

# Standards for Forensic Services

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Recently, the AICPA released the first Statement on Standards for Forensic Services (SSFS). The statement was issued by the Forensic and Valuation Services Executive Committee of the AICPA (FVS Executive Committee). The FVS Executive Committee provides guidance and establishes enforceable standards for members of the AICPA performing certain forensic and valuation services.

## What are forensic services?

The term *forensic* is defined as “used in, or suitable to, courts of law or public debate.” Forensic accounting services generally involve the application of specialized knowledge and investigative skills by an AICPA member to collect, analyze, and evaluate certain evidential matter and to interpret and communicate findings (forensic services).

## Why was the SSFS issued?

The SSFS was issued by the FVS Executive Committee to protect the public interest by preserving and enhancing the quality of practice of a member performing forensic services.

## What does the Statement establish?

The statement establishes standards for an AICPA member providing services to a client as part of the following engagements:

- *Litigation.* An actual or potential legal or regulatory proceeding before a trier of fact or a regulatory body as an expert witness, consultant, neutral, mediator, or arbitrator in connection with the resolution of disputes between parties. The term *litigation* as used herein is not limited to formal litigation but is inclusive of disputes and all forms of alternative dispute resolution.
- *Investigation.* A matter conducted in response to specific concerns of wrongdoing in which the member is engaged to perform procedures to collect, analyze, evaluate, or interpret certain evidential matter to assist the stakeholders (for example, client, board of directors, independent auditor, or regulator) in reaching a conclusion on the merits of the concerns.

## Who must follow the SSFS?

The SSFS applies to all AICPA members, AICPA member firms and their employees. It excludes AICPA members not in public practice performing internal use assignments for their employers.

## When is the SSFS effective?

The SSFS is effective for new engagements accepted on or after January 1, 2020. Early application of the provisions of this statement is permissible.

## Is there an AICPA professional certification in financial forensics?

Additionally, the AICPA offers a certification in financial forensics – the Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF®) credential. It was created specifically for CPAs who specialize in financial forensics and demonstrate considerable expertise through their knowledge, skill and experience.

### Contact Us

For more information on forensic services or any other accounting related services, please contact the partner in charge of your account or:

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