BENEFICIARY™ ProActive

EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

The Great Wealth Transfer

Why Beneficiary Management Has Become a **Strategic Priority** for Credit Union Leaders

Who already has the relationship with the person inheriting the wealth?



> The future belongs to the institutions that build relationships before the **wealth changes hands.**

OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Five things every credit union leader should know.

Over the next two decades, the Great Wealth Transfer will reshape how financial institutions retain members, households, and long-term relationships. This briefing explains why beneficiary management has become a strategic priority for credit union leaders.

> *"Who already has the relationship with the person inheriting the wealth? The answer to that question may determine where trillions of dollars ultimately reside.*

- **$124 trillion** will transfer over the next two decades.
- Relationships, not products, will determine where much of that wealth stays.
- Beneficiary data is an underused strategic asset.
- Credit unions have a unique opportunity to strengthen household relationships before wealth transfers.
- Proactive beneficiary management can improve governance, member engagement, and long-term retention.

CHAPTER ONE

Every credit union executive knows the Great Wealth Transfer is coming.

Because the transfer of wealth is also the transfer of financial decision-making.

Over the next two decades, more than **$124 trillion** will pass from one generation to the next, making it the largest intergenerational transfer of private wealth in history. The financial services industry has devoted enormous attention to what this means for deposits, investments, lending, and member retention. Yet one strategic question has received remarkably little attention.

Every inheritance creates a new decision-maker who will determine where inherited deposits are held, who manages family investments, which institution provides future lending, and where the next generation chooses to build its long-term financial relationship.

For credit unions, this represents both a significant risk and a major opportunity. Unlike many commercial banks, credit unions have built their success on trust, loyalty, and relationships that often span decades. However, those relationships do not automatically pass from one generation to the next. A member may have banked with the same credit union for forty years, while their children and beneficiaries have never had a meaningful interaction with the institution. By the time inherited assets are distributed, those future decision-makers may already have well-established relationships with another bank, wealth manager, or digital financial provider.

> *"At that point, the wealth is often simply following the relationship that already exists.*

The Strategic Blind Spot

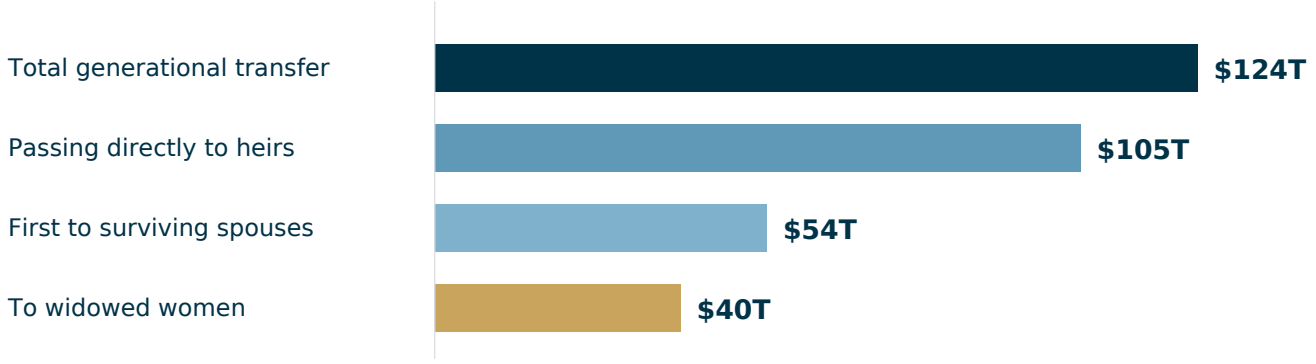
Most financial institutions invest heavily in attracting new members and deepening relationships with existing ones. Very few have a deliberate strategy for engaging the people who are most likely to inherit those relationships. Beneficiary information is typically viewed as an administrative requirement, something collected when an account is opened and reviewed only when circumstances demand it. Yet beneficiary data represents something much more valuable. It provides one of the earliest indicators of where future household relationships will emerge. Viewed through this lens, beneficiary management becomes far more than an operational process. It becomes part of a broader strategy focused on relationship continuity, stronger data governance, improved member engagement, and long-term growth.

By the Numbers

$124T	$105T	$54T	$40T
Expected to transfer between generations through 2048.	Expected to pass directly to heirs.	Expected to transfer first to surviving spouses.	Expected to pass to widowed women.

