TrustAlign

We make sure your trust is actually funded

Trust Funding *Checklist*

A guide to confirming whether your trust is actually funded

Most trusts fail because the assets were never moved into them.

This checklist helps you confirm whether your trust is actually doing its job. It walks through every type of asset and shows you what to look for, what paperwork should be in your files, and how to start checking each one today.

Before you start

This is a real checklist. It takes real time.

We want to be upfront with you. Going through this whole checklist on your own is a real project. For most people it takes several hours of work spread across weeks. You will probably need to:

☐ Dig through your files and find paperwork you may not have looked at in years

☐ Log into bank, brokerage, and insurance accounts to check how each one is titled

☐ Call your county recorder, your insurance carriers, and possibly your attorney

☐ Make decisions about things you may not have thought about in a long time

If you have the time and energy to work through it carefully, you absolutely can. Many people do, and we put this guide together so you have what you need to do exactly that.

> A word of caution: some of these steps, especially real estate deeds and business assignments, are easy to get wrong, and a mistake can be fatal to the transfer. These are not the place to improvise on your own.

> And even if you funded your trust at some point, it may already be out of date. New accounts, new property, and life changes since then often mean parts of it need to be redone.

“But you don’t have to do this alone.”

Trust Align exists for exactly this. The moving part, actually transferring your assets into the trust, is our expertise, and we’re trained by attorneys to do it the right way. You and your attorney decide what should go where; you give us the list, and we handle the transfers correctly. We sign a privacy agreement before reviewing anything specific to your situation. Timelines vary by asset, and some, like bank accounts, can take longer than others.

You created your trust to protect your family from probate. Whether you work through this checklist yourself or call us, the goal is the same: make sure that protection is actually in place.

> **If you’d like help instead of doing this yourself**
>
> Schedule a free 30-minute call at calendly.com/rich-trust-align/30min

Getting started

How to use this checklist

Funding a trust means moving your assets into the trust's name, or otherwise aligning them with your trust. A trust that hasn't been funded gives you no protection. The assets will still go through probate when you pass.

This document is organized by type of asset. For each one, you'll find four things:

1. What you would remember doing. There are very specific things you have to do, and do correctly, to move an asset (like a bank account) into the trust. If you did them, you'd probably remember. It's such a pain that it's hard to forget.

2. Documents to look for. The paperwork that should be in your files if the funding was done.

3. How to check today. Concrete things you can do now to see whether the asset is currently aligned with your trust.

4. Warning signs. Common red flags that the work was never fully completed.

Check off each item as you confirm it. If you can't check most of the boxes in a section, that asset is probably not in your trust and would go through probate.

> One important note: this checklist helps you see whether something was done. Confirming it was done correctly is a separate question, and that often takes a professional eye. A small error on a deed or a beneficiary form can quietly undo the whole transfer. When in doubt, have it reviewed.

A quick disclaimer. This checklist is for general education only. It is not legal advice, and what belongs in your trust, and how, depends on your situation and your state. For those decisions, check with your attorney. Where Trust Align comes in is the moving part: actually transferring assets into the trust, which is our expertise and something we're trained by attorneys to do correctly. We sign a privacy agreement before reviewing anything specific to your trust.

Real Estate

It’s a common myth that every property should go straight into your trust. Sometimes a property is owned by the trust directly; sometimes by a company (such as an LLC) that is in turn owned by the trust; and sometimes your attorney will direct another approach entirely. What’s right depends on you, your situation, and your state. When a property does need to go into the trust, that means preparing and recording a new deed, and that’s something we can handle for you. Deeds are also easy to get wrong, and a mistake can be fatal to the transfer, so this is not a place to do it yourself.

IF A PROPERTY WAS MOVED INTO THE TRUST, YOU WOULD REMEMBER

☐ Working with someone to prepare a new deed naming your trust (or the entity) as owner

☐ Signing that new deed

☐ Paying a recording fee (often $50 to $200 per property)

☐ Recording the new deed with the county, not just signing it

DOCUMENTS TO LOOK FOR

☐ A copy of each recorded deed with a county stamp

☐ A receipt showing the recording fee was paid

HOW TO CHECK TODAY

☐ Look at your most recent property tax bill. Does it show your trust (or the entity) as owner?

