



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO THE DOCUMENTS, DECISIONS, AND PROCESS OF ESTATE PLANNING.

Use this guide to understand the key pieces of an estate plan, how your property can pass, and the general steps in the planning process — and to help start conversations with your family.

1 THE DOCUMENTS

Key estate planning documents and what they do.



WILL

Directs how your probate property is distributed after your death, names an executor, and can nominate guardians for minor children.

A will does not avoid probate.



TRUST

Holds and manages property according to its terms and can provide for management during incapacity and distribution after your death.

A trust can help avoid or reduce probate.



FINANCIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

Names someone you choose to handle financial and legal matters when authorized by the document.

Allows someone to manage your finances if you cannot.



HEALTH CARE POWER OF ATTORNEY

Names someone you choose to make health care decisions when you cannot make those decisions yourself.

Ensures your health care wishes are followed.



LIVING WILL

States your wishes regarding life-sustaining treatment under certain end-of-life circumstances.

Used with a Health Care Power of Attorney.

2 HOW PROPERTY ACTUALLY PASSES

Not everything passes through your will.

YOUR ASSETS

How is the asset owned or designated?



TRUST

Goes to the trust and is governed by the trust terms.



JOINT OWNERSHIP (With Right of Survivorship)

Typically goes to the surviving owner(s).



TOD / POD (Transfer or Payable on Death)

Goes to the named beneficiary.



BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION

Goes to the named beneficiary (e.g., retirement accounts, life insurance).



INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP (No Beneficiary Designation)

Generally passes through probate and is distributed under your will.

Your estate plan is more than your documents. Your assets must be coordinated with the plan.

3 THE ESTATE PLANNING PROCESS

A simple roadmap from start to finish.

1



IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS

- Who should receive your property?
- Who should make decisions for you?
- Are there children or beneficiaries who need additional planning?

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2



CHOOSE YOUR PEOPLE

- Executor
- Trustee
- Financial Agent
- Health Care Agent
- Guardians (for minor children)

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3



PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS

- Will
- Trust, if appropriate
- Financial Power of Attorney
- Health Care Power of Attorney
- Living Will
- Property-transfer documents

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4



SIGN YOUR PLAN PROPERLY

Complete the required execution, witnessing, and notarization according to Ohio law.

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5



COORDINATE YOUR ASSETS

- Review ownership titles
- Update beneficiary designations
- Consider TOD/POD designations
- Fund your trust (if applicable)

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KEEP YOUR PLAN CURRENT

Review your plan after major changes in your family, finances, health, or wishes.

4 QUESTIONS WORTH DISCUSSING WITH YOUR FAMILY

Start the conversation.



Who would handle things if you couldn't?



Who should receive your property when you die?



Who would care for minor children?



Should anyone's inheritance be protected or held until a certain age?



Does your family know where your estate-planning documents are?



Do the people you've named know what role you've asked them to serve?

