



Taking Care of Business While Grieving

Your Step by Step Checklist



Welcome!



For many, going through a deceased loved one's estate, wrapping up that person's business - from a legal and financial perspective – is emotionally exhausting.

Add to that the hundreds of hours of digging through documents and paperwork to ensure the proper resolution of inheritance - it's a numbing experience in every way.

But life marches forward, and it has to get done.

At Inherit More, we understand what you are going through, and we are here to help. That's why we've prepared a checklist that will guide you through the exact steps to handling the affairs of your recently departed loved ones, including maximizing the inheritance.

Some items on this list may seem obvious, and some are super super complex. Regardless, **this is the list**. Our goal is to be thorough, and include everything.

While the specific steps you take will depend on the situation, location, and complexity of the deceased's estate, we hope that this checklist will give you a sense of control and peace about the process.

We know this can be overwhelming. In reality, **IT IS!!!** We deal with the probate system every day, and we know how to navigate the ins and outs of this process.

If we can be of any assistance to you as you undertake this considerable task, please know that we are here for you. If you wish to apply to work with us, [do so here](#).

SECTION A

Requires immediate attention

- NOTIFY KEY PEOPLE—FAMILY, EMPLOYER/BUSINESS PARTNER, CLERGY, ETC.**

Think of the people who your deceased loved one, if he/she were able, would insist on being at his funeral. Let them know, preferably one by one in a phone call. Obviously, though, if you are not feeling emotionally ready to do so, ask someone else to make the notifications.
- SECURE THE DECEDENT’S RESIDENCE/OFFICE AND OTHER TANGIBLE PROPERTY**

If your recently departed loved one lived alone, go to his or her residence and make sure that all the doors and windows are locked, the air conditioner or heat is properly operating and that no water is still running. Also, put some lights on timers so people will think that someone lives there.
- MAKE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Before doing anything, find out if your departed loved one made arrangements for his funeral before passing. If not, you may need to ask older family members which funeral home would be the best fit. Contact the funeral home of choice to schedule a meeting so you can pick a date and time, a casket and other details. When planning your loved one's funeral and other services, you should consider his religious affiliations or desires.
- SERVICES THE DECEDENT WAS RECEIVING—E.G., LAWN CARE. CONTACT VENDOR AND EITHER STOP SERVICE OR DIRECT VENDOR TO SEND FUTURE BILLS TO YOU**

Many people receive goods and services on a recurring basis that will keep coming unless someone actively cancels them. While you may want to keep some services, like lawn care, there are others you probably want to cancel, like newspaper delivery.

SECTION B

starting the legal process

SEARCH FOR WILL

A will could be in a number of places. Some people have their attorneys hold them. Others put them in a safe deposit box at the bank or in a small lockbox in the bedroom closet while others hide it in the family Bible. Basically, look in any place you would reasonably expect your departed loved one to have put it. If you can't find an original, try looking on any computers in the house

GET NAMES AND ADDRESSES FOR ALL HEIRS AND THOSE WHO TAKE UNDER THE WILL, IF THERE WAS ONE, AS WELL AS ALL KNOWN CREDITORS

A decedent's heirs are his closest living relatives, specifically his surviving spouse and children. For children who have died, their children are heirs.

CONSULT WITH ATTORNEY TO DISCUSS WHETHER PROBATE IS NECESSARY AND, IF SO, WHETHER AN ATTORNEY IS NECESSARY

Probate can be very confusing and time consuming, especially if you are new to the process. Some mistakes can be costly and irreversible. If you don't know a probate attorney yourself, ask those whom you trust for names of probate attorneys with whom they have had a positive professional experience. You may want to consult with more than one to make sure that you are not rushing into anything.

OPEN PROBATE ESTATE WITH COURT AND GET LETTERS OF AUTHORITY AS EXECUTOR

Many states have forms that guide you through the initial part of the process. If you don't hire an attorney, you may have to go to the courthouse to file the papers.

SEND NOTICE OF PROBATE TO ALL HEIRS, WILL BENEFICIARIES AND CREDITORS

You will need to send a copy of the petition to start probate, the will (if applicable) and the notice of a hearing (if applicable) to anyone who has a stake in the estate.

GET A FEDERAL ID NUMBER FOR THE ESTATE FROM THE IRS

Just like a person with a social security number or a company with an FEIN, an estate will need a federal ID number if it's going to open a bank account, which is advisable in many cases, and to file a return for any money the estate makes.

GET INVENTORY OF ALL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

This may be one of the most time consuming and frustrating tasks on this list. You will need to make a list of all your decedent's assets. This includes not just his house and car but bank accounts, brokerage accounts, stocks, insurance policies, etc.

NOTIFY SOCIAL SECURITY

If your decedent was receiving monthly payments, you will need to notify the social security agency of the passing. Also, do not cash any checks that come after the death. You will need to return them.

PUBLISH NOTICE OF PROBATE PROCEEDINGS IN THE NEWSPAPER

Ask a court clerk in which paper to publish notice. Contact that paper's legal notices department and ask them for the forms necessary to publish notice.

SECTION C

inheritance time

- RETAIN EXPERTS TO HANDLE WHAT YOU CAN'T—**
We all have limits on what we know, what we can do or how much time we have on our hands. Be realistic about those limitations. If you need an expert, ask those you trust for a referral. We are experts in our field, and happy to help you. You can join our [FB_group](#) here

- CONTACT ALL HOLDERS OF ASSETS AND/OR THOSE OWING MONEY TO THE DECEDENT (E.G., BANKS, INSURANCE COMPANIES, EMPLOYER) AND COLLECT**
Along with determining what assets are there, this can be the other most time consuming and frustrating part of the whole process. Every bank, insurance company and other large institution has its own way of doing things and making sure that all the paperwork is in order.

- ONCE YOU HAVE AT LEAST SOME MONEY, OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT FOR THE ESTATE**
Before opening an account, make sure you know the rules regarding minimum balances, number of free transactions, etc.

- SELL/DONATE/TRASH ALL ASSETS THAT NOBODY WANTS**
The house may have other tangible items. Get all the heirs in agreement about who is getting what. For those items that nobody wants, divide them into three categories--sell (money goes to the heirs), donate or trash. You will have to make judgment calls about which category applies to each item.

SECTION C

inheritance time



PAY ALL DEBTS THAT ESTATE IS OBLIGATED TO PAY

Make sure you pay or at least earmark debts to creditors. If you pay inheritances first and don't have enough to pay creditors, you will be personally responsible.



DISTRIBUTE REMAINING ASSETS PURSUANT TO THE WILL, IF THERE WAS ONE, OR INTESTATE LAW

Make sure to get receipts even if the court doesn't require them. You never know when you'll need them.



SUBMIT FINAL TAX RETURN(S) FOR DECEDENT

You will need to file a return for whatever calendar years in which the decedent still lived and had to file returns but didn't. This goes for both federal returns to the IRS as well as state tax returns, where applicable.



CLOSE PROBATE

Most states require you to file certain documents in which you give a summary and accounting of the assets, expenses and payments to both creditors and heirs.

We can help



Would you like to discuss how Inherit More can alleviate some or all of the burden of tracking down the deceased's money and assets, so they can be distributed to the rightful heirs?

Use the options below to follow up with us.

All our best,

The Inherit More Team

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(FREE FOR NOW!)

[APPLY TO WORK WITH US](#)