Source: Cerulli Associates, The Cerulli Report — U.S. High-Net-Worth and Ultra-High-Net-Worth Markets 2025.

Where the $124 Trillion Flows



Cerulli projections, 2025–2048. Categories overlap; spousal and widowed-women transfers are subsets of the total flow to heirs.

The Question Every Board Should Be Asking

Are we simply preparing to administer the transfer of wealth… or are we preparing to retain the relationships that determine where that wealth ultimately stays?

The institutions that thrive during the Great Wealth Transfer will not necessarily be those with the largest balance sheets or the biggest marketing budgets. They will be those that recognize a simple truth.

> *"The future belongs to the institutions that build relationships before the wealth changes hands.*

CHAPTER TWO

The Opportunity Hidden in Plain Sight

Everyone is looking at the transfer. Few are looking at the relationship.

For the past five years, the financial services industry has produced countless reports on the Great Wealth Transfer. Most focus on the same questions.

- How much wealth will transfer?
- Which institutions will attract it?
- How will younger generations choose financial providers?

These are important questions. But they all begin at the same point, after wealth changes **hands.** Very few organizations are asking a different question.

> *"How do we begin building relationships before that transfer takes place? That is where the greatest opportunity exists.*

The Missing Piece

Most financial institutions spend considerable time understanding their members. They know how long someone has banked with them, which products they use, their borrowing history, their savings behavior, their digital engagement and their financial goals. Yet many know remarkably little about the people who are most likely to inherit those relationships.

The irony is striking. An institution may spend forty years building trust with a member while having virtually no strategy for maintaining that relationship beyond the member's lifetime. When wealth eventually transfers, the next generation often makes financial decisions based upon the relationships they already have, not the ones their parents once had. By then, the

opportunity has already passed.

Executive Insight

Only **20%** of people who have already inherited wealth expect to retain the financial advisor used by the previous generation. Inherited financial relationships should never be assumed.

Source: Cerulli Associates, 2025.

A Different Way of Thinking

Historically, beneficiary information has been viewed as an administrative necessity: complete the form, store the information, retrieve it when required, job done. That approach was entirely reasonable when beneficiary management was simply about ensuring assets could be distributed correctly.

Today's environment is different. Demographic change, increasing competition, and rising consumer expectations mean beneficiary information has become something far more valuable. It is one of the earliest indicators of future household relationships. When viewed strategically, beneficiary management is no longer simply about preparing for someone's death.

> *"It becomes part of preparing for the next generation of member relationships. That subtle shift in thinking changes everything.*

From Reactive to Proactive

Traditional Approach	Strategic Approach
Beneficiary information collected once	**Beneficiary information reviewed regularly**
Paper-based updates	**Simple digital engagement**
Operational process	**Relationship strategy**
Focus on estate administration	**Focus on household continuity**
Reactive	**Proactive**

Did You Know?

A typical credit union knows:

- ✓ Products owned
- ✓ Loan balances
- ✓ Savings behavior
- ✓ Transaction history

But often knows little about:

- ✗ When beneficiary information was last reviewed
- ✗ Whether beneficiaries remain current
- ✗ Whether the next generation has any relationship with the credit union

Executive Insight

The institutions that retain the most wealth during the Great Wealth Transfer may not be those with the best investment products. **They may simply be the institutions that have already earned the trust of the people inheriting it.**

CHAPTER THREE

Why Credit Unions Have More to Gain — and More to Lose

The Great Wealth Transfer will affect every financial institution. It will not affect every institution equally.

Every bank, insurer, and wealth manager will experience the effects of the Great Wealth Transfer. Credit unions, however, face a unique challenge. Their competitive advantage has never been built on having the largest branch network, the biggest advertising budget, or the widest product range. It has been built on something far more valuable: **relationships.**

For generations, credit unions have earned extraordinary levels of member trust through personal service, community involvement, and a genuine understanding of members' financial lives. Many relationships span decades, supporting members through their first savings account, first loan, mortgage, family life, and retirement. That depth of relationship is one of the movement's greatest strengths. It also creates one of its greatest strategic risks.

