SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER FOUNDATION

PERSONAL ESTATE PLANNING KIT

A guide to planning your legacy



Supporting A Great Place, Doing Great Things, Because of Great People!

A Practical Guide to Estate Planning, Legacy Giving & Your Future

Estate planning is more than deciding who receives your property. It is the process of making thoughtful decisions about your family, your financial affairs, your health-care wishes, your charitable priorities, and the people you trust to carry out those decisions. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation created this Lesson Book to help you understand the planning process and prepare for informed conversations with your professional advisors.

When charitable giving is part of your plan, the Foundation can explain its mission, planned-giving opportunities, legal name, EIN, gift-processing requirements and current policies—and can work with you and your advisors to help document and honor your charitable intentions.

Important
This publication is educational information, not legal, tax, investment or financial advice. Laws and tax rules change. Your attorney and tax/financial advisors should determine how any strategy applies to your circumstances.

What You Will Learn

- How to set family, financial and charitable goals and turn them into an estate-planning checklist.
- How to organize assets, ownership, beneficiary designations and important documents.
- How federal and Virginia tax rules can affect an estate, and why tax planning should be integrated with the overall plan.
- How trusts can be used to manage assets, protect beneficiaries and support family members or charitable interests.
- How wills, beneficiary designations and asset titling work together.
- How planned gifts can support the causes you value while fitting your family and financial objectives.
- How to create a secure record of the information your family and advisors may need.

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1. Start With What Matters Most

Estate planning is values-based planning

Everyone has an estate, and effective estate planning is about more than property. It also addresses incapacity, health-care decisions, family responsibilities, digital assets and the causes or institutions you want to support. The goal is not simply to distribute property; it is to make the transition more orderly and aligned with your wishes.

Set five kinds of goals

Goal Area	Questions to Consider
Family	Who should be protected? Are there children, grandchildren, dependents or others with special circumstances?
Financial	What income, liquidity and asset-management needs must be met during life and at death?
Health & Incapacity	Who should make financial and health-care decisions if you cannot?
Legacy	What values, stories, property or traditions do you want to pass forward?
Philanthropy	Which causes should benefit, and should gifts be immediate, future, restricted or unrestricted?

Talk before you transfer

This Lesson Book emphasizes communicating wishes to family and, when appropriate, to charitable organizations. That principle is especially important when a plan includes a business, family property, unequal inheritances, special-needs planning, or a charitable gift. Early communication can reduce uncertainty and help the people involved understand the purpose behind the plan.

Family Conversation Prompt
What do I want my family to understand about the decisions in my estate plan—not just what I want them to receive?

Build the right team

Depending on your circumstances, the team may include:

- Estate-planning attorney — drafts and coordinates legal documents and advises on state-law issues.
- CPA or tax advisor — evaluates tax consequences and filing requirements.

- Financial advisor/planner — coordinates investments, retirement assets, insurance, cash flow and long-term objectives.
- Trust professional — may provide expertise in trust administration and fiduciary services.
- Charitable gift/planned giving professional — can explain the Foundation's available gift arrangements, gift acceptance policies, legal name, EIN and gift-processing requirements.
- Insurance, business, real-estate or other specialists — as circumstances require.

Professional Boundary

A charitable organization can explain its mission, gift policies, legal name, tax identification number and gift-processing requirements. It should not replace the donor's independent legal or tax counsel.

2. Build a Coordinated Estate Plan

A strong plan is coordinated. A will may control probate assets, while beneficiary designations, joint ownership, trusts and other transfer mechanisms may control other assets. The Record Book appropriately asks you to document both the legal documents and how assets are owned.

Core planning documents

Will: States how probate assets should be distributed and may name guardians and an executor/personal representative.

Revocable living trust: Can provide continuing management during incapacity and after death; assets generally must be properly titled or funded to work as intended.

Financial power of attorney: Names someone who can handle financial matters when the authority becomes effective under the document.

Health-care power of attorney / advance directive: Documents who may make health-care decisions and/or expresses treatment preferences, depending on the document and state law.

Beneficiary designations: Direct assets such as retirement accounts and life insurance; they should be reviewed alongside the will and trust.

