

What is a Codicil?

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A **codicil** is a short legal document used to amend an existing will. In New Jersey, it must be signed with the same formalities as a will. Use a codicil to:

- Add a charitable donation
- Update or change an existing charitable gift

How to Add a Charitable Gift (NJ)

1. Reference Your Will

- Include the date of your original will (and any prior codicils)

2. Identify the Charity

- Use full legal name
- Include address (recommended)
- Optional: include tax ID number

3. State the Gift

- Fixed amount (e.g., \$10,000)
- Percentage (e.g., 10% of estate)
- Residual (remaining estate after other gifts)

4. Sign with NJ Formalities

- You must sign (or acknowledge your signature)
- **Two witnesses** must sign
- Witnesses must be present at the same time
- Witnesses should understand it is your codicil
- Notarization is **not required**, but a **self-proving affidavit** (notarized) is strongly recommended to simplify probate

5. Keep It Safe

- Store with your will and tell your executor where it is located

Sample NJ Codicil Language (Simplified)

"I hereby amend my Last Will and Testament dated [date]. I give [amount/percentage/residue] of my estate to [full legal name of charity], located at [address], for its general charitable purposes. All other provisions of my will remain unchanged."

NJ Tips

- Keep codicils simple—multiple changes may require a new will
- Avoid naming individual witnesses who are beneficiaries
- Make sure the gift fits your overall estate plan

Disclaimer

This fact sheet is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. New Jersey law governs wills and codicils, and requirements may change. You should get your own legal advice from a qualified New Jersey estate planning attorney.

