COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

AUGUST IS MAKE-A-WILL MONTH

Estate Planning

Protect Your Family, Your Choices, and Your Your Legacy

A practical roadmap for wills, trusts, decision-making documents, probate, documents, probate, and life insurance with living benefits.

August 6, 2026 | 90-minute community webinar

Presented by Kinji R. W. Ridley, MBA, CFEd

Community Solutions Financial

We Put Your Future 1st

Welcome: This planning is for real life

Tonight is for everyone

Parents and grandparents. Singles and couples. Homeowners and renters. Employees, retirees, caregivers, and entrepreneurs.

Education, not individualized advice

Estate, tax, insurance, and probate rules are state- and fact-specific. Use this webinar to identify questions, then work with qualified professionals.

One question to keep in mind

If you could not speak for yourself tomorrow, who would have legal authority to act - and would they know what you want?
want?

INTERACTIVE MOMENT: Type one planning goal in the chat.

Original multicultural community illustration created for this presentation.

Our roadmap for the next 50 minutes

01	**The problem**	Why so many families are exposed - and why planning is not just for the wealthy.
02	**The probate process**	What the court-supervised process generally involves, with local lenses in PA, GA, and NY.
03	**Estate planning basics**	Will, pour-over will, revocable and irrevocable trusts, financial POA, health directives.
04	**Life insurance and living benefits**	Types, uses, policy riders, and how coverage coordinates with an estate plan.
05	**Your action plan**	What to gather, what to review, and how to get started with Community Solutions.

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A will is the beginning - not the whole plan

A complete plan answers three different questions:

1. What happens when I die?

Will, trust, beneficiary designations, ownership, and life insurance.

2. Who acts if I am alive but unable?

Durable financial power of attorney and health care decision documents.

3. Where does the cash come from?

Savings, liquidity, and insurance to carry out the plan without a forced sale.

THE GOAL: authority + instructions + coordinated assets + liquidity

Context: American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, Make-a-Will Month.

01

The Problem

Most families have something worth protecting, but many do not have authority, instructions, or coordination in place.

The preparedness gap is wide

56%

of U.S. adults report having none of five core core estate planning documents.

26%

report having a will in the 2026 Trust & Will survey.

73%

say estate planning is personally important - a - a major intention-action gap.

Different surveys use different definitions, but the direction is consistent: most adults do not have a complete, current plan.

Pew Research Center (2025): 32% report a will and 31% an advance directive.

Trust & Will 2026 survey: 5,000 U.S. adults, Jan. 28-Feb. 5, 2026.

Sources: Trust & Will 2026 Estate Planning Report; Pew Research Center, Nov. 2025.

You do not need to be wealthy to have an estate

65.0%

U.S. homeownership rate, Q2 2026.

54.3%

of families held retirement accounts in the 2022 SCF.

99%

of families held at least one one financial asset in the 2022 SCF.

Your estate may include:

- Home equity, vehicles, household and sentimental property
- Checking, savings, investments, retirement accounts, and business interests
- Life insurance, employee benefits, digital assets, and debts
- Most importantly: your medical, caregiving, and family decisions

Government data: U.S. Census Bureau, Q2 2026; Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances, 2022.

Planning is also about what happens while you are alive

7 in 10

Americans age 65 or older will need long-term services and supports for an average of about three years.

The planning question is not only, "Who inherits?" It is also:

- Who can pay bills, sign documents, and manage accounts?
- Who can speak with doctors and make medical decisions?
- What care do I want - and what care do I not want?
- How will caregiving and related expenses be funded?

Death documents and incapacity documents solve different problems.

Source: Administration for Community Living, No Wrong Door / LongTermCare.gov.

No documents does not mean no plan

It means state law and court procedures fill in the the blanks.

Who receives probate assets?	Your instructions, subject to law	Intestacy law decides
Who administers the estate?	Your nominated executor	Court appoints an administrator
Who manages finances if incapacitated?	Your selected agent	Guardianship or court involvement may be needed
Who makes health decisions?	Your selected health care agent	State priority rules apply
Who raises minor children?	Your nomination informs the court	Court decides based on available evidence

Planning moves important choices from default rules to deliberate decisions.