The three-way coordination test

- Document — Does the will or trust say what you intend?
- Title — Is the asset owned in the way your plan assumes?
- Beneficiary — Does the account or policy name the people or organizations you intend?

Review Trigger

Review the plan after marriage, divorce, birth or adoption, death, major asset changes, a move to another state, a business transaction, a significant change in charitable priorities, or a material change in tax law.

3. Understand Taxes Without Letting Taxes Drive the Plan

Tax planning should support the larger objectives of the estate plan. The right question is usually not 'How do I pay no tax?' but 'How do I preserve the most value for the people and causes I care about while meeting my legal and financial obligations?'

Federal estate and gift tax — 2026 snapshot

For 2026, the federal basic exclusion amount is $15,000,000 per individual. The annual gift-tax exclusion is $19,000 per recipient. These are federal rules and do not mean that every estate above or below those amounts has the same filing or tax outcome. Portability, prior taxable gifts, marital deductions, charitable deductions and other rules can materially affect an estate.

Virginia — important distinction

Virginia currently has no state estate tax or inheritance tax. Virginia does, however, impose a probate tax on many assets passing through probate. The tax does not apply to certain assets that pass outside probate, such as jointly held property with survivorship rights and certain beneficiary-designated assets.

This distinction is one reason coordinated ownership and beneficiary planning matters in addition to the will itself.

Virginia Estate & Probate Considerations

Virginia does not currently impose a state estate tax or inheritance tax. Virginia does impose a probate tax on many assets that pass through probate. The current state probate tax rate is $0.10 per $100 of estate value for estates valued above $15,000, and a locality may impose an additional probate tax equal to one-third of the state tax. Certain property that passes outside probate—such as qualifying jointly held property with survivorship rights, certain beneficiary-designated insurance proceeds and certain payable-on-death bonds—is generally excluded from the probate tax calculation.

For Virginia residents, probate and nonprobate transfers can therefore matter even when federal estate tax is not an issue. Your attorney can help determine which assets will pass through probate, which will pass by beneficiary designation or other nonprobate arrangements, and whether your ownership and beneficiary designations are consistent with your overall plan. If you own property or have a significant connection to another state, additional state rules may apply.

Tax Rule of Thumb

Do not choose a gift vehicle solely because it is advertised as 'tax-saving.' Evaluate control, liquidity, family needs, income needs, investment consequences, administrative costs, charitable purpose and the donor's overall plan.

4. Understand Trusts

A trust is a legal arrangement under which a trustee manages property for beneficiaries according to the trust's terms. Trusts are flexible tools that can serve personal, family and charitable purposes.

Common trust categories

Revocable living trust: Often used for continuity of management, incapacity planning and probate/administration considerations. The grantor generally retains significant control.

Irrevocable trust: Generally involves giving up some degree of control. Certain irrevocable structures can provide estate, gift, creditor or other planning benefits, but they require careful legal and tax analysis.

Testamentary trust: Created through a will and becomes effective at death, often to manage property for a spouse, children or other beneficiaries.

Supplemental/special-needs trust: Can be structured to provide for a person with a disability while seeking to preserve eligibility for means-tested public benefits; specialized counsel is essential.

Pet trust: Can provide funds and instructions for pet care during incapacity or after death, including naming a caregiver and trustee.

Charitable remainder trust: Provides an income interest to designated beneficiaries for a period or life, with the remainder ultimately passing to charity.

Charitable lead trust: Provides charitable payments for a defined period, with the remainder generally passing to selected noncharitable beneficiaries.

Choosing a trustee

- Integrity and willingness to serve.
- Ability to communicate and keep records.
- Understanding of fiduciary responsibilities.
- Capacity to manage investments or willingness to use qualified professionals.
- Ability to remain impartial when beneficiaries have competing interests.
- Availability over the expected life of the trust.

5. Build Your Legacy Through Philanthropy

Planned giving can help you extend your values and priorities into the future while supporting organizations and causes that matter to you. If you are considering a planned gift to the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation, you can expect the Foundation to listen to your goals, explain the charitable gift options it offers, provide accurate information about the Foundation and its gift policies, coordinate with your advisors when you invite us to do so, and document and steward your charitable intentions. The Foundation will respect your confidentiality, recognition preferences and need for independent professional advice. The Foundation does not replace your attorney, CPA, tax advisor or financial advisor.

