



# THE CHARITABLE BEQUEST PLANNER

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO HELP YOU CREATE AN ENDURING, POWERFUL  
LEGACY THROUGH A GIFT THAT COSTS YOU NOTHING DURING YOUR LIFETIME

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## WHAT IS A CHARITABLE BEQUEST?

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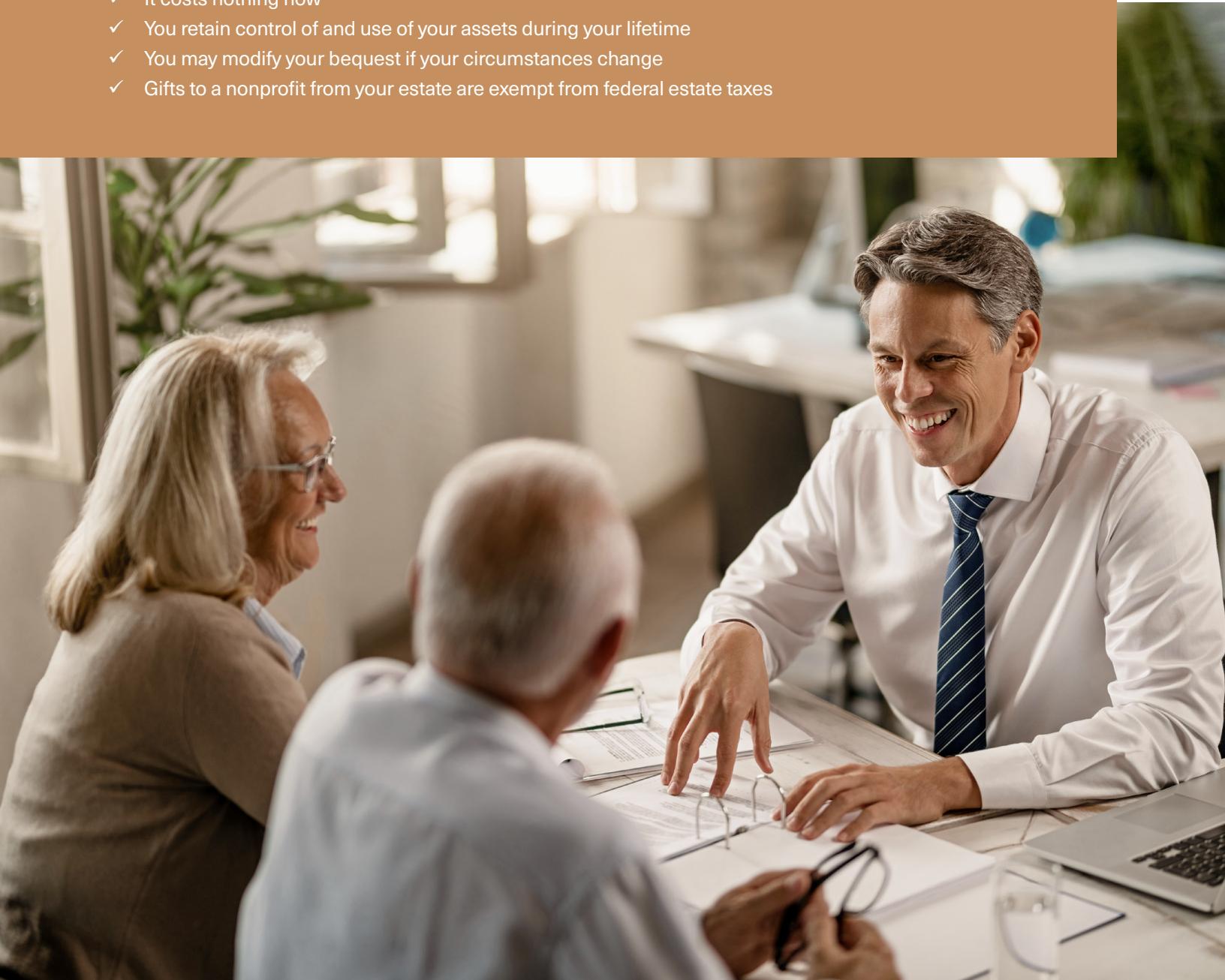
A bequest is the easiest type of planned gift you can make. It's a transfer of cash, securities, life insurance, collectibles, real estate or other property through your estate, made possible by a beneficiary designation or a provision in your will or trust that allows the assets to pass to the charitable organization(s) of your choice.

Planning your bequest carefully will help you to shape your own legacy, provide for the causes you care about, and possibly even help to minimize taxes.

### THE BENEFITS OF A BEQUEST

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- ✓ It costs nothing now
- ✓ You retain control of and use of your assets during your lifetime
- ✓ You may modify your bequest if your circumstances change
- ✓ Gifts to a nonprofit from your estate are exempt from federal estate taxes



## PART 1 THE CHECKLIST

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### 1. HOW MUCH DO YOU WISH TO GIVE?

- Set dollar amount. \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Percentage of assets. \_\_\_\_\_%

### 2. WHERE WILL THE GIFT COME FROM?

- Cash (from checking or savings)
- Stocks/appreciated assets
- Life Insurance
- Real estate
- Retirement account
- Art (or other collectibles)

### 3. ANY CONTINGENCY PROVISIONS?

You can make your bequest contingent upon other circumstances. For example, you may wish to preserve assets for other beneficiaries, and leave those assets to your favorite charity only if those beneficiaries are no longer alive. You could also gift your residuary estate: the assets remaining after other noncharitable bequests are distributed and the taxes and administration fees are paid.