02

The Probate Process

Probate is not one event. It is a sequence of court, notice, tax, accounting, and distribution steps.

Probate: a court-supervised transfer process

1 Open the estate

File the will or petition; prove death; request authority.

2 Appoint fiduciary

Court issues letters to an executor or administrator.
administrator.

3 Inventory and secure assets

Identify, value, safeguard, and retitle estate property.

4 Notify and resolve claims

Give required notice to heirs, beneficiaries, and creditors.

5 Pay taxes and expenses

File returns, pay valid debts, administration costs, and taxes.

6 Account, distribute, close

Obtain approvals as needed, distribute, and close the estate.

Process varies by state, county, estate type, disputes, asset complexity, and required tax filings.

A will controls probate assets - not every asset

PROBATE ASSETS

- Property titled solely in the decedent's name with no beneficiary feature
- Personal property and many business interests
- Accounts payable to the estate
- Assets the pour-over will directs into the trust after death

NON-PROBATE TRANSFERS

- Assets properly owned by a funded trust
- Life insurance and retirement accounts with living named beneficiaries beneficiaries
- Transfer-on-death / payable-on-death accounts where allowed
- Certain jointly owned property passing by operation of law

Beneficiary designations and account titles often control even when the will says something different.

Local lens: Pennsylvania and Philadelphia

The Register of Wills

Probates wills, issues letters of administration, keeps estate records, and receives inheritance tax filings and payments.

Pennsylvania inheritance tax

Generally due within nine months. Philadelphia notes a 5% discount when tax is paid within three months.

Current PA rates by relationship

0%	spouse / parent from child age 21 or younger
4.5%	direct descendants and lineal heirs
12%	siblings
15%	other heirs, subject to exemptions

Official sources: City of Philadelphia Register of Wills; PA Department of Revenue.

Local lens: Georgia and Atlanta

Fulton County Probate Court

Has exclusive jurisdiction over probate of wills, appointment and removal of executors and administrators, and guardianships and conservatorships.

A written, properly executed will matters

Georgia's public guidance notes that without a valid will, property is distributed to relatives under state law.

Authority still comes through the court

Even with a will, the nominated executor generally needs the probate court's authority before administering estate assets.
assets.

A valid will guides the process; it does not automatically eliminate probate.

Official sources: Fulton County Probate Court; Georgia.gov.

Local lens: New York and New York City

Surrogate's Court

The executor files the original will, certified death certificate, probate petition, and supporting documents in the county of residence.

Notice to distributees and beneficiaries

The proceeding includes formal notice and an opportunity for eligible parties to respond.

Small-estate option

If personal property is under $50,000, a voluntary administration may be available. New York County lists a $1 filing fee.
a $1 filing fee.

Probated wills and court filings can become public records.

Official source: New York State Unified Court System.

Why probate friction matters to families

Time

Property cannot always be sold, distributed, or retitled until authority and required steps are complete.

Privacy

Wills, inventories, petitions, and other filings may become part of a public court record.

Liquidity

Taxes, debts, professional fees, maintenance, and family family needs can arrive before assets are easily available. available.

Conflict

Ambiguous documents, unequal expectations, missing missing records, and blended families can intensify disputes.

Multi-state property

Real estate in another state may require an additional ancillary probate proceeding.

Lost value

Delay, forced sales, penalties, and unmanaged property can reduce what ultimately reaches beneficiaries.