Common charitable planning tools

Planned Giving Opportunity	How It Can Work for You and What to Expect from the Foundation
Bequest through a Will or Revocable Trust	You can name the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation in your will or revocable trust by a specific dollar amount, percentage of your estate, specific property or a share of the residue. The Foundation can provide its exact legal name, EIN and current bequest language or gift-processing information for your attorney to review. If you choose to notify the Foundation of your intention, the Foundation can document your stated intent, discuss any restrictions and steward the relationship over time.
IRA or Retirement-Plan Beneficiary Designation	You can name the Foundation as a primary or contingent beneficiary of all or a portion of an IRA or eligible retirement plan. Beneficiary designations are generally separate from your will, so they should be reviewed as part of your coordinated estate plan. The Foundation can provide its legal name and EIN and can help you confirm that the designation information is current.
Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)	If you are age 70½ or older and meet the applicable requirements, you may be able to direct a distribution from an IRA directly to the Foundation as a qualified charitable distribution. A QCD may be excludable from income and may count toward a required minimum distribution when the requirements are met. The Foundation can provide instructions for directing the gift and will provide appropriate gift acknowledgement. Current IRS limits and eligibility rules should be confirmed for the year of the gift.
Appreciated Securities	You may be able to give publicly traded appreciated securities directly to the Foundation. When the requirements are met, a charitable contribution of eligible appreciated securities may provide a deduction and may avoid recognition of capital gain on the donated appreciation. The Foundation can provide

	current transfer instructions and work with you and your advisor to document the gift. Your advisor should determine the tax treatment of the specific asset and transaction.
Real Estate	A residence, farm, commercial property or other real estate may sometimes be given outright or through a planned-giving arrangement. The Foundation can discuss whether the proposed property is consistent with its current gift acceptance policies and coordinate due-diligence and documentation with you and your advisors. Real-estate gifts may require appraisal, title review, environmental review, mortgage/debt analysis and other due diligence before acceptance.
Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)	If you have a donor-advised fund, you can recommend grants to the Foundation during your lifetime. Depending on the DAF sponsor's agreement, you may also be able to identify the Foundation as a beneficiary or recommend successor charitable interests. The Foundation can provide the information your DAF sponsor needs and can work with you on the charitable purpose of a grant.
Other Planned Giving Arrangements	Depending on your goals and the Foundation's current gift acceptance policies, other arrangements may include charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts or charitable lead trusts. These structures can involve significant legal, tax and administrative considerations and should be evaluated with qualified professional advisors before you proceed.

A donor-centered order of operations

- 1. Share your charitable intention with the Foundation when you are comfortable doing so. You do not need to have every detail finalized before beginning the conversation.
- 2. Expect the Foundation to listen first and ask questions about the charitable purpose, timing, restrictions, recognition preferences and the asset you are considering.
- 3. The Foundation will encourage you to discuss the gift with your independent attorney, CPA, tax advisor and/or financial advisor. The Foundation will provide organizational information, not individualized legal or tax advice.
- 4. Before you finalize documents, the Foundation will help you confirm its exact legal name, EIN, current gift-processing instructions and any applicable gift acceptance requirements or restrictions.
- 5. If you choose to document your intention with the Foundation, the Foundation will record your stated charitable intent and recognition preferences and will keep that information confidential in accordance with its policies and applicable law.

- 6. After your gift or planned gift intention is established, the Foundation will steward the relationship, acknowledge the gift appropriately, maintain accurate records and work to honor your documented intent.

If you choose to include the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation in your estate or charitable plan, use the Foundation's exact legal name and confirm current gift instructions and gift acceptance requirements with the Foundation before signing documents.

Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation
Federal Tax ID / EIN: 80-0232306

The Foundation welcomes conversations about bequests, IRA and retirement-plan beneficiary designations, qualified charitable distributions, appreciated securities, real estate, donor-advised funds and other planned-giving arrangements that align with its current policies.

