

Family Law

The Family Law Group at Sideman & Bancroft is uniquely suited to sophisticated clients addressing complicated legal matters. Our attorneys collaborate with partners in other disciplines within the firm, taking a comprehensive approach to the complex financial and emotional issues facing clients during what can be challenging transitions. Through negotiation, mediation and, when necessary, litigation, we represent clients in family matters which often demand expertise in trust and estate planning, taxes, real estate, and complex business transactions.

Our attorneys have developed strong ties to the Bay Area family law community through volunteer and pro bono work and in their capacities as private judges, mediators, and litigators. This affords us tremendous insight into the decision makers who adjudicate our clients' cases, and broad access to client support resources.

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Pre-Marital, Pre-Domestic Partnership and Pre-Cohabitation Planning

Our goal in assisting clients in the planning phases of committed relationships is to understand and honor each partner's position, and to offer strategic advice that protects individual rights while respecting and strengthening the life-partner bond. We have the great advantage of consulting with our colleagues in Tax and Estate Planning and the Business and Real Estate Practice Groups to handle complex valuations and income assessments. We take an integrated approach to providing couples and families solid footing for their futures together.

Post-Marital, Post-Domestic Partnership and Post-Cohabitation Agreements

Changes that arise in a relationship as it grows and matures—from starting a family to launching a new business venture—create opportunities to reassess pre-nuptial or pre-partnership agreements. In advising our clients on structuring new agreements, we are attentive to each party's expectations, as well as their legal rights; and we hold relational and fiduciary matters in strictest confidence.

Marriage and Domestic Partnership Dissolutions and Cohabitation Termination

The Family Law Group represents clients in complex family matters in a range of roles, including as consulting attorneys in dissolution mediation, as supporting counsel in negotiations with a private judge, or through litigation. Having practiced in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, San Francisco, Solano, Sonoma, and Santa Clara counties affords us familiarity with the judges, lawyers, and other decision makers in the Bay Area family law community.



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The broad expertise of our collaborating partners means that Sideman & Bancroft is well equipped to deal with complex valuation issues, private equity and hedge funds, stock options, limited partnerships, privately held businesses, residential and commercial real estate holdings, and other intricate matters that arise in dissolution proceedings.

Modification Proceedings

As a family evolves, lifestyles and needs very often change. Our partners advise clients through modification proceedings such as revising prior child custody arrangements, altering settlement agreements, or adjusting spousal or child support.

Paternity, Custody and Parentage Actions

A vital component of the family law practice at Sideman & Bancroft is giving our clients access to the resources they need to make good decisions in what can be emotionally trying situations. We coordinate with family therapists, co-parenting counselors, and special masters, when warranted, to facilitate decision making on visitation and other child-rearing issues.

When these avenues do not yield satisfactory outcomes, we pursue litigation and advise our clients throughout that process. We also address same-sex parentage and custody matters such as visitation rights for non-registered domestic partners and official recognition of same-sex parental rights.

Domestic Violence and Stay-Away Orders

Guarding our clients' safety and security is of paramount importance. Our attorneys respond immediately to instances of stalking and harassment, and expedite permanent restraining orders. Enforcing spousal and/or child support orders and even pet allocations is an important part of helping clients feel safe and secure. We also handle civil restraining orders and the coordination of criminal defense.

Mediation and Private Judging

Our mediation work runs the gamut from pre-marital agreements to marital dissolutions, nonmarital partnerships, domestic partnerships, and parentage actions. Private judging engagements may focus on a single issue, such as conducting a one-time settlement conference or resolving a particular complaint, or may serve for all purposes in a marital dissolution, domestic partnership dissolution, non-marital partnership action, or parentage action, depending on the choice of the attorneys and litigants in each case. This part of our practice is spearheaded by senior partner Diana Richmond, who has more than three decades of experience as a family law attorney, including extensive litigation at both trial and appellate court levels and mediation and private judging.