

Estate Planning Checklist

New York State | 2026 Edition

ZEUS ESTATE PLANNING

1. Core Estate Planning Documents

- Last Will and Testament**
NY requires 2 witnesses who must sign within 30 days. Review executor designation.
- Revocable Living Trust (if applicable)**
Verify trust terms still reflect your wishes. Check successor trustee designations.
- Irrevocable Trust(s) (if applicable)**
Review for special needs trusts, life insurance trusts, or asset protection trusts.
- Trust Funding Verification**
Confirm assets are properly titled in trust name. Unfunded trusts don't avoid probate.

2. Decision-Making Documents

- Durable Power of Attorney**
NY Statutory Short Form (GOL 5-1501). Banks must accept this form. Review agent designation.
- Health Care Proxy**
Names person to make medical decisions if you cannot. Must be signed with 2 witnesses.
- Living Will / Medical Directive**
Documents your treatment preferences for end-of-life care.
- HIPAA Authorization**
Allows agents to access your medical records. Critical for emergency situations.

3. Beneficiary Designations

Important: Beneficiary designations override your will. Review these annually.

- 401(k) / 403(b) Accounts**
- IRA / Roth IRA Accounts**
- Pension Benefits**
- Life Insurance Policies**
- Annuities**
- POD Bank Accounts**
- TOD Brokerage Accounts**
- HSA / FSA Accounts**

4. Financial & Property Records

- Bank Account Statements
- Investment Account Statements
- Real Estate Deeds
- Property Tax Records
- Mortgage Documents
- Vehicle Titles
- Business Ownership Docs
- Loan Statements
- Credit Card Accounts
- Safe Deposit Box Location

5. Digital Assets & Access

- Password Manager / Master Password List**
Store securely. Consider a digital estate planning service.
- Email Account Access**
- Social Media Accounts**
Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn legacy settings configured?
- Cryptocurrency / Digital Wallets**
Document wallet addresses and recovery phrases securely.
- Cloud Storage (Google Drive, iCloud, Dropbox)**
- Subscription Services**

6. Personal & Family Documents

- Birth Certificates
- Marriage License
- Divorce Decree (if applicable)
- Adoption Records
- Social Security Cards
- Passports
- Military Discharge Papers
- Immigration Documents

7. New York-Specific Considerations

- NY Estate Tax Planning**
2026 exemption: \$7.16M. "Cliff" rule: estates over 105% of exemption lose entire exemption.
- Spousal Right of Election**
Surviving spouse entitled to greater of \$50,000 or 1/3 of estate (EPTL 5-1.1-A).
- Transfer on Death Deed (if applicable)**
NY allows TOD deeds for real property to avoid probate. Must be recorded.

When to Update This Checklist:

After marriage, divorce, birth/adoption, death of beneficiary, significant asset purchase/sale, retirement, moving to a new state, or major tax law changes.

Review Completed: _____ **Next Review Date:**

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Schedule your free consultation at zeusestateplanning.com/contact