

# Probate Glossary

## Plain-English Definitions for Arizona Executors and Personal Representatives

Probate comes with its own vocabulary — and understanding the terms makes the process far less intimidating. Here are the key terms you'll encounter as a Personal Representative in Arizona.

### A

<b>Administrator</b>	A person appointed by the court to manage an estate when there is no Will, or when the named executor cannot serve. Similar in duties to a Personal Representative.
<b>Affidavit of Succession</b>	A simplified legal process in Arizona for transferring assets of a small estate (generally under \$75,000 in personal property and \$100,000 in real property) without full probate. Requires waiting 30 days after the date of death.
<b>Assets</b>	Everything the decedent owned at the time of death — real estate, bank accounts, investments, vehicles, personal property, and business interests.

### B

<b>Beneficiary</b>	A person or organization designated to receive assets from an estate, trust, life insurance policy, or retirement account.
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### C

<b>C.P.R.E.S.™</b>	Certified Probate Real Estate Specialist. A designation held by real estate agents who have completed specialized training in probate law, the probate process, and estate property transactions.
<b>CMA (Comparative Market Analysis)</b>	A report prepared by a real estate agent comparing similar recently sold properties to estimate the current market value of the estate property. Required before listing and useful for court documentation.
<b>Court Confirmation</b>	In some Arizona probate sales, the court must formally confirm (approve) the sale before it can close. Not all probate sales require this — your attorney and C.P.R.E.S.™ specialist will advise you.
<b>Creditor</b>	A person or company that is owed money by the decedent or the estate. Creditors must be notified during probate and have a limited time to file claims.

### D

<b>Death Certificate</b>	An official government document that certifies the fact and cause of death. Required for virtually every probate-related transaction. Order at least 10–15 certified copies.
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**Decedent** The person who has died and whose estate is being probated.

**Devise** Real property that is left to a beneficiary through a Will. A person who receives real property through a Will is called a devisee.

### E

**EIN (Employer Identification Number)** A federal tax identification number assigned to the estate by the IRS. Used for estate bank accounts and tax filings.

**Estate** All of the property, assets, and liabilities left by the decedent at the time of death.

**Executor** The person named in a Will to carry out its instructions and manage the estate. In Arizona, this role is formally called the Personal Representative.

### F

**Fiduciary** A person who has a legal duty to act in the best interests of another. As Personal Representative, you are a fiduciary to the estate and its beneficiaries.

### H

**Heir** A person who is legally entitled to inherit from an estate — either through the Will or through Arizona intestate succession law (if there is no Will).

### I

**Intestate** Dying without a valid Will. Arizona's intestate succession laws determine how the estate is distributed when there is no Will.

**Inventory and Appraisal** A formal list of all estate assets and their values, typically required to be filed with the court during probate.

### L

**Letters of Personal Representative** The official court document that authorizes you to act on behalf of the estate — to sign contracts, sell property, access accounts, and manage estate affairs. You cannot legally sell estate real property without these.

### N

**Notice to Creditors** A formal notice published in a newspaper and sent to known creditors informing them of the death and the deadline to file claims against the estate.

### P

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<b>Personal Representative (PR)</b>	Arizona's term for the person appointed by the court to administer the estate. Equivalent to Executor in other states.
<b>Petition for Probate</b>	The legal document filed with the court to open a probate case and request appointment of the Personal Representative.
<b>Probate</b>	The legal process by which a deceased person's estate is administered — debts are paid, assets are identified, and property is transferred to heirs and beneficiaries under court supervision.
<b>Probate Court</b>	In Arizona, probate matters are handled by the Superior Court in the county where the decedent lived.

### T

<b>Trustee</b>	A person who manages assets held in a trust. Different from a Personal Representative — trusts typically avoid probate.
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### W

<b>Will (Last Will and Testament)</b>	A legal document that specifies how a person wants their estate distributed after death and who they designate as Personal Representative.
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### ■ Free Consultation — No Obligation

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