



A SUNNYSIDE, QUEENS FAMILY GUIDE

The Inherited Sunnyside Co-op Sale Planning Guide

From letters testamentary to the closing table — a clear, kind path for settling your family's co-op, keeping more of the proceeds, and honoring the story the apartment holds.

Shalinthia

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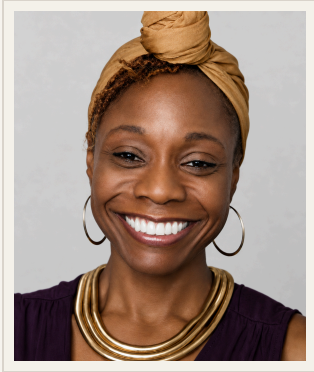
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A note from your neighbor



If you're reading this, I'm sorry for your loss.

Inheriting a co-op in Sunnyside usually means two things arrive at once: grief, and a set of keys. Behind those keys is an apartment full of a life — and a surprising amount of paperwork, court procedure, and building rules that nobody warns you about.

I've walked Sunnyside families through this exact journey. What I've learned is that heirs don't need pressure — they need **a sequence**. Which door to open first, which one can wait, and which one quietly closes if you knock too late. That sequence is what this guide gives you.

Nothing here is a sales pitch; take it at your own pace.

To show how this really unfolds, the guide follows one family's story from first phone call to closing table. Names and details are changed; the steps, numbers, and sequence are real.

“An inherited apartment is never just a property. It's the last chapter of one story — and the down payment on the next.”

ONE FAMILY'S STORY

Meet Elena

The call came on a Tuesday in March. By Friday, Elena was driving in from New Jersey, standing in the doorway of her mother's one-bedroom co-op near 43rd Avenue — the apartment she grew up in — bought in 1993 for \$38,000, filled with thirty years of Sundays.

Carmen had done everything with care: the will sat labeled in the desk drawer, the stock certificate and proprietary lease clipped to it. But Elena soon discovered what most Sunnyside heirs discover: **even the tidiest estate passes through three gates** — the Surrogate's Court, the co-op board, and the calendar — and the order you approach them changes everything.



Where every estate conversation I have begins — at the kitchen table, with the paperwork spread out and no clock on the wall.

We met at that table a week later. Elena didn't need a pitch; she needed a map. The next chapters are that map — and how Carmen's apartment reached the happiest ending the market could write.

Yes, you can sell it — through three gates

THE SHORT ANSWER

You can absolutely sell an inherited Sunnyside co-op — but only after **Surrogate's Court** gives someone legal authority (letters testamentary or letters of administration), and your **co-op board** still approves the buyer like any resale. Plan on **9–18 months end to end**; uncontested estates with organized paperwork often land near twelve.

12–13

MONTHS, TYPICAL
UNCONTESTED
SUNNYSIDE ESTATE
SALE

\$7.35M

NY ESTATE-TAX
EXCLUSION FOR 2026
— MOST HEIRS OWE
NOTHING

3

GATES: THE COURT,
THE BOARD, AND THE
CALENDAR

Here is the reframe that lowers shoulders in every first meeting: **the process is long, but it is not hard**. It fails only when the steps are done out of order — listing before anyone has authority to sign, or finding a buyer whose package the board can't process yet.

Everything in this guide is organized around one principle Elena learned early: **run the court track and the market track in parallel**, so the day the letters arrive, the apartment is ready to list.

Secure first. Paperwork second. Decisions last.

THE SHORT ANSWER

In the first month, do only five things: **secure the apartment, notify the managing agent, keep the maintenance current, gather the core documents, and engage an estate attorney.** Do not list yet, and do not discard paperwork.

1 · Secure the apartment

Change the locks or confirm who holds keys, check the unit regularly, and keep utilities on — a leak found in week one is a repair; found in month five, a renovation.

2 · Notify the managing agent — and ask one question

Tell the managing agent the shareholder has passed, and ask in writing: *“What does this building require for an estate sale?”* The reply becomes your checklist.

3 · Keep the maintenance current

The estate owes maintenance from day one, and boards stall sales with arrears — treat it as the rent the process charges. Budget **\$900–\$1,400 a month** on a typical one-bedroom.

4 · Gather the documents — and 5 · engage an estate attorney

The next page is your scavenger hunt — some items take weeks to replace. For the court track, choose a Queens estate attorney who knows the Surrogate’s Court clerks by name; familiarity shortens timelines.

The heir's document scavenger hunt

HOW TO USE THIS

Check each item only when it's **physically in the folder**. Attorney and board will both ask for most of this list — gathering it once, early, is the biggest timeline-saver you control.

- ☐ **Certified death certificates** — order 8–10 copies; the court, the co-op, the banks, and the transfer agent each want an original.
- ☐ **The original will** — a photocopy can slow probate to a crawl; the court needs the original.
- ☐ **Stock certificate** — the co-op's proof of ownership; replacing a lost one involves affidavits and fees.
- ☐ **Proprietary lease** — contains the flip-tax formula, sublet rules, and estate provisions.
- ☐ **Offering plan and amendments** — the building's constitution; the buyer's attorney will ask.
- ☐ **Recent maintenance statements** — proof the account is current.
- ☐ **Managing agent's written estate-sale requirements** — from step 2 on the previous page.
- ☐ **Prior tax returns and a list of accounts** — your attorney and CPA will thank you.

