

Merit Financial Advisors

Stronger Together





ABOUT MERIT

Merit Financial Advisors is a national wealth management firm with over \$11.8 billion* in assets that supports advisors affiliated with independent broker-dealers, as well as those who are registered investment advisors.

Merit Financial Advisors exists to enrich the lives of those we serve. Our mission is to revolutionize the client experience by building the RIA of the future.

Our focus is on growth - both supporting clients in exceeding their financial goals and supporting advisors in evolving and expanding their businesses. Merit provides its advisors and offices with practice management resources, an industry-leading technology platform, superior operational support, and the investment expertise needed to drive growth and deliver a dynamic client experience.

Our team serves as a professional partner on the path to growth. Merit works with advisors equipping them with the tools and resources needed to build revenues, expand their practices and grow as a professional. Our partners have achieved exponential growth in their practices as they leverage our expertise, industry experience, and resources.

Our Culture

Merit fosters a relationship-based culture that is built on integrity and respect – among our colleagues, with clients, and within our community. Our mission is anchored by several key principles including humility, flexibility, and objective-driven and goals-based advice.

- We are committed to elevating and supporting **diverse voices**, experience, and expertise across the firm. As an example, over 52% percent of Merit’s staff is female and the firm has completed 5 acquisitions of female-founded firms since 2017.
- We uphold a **team-based approach** that facilitates leadership and collaboration across the group for the collective benefit of the team and our clients.
- We are focused on **empowering growth and advancement** among our advisors. We believe we are **Stronger Together**.

Our Awards



*\$8.8 billion in advisory, \$2.8 billion in brokerage assets, and \$253 million in assets under advisement. As of June 30, 2024.



ABOUT MERIT

Our Philosophy

- Merit is committed to being on the leading edge of financial technology innovation. The firm has made significant investments in technology and digital tools to increase client engagement and provide its advisors with opportunities to scale their practice.
- We strive to bring our technology systems together in an integrated way, creating efficiencies within our teams and provide an unmatched client experience.
- Our team includes a range of professionals who specialize in various aspects of financial planning, wealth management, investment strategy, and more to help drive the client experience while providing in-house support for its advisors to create customized strategies for clients.
- We have a particular focus on working with individuals in transition, including divorce, retirement, widowhood, and life's other unexpected changes. As clients navigate these personal life events, they can feel confident their advisors at Merit will guide them through the financial implications.
- Our advisors are committed to providing superior service and strategies that help clients pursue their financial goals and objectives.
- The Merit model is anchored by core values and a relationship-based culture.

Our Growth Strategy

- Merit has a three-prong growth approach:
 - Organic growth by increasing the number of new clients using niche segmentation, digital marketing, and our client referral initiative.
 - Acquisitions of like-minded hybrid and advisory-only RIA firms.
 - Integration of financial advisors through our Independent Advisor Partner Program. Merit seeks to align with financial advisors who wish to maintain their independence but have the support of a larger entity for administrative and operational support.
- We are strategic and thoughtful in our growth trajectory, seeking to align with the right kinds of advisors who share the philosophy and vision, as well as clients with similar values and beliefs.
- As of August 2024, Merit has completed 37 M&A transactions. Five of those transactions were female-owned firms. In fact, Merit staff is 52% female.

Acquisition Timeline

1998 - 2022

- Merit Financial Advisors Established
- Allegiance Financial Strategies Group
- CPA Retirement Network
- King Financial Partners
- Allegiance Retirement Solutions
- Botsford Financial Group
- Financial Development Systems
- Kirsch & Associates
- Price Financial Group
- Bautz Family Financial
- Sharp Advisors
- Consilium Financial Group
- Biltmore Capital Advisors
- Tedstrom Wealth
- IM Wealth Care
- Union Financial Advisors
- Dasher & Padgett
- Brook Wealth
- Ceponis
- Mersberger Financial Group
- Jochimsen Wealth Management
- Triad Financial Strategies
- Allegiance Retirement

2023

- Financial Design Group
- TFG Wealth Management
- INVEX Financial
- Planned Futures
- WealthPlan, LLC
- Financial Analysts
- Reis Financial Services
- EJS Wealth Management
- ClearBridge Wealth Management

2024

- Robert M. Birgen
- Viren and Associates, Inc.
- Access Investment Advisors
- Westfield Financial Planning
- Kizer and Associates





OUR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Merit is led by demonstrated leaders and seasoned advisors who have a deep understanding of the needs and goals of successful financial practitioners. Our team includes experienced professionals across disciplines, including in-house investment management and strategy, comprehensive financial planning and life transition support, wealth management insights, operations, marketing, and human resources support.



