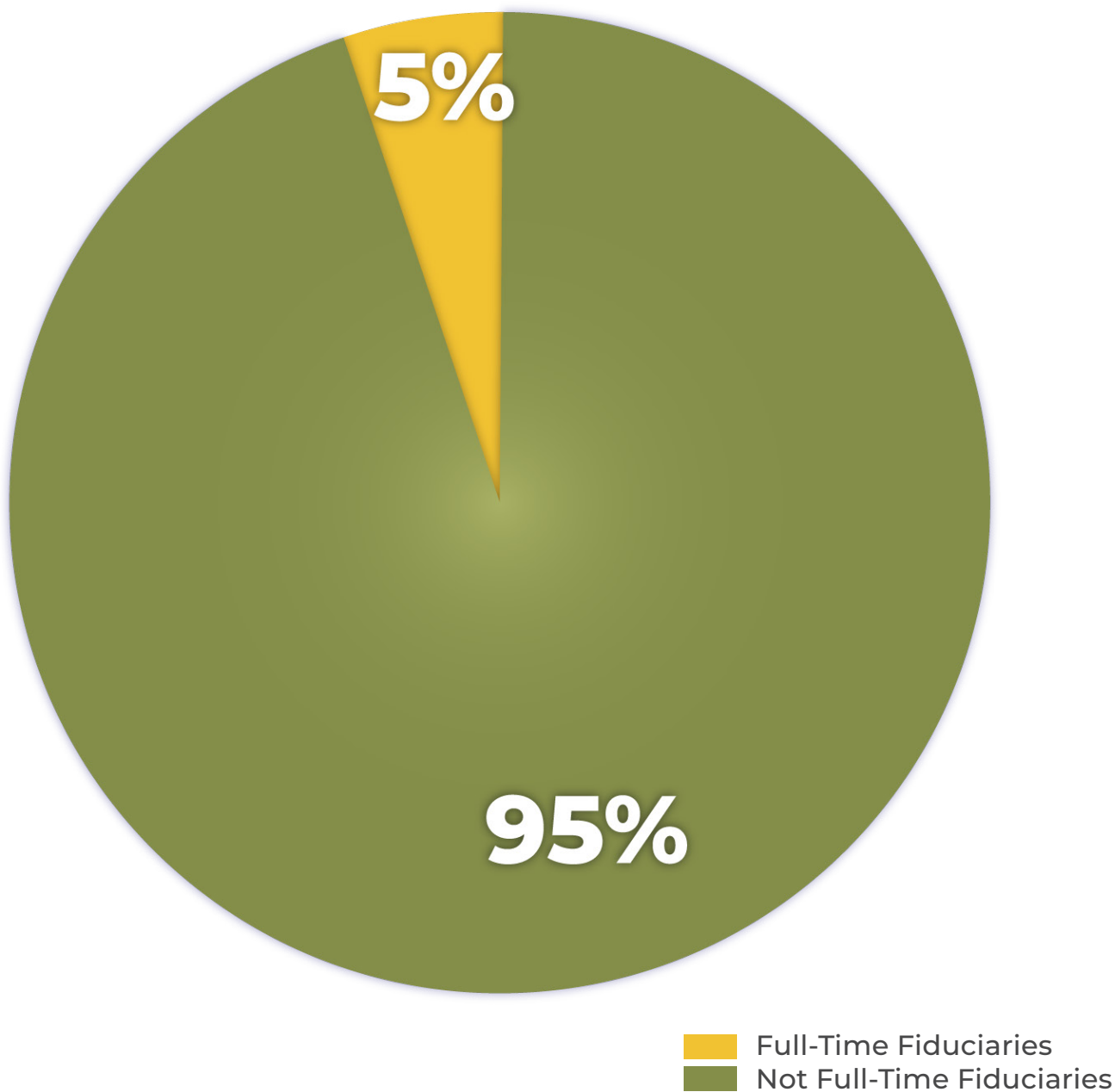
“When you understand how advisors are compensated, you see why fiduciary guidance is truly different - it's about your goals, not someone else's paycheck.

- Chris Grellas





## Breakdown of Financial Advisor by Fiduciary Status<sup>1</sup>



Understanding these differences **empowers you**  
to protect yourself, and to grow your wealth.

