

Starting Your Estate Plan

At the end of your life, your real estate is likely the single most valuable asset you will leave behind for surviving family members. That's why the creation of a comprehensive estate plan is so important. Despite this, many homeowners have never compiled the right information or sought the necessary legal assistance to produce a plan that ensures their real property will be rightly passed on and cared for.

What is an estate plan?

An estate plan is generally made up of written legal directives that detail how your property and other assets should be distributed in the event of your death or disability. While many people think estate plans are strictly for the wealthy, this is far from true; everyone who owns property has an interest in the way it will eventually be transferred. Keep in mind that a well-drafted estate plan can also help your family avoid costly probate proceedings and burdensome taxation.

In addition to facilitating the transfer of your real estate, estate plans can:

- Provide instruction for your care in the event that you become disabled
- Determine who will inherit your other property and financial assets
- Name a guardian for children
- Provide for the transfer of your business
- Assist family members with special needs without disrupting their government benefits

You should speak with an attorney to learn more about how an estate plan could help provide you with security and peace of mind.

Finding Legal Counsel

Creating your estate plan will require the assistance of a lawyer. If you are a senior or low-income individual residing in Ingham County, you may be eligible for free legal services. For more information, contact:

Legal Services of South Central Michigan

3490 Belle Chase Way, Ste 50

Lansing, MI 48911

(888) 783-8190

www.lsscm.org

Tri-County Senior Legal Services

(517) 372-3484

If you would like to hire a lawyer, you may wish to contact the **State Bar of Michigan Lawyer Referral Service** at:

1-800-968-0738