

→ Estate Planning and Wealth Transfer

Sheppard Mullin has a wide range of experience in all aspects of estate planning, complex trust and estate administration, and fiduciary litigation. Our attorneys provide legal counsel ranging from developing a basic estate plan involving wills and revocable trusts to designing more sophisticated plans for the transfer of family wealth to younger generations and charities. Our clients include individuals, families, nonprofit organizations, and corporate fiduciaries.

Estate planning can include the use of wills, revocable living trusts, property agreements, one or more irrevocable trusts, charitable trusts, insurance trusts, private foundations, family limited partnerships, and limited liability companies, as well as durable powers of attorney for financial and healthcare matters. Sheppard Mullin's Trusts and Estates attorneys customize estate plans to minimize taxes, maximize wealth transfers, and ensure that the final distribution of the clients' assets is in accordance with their wishes. For multi-national families, our attorneys can work with advisors in other countries to plan transfers in light of U.S. tax rules.

For our clients involved with closely held businesses, we advise on various techniques for achieving wealth transfers between generations. We also use the expertise of the lawyers in our other practice areas to advise business owners on challenges such as selecting the legal structure for the business, the preparation of buy/sell agreements, and other management succession issues.

In the trust and estate administration area, our attorneys advise trustees, executors and beneficiaries on matters such as the interpretation of documents, tax issues (including the preparation of gift and estate tax returns), and disagreements between beneficiaries and fiduciaries. We also assist clients with probate administration and post death administration of living trusts.

If a dispute arises in a fiduciary context, Sheppard Mullin both prosecutes and defends disputes pertaining to breach of fiduciary duty/surcharge actions, interpretation issues, will/trust contests, entitlement claims, and other types of controversies, both in the court system and before alternative dispute resolution forums.