

Serving as an estate executor for several of my family members over the years has been personally meaningful. The earliest experience I had was in the 1970s and the most recent one is currently in process. The estates varied in complexity and in the [duties I needed to perform](#). Many of you might have similar experiences and will relate to much of what I will share. If you have not had this experience, or if you have been named as executor but have not yet been pressed into duty, I hope that you will find my remarks helpful.

## The Importance of Naming an Executor in Your Will

First of all, a will needs to exist and an executor named in order for what I say to take effect. If you have not done either of these steps, the state has a procedure whereby it will step in and assume these duties. By all means, ensure your wishes documented. Without a will, you may not agree with the state's decisions regarding your assets. Fortunately, proper and advance planning mitigates much of the time and expense involved.

The American Bar Association provides a comprehensive list of [Guidelines for Individual Executors & Trustees](#) which may be useful. If you need to see what is involved in serving as an estate executor, you may [contact us](#) for this information.

## Modern Executor Duties and Managing Digital Assets

What strikes me about my experience is the increased complexity of present-day duties, responsibilities, and liabilities pertaining to serving as an executor. In my practice, we have identified 28 such tasks. The tasks increase as the complexity of the property in the estate increases. Also, the internet has added additional complexity as most people today have some internet presence and digital assets may reside there. Having access to these, such as bank accounts, brokerage statements, retail accounts, credit card information, and the like is a major consideration in advance planning.

## Key Considerations for Choosing an Estate Executor

[You should choose your estate executor wisely](#). Make sure the person you select is willing and able to serve - this selection should not come as surprise. If they are not fully aware of what is you are asking of them ahead of time, difficulties may occur. And no matter who you name as executor, [access to your documents and accounts of all types should be documented and preferably centralized to ease the process](#).

## The Benefits of a Corporate Executor

You also may consider naming a corporate entity, such as trust company, or investment firm offering such services as executor. There are certainly advantages to this. They do not get sick, die, move away or quarrel over property distributions, and they are experienced. You will also know the fees for their services upfront. This profession input can prove to be invaluable in many cases.



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