

Frequently Asked Questions about ***Estate Planning***

Estate planning is the process of organizing your personal, financial, and medical affairs to ensure your wishes are honored during your lifetime and after your death. Whether you have a large estate or modest assets, a well-crafted estate plan can help protect your loved ones, avoid unnecessary taxes, and reduce the burden on your family.

What is estate planning?

Estate planning involves creating legal documents that outline how your assets, healthcare, and personal matters should be handled if you become incapacitated or pass away.

Do I need an estate plan?

Estate planning is not about wealth alone. Even with modest assets, a plan helps ensure your property is distributed per your wishes, your voice is preserved in the care of your children, your medical care preferences are memorialized, and much more.

When should I create an estate plan?

Anyone over 18 should consider having basic estate planning documents such as a healthcare power of attorney, durable power of attorney, and Will. More comprehensive planning is recommended when you own property, get married, have children, start a business, or experience other major life changes. This may include creating a trust as well.

How often should I update my estate plan?

You should review your estate plan every 3–5 years, or after major life events like marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, or any significant change in assets or debts.

What happens if I die without a Will?

Your estate will be distributed according to the state's intestacy laws. The Court will appoint an administrator and will decide who inherits your assets, which can lead to delays and disputes.

What is the role of an executor in estate planning?

An executor is named in a Will to carry out the deceased's wishes. The executor submits the Will into probate, gathers and develops an inventory of estate assets and their values, pays debts, and distributes assets to designated beneficiaries. The Probate Court remains involved in a supervisory role.

Do I need a lawyer to create an estate plan?

While you can use online tools for basic documents, it is recommended to consult an estate planning attorney to learn about all of your options — especially if your situation involves complex assets, blended families, or special needs planning.

