

Trust Funding Letter Template

A plain request to a bank, brokerage or insurer to update an account for a revocable trust. With a checklist for sending it and a table for tracking it until the institution confirms the change.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This template is a general starting point for a letter from an account owner to the institution that holds the account. It offers no legal, tax or financial advice, and it does not transfer ownership or change a beneficiary designation by itself. Each institution sets its own requirements and may ask for its own forms. Confirm those requirements with the institution, and ask the household's attorney about any legal question, including how the trust should be named on an account and whether a beneficiary designation should change.

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What a Funding Letter Does

A funding letter asks an institution to begin a specific change. It may ask a bank to retitle an account to the trustee, ask a brokerage for its trust account forms, or ask a custodian or insurer for its beneficiary designation form. It identifies the account owner, the trust, the account and the request.

The letter does not transfer ownership or change a designation. The institution makes the change after its own requirements are met. Its confirmation is the proof. Mailing a letter shows only that a request was sent.

The letter comes from the account owner. Where the trust will own the account, the owner usually signs both as owner and as trustee. An advisor can help gather the details and keep track of each request. The household signs and sends it.

Match the Request to the Account

Each account reaches the trust in the way its institution allows and the household's plan calls for. Settle which request applies before writing the letter. The table shows the usual pattern. The household's plan decides each case.

ACCOUNT	USUAL REQUEST	PROOF THE CHANGE IS DONE
Bank account	Retitle the account to the trustee, open a trust account and move the funds, or name the trust as payable-on-death beneficiary	An account record showing the trust registration or designation
Taxable brokerage account	Re-register the account, or move the holdings in kind to a trust account, or name the trust as transfer-on-death beneficiary	A statement or account record showing the trust registration or designation
IRA, 401(k), 403(b)	No change of ownership. Ask for the beneficiary designation form	The institution's acknowledgment of the designation
Life insurance, annuity	Ask for the beneficiary designation form, or the form for any other change the household chose	The insurer's acknowledgment

Retirement accounts are not retitled. An IRA or employer plan stays in the owner's name during life. A transfer of ownership is generally treated as a distribution, and employer plan interests generally cannot be assigned. The beneficiary designation does that work instead. Whether it should name the trust, a spouse or individuals is a legal and tax decision for the household and its counsel. The letter asks only for the form.

Real estate does not use a funding letter. It moves by a new deed recorded with the county. Business interests usually move by a written assignment after the governing agreement has been reviewed. Both are outside this template.

What Institutions Usually Ask For

Requirements vary by institution and by account. Ask the institution for its current checklist and the department that handles trust registration changes before mailing anything. These are the items to ask about:

- A certification of trust. A short statement signed by the trustee that confirms the trust exists and identifies the trustees and their powers, without disclosing who inherits. Most institutions accept it in place of the full trust document.
- The account number and the names on the account, matching the institution's records exactly.
- Signatures of every account owner and every trustee who must sign.
- The institution's own forms. Banks and brokerages usually have a trust account application or a change of registration form. The letter asks for it.
- A medallion signature guarantee for many brokerage transfers. It is obtained in person at a bank, credit union or broker-dealer that participates in a medallion program.
- For an employer retirement plan, the plan's spousal consent form where the participant is married.

Institutions differ. One bank may handle the change at a branch. Another may route it through a trust operations department at a different address. A letter sent to the wrong department can sit for weeks. Call first, note the name of the person and the department, and address the letter there.

Send a certification of trust rather than the full trust document unless the institution specifically requires the full document. If the household does not have a signed certification, ask the attorney who prepared the trust.

Before You Send

Work through this list for each letter.

- ☐ The trust is signed, and a signed certification of trust is ready to enclose.
- ☐ The institution's current requirements, department and mailing address are confirmed.
- ☐ The institution's own form, if it has one, has been requested or is enclosed.
- ☐ The account owner names match the account. The account type and number are correct.
- ☐ The trust name, trust date and trustee names match the trust document and the certification exactly.
- ☐ The requested action matches the household's plan for this account.
- ☐ For any beneficiary designation, the household has reviewed the choice with its attorney and tax advisor.
- ☐ For a joint account where one owner is not a trustee, the household has discussed it with its advisor and attorney.
- ☐ Every owner and trustee who needs to sign has signed and dated the letter.
- ☐ A medallion signature guarantee is obtained if the institution requires one.
- ☐ A copy of the full packet is kept, and the letter goes by a method that can be tracked.
- ☐ The date sent and a follow-up date are entered in the tracking table.

