

Accountant Liability

Williams & Connolly has represented national accounting firms, including three of the “Big Four,” in scores of malpractice, securities and regulatory matters.

Among these representations are a number of high-profile cases stemming from some of the country’s largest financial frauds. The firm has extensive experience defending against claims brought in connection with audit, tax, and consulting work—in state and federal courts, arbitrations, bankruptcy trustee actions, and regulatory proceedings. Williams & Connolly has an active practice representing firms and individuals in Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) and Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (“PCAOB”) investigations, and also handles a range of other matters from employment cases to commercial disputes to congressional inquiries. As in other practice areas, Williams & Connolly has not shied away from pursuing an aggressive defense and taking its accounting matters to trial.

The firm’s practice includes:

Civil Litigation Defense

- Malpractice claims arising out of audit, tax, and consulting work
- Bankruptcy trustee and receiver proceedings
- Securities class actions
- Employment matters
- Commercial cases
- Extensive experience in state courts across the country
- Nationwide arbitration experience (including AAA, JAMS, and CPR)

Regulatory Defense

- PCAOB and SEC investigations and enforcement actions
- State licensing boards

International

- Cross-border regulatory and litigation matters

Representative litigation matters include:

- Representation of a “Big Four” firm in a multi-billion-dollar securities and audit malpractice litigation arising out of one of the largest investor frauds in history, resulting in a successful defense on the merits before a three-judge arbitration tribunal.
- Representation of another “Big Four” firm in defending individual, class, and derivative claims in numerous forums across the country – including state courts, a federal multidistrict litigation (“MDL”), and an arbitration—arising out of the Madoff Ponzi scheme.

- Representation of a national firm in a three-week jury trial involving malpractice claims arising out of audits of a healthcare company. Williams & Connolly obtained a defense verdict on all claims.
- Representation of a “Big Four” firm in arbitrations and court proceedings in multiple cases arising from tax services and tax minimization strategies.
- Representation of a national firm against audit malpractice claims brought by investors and a federal bankruptcy trustee, in multiple forums across the country, arising out of the Petters Ponzi scheme. The firm has prevailed on multiple dispositive motions in different forums and in an appeal to the Seventh Circuit.
- Representation of a “Big Four” firm in a three-week arbitration trial brought by a bankruptcy trustee alleging audit malpractice claims. The panel issued an award in favor of the accounting firm, rejecting all claims.
- Representation of firms and individuals in numerous SEC and PCAOB investigations and enforcement actions.
- Representation of a national firm in pending U.S. Supreme Court case on the enforceability of an agreement requiring an employee to arbitrate claims against an employer on an individual, rather than a collective, basis.
- Representation of a “Big Four” firm in two arbitrations against former partners, which involved claims that the former partners had improperly solicited other partners to join a rival firm.
- Representation of a national firm in matter arising from collapse of an HMO and involving application of statutory accounting principles.
- Representation of a national firm in tax advice matter claiming \$240 million in losses.