<sup>1</sup> What Percentage of Financial Advisors Are Fiduciaries? - Bright Advisers

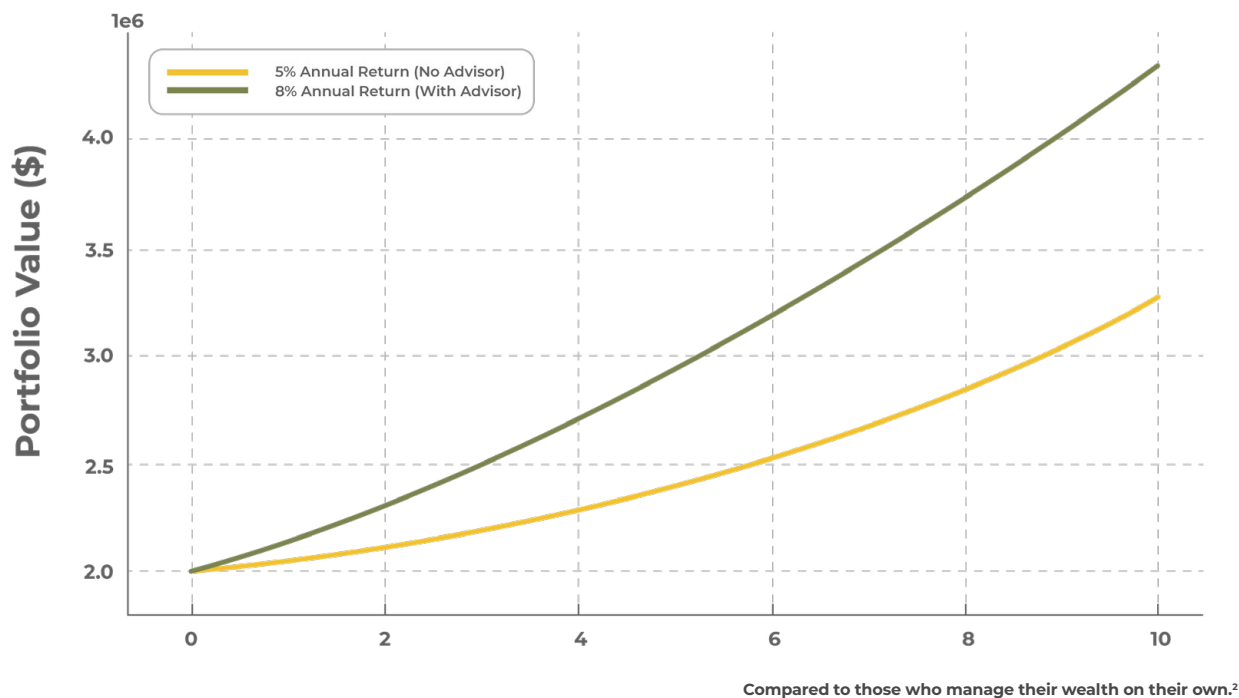
# HOW A FIDUCIARY ADVISOR HELPS YOU MAKE **SMARTER DECISIONS**

Even capable investors face uncertainty, especially during major life transitions or volatile markets. A fiduciary advisor acts as a strategic partner who brings objectivity, discipline, and informed perspective to each decision.

This chapter briefly illustrates how professional guidance helps reduce emotional mistakes, optimize long-term outcomes, and turn overwhelming choices into clear, confident steps forward by providing:

- Evidence-based investment strategies
- Tax-efficient planning
- Behavior coaching during market volatility
- Coordination of investments, taxes, insurance, and estate planning
- Support during major life transitions
- Long-term retirement planning and timing decisions

