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Should You Agree to Serve as an Executor or Trustee?

Estate Roles and Considerations

It feels like a compliment to be asked to serve as an estate executor or trustee, but you shouldn't say yes until you have a sound understanding of what the responsibility will include and why you're being asked to do it.

First, make sure the individual isn't asking you to be an estate decision maker just because you're the oldest child, a family member or close friend. Ask why they believe you're the best person for the job, and find out what, exactly, you're saying yes to. Do you understand what Virginia law requires of you? And do you know the difference between an executor and a trustee?

- **Executors:** The executor is responsible for settling the estate, which may include filing the deceased's tax returns, initiating legal and court proceedings as necessary, and communicating with beneficiaries.
- **Trustees:** The trustee acts as the legal owner of trust assets. His or her responsibilities include safeguarding trust assets and distributing those assets pursuant to trust terms and tax filings, as well as communicating with beneficiaries.

> [Get more information about serving as an executor or trustee in Virginia from Blair & Associates.](#)

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