

March 2009

FACT SHEET #6

Your *undivided interest* of 5% or more: What happens if you pass away without writing a will?

If you pass away without writing a will, any trust or restricted land you own^{*} is inherited by your heirs under a new federal law called the American Indian Probate Reform Act of 2004 (AIPRA).

State laws no longer determine how trust lands on reservations pass from one generation to the next for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006.

AIPRA has created a uniform probate code for all reservations across the United States.^{*} This act applies to all individually owned trust and restricted lands^{*} unless a tribe has its own probate code. All tribal probate codes pertaining to trust property must be approved by the Secretary of Interior. The Fort Hall, Fort Peck, Fort Belknap and Blackfeet tribes do not have approved probate codes enacted as of the publication date of this fact sheet.

Percentage of undivided interest

AIPRA passes trust land to your heirs under different rules depending on whether you own an *undivided*

interest of **5% or more** in an allotment (this Fact Sheet #6) or whether you own an *undivided interest* of **less than 5%** in an allotment (See Fact Sheet #7). To determine your ownership interest you will need to examine your Individual Trust Interest (ITI) report from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Review Fact Sheet #4 to learn how to obtain your Individual Trust Interest (ITI) report and how to read it.

This fact sheet explains how AIPRA will divide your interests among your heirs if you own an *undivided interest* of **5% or more** in an allotment and if you pass away without writing a will.

Marital status and children

Your marital status and whether you have children will have an effect on the division of your *undivided interest* of **5% or more** among your heirs.

First, find a situation that is similar to yours in the descriptions on pages 2 and 3. Then, refer to the appropriate illustrations on pages 4 - 17 for information about the distribution of your interests to your beneficiaries.

^{*} Except Alaska, the Five Civilized Tribes, and Osage.

What is your marital and child status? Check one.

- **Single**-*No* Children **Single**-*With* Children
 - **Single**-*With* Children (legally adopted or biological)
 - Married-No Children

Married-*With* Children (legally adopted or biological)

The term *single* means that you are legally divorced (not just separated), or that your spouse has passed away, or that you have never been married.

- If you checked *Single-no children* see questions 1 4 (this page).
- If you checked *Single-with children* see questions 5 9 (this page).

The term *married* includes couples who are legally married, who are separated, or who have a legal separation. Separated couples are still legally *married*. Common law marriages are not recognized under AIPRA or by Montana and Idaho tribes.

- If you checked *Married-no children* see question 10, page 3.
- If you checked *Married*-with children see question 11, page 3.

SINGLE-No children, no will

Question 1: Are you *single* and do not have any living children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren, but one or both your parents are living?

Yes (See pages 4 - 5, Illustrations 1a, 1b, 1c,
and 1d)
$\mathbf{N}_{\mathbf{r}}$

 \Box No (Go to question 2)

Question 2: Are you *single* and do not have any living children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren, your parents are not living, and **all** your brothers and sisters are living?

Yes (See page 5, Illustration 2)
No (Go to question 3)

Question 3: Are you *single* and do not have any living children, grandchildren, or great grandchildren, your parents are not living, and you have one or more brothers or sisters who have passed away?

Yes (See page 6, Illustrations 3a & 3b) No (If you are single without children, grandchildren or great grandchildren review questions 1 - 2. If no, go to question 4.)

Question 4: If you are single and do not have any <u>living</u> children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren, parents, brothers or sisters, your *undivided interest* of **5% or more** in an allotment passes to the tribe where the allotment is located (if you pass away without writing a will) (See page 7, Illustration 4).

SINGLE-With children, no will

Question 5: Are you *single* and **all** of your children are living, but you do not have any grandchildren?

Yes (See page 8, Illustration 5) No (Go to question 6)

Question 6: Are you *single* and **all** your children are living and you also have living grandchildren?

Yes (See page 8, Illustration 6) No (Go to question 7)

Question 7: Are you *single* with one or more children who have passed away and they are survived by living children (your grandchildren)?

Yes (See pages 9 – 12, Illustrations 7, 7a, 7b, and 7c)
 No (Go to question 8)

Question 8: Are you *single* and **all** of your children have passed away and they are survived by living children (your grandchildren)?

