

◆ Probate & Real Estate Guide

Navigating Probate & *Real Estate Trusts*

A Compassionate Guide for Personal Representatives and Trustees

Understanding your options, timelines, and responsibilities
during a real estate transition.

Vladimir Bellemo

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RESHAPE Real Estate

CA-DRE License #01200312

If you have recently been named an Executor, Administrator, or Successor Trustee, please accept my sincere condolences for your loss. Stepping into this role is an honor, but it often comes with a steep learning curve and a heavy emotional weight.

"When real estate is involved, the responsibilities can feel overwhelming. My goal with this guide is to demystify the legal terminology, outline the clear steps ahead, and provide you with a roadmap. You do not have to walk this path alone."

With over 30 years of full-time real estate experience right here in Southern California, I am here to ensure this process is handled with the utmost dignity, transparency, and care.

OUR PROMISE

"Our Code of Ethics isn't just a professional standard — it's a personal promise to protect your family's best interests every step of the way."

Vladimir Bellemo

BROKER ASSOCIATE
30+ YEARS

CREDENTIALS

- ✓ Cert. Probate & Trust Specialist
- ✓ Seniors Real Estate Specialist
- ✓ (SRES®)
- ✓ 30+ Years — Southern California
- ✓ RESHAPE Real Estate
- ✓ Buena Park, CA



■ Probate Sale

Court-supervised process

■ Trust Sale

Private administration

Feature	Probate Sale	Trust Sale
Court Supervision	Yes — heavily supervised by the CA Probate Court	No — administered privately outside of court
Who Signs?	Executor or Court-Appointed Administrator	Successor Trustee named in the Trust
Timeline	Typically several months to a year or more	Can move as quickly as a standard residential sale
Public Record	Yes — filings and property details are public	Private — keeps family matters confidential
Flexibility	Limited — court sets the schedule	High — Trustee controls the process

If the property is in probate, the court dictates the schedule. The typical real estate journey unfolds in five distinct stages:

1

COURT PHASE

Petition for Probate

A petition is filed with the court. The court appoints the Personal Representative — either the named Executor or a court-appointed Administrator.

2

COURT PHASE

Letters of Administration

The court issues "Letters" granting you legal authority to act and sign on behalf of the estate — your essential credential for every subsequent step.

3

COURT PHASE

Inventory & Appraisal

A court-appointed Probate Referee provides an independent valuation of the real estate, establishing the estate's baseline property value.

4

FINAL STAGES

Marketing & Listing

The property is placed on the market. Depending on whether you hold Full or Limited Authority under the IAEA, court confirmation and overbidding may be required.

5

FINAL STAGES

Closing & Distribution

Escrow closes. Funds go into the estate account. The attorney handles final court approval for distribution of proceeds to beneficiaries.

Selling a home held in a Living Trust bypasses the court system entirely, allowing for a much faster, more private process:

1

COURT PHASE

Review the Trust Document

Identify the named Successor Trustee and locate the specific powers granted regarding real estate decisions and sale authority.

2

COURT PHASE

Establish Legal Authority

Obtain the Affidavit of Death of Trustee and a formal Certification of Trust. These documents clear the title and establish your signing authority.

3

COURT PHASE

Property Valuation

Obtain a date-of-death appraisal to establish a new tax basis — critically important for minimizing capital gains taxes for the beneficiaries.

4

FINAL STAGES

Prepare & List

Liquidate personal property, prepare the home, and launch marketing. No court approval is needed — you set the timeline entirely.

5

FINAL STAGES

Distribution

Escrow closes directly to the Trust account. The Trustee distributes proceeds to the beneficiaries according to the trust terms.

Securing and protecting the asset is your first duty as a fiduciary. Complete each of these steps as early as possible:

**Secure the Property**

Change the locks immediately. Uninhabited homes are targets for theft and vandalism. A key lockbox for agents should be installed only when the property is formally listed.

**Maintain Insurance**

Contact the homeowner's insurance provider. Vacant properties often require a specific "vacant home" rider — standard policies may not cover an unoccupied dwelling.

**Keep Up Utilities & Maintenance**

Do not let water, gas, electricity, or landscaping lapse. A neglected home loses value quickly and may trigger HOA violations or municipal code enforcement.

**Gather Documents**

Locate the deed, current mortgage statements, property tax bills, and HOA documents. These are essential for both the estate attorney and the escrow process.

**Inventory Personal Belongings**

Coordinate with all family members before discarding, selling, or moving any items from the home. Disputes over belongings can complicate and delay the sale.

One of the hardest decisions for an estate representative is whether to renovate or sell in its current condition. There is no universal answer — it depends on the property's condition and the market.

■ The "As-Is" Route

Fiduciaries are generally exempt from filling out certain standard seller disclosures (like the TDS). Selling as-is saves the estate time, upfront capital, and emotional energy — attracting cash buyers and seasoned investors.

Best when: Property needs significant work ·
Timeline is tight · Cash is limited

■ The Value-Add Route

Sometimes simple fixes — fresh neutral paint, removing dated carpeting, clearing clutter — can net the estate tens of thousands of dollars more at closing. The key is knowing which improvements yield real returns.

Best when: Property is structurally sound ·
Market favors move-in ready homes

How I Help:

I provide a complimentary property walk-through and cost-benefit analysis — so the estate never spends a dollar on improvements that won't be recovered at sale.

An estate sale requires far more than a yard sign. It demands a strategic, modern approach to connect with the right buyers and maximize the net proceeds for beneficiaries.



Hyper-Local Google Ads

Targeted campaigns reaching buyers actively searching for homes in Central and North Orange County — right when they're ready to act.



Engaging Video Marketing

Weekly video content and custom property tours that tell each home's story — driving thousands of views and attracting qualified out-of-town buyers.



A Vetted Expert Network

Estate clean-out crews, appraisers, coordinators, and probate attorney referrals — all pre-screened and ready to mobilize when you need them.

OUR COMMITMENT

Every estate property receives the same full-service marketing package we provide our highest-value residential listings. Beneficiaries deserve maximum exposure — regardless of the property's price point.

Probate and trust properties are often sold by representatives who have never lived in the home. Buyers can feel hesitant about unknown underlying issues — and hesitant buyers make low offers, or walk away entirely.



Complimentary One-Year *Home Warranty Plan*

\$1,000

VALUE — PROVIDED PERSONALLY BY VLADIMIR BELLEMO

Coverage protects the new buyer against unexpected breakdowns in major home systems and appliances — offering them total peace of mind, and offering you a smoother, more attractive listing on the market.

✓ Fewer inspection objections

✓ Stronger, more confident offers

✓ Faster close timelines

◆ LET'S BEGIN

Let's Form *Your Strategy*

"You are carrying a lot of responsibility right now, but you don't have to carry it alone. Let's sit down for a complimentary, no-obligation Consultation Strategy Session."

We will review the property, discuss your timeline, and map out a stress-free plan tailored to your family's specific needs — at no cost and with no obligation.

AGENT

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Disclaimer: Vladimir Bellemo is a real estate broker certified in probate and trust sales. He is not an attorney. For specific legal or tax advice regarding an estate, please consult with a qualified professional.