

Starting to Plan Your Estate



Large or small, whatever the size of your estate, it is important to plan. If you do not have a will, a court will select your heirs and distribute your property as prescribed by state law. On the other hand, if you prepare a will, you decide exactly whom you want to benefit. While estate planning may seem like a daunting task, it need not be. Please use this brief guide for simple ideas to start your planning.

Consider these five basic questions as you start to plan your estate:

1. What are my assets?
2. Whom do I want to receive those assets?
3. Who can help me plan my estate?
4. Who will manage my estate?
5. What do I want to accomplish with my estate plan?

What are my assets?

A first step in planning your estate is making a list of your assets and liabilities. To help you, use the Arbor Day Foundation's guide: **Your Estate Planning Inventory**. This checklist helps you organize your estate and will make working with an estate planning attorney easier.

Whom do I want to receive my assets?

You'll want to think of your family members, friends, and charities that are important to you. Think of whom you want to help, whom you want to benefit and why. Here's a simple exercise to get started:

1. Make a list of whom you want to benefit.
2. Make a list of items or assets you wish to give.
3. Draw connecting lines from the "Who" list to the "What" list.

Whom I Want to Benefit

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Items I Want to Give

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Who Can Help Me Plan My Estate?

It is important to have advisors to help you finalize your estate plan. Legal requirements need be met to ensure that your wishes are accomplished. An estate planning attorney may be all you need for your estate. Or, with larger estates, you may want to assemble an estate planning team which may include a financial planner, insurance agent, trust officer, and estate planning attorney. If you need assistance in finding an advisor, please refer to the Arbor Day Foundation's guide: **Hiring An Attorney to Assist in Your Estate Planning.**

Who Will Manage My Estate?

You will want to carefully consider who will manage your estate. Naming an executor or trustee can have far-reaching implications. It's important to find someone who will understand your objectives and who has the financial or legal skill to administer your estate. As you think about whom you name as your executor, also consider whether this same person is the appropriate person to manage your affairs in case of incapacitation.

What Do I Want to Accomplish With My Estate Plan?

In drafting your estate plan, you need to decide upon your objectives. Leaving an inheritance can have a profound effect upon your

family, friends, and the causes you care about. Consider whether any of those whom you want to benefit with your estate have any special needs. Are there certain assets that may be especially meaningful to one heir? Do you need to set up controlled distribution of assets to minor children or others? Are there charitable goals you wish to achieve? What kind of legacy will you leave?

Getting Started is the Hardest Step

Actually, you've already taken the first step by simply getting started. And once you start, finishing is the easy part. The language of estate planning can make it seem more technical than it need be. Here are a few definitions to help you feel more comfortable with the process:

1. The executor is a person who implements the directions in a will. It is some one who is appointed by a testator (a person who dies leaving a will) to implement the directions in the testator's will.
2. An administrator is a person who is appointed to handle the affairs of a person who dies intestate (without a will), or one who dies with a will but without naming an executor.
3. Probate, through a court proceeding, is the act of proving the validity of a will and settling an estate.

The Arbor Day Foundation can provide you and your advisor with additional assistance in your planning. We cannot provide tax or legal advice. If you would like additional assistance or copies of our other guides, please contact our Gift Planning Department at (888) 448-7337 or send an email to giftplanning@arborday.org. If you have included the Arbor Day Foundation in your plans, please let us know so that we may acknowledge your generosity and welcome you to the Arbor Day Foundation Legacy Circle.

8. Do you have any children? Yes No

If Yes, please provide the following information:

Children:	Birth Date:	SS#:
_____	___/___/___	_____
_____	___/___/___	_____
_____	___/___/___	_____
_____	___/___/___	_____
_____	___/___/___	_____
_____	___/___/___	_____

Do you have legal custody of all your children? Yes No

If No, who has custody? _____

What is your financial obligation? _____

Are any of your children adopted? If so, please list names and date of adoption:

Advisors

1. Legal: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

2. Taxes: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

3. Insurance: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

4. Investments: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

5. Bank: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

6. Other: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

Financial Information

Asset Description (please attach a separate listing if more room is needed)

1. Bank Accounts, CD's	Estimated Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

II. Mutual Funds	Estimated Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

III. Bonds, Notes	Estimated Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

IV. Stocks	Estimated Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

V. Real Estate

A. Principal Residence _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Estimated Value \$ _____ Tax Assessment \$ _____
 Ownership _____ Amount of Indebtedness, if any _____

