

## Gallagher Retirement Services

### Introduction

CEFEX certification is becoming more widely recognized by retirement plan sponsors as a trusted form of verification that a financial service company adheres to fiduciary best practices. Such is the experience of *Gallagher Retirement Services* – [www.gallagherretirement.com](http://www.gallagherretirement.com) – headquartered in Itasca, IL with 123 branches nationwide.

Gallagher Retirement Services (GRS) is one of the largest retirement plan consulting firms in the country. GRS is a division of Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. whose parent company is Arthur J. Gallagher & Co, the fourth largest brokerage and risk management services firm in the world.\* Gallagher Retirement Service's plan assets under care have grown to more than \$76 billion. The firm has created a national team of experienced, dedicated retirement and actuarial consultants and a legal and compliance staff experienced in ERISA, FINRA, SEC, DOL, and IRS matters. Its proprietary Knowledge Management Platform deliverables and Fiduciary Risk Mitigation processes are designed to provide stewardship in retirement plan governance and to meet prudent practice standards. The firm has extensive consulting and delivery expertise in all types of retirement plans and services including; 401(k), 403(b), defined benefit, 457, cash balance, non-qualified, as well as in investment advisory services, and the world of foundations and endowments.



Mike DiCenso  
Gallagher Retirement Services

### Gallagher's Experience

Mike DiCenso, GRS's National Practice Leader, who is recognized by 401kwire.com as one of 2011's 100 Most Influential People in the Defined Contribution Industry, had witnessed a need in the marketplace for instilling procedural and substantive prudent processes in the governance of defined contribution plans at a time when the market was dominated by retail providers who paid only lip service to the stringent fiduciary obligations imposed on plan sponsors by ERISA. After he joined GRS in 2006, Mike created a mission and strategy around managing and mitigating fiduciary risk to ensure that plan governance would be directed for the sole benefit of plan participants and their beneficiaries. This also led to the development of a proprietary Knowledge Management Platform which aggregates data across 30 data sources to build consulting deliverables on a standardized and comprehensive basis.

In 2009, Mike determined that it would be beneficial for GRS to have an external audit of its processes and client deliverables relating to its monitored clients (representing \$28 billion in assets) in order to demonstrate the firm's prudence. Accordingly, he approached CEFEX, Centre For Fiduciary Excellence, an independent certification organization, resulting in GRS becoming certified by CEFEX as to its conformity with the Prudent Practices for Investment Support Services.

According to Mike, "Everything we have built is around procedural and substantive prudence. This certification from CEFEX, the first of its kind, gives clients confidence that the management system supporting our Knowledge Management Platform and Fiduciary Risk Mitigation processes, conforms to a fiduciary standard of excellence." He also says that CEFEX assessments have helped to improve the firm's deliverables, especially its investment monitoring reports and the content of the Investment Policy Statement which is customized for each client.

GRS uses its certification in marketing its services and Mike sees CEFEX certification as a market differentiator. He says, "Clients react positively to learning of our certification. They appreciate our willingness to have ourselves audited and recognize that certification is designed to give them peace of mind." He adds that, in an era of increasing fiduciary regulation and litigation, GRS is able to mitigate these situations successfully.

In the two years following its initial assessment, Mike sees growing recognition of the CEFEX certification mark and believes that certification is helping to increase the firm's client base, assets under care and revenues. "There is no doubt," he says, "Certification by CEFEX is helping us to attract and retain clients."

## CEFEX

CEFEX, Centre For Fiduciary Excellence provides independent verification of an organization's conformity with all Practices and Criteria that constitute a Standard applicable to a particular function involved in the management of other people's financial assets. Whether as trustees or investment committee members of foundations, endowments or retirement plan, or as an Investment Advisor, Asset Manager, Recordkeeper or other service provider, the need to demonstrate one's trustworthiness to one's constituents or clients is becoming increasingly more important.

CEFEX certification helps increase trust. It serves as a tool to publicly demonstrate best practices in fiduciary operations. It is a self-imposed due diligence for the benefit of an investor who has directly or indirectly entrusted financial assets to another. Such due diligence takes the form of an assessment process conducted by a CEFEX Analyst. This Analyst has achieved the Accredited Investment Fiduciary Analyst™ from Fi360, has extensive industry experience and has access to CEFEX experts in related disciplines.

Standardization is essential in achieving global acceptance of the principles of fiduciary excellence and to assuring investors of consistent, unbiased methodologies. CEFEX uses the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 19011 for performing assessments. This is a methodology employed internationally in other industries for over 30 years.

A successful CEFEX certification process, as confirmed by the CEFEX Registration Committee results in:

- A CEFEX certificate and Letter of Registration being issued:
- Registration on CEFEX's public database at [www.cefex.org](http://www.cefex.org)
- Permitted use of the CEFEX mark in both print on-line form
- Issuance of a Public Certification Report suitable for distribution by the certified firm
- A News Release issued by CEFEX.

The CEFEX registration remains valid for 12 months and is extended through subsequent annual renewal assessments.

Gallagher Retirement Services is the national retirement plan services and consulting division of Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. Securities and investment advisory services offered through NFP Securities, Inc., a Broker/Dealer and Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment advisory services and corresponding named fiduciary services may also be offered through GBS Investment Consulting, LLC (GBS IC), a Registered Investment Adviser and wholly owned subsidiary of Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. Not all individuals using this material are registered to offer Securities or Investment Advisory services through NFP Securities, Inc. NFP Securities, Inc. is not affiliated with Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc., GBS Investment Consulting, LLC, or Gallagher Retirement Services. Neither Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc., Gallagher Retirement Services, GBS Investment Consulting, LLC, or NFP Securities, Inc. provide legal or tax advice.

\*Business Insurance magazine, July 19, 2010

This Certified Firm Profile is one of a series demonstrating the experience of CEFEX certified firms, a growing community of investment firms and other entities who recognize the value and importance of fiduciary conformity.



**CEFEX Centre for Fiduciary Excellence, LLC.** is an independent certification organization. CEFEX works closely with industry experts to provide comprehensive assessment programs to promote fiduciary best practices. It certifies investment stewards, advisors, fiduciary advisers (PPA), managers, ASPPA recordkeepers, ASPPA administrators, and support services firms. To learn more about CEFEX, please visit [www.cefex.org](http://www.cefex.org):

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