Yes (See pages 13 - 14, Illustrations 8a & 8b)
No (If you are single with children, review
questions 5 - 8. If no, go to question 9)

Question 9: If you do not have any surviving children, grandchildren, parents, brothers or sisters, your *undivided interest* of **5% or more** in an allotment passes to the tribe where the allotment is located (if you pass away without a written will) (See page 15, Illustration 9).

Write a will

If you are single and want your *undivided interest* in trust property to pass to individuals other than those described in questions 1 - 9, you need to write a will to distribute your land the way you desire.

Married-No children or grandchildren, no will

Question 10: Are you *married* with your spouse living and you have no living children or grandchildren?

Yes (See page 16, Illustration 1	0)
No (Go to question 11)	

Married-With children, no will

Question 11: Are you *married* with your spouse living, and you have living children, grandchildren, and/or great-grandchildren?

Yes (See page 17, Illustration 11)

As long as your spouse is living he or she inherits all of your *undivided interest* in trust land of **5% or more** as a *life estate*. Your children inherit a *remainder interest* in your estate. They are called *remaindermen* (See fact sheet #8). Your children have full ownership of your *undivided interest* in trust land after the passing of your spouse.

No (If you are married without children review question 10)

Fee

Under the technical amendment of December 2, 2008 IRA tribes have been given the authority to enact resolutions, codes, or laws to permit owners the ability to write a will and leave trust property to a non-Indian person and have the land converted from trust status to fee status. Without tribal resolution AIPRA prohibits the leaving of IRA lands in fee to non-Indian. Non-IRA tribes already had this authority. Thus if you are married and if you have an *undivided interest*, the interest can pass to your non-Indian spouse in **fee** if you make a written will and if the tribe has enacted a resolution allowing for such a transfer. However, the land will lose its trust status.

Write a will

If you are married and want your *undivided interest* in trust property to pass to individuals other than those were described in illustrations 10 and 11, then you need to write a will to distribute your land the way you desire.

Acknowledgements

We wish to express appreciation to the Montana and Idaho Reservation Extension agents and Reservation Extension student assistants on the Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, Fort Hall, and Fort Peck reservations for their assistance in reviewing the fact sheets and presenting the information to tribal members on their home reservations.

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Disclaimer

The information appearing in this fact sheet is presented for informational purposes only. The objective of the fact sheet is to help you develop an understanding of the American Indian Probate Reform Act (AIPRA). The contents should not be considered as legal advice or be used as such. For legal information specific to your situation contact, appropriate legal counsel with your tribe or an attorney.

Future change in laws cannot be predicted and statements in this fact sheet are based solely on the rules and regulations in force on the date of publication.

(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT CHILDREN

Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 1a	Equally divided between parents.	Survivors: Indian Parents
Indian Father <u>and</u> Mother.	<i>Example:</i> Tony, who is single, passed away. His Indian mother and father each received 1/2 of the <i>undivided interest</i> he owns on the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Reservations.	Indian Mother 1/2 Single Person Passed Away 5% or more
Illustration 1b	A non-Indian parent cannot inherit under AIPRA.	Survivors: Indian and Non-Indian Parents
Indian parent and Non-Indian parent	<i>Example:</i> Tony's <i>undivided</i> <i>interests</i> of 5% or more in each parcel would pass to his Indian father.	Non-Indian Mother 0 Single Person Passed Away 5% or more
Illustration 1c	The surviving parent receives all undivided interest.	Survivor: One Indian Parent
Father <u>or</u> Mother.	<i>Example:</i> Lisa, who is single, passed away. The only surviving parent was her Indian mother. Her mother received all of Lisa's <i>undivided interests</i> in trust lands she owns on the Fort Hall and Blackfeet Reservations.	Indian Mother ALL Father Father 5% or more

* **Single** means you are divorced, widowed or that you have never been married.

