

Clear estate matters

New York, April 19, 2022—Maru Public Opinion released the results today of a survey conducted on behalf of ClearEstate that finds of those who have a will (41%), nine-in-ten (90%) have appointed a person in their immediate or extended family to act as the executor of their estate—often an unknown and challenging burden until they're needed.

Executors report challenges, stress, and little guidance

Three quarters (74%) of those Americans who have acted as an executor for an estate of someone who has passed away indicate that experiencing the death of a parent, spouse and/or partner was one of the most difficult challenges of their life while two-thirds (63%) offered up that it also disrupted their personal and/or professional life.

And no wonder for many: half (47%) of executors reported they were offered little guidance by anyone during the estate settlement process, and for more than four-in-ten (42%) of them it was an ordeal that took longer than one full year. For just under a third (30%), it took more than two years to complete the process.

It's no surprise then that, among those appointed executors, a majority (53%) admitted that settling the estate of a parent, spouse, and/or partner was one of the most difficult challenges of their life. And while, on average, half of Americans (49%) say that experiencing the death of a parent, spouse and/or partner was one of the most difficult mental health challenges they've ever faced, those who have acted as an executor reported a significant and disproportionate level of stress (74%).

Grief in the workplace

With the pandemic-era trend of bereavement benefits packages for employees gaining in popularity, ClearEstate also explored the challenges faced by those mourning in the workplace and found that only one-third (36%) of Americans felt supported by their employer when they experienced the death of a parent, spouse and/or partner.

The study also uncovered the extent to which fellow employees can find it difficult in addressing someone in their workplace who has experienced the loss of a loved one—one third (36%) of Americans and almost half (45%) of former executors admitted that when a work colleague experienced the death of a parent, spouse, and/or partner, they felt it was difficult to address the grief of that person. Similarly, one quarter (25%) of Americans and four-in-ten (37%) former executors felt that work colleagues had difficulty talking to them about their loss when it had occurred.

Methodology

These are some of the findings released by Maru Public Opinion from a survey undertaken for ClearEstate January 10/11, 2021, by its panel and data collection experts at Maru/Blue of 1518 randomly selected American adults who are Maru Springboard America online panelists. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population according to Census data which ensures the sample is representative of the entire adult population of the United States. Discrepancies in or between totals when compared to the data tables are due to rounding.

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Excerpts from this release of findings should be properly attributed, with interpretation subject to clarification or correction.

For more information contact:

John Wright
Executive Vice President
Maru Public Opinion
1-332-282-1610
john.wright@marublue.com



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