



## **2024 1041 – ESTATES & TRUST TAX RETURN ENGAGEMENT LETTER**

Dear Client:

Lay & Lay CPAs, PLLC (“firm,” “we,” “us,” or “our”) is pleased to provide you with the professional services described below. This letter and any other attachments incorporated herein (collectively, “Agreement”), confirm our understanding of the terms and objectives of our engagement and the nature and limitations of the services we will provide. The engagement between you and our firm will be governed by the terms of this Agreement.

### ***Engagement Objective and Scope***

We will prepare your 2024 federal and state estate and trust income tax returns based on the returns you filed last year. We will not prepare any tax returns other than those identified above, without your written request, and our written consent to do so. The objective of our services is to assist you with the calculation of your tax due and provide you with forms and schedules we believe are suitable for you to file with the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) and applicable state and local tax authorities and sufficient to comply with your tax filing obligations. You have the final responsibility for the filing and content of your tax return(s). We will not assist you with any tax return other than those identified above, without your written request, and our written agreement to do so.

Our services are not intended to benefit or influence any third party, including any entity or investment which may seek to evaluate your creditworthiness or financial strength. You agree to indemnify and hold us harmless from any and all claims arising from the use of the tax returns for any purpose other than complying with your tax filing obligations, regardless of the nature of the claim, excepting claims arising from our gross negligence or intentional wrongful acts.

Our engagement does not include any procedures designed to detect errors, fraud, theft, or other wrongdoing. Therefore, our engagement cannot be relied upon to disclose such matters. In addition, we are not responsible for identifying or communicating deficiencies in your internal controls. You are responsible for developing and implementing internal controls applicable to your operations.

Assisting you with your compliance with the Corporate Transparency Act (“CTA”), including beneficial ownership information (“BOI”) reporting, is not within the scope of this engagement. You have sole responsibility for your compliance with the CTA, including its BOI reporting requirements and the collection of relevant ownership information. We shall have no liability resulting from your failure to comply with CTA. Information regarding the BOI reporting requirements can be found at <https://www.fincen.gov/boi>. Consider consulting with legal counsel if you have questions regarding the applicability of the CTA’s reporting requirements and issues surrounding the collection of relevant ownership information.

You may request that we perform additional services not contemplated in this engagement letter. If this occurs, we will communicate with you regarding the scope and estimated cost of these additional services. Engagements for additional services may necessitate that we amend the Agreement or issue a separate agreement to reflect the obligations of all parties. In the absence of any other written communications from us documenting additional services, our services will be limited to and governed by the terms of this Agreement.

### ***CPA Firm Responsibilities***

It is our duty to prepare your returns based on the same standard of care that a reasonable tax return preparer would exercise in this type of engagement. Unless otherwise noted, the applicable standard of care for a “reasonable tax return preparer” shall be based upon the following pronouncements:

- the Statements on Standards for Tax Services (“SSTS”) issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (“AICPA”);
- U.S. Treasury Department Circular 230 (“Circular 230”); and
- the Internal Revenue Code, Treasury Regulations, and any applicable state/local corollaries (collectively, “the Code”).

As tax return preparers, these pronouncements restrict our ability to sign a tax return when the tax positions you report do not comply with tax law. We will be unable to sign your return and may terminate this Agreement if you:

- request that we report a tax position on your return which we feel is contrary to published guidance, frivolous, or a willful attempt to evade tax;
- request that we include a deduction, credit or refund on your return that we believe you do not qualify for; or
- decline to disclose a position where in our professional judgment tax law requires disclosure.

We will not make any management decisions or perform management functions on your behalf.

Trustee/Executor Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Arguable positions

If there are conflicting interpretations of tax law, or if tax law is unclear, we will explain the possible positions that may be taken in order for us to sign your return. We will follow the position you request, provided it is consistent with our understanding of tax reference materials and our professional standards. Tax reference materials include, but are not limited to, the Code, Revenue Rulings, Revenue Procedures, court cases, and similar state and local guidance. If the IRS, state or local tax authorities later contest the position you select, additional tax, penalties, and interest may be assessed. You will be responsible for these amounts, as well as any related professional fees you may incur, to respond to the tax authority.

