



Estate Admin Client Consultation Checklist

Creating a comprehensive client consultation checklist for estate administration can greatly streamline the process for lawyers and their clients. This structured checklist can serve as a reference and be used to plan ahead, and lists topics to discuss with your client.


Prep Work

Request the client bring

- ☐ Client identification
 - Verify the identity of your client and any other parties involved.
- ☐ Client's legal relationship to the deceased
- ☐ Copy of the Death Certificate

- ☐ Original Will and Codicils
- ☐ Inventory of Assets and Liabilities

Before you go

- ☐ Run a  **tru**suite search, retirement search, bank quick search

Consultation

Understanding the Will

- ☐ **Review:** Read and interpret the Will with the client
- ☐ **Executor/PR:** Confirm the appointment and willingness of the executor or personal representative to serve
- ☐ **Beneficiaries:** Identify all beneficiaries named in the Will and any specific bequests to them
- ☐ **Special Instructions:** Note any special instructions regarding the disposition of the estate

Estate Liabilities

- ☐ **Mortgages and Loans:** Mortgages, personal loans, and other debts
- ☐ **Credit Cards:** Credit card debts
- ☐ **Utilities and Bills:** Outstanding utility bills or service charges
- ☐ **Taxes:** Potential estate tax liabilities and any unpaid income taxes

Estate Assets

- ☐ **Real Estate:** Real estate holdings, including location, value, and any mortgages
- ☐ **Bank Accounts:** Bank accounts with current balances
- ☐ **Investments:** Inventory stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and other investments
- ☐ **Personal Property:** Valuable personal property items (e.g., jewelry, art, vehicles)
- ☐ **Life Insurance:** Life insurance policy, beneficiaries, and payout amounts
- ☐ **Retirement Accounts:** Retirement accounts, including IRAs, 401(k)s, and pensions



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Legal and Administrative steps

- ☐ **Probate Process:** Including timelines and key steps
- ☐ **Tax Filings:** Requirements for filing the final income tax return for the deceased and any estate tax returns
- ☐ **Notices to Creditors:** Process for notifying creditors and settling debts
- ☐ **Closing Liabilities and Paying Expenses:** Closing out any open and/or ongoing bills and expenses of the Decedent and their estate, and how that protects the client from future liability down the road
- ☐ **Distribution of Assets:** Process for distributing assets to beneficiaries
- ☐ **Final Accounting:** Necessity of preparing a final accounting for the estate

Other Considerations

- ☐ **Disputes:** Potential disputes among beneficiaries or challenges to the Will
- ☐ **Trust Administration:** If applicable, trusts established by the Will or separately
- ☐ **Ongoing Communication:** Expectations for ongoing communication and updates

Closing

- ☐ **Summary of Next Steps:** Next steps and any immediate actions required
- ☐ **Deadlines and Timelines:** Where the client will be needed, and where you will step in to assist them in making sure they comply with any open items in the appropriate timeframe
- ☐ **Fees and Costs:** Estimate of legal fees and other costs related to the estate administration
- ☐ **Questions and Concerns:** Address any remaining questions or concerns the client may have

Documentation

- ☐ **Engagement Letter:** Prepare an engagement letter outlining the scope of services, fees, and other terms
- ☐ **Checklist and Documents Received:** Document the checklist and any documents received from the client

This checklist aims to cover the essentials of estate administration but may need to be adapted based on the specific laws of the jurisdiction and the unique aspects of each case.