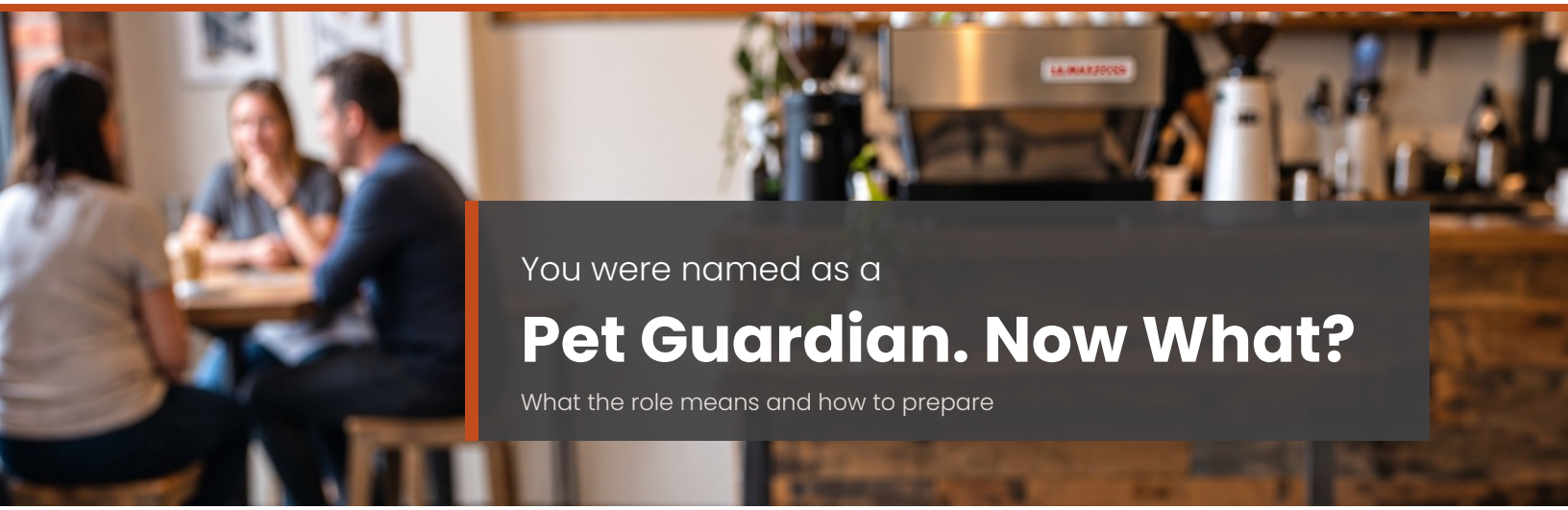


You were named as a

Pet Guardian. Now What?

What the role means and how to prepare

Someone close to you has named you in their will as guardian for their pets. Being named is a meaningful expression of trust. It means someone looked carefully at the people in their life and chose you for a role that matters to them. It is also a responsibility worth understanding well before it is ever needed.

This guide explains what the role involves, the choices available to you, and a few practical steps you can take now so you are prepared if you are ever asked to serve.

> **If you were named as an alternate pet guardian,** you would be asked to serve only if the first-choice pet guardian is unable or unwilling to do so. The guidance below still applies, and a conversation with the family now is just as valuable.

What is a pet guardian?

For many people, pets are family, and knowing they will be loved and cared for is a real source of peace. Because the law treats pets as property, a will is one of the ways a person can make sure their animals go to someone they trust. While every arrangement is different, being named pet guardian usually means:

- If the person passes away before their pets, you would give those pets a home and care for them
- This generally applies to any pets they have at the time of their passing, including animals acquired after the will was written

Will there be money for the pets' care?

A will may leave a gift to the pet guardian to help with the cost of care, but that gift typically comes without legal strings attached. Some people instead create a pet trust, which every state now recognizes, to set aside funds and give specific care instructions. It is worth asking which approach has been used.

Do I have to serve as pet guardian?

No. Being nominated does not obligate you to serve. When the time comes, you can decide whether to accept the responsibility. If you decline, an alternate named in the will may step in. If no alternate is available, the probate court will decide who takes the pets.

What should I do now?

A short conversation now can make a transition much easier on everyone, including the animals. A few topics worth covering:

- **Care details.** Diet, medications, routines, veterinarian contact information, and any health history.
- **Their wishes.** Anything they would want you to know about how their pets should be cared for.
- **Funding.** Whether money has been set aside for care and how you would receive it.
- **Where the will is stored,** and who the executor of the estate will be.

Let's talk about your own plan

Helping families prepare for what comes next is at the heart of our work, and that includes every member of the family. Whether you would like to talk through this role or you are ready to put your own plan in order, we would be glad to help.

Call 541-228-9924 **Email** nate@nwadvisory.com
Schedule a conversation Book an introductory call

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