



A Guide to Making Your Will

Direct Your Assets to the People and Causes You Care About Most

Making a will is an important way to extend your love, care, generosity and gratitude to family and friends. It is also an excellent way to support our mission. So why have 60 percent of U.S. adults living in households with children not created a will?

Perhaps the whole thing seems too time-consuming, difficult or even mysterious. To overcome these obstacles, review this helpful guide that gives clear answers to the questions you may have.

What Happens if You Do Not Have a Will?

If you die without a will, your estate will be divided according to laws in the state where you live. The resulting transfer of assets may be very different from what you had wished. While certain family members will likely receive part of your estate, close friends or charities that you may have wanted to remember will not be included.

What Can You Put in Your Will?

Only you know the special circumstances of your family members and heirs. That is why it is important to discuss these factors with your attorney. Some things to address include how you want to distribute your estate, whom you want to be executor and what charities you wish to support.

For example, you may want your will to:

- Name the **executor** of your estate.
- Give your property to those you choose.
- Set up trusts to save on taxes and provide financial management.
- Name a guardian for minor children.
- Ensure lifetime care for a child with a disability.
- Pass what you choose to children of a prior marriage.
- Set guidelines for distributions if you and your spouse die at the same time.

executor

the person named in a will to manage the estate, collect the property, pay any debt and distribute property according to the will

Ask your attorney about a living will and a durable power of attorney in case you become incapacitated.

Your attorney may suggest other components, but be prepared to talk about these items so you will be in a position to have a document drafted that accomplishes your wishes.

Why Leave Charitable Gifts in Your Will?

Some individuals plan on leaving gifts to A Kitty's Pursuit of Happiness, talk about it with us and their friends, and then never get around to properly establishing such gifts in their wills. If you make this mistake, your estate will not realize the benefits of the unlimited charitable estate tax deduction, and our work will not receive your support.

You Can Revoke Your Will

Note that one of the articles in your will is "revocation of prior wills and **codicils**." Relationships and situations change, and this article ensures that you are free to alter your will with a codicil or to change your will entirely at any time.

codicil

a written and properly witnessed legal change to a will

Typical Components (Articles) of a Will

- Your identification and state of residence
- Revocation of prior wills and codicils
- Name of executor
- Payment of taxes and administration of estate
- Payment of debts
- Specific gifts
- **Residuary estate**
- Common disaster

residuary estate

the part of an estate left after debts, taxes and specific bequests have been paid

It is a good idea to keep your old will but to write on its pages

- 1) that it has been revoked and replaced by a new will, and
- 2) the date of the new will. This may be useful in situations when someone wants to challenge a newer will.

We want to work with you to create a gift that best fits your circumstances and our needs. To learn more about including us in your will, please contact us today.

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