

Estate Plans – Understanding the Process

Everyone's needs are unique, and we feel it is important to take the time, up front, to provide you with a general outline of the process. Individual circumstances may require a modification to the process to meet a client's specific needs:

Once you set up an initial consultation:

- You will receive a Welcome Packet including an Estate Planning Worksheet
- You will be asked to complete the Estate Planning Worksheet and provide it to us prior to the first consultation. This facilitates a more productive first meeting, and helps our clients focus on the issues and decisions they will need to make to create an effective plan to meet their goals.
- The initial packet includes a sample engagement letter and the fees involved in planning.

At the initial consultation:

- We will listen and identify your concerns, goals and aspirations
- We will suggest appropriate planning options to address your concerns and give you the peace of mind that you and your heirs will be taken care of according to your wishes.
- We will review the engagement letter and address any questions or concerns you may have.
- If further information is needed, you will be given a "homework" sheet to remind you about the information or answers that are needed.
- You may sign the engagement letter at our meeting or take it with you for review. We must have a signed engagement letter in our files prior to preparing drafts.
- We will schedule a review/signing meeting for four to five weeks after the initial consultation. If there are circumstances such as travel, health, surgery, etc. where the documents are needed sooner, we can work with you to meet those needs.

Document preparation:

- In this phase, documents are prepared, modified and finalized.
- We believe that a client should not sign a document without a complete understanding of its contents and the impact of the documents and the decisions made. Therefore, we dedicate a significant amount of time to reviewing the documents and answering any questions, by phone, email, or in person based on the client's preference. All meetings to create the plan and future "review only" meetings are included in the flat fee.

At the review/signing meeting:

- Documents are reviewed together for accuracy and any additional questions are answered.
- Documents are signed, witnessed and notarized as appropriate.
- The client will be provided with originals of all documents signed for safekeeping by the client.
- If your plan includes a trust, we will advise you on the steps necessary to fund your plan. Generally the client is responsible for funding the trust unless you would like to engage us to assist with the funding process. Fees for assistance with funding are in addition to the fees for your estate plan.
- A binder with additional originals copies of all your documents and information needed to administer your plan will be provided several weeks after the documents are signed. Upon request, we will provide you with access to electronic copies of your documents.