Carmen had clipped the stock certificate to the will. That one paper clip saved her daughter six weeks — be that family.

Probate in Queens: the first gate

THE SHORT ANSWER

If your parent left a will, it goes through **probate** at the Queens County Surrogate's Court in Jamaica, and the court issues **letters testamentary** to the executor — the legal authority to sell.

Without a will, the process is called **administration** and produces **letters of administration**. Either way, most Sunnyside boards won't process a buyer's package until letters exist.

Elena's petition was filed in April. The waiting began — but as you'll see, waiting was never wasted.

Why the “small estate” shortcut rarely fits a co-op

New York offers a streamlined **voluntary administration** for estates whose personal property totals **\$50,000 or less** (SCPA Article 13). Co-op shares are personal property — but at today's Sunnyside values, the apartment alone is several times that threshold, so nearly every inherited co-op goes through full probate or administration.

What letters actually unlock

Letters let the executor sign the contract of sale, direct the transfer agent, and access estate accounts to keep maintenance current. Everything before letters is preparation; everything after is execution.

The courthouse on Sutphin Boulevard



Queens estate matters run through the Surrogate's Court at 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard in Jamaica — two stops past Sunnyside on the E, F, or 7-and-LIRR connection.

How long do letters take?

In an uncontested Queens estate with complete paperwork, letters commonly issue in roughly **3–7 months**; contested estates can take years. Early family conversations matter more than any filing.

Executor commissions, briefly

New York sets executor commissions by statute (SCPA 2307): 5% of the first \$100,000, 4% of the next \$200,000, 3% of the next \$700,000. On a \$372,000 co-op estate that's about **\$15,160** — and family executors often waive or reduce it. It's a choice, not an obligation.

The two tracks, side by side

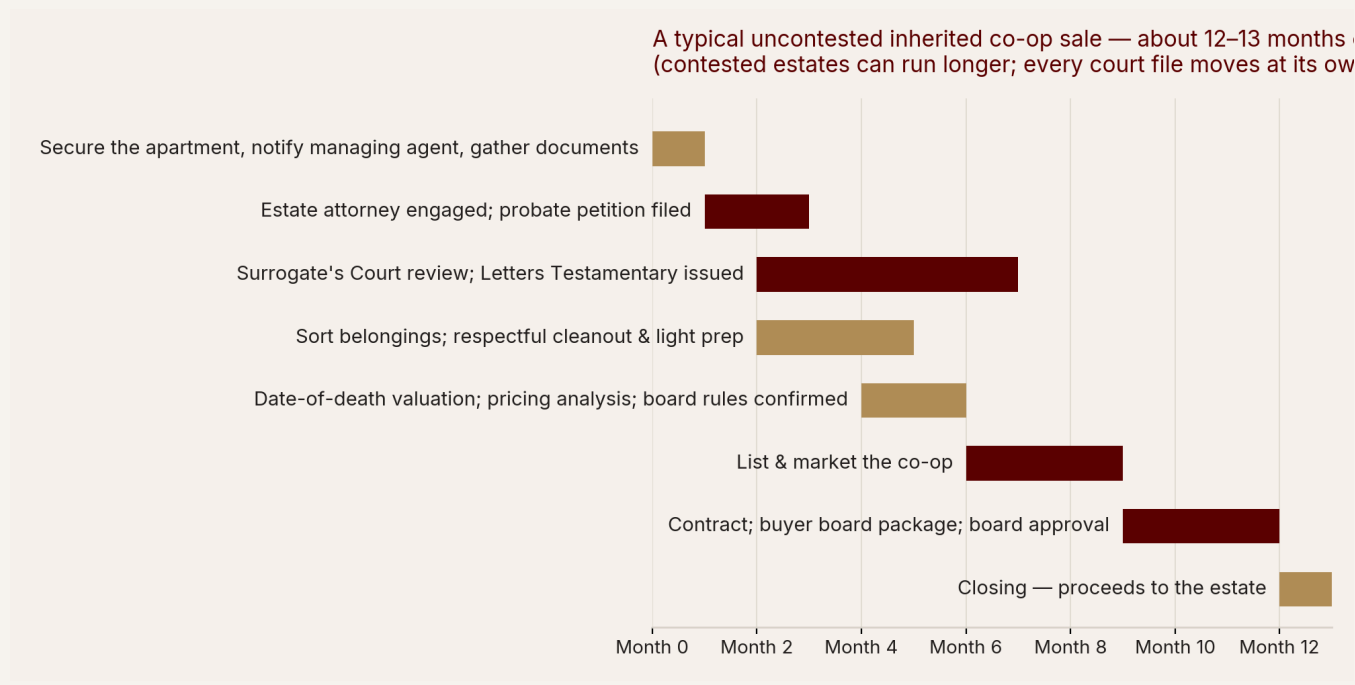


Figure 1 — The inherited co-op timeline. Burgundy bars are court-and-sale milestones; gold bars are preparation you control. Notice how much gold fits inside the court's waiting period.

