

# Estate Planning 101

There are many different types of legal documents that can help you plan how your affairs will be handled in the future. Many of these documents have names that sound alike, so make sure you are getting the documents you want.

## Getting Legal Aid

You may want to talk with a lawyer about setting up a general power of attorney, durable power of attorney, joint account, trust, or advance directive. Be sure to ask about the lawyer's fees before you make an appointment. You should be able to find a directory of local lawyers on the internet or you can contact your local bar association for lawyers in your area. Your local bar association can also help you find what free legal aid options your state has to offer, if any.

## Wills and Trusts

Wills and trusts let you name the person you want your money and property to go to after you die. There are many types of trusts that may meet your needs, depending on your circumstances and goals.

## Advance Directives

Advance directives let you make arrangements for your care if you become sick. Three common types of advance directives are:

- » A living will gives you a say in your health care if you become too sick to make your wishes known. In a living will, you can state what kind of care you do or don't want. This can make it easier for family members to make tough healthcare decisions for you. To name a person to make those decisions, you may need a durable power of attorney for health care.
- » A durable power of attorney for health care lets you name the person you want to make medical decisions for you if you can't make them yourself or not addressed by a living will. Make sure the person you name is willing to make those decisions for you.
- » A do not resuscitate document informs medical professionals not to revive you if your heart stops or you stop breathing.

SEE OTHER SIDE 

For non-medical legal matters, there are ways to give someone you trust the power to act in your place.

» A general power of attorney lets you give someone else the authority to act on your behalf, but this power will end if you are unable to make your own decisions.

» A durable power of attorney allows you to name someone to act on your behalf for any legal task, but it stays in place if you become unable to make your own decisions.

For more information, see <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/getting-your-affairs-order>.

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