

Estate Planning Document Checklist



Use this checklist to understand the essential documents that should be included in any estate plan and the purpose of each.

1. Balance Sheet

- A helpful prerequisite to estate planning documents
- Complete list of owned assets as well as accounts intended to pay out later (like life insurance)
- Includes any outstanding debts

2. Wills

- Lists wishes regarding assets
- Names guardians for minor children
- Names an executor

3. Revocable Living Trust

- Alternative to a will for large or complicated estates
- Ensures privacy from public records
- Includes any outstanding debts

4. Beneficiary Designations

- Can include individuals or groups of people, charities/nonprofits, minor children, and/or trustees
- Names recipients of life insurance policies, retirement account balances, and annuities

5. Tangible Personal Property Memo

- Ensures desired distribution for property that has sentimental value
- Can explain personal reasons for leaving property to certain beneficiaries

6. Advance Healthcare Directive (AHCD)

- Often contains a living will and medical power of attorney
- Outlines medical preferences
- Contains a HIPAA waiver

7. Financial Power of Attorney

- Designates someone to manage finances and property
- Doesn't apply to assets held in a trust

8. Insurance and Financial Documents

- Insurance policies
- Bank accounts and credit cards
- Mortgages and loans
- Tax documents
- Pensions and retirement benefits
- Investments

9. Identification Documents

- Birth, marriage, and divorce certificates
- Social security card
- Army discharge papers, prenuptial agreements, etc.

10. Titles and Property Deeds

- Property including homes, vehicles, and other real estate
- Property may need to be retitled if a trust is established

11. Digital Account Logins and Passwords

- Will may name a separate digital executor
- Includes a list of digital assets and login information for all accounts

12. Funeral Instructions

- Details preferences for burial, cremation, etc.
- Includes any other funeral wishes like music, flowers, etc.