(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT CHILDREN (cont'd)		
Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 1d Non-Indian Father <u>or</u> Mother. (one parent survives)	A non-Indian parent cannot inherit under AIPRA. <i>Example:</i> Lisa's <i>undivided</i> <i>interests</i> in land on the Blackfeet Reservation would pass to her heirs listed in illustrations 2 and 3.	Survivor: Non-Indian Parent Non-Indian Mother 0 Father 0 Father 5% or more
Illustration 2 Brothers and Sisters (if parents of the deceased person aren't living or if surviving parent is non-Indian).	Equally divided among brothers and sisters. Example: Walter, who is single, passed away with three sisters who survived him. Walter's parents passed away years ago. Each of Walter's sisters received 1/3 of his undivided interests in trust lands his ITI report shows he owned on several reservations.	Survivors: 3 Siblings

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SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT CHILDREN (cont'd)

Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 3a Brothers, Sisters, Nieces and Nephews of deceased siblings of decedent. (<i>if parents and some siblings of</i> <i>the deceased person aren't</i> <i>living</i>).	Divided equally among living brothers and sisters. Example 3a: John passed away with two brothers who survived him. John also had two sisters who passed away before he did. Each living brother received 1/2 of John's undivided interests in trust lands his ITI report shows he owned on several reservations. John's deceased sister's only daughter (his niece) did not inherit any of his undivided interests in trust land. John's other deceased sister's two sons (his nephews) also did not inherit any of his undivided interests.	Survivors: 2 Siblings Image: Signed
Illustration 3b One surviving brother or sister, nieces and nephews of deceased siblings of decedent. (<i>if parents and some siblings of</i> <i>the deceased person aren't</i> <i>living</i>).	Living brother or sister receives all. <i>Example 3b:</i> If John had only one brother who survived him, that brother would receive all of his <i>undivided interest</i> in trust lands his ITI report shows he owned on several reservations.	Survivor: 1 Sibling

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(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT CHILDREN (cont'd)

Surviving Family Members ** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 4 No eligible heirs	If you pass away without a written will and if you do not have any surviving children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren, parents, brothers or sisters, then your <i>undivided interest</i> of 5% or more in an allotment passes to the tribe where the allotment is located.	No eligible heirs Single Person Passed Away 5% or more
	However, during probate co-owners of the allotment can purchase a deceased person's <i>undivided interest</i> at fair market value.	

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(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN			
Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)	
Illustration 5 Children of the person who passed away (<i>includes legally adopted</i>	Divided equally among the children. <i>Example</i> : Tamara, a single parent,	Survivors: 3 children	
away (includes legally adopted children).	passed away with three living children. Tamara's <i>undivided interests</i> in trust lands she owns on the Fort Hall Reservation are divided equally among her three children; 1/3 to	1/3 1/3 1/3 5% or more	
Illustration 6 Children and grandchildren of the	each. Divided equally among children only. Grandchildren do not inherit when their parents are alive.	Survivors: 3 children	
person who passed away.	<i>Example</i> : Lloyd passed away with three living children and six living grandchildren.	1/3 1/3 1/3 Grandchildren	
	Lloyd's <i>undivided interest</i> s in trust land he owns on the Fort Belknap Reservation are divided equally among his three children; 1/3 to each child.	5% or more	
	The grandchildren do not inherit any of Lloyd's <i>undivided interests</i> because each child has a parent living who received the 1/3 interest from Lloyd, their grandfather.		

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(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN (cont'd)

Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 7	Divided among living child(ren) and the deceased child's child(ren) by <i>right of representation</i> .	See Illustrations:
Living children and one or more living grandchildren from a deceased child who passed away before you.	If a child passes away before a parent, the grandchild steps into the shoes of the deceased parent and takes the parent's share.	• 7a on page 10
	If there is more than one deceased child with children, the children share the parent's share equally. This is called <i>right of representation</i> .	7b on page 117c on page 12

