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## Where to Start

You're planning to leave a donation in your Will to a cause you care about, nice work! A Will can be a powerful way to make change in this world, and this guide will help you understand the process for incorporating charitable giving into your Will.

Now did you know that there could be some tax benefits you might want to consider? A lawyer, notary and/or financial advisor can help make sure you're taking full advantage. It's a win for you, your family, and the cause(s) that matters to you.

To help you narrow down what you may want to have in your estate plans you can consider questions like:

- Who are the important people in my life? Who do I need to take care of?
- What kind of impact do I want to leave in this world?
- What do I have to give? How am I going to divide it?
- Who is going to put my Will together? Who will be responsible for carrying out my wishes?

It's important to start thinking about these points, which we'll help walk you through further along in this guide. You don't need all the answers. Write your Will for where you are in life now, then update it as things change. The most important thing is to get started so the people you love, and the things you care about, are protected.

### **Share your intentions**

In order to create a strategy that suits your needs, start by sharing your goals with your advisor. Why do you want to leave a gift in your Will? What kind of impact do you want to leave? Which charity(ies) are you thinking of?

Get an approximate idea of the percentage of your estate that should go to family, and then how much to charity.

### **Narrow in on your numbers**

With your assets and liabilities in hand, your advisor can estimate the future value of your estate, and how much might be owed in taxes.



## Explore the different ways to give

It's likely that your estate will receive a significant tax bill the year that you pass. A donation in your Will can result in a tax credit that can significantly reduce what your heirs will have to pay from your estate.

Your advisor can help choose which of your assets to donate from, so that you get the biggest tax credit possible. Here's a short list to consider:

- **A gift of cash:** you can designate a specific dollar amount, or percentage of the net residue of your estate to charity. This is called a 'bequest' and is the most common way to leave a gift in your Will.
- **A gift of securities:** if you own publicly listed securities that have increased in value, donating them to charity can have a tax benefit - you get the donation tax credit (*where applicable*) PLUS you can eliminate the capital gains tax you may normally have to pay on that stock.
- **Bank account beneficiaries:** Naming a charity as one of the beneficiaries of your bank accounts is one of the easiest and most flexible ways to leave a legacy. These assets are often highly taxed and by donating these funds to charity you could eliminate the taxes you'd have to pay on them. It's as simple as filling out your bank provider's beneficiary form, which you can update at any time.
- **A gift of life insurance:** you might have one through work, or one you purchased yourself. It's a way to make a BIG donation, for a fraction of the cost...and you get that credit to help pay down taxes that will be owed by your estate. If you don't have a life insurance policy but are interested in learning more, you can speak to your advisor about purchasing one and transferring it to a charity. When you transfer ownership, the premium you pay can be treated as a donation *now* and you can receive a credit to apply against your *current* tax bill.



## Step One: Who do you want to support with your legacy?

### Who do you want to support? Who will inherit your property?

*It's also helpful to have a couple back-up beneficiaries too.*

Beneficiary's legal name:

Beneficiary's legal name:

Beneficiary's legal name:

### Who will take care of your children, pets, or other dependants?

*(and your partner, if applicable):*

Things to consider when choosing a guardian:

- Someone who shares your values
- Someone dependable, who can provide a stable environment
- A loving caretaker, who your dependants know and trust
- The most seamless transition for your dependants

Guardian's legal name:

### Have you let them know? Have they agreed?

Yes

No



## Step Two: What will your impact be?

When you include a charity in your Will, try not to get too specific with your donation. Who knows what will be needed in the future? It's a good idea to make your gift general and unrestricted in nature.

If you're feeling stuck on choosing charities, look to the charities you're already involved with; think about the charities that have helped you or your family in the past; or make the best decision for now, knowing you can revise your Will in the future.