B. Other Real Estate (vacation home, farm, rental property, etc.)

Please list state of location, estimated value, indebtedness, and ownership

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

VI. Personal Property

Please describe, list estimated value, and ownership

- 1. Furnishing _____
- 2. Jewelry _____
- 3. Automobiles _____
- 4. Collectibles _____
- 4. Art _____
- 6. Other _____

VII. Safety Deposit Box

Please describe contents, list estimated value, and ownership

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

VIII. Commercial Annuities

	Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
1. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____			

Please specify beneficiaries of the listed annuities:

IX. IRAs

	Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
1. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____			

Please specify beneficiaries of the listed IRAs:

IX. Retirement Plans, Pension, Profit-sharing, 401(k), 403(b), etc.

	Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
1. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____			

Please specify beneficiaries of the listed IRAs:

X. Life Insurance

	Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
1. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____			

Please specify beneficiaries of the listed policies:

Are there any loans on the policies? If so, please list indebtedness _____

XI. Business Interests (corporate, partnership, proprietorship, etc.)

	Value	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Joint Owners
1. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	\$ _____	_____	_____	_____
Total:	\$ _____			

Are there any loans? If so, please list indebtedness _____

Indebtedness Description (please list any liabilities that are not already listed under Asset Description section; attach a separate listing if more room is needed)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Summary of Financial information

Total Assets

	Owned By You	Owned by Spouse	Owned Jointly
1. Bank Accounts/CDs	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. Mutual Funds	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
3. Bonds, Notes	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
4. Stocks	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. Real Estate	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. Tangible Property	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
7. Annuities	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
8. IRA's	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
9. Retirement Plans	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
10. Life Insurance	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
11. Business Interests	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Assets	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

Total Liabilities

	Owned ByYou	Owned by Spouse	Owned Jointly
1. Auto Loans	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
2. Personal Loans	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
3. Mortgages	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
4. Business Loans	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. Pledges	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. Life Insurance Loans	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
7. Credit Card Balances	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
8. Other	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Indebtedness	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Net Worth:	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

INHERITANCES: (please describe any anticipated inheritances or gifts)

INCOME: (please list annual income from all sources)

You _____
Spouse _____
Joint _____

Notes

Estate Planning Documents

Will (please provide copies)

	YOU	SPOUSE
1. Existing Will	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Date of Will	____/____/____	____/____/____
3. Date of Last Codicil	____/____/____ ____/____/____	____/____/____ ____/____/____
4. Name of Executor	_____	
5. Name of Guardian(s)	_____	

Other Estate Planning Documents (please describe and provide copies – examples may include: living trusts, insurance trusts, living wills, health care proxy, power of attorney, charitable trust, charitable gift annuity, premarital agreement, etc)

	YOU	SPOUSE
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Expected Beneficiaries

Family Beneficiaries (list names and what you wish to give)

Non Family Beneficiaries (list names and what you wish to give)

Charitable Beneficiaries (list names and what you wish to give)

Notes

Additional Information

1. Describe any health problems or special needs of your family members.

2. If you have minor children, please list your choices of guardians in case of your death(s):

Primary Guardian

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

Relationship: _____

Alternate Guardian

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

Relationship: _____

3. If you have minor children, do you want their share of your estate to be distributed outright when they attain the age of majority (age 18), or retained in a trust fund to be administered for their benefit until a specified age?

Notes

Questions for Your Attorney

Including the Arbor Day Foundation in Your Will



Your love of trees can be a lasting legacy. Consider leaving the Arbor Day Foundation in your will. Your bequest will further the mission we all share of inspiring people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees.

Many people have told us of their satisfaction in knowing that their bequest will leave a lasting legacy of a greener Earth to be enjoyed by generations to come. They include the Arbor Day Foundation in their will as a means to accomplish their charitable goals. The Arbor Day Foundation uses all bequests to support tree planting and conservation efforts throughout the country and around the world.

If you haven't done so, please consider including the Arbor Day Foundation in your will by providing your attorney with the following language for your will:

I give _____ (specific amount or property, percentage, or residue) to the tax-exempt Arbor Day Foundation, located in Nebraska City, NE, for the purpose of supporting its environmental stewardship programs. (Tax ID 23-7169265)

If you have already included the Arbor Day Foundation in your will, please let us know so that we may acknowledge your generosity and welcome you to the Arbor Day Foundation Legacy Circle. Let us know by calling our Gift Planning Department at (888) 448-7337 or sending an email to giftplanning@arborday.org. Or, for your convenience, please return the response form below in the enclosed envelope.