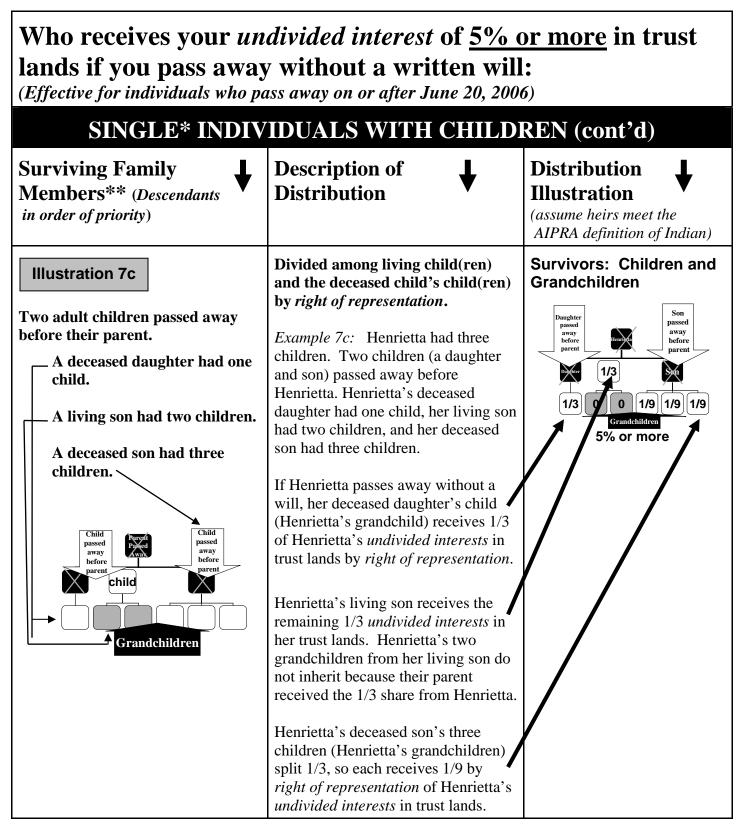
* **Single** means you are divorced, widowed or that you have never been married.

Who receives your *undivided interest* of <u>5% or more</u> in trust lands if you pass away without a written will: (Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006) SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN (cont'd) **Description of Distribution Surviving Family** Distribution **Members**** (Descendants Illustration in order of priority) (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian) Survivors: Children and **Divided among living child(ren)** Illustration 7a and the deceased child's child(ren) Grandchildren by right of representation. One adult child passed away before Daughter passed away before his or her parent with a surviving *Example 7a:* Eunice had three child. children. One of her daughters passed 1/3 1/3 away before Eunice. This daughter had one child, a son. 1/3 If Eunice passes away without 5[°]/ or more writing a will, her deceased daughter's son (Eunice's grandchild) receives the 1/3 share of undivided interest in Eunice's trust lands that his mother would have received if she had survived Eunice. This is called right of representation. Eunice's two living children each receive a 1/3 share of undivided *interest* in her trust land. Eunice's remaining five grandchildren do not inherit because each parent received the 1/3 share from Eunice.

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Who receives your *undivided interest* of <u>5% or more</u> in trust lands if you pass away without a written will: (Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006) SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN (cont'd) **Description of Surviving Family** Distribution Members** (Descendants Distribution Illustration *in order of priority*) (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian) **Divided among living child(ren)** Survivors: Children and **Illustration 7b** and the deceased child's child(ren) Grandchildren by right of representation. Two hildrer: Two adult children passed away passed before their parent. *Example 7b:* Jim had three children. Two children (a daughter and a son) One deceased adult child passed away before Jim. Jim's had one child. deceased daughter had one child, his 1/31/61/6 0 deceased son had two children, and -Another deceased adult child his living son had three children. 5% or more had two children. If Jim passes away without a written The third living adult child will, his deceased daughter's child had three children. -(Jim's grandchild) receives the 1/3share of *undivided interests* in trust Survivors: Two children land that his mother would have passed received if she had lived. This is away called right of representation. child Jim's deceased son's two children (Jim's grandchildren) split the 1/3 randchildr undivided interest in trust land that their father would have received, each receiving 1/6. This is called right of representation. Jim's living son receives the remaining 1/3 of his father's *undivided interest* in trust land. The three children of his living son (Jim's grandchildren) do not inherit because their parent received the 1/3 share from Jim.