Trust Does Not Automatically Pass from One Generation to the Next

A member may remain loyal to their credit union for forty years. That does not mean their children will. The next generation may already bank elsewhere. Borrow elsewhere. Invest elsewhere. Manage their finances through digital-first providers. When the time comes to inherit family wealth, they are unlikely to choose a financial institution simply because their parents did.

> *"They will choose the institution they already know and trust.*

Executive Perspective

Cerulli estimates that **Generation X will inherit approximately $14 trillion** over the next decade, making them the immediate generation most likely to influence where inherited assets and financial relationships are retained. While much of the discussion focuses on Millennials and Gen Z, the first major wave of financial decision-making is already beginning with Gen X.

Source: Cerulli Associates, 2025.

The Household Has Become the Real Relationship

Traditionally, financial institutions have managed relationships one member at a time. Increasingly, they need to think in terms of households. Financial decisions are rarely made in isolation. Parents help children buy their first homes. Grandparents contribute to education and family milestones. Adult children support aging parents with financial decisions. Spouses often consolidate finances after the death of a spouse.

> *"Wealth moves through families — not individuals.*

Credit unions that understand the wider household are far better placed to maintain trusted relationships as financial responsibility passes from one generation to the next. Those that focus solely on the individual member risk seeing an entire household relationship disappear with a single estate.

Three Strategic Risks Every Credit Union Should Consider

Relationship Risk

Beneficiaries often have little or no existing relationship with the credit union. Without meaningful engagement before an inheritance occurs, assets are more likely to follow financial relationships that already exist elsewhere.

Operational Risk

Outdated or incomplete beneficiary information creates avoidable manual work, delays estate administration, and increases operational costs. As memberships age, these issues become more frequent and more expensive.

Growth Risk

Acquiring a brand-new member is significantly more expensive than extending an existing family relationship into the next generation. Every household relationship retained reduces future acquisition costs while protecting long-term member value.

The Board-Level Question

For years, most strategic plans have focused on three priorities: growing membership, increasing member value, and improving operational efficiency. The Great Wealth Transfer introduces a fourth: **protecting relationships across generations.**

While total credit union membership continues to grow nationally, **the median credit union experienced a 0.5% decline in membership during 2025**, reinforcing the importance of retaining existing household relationships as well as acquiring new members.

Source: National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), Q4 2025 State-Level Data Report.

This is no longer simply an operational issue. It is a strategic issue that deserves board-level attention. Over the next twenty years, the institutions that retain the greatest value are unlikely to be those that simply administer inheritances efficiently. They will be those that have already earned the confidence of the next generation before the transfer ever takes place.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Credit unions have always been relationship businesses. The challenge now is ensuring those relationships survive the transfer of wealth from one generation to the next.

CHAPTER FOUR

From Administration to Strategic Advantage

The most valuable opportunity may already exist inside your member records.

For decades, beneficiary management has been viewed as an administrative process. A member names a beneficiary. The information is recorded. The file is stored until it is needed. If the information proves to be accurate years later, the process is considered successful.

Operationally, that approach has worked. Strategically, however, it may no longer be enough. The Great Wealth Transfer is changing the role beneficiary information can play within a modern credit union. Rather than existing solely to support estate administration, it can become part of a broader strategy that strengthens member relationships, improves data quality, and helps protect household continuity across generations.

> *"The information itself has not changed. Its strategic value has.*

Four Ways Proactive Beneficiary Management Creates Value

1. Better Data Quality

Every member review creates an opportunity to confirm beneficiary details alongside addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and other key member information. Over time, this improves confidence in one of the credit union's most valuable assets: its member data.

2. Better Member Engagement

Beneficiary reviews are natural life-event conversations: marriage, children, divorce, retirement, the loss of a spouse. Rather than being viewed as administration, they become opportunities to demonstrate care, strengthen trust and reinforce the credit union's commitment to supporting members throughout every stage of life.

Industry Signal

Research among wealth management firms found that **89% identify regular family communication and intergenerational engagement** as a best practice for maintaining relationships across generations. While credit unions operate differently, the underlying principle is the same. Proactive engagement strengthens long-term relationships.

Source: Cerulli Associates, 2025.

3. Better Operational Efficiency

Accurate information reduces avoidable manual work: fewer missing records, fewer outdated beneficiary details, and less time resolving discrepancies when estates need to be administered. The result is a smoother experience for both members and employees.

