

CHAPTER 4

CREATION, VALIDITY, MODIFICATION AND TERMINATION OF TRUST

§401. Methods of creating trust

A trust may be created by: [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

1. Transfer of property. Transfer of property to another person as trustee during the settlor's lifetime or by will or other disposition taking effect upon the settlor's death; [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Declaration. Declaration by the owner of property that the owner holds identifiable property as trustee; or [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Exercise of power. Exercise of a power of appointment in favor of a trustee. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§402. Requirements for creation

1. Requirements. A trust is created only if:

A. The settlor has capacity to create a trust; [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

B. The settlor indicates an intention to create the trust; [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

C. The trust has a definite beneficiary or is:

(1) A charitable trust;

(2) A trust for the care of an animal, as provided in section 408; or

(3) A trust for a noncharitable purpose, as provided in section 409; [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

D. The trustee has duties to perform; and [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

E. The same person is not the sole trustee and sole beneficiary. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Definite beneficiary. A beneficiary is definite if the beneficiary can be ascertained now or in the future, subject to any applicable rule against perpetuities. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Power to select beneficiary; failure of power. A power in a trustee to select a beneficiary from an indefinite class is valid. If the power is not exercised within a reasonable time, the power fails and the property subject to the power passes to the persons who would have taken the property had the power not been conferred. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§403. Trusts created in other jurisdictions

A trust not created by will is validly created if its creation complies with the law of the jurisdiction in which the trust instrument was executed or the law of the jurisdiction in which at the time of creation: [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

1. Settlor. The settlor was domiciled, had a place of abode or was a national; [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Trustee. A trustee was domiciled or had a place of business; or [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Trust property. Any trust property was located. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§404. Trust purposes

A trust may be created only to the extent its purposes are lawful, not contrary to public policy and possible to achieve. A trust and its terms must be for the benefit of its beneficiaries. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§405. Charitable purposes; enforcement

1. Purposes. A charitable trust may be created for the relief of poverty; the advancement of education or religion; the promotion of health; governmental or municipal purposes; or other purposes the achievement of which is beneficial to the community. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Selection by court. If the terms of a charitable trust do not indicate a particular charitable purpose or beneficiary, the court may select one or more charitable purposes or beneficiaries. The selection must be consistent with the settlor's intention to the extent it can be ascertained. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Enforcement. The settlor of a charitable trust, among others, may maintain a proceeding to enforce the trust. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§406. Creation of trust induced by fraud, duress or undue influence

A trust is void to the extent its creation was induced by fraud, duress or undue influence. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§407. Evidence of oral trust

Except as required by a statute other than this Code, a trust need not be evidenced by a trust instrument, but the creation of an oral trust and its terms may be established only by clear and convincing evidence. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§408. Trust for care of animal

1. To provide care for animal; termination. A trust may be created to provide for the care of an animal alive during the settlor's lifetime. The trust terminates upon the death of the animal or, if the trust was created to provide for the care of more than one animal alive during the settlor's lifetime, upon the death of the last surviving animal.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Enforcement. A trust authorized by this section may be enforced by a person appointed in the terms of the trust or, if no person is so appointed, by a person appointed by the court. A person having an interest in the welfare of the animal may request the court to appoint a person to enforce the trust or to remove a person appointed.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Intended use of property. Property of a trust authorized by this section may be applied only to its intended use, except to the extent the court determines that the value of the trust property exceeds the amount required for the intended use. Except as otherwise provided in the terms of the trust, property not required for the intended use must be distributed to the settlor, if then living, otherwise, to the settlor's successors in interest.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§409. Noncharitable trust without ascertainable beneficiary

Except as otherwise provided in section 408 or by another statute, the following rules apply. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

1. Noncharitable purpose. A trust may be created for a noncharitable purpose without a definite or definitely ascertainable beneficiary or for a noncharitable but otherwise valid purpose to be selected by the trustee.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Enforcement. A trust authorized by this section may be enforced by a person appointed in the terms of the trust or, if no person is so appointed, by a person appointed by the court.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Intended use of property. Property of a trust authorized by this section may be applied only to its intended use, except to the extent the court determines that the value of the trust property exceeds the amount required for the intended use. Except as otherwise provided in the terms of the trust, property not required for the intended use must be distributed to the settlor, if then living, otherwise, to the settlor's successors in interest.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§410. Modification or termination of trust; proceedings for approval or disapproval

1. Termination. In addition to the methods of termination prescribed by sections 411 through 414, a trust terminates to the extent the trust is revoked or expires pursuant to its terms, no purpose of the trust remains to be achieved or the purposes of the trust have become unlawful, contrary to public policy or impossible to achieve.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Modification or termination proceeding. A proceeding to approve or disapprove a proposed modification or termination under sections 411 to 416, or trust combination or division under section 417, may be commenced by a trustee or beneficiary, and a proceeding to approve or disapprove a proposed modification or termination under section 411 may be commenced by the settlor. The settlor of a charitable trust may maintain a proceeding to modify the trust under section 413.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§411. Modification or termination of noncharitable irrevocable trust by consent

