

What is a Single-Family Office vs. a Multi-Family Office?

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Having better defined a [family office](#) in our last communication, if interested in family office services, the next question logically is, “Are you going to set up your own single-family office (SFO), use a multi-family office (MFO), or possibly implement something in between (Hybrid)?”

The lines are not as clear between the structures as they might seem, so before we discuss how best to decide, it makes sense to define these solutions a bit more carefully.

Single-Family Office (SFO)

A single-family office is a private independent entity serving only one family. The SFO will typically feature multiple full-time employees who only work for the family office, and the resulting level of service will be “full-time” as well, with the staff often working in a dedicated family office space and often spending significant time with family members every week.

Single Family Office (SFO)



Multi-Family Office (MFO)

The multi-family office provides most of the same services as a single-family office but provides these services to more than one family using shared resources across families. This approach can help to reduce the cost while also broadening the experience and expertise of the professionals involved in serving the family.

Multi-Family Office (MFO)



The Hybrid SFO/MFO Approach

The reality is that many families have elements of an SFO and elements of an MFO. A family may choose to have [a full-time family CFO](#) who manages day-to-day cash flow, bill pay, and other financial logistics, but then have that family CFO work with a multi-family office advisory team to help with more strategic [investment](#) and [financial planning](#) matters. Another family may choose to have an in-house CPA managing all their tax needs and bill pay but otherwise use an MFO for the rest of their family office needs. You may automatically assume that if a family is using an MFO they have completely outsourced everything, but in reality, they may have a hybrid SFO/MFO model.

To learn more about a family office, please visit us at <https://hbwealth.com/insights-and-news/helpful-resources/understanding-family-offices/>, send an email to info@hbwealth.com, or call 404.264.1400.

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