



The Final Stretch: Completing Your Estate Settlement Journey

After months of navigating the probate process, you're finally approaching the finish line. As someone who's guided countless St. Louis families through these challenging times, I want you to know that these final steps, while important, are manageable when you understand what needs to happen.

Distributing Assets: The Moment Everyone's Been Waiting For

This is often the most emotionally significant part of the entire process. You've worked hard to preserve and protect your loved one's legacy, and now it's time to honor their wishes by distributing assets to the beneficiaries.

Follow the asset disposition plan you developed earlier in the process. This isn't the time for last-minute changes or family negotiations - stick to the plan that's been approved. Remember, you're not just distributing assets; you're fulfilling your loved one's final wishes and closing an important chapter for your family.

Compensating the Executor: Recognizing Your Service

If you planned to compensate the executor (whether that's you or someone else), now is the time to make that payment. Serving as an executor is demanding work that requires significant time, expertise, and emotional energy. Missouri law provides for reasonable compensation, and this isn't something to feel guilty about - it's a recognized part of the process.

Finalizing Probate: Crossing the Legal Finish Line

If your estate went through formal probate, you'll need to submit two critical documents to the court:

The Final Accounting shows exactly how you handled the estate assets. This detailed report includes all income generated, any losses incurred, payments made to creditors, and distributions to heirs. Think of it as your comprehensive report card for the entire estate settlement process.

The Closing Statement is your formal declaration that you've resolved all debts, paid all taxes, and distributed the estate proceeds appropriately. This document officially closes your role as executor and provides legal protection for your actions.



Both documents require court approval, so work closely with your probate attorney to ensure everything is properly prepared and submitted.

Closing the Estate Account: The Final Financial Step

By this point, your estate bank account should be nearly empty - most funds will have been distributed to beneficiaries. If there's still money in the account, it's likely because you kept a small buffer for final expenses. Now's the time to close this account and complete the financial aspect of your responsibilities.

Filing the Final Form 56: Notifying the IRS

If you filed IRS Form 56 when you became executor (which notified the IRS of your appointment), you need to file a final Form 56 to notify them that your responsibilities have ended. This simple but important step ensures the IRS knows you're no longer acting in this capacity.

You've Done Something Extraordinary

Congratulations - you've successfully guided an estate through the complete settlement process. This isn't just about completing paperwork; you've honored your loved one's memory, protected their legacy, and provided security for their beneficiaries during one of life's most challenging transitions.

As someone who specializes in probate matters here in St. Louis, I've seen firsthand how demanding this process can be. The fact that you've reached this point demonstrates your commitment, perseverance, and love for your family member. Take a moment to acknowledge what you've accomplished.

Need Support During This Process?

If you're currently serving as an executor or personal representative and need guidance with real estate matters, I'm here to help. My specialized training in probate real estate ensures you'll have expert support when you need it most. The complex doesn't have to feel overwhelming when you have the right team in place.

Ready to learn more about probate real estate in Missouri? Contact me today for a consultation tailored to your family's specific situation.



Download eBook - The Essential
Guide To Navigating The Probate
Process And Settling An Estate



Schedule a Consultation

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