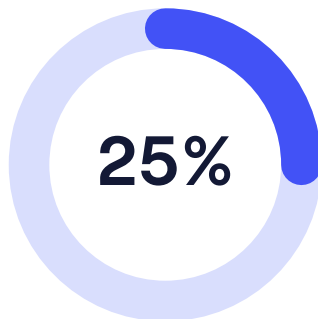


# The Importance of Having a Will

The best gift you can give your loved ones is a **well-planned estate**

Thinking about death can be uncomfortable, and as such it's no surprise that more than half of Canadians (51%) don't have a will. A will is a legal document containing a person's last wishes. This includes important information such as how a person wishes to distribute their assets and who will manage them until they are distributed. It'll specify who the executor is, the person carrying out all these activities on your behalf when the time comes, and other relevant details such as who will take care of your children or pet. The number one reason why so many Canadians don't have wills is they believe they are too young to worry about it.<sup>1</sup>



of Canadians don't have a will because they believe they are too young.



However, we believe that every Canadian, regardless of age and estate size, should have a will. It's simply a recognition of the fact that one day your time will come, and it's ALWAYS better to have a plan than not.

<sup>1</sup> <https://angusreid.org/will-and-testament/>

## What happens when you die without a will?

Twenty-three percent of Canadians reported the main reason they don't have a will in place is that they don't have many assets to worry about.<sup>2</sup> But a will covers much more than just that. You may want to pass some personal items to your friends and loved ones, or donate some of your money to charity, or have a special song play at your funeral. Without a will, there's no way to enforce all those wishes once you pass. Instead, everything you own will be distributed according to specific intestate laws in your jurisdiction. The government will also be left to decide who will take care of any children and pets may be left at a shelter.

## So, when is the best time to create a will?

Yesterday. But the second best time is now. Life is unpredictable and you should hope for the best but always prepare for the worst.

For 10% of Canadians with a household income over \$100k, the main reason reported for not having a will written is the concern that it may be too time consuming.<sup>3</sup>

Nowadays, however, you can get help from a technology-enabled estate expert in order to guide you through the process and reduce the overall workload. Otherwise, it can indeed be a daunting task. Either way, the effort has a huge pay-off: you get the peace of mind that your wishes will be legally protected after you are gone.



## What if your will isn't up-to-date when you pass?

Your assets and personal life will change over time. Major changes like new children or new marriages will effectively invalidate your will. If you die without updating these major changes, you may also lose the decision-making power regarding your estate and it would be handed to the government. Outdated wills create countless headaches for your loved ones when it comes to settling your estate. Wills that no longer reflect your situation at the time of death will take longer to settle and will increase the burden on your family.

## What's an estate plan?

Having a will is a good step in taking responsibility for the settlement of your estate, but creating an estate plan is the only way to truly ensure your loved ones' well-being after you are gone. An estate plan is much more than a will and allows your family to seamlessly administer your future estate settlement. It is a comprehensive outline

<sup>2</sup> <https://angusreid.org/will-and-testament/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://angusreid.org/will-and-testament/>

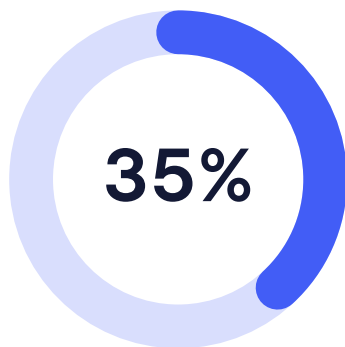
detailing your estate and essentially fills in the many gaps of what has not been included in the will. This ultimately provides peace of mind for your family that your assets will be distributed exactly as you intended.

## **Dying without an estate plan creates many hurdles for your family**

Without an estate plan in place, your executor will face an enormous amount of obstacles because estate settlement is such a complicated process. Most executors are assuming the role for the first time, and 70% of them aren't even aware that they had been given this responsibility. Most of them are also assuming it for the first time. They are confused, overwhelmed, and lack guidance. Settling an estate is also a lengthy process, requiring an average of 400 hours of paperwork to ensure the proper forms are submitted to the government and financial institutions, the beneficiaries are kept informed, the assets are secured, etc. Not to mention, your executor can incur more than \$8,500 in fees, including legal fees, taxes, filing fees, and probate fees.

The absence of planning also allows for family disputes to arise.

While your families are grieving, there may be added tension about who is getting what, or that the executor has their own interests ahead of others. This is why at ClearEstate, we say there's no greater gift you can give your loved ones than a well-planned estate. When the time comes, your estate plan can save your family tens of thousands of dollars and will cut the average time to settle the estate by up to six months. It is an incredible act of empathy to save your family from all the added stress while they are grieving.



of Canadians report family conflict as a result of not having a comprehensive estate plan.

# Comparing Wills vs. Estate Planning

It is important to understand the difference between a will and an estate plan because they are not created equal. A **will** is just the tip of the iceberg, whereas an **estate plan** optimizes your estate's value and contains information about every aspect of your estate, including all pertinent information and documentation. Consulting with an experienced trust office like ClearEstate can provide invaluable guidance when creating a comprehensive plan tailored to meet all of your goals.

## Will

- ⊖ You've appointed an executor, who will be in charge of your estate and carry out important responsibilities
- ⊖ You can decide who gets your assets
- ⊖ Forms only one part of your estate plan
- ⊖ Does not actually list all info and docs that your executor needs when you die

## Estate plan

- ✓ Inventory of all assets and liabilities
- ✓ Includes all pertinent information and documentation needed for your loved ones
- ✓ Considers your goals and circumstances and optimizes your plan to fit your circumstances
- ✓ Allows for important conversations to occur, for example, beneficiary designations, trust solutions, etc.
- ✓ Significantly cuts time and fees associated with estate settlement, allowing your family to grieve in greater peace

ClearEstate is here to help. Aggregate all important documents in the online vault as part of your estate plan. Want to learn more?



Talk to your advisor about booking a  
**free 30-minute consultation**  
with ClearEstate.



# How we can help

ClearEstate is a digital-forward trust office that acts as a one-stop shop for all estate administration needs, including estate planning and settlement. Our team consists of highly trained estate professionals that handle the entire process from beginning to end, **saving you and your family thousands of dollars** that would otherwise get eaten up by fees. We offer you **prompt support and guidance** through online communication, video chats, or phone calls. You

may also find yourself scrambling to centralize important documents and information all stored with different institutions. This is why we created a user-friendly portal where you can securely store all pertinent documents, build your assets' distribution tree, securely connect all your accounts, and give access to your executor when the time comes. Instead of having to run from service to service, they'll be **able to find everything they need in minutes**.

With a few meetings totalling 2 to 5 hours, ClearEstate can save your loved ones over **\$8,500** in fees.

Talk to your advisor about booking a **free 30-minute consultation** with ClearEstate.