Estate Planning Starter Checklist

A Michigan family's plan in five parts. Check off what you have. Whatever's left unchecked is your starting point.

1. Your core documents

- [ ] **A will** that names a personal representative and a guardian for any minor children.
- [ ] **A revocable living trust,** if you want to keep your family out of probate. It works with a short "pour-over" will that catches anything left outside it.
- [ ] **A durable financial power of attorney** naming someone to handle money, bills and property if you can't.
- [ ] **A patient advocate designation,** Michigan's healthcare power of attorney. It needs two qualified witnesses, and your advocate must sign an acceptance before acting.
- [ ] **Your written medical wishes,** usually included in the patient advocate designation.
- [ ] **A HIPAA release** so your family can talk to your doctors.

2. Funding and beneficiaries

A trust only controls what's titled in its name, and beneficiary forms override your will.

- [ ] Your home is deeded to your trust, or covered by another planned transfer, such as a Lady Bird deed.
- [ ] Bank and investment accounts are retitled to your trust or have a payable-on-death or transfer-on-death beneficiary that matches your plan.
- [ ] Life insurance beneficiaries are current. No minor child is named directly.
- [ ] Retirement account beneficiaries are current. If your trust is named, it was drafted for that purpose.
- [ ] Business interests (LLC or corporation) are assigned to your trust, and the operating agreement allows it.
- [ ] Accounts and property bought after your plan was signed are titled correctly too.

3. Your people

- [ ] A successor trustee and personal representative, plus a backup for each.
- [ ] A guardian for minor children, plus a backup.
- [ ] Financial and healthcare agents, plus backups.
- [ ] Each person knows they've been named and has agreed to serve.

4. Getting organized

- [ ] Your signed originals are in one secure place, and two people know where.
- [ ] A list of your accounts, policies and advisors and where to find them. Not the passwords themselves.
- [ ] Passwords live in a password manager, with an emergency-access plan.
- [ ] Digital accounts, photos and any cryptocurrency are listed, with instructions for access.
- [ ] A short letter to your family explaining your wishes and where things are.

5. When to review

- [ ] Every three to five years, or sooner if a big change makes it relevant.
- [ ] After a marriage, divorce, birth, adoption or death in the family.
- [ ] After buying or selling a home, starting or selling a business, or moving to or from Michigan.
- [ ] When someone you named can no longer serve.

Your next step

Unchecked boxes are normal. Most families have three or four. Each one is a fixable gap, and most take one meeting.

Book a free **Estate Plan Chat** at GenerationEP.com. We'll go through your list with you.

Clarity today. Peace for generations.

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