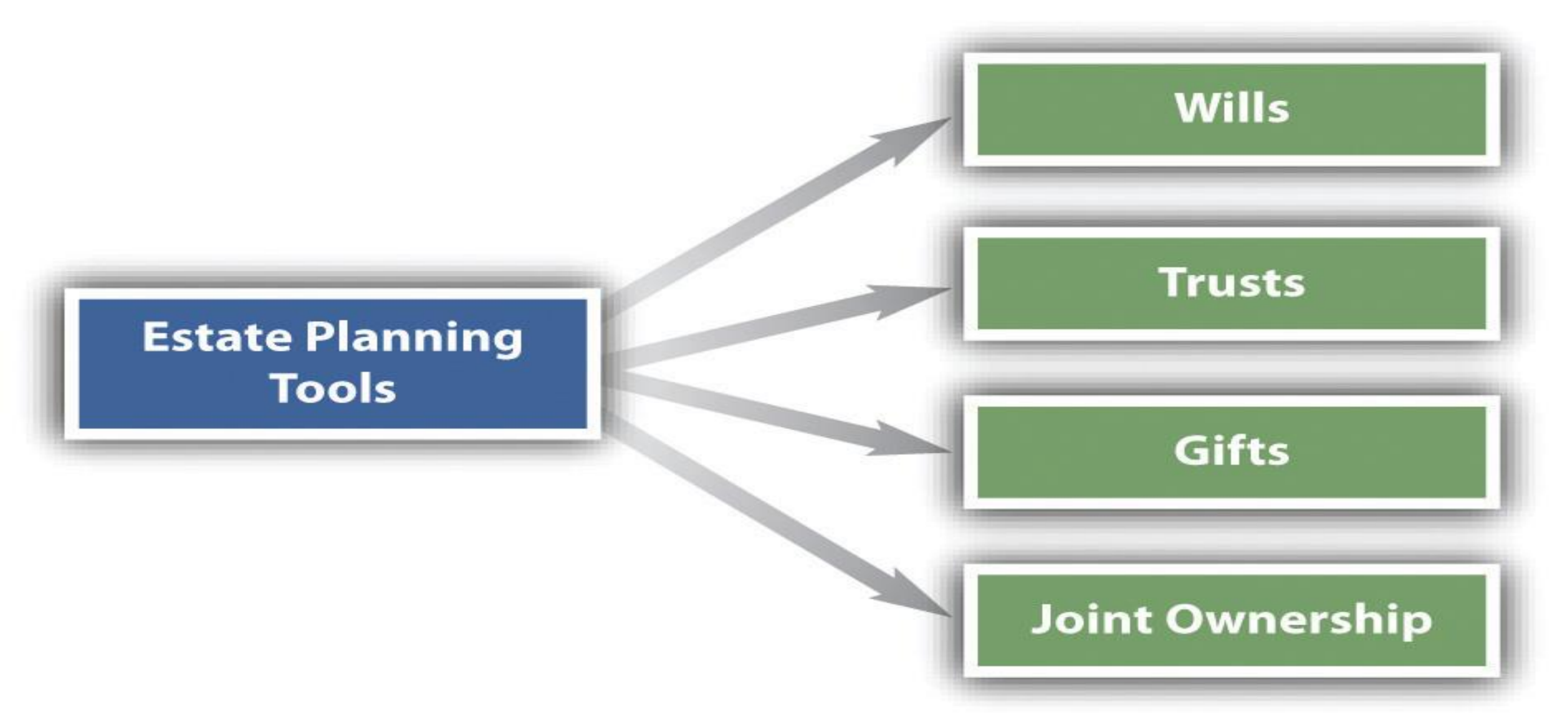
Good planning cannot eliminate every cost or dispute - but it can reduce avoidable friction.

03

Estate Planning Basics

The right documents are a system: each tool has a job, a timing, and a limit.

