

Who Will Take Care of Fido After You're Gone?

Q: I would like to leave my dog to my son-in-law after I die. I also want to make sure that this pet is cared for even if something happens to my son-in-law. Is there anything that can be done?

A: Yes. There are a large number of people who include a “pet trust” in their planning. This type of planning is great for someone who wants to provide money for a dog, cat, horse, etc., while ensuring that the money follows the animal no matter where the animal ends up.

Providing for your pet is not a crazy or unusual idea. In fact, it is a very common practice in the Roanoke Valley. Pets play a significant role in the lives of many people. There are many seniors in our area that would be all alone except for the dog or cat in their life.

You can make sure that your pet is comfortable and cared for after you die by leaving money to the next owner of your pet. But be careful not to leave the money outright to that person -- if so, there is no guarantee that the money will be used for your pet, particularly after the next owner dies.

Instead, you should leave the money to a small trust fund for your animal, and your son-in-law could be the trustee. This fund will be used for the life of your pet to reimburse your pet's owner for all pet-related expenses, even if your son-in-law is no longer in the picture.

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