Pet Trust Provision

Free Fillable Legal Template — ClearLegalTips.com (2026)

A pet trust is the enforceable way to fund your pet's care. You cannot leave money directly to an animal — animals are legally property, so a will gift “to my dog” fails. This template gives you a copy-and-paste trust provision to drop into your will or living trust as its own article, plus a fill-in worksheet to plan your details first. Adapt the bracketed items to your situation. Where your state publishes specific pet-trust language, mirror it.

Part A — Planning Worksheet

Fill in these details first, then transfer them into the provision below.

1. Parties
Grantor (you): ______________________________________

Trustee (manages the money — not the caregiver): ______________________________________

Caregiver (houses and cares for the pet): ______________________________________

Successor caregiver: ______________________________________

Enforcer (may inspect the pet and enforce the trust): ______________________________________

Remainder beneficiary (not the caregiver or trustee): ______________________________________

2. Animals Covered
Pet(s) name, species, breed, age: ______________________________________

Identifying details (microchip #, markings): ______________________________________

3. Funding
Amount funded to the trust: ______________________________________

Caregiver stipend, if any (amount per month/year): ______________________________________

4. Care Instructions
Diet, vet practice, medical conditions and medications: ______________________________________

Exercise, social, and daily routines: ______________________________________

5. Remainder
On the pet's death, remaining funds go to: ______________________________________

Part B — Pet Trust Provision (Copy and Paste)

Drop this into your will or living trust as its own article, replacing the bracketed items with your worksheet answers above.

PET TRUST PROVISION

1. CREATION AND PURPOSE. I create this trust for the care of my animal(s): [NAME, SPECIES/BREED, MICROCHIP #] (my “Pet”), and any other animal I own at my death or incapacity. This trust continues until no covered animal remains living, then terminates.

2. CAREGIVER. I designate [CAREGIVER'S FULL NAME] to take custody of and care for my Pet. If they are unable or unwilling, I designate [SUCCESSOR CAREGIVER]. If neither can serve, the Trustee shall place my Pet with a loving home or a no-kill sanctuary, applying trust funds to that placement.

3. TRUSTEE AND FUNDING. I appoint [TRUSTEE'S FULL NAME] (not the Caregiver) as Trustee and fund this trust with $[AMOUNT]. The Trustee shall distribute funds to or for the Caregiver for my Pet's food, housing, grooming, insurance, and veterinary care, and may pay the Caregiver a stipend of $[AMOUNT] per [month/year].

4. STANDARD OF CARE. My Pet shall be cared for at the standard I maintained, including: [DIET / VET PRACTICE / MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND MEDICATIONS / EXERCISE OR SOCIAL ROUTINES]. Decisions about euthanasia shall be made only on a licensed veterinarian's written advice, based on my Pet's quality of life.

5. ENFORCEMENT. I designate [ENFORCER'S FULL NAME], who may inspect my Pet's condition and enforce this trust as permitted by law.

6. REMAINDER. On termination, remaining funds pass to [REMAINDER BENEFICIARY, e.g., a named animal charity]. The Caregiver and Trustee shall not be remainder beneficiaries.

Why the roles are split

A caregiver with direct access to the money has a quiet incentive to underspend; a remainder beneficiary who inherits “whatever's left” has an incentive for the pet's life to be short. Separate people in each seat, plus an enforcer, is the structure the pet-trust statutes were written for (see California Prob. Code §15212 and New York EPTL 7-8.1, with equivalents elsewhere).

A note on funding

Build the amount from your own vet bills: annual routine cost times the pet's remaining life expectancy, plus a veterinary reserve for age-related care, plus any caregiver stipend and administration allowance. Resist over-funding — courts can reduce amounts that substantially exceed what care requires (New York's statute says so explicitly, and a court cut Leona Helmsley's dog Trouble from $12 million to $2 million). A number you can defend line-by-line is a number that survives.

Part C — Execution

Grantor

Printed Name: ____

Signature: ____

Date: ____

Trustee
Printed Name: ____

Signature: ____

Date: ____

Notarize per your state's trust rules. Place this provision inside a revocable living trust to have it also take effect at incapacity, not only at death.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Fill in the Part A worksheet, then transfer your answers into the bracketed fields of the Part B provision. Add the completed provision to your will or living trust as its own article and sign per your state's rules. Pet-trust statutes are recognized nationwide, with state-specific details; where your state publishes model language, mirror it. This template is general information, not legal advice — consult a licensed attorney in your state for large funding amounts, exotic or long-lived animals, or a standalone trust.