

Year-End Estate Planning Checklist

Work through the questions below honestly. Mark anything that applies to you. At the end, pick ONE item to actually address in the first quarter of the new year. The planning that happens is the planning that gets done.

1. When did you last look at your plan?

- ☐ My most recent planning documents were drafted in the last 3 years
- ☐ My most recent planning documents are 3 to 5 years old
- ☐ My most recent planning documents are 5 to 10 years old
- ☐ My most recent planning documents are more than 10 years old
- ☐ I am not sure when my documents were last updated
- ☐ I do not have a current estate plan

2. Who are your beneficiaries?

- ☐ I have reviewed every beneficiary designation in the last year
- ☐ I have at least one account where the beneficiary may be out of date (ex-spouse, deceased person, outdated contingent)
- ☐ I have at least one old 401(k) from a prior employer and I'm not sure who is listed as beneficiary
- ☐ A minor child is named directly as a beneficiary without any trust structure in place
- ☐ I'm not sure what my beneficiary designations say

3. Is your executor still the right person?

- ☐ The person I named as executor is still available, willing, and appropriate
- ☐ The person I named is no longer appropriate (deceased, estranged, moved away, no longer trusted)
- ☐ I named this person a long time ago and we have not talked about it since
- ☐ I do not remember who I named

4. Are your Power of Attorney and healthcare proxy still appropriate?

- ☐ My POA and healthcare proxy name people who are still available and appropriate
- ☐ One or both of these may need to be updated
- ☐ My POA was signed more than 10 years ago
- ☐ I do not have a durable Power of Attorney, or I'm not sure if mine is durable
- ☐ I do not have a healthcare proxy
- ☐ I do not have a living will

YEAR-END ESTATE PLANNING AUDIT

5. Has your family changed in the last 1 to 2 years?

- ☐ New marriage
- ☐ Divorce
- ☐ New grandchild or child
- ☐ Death in the family
- ☐ Serious illness or diagnosis
- ☐ New business or sale of a business



- ☐ Significant inheritance received
- ☐ Property bought or sold
- ☐ Move to or from New Jersey
- ☐ A child turning 18
- ☐ A beneficiary going through their own hard season (addiction, divorce, financial trouble)

6. If you have a trust, is it funded?

- ☐ I do not have a trust (that is fine for many families)
- ☐ I have a trust and I know for sure it is fully funded
- ☐ I have a trust and I'm not sure whether it is funded
- ☐ I have a trust and I know some assets are not in it

7. Your digital life

- ☐ If something happened to me tomorrow, my family could access the digital accounts they would need to (email, cloud storage, password manager, social media, online banking)
- ☐ My family would struggle with my digital accounts
- ☐ I have no plan for digital access at all

8. The conversations

- ☐ My named executor knows they are named
- ☐ My healthcare proxy knows my values and preferences
- ☐ My spouse knows where important documents are kept
- ☐ My adult children have a general sense of what my plan does
- ☐ Nobody in my family knows the above

Picking ONE thing

Of everything above, what is the ONE item that would most reduce your worry if it were done in the first quarter of the new year?

Put it on your calendar for January. Book the appointment. Send the email. Make the call.

One thing done in January is worth ten things identified in December.

What to do with your results

If the audit surfaced a lot: bring this completed checklist to a one-hour planning review with our firm. We help you prioritize what matters most to address this year and build a realistic plan for the rest.

If the audit surfaced one or two things: address those specific items. Many fixes can be done without a full plan rebuild.

If the audit surfaced nothing: your plan is in good shape. Schedule to repeat this audit at the end of next year.

Turn your audit into a plan.

Bring this checklist to a planning review and we will help you prioritize next steps.

[Schedule a planning review →](#)