

Who Needs a Will? You Do.

Wills: Introduction and Overview

A Will lets you decide what happens with your property after you pass away. Any adult who owns assets can benefit from having a Will. Without a Will, the law decides how your property is distributed and who gets what. A Will can address assets including savings, investments and real and personal property like jewelry, furniture and heirlooms.



Over 50% of American adults do not have Wills. Regardless of your age, financial status or family situation, it is important to have a Will to prepare for an uncertain future.

Why is a Will Important?

A properly drafted and executed Will is the best way to ensure that your wishes are carried out and can eliminate family disputes after you die. Other than a small number of specific legal limitations, you can distribute your property however you want in your Will. Among many other things, with a Will you can:

- ✓ Give your children equal shares to your inheritance
- ✓ Give everything you own to one other person
- ✓ Donate to your favorite charity
- ✓ Set up a trust for the care of your pet
- ✓ ...and anything else you may desire, within some limitations

FAQs

- **Does everything have to be distributed through a Will?**

With proper planning, many of your assets can be distributed automatically, without your heirs having to go through the probate process. However, a Will is still useful for assets that cannot be or are not subject to automatic distribution.

- **Should I draft my own Will?**

It is not recommended. There are specific laws that govern how a Will has to be drafted and executed in order for it to be valid. These laws vary from state to state and it's risky to rely on forms you may find on the internet.

- **Can I exclude people from my Will?**

Yes. A Will lets you say both who should get your assets and who should not (subject to a few legal limitations).

- **Can I change my Will?**

Yes, as long as you remain mentally competent. Depending on what you want to change, you may need a new Will or you may be able to write a simpler codicil. It's important that any change to your Will be properly drafted and executed.



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