Private Client & Family Office Advisory

Turn your ambitions into reality with BLG's advice. Our team specializes in wealth preservation, business succession planning, tax-efficient investments—essentially working with our clients to create lasting legacies. Our diverse clientele includes high-net-worth individuals, executives, private business owners, trust companies, family offices and foundations, all of whom trust and rely on our team to help them realize their ambitions while minimizing potential risks.

Setting goals is simple; however, achieving them is not. This is where our professionals excel. We employ a collaborative approach to address complex personal, estate, family and business matters, tailored to meet the unique needs of each client, whether they are based at home or abroad. Our clients also rely on us to navigate them away from potential disputes as well as expertly guide them through any that may arise. With BLG's guidance, you can safeguard and grow your assets and diligently plan for a successful and secure future.

Our services:

Private Wealth – Planning and Succession

Succession Planning

We have helped many Canadian and global families successfully transition their business, investment, and personal assets to successive generations. Our expertise extends beyond our leading tax, trust and legal structuring services. We can ensure that our clients benefit from governance frameworks that withstand the test of time, accommodating complex family situations and multijurisdictional assets, and issues. We can also assist in implementing structures to incorporate employee or key employee ownership into the family holdings.

Family & Philanthropy

Legacy planning can unite a family and give it a higher purpose. Our tax and charities lawyers design tax-efficient gifting arrangements and implement perpetual family-controlled charitable and purpose driven foundations to achieve the family's long term philanthropic objectives. We also provide practical and strategic advice on leadership and governance, donor advised funds, grant making, impact investing, charitable partnerships and charitable administration.

Privacy

The world is becoming increasingly complex. Reporting and disclosure obligations often conflict with privacy rights. These issues arise regularly in investment and transactional matters and increasingly in connection with tax, estate and succession planning. Together with members of our internationally recognized Privacy Group, we assist our clients in identifying and navigating these rules to ensure compliance while protecting confidentiality.

Trusts, Wills, Estates, Intestacy

Powers of Attorney, Mandates, Health Directives

Many people experience health or other situations that require the support of others to make decisions on their behalf. We work with Canadians and international private clients with assets in Canada to ensure that their financial and personal care decisions are made by people they trust following our clients' directives.

Will Planning

We work with Canadians and international private clients with assets in Canada to ensure that their assets pass on to their intended beneficiaries. We use testamentary trust structures where appropriate for family, disability, and tax planning, including for our cross-border clients. Our planning is done with a holistic approach in mind, seeking simplicity where possible.

Using Will Substitutes

We often use trusts as Will substitutes, such as alter ego trusts and joint spousal trusts, where appropriate to pre-emptively protect against Will challenges, reduce taxes, ease administrative burdens on death, and protect privacy.

Domestic and International Trust Planning

There are many circumstances where it can be appropriate to establish a trust during one's lifetime, whether for tax planning, to protect vulnerable beneficiaries, or to secure certain assets for the next generation.

We know how important it is to protect the family's wealth. We can assist in creating and advising on Canadian and international ownership structures and arrangements, designed to preserve assets for the global family.

Tax Planning

Tax planning for closely held entities

Our tax team provides a full range of tax and advisory services for privately held companies, partnerships and trusts. We structure and implement tax-deferred reorganizations, butterfly transactions, estate freezes, post-mortem plans, and a wide range of investment arrangements for our private clients. We offer innovative service delivery and transparent and flexible pricing.

Private Investment Structures

BLG is recognized as one of Canada's best law firms for investment funds and asset management. Supported by this leading investment funds group, we are able to offer closely held investment funds and partnerships for Canadian and international private clients wishing to invest in Canada.

Use of Life Insurance

Life Insurance is often an important part of a private client's financial plan. Our lawyers are experts in the taxation of arrangements involving life insurance. Insurance can provide liquidity when most needed and offer innovative investment solutions for private company and multi-generational planning.

Immigration/Emigration Planning

Our clients and their families are mobile. We regularly assist clients in planning for immigration or emigration. This may involve preliminary planning, pre-move restructuring of assets, negotiating security for departure tax, and working with advisors in other jurisdictions. This extensive experience with multiple jurisdictions allows us to provide practical advice to ensure a smooth transition.

Business and Tax Disputes involving Estates and Trusts

Trusts

Trusts are frequently used to hold assets in connection with a private company. The principles that govern the role of trustees and directors differ, as do the potential entitlements of beneficiaries and shareholders to information and distributions. The administration and reporting for such structures are complex.

