

# PLANADVISER TOP 100 Retirement Plan Advisers

**M**any years ago, to help readers learn about the evolving specialist retirement plan adviser marketplace, PLANSPONSOR introduced a “Most Successful Advisers” list, recognizing 25 individual advisers who had a sizeable book of business in terms of retirement plan assets under advisement (AUA). That list has morphed into the annual “PLANADVISER Top 100 Retirement Plan Advisers,” which includes individual advisers, but also adviser teams, ranging from small, single-office teams to mega firms.

In years past, advisers had been able to determine into which category they would be placed, but that increasingly was making for muddled lists—and some potential for gaming the system. This year, as the process for gathering the submissions was changed (see Methodology, page 39), so were the categories. Advisers were segmented into four groups based on the number of advisers and number of total employees including support staff. Those figures assigned advisers into the following categories: individual adviser – meaning one adviser with support staff; small team – a group of 10 or fewer, comprising two or more advisers and support staff; large team – a group of 11 to 25 advisers and support staff; and mega teams – 26 or more team members. This year’s list includes 18 individuals, 43 small teams, 22 large teams and 17 mega teams.

In the pages that follow, we highlight the quantitative standouts according to the dollar value of qualified plan AUA as well as the number of plans under advisement. The qualification standards have risen considerably since the first list, as specialist advisers and consultants have built their practices. This year, individuals needed to have more than 100 plans or more than \$1 billion in retirement plan AUA; small teams had to advise more than \$2 billion in retirement plan assets or more than 100 plans; large teams needed more than \$3 billion in retirement plan AUA or more than 170 plans; and mega teams had to oversee more than \$5 billion in retirement plan AUA or more than 250 plan clients. —PA



## Individual Advisers With More Than \$1b in Retirement Plan Assets Under Advisement

More Than \$1b to \$2b

**Corby Dall**  
401k Advisors Intermountain  
Sandy, Utah

**L. Rita Fiumara**  
UBS  
Chicago, Illinois

**Jordan Gelb**  
Bank of America Merrill Lynch  
Northbrook, Illinois

**Andy Harbour**  
Graystone Consulting  
Atlanta, Georgia

**Michael Maresh**  
InTrust Fiduciary Group  
Austin, Texas

**James McQuillan**  
McQuillan Lahti Associates, DBA RJF  
Financial Services  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Dan Peluse**  
Wintrust Wealth Management  
Chicago, Illinois

More Than \$2b

**John Mott**  
Morgan Stanley  
Houston, Texas

**Jason Stanicek**  
CAPTRUST Financial Advisors  
Raleigh, North Carolina

## Individual Advisers With More Than 100 Plans Under Advisement

101 to 130 Plans

**Michael Clark**  
Keiron Partners  
Orlando, Florida

**Ross Dahlof**  
Christensen Group  
Minnetonka, Minnesota

**Emmett Dupas**  
Northwestern Mutual  
Metairie, Louisiana

**Curtis Farrell**  
Financial Management Network  
Mission Viejo, California

**James McQuillan**  
McQuillan Lahti Associates, DBA RJF  
Financial Services  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Dan Peluse**  
Wintrust Wealth Management  
Chicago, Illinois

**Russell Warye**  
Benefit Partners Financial Group, LLC  
Libertyville, Illinois

131 to 170 Plans

**Stephen Cunha**  
Baystate Financial Services, LLC  
Wakefield, Massachusetts

**Corby Dall**  
401k Advisors Intermountain  
Sandy, Utah

**Mark Gutrich**  
Fi401k Advisors, LLC  
Greenwood Village, Colorado

**Steven Hocking**  
Meridian Wealth Management, UBS  
Financial Services  
Irvine, California

**Jim Sampson**  
Cornerstone Retirement Advisors  
Warwick, Rhode Island

More Than 170 Plans

**Anthony Girellini**  
Principled Advisors  
Staten Island, New York

## Small Teams With More Than \$2b in Retirement Plan Assets Under Advisement

More Than \$2b to \$3b

**The Atlantic Group, Morgan Stanley**  
Boca Raton, Florida

**Baystate Fiduciary Advisors, Inc.**  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Clearpoint Financial**  
Bellevue, Washington

**Eisen-Sessa Institutional  
Consulting Group, UBS**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Hooker & Holcombe  
Investment Advisory**  
West Hartford, Connecticut

