

Funding Your Trust: How to Title Your Assets

In short: Your Trust only controls assets it owns or that name it as beneficiary. Moving your assets into your Trust is called **funding**. Any asset you don't fund may still have to go through probate.

How the New Title Should Read

When an asset is retitled, it is owned by you *as Trustee* of your Trust. Use the exact name and date of your Trust:

"Jane Smith, Trustee of the Jane Smith Revocable Trust dated March 1, 2026"

You keep your own Social Security number; no new tax ID or tax return is needed while you serve as Trustee.

What to Do With Each Asset

Asset	What to Do
Florida real estate home, vacant land, rentals	A new deed transferring the property to your Trust is signed and recorded. Your homestead exemption is generally not affected. Notify your homeowner's insurance company.
Out-of-state real estate	Transfer it with a deed under that state's rules to help avoid a second probate there. Talk with us first.
Bank accounts checking, savings, CDs, money market	Name your Trust as the "payable on death" (POD) beneficiary of each account.
Brokerage and investment accounts (non-retirement)	Retitle the account into your Trust's name, or name your Trust as the "transfer on death" (TOD) beneficiary. Most firms have a form for this.
Retirement accounts IRA, 401(k), 403(b), pension	Do NOT retitle these. Changing ownership can trigger income taxes. Keep them in your name. As a general rule, name individuals or charities as your beneficiaries.
Life insurance and annuities	Usually keep the owner the same and update the beneficiary as we advise. Changing an annuity's owner can have tax consequences, so ask us first.
Business interests LLC, corporation, partnership	Discuss transferring your business interests with your business attorney and tax professional.
Vehicles, boats, and RVs	These usually stay in your own name. Ask us if you own one of significant value.
Personal belongings	Furniture, jewelry, and household items generally don't need to be retitled. Your Separate Writing says who receives specific items.

Tips for Working With Institutions

- **Bring a Certification of Trust** instead of your full Trust. It keeps your private details private.
- **Ask for written confirmation** of each change, and keep copies with your estate planning documents.
- **If an institution gives you trouble**, email Attorney Mazenko.

Keep Your Trust Funded Going Forward

Title new accounts and property in your Trust's name, or name your Trust as beneficiary, from the start. Your Pour-Over Will is a safety net, but assets that pass through it may still need probate.