Whether an express, implied or bare trust is involved, we have the experience to help you understand your obligations and/or entitlements, avoid risks and achieve the best outcomes in all disputes.

Tax Disputes

High net worth individuals and their investment and business structures are often targeted for tax audits. We have a multi-province tax disputes team with an in depth and diverse range of experience from audit with the federal and provincial tax authorities to Court cases from the Tax Court of Canada to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Our team is also particularly sensitive to, and experienced in, matters of solicitor-client privilege.

Trusts, Estates, and Capacity Disputes

Trusts, Wills, Estates, Intestacy

Our team has experience advising families, individuals, and trust companies on everything from the risks involved in certain estates plans to contentious or simple trust administration, will challenges, variation of trusts, and tax issues (before and after death). We work with estate trustees, executors, trustees, and beneficiaries to provide advice that is responsive, practical and strategic.

Our files often involve complex estate and/or trust administrations, corporate assets, multijurisdictional and tax issues, second marriages, common law relationships, and disputes over ownership (joint bank accounts, company assets, family home or cottage, etc.). We find solutions using both court and non-court strategies.

Capacity Issues and Elder Abuse

Caring for an elderly or incapable family member can be difficult, especially when they are being taken advantage of. We have experience protecting vulnerable family members from financial and other abuse. We use the Courts and work with local, public and private institutions to protect you and your loved ones.

Our team is also experienced in assisting with the appointment of guardians for property and personal care by Court order and advising guardians and attorneys acting under a power of attorney on their duties. We can also assist in arranging capacity assessments. We can help you navigate all the pitfalls of acting in a fiduciary capacity and facilitate your communications with third parties (banks, the government, family members, doctors, etc.).

Accounting and Compensation

If you accept appointment as trustee/attorney, you must keep proper records and accounts. Your ability to claim compensation depends on it and you can be held liable if you fail to meet your obligations.

Our disputes lawyers can advise beneficiaries on whether they can oppose the trustees' decisions or require trustees to account. Our team has extensive experience with mediating and litigating accounting and compensation disputes and can assist with all aspects of informal or court accounting.

Estate and Trust Administration

Advising Executors and Trustees

Estate and trust administration is multi-faceted and complex.

We provide expert advice and support to trust companies and individuals acting as trustees and personal representatives.

Our trust lawyers also form business trusts, and advise a variety of commercial and public sector institutions and pension fund administrators on trust issues.

Advice to Financial Institutions, Investment Managers, and other Organizations

Our team provides advice to financial institutions, investment managers, and other organizations in dealing with estate, trust, and incapacity issues.

Financial institutions deal with a wide variety of estate, trust and capacity issues relating to their clients, including disputes concerning jointly owned assets, and these issues often arise in emotionally charged and contentious circumstances. We have significant experience in providing practical advice to banks, credit unions, investment managers and trust companies in risk and litigation management and compliance with these matters, as well as assisting financial institutions with the preparation or review of relevant policies, procedures and client-facing documentation.

Estates and Trusts Involving Multiple Jurisdictions

Multi-jurisdictional issues involving estates and trusts are more common, as beneficiaries and trustees are ever more geographically diverse. Where trustees reside can impact situs. Location of the assets held by an estate or trust can impact governing law and forum selection to resolve disputes. The area of conflicts of laws is complex.

As Canada’s law firm, our team can help administer and advise on estates and trusts with assets or heirs located across all the provinces and territories.

Our team of dedicated and experienced professionals also have trusted contacts around the world to ensure that you receive the support you need, regardless of jurisdiction.

Experience

- Ranked Band 1, the highest level of recognition, in 14 practice areas in *Chambers Canada 2024*. BLG received a total of 177 rankings, including 123 lawyer rankings and 54 practice group rankings.
- Ranked Band 2 for Private Wealth Law in *Chambers High Net Worth 2023* and three Private Client members received individual rankings in Band 1 and 3 (one for Private Wealth Disputes and two for Private Wealth Law).
- Recognized in eleven practice areas, with 38 lawyers recognized, in *IFLR1000 2023*.
- 346 lawyers recognized, 8 lawyers recognized as “Lawyer of the Year”, 62 lawyers named Ones to Watch, BLG named Privacy and Data Protection Law Firm of the Year and Class Actions Law Firm of the Year in *The Best Lawyers in Canada®* 2024.
- 257 lawyers received 500 rankings across 57 practice areas in the *2023 Canadian Legal Lexpert®* Directory.

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 725 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

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