ECKERT SEAMANS

Estates & Trusts

OVERVIEW

The Estates & Trusts practice group is part of Eckert Seamans' Tax, Estates & Employee Benefits Group. Our lawyers provides a full array of estate planning and administration services to individuals, entrepreneurs, owners of family businesses, fiduciaries, charitable foundations, and other nonprofit organizations. We strive to meet client needs by preserving current income and assets, minimizing income and transfer tax consequences, and optimizing the financial benefit to present and future generations. Staying ahead of developments and new trends in estates, trusts, and wealth transfer tax is a priority of our attorneys, many of whom lecture on these subjects at continuing legal and professional education seminars.

Our attorneys have extensive experience in the law of decedents' estates, trusts, probate, and taxation. We counsel clients on developing, implementing, and administering comprehensive lifetime and testamentary estate and tax planning strategies that carefully balance personal and wealth accumulation goals. Matters such as the succession of a family business enterprise, asset protection, and philanthropy are routinely addressed.

Our estates and trust attorneys work closely with business owners and corporate executives and their families in designing and selecting various alternatives under pension, profit sharing, and other corporate benefit plans. Clients are advised on income and wealth transfer tax strategies and on the repositioning of assets so that insurance and other beneficiary designations are in harmony with their estate plan.

Because successful trust and estate planning focuses on the unique requirements of each case, attorneys design individually tailored revocable and irrevocable trust instruments, wills, durable powers of attorney, advance health care directives, and other documents necessary to effectuate the client's wishes and objectives.

We are sensitive to those family members who serve as executors or trustees at a time when they might have difficulty focusing on fiduciary matters. Our attorneys are skilled in counseling personal representatives, trustees, and other fiduciaries on such matters as post-mortem tax planning, valuation and allocation of assets, distributions to beneficiaries, collection of life insurance proceeds and retirement benefit payouts, and the orderly accounting for receipts and disbursements. We are also experienced in the preparation of income, gift, inheritance, and estate tax returns.

Our estates and trust attorneys represent clients in all types of federal and state tax controversies involving estate, gift generation-skipping, and income tax matters. The firm is also equipped to efficiently handle estate and trust-related litigation matters, including will contests, distribution disputes, fiduciary liability actions, and guardianships. Our attorneys also have significant experience with limited liability entities, private annuities and grantor trusts, and other sophisticated planning strategies.