4. Stronger Relationship Continuity

Most importantly, proactive beneficiary management encourages credit unions to think beyond today's member. It introduces a wider perspective, one that recognizes the household as the long-term relationship rather than the individual account holder.

> *"That shift may prove to be one of the most important competitive advantages during the Great Wealth Transfer.*

Moving Beyond Compliance

Every credit union understands the importance of meeting regulatory obligations and maintaining accurate records. Those responsibilities remain essential. However, institutions that view beneficiary management only through the lens of compliance are likely to overlook its wider strategic contribution. The same process that supports governance can also strengthen member engagement. The same information that improves operational efficiency can also support relationship continuity.

> *"The greatest value lies not in collecting beneficiary information. It lies in using it to build stronger, longer-lasting relationships.*

A Strategic Shift in Thinking

Traditional View	Strategic View
Administrative requirement	**Strategic relationship asset**
One-time form completion	**Ongoing member engagement**
Estate administration	**Household relationship continuity**
Compliance activity	**Board-level strategic initiative**
Reactive process	**Proactive member strategy**

The Cost of Losing a Household

One long-standing member relationship may represent:

- Savings accounts
- Checking accounts
- Mortgages
- Auto loans
- Credit cards
- Insurance referrals
- Family recommendations
- Future generations of members

> *"Losing one member can mean losing an entire household.*

That is why beneficiary management should no longer be viewed solely as an administrative process. It is an opportunity to protect lifetime member value, preserve trusted family relationships, and strengthen long-term growth.

Executive Insight

The question is no longer whether beneficiary information is important. The question is whether your organization is extracting its full strategic value.

The Proactive Framework



A three-step operating model that turns beneficiary data into household relationships.

CHAPTER FIVE

What Leading Credit Unions Will Do Differently

Preparing for the Great Wealth Transfer requires more than better administration.

The Great Wealth Transfer will not be won by the institutions that simply process estates more efficiently. It will be won by those that use today's member relationships to build tomorrow's household relationships. That requires a shift in thinking.

Forward-looking credit unions are beginning to recognize that beneficiary management is not a standalone administrative process. It is part of a wider member engagement and relationship strategy. The objective is no longer simply to maintain accurate records.

> *"It is to create stronger, more resilient relationships that span generations.*

Five Strategic Priorities for the Next Decade

Think Beyond the Individual Member

Financial relationships increasingly exist across households rather than individuals. Parents, spouses, children, and beneficiaries all influence future financial decisions. Understanding these wider relationships will become an increasingly important competitive advantage.

Turn Life Events into Engagement Opportunities

Marriage. The birth of a child. Retirement. The death of a family member. These moments naturally prompt members to review beneficiary information, and they create valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships through timely, relevant conversations.

Make Data a Strategic Asset

Beneficiary information should no longer sit untouched for decades. Regular reviews improve data quality, reduce operational risk, and provide greater confidence that important member records remain accurate and relevant.

Build Relationships Before Wealth Transfers

The strongest financial relationships are rarely formed during estate administration. They are built years beforehand. Institutions that engage members proactively are more likely to remain trusted when financial responsibility passes to the next generation.

Measure What Matters

Credit unions have long measured member growth, lending, deposits, and operational performance. The next generation of strategic planning should also include measures such as beneficiary review rates, household engagement rates, and multi-generational member relationships.

> *"What gets measured gets managed.*

Executive Insight

Research shows that only **20% of people who have already inherited wealth** expect to retain the financial advisor used by the previous generation. Relationships do not transfer automatically. They must be earned before wealth changes hands.

Source: Cerulli Associates, 2025.

From Today's KPIs to Tomorrow's KPIs

Traditional Measures	Future Measures
New members	**Household relationships**
Loan growth	**Beneficiary review rate**
Deposit growth	**Data quality score**
Digital adoption	**Multi-generational engagement**
Member retention	**Household retention**

This shift reflects a broader change in strategic thinking. Credit unions have always measured financial performance exceptionally well. The next competitive advantage will come from measuring the health of member relationships across generations as well.

Questions Every Board Should Be Asking

- ✓ How confident are we that our beneficiary information is accurate and current?
- ✓ How often do members review their beneficiary information?
- ✓ Do we have any structured engagement with the next generation of member households?
- ✓ Could beneficiary reviews strengthen member engagement rather than simply satisfy an administrative requirement?
- ✓ Are we measuring the right indicators to protect long-term member relationships?