- My bequest has no conditions.
- My bequest will be contingent upon the following conditions:

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### 4. WILL YOUR GIFT BE RESTRICTED OR UNRESTRICTED?

You can specify how your gift will be used. You may be interested in supporting a specific project or program at your favorite nonprofit(s)—or you could allow the nonprofit to put the gift toward whatever need makes the most sense. If you decide to restrict your gift, ensure instructions on its use are carefully worded, and allow the charity some flexibility to manage the gift accordingly in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

My bequest will be:

- Unrestricted — the nonprofit may decide the best use for my gift.
- Restricted. The nonprofit may use my gift toward the following:

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### 5. CONTACT THE NONPROFIT.

Run your gift idea past the nonprofit's gift officers. They will be happy to hear about your intentions, and can offer guidance on how to best structure a gift for maximum impact. They can also discuss keeping your gift anonymous if you wish.

### 6. DISCUSS YOUR BEQUEST WITH A PROFESSIONAL.

Some supporters find that working with a financial advisor and/or estate attorney is the best way to craft a bequest that helps them meet their financial and philanthropic goals while also ensuring their estate plan protects their loved ones. A professional can also advise you on whether a bequest through a will or a trust can best meet your needs.

### 7. DESIGNATE A BACKUP NONPROFIT(S) TO RECEIVE YOUR GIFT.

Circumstances can change quickly. Naming a "successor" charitable organization to be the recipient of your bequest ensures that your philanthropic intentions will be met in case of unforeseen events, such as the original charity's closure.

I designate \_\_\_\_\_ to be the recipient of my gift if \_\_\_\_\_ is no longer able to accept it.



## PART 2 BEQUEST LANGUAGE FOR YOUR WILL OR TRUST

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### GENERAL BEQUEST (UNDER TRUST)

The trustee shall distribute, outright and free of trust, to [NONPROFIT'S NAME], a 501(c)(3) organization located at [NONPROFIT ADDRESS], [A PERCENTAGE OF TRUST ASSETS, A SPECIFIC DOLLAR AMOUNT, OR REMAINDER OF THE TRUST ASSETS] to be used for its general support and charitable purposes without restriction.

### SPECIFIC BEQUEST (UNDER WILL)

I give, devise, and bequeath [A SPECIFIC SUM, A PERCENTAGE, OR A SPECIFIC ASSET] to [NONPROFIT NAME], a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization located at [NONPROFIT ADDRESS], to be used for [SPECIFIC PURPOSE].

### RESIDUARY BEQUEST (UNDER WILL)

I give, devise, and bequeath all [OR A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE] of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, to [NONPROFIT NAME], a nonprofit 501(c) (3) charitable organization located at [NONPROFIT ADDRESS], to be used for [its general purposes or a specific purpose].

### CONTINGENT BEQUEST

In the event that [PRIMARY BENEFICIARY NAME] does not survive me, I give, devise, and bequeath all of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate [OR A SPECIFIC SUM, ASSET, OR PERCENTAGE OF THE RESIDUAL ESTATE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARY] to [NONPROFIT NAME], a nonprofit 501(c) (3) charitable organization located at [NONPROFIT ADDRESS], to be used for [its general purposes or a specific purpose].

## PART 3

## CHOOSING THE RECIPIENT OF YOUR BEQUEST

Making plans to help a nonprofit achieve its mission is a noble endeavor. But before you decide to make a gift, you'll want to ensure your philanthropy won't be wasted. Does a nonprofit match your values? Does it support the causes you care about? Is it fiscally responsible? How much of your donation will actually go toward the mission?

With a little research, you can find the answers to all these questions and more and make an informed decision.



### THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES WILL HELP YOU RESEARCH POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS:

#### CHARITYNAVIGATOR.ORG

One of the world's largest and oldest evaluators of charities. Features search filters so that you can find charities that align with your vision and values; a ratings system based on accountability, finances, impact, leadership and more; information including the charity's size, mission; contact and EIN information.

#### GUIDESTAR.ORG (NOW CALLED CANDID)

The GuideStar database (now part of a nonprofit called Candid) features up-to-date information on more than 2.7 million nonprofits. It provides a nonprofit's financial data, mission objectives, an impact summary from the nonprofit, and more.

#### GREATNONPROFITS.ORG

Provides first-person stories, reviews and insights from volunteers, program participants, clients, donors and more.

#### CHARITYWATCH.ORG

CharityWatch rates charities almost exclusively through audited financial statements, tax filings, fundraising contracts, and other financial reports.

#### IRS.GOV/CHARITIES-NON-PROFITS/TAX-EXEMPT-ORGANIZATION-SEARCH

The I.R.S. features a searchable database of charities that allows you to verify the nonprofit status of an organization.

#### GIVE.ORG

Give.org is an arm of the Better Business Bureau and reviews complaints about charities the way the BBB investigates businesses. It seeks to "verify the trustworthiness of publicly-soliciting charities by completing rigorous evaluations based on 20 BBB Standards for Charity Accountability."

#### CHARITYNAVIGATOR.ORG

This site uses data from the IRS, partners, and charities to determine a nonprofit's health.

#### PHILANTHROPY.ORG

Research, analysis, and commentary on philanthropy, nonprofit practice, and charitable impact.



*Plant trees whose shade you  
will never enjoy.*



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