#### Bookkeeping assistance

We may deem it necessary to provide you with limited accounting or bookkeeping assistance solely for the purpose of helping you organize your information. This assistance is intended to be nominal and is not a separate accounting or bookkeeping service. In the event we conclude that bookkeeping or accounting assistance is necessary to prepare your tax returns, we will advise you in writing before proceeding. Any assistance will be billed at our standard hourly rates and will be subject to the terms of this Agreement.

#### Prior year review

Our review of the prior year's tax returns will necessarily be limited and may not find errors. We will, however, bring to your attention errors that we do find. Similarly, if you become aware of any information affecting prior year tax returns, please contact us. If an error or information affecting prior year tax returns is discovered by you or us, we will discuss your options with you. If you ask us to prepare amended tax returns, and we agree, we will confirm this engagement in a separate written agreement.

#### Tax planning services

Our engagement does not include tax advice which affects the calculation of tax due or the filing of tax forms and schedules for previous or future tax years. However, we may communicate potential tax strategies to you, and you may ask high-level questions of us. It is your responsibility to communicate to us, in writing, any interest in pursuing a tax strategy identified, or if you require more than a cursory response to your question. If you do not request our assistance in writing, we will infer that you do not wish to pursue any suggestion made to you. If you do request our assistance and we agree, we will confirm our understanding with you in a separate agreement prior to proceeding.

We shall not be liable for any forgone tax or other benefits if you fail to advise us of your desire to investigate or pursue any tax strategy communicated to or by us. Any tax advice described in this paragraph and provided to you shall be governed by this Agreement and billed at our standard hourly rates.

#### Government inquiries

This engagement does not include responding to inquiries by any governmental agency or tax authority. If you are contacted by a tax authority, either for an examination or other inquiry, you may request our assistance in responding.

#### Third party requests

We will not respond to any request from banks, mortgage brokers or others for verification of any information reported on these tax returns. Except where compelled by court order or subpoena, we do not communicate with third parties or provide them with copies of tax returns.

#### Reliance on others

There may be times when you engage another advisor to assist you.

If you wish to take a tax position based upon the advice of another advisor, before we are able to sign your tax return, we must comply with the applicable provisions of the Code and the SSTS.

We will review the other advisor's work and may require a written statement from the advisor describing the statutory basis for the position and the suggested disclosure needed to appropriately report the position. If we believe additional research is required, we will discuss the matter with you. You agree to pay for the additional charges necessary to complete the disclosure or research as this is not included in the scope of our service.

Moreover, you understand that the IRS, state or local tax authority may disagree with the position taken on the return. If this occurs, you will be responsible for any additional tax, penalties and interest, as well as any related professional fees, you may incur.

If, after review of the work prepared by your other advisor, we determine that we are unable to sign the tax return, we will be unable to proceed and may terminate this Agreement.

#### Substantial understatement penalties

The IRS and many states impose harsher accuracy-related penalties (20%) for substantial understatement of tax. Substantial understatement of tax may be found where the tax that should be reported on your return is more than what is actually reported on your return, based on a statutory formula which defines when an understatement is "substantial". In some cases, avoiding substantial understatement penalties can be achieved if the tax position is adequately disclosed in a method approved by the IRS. Similar rules may apply at the state level.

While the decision to disclose or not disclose is yours, if we conclude that your return contains a tax position which we believe you are required to disclose, we will ask that you consent to include a disclosure in a method approved by the IRS. If you decline to disclose the tax position, we will be unable to proceed and may terminate this Agreement.

#### Abusive tax strategies

Certain tax positions or strategies, while not currently identified as “abusive” by the IRS, may ultimately be determined to be so in the future. Consequently, you agree to advise us of any transaction you have entered into that entitles you to disproportionate tax benefits (deductions, credits, or refunds), that generates significant income deferral or non-recognition, or that generates significant tax losses without corresponding cash impacts (“abusive tax strategy”). If you fail to timely notify us, in writing, of any abusive tax strategy you have entered into, you will be responsible for any liability, including but not limited to, additional tax, penalties, interest and related professional fees.