## 10-Year Growth of \$2,000,000 Advisor vs. No Advisor

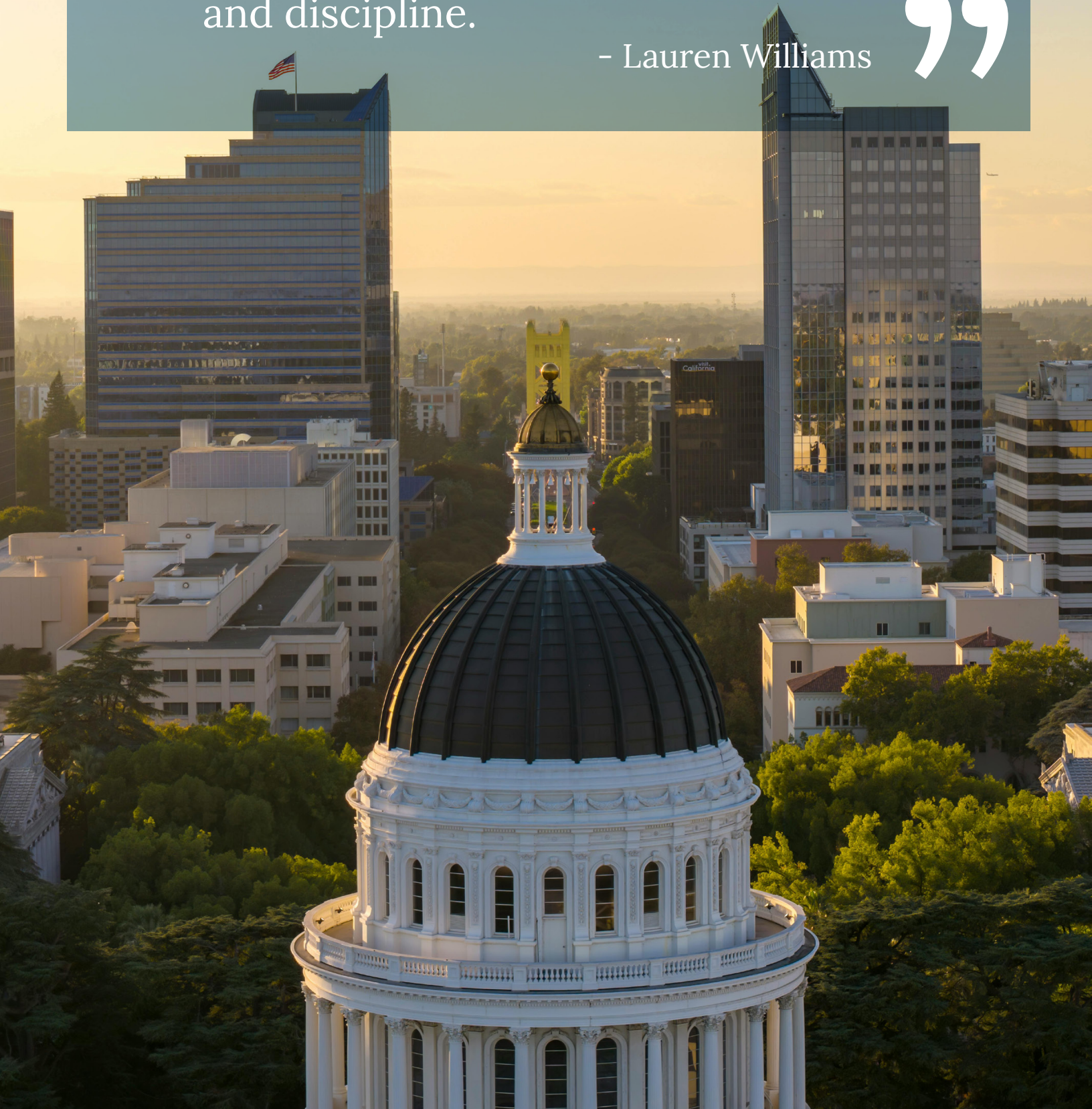


The end result of working with a fiduciary advisor? Better outcomes, fewer mistakes, increased wealth, and more confidence.



“Emotions can cost clients tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of dollars over a lifetime. Our job is to guide decisions with clarity and discipline.”

– Lauren Williams





# ESSENTIAL SERVICES A FIDUCIARY PROVIDES

Exceptional financial advice goes far beyond managing investments. A fiduciary advisor integrates your goals, finances, risks, and opportunities into a coordinated, comprehensive plan. Here, you'll discover the core services fiduciaries deliver - from retirement planning to tax strategy - and how each supports a more secure and predictable financial future.

## EXAMPLES OF CORE SERVICES

- Retirement income planning
- Investment management
- Tax optimization and coordination
- Estate planning and legacy strategy
- Social Security timing
- Insurance and risk management
- Cash - flow analysis
- Charitable giving and philanthropic planning



“Our clients tell us the value isn't just in investments - it's knowing every piece of their financial life works together seamlessly.