**The Kelliher Corbett Group,  
Morgan Stanley**  
Norwell, Massachusetts

**The Kieckhefer Group,  
LPL Financial**  
Brookfield, Wisconsin

**Mariner Retirement Advisors**  
Leawood, Kansas

**The Messner Consulting Group of  
Graystone, Morgan Stanley**  
Birmingham, Michigan

**Princeton Investment  
Consulting, UBS**  
Princeton, New Jersey

**ProCourse Fiduciary Advisors, LLC**  
Carmel, Indiana

**StoneStreet Advisor Group, LLC**  
Pearl River, New York

**The Willhite Institutional  
Consulting Group, UBS**  
The Woodlands, Texas

More Than \$3b to \$5b

**Ascende Wealth Advisers, Inc.**  
Houston, Texas

## Mark Gutrich

Fi401k Advisors, LLC

Greenwood Village, Colorado



Art by Cristian Turdera

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Mark M. Gutrich has spent the past 25 years in the retirement plan business. Mr. Gutrich worked for a wire house, an insurance company and an independent broker/dealer, before starting his own pension consulting firm. In 1999, Mr. Gutrich co-founded a 401(k) record-keeper and administration company (ePlan Services) where he served as Co-CEO and Chief Marketing Officer. Following the sale of ePlan Services, Mr. Gutrich served as the Director of Retirement Advisory for Paychex Retirement Services. Then, in 2014, Mr. Gutrich launched Fiduciary Holdings Limited which is the parent company of Fiduciary Insight, LLC and Fi401k Advisors, LLC. Mr. Gutrich received his bachelor's degree from the University of Puget Sound and has been licensed as a Registered Investment Adviser since 1994. Mark lives in the suburbs of Denver, Colorado with his wife and their four children.

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**Q: How did you get into the business of advising retirement plans? Do you specialize in one part of the market?**

A: I started in retirement advisory straight out of college, working for a wire house, an insurance company and an independent broker/dealer. But it wasn't until I moved back to Denver that I started my first RIA and focused exclusively on ERISA-covered plans. Back then, small business 401(k) plans were a luxury. Yet, I was bound and determined to make 401(k) plans affordable for every small business. So, in 1999, I started an online RK/TPA specifically designed for small businesses. After nearly 15 years building that business, I sold it and returned back to my roots in retirement advisory.

**Q: What is your one minute elevator pitch?**

A: Fi401k Advisors is an RIA firm that performs as an outsourced professional Fiduciary Adviser to small business owners (and their executives). Our primary goal is to ensure that our clients' 401(k) plans use a prudent process to determine the investment options made available to their participants. Thereafter, we leverage technology to consistently monitor and manage their designated investment options over time. However, as "co-fiduciary" with intimate knowledge of record-keeping and plan administration, we also work to ensure our clients' are leveraging their plan design flexibility to provide the most effective workplace retirement savings plan available.



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Art by Cristian Turdera

**Q: How has your practice embraced digital technology to improve plan participant and sponsor outcomes?**

A: We are firm believers in the power of technology. But, as technology by itself does nothing, we understand that it must be employed as a means to accomplish specific ends. As a result, we have developed a proprietary technology platform that enables us to streamline investment data analysis “as a means” to deliver more consistent services to our clients. By leveraging technology to support our investment services, we are able to focus on helping our clients deliver a superior 401(k) plan for the exclusive benefit of the plan and its participants.

**Q: What do you predict will be most significant challenge or opportunity for retirement plan advisors in the next five years? Where is the advice market heading?**

A: The most significant change in store for retirement plan advisors is going to be the implementation of the DOL’s new “fiduciary rule.” As a result, I suspect the number of advisors in the qualified retirement plan space will shrink in the years ahead. So, the primary challenge will be around ensuring clients don’t get left behind as that occurs. As counter-balance to those threats, a significant opportunity will emerge for qualified plan specialists to expand their practices. Nevertheless, as a uniform fiduciary standard pervades, I believe 401(k) plan sponsors (and participants) will reap the benefits.

**Q: How will your practice grow or change in the years ahead?**

A: We have been extremely fortunate to have significantly grown our practice over the past 2 years, and forecast continued expansion in the years ahead. As a result, our team will be expanding to ensure that we maintain the high standards that have been the foundation of our early success. As our team and client rosters grow, we look forward to overcoming the challenges of continuing to build a world class organization.