KEY TAKEAWAY

The Great Wealth Transfer is not simply a demographic event. It is a relationship event. The credit unions that protect the greatest long-term value will be those that begin strengthening household relationships **before** wealth changes hands, rather than relying on loyalty to transfer automatically.

CHAPTER SIX

Why Acting Now Matters

The window of opportunity is open — but it will not stay open forever.

The Great Wealth Transfer is not a single event that will happen one day in the future. It is a gradual transition that has already begun and will continue over the next two decades. Every year, millions of households experience life events that change financial responsibilities and decision-making.

For credit unions, this creates a unique opportunity. Relationships can still be strengthened. Beneficiary information can still be updated. Future decision-makers can still become engaged with the institution before significant assets change hands. Those opportunities become far more difficult once wealth has already moved elsewhere.

A Small Change Can Create Significant Long-Term Value

Unlike many strategic initiatives, improving beneficiary management does not require changing your entire operating model. It starts with a simple shift in mindset. Instead of viewing beneficiary information as something collected once and forgotten, it becomes part of an ongoing member engagement program. Small, consistent interactions over many years can significantly improve data quality, member trust, household engagement, operational efficiency and long-term relationship retention.

The Cost of Waiting

Many organizations assume there will always be time to address beneficiary information later. Unfortunately, the most important conversations often happen after the opportunity has already passed. By the time an estate is being administered:

- The member relationship has ended
- Family members may have little connection with the credit union
- Assets may already be moving elsewhere
- Opportunities to strengthen relationships have been lost

> *"Preparing earlier creates far greater strategic value than responding later.*

Executive Insight

The most successful institutions will not simply *process* the Great Wealth Transfer more efficiently. They will **prepare** for it more intelligently.

What Does Good Look Like?

Leading organizations are beginning to adopt a proactive approach built around four simple principles.

Review Regularly

Encourage members to review beneficiary information throughout their financial journey, not just when accounts are opened.

Engage Around Life Events

Marriage, children, retirement and the death of a family member all provide natural opportunities for meaningful member conversations.

Maintain High-Quality Data

Regular engagement improves confidence that beneficiary information remains accurate, complete, and up to date.

Think in Households, Not Individuals

The future value of a relationship increasingly depends on engaging spouses, beneficiaries and future generations, not simply today's account holder.

Preparing for the Future

Credit unions have always succeeded by building trusted, long-term relationships within their communities. The Great Wealth Transfer does not change that principle. It reinforces it. Institutions that begin preparing today will be better positioned to retain member relationships, protect household value, and strengthen their competitive position throughout the decades ahead.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The Great Wealth Transfer is not simply a future demographic trend. It is a strategic opportunity that is already unfolding — and the organizations that act today are likely to be those that benefit most tomorrow.

CHAPTER SEVEN

From Strategy to Action

Turning beneficiary management into a strategic capability.

Recognizing the opportunity is the first step. The next challenge is creating a practical, scalable way of keeping beneficiary information accurate, engaging members at the right time, and supporting stronger relationships across generations. This is where technology can make the difference.

> *"Not by replacing personal relationships. By making them easier to maintain.*

Introducing Beneficiary ProActive™

Beneficiary ProActive has been designed specifically to help financial institutions move from **reactive beneficiary administration** to **proactive beneficiary management**. Rather than relying on paper forms, manual reviews, or member-initiated updates, the platform enables organizations to create a structured, ongoing approach to beneficiary engagement. The result is:

- More accurate beneficiary data
- Stronger governance and audit readiness
- Reduced manual administration
- Better member experiences
- Stronger household relationships

Rather than being another software application, Beneficiary ProActive provides a practical framework for helping credit unions prepare for one of the biggest demographic and relationship shifts the financial services industry has ever experienced.

Supporting Better Outcomes Across the Organization

For Members

- A simple, intuitive digital experience
- Greater confidence that beneficiary information remains accurate
- Regular opportunities to review life changes
- Reassurance that loved ones are protected

For Credit Unions

- Improved beneficiary data quality
- Reduced manual administration
- Better governance and regulatory readiness
- More meaningful member engagement
- Stronger household relationships
- A differentiated member proposition

For Leadership Teams

- Greater confidence in member data
- Better operational oversight
- Reduced operational risk
- Improved reporting and governance
- Support for strategic member retention
- A practical response to the Great Wealth Transfer

A New Approach

Instead of waiting until a claim or estate needs to be administered, credit unions can adopt a proactive model built around continuous member engagement.

