

**YAVAPAI COUNTY  
Self-Service Center**

**INSTRUCTIONS:  
SIMPLIFIED ACCOUNT GUIDELINES FOR PROBATE ACCOUNTS**

**READ ME:** These guidelines are to help non-accountants and non-lawyers complete court paperwork. To use these Simplified Guidelines, you should have a copy of the Superior Court FORM FOR SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL ACCOUNT. If you are not sure how to complete the court papers, contact an accountant or a lawyer for help.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION.** The following information is to assist you in preparing an account of the estate for approval by the Judge. The purpose of an account is to present financial information in a format which is meaningful to the interested parties. The account should be understood by persons who are not accountants and lawyers. The information should be presented in a simple, but complete format to help everyone understand the administration of the estate. Parties should easily be able to determine what came into the estate, what went out, and what is left in the estate at the end of the account period.

**Number of this Account:** Number the account you are submitting (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and so forth, or Final). The last account (when the estate is ready to be closed) should be numbered and called "Final" (for example: the Tenth and Final Account).

**Time period:** Write the dates for which this account was prepared (for example: March 1, 2011, to February 28, 2012).

**Bond:** If this applies to your case, write in the current bond amount. Write in the amount the bond should be increased or decreased to based on the amount that will cover the estate's unrestricted assets plus the unrestricted income for the next account period (generally one year), or check that the bond should be exonerated because the Estate has been distributed.

**ACCOUNT SUMMARY:**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Complete Lists A through F first and then enter the total from each list on The Account Summary.

**LIST A BEGINNING LIST OF ASSETS  
BEGINNING BALANCE:**

- If this is the First Account, use the Inventory and Appraisement for the Beginning List of Assets. If this is the Second Account or any other account, use the Ending List of Assets from the previous account. You can copy the Ending List of Assets from the previous account and write the amount on **LIST A**.
- List the account number (**PROVIDE ONLY THE LAST FOUR DIGITS OF THE ACCOUNT NUMBER**), account type, and the institution for all bank accounts and investment accounts. List all assets with an adequate description so the asset can be located and identified (addresses of properties; year, make and model of vehicles, insurance company name and policy number, and so forth). List life insurance policies (**PROVIDE ONLY THE LAST FOUR DIGITS OF THE POLICY NUMBER**) at cash value. List all marketable securities (**PROVIDE ONLY THE LAST FOUR DIGITS OF THE POLICY NUMBER**) at cash value.

- Include with the beginning and ending assets all information about any debt owed or liens or the assets, like a house or automobile. Include the following information about the debt or lien:
  - 1) The payee
  - 2) Principal balance
  - 3) Interest rate
  - 4) Payment amount
  - 5) Pay-off date

**After you finish List A, put the total at the bottom of the page on line A of page 1.**

**LIST B MONEY RECEIVED DURING THIS ACCOUNT PERIOD:**

- List all funds received by the estate during the account period from all sources.
- Itemize all money received by:
  - 1) Date of receipt
  - 2) Payer
  - 3) Description by type of receipt (interest income, dividends, Social Security, and so forth) and other details to identify the income source (such as account numbers)
  - 4) Amount

**Transfers:** Include transfers of funds from one account number to another as monies received or monies disbursed. Report any time you closed or opened an account, cased in an insurance policy, or any other transfer of funds in which the original form of the asset is discontinued or a new asset is obtained.

**After you finish List B, put the total at the bottom of the page on line B of page 1.**

**LIST C SCHEDULE OF ALL GAINS DURING THIS ACCOUNT PERIOD:**

- Write the details of sales with gains. This includes:
  - 1) The date of sale
  - 2) Purchaser (person sold to)
  - 3) Description of what was sold
  - 4) The amount gained (sale price minus fees and minus the value of the asset as reported in the previous Account or Inventory and Appraisalment)

**Note:** if you sold an asset but had no gain and no loss, you must still report the transaction and list the gain as zero.