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Who receives your undivided interest of 5% or more in trust lands if you pass away without a written will: (Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006) SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN (cont'd) Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority) Description of Distribution Image: Content of the priority of the

Members ** (Descendants in order of priority)	Distribution	(assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 8a One or more grandchildren (<i>no living children</i>).	If all the children passed before a parent, then the living grandchildren inherit shares by <i>right of representation</i> from their grandparent.	Survivors: Grandchildren Passed away before parent Survivors: Grandchildren
	<i>Example 8a:</i> Ronald, a grandfather, passed away with six living grandchildren. None of Ronald's children were living at the time of his passing.	1/3 1/6 1/6 1/9 1/9 1/9 Grandchildren 5% or more
	Because Ronald's three children passed away before him, his six grandchildren inherit Ronald's <i>undivided interests</i> in trust lands by <i>right of representation</i> .	
	The child of Ronald's deceased daughter receives 1/3.	
	The two children of Ronald's deceased son receive 1/6 each.	
	The three children of Ronald's remaining deceased son receive 1/9 each.	

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(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN (cont'd)

Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 8b One or more grandchildren (no living children).	If a grandchild passed before a great-grandparent, then the living great-grandchildren do not inherit. <i>Example 8b:</i> George, a grandfather, passed away with five living grandchildren and one grandchild who passed away during George's lifetime. None of George's three children were living at the time of his passing. Because George's children passed away before him, his five grandchildren inherit George's <i>undivided interests</i> by <i>right of</i> <i>representation</i> . The child of George's deceased daughter receives 1/3. The two children of George's deceased son receive 1/6 each. The two living children of George's other deceased son receive 1/6 each. George's great-grandchildren do not inherit under AIPRA.	Survivors: Grandchildren and Great-grandchildren passed away bore parent 1/3 1/6 1/6 1/6 1/6 1/6 5% or more 0 0

* **Single** means you are divorced, widowed or that you have never been married.

(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

SINGLE* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN (cont'd)

Surviving Family Members** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)
Illustration 9 No eligible heirs	If you do not have any surviving children, grandchildren or great- grandchildren, parents, brothers or sisters, then your <i>undivided</i> <i>interest</i> of 5% or more in an allotment passes to the tribe where each interest is located if you pass away without a written will.	No eligible heirs Single Person Passed Away 5% or more
	However, during probate co-owners within the allotments can purchase a deceased person's <i>undivided interests</i> at fair market value.	

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(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

MARRIED* INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT CHILDREN			
Surviving Family Members ** (Descendants in order of priority)	Description of Distribution	Distribution Illustration (assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)	
Illustration 10 Spouse	All undivided interest in trust lands pass to the surviving spouse as a life estate.Example:Victor who was married passed away without a will, his interests of 5% or more in each allotment passes to his wife as a life estate.The tribe where the land is located is the remainderman because Victor has no surviving parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, or parents.	Survivor: Spouse	

* If you are separated or legally separated you are still considered legally married.

(Effective for individuals who pass away on or after June 20, 2006)

MARRIED* INDIVIDUALS WITH CHILDREN

Surviving Family Members ** (Descendants in order of priority) Description of Distribution







(assume heirs meet the AIPRA definition of Indian)

With Children from Present Marriage & Spouse

Illustration 11	e i	All to surviving spouse in a life estate. All <i>undivided interest</i> in trust lands pass to the surviving spouse as a <i>life estate</i> .	
Spouse and children	<i>Example:</i> Michael passed away without a written will. He was survived by his wife and three children.	Survivor: Spouse & Children, Deceased Person's Parents	
	Michael's interests of 5% or more in allotments pass to his surviving wife as a life estate.	Father 0 Wife Life Estate Their Child 0 5% or more	
	Michael's parents do not inherit as priority is given to the surviving spouse.		
	Their three children inherit a <i>remainder interest</i> in Michael's trust land. They own the land although their mother receives income (if any) from it and the mother may live in the home on the land during her lifetime (Review Fact Sheet #8 on life estates).		
	Upon the passing of Michael's wife (the children's mother) the life estate ends. The three children have complete use and enjoyment of the interests in Michael's allotments.		

* If you are separated or legally separated you are still considered legally married.

** Illustrations assume heirs meet the definition of Indian unless otherwise noted (see Fact Sheet #5).

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