-
- Please contact me about including the Arbor Day Foundation in my will.
 - I have already included the Arbor Day Foundation in my will.
 - I would like information about Charitable Gift Annuities.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Best time to call: _____

email address: _____

Giving Gifts Through Your Retirement Plan



One of the easiest and most tax efficient ways to give a gift to the Arbor Day Foundation is through your retirement savings, such as an IRA, 401(k) or 403(b) account. Many retirement accounts are subjected to both income and estate taxes. However, giving some or all of these assets may be one of the lowest cost ways available to provide critical support for the Arbor Day Foundation and the mission we all share of inspiring people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees.

How to Provide for the Arbor Day Foundation with Your Retirement Plan

There are two ways to give a gift to the Arbor Day Foundation through your retirement account:

- **Primary Beneficiary:** This allows you to name the Arbor Day Foundation as the primary beneficiary of a stated percent age or the entire amount of the assets in your retirement plan.
- **Contingent Beneficiary:** You can name the Arbor Day Foundation as a contingent beneficiary of a stated percentage or the entire amount of your retirement plan. A contingent beneficiary receives assets only if the named primary beneficiaries, such as family members or friends, do not survive you.

How to Name the Arbor Day Foundation in Your Retirement Plan

The administrator of your retirement account will provide you with a Designation of Beneficiary form. This form directs where your retirement account assets will go after your lifetime. It is important to update this form to reflect your current wishes.

To name the Arbor Day Foundation as a beneficiary to your retirement plan, please use the following address:

Arbor Day Foundation
100 Arbor Avenue
Nebraska City, NE 68410
Tax Identification Number: 23-7169265

How to Include the Arbor Day Foundation in Your Will

If you haven't done so, please consider including the Arbor Day Foundation in your will. Your legacy can serve the Earth for generations to come. To do so, please provide your attorney with the following language for your will:

I give _____ (specific amount or property, percentage, or residue) to the tax-exempt Arbor Day Foundation, located in Nebraska City, NE, for the purpose of supporting its environmental stewardship programs. (Tax ID 23-7169265)

If you have already included the Arbor Day Foundation in your will, please let us know so that we may acknowledge your generosity and welcome you to the Arbor Day Foundation Legacy Circle. Let us know by calling our Gift Planning Department at (888) 448-7337 or sending an email to giftplanning@arborday.org.

Tax Efficient Benefits to Discuss with Your Advisor

When you designate the Arbor Day Foundation as a beneficiary to your retirement account, you can avoid income and estate taxes that might otherwise apply. Discuss with your advisor whether it would be advantageous to name the Foundation as a beneficiary to your retirement account and to leave other, less heavily taxed assets to family members or friends.

Funding a Testamentary Gift with Assets from Your Retirement Plan

Another option for your retirement plan assets is to fund a testamentary life income gift, such as a charitable remainder trust or charitable gift annuity. This option allows for your heirs to receive income for their lifetime(s), and after their lifetime(s), the

remainder in the trust or annuity would be distributed to the Arbor Day Foundation. You should talk with a qualified financial advisor about setting up this transaction to see whether it is suitable for your needs.

Using Your Gift

The Arbor Day Foundation uses all unrestricted charitable gifts to support tree planting and conservation efforts throughout the country and around the world. If you want your funds to be used in a more specific way, please contact the Foundation so we can help ensure that we can meet your wishes. Your support of the Foundation will fund tree planting and conservation programs that will make a positive impact to the earth for generations to come.

Planning your estate is a complex matter. Therefore, it is important that you talk with your financial advisors to ensure that your long-term goals are met.

Many people name the Arbor Day Foundation as a beneficiary to their retirement plan without letting us acknowledge their generous support. If you decide to support the Foundation in this way, please share this information with us so that we may acknowledge your generosity. It is our desire to express our gratitude to everyone who partners with us to plant trees and leave a lasting legacy to the Earth.

If you have any questions, please contact the Foundation and allow us to help. If you are interested in exploring this option further, please call our Gift Planning Department toll free at (888) 448-7337 or send an email to giftplanning@arborday.org.