#### Reportable transactions

The law imposes substantial penalties on taxpayers and tax advisors for failure to disclose listed and other reportable transactions on Form 8886, Reportable Transaction Disclosure Statement and, in some cases, extends the statute of limitations tax authorities have to contest any tax return claiming those tax positions. In general, reportable transactions are potentially abusive transactions identified by the IRS that have a primary purpose of tax avoidance, including but not limited to listed transactions, confidential transactions, transactions with contractual protection, loss transactions, and transactions of interest (a definition of “reportable transactions” is located at <https://www.irs.gov/instructions/i8886> and includes a link to a summary of listed transactions).

If we conclude that your return contains a reportable transaction we believe you are required to disclose we will ask that you consent to include a disclosure, either on Form 8886 or other method approved by the IRS. If you decline to disclose the reportable transaction, we will be unable to proceed and may terminate this Agreement.

#### Client Responsibilities

If you fail to comply with the responsibilities as described in this Agreement, your actions or your inactions may result in economic or other loss to you, such as disallowance of tax deductions or credits claimed, additional tax, penalties or interest assessed against you, loss of administrative rights, or criminal punishment. You will be responsible for any loss suffered by you as a result of your failure to comply with your responsibilities, including any professional fees required to defend or correct changes made to your tax returns or prepare previously unfiled or amend previously filed tax returns.

The responsibilities detailed in this section are not exhaustive, and our services to you may require additional responsibilities not listed.

#### Tax information

**Due to the high volume of tax returns prepared by our firm, you must provide your tax return information to us no later than March 31, 2025. Failure to do so may result in your inability to file your returns or pay your tax due by the original filing due dates.**

You agree to provide us with a copy of the most recent trust documents, a trial balance, and other supporting data we may request, including any required trust accounting necessary, to prepare your tax returns. You are responsible for providing us with accurate and complete information, including income and activities outside of the U.S. or your home state.

We will rely upon the completeness and accuracy of the information and representations you provide to us. We will not audit or otherwise verify the data you submit to us, although we may ask you to clarify certain information.

#### Communication of authority of others

You hereby authorize the following individuals to communicate directly with us on your behalf, and to request services and exchange information necessary to provide the services described in this Agreement:

Name

Title

_____	_____
_____	_____

You agree that this limited authority conveyed above shall continue in full force and effect until either this Agreement is concluded or you inform us of any modifications in writing (whichever occurs first).

#### Schedule K-1 distribution

You are responsible for distributing a copy of the estate or trust’s Schedule K-1s, including any attachments, to each beneficiary.

#### Administrative Adjustments and Compliance with BBA

If you are or were a partner at any time in a partnership and receive(d) Schedule K-1 (1065), you may receive a Form 9886, *Partner’s Share of Adjustments to Partnership-Related Items*. Form 9886 is used by partnerships to correct errors on previously filed partnership returns and to provide the IRS and partners with each partner’s share of those tax corrections. Trust recipients of Form 9886 may either: (1) report this information and any additional tax due to the IRS on Form 9978, *Partner’s Additional Year Reporting Tax*, within the specified timeframe,

or (2) if the trust provides a Schedule K-1 (1041) to beneficiaries decide whether to: a) report to the IRS and pass the allocable share through to affected K-1 recipients on the required forms, or b) compute and pay any tax due at the trust level.

Our services do not include assisting you with anything pertaining to Form 8986 and/or Form 8978 unless specifically identified in the *Engagement Objective and Scope* section. If you receive a Form 8986 once our work has begun but prior to the filing of your tax return, you are responsible for alerting us and requesting assistance. Additionally, the impact an adjustment from Form 8986 may have on any state return you have previously filed is unclear and may only be determined with additional research. If you do not alert us or request our assistance, we will infer that you have not received Form 8986 absent other information you provide to us.