Traditional Model
Member joins
▼
Beneficiary recorded
▼
No further engagement
▼
Life circumstances change
▼
Beneficiary records become outdated
▼
Problems discovered during estate administration

Beneficiary ProActive Model
Member joins
▼
Beneficiary recorded
▼
Regular digital reviews
▼
Life-event prompted updates
▼
Accurate beneficiary information maintained
▼
Stronger member engagement
▼
Better operational outcomes
▼
Greater household relationship continuity

Executive Perspective

The Great Wealth Transfer cannot be prevented. But credit unions can prepare for it. Those that adopt a more proactive approach to beneficiary management will be better positioned to improve data quality, strengthen governance, reduce operational effort, deepen member relationships, protect household continuity, and retain long-term member value.

A Strategic Capability, Not Just a Technology Platform

Beneficiary ProActive is not intended to replace the trusted relationships that credit unions have spent decades building. Its purpose is to strengthen them. By making beneficiary management an ongoing member engagement process rather than a one-off administrative task, credit unions can improve operational performance while creating stronger, more enduring relationships that extend across generations.

As the Great Wealth Transfer accelerates, institutions that combine trusted personal relationships with proactive digital engagement will be best placed to retain members, protect household value, and differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market.

Strategic framework developed by Beneficiary ProActive, informed by the industry research referenced throughout this report.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Opportunity Starts Today

The Great Wealth Transfer is often described as a once-in-a-generation event. In reality, it is already underway.

Every day, financial responsibility passes between spouses. Every day, families experience life events that change beneficiary information. Every day, credit unions have opportunities to strengthen relationships that may ultimately determine where future assets are held.

The institutions that succeed over the next twenty years are unlikely to be those that simply react more efficiently.

> *"They will be those that prepare earlier.*

Preparing for the future does not require predicting when wealth will transfer. It requires building stronger member relationships today, improving the quality of beneficiary information, and ensuring the next generation already knows and trusts the institution before important financial decisions are made. That is a strategic choice every credit union can begin making now.

Three Questions to Take Back to Your Executive Team

1 **Are we treating beneficiary management as an administrative process — or as a strategic opportunity?**

If beneficiary information only becomes relevant when a member dies, valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships, improve data quality, and engage future decision-makers may already have been lost.

2 **Are we preparing only for today's members — or also for tomorrow's households?**

The strongest credit unions have always built relationships that last for decades. The next challenge is ensuring those relationships survive the transfer of wealth from one generation to the next.

3 **If we started building stronger beneficiary relationships today, where could our credit union be in five years' time?**

The institutions that begin preparing now will be in a far stronger position to retain household relationships, protect member value, and differentiate themselves throughout the Great Wealth Transfer.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Start the Conversation

Book a confidential executive discovery session with Beneficiary ProActive.

Beneficiary ProActive works with forward-thinking credit unions to transform beneficiary management from an operational process into a strategic member engagement capability. Rather than beginning with a product demonstration, we start with a strategic discussion focused on your organization, your members, and your long-term objectives.

A confidential executive discussion exploring:

- ✓ Your current beneficiary management approach
- ✓ Opportunities to strengthen household relationships
- ✓ Practical ways to improve beneficiary data quality
- ✓ Strategies to increase member engagement across generations
- ✓ The potential role of proactive beneficiary management within your organization

No obligation. No generic sales presentation. Just a focused executive conversation about one of the most significant strategic opportunities facing credit unions over the next two decades.

BENEFICIARY ProActive™

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> *"The Great Wealth Transfer will happen with or without a strategy. The question for every credit union is whether it intends simply to administer the transfer… or to build the relationships that determine where that wealth ultimately stays.*

Sources & References

Cerulli Associates (2025). The Cerulli Report — U.S. High-Net-Worth and Ultra-High-Net-Worth Markets 2025. · National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), Q4 2025 State-Level Data Report. · Strategic framework developed by Beneficiary ProActive.