- List other increases to the estate on **List C** and then add them to the total at the bottom of the page. Increases to the estate may include:
  - 1) Assets you did not know about at the last account but now you do
  - 2) Assets that increased in value since the last account, such as investments or insurance

**Note:** You should only show increases or decreases in value of an asset if the value can be supported by documentation (such as a written appraisal, or when the market value is easily available, as for securities). In case of real property, increases or decreases in value of an asset should be estimated based on the prevailing market conditions or the current property tax full-cash value should be used.

**After you finish List C, put the total at the bottom of the page on line C of page 1.**

**LIST D MONEY SPENT (DISBURSEMENTS) DURING THIS ACCOUNT PERIOD:**

- List all money you spent on behalf of the estate during the account period. Only include items which are expenses of the estate.
- Itemize all money spent, first by account, then by:
  - 1) Date
  - 2) Person you paid
  - 3) Purpose of expenses
  - 4) Amount

**Note:** If the expenses in unusual or appears questionable, you should provide additional information in a note attached to **List D**.

**Transfers:** Include transfers of funds from one account number to another as monies received or monies disbursed. Report any time you closed or opened an account, cashed in an insurance policy, or any other transfer of funds in which the original form of the asset was discontinued or a new asset was obtained.

**After you finish List D, put the total at the bottom of the page on line D of page 1.**

**LIST E SCHEDULE OF LOSSES DURING THIS ACCOUNT PERIOD:**

- Write the details of sales with losses. This includes:
  - 1) The date of sale
  - 2) Purchaser (person sold to)
  - 3) Description of what was sold
  - 4) The amount lost (sale price minus fees and minus the value of the asset as reported in the previous Account or Inventory and Appraisalment)

**Note:** If you sold an asset at neither a gain for a loss, report the transaction and show a gain of zero in List C.

- List other decreases to the Estate on List E and add them to the total at the bottom of the page. Decreases to the estate may include:
  - 1) Decreases in value of assets
  - 2) Loss of assets, and so forth

**Note:** You should show increases or decreases in value of an asset if the value can be supported by documentation (such as a written appraisal, or when the market value is easily available, as for securities). In the case of real property, increases or decreases in value of an asset should be estimates based on the prevailing market conditions or the current property tax full-cash value should be used.

For most assets other than investments or insurance, it is not necessary to adjust the value. You do not need to obtain appraisals (or otherwise incur unnecessary expenses) to adjust an asset's value for an account.

**After you finish List e, put the total at the bottom of the page on line E of page 1.**

**LIST F ENDING LIST OF ASSETS**

**VALUE OF PROPERTY AT THE END OF ACCOUNT PERIOD:**

- List everything remaining in the Estate at the end of the account period. This is the value of all assets after all the transactions of the account have occurred.

**Note:** List all assets that exist at the end of the account period in the same manner as instructed in List A.

**After you finish List F, put the total at the bottom of the page on line F of page 1.**

**GO BACK TO THE ACCOUNT SUMMARY:** Now that you have completed Lists A through F, check to be sure you filled in the blanks on the Account Summary as follows:

- Enter the beginning balance of the account from the total at the bottom of **List A**;
- Add the money received from the total at the bottom of **List B**;
- Add the gains on property from the total at the bottom of **List C**;
- Subtract the money spent (disbursed) from the total at the bottom of **List D**; and
- Subtract the losses on property from the total at the bottom of **List E**.
- The total should be the same as the total you entered at the bottom of **List F**.

**COMMON ERRORS:** Following are common errors found in Accounts.

- **Addition.** The total at the bottom of each list must be the same as the amount you put on the Account Summary, page 1. Double-check all the totals on your lists.
- **Incorrect beginning balance.** The beginning balance must match the ending balance of the previous Account or Inventory. If the ending balance of the previous Account or Inventory was wrong, use it anyway, and make corrections on **List C** for gains or **List E** for losses, and explain what you are doing.
- **Value of assets on List A and F.** All valuable Estate assets should be included on both lists.
- **Bond increase.** The bond should be set to cover the unrestricted assets plus the unrestricted income of one account period (generally one year). Often, the fiduciary fails to ask for bond increase when the Estate assets have increased from what they were the previous account period.
- **Unusual expenditures** with no explanation will be questioned. If there has been an unusual expenditure, you should provide a written explanation along with the account.

**WHEN ORDERED BY THE COURT, ALL INSTRUCTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**