



COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON

REGISTER OF WILLS & ORPHANS' COURT NORTHAMPTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

669 WASHINGTON STREET
EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18042
610-829-6489 – Register of Wills

GINA X. GIBBS
REGISTER OF WILLS
CLERK OF ORPHANS' COURT

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROBATING OR OPENING AN ESTATE

PRESENTING A WILL (*Letters Testamentary or Letters of Administration C.T.A.*)

1. The Will must be an original. A copy of a Will can only be probated after a meeting with the Register of Wills. If the Will is not self-proving, witness form/s must be obtained and notarized or signed in the presence of the Register of Wills.
2. Person/s named as executor/s or executrix/rices (called personal representative/s) must appear in person with valid picture identification.
3. Original death certificate must be presented, which contains a raised seal.
4. A check for the probate fees is necessary. This fee is based on the gross value of the estate. Further fees could be assessed when the inheritance tax return is filed and the appraisal is received from the Department of Revenue. Included in this fee is the filing fee for short certificate/s, renunciation/s, inheritance tax return, inventory, county improvement fee, and state Judicial Computer Fee.
5. A petition will be prepared by a clerk in the Register of Wills department based on the will and information received from the personal representative, attorney of the estate, and the death certificate.
6. The petition will be read to the personal representative at which time he/she/they will be administered the oath of office and asked to sign the petition.
7. All forms necessary to complete the estate will be handed delivered to the personal representative or mailed to the attorney at the time of the probate.
8. The official and original letters applied for will be sent by mail once the estate papers have been processed.

APPLYING FOR LETTERS WITHOUT A WILL (*Letters of Administration*)

- 1 . Before Letters of Administration can be granted, it must be established who is entitled to apply for the letters. This is established by following the rules of intestacy, which means it is usually the next of kin. It is possible that renunciations might be required to be obtained and notarized before an appointment of a personal representative.
2. The person requesting the letters must appear in person with valid photo identification.
3. Original death certificate must be presented, which contains a raised seal.
4. Check for the probate fees is necessary. This fee is based on the gross value of the estate. Further fees could be assessed when the inheritance tax return is filed and the appraisement is received from the Department of Revenue. Included in this fee is the filing fee for short certificate/s, renunciation/s, inheritance tax return, inventory, county improvement fee, and state Judicial Computer Fee.
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