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**CEFEX<sup>®</sup>, THE CENTRE FOR FIDUCIARY EXCELLENCE, HONORS TWELVE CERTIFIED FIRMS FOR A DECADE OF VOLUNTARY ADHERENCE TO BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS**

**CEFEX Instills Trust and Enhances Reputations with Issuance of over 210 Certifications**

**Pittsburgh, PA (May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018)** – CEFEX, the Centre for Fiduciary Excellence, LLC, a Fi360<sup>®</sup> company, is pleased to recognize twelve CEFEX-certified firms for their decade of adherence to a defined Standard of Practice. This special awards event at the CEFEX Annual Meeting is in conjunction with the Fi360 Annual Conference lauded as the premiere professional development conference for investment fiduciaries.

An independent global assessment and certification organization founded in 2006, CEFEX verifies conformity to standards that are substantiated in laws, regulations and professional best practices. In the case of record keepers and Third Party Administrators, CEFEX verifies conformity to the American Society of Pension Professionals & Actuaries (ASPPA) Standard of Practice for Retirement Plan Service Providers. To date, CEFEX has issued more than 210 certifications involving over \$450 billion in invested assets.

The CEFEX assessment and certification process promotes excellence and helps organizations manage regulatory, business and reputational risks. The CEFEX mark signifies that an organization has joined the elite ranks of firms demonstrating conformity to high conduct and practice standards that are worthy of the public's trust and confidence.

“In a time of financial industry change, trust is critical to firms which provide fiduciary functions and those that provide support services. Investors and stewards of retirement plans, endowments and foundations are continually looking for proof of integrity,” explains Carlos Panksep, Managing Director, CEFEX. “Our rigorous certification demonstrates that the firm places its clients' interests first and adheres to professional best practices.”

The twelve CEFEX-certified firms recognized for their decade of adherence to these best practices follow:

- Petersen Hastings Investment Management (Investment Advisor Certification)
- Resource Consulting Group, Inc. (Investment Advisor Certification)
- Slavic Mutual Funds Management Corporation (ASPPA Recordkeeping Certification)
- Aspire Financial Services, LLC (ASPPA Recordkeeping Certification)
- South State Retirement Plan Services (Investment Advisor Certification & ASPPA Recordkeeping Services Certification)
- Alpha Advisors, LLC (Investment Advisor Certification)
- Benefit Plans Plus, LLC (ASPPA Administration Services Certification)

- ABG Retirement Plan Services (ASPPA Recordkeeping Certification)
- Edward M. Lynch – Dietz & Lynch Capital (Investment Advisor Certification)
- UniqueHR (Investment Steward Certification)
- Gordon Asset Management, LLC (Investment Advisor Certification)
- Rogers Wealth Group, Inc. (ASPPA Recordkeeping Certification)

The CEFEX assessment process is based on the international standard, ISO 19011: Guideline for quality management system auditing. The assessment is evidence-based, and all work is reviewed by the CEFEX Registration Committee to ensure impartiality and consistency. The assessment typically includes document review, client file sampling, on-site visits and interviews with senior representatives at the firm. The assessment is conducted by [CEFEX Analysts](#) who must hold the Accredited Investment Fiduciary Analyst<sup>®</sup> designation and a minimum of the ASPPA 401(k) Administrator (QKA) designation for recordkeeping and administration certifications. CEFEX Analysts maintain annual assessment training. Where applicable, the assessment methodology includes questionnaires on regulatory matters, developed by expert attorneys.

The CEFEX certification standards are organized according to a four-step management process. The steps are analogous to the global ISO 9000 Quality Management System standard, which emphasizes continual improvement in a decision-making process.

The CEFEX Investment Advisor certification standard describes how an Investment Advisor assumes the responsibility for managing a client's overall investment management process, which includes the selection, monitoring and de-selection of investment managers, as well as developing processes to implement investment strategies and fiduciary practices on an ongoing basis. This standard is substantiated by legislation, case law and regulatory opinion letters from the following organizations: the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA); the Investment Advisers Act of 1940; the Uniform Prudent Investor Act (UPIA); the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA); and the Uniform Management of Public Employee Retirement Systems Act (UMPERSA) in the United States. A full copy of the standard can be downloaded from CEFEX at [www.cefex.org](http://www.cefex.org).

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*About CEFEX<sup>®</sup>: CEFEX, Centre for Fiduciary Excellence, LLC, an Fi360<sup>®</sup> company, is an independent certification organization. CEFEX works closely with industry experts to provide comprehensive assessment programs to improve the fiduciary practices of investment stewards, advisors, recordkeepers, administrators and managers. CEFEX is based in Pittsburgh, PA. Connect to CEFEX via [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).*

*About Fi360<sup>®</sup>: Fi360, a fiduciary education, training and technology company, helps financial intermediaries use prudent fiduciary practices to profitably gather, grow and protect investors' assets. Since 1999, the firm has provided financial professionals with the tools necessary to act as a fiduciary in their work with investors. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA, Fi360 is the home of the Accredited Investment Fiduciary<sup>®</sup> (AIF<sup>®</sup>) designation, the Fiduciary Focus Toolkit<sup>™</sup> and the Fi360 Fiduciary Score<sup>®</sup>. Fi360 is also the parent company of CEFEX. Learn more at [www.Fi360.com](http://www.Fi360.com), via [Twitter](#) or on [LinkedIn](#)*