

PREPARING FOR YOUR FUTURE



ESTATE PLANNING

An estate plan protects your family and your property when you die or become incapacitated. Planning your estate includes:

- Deciding who will get your things when you die.
- Naming an executor to wrap up your affairs.
- Naming guardians for your children and their property.
- Preparing for a time when you may not be able to make your own financial or medical decisions.

To accomplish these goals, you need a will, a living will, and powers of attorney.

POPULAR MYTHS

1. Estate planning is for rich, old people.
2. When I die my family will take care of my kids, so I don't need to make provisions for them.
3. I don't have anything to give anyone when I die, so I don't need to make a will.

WILL

A will identifies who will get your property, an executor to wrap up your affairs, guardians for your children and their property. If you don't make a will (or create a comparable plan), your state's laws will decide where your property should go – usually to your spouse, children, or parents.

RULES WHEN WRITING A WILL

- A will must be written in sound judgment and mental capacity to be valid.
- The document must clearly state that it your will.
- An executor, who makes sure your property is distributed the way you want, must be named.
- To be valid you must sign the will in front of two adult witnesses.
- It is not necessary to notarize or record your will but doing so minimizes claims that your will is invalid.



CHOOSING AN EXECUTOR

An executor is responsible for settling your estate after you die. Duties include:

- Taking inventory of your property and belongings
- Appraising and distributing your assets
- Paying your taxes
- Settling your debts once you are deceased

Most importantly, the executor is legally obligated to act in your interest once you are deceased.

LIVING WILL

This document spells out the types of medical treatments and life-sustaining measures you want and don't want, such as mechanical breathing (respiration and ventilation), tube feeding or resuscitation.

... and I'm sure
I can trust you
not to fight over
my money
when I'm
gone.



POWER OF ATTORNEY (POA)

A power of attorney is a legal document that gives someone you chose the authority to act in your place. With a valid POA the trusted person can take care of important matters for you (i.e. pay your bills and manage your investments) if you are unable to do so yourself.

DURABLE POA

A durable POA means that the document stays in effect if you become incapacitated and are unable to handle matters on your own.

MEDICAL POA

This type of POA specifically names someone to oversee your medical care and make health decisions for you if you are unable to do so.

FINANCIAL POA

This type of POA gives someone the authority to handle financial transactions on your behalf. This type of POA can be very simple and used for a single transaction (i.e. a real estate deal), or may be more complex and exhaustive.

REVIEW YOUR ESTATE PLAN

Periodically review your estate plan and consider changes if:

- The value of your assets has changed considerably.
- You marry, divorce, or remarry.
- You have a child.
- You relocate to a different state.
- The people named as your executor and/or POA die, become incapacitated, or your relationship changes.
- One of your heirs dies.
- The laws affecting your estate change.

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