



OFFICE OF THE MISSOURI
STATE TREASURER

FACT SHEET: VIRTUAL ASSET INSTRUCTION LETTERS

- A **virtual asset** is any information you store online and any device you use to access that information. Virtual assets include:
 - Mobile phones
 - Desktop, laptop and tablet computers
 - Websites and blogs
 - Email accounts (Gmail, AOL, Yahoo)
 - Online photo storage accounts
 - Social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn)
 - Online banking and financial accounts
 - Online shopping accounts (eBay, Amazon, etc.)
- Your virtual assets have value, so it is important to consider them in your estate planning. What do you want to happen to your email account? Do you want to leave your online photographs to your family members? These are questions to discuss with your lawyer or financial planner.
- A **virtual asset instruction letter** (VAIL) is a useful tool to protect your virtual assets. It allows someone else (your spouse, lawyer or designated representative) to access your virtual assets should you become incapacitated or pass away.
- Your VAIL should list all of your virtual assets, including website addresses, usernames and passwords.
- Keep your VAIL secure by saving it to a CD or memory stick. Store it in a safe place and give your spouse, lawyer or designated representative instructions on how to access it.
- It is crucial to keep your VAIL up to date. Regularly update it with your current electronic devices, websites, account names, user names and passwords.

About Missouri State Treasurer's Unclaimed Property

State law requires financial institutions, insurance companies, public agencies and other business entities to turn over assets to the Missouri State Treasurer that belong to a customer, client, employee or other owner if there have been no documented transactions or contact with the owner for five or more years. Most Unclaimed Property consists of cash from bank accounts, stocks, bonds and contents of safe deposit boxes that have been abandoned. It also can include uncollected insurance policy proceeds, government refunds, utility deposits and wages from past jobs. The State Treasurer's Office does not handle real property such as land and houses or certain types of personal property such as cars and boats. There is \$942 million in Unclaimed Property maintained by the Missouri State Treasurer. The State Treasurer's Office never charges for the return of Unclaimed Property. To learn more visit www.ShowMeMoney.com or contact ucphelp@treasurer.mo.gov

This fact sheet is intended as a starting point only. It does not constitute legal advice.

Consult

with your attorney or financial planner about how to protect and plan for your virtual assets.