

THE
NATIONAL LAW REVIEW

Estate Planning Checklists and Sample Documents

Monday, February 18, 2019

There are few tasks more important than estate planning for the elderly and those with significant assets to their name. Financial resources must be taken into account when folks enter their twilight years. Issues like who receives their assets, at what rate, how they can be utilized, and the tax implications are all necessary issues to tackle with an experienced estate planning attorney, using checklists and sample documents to have the process explained as simply as possible. That said, it is also vital that attorneys get a sense from their clients as to what the answers to these questions of asset allocation might be from the very start.

The Estate Planning Checklists and Sample Documents

Personal/Family Information: Checklists and Sample Documents

1. The sample document is available [here](#)
2. Client's names and addresses, as well as their spouse (and any ex-spouses that may be included in alimony payments or the estate planning)
3. Citizenship status in the United States and/or other countries
4. Children's names and addresses, including which ones may be the offspring of only the client's spouse (all biological children, step-children, adopted children, etc., must be included with birth dates)
5. Medical history regarding serious health issues that could be imminent

Financial Assets: Checklists and Sample Documents

1. A sample document is available [here](#)
2. Real estate assets, homes, vacation homes, land, property without a dwelling, etc., as well as the mortgage balance if such remains
3. Automobiles and other vehicles
4. Expensive belongings, such as antiques, furniture, jewelry, works of art, collections, gold, etc.
5. Financial accounts: investment accounts, stocks, bonds, cash savings, checking and savings accounts, money market accounts, CD's, Treasury notes, pensions, IRAs, Roth IRAs, SEP IRAs, and any other tax-favored plan
6. Life insurance and listed beneficiaries, as well as the value of the policy
7. Any other insurance that may have financial or tax results for either client or spouse
8. Business interests or major shareholder positions in companies, as well as limited partnerships
9. Trusts, expected inheritances, and any other assets of value
10. Liabilities other than home or property mortgages (as listed above)

Estate Planning Objectives: Checklists and Sample Documents



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1. A sample document is available [here](#).
2. While these range from person to person and are far more subjective than the preceding questions, there are a number of important points to consider.
3. First, a client ought to consider how they would dispose of their assets in an ideal scenario (that is, without estate tax complications).
4. Second, clients should consider if and how much money will be provided for their offspring and other surviving family members outside of their estate.
5. Lastly, estate planning clients need to consider what personal aims that they have in terms of their family and how their estate is divvied out, regardless of any potential tax hazards. This is similar to the first question. Importantly, it differs in the sense that this is a practical consideration, while the first is an idealist one.

Guardians, Executors, Trustees, and Miscellaneous Matters: Checklists and Sample Documents

1. A sample document is available [here](#)
2. Executors and trustees (primary and substitute) will need to be named, as well as the guardians of minors if any such are living.
3. Community property, if such exists
4. Powers of attorney [a sample document available [here](#)]
5. Living will and healthcare power (these both relate to the instructions or individual responsible for your health in the event that the client is unable to do so for themselves) [sample document available [here](#)]

Summary

With this checklist and the sample documents provided, a lawyer ought to be able to conduct a preliminary survey of a client's wishes as well as proceed in the manner necessary to reach a satisfactory result. For a sample will with annotations, there is one provided [here](#) by FindLaw.

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