



## **Merit Financial Advisors Partners with Pillar Wealth Management Co., Adding Two New Offices in Wisconsin**

January 24, 2025

ATLANTA — January 28, 2025 — [Merit Financial Advisors](#) (“Merit”), a Georgia-based financial advisory firm that specializes in financial planning and wealth management solutions for high-net-worth individuals and families, and those navigating life transitions, announced today it has acquired Pillar Wealth Management Co. (“Pillar”). This acquisition will expand Merit’s presence by establishing two new offices in Wisconsin, located in Madison and Dodgeville, while adding \$179 million in assets.

Pillar specializes in comprehensive wealth and risk management services for individuals, families, and business owners. Partnering with Merit will enable Pillar to enhance its back-office and administrative support, streamline operational complexities, and dedicate more time to serving its high-net-worth clients. The firm’s Founder and President, William “Bill” Meland; COO, Patrick Sturm; CEO, Brian Clevens; and financial advisor, Chester “Skip” Lee, will join Merit, assuming new roles as Wealth Managers and Partners. They will be joined by financial advisor Crew Risgaard, who will take on the role of Branch Operations Associate, and the firm’s Director of Operations, Cara Wolenc, will assume the role of Client Service Manager (CSM).

“At Pillar, we are deeply rooted in our core values of care, respect, excellence, accountability, honesty, and integrity. These principles guide everything we do for our clients, and we are proud to join Merit, a firm that shares these same values and synergies,” said Bill. “We are looking forward to leveraging Merit’s expertise, resources, and robust technology stack to enhance the services we provide to our clients.”

This is Merit’s thirty-second acquisition since taking a minority investment in December 2020 from Wealth Partners Capital Group (“WPCG”) and a group of strategic investors led by HGGC’s Aspire Holdings platform. At the start of the year, Merit announced its acquisition of Zimmermann Investment Management & Planning, adding approximately \$739 million in assets and establishing Merit’s fourth office in Pennsylvania.

“We are thrilled to welcome the Pillar team to Merit and look forward to leveraging our resources to help them dedicate more time to their clients,” said Joshua and Zachary Mersberger, Regional Directors at Merit. “As Merit continues its rapid growth in the Upper Midwest region, we are excited to add two new Wisconsin locations – one in Madison and the other in Dodgeville. We look forward to collaborating with the Pillar team and warmly welcoming them and their clients to Merit!”

“The Pillar team will be an excellent complement to what Merit is building in the Upper Midwest and across the country through both organic and inorganic growth,” said Nick Trepp, Principal at Wealth Partners Capital Group, LLC. “Merit’s scaled infrastructure provides the resources the Pillar team can leverage to elevate their client service model to the next level.”



The merger was finalized on January 24, 2025. Financial and legal terms of the deal were not disclosed.

#### About Merit Financial Advisors

Merit Financial Group, LLC, doing business as Merit Financial Advisors (“Merit”), is a national wealth management firm that supports both the independent broker-dealer and RIA models. Merit exists to enrich the lives of those they serve, and its mission is to revolutionize the client experience by building the RIA of the future. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Merit has over 40 offices throughout the U.S. and managed \$11.84 billion in assets as of June 30, 2024 (\$8.8 billion in advisory, \$2.8 billion in brokerage assets, and \$253 million in assets under advisement). For more information, please visit [www.meritfinancialadvisors.com](http://www.meritfinancialadvisors.com). Investment advice offered through Merit Financial Group, LLC, an SEC registered investment adviser.

#### About Wealth Partners Capital Group

Wealth Partners Capital Group (WPCG) is a financial services holding company, which invests in and partners with select leading wealth management firms. WPCG assists its partner firms by identifying and integrating like-minded wealth advisers who seek access to expanded business capabilities, strategic growth and/or customized transition solutions. For more information, please visit [www.wealthpcg.com](http://www.wealthpcg.com).

#### About HGGC

HGGC is a values-driven, partnership-focused private investment firm. The firm’s ecosystem of investors, operators, and professionals are united by the shared mission to develop leading enterprises and build long-term value together. HGGC invests in technology, business services, financial services and consumer enterprises generally valued between \$200M – \$1.5B+. The firm is based in Palo Alto, CA and manages over \$6.9 billion in cumulative capital commitments. Since its inception in 2007, HGGC has completed more than 700 platform investments, add-on acquisitions, recapitalizations, and liquidity events with an aggregate transaction value of over \$80 billion. HGGC makes investments in RIAs via its Aspire Holdings platform, which is targeting \$300 million of total investment in the space. More information, including a complete list of current and former investments, please visit [www.hggc.com](http://www.hggc.com).

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