
KAREN LEAFFER



Karen Leaffer is a recognized leader in the area of nonprofit law, having practiced in some of Denver's largest, most respected law firms for more than 20 years before forming Leaffer Law Group. She is also a community leader, a mentor and an entrepreneur. It is her extensive experience, combined with her lifelong dedication to serving nonprofits, which makes her a sought-after resource for nonprofit organizations and their advisors.

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Experience

Karen serves as both general and special counsel to nonprofits, advising them on corporate, tax and transactional matters, such as:

- Regulation of private foundations, supporting organizations and donor-advised funds
- Corporate governance, best practices and implications of Sarbanes-Oxley for nonprofits
- Corporate philanthropy and social enterprise
- Scholarships, disaster relief grants and international grants
- Intermediate sanctions and self-dealing
- Executive compensation audits and reporting
- Tax-exempt financing and low-income housing tax credits
- Corporate sponsorships and other fundraising matters
- Public policy development, advocacy, lobbying and political campaign activity
- Fiscal sponsorship programs and grants
- Regulation of trade associations
- Strategic alliances, joint ventures, taxable subsidiaries and nonprofit/for-profit combinations

Karen currently serves as managing editor and contributing author of *A Guide for Colorado Nonprofit Organizations* (revised edition 2014), a role she has served since the Guide's inception in 2007, and represents the nonprofit sector on the Colorado Secretary of State's Business Entity Advisory Committee. She previously served as chair of the Nonprofit Entities Subsection of the Colorado Bar Association and past chair of the Tax Section.

Karen is a Best Lawyers in America® in Non-Profit/Charities Law (2007-2016), and for Tax Law (2015). In 2014, she received the *Denver Business Journal's* Outstanding Women in Business award in the law category. She is a well-known speaker and has published numerous articles on legal issues of importance to nonprofit organizations and foundations.

In addition to her community, civic and political involvement, Karen is invested in family, raising her three children -- a teenager and a set of twins -- and regularly returning to her roots in Eastern Washington/Northern Idaho. She loves her pets, each one being named after one of her favorite sitcoms (Murphy, Fraser and Lucy!). She enjoys taking walks with friends and traveling in the United States and abroad.

Professional Leadership

- Managing editor and contributing author, *A Guide for Colorado Nonprofit Organizations* (revised edition 2014), published by CLE in Colorado.
- Legal editor, *Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Colorado*, published by the Colorado Nonprofit Association
- Colorado Secretary of State Business Entity Advisory Committee, Nonprofit Sector
- Continuing Legal Education in Colorado, Board of Directors, Vice President
- National Scholarship Providers Association, Advisor
- Colorado Bar Association Business Law Section/Nonprofit Entities Subsection, Past Chair
- Colorado Bar Association Tax Section, Past Chair
- Exponent Philanthropy Board of Legal Advisors, Past Member
- Foundation Tax Group, Past Co-Chair

Community Service

- Aspen Academy, Board of Directors
- Rose Community Foundation Committee on Aging, Advisory Committee Member
- Space Science Institute, Past Board Member
- Delores Project, Women's Homeless Shelter Volunteer
- Electing Women Political Action Committee, Sponsor
- University of Colorado Women's Health Research Center, Past Advisory Board Member
- Mile High United Way, Past Donor Relations Council Member
- Lutheran Medical Center Foundation, Past Board Member
- Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation, Past Finance Committee Member

Distinctions

- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent® ranking
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Denver Business Journal's Winner (2014) Outstanding Women in Business Award in Law
- Best Lawyers in America® Non-Profit/Charities Law (2007-2016) and Tax Law (2015)
- Super Lawyers® Non-Profit (2006-2017)
- Super Lawyers® Top 50 Women (2013)
- Law Week Colorado Barrister's Best Nonprofit Attorney (2011, 2013, 2015, 2016)

Education

- University of Denver LL.M. (1991)
- University of Idaho J.D., *summa cum laude* (1988)
- Gonzaga University B.A., *summa cum laude* (1985)

Bar Admissions

- Colorado