1. Consent of settlor and all beneficiaries. If the settlor and all beneficiaries consent to the modification or termination of an irrevocable trust, the court shall enter an order approving the modification or termination even if the modification or termination is inconsistent with a material purpose of the trust, if the court finds that the modification or termination is in the best interests of the beneficiaries. A settlor's power to consent to a trust's modification or termination may be exercised by an agent under a power of attorney only to the extent expressly authorized by the power of attorney or the terms of the trust; by the settlor's conservator with the approval of the court supervising the conservatorship if an agent is not so authorized; or by the settlor's guardian with the approval of the court supervising the guardianship if an agent is not so authorized and a conservator has not been appointed.

[PL 2005, c. 184, §9 (AMD).]

2. Consent of beneficiaries. A noncharitable irrevocable trust may be terminated upon consent of all of the beneficiaries if the court concludes that continuance of the trust is not necessary to achieve any material purpose of the trust. A noncharitable irrevocable trust may be modified upon consent of all of the beneficiaries if the court concludes that modification is not inconsistent with a material purpose of the trust.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Spendthrift provision. A spendthrift provision in the terms of the trust is not presumed to constitute a material purpose of the trust.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

4. Distribution after termination. Upon termination of a trust under subsection 1 or 2, the trustee shall distribute the trust property as agreed by the beneficiaries.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

5. Court approval without unanimous consent. If not all of the beneficiaries consent to a proposed modification or termination of the trust under subsection 1 or 2, the modification or termination may be approved by the court if the court is satisfied that:

A. If all of the beneficiaries had consented, the trust could have been modified or terminated under this section; and [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

B. The interests of a beneficiary who does not consent will be adequately protected. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF). PL 2005, c. 184, §9 (AMD).

§412. Modification or termination because of unanticipated circumstances or inability to administer trust effectively

1. Modification or termination. The court may modify the administrative or dispositive terms of a trust or terminate the trust if, because of circumstances not anticipated by the settlor, modification or termination will further the purposes of the trust. To the extent practicable, the modification must be made in accordance with the settlor's probable intention.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Modification of administrative terms. The court may modify the administrative terms of a trust if continuation of the trust on its existing terms would be impracticable or wasteful or impair the trust's administration.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Distribution after termination. Upon termination of a trust under this section, the trustee shall distribute the trust property in a manner consistent with the purposes of the trust.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§413. Cy pres

1. Charitable purpose becomes unlawful, impracticable, impossible to achieve or wasteful. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, if a particular charitable purpose of a trust becomes unlawful, impracticable, impossible to achieve or wasteful:

A. The trust does not fail, in whole or in part; [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

B. The trust property does not revert to the settlor or the settlor's successors in interest; and [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

C. The court may apply cy pres to modify or terminate the trust by directing that the trust property be applied or distributed, in whole or in part, in a manner consistent with the settlor's charitable purposes. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Noncharitable beneficiary. A provision in the terms of a charitable trust that would result in distribution of the trust property to a noncharitable beneficiary prevails over the power of the court under subsection 1 to apply cy pres to modify or terminate the trust only if, when the provision takes effect:

A. The trust property is to revert to the settlor and the settlor is still living; or [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

B. Fewer than 50 years have elapsed since the date of the trust's creation. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§414. Modification or termination of uneconomic trust

1. Termination by trustee after notice. After notice to the qualified beneficiaries, the trustee of a trust consisting of trust property having a total value less than \$100,000 may terminate the trust if the trustee concludes that the value of the trust property is insufficient to justify the cost of administration.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

2. Modification, termination, new trustee by court. The court may modify or terminate a trust or remove the trustee and appoint a different trustee if it determines that the value of the trust property is insufficient to justify the cost of administration.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

3. Distribution after termination. Upon termination of a trust under this section, the trustee shall distribute the trust property in a manner consistent with the purposes of the trust.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

4. Easement for conservation or preservation. This section does not apply to an easement for conservation or preservation.

[PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§415. Reformation to correct mistakes

The court may reform the terms of a trust, even if unambiguous, to conform the terms to the settlor's intention if it is proved by clear and convincing evidence that both the settlor's intent and the terms of the trust were affected by a mistake of fact or law, whether in expression or inducement. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§416. Modification to achieve settlor's tax objectives

To achieve the settlor's tax objectives, the court may modify the terms of a trust in a manner that is not contrary to the settlor's probable intention. The court may provide that the modification has retroactive effect. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

§417. Combination and division of trusts

After notice to the qualified beneficiaries, a trustee may combine 2 or more trusts into a single trust or divide a trust into 2 or more separate trusts, if the result does not impair rights of any beneficiary or adversely affect achievement of the purposes of the trust. [PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §1 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 618, Pt. A, §2 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2003, c. 618, §A1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 618, §A2 (AFF).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Special Session of the 132nd Maine Legislature and is current through October 1, 2025. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.