#### Crummey notices

A Crummey trust is created for the purpose of “skipping” one level of beneficiaries to make a gift to the next generation without tax implications (i.e., grandparents “skipping” making a gift to their children and, instead, gifting directly to the grandchildren). The beneficiary recipient must be notified of the temporary right to withdraw from the trust all or a portion of the gift (a Crummey notice) at the time the gift is made. The notification letter is sent by the trustee to the beneficiary of the trust. You acknowledge that it is your responsibility, as trustee, to send and retain such notices in the event of a future examination.

#### Estate or trust expenses

In the year of death, certain expenses may be deductible on either the estate tax return (Form 706) or on the estate’s trust income tax return (Form 1041). While we will explain the options to you, you should discuss the options with the estate’s and trust’s attorneys, other advisors, heirs, and beneficiaries of the estate. The decision where to deduct expenses is yours. You agree to instruct us in writing whether or not to deduct the expenses on the trust income tax return.

#### Documentation

You are responsible for maintaining adequate documentation to substantiate the accuracy and completeness of your tax returns. Our workpapers do not satisfy your documentation responsibility. You should retain all documents that provide evidence and support for reported income, credits, deductions, and other information on your returns, as required under applicable tax laws and regulations. The IRS recommends that you maintain this documentation for as long as it may be relevant to your taxes.

You represent that you have such documentation and can produce it, if necessary, to respond to any examination or inquiry by tax authorities. You will be responsible for any liability, including but not limited to, additional tax, penalties, interest and related professional fees, resulting from the disallowance of tax deductions due to inadequate documentation.

#### Gifts received from foreign persons

The preparation of IRS Form 3520 or Form 3520-A is not within the scope of this engagement. If you transferred property to or received property from a foreign person or trust, or are a U.S. person who “owns” assets in a foreign trust, you may be required to file a separate IRS Form 3520, *Annual Return To Report Transactions With Foreign Trusts and Receipt of Certain Foreign Gifts* or Form 3520-A, *Annual Information Return of Foreign Trust with a U.S. Owner*. You are responsible for providing us with details of any cash, property, or value exchanged with foreign persons or trusts, or of ownership of foreign assets, including access to foreign bank or investment accounts.

#### Personal expenses

In general, personal expenses are not deductible for income tax purposes. You are responsible for ensuring that personal expenses, if any, are separated from business expenses and that expenses such as meals, travel, vehicle use, gifts, and related expenses are supported by documentation and records required by the IRS and other tax authorities.

#### State and local filing obligations

The preparation of any state or local tax return not listed in *Engagement Objective and Scope* above is not within the scope of our engagement. You are responsible for fulfilling your filing obligations with any state or local tax authorities, including but not limited to, income, franchise, sales, use, and property taxes or abandoned and unclaimed property. However, if upon review of the information you have provided to us, including information that comes to our attention, we believe that you may have additional filing obligations, we will notify you.

If you are unsure if you have any other filing obligation with other state or local tax authorities, you are responsible for alerting us and requesting assistance. If you do not alert us or request assistance, we will infer that you do not have other state or local filing obligations. You will be responsible for tax due and penalties associated with the failure to file or untimely filing of any form for which we were not engaged to prepare.

#### U.S. filing obligations related to foreign investments and activities

U.S. persons generally must report income and activities related to both domestic and foreign assets (worldwide income). You are responsible for fulfilling your filing obligations related to foreign activity where required. U.S. reporting requirements related to foreign activity are very complex. **Contact us immediately** if you have:

- Ownership of, investment in, or officer responsibilities for a corporation, partnership, or other business entity formed under the laws of another country;

- Fiduciary, grantor, or beneficiary relationships in connection with an entity formed under the laws of another country;
- Ownership of, signature authority over, or control over any financial account held in a financial institution located in another country;
- Citizenship or government-approved employment/visa status with a country other than the U.S. (including anyone in your immediate household, or your parents who live outside the U.S.);
- Transferred property, including cash, offshore either directly or through the purchase of or investment in an entity formed under the laws of another country;
- Received or have legally-recognizable rights to receive property, including cash, from a trust, business, or investment formed under the laws of another country or individual residing in another country;
- Conducted business with any entity or person physically located in another country, regardless of whether such business is for-profit, not for-profit, or informal/irregular;
- Received property, including cash, or income from a source outside of the U.S. which is not reported on a brokerage statement (such as a 1099-B or similar report); or
- Any other activity or economic arrangement which takes place outside of the U.S.

