

# NM Law APC Urges California Families to Review Estate Plans as Probate Courts Hit Crisis Point

*NM Law APC warns outdated estate plans are trapping California families in probate court for years as Southern California backlogs hit two to three years.*

TUSTIN, CA, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- California's probate courts are

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*Noelle Minto*

more backlogged than at any point in recent memory, and families across the state are paying a steep price. Rising death rates have driven a significant increase in probate filings at the same time that court budgets have been cut and staffing has been reduced. The result is a system in which estate disputes and trust administration matters are routinely delayed for two to three years before reaching resolution.

NM Law APC, a boutique fixed-fee concierge law firm serving individuals, families, and business owners throughout California, is calling on residents statewide to

schedule an immediate estate plan review regardless of whether a plan is already in place.

"The risk is not only that families have no plan," said [Noelle Minto](#), founder and principal attorney of NM Law APC. "The greater risk, and the one we see most often, is the plan that was done years ago, was never updated, and no longer reflects the family's actual circumstances. When that plan reaches a court because beneficiaries disagree or because the trustee needs guidance from the court, everything freezes. Assets cannot be liquidated. The inheritance cannot be distributed. And the clock keeps running."

The financial consequences of probate delay are concrete and compounding. Under California law, attorney fees on an estate valued at \$800,000 are approximately \$19,000 in statutory fees alone, before extraordinary fees are calculated under the Probate Code. Interest and stiff penalties on unpaid estate tax obligations accrue every month a matter remains open. Assets that should flow to surviving family members instead sit frozen in a court process that no one can accelerate.

The families most at risk are often those who believe they are already protected. A trust drafted a decade or more ago may not account for dramatic increases in real estate values, the death of a spouse, a blended family, a business transition, or changes in tax law. Language that seemed clear when it was written can be interpreted in two completely different ways by beneficiaries with different interests. When that happens, the only resolution is a judge.

NM Law APC offers a comprehensive estate and wealth strategy review designed to identify these gaps before they become disputes. The firm examines each family's complete picture: assets as they exist today, relationship dynamics, health, skillset

and availability of agents and fiduciaries selected, tax exposure, including property tax re-assessment, potential points of conflict, and planning structures that create efficiency across estate tax, capital gains treatment, and asset protection.

"Every family's situation is different," said Minto. "The planning has to reflect that. A review is not about starting over. It is about understanding where the current plan stands and what, if anything, needs to change. Families are encouraged to bring whatever they have. That is enough to begin."

The urgency is compounded by a significant change on the horizon. The federal estate tax exemption is set to change before the end of 2026, with potentially major implications for California families with real estate, business interests, or accumulated investment portfolios. Families who act now have the opportunity to structure their plans accordingly. Those who wait may find the window closed.

NM Law APC serves clients throughout the state of California, with offices in Tustin and Riverside. The firm operates exclusively in the areas of trusts, estates, and business transactions, and has done so since its founding in 2006. All engagements are conducted on a fixed-fee basis, giving clients full transparency on cost from the outset.

Estate plan reviews may be scheduled by contacting the firm directly.



Noelle R. Minto has been a business and estates transactional attorney based in California since 2003.

## About NM Law APC

NM Law, APC is a boutique fixed-fee concierge law firm founded in 2006 and dedicated exclusively to trusts and estates and business transactions. The firm serves individuals, families, closely held business owners, and high net worth clients throughout California. Offices are located in Tustin and Riverside.

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