



Wills for Heroes Pennsylvania

Protecting Those Who Protect Us

Police, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders risk their lives every day to make sure our communities are safe. Some die in the line of duty, leaving grieving families behind.

The *Wills for Heroes* program is a way for lawyers to support and salute the important work of first responders. Lawyers provide free wills and other estate documents to first responders and also to their spouses or domestic partners.



Why First Responders Need Wills

For many first responders, thinking about a will is an uncomfortable reminder of the imminent dangers of their jobs. Many first responders are also selfless; the very nature of their profession is to think of others first and to put the good of the community before themselves.

When a first responder dies without a will, generally state laws decide who receives that property from his or her estate. Loved ones are often left with tedious paperwork, difficult decisions and financial struggles.

By having a will in place, the first responder lays out a plan in advance, deciding how his or her property will be distributed, who will be the guardian of children and who will settle and manage the estate. By having a Living Will, the first responder sets direction about his or her health care and whether or not to allow doctors to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining procedures in the event of a coma, terminal condition or persistent vegetative state.

The Program's Beginnings and Its Growing Impact

The *Wills for Heroes* program was created by lawyer Anthony Hayes of South Carolina in November of 2001. Hayes felt the need to respond positively to the 9/11 crisis that left many Americans stunned, frustrated and looking for ways to help. Of the 403 first responders who died at New York's World Trade Center on 9/11, most did not have a will.

Word of the good works of *Wills for Heroes* in South Carolina quickly spread. In 2006, the Wills for Heroes Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was formed to expand the program nationwide.

Today, *Wills for Heroes* reaches into many states. Pennsylvania was the 21st state to join the effort, thanks to the efforts of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.



How the Program Works

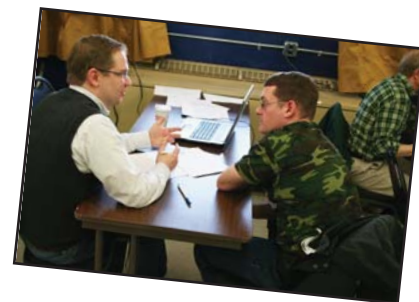
Wills for Heroes is an innovative program because it brings lawyer volunteers directly to the first responders. Estate planning documents for each participating first responder are produced in about one hour.

The lawyer volunteers use laptop computers loaded with a software program designed specifically for *Wills for Heroes*. Using this technology allows lawyers from all specialties to participate in the program.

Before each *Wills for Heroes* event, participating first responders complete estate planning questionnaires. This allows participants to think through and talk about a number of important decisions with their loved ones.

During the event, each participant meets with a lawyer volunteer who inputs information from the questionnaire into the software. The lawyer reviews the draft estate planning documents with the first responder to make sure he or she understands and agrees to the plan.

The documents are then finalized, signed, witnessed and notarized at the event so they are effective immediately.





Who We Are

Since 2001, *Wills for Heroes* has provided peace of mind to thousands of first responders and their families. The Pennsylvania program, launched in 2009, depends upon the efforts of generous lawyer volunteers and its partners.



Wills for Heroes Pennsylvania Partners



The Pennsylvania Bar Association provides public relations, marketing and informational technology support for *Wills for Heroes Pennsylvania*.



The Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers Division recruits lawyer volunteers to participate in the program

Ballard Spahr
Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP

Ballard Spahr has named *Wills for Heroes* as a public service project and has donated funding, computers and volunteers to support the effort.



LexisNexis provides free software and development services to bar associations participating in the program

How to Learn More

For more information about Wills for Heroes and its Pennsylvania programs and to register as a volunteer, visit www.pabar.org/public/yld or call the Pennsylvania Bar Association Young Lawyers Division at 800-932-0311.



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