

TERMS TO KNOW

Estate Planning

Probate

This is the process where a judge reviews your Will and gives your executor permission to distribute your assets. Typically, the court charges a fee for this process, and your will becomes public record.

Assets

Simply put, this refers to your “stuff.” Everything you own is considered your assets, including cash, stocks, car, home, collectibles, furniture, cryptocurrencies and more.

Estate/Estate Planning

Your estate is everything you own. Estate Planning is the process of choosing who will manage your affairs and receive your estate if something happens to you.

Agent or attorney-in-fact

The person you name in your Financial Power of Attorney or Advance Health Care Directive to act or make decisions on your behalf if you are incapacitated.

Beneficiaries

These are the people you name as the recipients of your assets. Beneficiaries can be anyone you choose, including family members, friends, loved ones or charitable organizations.

Executor

Your executor is the person you name who is in charge of administering your estate after you're gone. This person is responsible for collecting your assets, paying your debts and distributing your estate to your beneficiaries.

Guardian

The person who you want to care for your children if something happens to you.

Trustee

Similar to an executor, a trustee is a person (or corporate fiduciary like an investment firm or bank) who you name to be responsible for managing the property held by your Trust.

Last Will and Testament

Commonly referred to as a Will, this is a legal document that names your executor and communicates your final wishes regarding your assets and beneficiaries.

Financial Power of Attorney

A legal document that gives a person you choose the ability to conduct financial transactions, sign documents and make other legal decisions on your behalf.

Advance Health Care Directive

If you are incapacitated and cannot communicate your wishes to your medical team, this document empowers the person you name to make decisions about treatment, symptom management and end-of-life care.

Revocable Trust

A Revocable Trust acts as a “bucket” you fill with your assets. Unlike a Will, which does not take effect until you pass, a Trust is active the day it's created.