☐ Search your county recorder’s website (most are free) and confirm how each property is titled

☐ Call your homeowner’s insurance to make sure your coverage reflects how the property is now held. This is an important step to take, but a phone call alone doesn’t confirm the transfer was done. It only updates the insurance side.

WATCH OUT FOR THESE WARNING SIGNS

- You have a deed in your file, but it was never recorded at the county
- Your property tax bill still shows your personal name
- You bought a property after creating the trust and never addressed it
- You own property in another state and only handled the deed where you live
- It was handled years ago and hasn’t been reviewed since

Bank, Brokerage, and Retirement Accounts

Money in accounts is the most commonly missed part of trust funding. Depending on your plan, an account may be retitled into the trust, set up to transfer to the trust when you pass, or in some cases intentionally left as is. Not every account belongs in the trust, and what's right depends on your situation and your attorney's guidance. Retirement accounts work differently and are generally handled through beneficiary designations, not by retitling.

WHAT YOU WOULD REMEMBER DOING

☐ Contacting each bank, brokerage, and retirement provider one at a time

☐ Completing a form at each place to retitle the account or set a beneficiary, as directed for your plan

☐ For retirement accounts: naming the trust, where appropriate, as primary and/or backup beneficiary

☐ Getting written confirmation from each institution that the change went through

DOCUMENTS TO LOOK FOR

☐ Account statements showing the account name as "[Your Name], Trustee of [Your Trust]" for accounts that were retitled

☐ Confirmation letters showing updated beneficiaries

☐ Transfer-on-Death (TOD) forms, if that option was used

HOW TO CHECK TODAY

☐ Log into each account and check the title. Does it reflect your trust where it's supposed to?

☐ For retirement accounts: check the beneficiaries section against your attorney's instructions

☐ Call any account you can't verify online and ask how it's currently titled

WATCH OUT FOR THESE WARNING SIGNS

- You remember one trip to the bank but have accounts at multiple institutions
- A retirement beneficiary names your spouse or kids directly when your plan called for the trust
- You set a primary beneficiary but no backup
- You opened a new account after funding the trust and never addressed it
- It was set up years ago and hasn't been reviewed since

Life Insurance Policies

Life insurance is one of the easiest things to align with your trust, and one of the most commonly forgotten. The policy itself stays in your name; what matters is who you've named as beneficiary on each policy, where naming the trust is appropriate for your plan.

WHAT YOU WOULD REMEMBER DOING

☐ Contacting each carrier separately, once per policy

☐ Completing a beneficiary form for each policy

☐ Receiving written confirmation the change went through

DOCUMENTS TO LOOK FOR

☐ A confirmation letter from each carrier showing the updated beneficiary

☐ A copy of the policy reflecting the trust as primary or backup beneficiary, where applicable

HOW TO CHECK TODAY

☐ Log into each insurer's website and check the beneficiary section

☐ Call the carrier and ask who the current beneficiary is. Worth doing, but a call confirms only what's on file, not that the overall plan is correct.

☐ Don't forget life insurance through your employer. Check your HR or benefits portal.

WATCH OUT FOR THESE WARNING SIGNS

- A beneficiary listed as "estate" or left blank, which can force probate even with a trust
- A major life event (marriage, divorce, new child) with no beneficiary update
- A forgotten employer policy
- Your spouse listed as the only beneficiary, with no backup
- It hasn't been reviewed in years

Personal Property and Digital Assets

Personal property is your valuable physical things: art, jewelry, collectibles, antiques, firearms. Digital assets are your online things: cryptocurrency, online accounts, valuable domain names. Both need to be documented and assigned to your trust to be protected.