6. Put the Plan into Action

1. Inventory: Complete the Record Book: family, assets, liabilities, insurance, retirement plans, business interests, digital assets and important documents.

2. Coordinate: Compare asset ownership and beneficiary designations with the will/trust.

3. Execute: Work with counsel to sign and, where applicable, fund or retitle documents.

4. Communicate: Tell the people who need to know where documents are located and what their responsibilities are.

5. Secure: Use a secure password manager or protected storage. Avoid unsecured email for sensitive information.

6. Review: Set a recurring review date—at least annually is a useful administrative discipline—and revisit after major life events.

7. Steward: If a charitable gift is included, keep the charity informed enough to identify and honor the intended gift.

7. Planning Worksheets & Discussion Questions

My Family & Legacy Goals

What matters most to me about the people I leave behind?

_____

What values, stories, traditions or experiences do I want to pass forward?

_____

Are there family members who need special protection or a different form of support?

_____

What causes or organizations reflect the legacy I want to create?

_____

What would I want my family to say about the purpose of my plan?

_____

My Professional Team

Advisor / Role	Name	Phone / Email	Document or Purpose

Questions for My Next Estate-Planning Meeting

☐ Are my will, trusts and beneficiary designations coordinated?

☐ How are my assets titled, and does that match my intended distribution?

☐ What would happen if I became incapacitated tomorrow?

☐ Are there federal, state or income-tax issues I should address?

☐ Are any assets especially appropriate—or inappropriate—for charitable giving?

☐ Should I consider a trust for a spouse, child, grandchild, special-needs beneficiary or other loved one?

☐ What should I review annually?

8. Professional & Philanthropic Standards

Our donor-centered standard

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation will approach planned giving as a service to you, the donor—not as a sales transaction. The Foundation follows the ethical principles and donor-rights standards reflected in the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Code of Ethical Standards and Donor Bill of Rights, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) principles and planned-giving practices, and BoardSource principles for responsible nonprofit governance and fundraising. These standards guide how the Foundation communicates with donors, handles charitable intentions, protects confidentiality and stewards planned gifts.

What the Foundation will do

- Explain the Foundation's mission and charitable purposes.
- Provide the Foundation's legal name and EIN and current gift-processing instructions.
- Explain common planned-gift concepts in plain language.
- Coordinate with a donor's attorney, CPA or financial advisor when invited by the donor.
- Document and steward a donor's stated charitable intent.
- Respect confidentiality and donor recognition preferences.
- Encourage independent professional advice for legal and tax decisions.

What the Foundation will not do

- Draft a donor's will, trust or other legal document.
- Tell a donor what the donor 'should' give or which beneficiary should be displaced.
- Guarantee a particular tax result.
- Provide individualized legal, tax or investment advice.
- Pressure a donor to make a gift that conflicts with family or financial needs.

Ready to explore a charitable or planned gift? Contact the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation to discuss your goals, learn about current giving opportunities and receive the information your professional advisors may need. The Foundation will work with you at your pace and within the boundaries of its role as a charitable organization.

Sources & Professional References

- Personal Estate Planning Kit — Lesson Book source reference (estate-planning and charitable-giving concepts).
- Personal Estate Planning Kit — Record Book source reference (record-keeping and planning worksheet concepts).
- Internal Revenue Service — 2026 Instructions for Form 706; estate and gift tax guidance.

- Internal Revenue Service — 2026 gift-tax guidance and IRA/QCD guidance.
- Virginia Department of Taxation — Estate and Inheritance Taxes; Probate Tax.
- BoardSource — board governance, fundraising responsibilities and board participation in resource development.
- CASE — planned giving, legacy giving, donor-centered practice and gift acceptance resources.
- Association of Fundraising Professionals — Code of Ethical Standards, Donor Bill of Rights, stewardship and planned-giving ethics.

Prepared for educational and donor-development use by the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation. This publication is not legal, tax, investment or financial advice. Laws, tax rules and Foundation policies can change. Review your plan regularly and consult qualified professional advisors before making estate-planning or charitable-giving decisions.