Executor checklist

You've been named executor—now what?

New York Life
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While both an honor and a big responsibility, protecting and distributing someone's property can be an overwhelming task.

The following pages can help you make a plan and keep track of the many tasks and documents involved in settling an estate. The Executor checklist will help guide you through the process and help you organize all paperwork and correspondence. Be sure to include the dates that you complete each task, and any follow-up actions you may need to take.

	Task	Date Completed	Issues/Comments
	Find the will		
	Submit the will to local probate court		
	Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS to identify the deceased's estate accounts during the account transfer and estate settlement process		
	Appraise assets, if needed		
	Arrange to publish a "notice of probate" in local newspapers to give creditors and beneficiaries public notice of the deceased's death and the appointment of the personal representative		
	Determine whether probate proceedings are needed		
	If probate, conduct the proceedings or hire a lawyer to conduct proceedings		
	If there is a Living Trust, work with trustee for bill-paying, property management, and other miscellaneous tasks		
	Designate guardians for minors, if necessary		
	Designate a conservator (for collecting and managing a minor child's inheritance)		
	Protect/Manage assets until distributed to beneficiaries		
	Collect money owed to the estate (e.g., wages, insurance benefits, rents, etc.)		
	Pay bills		
	File final income tax returns for deceased		
	File estate taxes, if necessary		
	Distribute assets		
	Notify within one month		
	Post Office		
	Utility companies		
	Credit card companies		
	Banks		
	Investment firms		
	Inheritors and beneficiaries		

	Documents Needed	Date Requested	Date Received	Issues/Comments
	Bank statements			
	Birth certificates for both deceased and minor children			
	Brokerage account statements			
	Business co-ownership agreements			
	Checkbook(s)			
	Child support documents			
	Credit card statements (look for auto pay items on each statement—this can be a very helpful source of information)			
	Disability-related documents			
	Divorce papers (including property and other settlement agreements)			
	Health insurance policies, statements, or bills			
	Immigration and citizenship documents			
	Investment records			
	Life insurance policies and premium payment records			
	Marriage license/certificate			
	Military service records including branch, dates of service, discharge or “separation” papers			
	Pension records			
	Prenuptial agreement			
	Real estate deeds and tax records			
	Registration papers for vehicles or boats			
	Retirement account statements			
	Social Security records			
	Form W-2 showing wages for the current year			
	Workers’ Compensation paperwork			

	Businesses and Agencies to Notify	Date Notified	Issues/Comments
	Bank(s)		
	Charities		
	Credit card companies		
	Doctors or other health care providers		
	Current employer		
	Former employers		
	Insurance company(ies)		
	Landlord and/or tenants		
	Membership organizations (e.g., country clubs, alumni associations, and social groups)		
	Newspaper and magazine subscription offices		
	Pension payers		
	Post Office		
	Service providers (e.g., landscapers, utility companies, trash haulers, etc.)		
	Social Security Administration		
	State health/welfare departments		
	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs		
	Volunteer groups		
	Investment firms		
	Inheritors and beneficiaries		

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