A complete estate plan is an integrated system



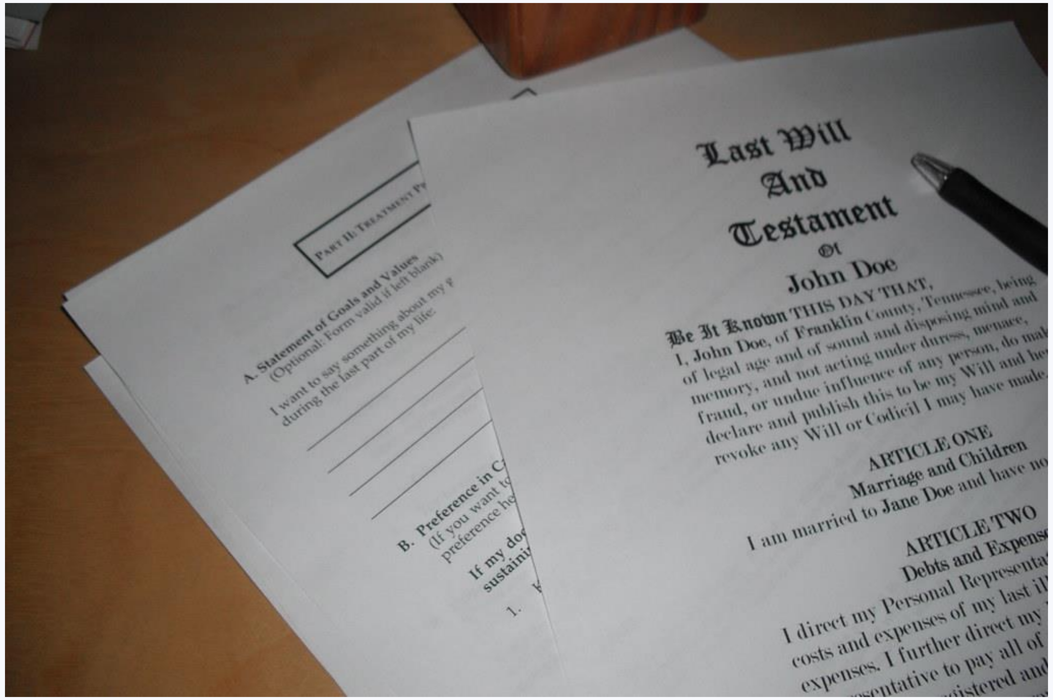
Documents alone are not enough.

The instructions, asset titles, beneficiary designations, insurance, access to records, and review process must process must point in the same direction.

What is a Last Will and Testament?

A will is a state-law document that speaks at death.

- Directs who receives probate assets
- Nominates an executor to administer the estate
- Nominates guardians for minor children
- Can create testamentary trusts and state funeral or personal-property wishes



A will usually does not control jointly owned property or accounts with valid with valid beneficiary designations.

Execution rules differ by state: witnesses, notarization, self-proving affidavits, and electronic wills vary.

Why a trust plan still includes a pour-over will

FUNDED TRUST

Assets already titled to the trust generally follow the trust instructions without probate.

POUR-OVER WILL

Directs remaining probate assets into the trust after death, subject to probate administration.

ONE DISTRIBUTION PLAN

The trust becomes the central set of set of distribution instructions.

The best pour-over will is rarely used because the trust was funded and beneficiary designations were coordinated.

Revocable Living Trust: control now, continuity later

- Created during life; the grantor can generally amend or revoke it while competent
- A trustee holds and manages property under written instructions
- Properly funded assets can avoid probate and improve privacy
- A successor trustee can manage trust assets during incapacity and after death
- Distribution timing can be customized for minors, beneficiaries with special needs, or spendthrift concerns

Important: a revocable trust generally does not protect the grantor's assets from the grantor's the grantor's creditors or remove them from the grantor's taxable estate.

The trust works only for assets connected to it

Real estate

Prepare and record a deed or other approved transfer document; review mortgages, title, exemptions, and insurance.

Bank and investment accounts

Retitle where appropriate or coordinate beneficiary / transfer-on-death designations.

Business interests

Review operating agreements, transfer restrictions, succession, and valuation.

Retirement accounts

Usually coordinate beneficiary designations rather than retitling to a revocable trust; obtain obtain tax/legal advice.

Life insurance

Coordinate owner, insured, beneficiary, and trust language. Advanced plans may use an ILIT with counsel.

Personal and digital property

Use assignments, schedules, access instructions, and secure records where permitted.

