

Barron's Top Advisors Methodology

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Barron's publishes four individual advisor rankings each year (Top 100 Advisors, Top 100 Women Advisors, Top 100 Independent Advisors, Top 1,200 Advisors) along with three team- or firm-based rankings (Top RIA Firms, Top Institutional Consultants, Top Wealth Management Firms).

The goal is to shine a spotlight on the nation's best financial advisors, with an eye toward raising standards in the industry. The rankings serve two distinct types of *Barron's* readers. For wealth management professionals, they serve as an industry scorecard. For investors, the rankings are a tool that can help in the process of finding financial guidance.

Advisors who wish to be ranked fill out a 102-question survey about their practice. We verify that data with the advisors' firms and with regulatory databases and then we apply our rankings formula to the data to generate a ranking. The formula features three major categories of calculations: (1) Assets (2) Revenue (3) Quality of practice. In each of those categories we do multiple subcalculations.

For instance, we take into account not just the amount of assets an advisor manages, but also the type of assets—are they private-wealth assets or institutional? If they're institutional, are they for a foundation or an endowment, or are they corporate assets? We measure the growth of advisors' practices and their client retention. We also consider a wide range of qualitative factors, including the advisors' experience, their advanced degrees and industry designations, the size, shape, and diversity of their teams, their charitable and philanthropic work and, of course, their compliance records.

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. Clients are encouraged to approach a search for an advisor the way they would a search for a doctor—interviewing multiple professionals and getting opinions from multiple third parties.

