



TARA E. CASTILLO
Partner
Alston & Bird

Tara Eliza Castillo, chair of the Structured & Warehouse Finance Team, is a partner in Alston & Bird's Finance Group. Tara focuses her practice on warehouse finance, structured finance, securitizations, and other asset-backed transactions. She represents borrowers, issuers, lenders, placement agents, underwriters, and other industry participants across a broad spectrum of asset classes, including auto loans and leases, consumer loans, credit card receivables, floorplan loans, merchant cash advance loans, online marketplace loans, and timeshare receivables. Tara also advises on the receivables financing aspects of large industry mergers and acquisitions.

Tara is a frequent industry speaker and has served as a guest lecturer at both the Universidad Diego Portales and Universidad de Chile law schools in Santiago, Chile, on securitization and structured finance. She is the author of the chapters "Securitization Readiness Considerations for Consumer Finance Companies," "Auto Loan Securitizations" and "Timeshare Loan Securitizations" in the treatise *Securitization: Legal and Regulatory Issues*.

Tara's work has earned her recognition as a leading securitization lawyer. She is listed in Chambers Global and Chambers USA in Capital Markets: Securitisation, named in the 2019 - 2022 editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*® in securitization and structured finance law, and recognized as one of *Law360's* "Top Attorneys Under 40" in capital markets. Tara is a member of the Structured Finance Association's Women in Securitization Cabinet.

How are you personally supporting Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow?

I'm very fortunate to lead a Structured and Warehouse Finance team where over 50% of the attorneys are women, including several female partners who are in other leadership positions within the Firm. My career has been shaped and positively influenced by many mentors and sponsors. I support gender equality first and foremost by paying it forward and leading by example. I strongly believe that mentorship and sponsorship are critical to recruiting and retaining female and diverse talent across all industries. In addition to mentoring, I actively support female colleagues within my firm by identifying strategic leadership, development, and advancement opportunities. I also facilitate networking opportunities both internally at my firm, and externally across the industry, because relationships and market visibility are important. On a personal level, outside of structured finance, I sponsor a scholarship through the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory for diverse high school seniors intending to pursue a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) degree in college. Supporting and providing opportunities for more women and minorities to participate in STEM related careers helps further bridge the gap to a more sustainable future.

What inspired you to get into the finance industry?

A brief stint at US Embassy Doha and Banco Estado in Santiago, Chile prior to practicing law piqued my interest in finance. I gravitated to structured finance because I like the diversity of the work in terms of the different structures and asset classes. I also had a solid mentor who invested time helping me understand the critical aspects and regulatory framework relating to structured transactions. Very early in my career, my mentor made it a point to invite me to participate on industry committee calls and to attend conferences, which was meaningful because it helped me better understand the industry at large and its different market participants.



TARA E. CASTILLO
Partner
Alston & Bird

What advice do you have for other women in securitization?

Be present and invest in and take ownership of your career. Identify and participate on SFA committees, and if you aren't already a member, join the WiS initiative! Actively seek out and identify mentors. Finally, challenge yourself, be curious, and raise your hand and volunteer for stretch opportunities.

What inspires you to continue to grow in this industry?

Our industry is innovative and ever evolving. I enjoy structuring complex transactions, identifying and leveraging cross discipline synergies, and working with borrower, issuer, lender, and underwriter clients on new asset classes. I'm most inspired by the increase in female and diverse industry participants over the last 15 years, and the work that the SFA's WiS initiative has done thus far to focus on the development, advancement, and retention of women by leveraging both male and female participants. There is still much work to be done, and I look forward to helping do my part to continue shaping the industry.

Where is your favorite vacation spot?

The island of Vieques, which is a few miles off the east coast of the main island of Puerto Rico.