

**RCW 11.98.170 Designation of trustee as beneficiary of life insurance policy or retirement plan—Determination of proper recipient of proceeds—Definitions—Beneficiary designations executed before January 1, 1985, not invalidated.** (1) Any life insurance policy or retirement plan payment provision may designate as beneficiary:

(a) A trustee named or to be named by will, and immediately after the proving of the will, the proceeds of such insurance or of such plan designated as payable to that trustee, in part or in whole, shall be paid to the trustee in accordance with the beneficiary designation, to be held and disposed of under the terms of the will governing the testamentary trust; or

(b) A trustee named or to be named under a trust agreement executed by the insured, the plan participant, or any other person, and the proceeds of such insurance or retirement plan designated as payable to such trustee, in part or in whole, shall be paid to the trustee in accordance with the beneficiary designation, to be held and disposed of by the trustee as provided in such trust agreement; a trust is valid even if the only corpus consists of the right of the trustee to receive as beneficiary insurance or retirement plan proceeds; any such trustee may also receive assets, other than insurance or retirement plan proceeds, by testamentary disposition or otherwise and, unless directed otherwise by the transferor of the assets, shall administer all property of the trust according to the terms of the trust agreement.

(2) If no qualified trustee makes claim to the insurance policy or retirement plan proceeds from the insurance company or the plan administrator within twelve months after the death of the insured or plan participant, determination of the proper recipient of the proceeds shall be made pursuant to the judicial or nonjudicial dispute resolution procedures of chapter 11.96A RCW, unless prior to the institution of the judicial procedures, a qualified trustee makes claim to the proceeds, except that (a) if satisfactory evidence is furnished the insurance company or plan administrator within the twelve-month period showing that no trustee can or will qualify to receive such proceeds, payment shall be made to those otherwise entitled to the proceeds under the terms of the policy or retirement plan, including the terms of the beneficiary designation except that (b) if there is any dispute as to the proper recipient of insurance policy or retirement plan proceeds, the dispute shall be resolved pursuant to the judicial or nonjudicial resolution procedures in chapter 11.96A RCW.

(3) The proceeds of the insurance or retirement plan as collected by the trustee are not subject to debts of the insured or the plan participant to any greater extent than if the proceeds were payable to any named beneficiary other than the personal representative or the estate of the insured or of the plan participant.

(4) For purposes of this section the following definitions apply:

(a) "Plan administrator" means the person upon whom claim must be made in order for retirement plan proceeds to be paid upon the death of the plan participant.

(b) "Retirement plan" means any plan, account, deposit, annuity, or benefit, other than a life insurance policy, that provides for payment to a beneficiary designated by the plan participant for whom the plan is established. The term includes, without limitation, such plans regardless of source of funding, and, for example, includes pensions, annuities, stock bonus plans, employee stock ownership

plans, profit sharing plans, self-employed retirement plans, individual retirement accounts, individual retirement annuities, and retirement bonds, as well as any other retirement plan or program.

(c) "Trustee" includes any custodian under chapter 11.114 RCW or any similar statutory provisions of any other state and the terms "trust agreement" and "will" refer to the provisions of chapter 11.114 RCW or such similar statutory provisions of any other state.

(5) Enactment of this section does not invalidate life insurance policy or retirement plan beneficiary designations executed prior to January 1, 1985, naming a trustee established by will or by trust agreement. [1999 c 42 s 623; 1991 c 193 s 29; 1985 c 30 s 59. Prior: 1984 c 149 s 91.]

**Effective date—1999 c 42:** See RCW 11.96A.902.

**Effective date—Severability—1991 c 193:** See RCW 11.114.903 and 11.114.904.

**Short title—Application—Purpose—Severability—1985 c 30:** See RCW 11.02.900 through 11.02.903.

**Severability—Effective dates—1984 c 149:** See notes following RCW 11.02.005.