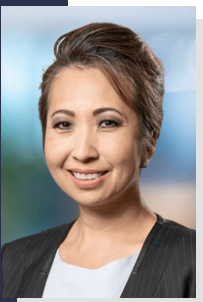
Rick Kent, CFP®, ChFC, AIF®
Founder & Chief Executive Officer

Rick is an entrepreneur and visionary leader who founded Merit on a servant-leadership philosophy and a commitment to helping individuals reach their financial goals while supporting fellow advisors and entrepreneurs in meeting their professional goals. Rick has a clear vision for Merit's growth, designing a program that allows advisors to align with Merit in a number of ways. Rick is well versed in the industry and is striving to change it for the better.



Kay Lynn Mayhue, CFP®, AEP®, RFC®
President

Kay Lynn has played many roles in the financial advisory industry: as a successor, partner, seller, and buyer. This unique and diverse background allows her to be able to relate to advisors in all phases of their careers and mergers and acquisitions. With a background in financial planning and leadership, her career expands over several areas, including advising clients, mergers and acquisitions, and strategic growth.



Chrissy Lee
Chief Operating Officer

Chrissy serves as our Chief Operating Officer at Merit. Chrissy has over 15+ years of experience in the Wealth management and Broker Dealer channel, having started her career in Operations and eventually rising to the role of COO and President at her previous firm. She previously served as a board member for IPA, served on the Advisory Council of Docupace, a technology provider for wealth management firms, created the Women Advisor Network, and served as a committee member for the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion task force.



Mike Mitchell
Chief Financial Officer

Mike's professional background includes over 30 years of experience in corporate finance and operations, mainly within the financial services industry. During his career, he's held progressive leadership positions with Fortune 500 firms, including Toyota, Wachovia Bank, and AT&T, as well as small to medium-sized growth companies. His focus is centered on revenue growth, expense management, margin expansion and boosting bottom-line profitability.



**OUR SENIOR
LEADERSHIP TEAM**



Martina Chisholm
VP of Marketing



Amelia Wood
Chief Transitions Officer



Brian Andrew, CFA®
Chief Investment Officer



Zach Kohlman
Director of Employee
Experience



Jennifer Keegan
VP of Operations



Tony DiGirolamo
VP of Technology



Doug Baxley, CFP®
Chief Compliance Officer



John Cote
Chief Growth Officer

KEY METRICS

\$11.8 Billion*

*\$8.8 billion in advisory, \$2.8 billion in brokerage assets, and \$253 million in assets under advisement. As of June 30, 2024.

20,000+

Households serviced nationwide

48

Offices nationwide

250

Merit team members and partners

OUR LOCATIONS

Alabama:

Birmingham

Connecticut:

Rocky Hill
Wilton

Colorado:

Colorado Springs
Denver
Greenwood Village

California:

San Diego
Diamond Bar

Florida:

Boca Raton
Boynton Beach
Daytona Beach
Jacksonville
Maitland
Mount Dora
Orlando
Palm Beach Gardens

Georgia:

Albany
Alpharetta
Lawrenceville
Roswell

Illinois:

Barrington

Montana:

Kalispell

New Jersey:

Princeton
Westfield

North Carolina:

Charlotte
Davidson
Raleigh

Oklahoma:

Norman
Perry
Tulsa

Pennsylvania:

Newtown
Williamsport

Texas:

Frisco
Southlake

Washington:

Des Moines
Issaquah
Tacoma
Spokane

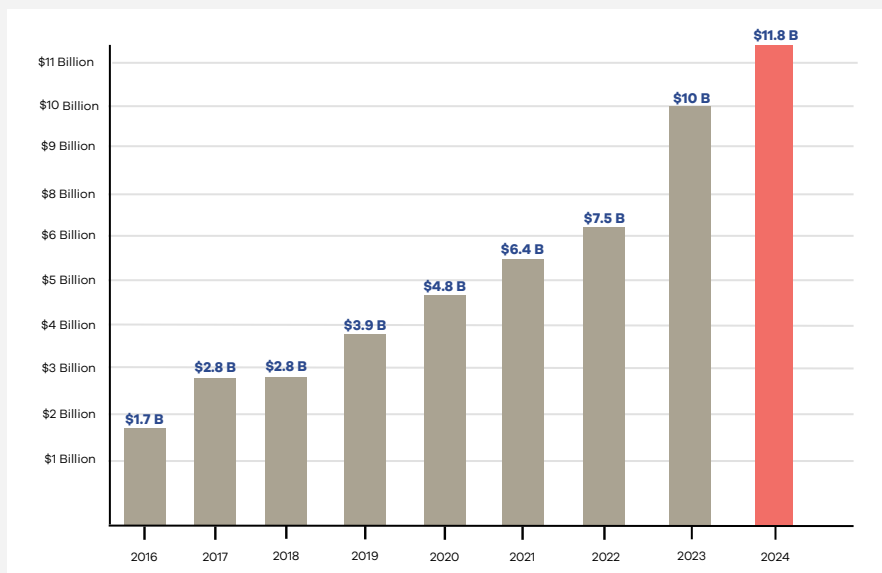
Wisconsin:

Appleton
De Pere
Sheboygan Falls
West Bend
Manitowoc



ASSET GROWTH

Join a winning team!



*\$8.8 billion in advisory, \$2.8 billion in brokerage assets, and \$253 million in assets under advisement. As of June 30, 2024.



OUR CLIENTS



Bridges allow us to move from one place to another while overcoming obstacles and challenges. Our icon, the bridge, represents Merit's excellence in assisting our clients, not just on their financial goals but also their overall life goals.

We are committed to providing holistic financial planning and wealth management strategies for our clients that bring them closer to their financial objectives while empowering them to pursue their passions and interests with confidence. We serve:



Business Owners



Retirees & Aspiring Retirees



Divorce



Special Needs Planning



Emerging Wealth



Sudden Wealth



Executives



Tax Services



Life Transition



Widowhood

We also specialize in serving specific client segments and industries including:

- AT&T
- UPS
- Toyota
- Chick-Fil-A
- Exxon
- XTO Energy
- Duke Energy
- QuikTrip
- Lowe's
- Women in Transition: Widowhood and Divorce
- Special Needs Planning
- High Net Worth Individuals and Families

At Merit, we are always open to exploring new client segments and welcome firms that can bring that expertise to our group.





OUR M&A OFFERING



Our company serves as a true partner for advisors. If you are looking to take your firm to the next level, Merit can help.

We work with you and your team making sure your transition is seamless. We take many carefully crafted steps to prepare, plan and execute the transition, making it as smooth as possible for you and your clients.

Our Integration Process Includes:



Discovery: We take time to understand your staff and your culture



Assessment: We review your book of business and business practices



Planning: We work with you to identify opportunities and challenges, and in response, establish roles and responsibilities



Implementation: We plan and provide complete support through client communication, consent, and repapering processes



Go Live: We provide and oversee employee training, system conversion, and portfolio management implementation

What We Provide:

OPERATIONS

Eliminate operational burdens and frustrations so you can focus on serving your clients.

STAFFING

Leverage our dedicated, skilled and well-trained staff to assist and support your HR management.

TRAINING

Empower and advance your skills through comprehensive training, education, and coaching programs.

MARKETING

Amplify your services in the marketplace to attract new clients. Our marketing team has proven strategies to grow your practice.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

Investment strategy and support led by a team of in-house investment professionals.

GROWTH

Expand your geographical reach with in-house expertise and support from a larger group of advisors.

OUR CORE VALUES



Team:

We are a diverse, dynamic, collaborative and interdependent team, who share a vision of excellence. Team Merit is Stronger Together!



Relationships:

At the heart of each relationship, we value mutual respect, trust, dependability and accountability.



Kaizen:

The idea that nothing is ever complete and there is always room for improvement.



Future Focus:

We are a multi-generational firm investing now, to ensure a greater impact for tomorrow.





Headquarters:

2400 Lakeview Parkway, Suite 550
Alpharetta, GA 30009

678-867-7050

meritfa.com/for-advisors



Stronger Together

Investment advice offered through Merit Financial Group, LLC, an SEC-registered investment adviser.

