



Nonprofit & Religious Organizations

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STRADLEY
RONON

OUR PRACTICE

Highly regarded as a trusted adviser and advocate for nonprofit and religious organizations, Stradley Ronon addresses the challenges and obstacles that nonprofits face, helping them achieve their missions. We represent tax-exempt organizations of all stripes – religious organizations, colleges and universities, charter schools and other educational institutions, health care and social services agencies, and others serving the community – regarding the myriad legal issues that arise throughout their life cycles.

We recognize that each client is unique and tailor our approach to each client's distinct needs. Our practice is regional, national and international in terms of clients and reach. We serve nonprofits worldwide, collaboratively with Meritas, a professional global alliance of more than 175 law firms.



OUR APPROACH

With more than 95 years of experience, we understand the legal, business, practical and political challenges nonprofits face and are skilled at resolving them.

Our team is deep and broad, comprised of lawyers from numerous disciplines whose common focus is to help our clients solve real problems and prevent new ones. As recognized thought leaders, our attorneys are sought out by the media and others serving the religious and nonprofit sectors to educate and comment on significant developments in the field.

Personally as well as professionally engaged in the nonprofit world, our lawyers serve on nonprofit boards in communities where we live and beyond. In these roles, we have gained practical experience and a stakeholder's perspective on organizational and financial issues, enabling us to better serve our clients with tailor-made solutions.

MEETING YOUR CHALLENGES

Beyond the many legal problems all entities confront in today's business and legal environment, nonprofits face unique transactional issues; structure and governance concerns;

tax challenges; church-state matters; and insurance, regulatory and land-use issues. Whether advising a religious institution on a sensitive church-state matter, counseling a charter school on a sophisticated real estate deal or guiding a private foundation through a complex tax issue, we have the experience needed to resolve matters effectively and cost-efficiently.

SERVING DIVERSE RELIGIOUS CLIENTS

In addition to secular organizations, our clientele includes Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Shinto, Buddhist and other religious organizations. Whether a client is a house of worship, regional and national governance, and even an international denomination, our lawyers have experience in managing issues both proactively and reactively. We recognize and respect the differences in tradition, language and philosophy, and we help clients express these principles in their organizations and activities. We help navigate the First Amendment boundaries between religion and government, often a key issue in resolving or litigating disputes regarding public benefits, regulation and exemptions. Our attorneys have been involved in more important and sensitive constitutional issues for our religious clients.

Insurance

Our insurance attorneys counsel nonprofits on insurance coverage, policy interpretation and using insurance proceeds to defray the impact of a claim against business or even personal assets. We review and prepare insurance programs and advise on risk management issues, premium financing, and broker and agent matters.

Employment

Our employment attorneys advise on the full range of employment matters, counseling businesses on ways to avoid employment-related issues before they arise. We have advised on and litigated disputes regarding everything from hiring and firing to compensation and benefits; discrimination claims; wage-and-hour issues; and noncompetition, nonsolicitation and confidentiality agreements. We also assist in devising, implementing and enforcing human resource policies and procedures and employment handbooks.

Employee Benefits

Our employee benefits practice deals with the problems and opportunities nonprofit and religious institutions experience with pension and other employee benefit plans and practices. We design new plans and draft plan amendments; advise on tax, administrative and regulatory compliance issues; and secure rulings and opinion letters from the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Labor concerning plan exemptions from ERISA known as “church plans.”

Governance

Our attorneys advise directors, trustees and officers about the best ways to organize and conduct themselves to accomplish their missions. Whether the matter concerns finding the right structure or structures; managing daily risk associated with the mission, including protecting vulnerable persons served by our clients; or sorting out relationships inside and outside client entities, we understand these unique problems and assist clients in finding the right solutions.

Transactions

From negotiating service contracts to complex transactions involving mergers and acquisitions to partnering nonprofits with for-profit entities, our business attorneys have broad and deep experience in achieving our clients’ goals.

Public Finance

Our public finance attorneys regularly represent borrowers, lenders, underwriters and letter of credit providers and serve as bond counsel regarding tax-exempt bond and note transactions for various types of 501(c)(3) organizations. We have helped universities, hospitals, elementary schools, YMCAs and other nonprofit entities finance their expansion and capital improvement projects and refinance existing debt.

Planned Giving

Our trusts, estates & personal planning practice regularly advises on the tax-saving devices often used in planned giving programs, including charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, gift annuities, pooled-income funds, personal-residence trusts, and other trusts allowing grantors to retain control of assets and minimize taxation. We also handle all aspects of the development and management of charitable giving programs, from drafting policies and procedures to helping select administrators and investment advisers for planned giving vehicles.

Real Estate

Our real estate practice handles all aspects of real estate transactions, including acquiring land and facilities; qualifying for tax exemption; negotiating and drafting all types of real estate-related contracts, including financing documents; and obtaining grants and tax credits. We have represented nonprofit institutions before government agencies regarding these issues at the local, state and federal levels.

Litigation

Experienced at the trial and appellate levels in state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, our trial attorneys regularly litigate complex commercial matters, employment-related matters, civil rights cases and constitutional appeals. We have successfully tried cases before judges, juries, arbitrators and administrative officers, and have protected our clients’ constitutional rights from government encroachment. We also routinely prepare amicus curiae briefs when our clients’ interests are implicated in litigation involving other parties.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

When traditional litigation is not the best solution, alternative dispute resolution – especially mediation – can be a powerful tool in resolving disputes early, cost-effectively and fairly. As one of the few law firms in the nation with a designated ADR practice, we are skilled at resolving disputes through ADR. In fact, CPR – the International Institute for Conflict Prevention & Resolution – awarded Stradley Ronon its inaugural Law Firm Award for Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution for our “commitment to principled and creative conflict management and resolution.”

Protecting Vulnerable People

Many of our clients serve vulnerable populations – the disabled, the elderly, and children and youth.

We assist our clients in designing and implementing policies and programs that train staff, check backgrounds, educate those served and respond to complaints. When necessary we defend, try and mediate liability claims. We have experience in managing situations where there are numerous claims and where the media is actively demanding answers.

For more information about our Nonprofit & Religious Organizations practice, visit www.stradley.com/nonprofit.



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ABOUT STRADLEY RONON

For more than 95 years, Stradley Ronon has helped nonprofit and religious organizations – from a neighborhood shelter or house of worship to a large multi-corporate health system – fulfill their missions. With nine offices and more than 200 attorneys, Stradley Ronon is proud to help our nonprofit clients serve their communities while we manage their legal challenges.

www.stradley.com

LOCATIONS

Pennsylvania
Washington, D.C.
New York
California
New Jersey
Illinois
Delaware



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