WHAT YOU WOULD REMEMBER DOING

☐ Signing a Personal Property Assignment or Bill of Sale (a document listing valuables that belong to the trust)

☐ Keeping that signed document with your trust records

☐ Writing down a list of your online accounts, crypto wallets, and login information

☐ Telling your trustee where to find that list (a sealed envelope, safe deposit box, or password manager)

DOCUMENTS TO LOOK FOR

☐ A signed Personal Property Assignment or Bill of Sale dated after you created your trust

☐ A current list of your digital assets with access instructions

☐ Appraisals for high-value items, if you have them

HOW TO CHECK TODAY

☐ Find your Personal Property Assignment or Bill of Sale among your trust records

☐ Check that your digital asset list is current. Most are years out of date

☐ Ask yourself: if something happened tomorrow, could my trustee actually access my online accounts and crypto?

WATCH OUT FOR THESE WARNING SIGNS

- You don’t have a Personal Property Assignment or Bill of Sale anywhere
- Your digital asset list is more than two years old, or doesn’t exist
- Your trustee has no idea how to access your password manager
- You acquired crypto or NFTs after creating the trust and never documented them

Business Interests

If you own part of a business (an LLC, corporation, or partnership), funding the trust usually takes two steps that are often confused for one. Signing a paper that transfers your ownership is not enough on its own. The business's internal records also need to be updated to show the trust as owner. As with deeds, these assignments are easy to get wrong, so they're best not done on your own.

WHAT YOU WOULD REMEMBER DOING

- ☐ Signing an assignment document that transfers your ownership share to the trust
- ☐ For an LLC: updating the Operating Agreement to show the trust as a member
- ☐ For a corporation: updating the Shareholder Agreement and stock ledger
- ☐ For a partnership: amending the Partnership Agreement

DOCUMENTS TO LOOK FOR

- ☐ A signed assignment document dated after the trust was created
- ☐ The updated Operating Agreement, Shareholder Agreement, or Partnership Agreement showing the trust as owner
- ☐ For corporations: a stock certificate or updated stock ledger in the trust's name

HOW TO CHECK TODAY

- ☐ Pull your most recent Operating, Shareholder, or Partnership Agreement. Is the trust listed among the owners?
- ☐ Check your most recent Schedule K-1. Whose name is on it?
- ☐ If you co-own with others, confirm they're aware of the transfer. In some cases, co-owners or other parties must formally consent before your interest can be transferred.

WATCH OUT FOR THESE WARNING SIGNS

- You signed an assignment but the Operating, Shareholder, or Partnership Agreement was never updated
- You can't find an updated Operating, Shareholder, or Partnership Agreement
- Your most recent K-1 still shows your personal name
- You started a new business after creating the trust and never addressed it

One more thing

Items beyond the asset categories

Even with every asset properly titled, a few coordination items can quietly undo your planning if you forget them.

POUR-OVER WILL

☐ Confirm you have a “pour-over will.” This is a backup that catches anything you forgot to move into the trust

☐ Confirm it’s current and references your trust

> Important: a pour-over will is worth having, but it is not a substitute for funding your trust. Anything it catches still goes through probate, the very thing your trust was meant to avoid. It’s a safety net, not a fix.

BENEFICIARY REVIEW

☐ Review every beneficiary across every account in the last 12 months

☐ Confirm none conflict with what your trust says

MAJOR LIFE EVENTS

☐ Has anything big happened since you created the trust, like marriage, divorce, a death in the family, a new child or grandchild, a sold business, or a new property? Each is a reason for a trust review

☐ Confirm your trust and your funding reflect these events. Even a trust that was fully funded once is often out of date.

TRUSTEE SUCCESSION

☐ Confirm your successor trustee is still willing and able to serve

☐ Confirm your trustee knows where your trust documents are kept

If this checklist surfaced gaps, talk to Trust Align

You and your attorney decide what needs to happen. We handle the part we’re experts in: making the transfers. Give us a list of the assets to move, and we’ll get them into your trust correctly, trained by attorneys to do it the right way. We sign a privacy agreement before reviewing anything specific to your situation, and we do not give legal advice.

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