How to Plan for Your Legacy

It is ideal to start legacy planning early, and yet so often nothing feels easier or more tempting to put off. For some, legacy planning feels too distant and irrelevant when there are so many immediate concerns demanding our attention. For others, the whole notion feels morbid and may cause anxiety.

But planning for your legacy is simply part of the process of living a well-ordered life, leaving your time and energy free so you can focus on other things. Approached with a positive attitude, it can also be a welcome opportunity to reflect on what you find most important in life and your place in the world, both now and in the future. Once you have completed your legacy plans, you will experience peace of mind knowing that you have provided for your family, friends, and the charitable causes you value most.

For over a century, the California Community Foundation's (CCF) team of attorneys and charitable advisors has helped donors quickly and effectively incorporate their values and charitable goals within their legacy plans. CCF continues to provide the guidance that donors like you can implement to complete your own legacy plans.

Start with your values to develop a strategy.

Depending on how much philanthropy you may have done to this point, your approach to giving may be finely honed, or you may still be finding your way. No matter your starting point, center yourself in the kind of difference you would like to make in the world and what you think is the best way to approach the task. Invest time in researching issue areas and organizations. The better you know the terrain, the more carefully you can focus your legacy giving.

Decide who to involve in your plans.

Who will take over management of your fund or funds once you pass? These are your "successor advisors."

Some donors wish to assign individuals who will faithfully carry out and interpret their specific intentions, within certain carefully defined boundaries, perhaps even focused on selected organizations.

Others wish to empower individuals to exert more judgment in response to changing circumstances. In these instances, part of the goal may be to encourage these people to take ownership of the mission and exert their own judgment, perhaps within an established framework of values.

Still others designate CCF to serve as the successor advisor to their fund. In that capacity, CCF can ensure that the values and legacy intentions are achieved in perpetuity or in a specific time frame. Moreover, they appreciate the fact that, should the organizations or causes they wish to support become inoperable or obsolete, CCF will be able to redirect distributions from their fund to alternate organizations that align with the donor's legacy goals.

Get expert advice early.

At CCF, we established the **Sartori Circle** to support donors who have sought our partnership by including CCF in their estate plans through will, trust, beneficiary designation or by naming CCF as the successor advisor to their existing Donor Advised Fund. As a part of the process, CCF's charitable experts help donors identify and select the most appropriate giving vehicles and funding assets for their specific circumstances and charitable goals. This level of expertise allows CCF to help donors with issues such as how to handle complex financial instruments, establishing advisory structures to ensure that legacy giving will be in alignment with donors' wishes, and other administrative and legal issues that demand experienced professionals.

For your convenience, the **Sartori Circle Guide to Gift Planning** also provides materials that can help you think through the issues you may wish to consider as you craft your legacy plans.

Update your plan over time.

Perspectives and circumstances change, and one of the great advantages of starting legacy planning early is that it puts an initial organizing structure in place that you can then modify as both your thinking about philanthropy and your financial situation evolve over time.

Keep the relevant people informed.

If you want your family to be involved in your philanthropic legacy after you are gone, bring them into the process early, let them know what you are hoping to accomplish, and get their feedback. If they find the role you envision for them to be an uncomfortable fit, it's good to know that early so you can adjust accordingly. These conversations are also a great opportunity to communicate your thinking and your values.

Please feel free to contact your Relationship Manager or the Donor Relations Team at **donorrelations@calfund.org** if you have any questions. We are here to help.

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