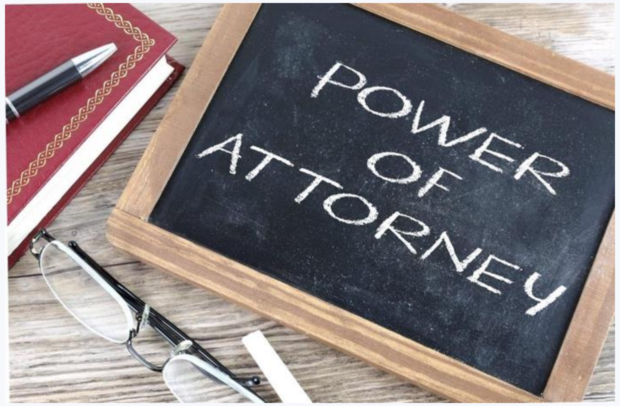
County fees and deed procedures vary. The uploaded Montgomery County schedule, effective June 25, 2026, lists a base deed fee of $87.75 plus add-ons.

Revocable vs. Irrevocable Trust

	REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST	IRREVOCABLE TRUST
Control	Grantor generally retains broad control	Grantor gives up specified control; terms are harder to change
Primary uses	Probate avoidance, privacy, incapacity continuity, customized distribution	Estate-tax, asset-protection, special-needs, charitable, or insurance planning
Income tax during life	Usually reported under grantor's Social Security number	Depends on structure; may be grantor or separate taxpayer
Creditor protection for grantor	Generally limited or none	Can be stronger if properly designed and administered
Estate inclusion	Generally included in grantor's estate	May remove assets if legal requirements are satisfied
Best fit	Foundational plan for many households	Advanced planning requiring coordinated legal and tax advice

Irrevocable does not automatically mean protected or tax-free. Drafting, funding, administration, timing, and state law all matter.

Durable Limited Power of Attorney



You appoint an agent to act on your behalf behalf within the powers you grant.

What it can cover

Banking, taxes, real estate, insurance, benefits, business interests, digital assets, litigation, gifting, trust transactions, and other listed powers.

Why durable and limited matter

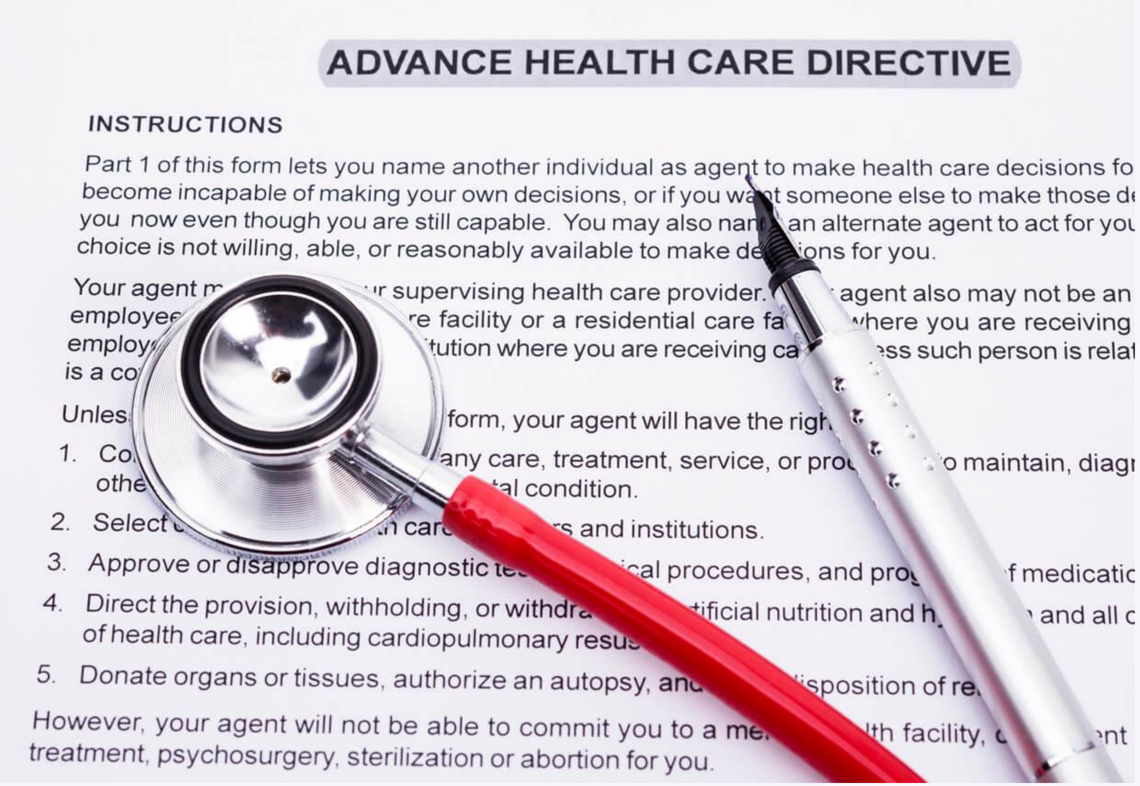
Durable means it continues through incapacity. Limited means authority is defined by the document - by subject, amount, duration, or trigger.

