

The Buy-Side Is Multiplying

How many single family offices there now are — and why the buy-side of private capital keeps multiplying.

This is not another single-family-office versus multi-family-office explainer.

The buy-side is multiplying

The number of single family offices is climbing. Roughly 8,030 exist globally today, on a path to a projected 10,720 by 2030 (Deloitte Private, 2024; a projection, presented as a range). That is the story most coverage of the single family office misses. The ranking explainers tell you what the entity is and what it costs to run. Very few tell you how many there are, where they are forming, or why the count keeps rising.

This is not another single-family-office versus multi-family-office explainer. It is IMS Group's read on the shape and growth of the single-family-office population, and on what is driving the expansion. We lead with the sourced figure, then draw the implication for allocators tracking where private-capital demand is concentrating.

What a single family office is, in brief

A single family office (SFO) is a private, in-house investment and administration office that serves one wealthy family. Under one roof it runs that family's capital and legal structures, its reporting, and frequently its succession planning and philanthropy. The threshold is high. Families typically establish an SFO at around US\$100M+ in investable assets, the point at which a dedicated team becomes more efficient than outsourcing.

The distinction from a multi-family office is straightforward. An SFO serves one family; a multi-family office pools several. That difference shapes cost, control, and bespoke-ness, and it is the comparison most ranking pages dwell on. We will not re-litigate it here.

For the full definition, the types of family office, and how they operate day to day, see [what a family office is](#). This page is about a different question: how many of these offices exist, and why the count is rising. That sits inside [the next-generation-allocators thesis](#), the broader case that the buy-side of private capital is changing who allocates and how.

The single-family-office population is growing: the numbers

How many single family offices are there?

The most useful current estimate comes from Deloitte Private's family-office research. It puts the global population at roughly 8,030 single family offices in 2024, with a projection of about 10,720 by 2030, growth of close to a third over the period (Deloitte Private, "The Family Office Insights Series — Global Edition", 2024). The 2030 figure is a forecast, not a settled fact, and should be read as a range: the direction is well-evidenced, the precise endpoint is not.

A note on the counting is warranted, because it is the reason published figures differ. There is no single registry of single family offices; they are private by design and rarely disclose. Estimates therefore depend on definition and method, and they vary between research houses. What the credible sources agree on is the trajectory, not the decimal. Deloitte's own series flags its 2030 number as a projection rather than a count, and treats the growth rate as the durable finding. We follow the same discipline here: the population is rising, the slope is steep, and the precise level in any given year carries an honest margin of error.

Why the count is the story (not the definition)

The definition of a single family office has been stable for years. What has changed is the population. A roughly 33% increase in formal SFOs across a six-year window is a structural shift in who holds investable capital and how they choose to deploy it. Each new office is a new in-house decision-maker, with its own mandate, its own appetite for private markets, and its own preference for direct control over pooled vehicles.

For an allocator, the count matters more than the definition because it describes the size and direction of a buy-side cohort that is becoming harder to reach through traditional distribution. When the number of self-directed allocators rises, the centre of gravity in private capital moves with it.

Why the number is climbing

The growth is not random. Two forces are doing most of the work, and both are sourced and observable rather than speculative.

The first is the generational handover of capital. A large cohort of principals is now receiving and redeploying wealth, and a meaningful share of that capital is being organised into dedicated structures rather than left with incumbent managers. We size that handover soberly, as a range rather than a headline, in our analysis of [who is receiving the transfer](#). The point for this page is narrower: when capital changes hands at scale, some of it forms new offices.

The second force is a change in preference among the people inheriting. Bank of America's 2024 Study of Wealthy Americans found that 72% of younger investors (aged 21–43), against just 28% of those over 44, no longer believe traditional stocks and bonds alone can deliver above-average returns. That is a younger cohort with markedly different expectations of how their capital should be run. This generation tends to favour direct control, bespoke structures, and access to private markets over off-the-shelf wealth management. That preference is examined in full in [the next generation's rejection of the old playbook](#). A single family office is the structure that expectation tends to produce.

Put together, the two forces compound: more capital in motion, held by principals who increasingly want to run it themselves. That is also why family-office portfolios are shifting in composition, not only in number, a re-weighting we cover in [how family-office allocation is being re-weighted](#). Direction here is clear; magnitude is contested. We state the driver thesis with the sourced support it carries, and we present the figures as ranges rather than cherry-picks.

A global lens: where the buy-side is multiplying fastest

Most of the ranking coverage is written from a US-institutional vantage point, and the United States remains the single largest centre of single-family-office formation. But the growth is not a US-only phenomenon, and the US-centred explainers tend to miss the rest of the map.

Formation is accelerating across the United Kingdom, the Gulf, and parts of APAC. The UK remains a primary European hub for family-office structuring, supported by deep professional-services and capital-markets infrastructure. The Gulf has drawn a wave of new and relocating offices, with jurisdictions such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia building dedicated regimes and incentives explicitly designed to attract them. Across APAC, rising private wealth and a maturing advisory ecosystem are producing the same pattern, with Singapore and other Asian financial centres competing for the flow. The composition of where capital sits is shifting alongside the count, and the centres gaining share are precisely the ones the US-centred narrative tends to under-weight.

As a private markets investment group led from New York and London, with a partnership spanning multiple markets, IMS Group reads this international dimension as central rather than incidental. An allocator that maps the buy-side only onto the United States is mapping a shrinking share of it.

The combined effect is a buy-side that is spreading geographically as fast as it is growing in number. More offices, run by a newer generation, forming across more regions than the incumbent narrative accounts for.

The buy-side IMS Group is built for

The single-family-office population is expanding, getting younger, and growing more demanding, across more regions than the standard coverage tracks. That is the buy-side IMS Group, a private markets investment group, is built to serve: a network of mandate-driven allocators who want direct access, not arm's-length distribution. The wider context sits in [the next-generation-allocators thesis](#) and in [how family-office allocation is being re-weighted](#). Allocators and next-generation principals can explore [IMS Group's partnership network](#) to see how the Group works alongside offices like theirs.

Figures describing the future size of the single-family-office population are projections, not guarantees, and are presented as ranges. This article is for informational purposes only and is not investment advice.

Frequently asked questions

What is a single family office?

A single family office is a private, in-house team that manages the investments, administration, and often the succession and philanthropy of one wealthy family, typically with US\$100M+ in investable assets. It serves a single family rather than pooling several. For the full definition and the different types of family office, see [what a family office is](#).

What is the minimum wealth for a single family office?

There is no fixed legal minimum, but the working threshold is generally around US\$100M+ in investable assets (Deloitte Private, 2024). Below that level, the fixed cost of staffing a dedicated office usually outweighs the benefit, and families more often use a multi-family office or a private bank.

How many single family offices are there?

Deloitte Private estimates roughly 8,030 single family offices globally in 2024, projected to reach about 10,720 by 2030 (Deloitte Private, 2024). The 2030 figure is a projection and should be read as a range, but the direction of travel is well-evidenced.

Why is the number of single family offices growing?

Two forces are driving it: the generational handover of capital, which is putting wealth in motion at scale, and a shift in preference among younger principals. Bank of America's 2024 Study of Wealthy Americans found that 72% of younger investors (21–43), versus 28% of those over 44, no longer believe traditional stocks and bonds alone can deliver above-average returns — a cohort that tends to prefer direct control and bespoke structures over traditional wealth management. Together they push more capital into newly formed, self-directed offices.

Sources & important information

Point-in-time figures are volatile and should be re-verified on the date of publication.

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The next-generation
buy-side, read as a re-
allocation event.

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