InvestmentNews RIA Firm of the Year 2024: The InvestmentNews Awards team will conduct research and draw on knowledge and information gained through InvestmentNews to support and supplement nominations received.

Barron's 2023 Top RIA Firms, Data is verified with the advisors' firms and with regulatory databases in three major categories of calculations: Assets, revenue, and quality of practice. Every advisor will have his or her own approach to investing, financial planning, and other services. **Forbes America's Top Wealth Advisors** ranking was developed by SHOOK Research and is based on in-person, virtual, and telephone due diligence meetings to measure best practices, client retention, industry experience, credentials, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, such as: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Neither Forbes nor SHOOK Research receive compensation in exchange for placement on the ranking. **The Forbes ranking of America's Top RIA Firms 2022, 2023** developed by SHOOK Research, is based on an algorithm of qualitative criteria, mostly gained through telephone, virtual and in-person due diligence interviews, and quantitative data. The algorithm weighs factors like revenue trends, assets under management, compliance records, industry experience and those that encompass best practices and approach to working with clients. Portfolio performance is not a criterion due to varying client objectives and lack of audited data. Neither Forbes nor SHOOK receive a fee in exchange for rankings.

Barron's 2023 Top 100 Private Wealth Management Teams, the teams are ranked on a variety of factors, including their size and shape, their regulatory records and credentials of their members, and the resources they have at their disposal to serve their client bases. The rankings are meant as a starting point for clients looking for an advisor—a first-pass vetting that can help investors narrow a search. Every advisor will have his or her own approach to investing, financial planning, and other services. **Best Places to Work for Financial Advisors 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, & 2024** recognized firms were required to be a registered investment advisor (RIA) that has been in business at least one year and having a minimum of 15 full-time/part-time employees. The assessment consisted of a questionnaire on benefits and policies completed by human resources staff along with an engagement & satisfaction survey completed by a minimum of 40% of staff. 50 firms were selected for this award from an undisclosed list of submissions. There was no charge to be included in this award listing. **Barron's 2021 Top 100 Private Wealth Management Teams,** the teams are ranked on a variety of factors, including their size and shape, their regulatory records and credentials of their members, and the resources they have at their disposal to serve their client bases. The rankings are meant as a starting point for clients looking for an advisor—a first-pass vetting that can help investors narrow a search. Every advisor will have his or her own approach to investing, financial planning, and other services.

The Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Advisor ranking, developed by SHOOK Research, is based on in-person and telephone due diligence meetings and a ranking algorithm that includes: client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, including: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Portfolio performance is not a criterion due to varying client objectives and lack of audited data. Neither Forbes or SHOOK Research receives a fee in exchange for rankings. **Top Women Wealth Advisors Best in State 2023,** received by Kay Lynn Mayhue (GA), developed by SHOOK Research, is based on an algorithm of qualitative and quantitative data, rating thousands of wealth advisors with a minimum of seven years of experience and weighing factors like revenue trends, assets under management, compliance records, industry experience and best practices learned through telephone and in-person interviews. Portfolio performance is not a criterion due to varying client objectives and lack of audited data. Neither Forbes or SHOOK Research receives a fee in exchange for rankings. **The Wilshire 5000 Total Market Index,** which consists of more than 5000 companies, represents virtually all of the capitalization of the entire U.S. stock market. **2017, 2018, 2020 Financial Times 300 Top Registered Investment Advisers** evaluates SEC registered investment advisers that reported at least \$300 million in assets under management and were selected based on the following criteria: adviser AUM, asset growth, the company's age, industry certifications of key employees, SEC compliance record and online accessibility. **RIA Intel's 2022 RIA of the Year,** More Than \$1 Billion AUM award, was based on the quantitative as well as qualitative criteria: an impressive RIA that has grown beyond a practice and into a complex business for the betterment of clients and its employees. **The Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Advisor** ranking, developed by SHOOK Research, is based on in-person and telephone due diligence meetings and a ranking algorithm that includes: client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, including: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Portfolio performance is not a criterion due to varying client objectives and lack of audited data. Neither Forbes nor SHOOK Research receives a fee in exchange for rankings. **The Georgia Fast 40 for 2022** was award by the Atlanta Chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth. To be eligible companies must be for profit and headquartered in Georgia and the most recent year-end revenues ranging from \$15 million to \$500 million, and have three years of verifiable revenue and employment growth.