Critical safeguards

Choose a trusted primary agent and backup; require records; consider co-agents carefully; review gifting powers; share where the document is stored.

A power of attorney ends at death. The executor or trustee then takes over under different authority.

Advance Health Care Directives



Living will / treatment instructions

States your preferences for life-sustaining treatment, comfort care, and other medical decisions under applicable state law.

Health care proxy / agent

Names the person who can make health decisions when you are unable, plus successor agents.

HIPAA and information access

Authorizes appropriate access to protected health information so decision-makers can receive what they need.
need.

The best directive is paired with a conversation: values, faith, quality of life, pain management, caregiving, and who should be in the room.

Beneficiary designations can override the will

Review these contract assets:

- Life insurance
- IRAs, 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and other retirement plans
- Payable-on-death and transfer-on-death accounts
- Certain annuities and employee benefits

Do not assume divorce, a new will, or a trust automatically changes every beneficiary form.

Ask five questions

- Is the primary beneficiary still correct?
- Is there a living contingent beneficiary?
- Are minors, special-needs beneficiaries, and blended-family goals goals handled appropriately?
- Does the designation coordinate with the trust and tax plan?
- Has the institution accepted and recorded the change?

Modern estate planning is an ongoing process

Advisor-led estate planning platform

Document creation	Wills, revocable trusts, powers of attorney, and health care directives
Document analysis	Review and summarize existing documents and identify planning questions
Secure Vault	Organize estate-related documents with permission-based access
Visualization and collaboration	Map family relationships, model estate flows, and collaborate with with advisors and attorneys

Explore Community Solutions

Our estate-planning process uses an advisor-guided digital platform to create, organize, execute, and maintain foundational documents.

Visit our estate planning page

Platform reference: Wealth.com. Access is advisor-led.

04

Life Insurance in the Estate Plan

Life insurance can create liquidity, replace income, equalize inheritances, and - with qualifying riders - provide benefits while the insured is living.

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Life Insurance 101: three core categories

TERM LIFE

Coverage for a stated term, often 10, 20, or 30 years. years. Usually provides the most death benefit per per premium dollar, with no cash value. Useful for for income replacement, mortgage years, education education funding, and temporary obligations.

WHOLE LIFE

Permanent coverage with scheduled premiums, guaranteed death benefit and cash value when policy requirements are met. Some policies may pay non-guaranteed dividends. Useful for permanent needs, final expenses, legacy, and predictable guarantees.

UNIVERSAL LIFE / IUL

Permanent, flexible coverage with adjustable premiums or death benefit within policy limits. Cash Cash value credits depend on the product: declared declared interest or index-based crediting. Greater Greater flexibility also requires ongoing monitoring. monitoring.

The right policy is the one designed for the actual need, funded realistically, and reviewed over time.

Sources: NAIC consumer guidance; Mutual of Omaha product comparison; NLG client materials.

A SOURCE OF LIQUIDITY AND LEVERAGE

How life insurance fits into an estate plan

Income replacement

Support dependents and preserve lifestyle after a wage earner dies.

Debt and final expenses

Pay mortgage, consumer debt, funeral, taxes, and administration costs.

Estate liquidity

Provide cash so property or a business does not does not have to be sold quickly.

