



# Susan Vignola

Partner

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Susan Vignola is Partner in the firm's Tax-Exempt Organizations department, where she advises nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations and their affiliates, donors, partners, and other stakeholders in the philanthropy sector. Ms. Vignola's clients include a wide range of mission-based organizations, including national and international funding intermediaries; aggregators and accelerators; community foundations and donor-advised fund sponsors; operational/direct service charities; social justice and advocacy organizations; private, family and corporate foundations; schools and universities; museums and cultural institutions; 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations and 501(c)(6) trade associations; along with other entities, affiliates, and trusts. Ms. Vignola also counsels individual, family, and corporate donors and investors on philanthropic planning and engagement.

Ms. Vignola regularly advises nonprofit boards and executives on compliance, risk, and related regulatory matters; corporate and board structuring and governance; lobbying and political campaign activity; fiscal sponsorship, donor advised funds, designated funds, and other intermediary matters; establishing and working with affiliates, public-private partnerships and joint ventures; international and cross-border philanthropy; management and expenditure of endowments and investments; impact and mission-related investing; and related corporate, tax, and regulatory matters, investigations, and disputes. Ms. Vignola has extensive expertise working with charitable intermediaries, 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) affiliations, navigating the rules relating to lobbying and political activity, equity and compliance reviews, and risk management.

Ms. Vignola regularly speaks at conferences and seminars and delivers client trainings on a variety of topics. Recent talks have focused on pursuing equity goals and compliance amid policy and regulatory shifts, corporate governance, navigating lobbying and political campaign activity, managing restricted funds and endowment funds under New York law, and intellectual property issues for nonprofit organizations.

Ms. Vignola is a member of the Exempt Organizations Committee of the American Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association, and the New York City Bar Association. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Ms. Vignola spent over a decade working for non-profit institutions in the U.S. and overseas. She received her J.D. from New York University School of Law, M.A. from the George Washington University, and B.A. from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

## Admissions

- New York

## Education

- New York University School of Law (J.D.)

- Root-Tilden-Kern D'Agostino Scholar
- Robert McKay Scholar
- Notes Editor, *Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*
- George Washington University (M.A.)
  - J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Scholar
- University of North Carolina (B.A.)
  - Phi Beta Kappa

## Professional Activities

### Professional Memberships:

- American Bar Association, Exempt Organizations Committee
- New York State Bar Association
- Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Committee on Nonprofit Organizations
- TEGE Exempt Organizations Council

### Selected Speaking Engagements:

- *Managing Mayhem: Crisis Planning, Response, and Recovery*, Georgetown Law Lifelong Learning's 2026 Conference on Representing & Managing Tax-Exempt Organizations (April 2026)
- *The Law as a Lever: Legal Strategies for Health Funders*, Grantmakers in Health's 2025 Health Policy Exchange Conference (November 2025)
- *Beyond Borders: The Evolving Landscape of International Giving*, DAF Giving Summit Webinar (November 2025)
- *Understanding your Governing Documents and Organizational Policies: What They Say, What They Don't, and What They Should*, Nonprofit Organizations Institute presented by the University of Texas School of Law and Philanthropy Southwest (January 2025)
- *Ask the Expert: What the Fearless Fund Ruling Might Mean for Corporate Giving*, ESG & CGR Board Webinar (August 2024)
- *Restricted/Endowment Funds in NY*, Philanthropic Planning Group of New York's Planned Giving Day (May 2024)
- *Election Year Essentials: Navigating Lobbying and Political Campaign Activity in 2024*, PBWT Tax Exempt Organizations CLE Series (April 2024)
- *Not-for-Profit Governance Trends in a Post-Pandemic World*, Grant Thornton's Not-for-Profit Executive Briefing Series (February 2024)
- *MASTER CLASS: Navigating Intellectual Property Issues for Nonprofits*, Nonprofit Organizations Institute presented by the University of Texas School of Law and Philanthropy Southwest (February 2024)
- *Endowments and Restricted Funds: Managing UPMIFA in Unpredictable Times*, Annual Exempt Organizations Update Meeting, TEGE Exempt Organizations Council (November 2023)
- *Investing for Exempt Organizations – Overview of Key Legal Issues and Practical Considerations*, PBWT Tax Exempt Organizations CLE Series (April 2023)

- *What is an "Effective" Private Foundation in 2023?*, Nonprofit Organizations Institute presented by the University of Texas School of Law and Philanthropy Southwest (January 2023)
- *Legal Considerations for Starting a Nonprofit*, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (November 2021)
- *Corporate Sponsorships Refresher*, PBWT Tax Exempt Organizations CLE Series (June 2021)
- *Collaborative Strategies to Achieve Charitable Impact*, PBWT Tax Exempt Organizations CLE Series (June 2019)
- *Starting a Nonprofit*, Nonprofit Formation Fundamentals Series, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Candid and Support Center (April 2019)
- *Primer on Charitable Giving*, Georgetown Law Continuing Legal Education, Representing and Managing Tax-Exempt Organizations (April 2016)