The Letter

Replace each bracketed field and delete any line that does not apply.

[Date]

[Institution name]

[Department, if known]

[Street address]

[City, state and ZIP code]

Re: Request to update account [registration / beneficiary designation] for a revocable trust

Account owner(s): [Full names as shown on the account]

Account: [Account type], ending in [last four digits]

Dear [Department or contact name]:

I am [We are] the owner[s] of the account listed above. I [We] have established a revocable trust, and I [we] serve as its trustee[s]:

Trust name: [Full name of the trust as written in the trust document]

Trust date: [Date the trust was signed]

Trustee(s): [Full names of the current trustee(s)]

[Requested action. Insert one paragraph from the next page.]

Enclosed is a certification of trust signed by the trustee[s]. If you need anything else to process this request, such as your own forms, a medallion signature guarantee or additional identification, please send the forms or instructions to the address below, or contact me [us] at [phone] or [email].

Please send written confirmation once the change has been made, showing the updated account [registration / beneficiary designation].

Sincerely,

OWNER AND TRUSTEE SIGNATURE

SECOND OWNER OR CO-TRUSTEE (IF ANY)

PRINTED NAME

PRINTED NAME

DATE

DATE

Mailing address: [Street address, city, state and ZIP code]

Enclosures: Certification of trust; [Institution form, if already obtained]; [Other documents the institution requested]

Requested Action Paragraphs

Choose the paragraph that matches the household's plan for this account and the institution's process. Use the trust title format the trust document or the household's attorney specifies; some institutions have a required format of their own. Option D asks only for the form. Who is named on it is the household's decision, made with its attorney and tax advisor before the form is signed and returned.

A. Retitle a bank account

Please change the registration of this account from my [our] individual name[s] to the trustee[s] of the trust named above, titled as: [Trustee name(s)], Trustee[s] of the [Trust name] dated [Trust date]. If your process requires opening a new account in the trust's name and moving the funds, please send the forms to do so.

B. Re-register a brokerage account

Please re-register this account to the trustee[s] of the trust named above, titled as: [Trustee name(s)], Trustee[s] of the [Trust name] dated [Trust date]. If a new account is required, please move the holdings to it in kind. Please do not sell any holdings to complete this request. If your process requires a trust account application, a transfer form or a medallion signature guarantee, please send the forms and instructions.

C. Add a payable-on-death or transfer-on-death beneficiary

I [We] would like to name the trust named above as the [payable-on-death / transfer-on-death] beneficiary of this account. The account will stay in my [our] name[s]. Please send the forms needed to make this designation.

D. Request a beneficiary designation form (retirement account, life insurance or annuity)

I am not asking to change the ownership of this [account / policy]. Please send your current beneficiary designation form and instructions so I can review and complete it. [If this is an employer retirement plan: Please also include the plan's spousal consent form.]

Tracking Each Request

Each account is a separate request to a separate institution, on its own timeline. Record each one when it goes out. When the institution responds, ask for a reference number and an expected processing time. Record any request for more information. The request stays open until the confirmation is on file.

INSTITUTION	ACCOUNT (TYPE, LAST 4)	REQUEST	DATE SENT	FOLLOW-UP DATE	CONFIRMATION RECEIVED

WHAT COUNTS AS CONFIRMATION

- Bank or brokerage account: a statement or account record showing the trust registration or the new designation.
- Retirement account, life insurance or annuity: the institution's written acknowledgment of the new beneficiary designation.
- Not confirmation: a mailing receipt, a delivery notice, a signed form or a checked box on a task list. Each shows only that a request was made.

Store each confirmation with the household's estate planning records, next to the trust and the certification of trust. The successor trustee will need to know which accounts the trust holds.

How Bancroft Helps

Bancroft prepares funding letters from the household's asset inventory for advisor review. Clients can download their packet, mark letters mailed and store supporting records in the Digital Safe. Reminders and task status support follow-up. A letter or delivery receipt does not establish that an institution has completed the requested change.

See usebancroft.com/funding-letters for how the workflow runs, and usebancroft.com/resources/trust-funding-guide for the full funding reference.

This template is provided for general informational purposes. It is not legal, tax or financial advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Bancroft is not a law firm. Institutions set their own requirements, and the household should confirm them with each institution and consult its attorney and tax advisor on any legal or tax question.