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Certified Elder Law Attorney—The Gold Standard in Elder Law Service

“Elder law” is becoming increasingly important as more older adults face the need for long-term care.

Many individuals struggle to afford such care—often costing as much as \$14,000 per month—without relying on public benefits, the most common of which is Medicaid. Navigating the Medicaid system, administered through Job and Family Services, can be difficult. As a result, many people turn to elder law attorneys for guidance. But because elder law is a complex and relatively new field, what establishes the standard for becoming a Certified Elder Law Attorney?

There is only one national organization accredited by the American Bar Association to certify elder law attorneys: the National Elder Law Foundation (NELF). Attorneys who earn this certification—known as Certified Elder Law Attorneys (CELAs)—have demonstrated the highest level of expertise in the field. To qualify, an attorney must have practiced law for at least five years, with the majority of that practice devoted to elder law.

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ORIGINAL THINKING

KNOWLEDGE. SOPHISTICATION. COLLABORATION.

Heartland Title Agency: Delivering a Better Closing Experience to Critchfield Clients



In any real estate transaction, choosing the right title company can mean the difference between a smooth, predictable closing and a stressful one. While many people assume the decision is fixed, selecting a title company is always negotiable—and the choice matters. Heartland Title Agency, an affiliate of Critchfield, offers the same regulated pricing as any Ohio provider, but with significantly greater value, protection, and peace of mind.

Competitive Pricing, Exceptional Value

Because title insurance rates in Ohio are state regulated, every provider charges comparable fees. Heartland delivers the same pricing clients expect—paired with a higher level of service, responsiveness, and accountability.

Built In Attorney Oversight

Every transaction at Heartland is reviewed by an experienced real estate attorney at no additional cost. This means issues are identified and resolved early, reducing the risk of surprises and ensuring a legally sound closing. Most title companies do not provide this level of oversight.

From Contract to Close—Handled for You

Heartland manages the entire process from start to finish, saving clients time and reducing the need for constant follow up or intervention.

Real Solutions, Not Workarounds

Instead of “insuring over” problems, Heartland focuses on resolving title defects correctly and promptly, protecting clients long after the transaction is complete.

Strength You Can Trust

As an authorized agent for First American Title Insurance Company, Heartland combines national financial strength with local expertise.

The Bottom Line

For a substantially similar cost to any other Ohio title company, clients receive attorney driven service, stronger protection, and a smoother path to closing. Heartland delivers confidence—every time.

ORIGINAL THINKING

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Elder Law

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The attorney must then pass a rigorous, full-day national examination covering 12 sub-areas of elder law. In Ohio, candidates must also pass a state-specific exam.

Beyond testing, the attorney must show NELF that they have handled at least 60 elder law matters within the previous three years. Finally, the attorney must obtain at least five references from other elder law attorneys outside their firm, attesting to their character and professional competence.

There are only 34 Certified Elder Law Attorneys in the state of Ohio. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the CELA designation, however, is maintaining it. CELAs must complete

extensive elder-law-focused continuing legal education each year to remain certified.

Critchfield has two Certified Elder Law Attorneys—Ann Salek and Nicole Hawks. Critchfield is one of only two firms with CELAs in Medina County and the only firm with a CELA in Ashland County.



Ann Salek - Medina



Nicole Hawks - Ashland

Attorney Spotlight



CLINT M. LEIBOLT

Member

Clint M. Leibolt is a Member of the firm whose practice centers on real estate, estate and trust planning, and business and succession planning. He is driven by a commitment to solving clients' problems and achieving their goals.

Clint guides clients through complex business transactions with comprehensive, start-to-finish support and strategic options for expanding, restructuring, or selling business and real estate holdings.

Contact Clint at 419.289.6888 or email leibolt@ccj.com

Critchfield in the community



Barry Romich receives the 2025 Local Library Champion Award for his support of the Creation Station Makerspace and the Joyful Cafe at the Wooster branch of the Wayne County Library. Pictured L-R are: Gigi Klotzek, Barry Romich, Jennifer Shatzer, Tricia Pycraft, Hayley Tracy-Bursley, and Dianna Drake.

Wayne County Public Library Board of Trustees member and 2024-2025 president Tricia Pycraft represented the firm at the Ohio Library Council awards luncheon in Cleveland on November 19, 2025, where Barry Romich received the 2025 Local Library Champion Award.

Under the guidance of the board, including Tricia's continued service, the library is advancing several major projects. The soon-to-launch Preservation Station in the Genealogy and Local History Room will provide residents with tools and training to digitize and safeguard family photos, recordings, and documents, with plans to eventually expand similar resources into the Library of Things for at-home use. In addition, upcoming enhancements to the Children's Department at the Wooster branch will create a more welcoming, flexible environment that fosters early literacy, creativity, curiosity, and meaningful family engagement—further strengthening the library's impact across the community.