Inheritance equalization

Balance inheritances when one heir receives a receives a business, real estate, or other illiquid illiquid asset.

Special needs and caregiving

Fund a trust or provide ongoing support under coordinated legal planning.

Charitable and business planning

Support charitable gifts, buy-sell funding, key-person needs, or succession strategies.

Advanced plans may use an irrevocable life insurance trust (ILIT). That requires attorney-led design, ownership, beneficiary, and administration decisions.

Living Benefits: life insurance you may access while living

A qualifying rider may allow the policyowner to to accelerate part of the death benefit after a covered covered event.

TERMINAL ILLNESS

Life expectancy within the period defined by the policy and state, often 12 or 24 months.

CHRONIC ILLNESS

Commonly inability to perform at least two of six activities of daily living or severe cognitive impairment, subject to certification.

CRITICAL ILLNESS OR INJURY

Coverage depends on the rider and may include specified conditions such as cancer, heart attack, stroke, paralysis, or severe burns.

Living benefits are not free cash: acceleration typically reduces the remaining death benefit and cash value, may be discounted, and can affect taxes or public benefits.

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What living-benefit proceeds could help pay for

- Home modifications
- Household bills and income replacement
- Caregiving and transportation
- Nursing or adult day care
- Family goals while finances are disrupted
- Quality-of-life expenses

Six Activities of Daily Living

1. Bathing
2. Continence
3. Dressing
4. Eating
5. Toileting
6. Transferring

Many chronic-illness riders require inability to perform at least two ADLs for a specified period, or severe cognitive impairment, as certified under the policy.

Policy language controls. Covered events, waiting periods, maximums, discounts, and state availability vary.

Carrier and product examples we may evaluate

National Life Group

FlexLife IUL; RapidProtect IUL

Broad Accelerated Benefit Rider suite, including terminal, chronic, critical illness/injury, and Alzheimer's options on eligible products.

Mutual Trust Life

Horizon Legacy; MTL Non-Par Whole Life

Whole-life products with accelerated death benefit provisions for critical, chronic, and terminal illness on eligible eligible policies.

Mutual of Omaha

Term, Whole Life, Life Protection Advantage IUL

Term and permanent protection; universal life products describe early access for terminal or chronic illness on on eligible policies.

Corebridge Financial

Select-a-Term; Max Accumulator+ III; Value+ Protector

Term and indexed universal life options; options; current materials describe optional chronic-care and lifetime-income income living benefits on eligible products.

Examples only - not recommendations or guarantees. Availability, underwriting, features, costs, limits, and rider terms vary by state, product, and issue date.

Official carrier sources reviewed August 2026.

Before buying or keeping a policy, ask better questions

Need

What problem must the death benefit solve, for whom, and for how long?

Amount

How much protection is needed after considering income, debts, goals, existing assets, and inflation?

Funding

What premium is sustainable? What happens if premiums change or assumptions underperform?

Guarantees

Which values are guaranteed and which depend on current assumptions, dividends, or index credits?

Living benefits

Which events qualify, how is the payment calculated, and how much death benefit remains?

Ownership and beneficiary

Should the policy be personally owned, trust owned, or business owned? Who should receive proceeds?

Tax and public benefits

Could loans, withdrawals, acceleration, ownership, or beneficiary choices affect taxes or eligibility?

Monitoring

Who will review the policy, in-force values, beneficiaries, and estate-plan coordination - and how often?

The policy contract and current in-force illustration - not the sales concept - determine actual benefits and values.

Case study: turning disconnected pieces into one plan

THE FAMILY

- Married couple, two children
- Home in Pennsylvania
- Retirement accounts and savings
- One spouse owns a small business
- Old will; no trust or directives
- Employer life insurance only

THE COORDINATED PLAN

Revocable living trust + pour-over wills

Home and appropriate non-retirement accounts funded; successor trustee named.

Durable POAs + health directives

Primary and backup agents; treatment wishes discussed and stored.

Beneficiary alignment

Retirement and life-insurance beneficiaries coordinated with family and trust goals.