### **What issues or causes are most important to you?**

### **What kind of legacy would you like to see?**

### **Which charities are tackling these issues?**

### **Name the charities you want to include in your Will:**

*Legal name:* Rainbow Railroad

*CDA Charity reg. number:* 827142530RR0001

*USA Charity reg. number:* EIN47-4896980



## Step Three: Assets

**What assets do you own?** (you can use estimates or approximate values here!)

Real Estate	\$
Cash Savings ( <i>in bank accounts, etc.</i> )	\$
Investments ( <i>retirement savings, stocks, etc.</i> )	\$
Vehicles	\$
Your Home	\$
Your Business	\$
Pension Plan	\$
Insurance Policies	\$
Valuable Property ( <i>jewelry, art, collectibles, etc.</i> )	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

**Do you have any debt?**

Mortgage ( <i>and/or home equity line of credit</i> )	\$
Consumer debt ( <i>credit card bills, installment payments, etc.</i> )	\$
Vehicle Loans	\$
Student Loans	\$
Business Loans	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>



Don't worry about exact numbers or future values. Your assets and debt will all change over time anyway. What's important is that you get a sense of the pie so you can decide how you want to split it.

If you're feeling stuck about how to bring this topic up with a partner, show them the tax benefits; use it as an opportunity to chat about your legacy together, make it a family discussion; or simply have slightly different Wills to take both of your intentions into account.

**BONUS: A donation in your Will can help save on taxes!**

Chances are, when you die, your estate could get a hefty tax bill. That's because all your assets may be turned into income (except those transferred to a spouse) and taxed accordingly.

Good news! That donation you plan to leave in your Will? It will likely result in a charitable tax credit that can seriously lower those taxes.

Everyone's situation is different. If you're interested to find out more, you'll want to speak to a Financial Advisor who specializes in this area.

**How much would you like your inheritors to receive?**

% of Total:

Approx Amount (\$):

**How much will go to the charities you've chosen?**

% of Total:

Approx Amount (\$):



## Step Four: Estate administration

If you're looking for advice on how to divide your estate or save on taxes or you have a more complicated situation (*i.e. blended family, dependents with special needs, assets, etc.*) it's a good idea to use a lawyer or notary to draft your Will.

But if you have a pretty straightforward situation you might choose a lawyer or a trusted online Will platform.

Not all legal professionals are familiar with how best to include a charity in a Will. Bring this factsheet to your advisor to get the conversation started, or find an advisor that specializes in this area.

### **Who will administer your estate and carry out your wishes when you die?**

*It's also important to have a back-up executor too.*

Guardian's legal name:

### **Have you let them know? Have they agreed?**

Yes

No

Though not officially part of the Will, **many people include a Power of Attorney and Personal Directive** among their legal documents. This ensures there is someone in place to take care of you and your affairs if you're ever incapacitated, and your end of life wishes are well laid out.

POA legal name:



## Success!

You've now done all the hard work! You have all the basics to get your legal documents drafted. You can feel good knowing your family is taken care of and you've left **a legacy to be proud of.**

**Rainbow Railroad has partnered with several trusted online platforms that allow you to create or update your Will and include a charitable gift.**

### **For supporters in Canada:**

[Epilogue Wills](#), a Canadian online estate planning platform founded by estate lawyers that helps individuals create legally valid Wills through a guided online process.

[Willfora, a free online tool](#) that walks you through creating or updating your Will step-by-step. The platform generates personalized legal documents based on your answers and provides instructions for signing your Will so it becomes legally valid.

### **For supporters in the United States:**

[FreeWill, a free online tool](#) that guides you through the process of creating your Will or trust. You can use this resource on its own, or use it to document your wishes before finalizing your plans with an attorney. Do you also have an IRA, 401(k), life-insurance policy, or any other assets not included in your Will? If so, these are called non-probate assets and you must plan your beneficiaries for them separately. You can use [FreeWill](#) to make your plans and designate a beneficiary for these assets.

### **A few things you'll want to do when you have your Will:**

Action Items:

- Let your executor know where your Will is stored. Include bank information, digital passwords, and any other important information.
- Tell your family about your plans. It's best not to leave any surprises.
- Tell your charities about your future gift so that it will be used in the way that you want. Don't worry, you won't be held to any commitment.
- Set a reminder to review your Will in 5 years to make sure it's up to date.
- Something about letting us know so we can thank them while they're still around