

Bridging the Gap: The Importance of Estate Planning Through Generations

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Estate Planning Statistics

- According to a 2021 Gallup poll, fewer than 46% of U.S. adults have a will.
- 30% of Americans do not know if their parents have a will.
- 40% of Americans do not know what is in their parents' wills.
- 64% of American adults who work with financial advisors have never discussed their estate plans with their advisor.
- 35% of American adults say they have personally experienced family conflict or know someone who has experienced family conflict as a result of not having an estate plan or will in place.

When The Unknown Poses Problems

Who? What? Where?

- Over half (52%) of adult children don't know where their parents store their estate documents. 58% percent of those adult children don't know the contents of the documents.
- Homework: Ask your adult children or beneficiaries whether they know the contents of your estate plan documents and where to find them.

Digital Considerations

- The average person under 70 years old has more than 160 digital accounts.
- According to a 2020 poll, 63% of respondents who have acted as executors of their parents' estates said it was harder than expected to access accounts of the deceased.
- Although over half of adult children(51%) will be responsible for executing their parent's wills, only one in three (36%) know or have access to their parents' passwords for their online accounts.

Where To Start?

- Don't wait until it's "almost" too late.
- A study by Ameriprise Financial found that a life-altering incident was the trigger for 90% of children who had discussed estate planning with their parents.
- Discuss, create and update so that they can advocate.
- Leave a roadmap for your legacy.
- On average Americans work 42 years before retirement.
- Make sure that assets that you have worked for are distributed the way that you intend.

What If I Die Without An Estate Plan?

If you die without a will in New Hampshire, your assets will go to your closest relatives under state "intestate succession" laws.

Two examples:

1. If you pass away with children but no spouse, children inherit all of your assets.
2. If you pass away with a spouse but no issue or parents your spouse inherits everything.

Estate Planning Tool: Wills

- A will is a written document expressing a deceased person's wishes. A will becomes active only after one's death.
- All wills must go through a legal process called probate which can be lengthy and potentially contentious if family members contest the will.
- The most common type of will is called a testamentary will. It is a legally enforceable document stating how you want your affairs handled and assets distributed after you die.
- This is what you can find in a will: a list of assets and debts, including any family heirlooms, the contents of safe deposit boxes, property, and vehicles. You can leave your possessions to heirs, friends, or charities.
- If you have minor-aged children at home, it's important to have a will that appoints guardianship of your children. If a guardian is not appointed at the time of death, your surviving family will have to seek help in a probate court to have a guardian appointed for your children.

Estate Planning Tool: Trusts

- Unlike a will, a living trust passes property outside of probate court. Your property can pass immediately and directly to your named beneficiaries.
- A living or revocable trust provides for the organization and management of your assets during your lifetime, including any periods of disability.
- Creating a trust also provides an incredible amount of flexibility after your death. For example, you could have your trust divide up your assets after you are no longer living and create new trusts for your children to protect them against creditors and divorce.

Estate Planning Tool: Advanced Directives

- 1 in 5 people (18%) do not know what an advanced health care directive is.
- Advanced directives (also called advanced healthcare directives) stipulate a person's wishes regarding end-of-life care and/or what is to happen if the person becomes mentally incapacitated or unable to communicate later in life.
- Only around one in three American adults have an advance care directive.
- Two major purposes for an AHCD:
 - Listing out the types of health care treatments you do and do not want.
 - Naming someone to make decisions on your behalf if you are unable to communicate.

Estate Planning Checklist

	LAST UPDATED (month/day/year)	LOCATION	TRUSTED CONTACT
<input type="checkbox"/> LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUST			
<input type="checkbox"/> ADVANCED HEALTHCARE DIRECTIVE			
<input type="checkbox"/> FINANCIAL INFORMATION			
<input type="checkbox"/> PROOF OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS			
<input type="checkbox"/> TITLES AND PROPERTY			
<input type="checkbox"/> DIGITAL LOGINS AND PASSWORDS			