

ESTATE AND GIFT PLANNING

Our Estate and Gift Planning Practice is nationally recognized for its expertise in estate planning, business succession planning, charitable planning, and trust and estate administration.

Seasoned attorneys emphasize a holistic approach to planning and problem solving, and work closely with our client's entire team of professional advisors, including accountants, financial advisors, insurance advisors, and business consultants, to create personalized solutions for each client's needs.

We focus on the creation of customized estate and gift plans that are tailored to each client's unique circumstances and goals. We identify and address issues and strategies related to estate, gift and generation-skipping transfer taxes, as well as liquidity problems, income and property tax planning, transfers of family businesses, and the financial security of spouses, children and other beneficiaries.

We offer a wide range of services, including:

Business Succession Planning

Many individuals have accumulated their wealth through the ownership and operation of a family business, real estate development, or investment company and may wish to transfer the business or real estate to one or more of their heirs or business partners. We are attentive to available strategies and to the dynamics within the family and the business. The business is frequently the key source of family wealth, but its disposition can also generate conflict among family members or co-owners. We have decades of experience in defusing these conflicts by providing proactive advice and solutions for family businesses and their owners.

Charitable Planning

Charitable planning may be important for both financial and philanthropic reasons. It is often a significant part of an individual's life and may be especially appropriate as a component of an overall estate plan. Our attorneys have extensive experience in designing and implementing charitable gifts and are nationally recognized experts in charitable planning. We are able to educate our clients on multiple charitable planning strategies, including Charitable Remainder Trusts, Charitable Lead Trusts, Donor Advised Funds, and Private Foundations. We create public and private Charities and provide ongoing legal counsel for their operations. We also provide counsel to non-profit institutions in developing and operating their fund-raising programs.

Estate Settlement and Distribution

When an individual dies, the assets must be distributed to the beneficiaries in accordance with the decedent's wishes. This process is necessary whether the individual uses a traditional will or a revocable living trust. Whether representing Executors or Trustees, our goal is to help implement the decedent's plan as quickly and efficiently as possible.

International Estate Planning

Non-resident aliens and U.S. residents who are not citizens are faced with special concerns and opportunities. We have the expertise to advise these individuals regarding special tax saving vehicles to make gifts and leave bequests to U.S. family members. We advise foreign clients about unique pre-immigration tax planning and offer customized living trusts and other estate plan documentation designed to minimize taxes on transfers of property to spouses who are not U.S. citizens.

Multi-Generational Planning

Effective estate planning considers both how to transfer family wealth and the impact of inherited wealth on future generations. We understand the goals of most individuals to empower their heirs to become successful and motivated, while avoiding creating dependency. We offer multifaceted guidance to assist our clients in making critical personal, civic, and charitable decisions, as well as identify and resolve issues that may have been overlooked by less experienced attorneys.

WEALTH MANAGEMENT: ESTATE PLANNING TECHNIQUES

Wills and Living Trusts

These instruments are the basic structures of most estate plans. They should be customized to fit the family's needs and financial circumstances.

Specialized Irrevocable Trusts

Sometimes the most effective planning requires using irrevocable trusts to receive, hold, and administer assets for the benefit of the family. These trusts might be used to acquire insurance, invest gifted assets, and protect against future creditors. These arrangements may include life insurance trusts, qualified personal residence trusts, defective grantor trusts, grantor retained annuity trusts, and special needs trusts.

Family Limited Partnerships

A family partnership may achieve a variety of objectives—estate tax reduction, value shifting, creditor protection, and family cohesion. Where

appropriate, other business structures (such as limited liability companies) are considered.

Charitable Trusts and Foundations

These entities combine significant income and estate tax advantages with long-term philanthropic goals. To be effective, charitable planning must be integrated into the overall estate and financial plan.

Private Annuities and Intra-Family Sales

Such sales may generate current income for the estate owner while substantially reducing the estate tax burden. Income tax planning and estate planning are often closely related. Such planning often includes consideration of the transition of ownership and management of the family business.

Gifting Programs

The tax law permits a certain amount of tax-free gifting, but the benefits in each estate plan depend on careful consideration of the amount, type, timing, and appropriate recipient.

Professionals



JERAD BELTZ
PARTNER



VALISA A. CARNEY
PARTNER



JERYLL S. COHEN
PARTNER



FRAN L. GARRETT
PARALEGAL



AUDREY J. GROSSMAN
SENIOR COUNSEL



LINDA R. KAAAN
PARALEGAL



LISA M. LAFOURCADE
PARTNER



STEPHEN M. LOWE
OF COUNSEL



FRED J. MARCUS
OF COUNSEL



ADRIENNE H. MCKAY
PARTNER



REBEKAH E. SWAN
SENIOR COUNSEL



KATHLEEN UNGER
OF COUNSEL



KENNETH S. WOLF
OF COUNSEL