- Chris Grellas”



# WHY YOU NEED THE RIGHT ADVISOR FOR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL HEALTH

The right advisor doesn't just guide your portfolio; they protect your long-term well-being. Studies consistently show that professional advice leads to better financial outcomes through stronger discipline, reduced taxes, and improved investment performance.

This chapter highlights the tangible benefits of choosing an advisor whose incentives align fully with your success, helping you avoid mistakes that quietly erode wealth over time.

## WHY IT MATTERS

- Better long-term outcomes
- Fewer hidden fees
- More transparency
- Smarter tax decisions
- Emotional coaching during volatility
- Holistic planning
- Consistency and clarity across every part of your financial life

Without the right advisor, you may unknowingly accept higher risk, higher fees, and lower long-term returns.



“The right advisor turns planning from a reactive activity into a proactive strategy that grows your wealth over time.

– Lauren Williams”

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING AN ADVISOR



Selecting an advisor is one of the most important financial decisions you'll make. Titles can be misleading, and not all credentials are equal. This chapter gives you a practical, straightforward framework - questions to ask, behaviors to look for, and red flags to avoid so you can confidently evaluate any professional offering financial guidance.

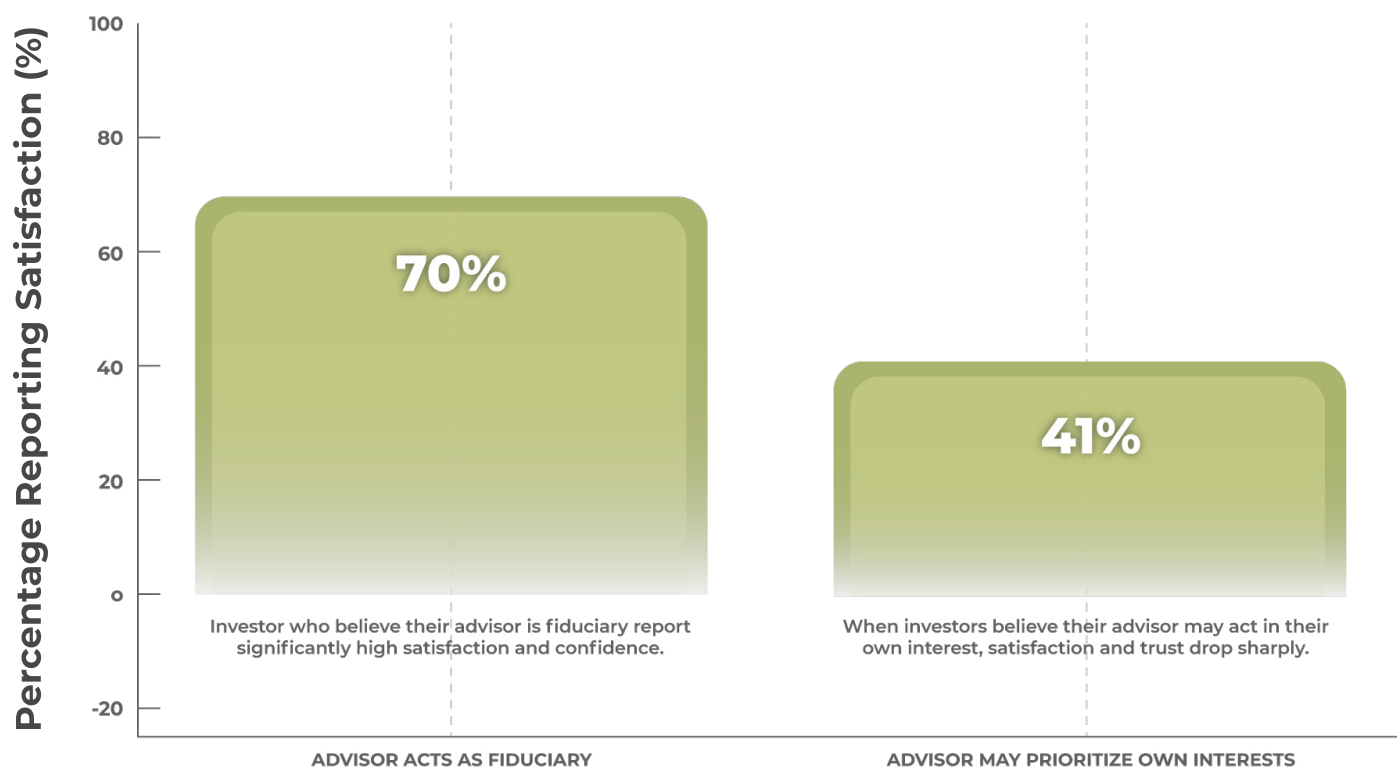
## KEY QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR

- 100% fiduciary obligation
- Fee-only compensation
- A decade or more of lead advisor experience
- Transparent, conflict-free recommendations
- Advanced credentials (CFP®, CFA®, ChFC®)
- Advanced degrees (MBA, MSFA)
- Clear communication and ongoing access
- A structured planning process
- No product-sales incentives
- A philosophy rooted in evidence, not guesswork



A recent study showed that affluent clients who work with a fiduciary financial advisor report significantly higher satisfaction levels than those who don't.

## Investor Satisfaction Based on Perceived Advisor Duty<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> 70% of investors satisfied with their fiduciary advisor: Cerulli

“We want clients to know exactly what they’re paying for and exactly what they’re getting - it should never be a mystery.”

– Lauren Williams

# HOW PROSPERPLAN WEALTH DELIVERS 100% FIDUCIARY CARE

At ProsperPlan Wealth, our approach is built entirely around our clients' best interests. Our advisors operate with complete independence, total transparency, and a commitment to objective, evidence-based planning.

This chapter explains our planning process, communication style, and investment philosophy - and how we ensure every recommendation supports the goals, values, and long-term security of the families we serve.

## OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

- Client-first advice, always
- No commissions, quotas, or product sales
- Customized planning designed around real life
- Tax-efficient strategies at every stage
- Long-term partnership and proactive guidance

“Our independence ensures that every recommendation is based on the client's goals, not a product or sales target.

- Lauren Williams



# CASE STUDIES: THE FIDUCIARY STANDARD IN ACTION



Real stories illustrate how fiduciary care can transform financial outcomes. Here are three simplified case studies that highlight the difference objective advice makes:

## **Case Study 1: Retiree Couple Avoids a Costly Social Security Mistake**

A couple nearing retirement planned to claim Social Security early. After a fiduciary analysis, they learned that delaying benefits and adjusting portfolio withdrawals would increase lifetime income by more than \$180,000.

**Strategic tax planning further reduced their long-term tax burden.**



## Case Study 2: Professional Eliminates Hidden Portfolio Fees

A mid-career professional had investments spread across several brokerage accounts with embedded sales charges and high expense ratios.

**After shifting to a fiduciary advisor, total investment costs fell by more than 60% while improving diversification and alignment with long-term goals.**

## Case Study 3: Business Owner Protects Wealth During a Market Downturn

A business owner panicked during a sharp market decline and considered selling everything. Their fiduciary advisor intervened, rebalanced the portfolio, and used tax-loss harvesting.

**This avoided a damaging emotional decision and added long-term tax benefits that improved future after-tax returns.**

*Case studies presented are not indicative of all client experiences with ProsperPlan Wealth. Each client has unique circumstances and the case studies presented are only hypothetical illustrations. Case studies presented should not be interpreted as a guarantee of future performance or success.*



“ Real-life decisions like these show the tangible value of a fiduciary – it’s not theory, it’s measurable impact on your wealth. ”

- Chris Grellas



# RESOURCES

To continue building clarity and confidence in your financial life, explore these resources:

## RECOMMENDED READING

- The Behavior Gap - Carl Richards
- The Psychology of Money - Morgan Housel
- Simple Wealth, Inevitable Wealth - Nick Murray
- Retire Secure! - James Lange

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- CFP Board
- NAPFA
- CFA Institute
- The Alliance of Comprehensive Planners

# NEXT STEPS

If you're ready to evaluate whether your current financial plan is aligned with your goals - or you're considering partnering with an advisor who puts your interests first you can easily schedule a free consultation with a 100% fiduciary partner-advisor at ProsperPlan Wealth.


We're here to help you make informed, confident decisions that support a lifetime of financial well-being.

“Our mission is simple: help every client make informed decisions that build security, confidence, and a lasting financial legacy.”

– Lauren Williams



**ProsperPlan**  
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