Life-insurance review

Individual coverage sized for income, mortgage, children, business transition, and living-benefit priorities.

Business succession and records

Operating documents, valuation, authority, and continuity steps integrated.

Annual maintenance

Secure vault, family conversation, and review after life events or every 3-5 years.

Result: clearer authority, fewer transfer gaps, better liquidity, and a plan the family can actually find and use.

05

Your Action Plan

A strong estate plan begins with an inventory, a conversation, and one scheduled next step.

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When should you review an existing estate plan?

Marriage, divorce, separation, or a serious serious unmarried partnership

Birth, adoption, guardianship changes, or a changes, or a beneficiary with special needs needs

Home purchase, move to another state, or property in multiple states

New business, ownership change, retirement, or major career transition

Diagnosis, disability, caregiving responsibility, or long-term-care concern

Death, incapacity, or changed relationship relationship with an agent, trustee, executor, or beneficiary

Major increase or decrease in assets, debt, insurance, or inheritance

At least every 3-5 years even if no major major event has occurred

A plan can be legally valid and still be practically outdated.

What to gather before your planning meeting

People and decisions

- Legal names and family relationships
- Guardians, executor, trustees, agents, and backups
- Special needs, caregiving, and charitable intentions

Assets and debts

- Real estate and deed copies
- Bank, investment, retirement, business, insurance, and annuity statements
- Mortgages, loans, credit cards, and guarantees

Existing documents

- Wills, trusts, POAs, health directives, prenups, divorce decrees
- Business agreements and buy-sell documents
- Prior beneficiary confirmations and insurance illustrations

Access and records

- Document locations and secure digital vault
- Advisor, attorney, accountant, insurance, bank, and employer contacts
- Digital accounts and instructions - not passwords in an unsecured worksheet

Do not wait for perfect records. Start with what you know, then create an action list for missing information.

How Community Solutions helps you move from intention to implementation

1
Discovery
Clarify family, goals, concerns, assets, debts, existing documents, and insurance.

2
Design
Determine the right foundational foundational documents, transfer transfer paths, decision-makers, and and liquidity needs.

3
Create and review
Use our advisor-guided Wealth.com platform and professional coordination to prepare and review documents.

4
Execute
Complete required signing, witnessing, notarization, and document storage.

5
Fund and coordinate
Retitle appropriate assets, record deeds where applicable, and update beneficiary designations.

6
Maintain
Review after life events, monitor insurance, store records, and update the plan over time.

START YOUR PLANNING PROCESS

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Your 30-day estate planning action plan

TONIGHT	**Choose the one risk you will solve first**	No will? Old beneficiaries? No POA? No health directive? Insufficient life insurance?
WITHIN 7 DAYS	**Gather the core information**	Family decision-makers, current documents, account statements, deeds, beneficiaries, and beneficiaries, and insurance.
WITHIN 14 DAYS	**Schedule your planning conversation**	Discuss goals, state-specific issues, document needs, trust funding, and insurance gaps.
WITHIN 30 DAYS	**Complete the first implementation milestone**	Begin documents, update a beneficiary, request an in-force illustration, or record the next funding task.

Scan to schedule

SCHEDULE A CONVERSATION

Text: (484) 309-8630

Office: (484) 900-4005

Five takeaways to remember

1. **Everyone already has a default plan.**
   Your documents and asset coordination determine whether your choices or default rules control.

2. **Probate is a process, not a punishment.**
   The goal is to reduce avoidable court friction while preserving necessary oversight.

3. **Each document has a job.**
   Will, trust, power of attorney, and health directive act at different times and solve different problems.

4. **Funding and beneficiaries make the plan operational.**
   A signed trust or will cannot fix mis-titled assets and outdated beneficiary forms by itself.

5. **Life insurance can protect both death and living risks.**
   Design the coverage for the need, understand living-benefit riders, and review the policy over time.

The best estate plan is not the thickest binder. It is the plan that is accurate, funded, accessible, understood, and maintained.

Protect what you have built - and the people you love

Kinji R. W. Ridley, MBA, CFEd

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