Failure to timely file the required forms may result in substantial civil and/or criminal penalties. You agree to provide us with complete and accurate information regarding any foreign activity in which you have a direct or indirect interest, or over which you have signature authority, during the above referenced tax year.

If you are unsure if you have any other filing obligation related to foreign activity, you are responsible for alerting us and requesting assistance. If you do not alert us or request assistance, we will infer that you do not have foreign activity absent information you provide to us. In any event, you will be responsible for tax due, penalties, and interest associated with the failure to file or untimely filing of any form for which we were not engaged to prepare.

#### Foreign filing obligations

You are responsible for complying with the tax filing requirements of any non-U.S. country. You acknowledge and agree that we have no responsibility to raise these issues with you and that any foreign filing obligation is not within the scope of this engagement.

#### Digital assets

There are specific tax implications of investing in digital assets (e.g., virtual currencies, non-fungible tokens, virtual real estate and similar assets). The IRS considers these to be property for U.S. federal income tax purposes. As such, any transactions in, or transactions that use, digital assets are subject to the same general tax principles that apply to other property transactions.

If you transacted in digital assets during the tax year, you may have tax consequences and/or additional reporting obligations associated with such transactions. Depending on the nature or volume of those transactions, a change to the scope of our services may be required. You are responsible for providing us with complete and accurate information, including basis, regarding any transactions in, or transactions that have used, digital assets during the applicable tax year.

#### Compensation and withholding compliance

If you or your business compensates individuals for services performed, there are various federal, state, and/or local payroll tax and income tax obligations affecting both payor and payee. We will not provide employment, labor, or immigration law advice to you as part of our engagement, including the classification of workers as employees or independent contractors. You should seek the advice of an appropriate professional, such as an employment attorney, to address any classification or employment eligibility questions. You agree to indemnify and hold us harmless for any and all claims related to misclassification or improper eligibility of individuals whom you compensate for services, excepting claims arising from our gross negligence or intentional wrongful acts.

Further, you acknowledge it is your responsibility to both timely comply with all payroll tax and income tax filing and remittance obligations that apply to you, and to maintain all necessary documentation to support those filings and remittances. Such forms are due as early as January 31, 2025, and significant penalties may be assessed for late filing, non-filing, or filing of incorrect information. In some cases, penalties may also be assessed against responsible individuals, such as owners and officers, in their personal capacity.

Preparation of these forms and calculation of any withholding amount due is not within the scope of this engagement.

#### Ultimate responsibility

You are ultimately responsible for complying with any substantive or procedural tax law which applies to you, and for ensuring your tax returns and any required tax payments are timely received by the appropriate tax authority. Notwithstanding any term of this Agreement, this responsibility cannot be delegated to us.

Our assistance related to your tax return is based upon tax reference materials, facts, assumptions, and representations that are subject to change. We will not update your return after the conclusion of the engagement for any reason. To the extent we provide written advice concerning federal tax matters, we will follow the applicable guidance contained in our professional standards.

You have final responsibility for the accuracy of your tax returns. We will provide you with a copy of your draft tax returns and accompanying schedules and statements for review. You agree to review and examine them carefully for accuracy and completeness. Tax authorities impose various penalties and interest charges for non-compliance with tax laws and regulations, including failure to file or late filing of returns, and underpayment of taxes. You will be responsible for the payment of any additional tax, penalties, and interest charges imposed by tax authorities.

You have final responsibility for the payment of your taxes in whatever amount ultimately determined. You may choose to have funds automatically withdrawn from a designated account and transmitted when your tax return is electronically filed. We will not transmit partial payments. It is your responsibility to provide us with correct account and routing numbers, to review this information for accuracy prior to submission of your return, and to ensure that sufficient funds are available at the time of payment. We shall have no liability for any tax due, penalties, interest, or overdraft charges which may result from your failure to ensure sufficient funds are available at the time of payment.

#### ***Timing of the Engagement***

We expect to begin our services upon receipt of this executed and other supporting data.

