Pet Trust Checklist

Action Checklist — ClearLegalTips.com (2026)

Make sure your pet is cared for — and funded — if you can't be there.

Plan the roles

- [ ] Had the honest “will you take my pet?” conversation and got a yes out loud
- [ ] Chose a caregiver (houses the pet) and a separate trustee (controls the money)
- [ ] Named a successor caregiver and a sanctuary fallback if no one can serve
- [ ] Named an enforcer who can inspect the pet and hold the trustee accountable
- [ ] Named a remainder beneficiary who is NOT the caregiver or trustee (often an animal charity)

Set the funding

- [ ] Built the amount from real vet bills: annual cost × remaining life expectancy
- [ ] Added a senior-care veterinary reserve for age-related costs
- [ ] Added any caregiver stipend and a modest administration allowance
- [ ] Scaled up for long-lived animals (parrots, tortoises, horses)
- [ ] Avoided over-funding — kept a number you can defend line-by-line

Write the care standard

- [ ] Wrote specific care instructions: diet, vet practice, medications, routines
- [ ] Added the euthanasia clause (only on a vet's written advice)

Execute

- [ ] Placed the provision inside your will or living trust as its own article
- [ ] Filled in every bracketed field with real names and amounts
- [ ] Signed and notarized per your state's trust rules

Fund and maintain

- [ ] Funded the trust with the trustee
- [ ] Told the caregiver, trustee, and enforcer where records, food, and vet contacts live
- [ ] Filed the provision with the rest of your estate documents
- [ ] Updated the plan after pet, caregiver, or life changes

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Work top to bottom: plan the roles, set a defensible funding number, write the care standard, execute the document, then fund and maintain it. This checklist is general information, not legal advice. Laws vary by state and change over time — consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.