Our services under this Agreement will conclude:

- on the later of:
  - the latest date of electronic acceptance of your 2024 tax returns by the relevant tax authority;
  - the date we deliver the paper copy of your returns to you; or
- upon written notification by either party that the Agreement is terminated; or
- one (1) year from the execution date of this Agreement, whichever comes first.

#### **Filing Your Tax Returns**

The original filing due date for your tax returns is April 15, 2025 for federal and states. The obligation to file a tax return and/or extension is solely that of the taxpayer. Although we will make every reasonably prudent effort to assist you with this obligation, this Agreement is not intended to and does not create an agent/principal relationship. By signing this Agreement, you understand that actual and timely receipt of your filings by the appropriate tax authority is the duty and responsibility of the taxpayer and the taxpayer alone.

#### **Tax Return Extensions**

It may become necessary to apply for an extension of the filing due dates if there are unresolved issues or delays in processing or if we do not receive all of the necessary information from you on a timely basis. Applying for an extension of time to file may limit your ability to make certain elections, extend the time available for a government agency to undertake an examination of your return and/or extend the statute of limitations to file a legal action. Although we may assist you in the preparation of an extension to file your return(s), you have sole responsibility for the filing of any extension, and you agree to hold our firm harmless from any consequences, including waived elections, where the extension is not timely filed. All taxes owed are due by the original filing due date. Additionally, extensions may affect your liability for penalties and interest or compliance with governmental or other deadlines.

**If you wish to engage our firm to apply for extensions of time to file tax returns on your behalf, we will not file these applications unless and until we receive both an executed copy of this Agreement and your express written authorization to file for an extension. In some cases, your signature may be required on such applications prior to filing. Failure to timely request an extension of time to file can result in penalties for failure to file tax returns, which accrue from the original due date of the returns and can be substantial.**

#### **E-filing**

In addition to being a return preparer, we are an Electronic Return Originator (ERO) and may prepare your return(s) and/or extension(s) in a format that permits us, if you choose, to electronically transmit ("e-file") those forms to the appropriate tax authority on your behalf. The e-filing of any form is a separate service from the preparation of that form.

If you request that we e-file any form on your behalf, including requests for extensions of time to file, and we agree, the IRS and states require you to sign and return to us the appropriate governmental form(s) before your returns can be filed electronically. **If you fail to timely sign and return e-file authorization, we cannot and will not e-file any form on your behalf.** In those situations, you will be solely responsible for any penalties or interest assessed against you.

If you choose not to have your return(s) or extension(s) e-filed, or if your return(s) or extension(s) cannot be e-filed, we will deliver to you a paper copy suitable for mailing to the taxing authorities. Once delivered to you, you bear full responsibility for reviewing the paper returns for accuracy, and either signing and timely filing them, along with any payments due, or notifying us of any issue which may need to be addressed prior to filing.

Once our services have concluded, we shall have no obligation to notify you of future tax law developments affecting your return(s) except as may be required by Circular 230 or the SSTS related to errors we identify.

***Professional Fee***

**Our fee for these services will be based upon the amount of time required at standard billing rates, a \$25 technology and administration fee per return plus any out-of-pocket expenses.** This fee is based upon the complexity of the expected work to be performed, our professional time and out-of-pocket expenses. Circumstances may arise that impact our estimated fee such as, but not limited to, (1) the timeliness, accuracy, or completeness of information you provide to us; (2) changes in your personnel, use of other advisors, or operations that impact our services; (3) mutually agreed changes in the scope of this engagement; or (4) other unanticipated items that arise during our engagement and that require additional time in order to complete the agreed-upon services. You agree to pay all fees and expenses incurred whether or not we complete the engagement. We require that all outstanding invoices be paid prior to releasing the completed tax returns. We do not release incomplete tax returns.

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We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you. Please date and execute this Agreement and return it to us to acknowledge your acceptance. We will not initiate services until we receive the executed Agreement

Very truly yours,



Mark Lay, CPA  
*Partner*

ACCEPTED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Trustee Representative Signature]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Trustee Representative Name]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Trust Name]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date]