This is the whole strategy in one picture. The court track (burgundy) moves at the court's pace and cannot be rushed — but the gold track is entirely yours. Elena's cleanout, valuation, and building research all happened *while* the petition waited in queue, so her letters arrived to a market-ready apartment.

Families who wait for letters before starting the gold track add four to six months to the journey. Families who start both tracks together — like Elena's — often list within days of their letters arriving and close in under four months from listing.

The stepped-up basis: the tax code's condolence

THE SHORT ANSWER

When you inherit a co-op, its tax “cost basis” resets to the **market value on the date of death** — not what your parent paid decades ago. Sell near that value and your taxable capital gain is often close to **zero**, even on an apartment bought for \$38,000 in 1993.

This was the moment Elena exhaled. The gain she feared wasn't the gain the IRS saw.

How the step-up works, in plain English

Carmen bought in 1993 for \$38,000; on the date of her passing, the apartment appraised at **\$368,000**. Under federal law (IRC §1014), Elena's basis became \$368,000 — not \$38,000. When the co-op sold a year later for \$372,000, the taxable gain was the *difference*: about \$4,000, before selling costs brought it lower still. A CPA confirmed it in one meeting.

One professional step you cannot skip

Get a **date-of-death valuation** — a licensed appraisal or documented broker opinion — and file it with the estate's records. If the IRS ever asks, you answer with a document, not a memory.

“The stepped-up basis means the years your parents spent paying down the apartment are honored, not taxed.”

Will the estate owe estate tax? Almost certainly not

THE SHORT ANSWER

For deaths in 2026, New York’s estate-tax exclusion is **\$7,350,000** and the federal exemption is **\$15,000,000** per person. A Sunnyside co-op — even plus savings — sits far below both. The estate tax conversation ends quickly for nearly every Sunnyside family.

TABLE 1 — 2026 ESTATE TAX THRESHOLDS VS. A TYPICAL SUNNYSIDE ESTATE

THRESHOLD	2026 AMOUNT	APPLIES?
Federal estate & gift tax exemption (per person)	\$15,000,000	Only above this — rare
New York estate-tax basic exclusion	\$7,350,000	Only above this — rare
Carmen’s estate: co-op (\$372K) + modest savings	≈ \$430,000	No estate tax due

One caution for larger estates: the New York cliff

New York has a notorious wrinkle: above **105% of the exclusion — about \$7.8 million in 2026** — the exemption falls away and the *entire* estate is taxed at rates up to 16%. If the apartment is one asset among several, raise it with your attorney early.

For most heirs the real tax question isn’t estate tax — it’s the stepped-up basis. Bring both numbers to a CPA for a short, happy meeting.

Your building still gets a vote

THE SHORT ANSWER

An estate sale is a normal co-op resale with extra paperwork: the board still approves the **buyer**, the **flip tax** still applies, and most Sunnyside boards require **letters to be issued and the maintenance account current** before they'll process anything. Ask for the building's estate-sale requirements in writing, early.

The board packet Elena received back had one line underlined: “Letters Testamentary required prior to processing any application.” Good thing she’d started the court track in April.

What boards typically require of estates

Expect requests for the letters, the death certificate, an estate affidavit, and confirmation that the account carries no arrears. Some buildings also require the estate's attorney to confirm in writing that the sale is authorized. None of this is hostile — boards simply answer to their own governing documents.

Can the board reject the sale?

A board can reject a *buyer*, as in any resale — and need not say why — but it cannot prevent the estate from selling altogether, and it must act within its documents and the law. In practice, rejections almost always trace to a weak buyer financial package, which is why pricing and buyer vetting matter doubly in estate sales.

The two questions every heir asks next

"Can we rent it out instead?"

Usually, no. Most Sunnyside co-ops restrict subletting — sometimes prohibiting it for estates entirely — and a tenant complicates showings, pricing, and board approval. Read the proprietary lease's sublet clause *before* deciding; it ends more rental plans than any spreadsheet.

"Can we sell it to a family member?"

Yes — but board approval, the flip tax, and the letters all still apply. Close-family transfers sometimes receive friendlier treatment in the governing documents; your attorney checks the proprietary lease.



Some of the best estate conversations happen on the block itself — walking the building, the courtyard, and the route to the 7 train, the way a buyer will.

What an inherited Sunnyside co-op actually nets

THE SHORT ANSWER

An estate sale carries two cost stacks: the normal **sale-side ledger** (commission, flip tax, transfer taxes, fees) and a smaller **estate-side stack** (probate attorney, court fees, appraisal, cleanout). On Carmen’s \$372,000 one-bedroom the stacks totaled about **\$48,700**, leaving roughly **\$323,300** to the heirs.

TABLE 2 — SALE-SIDE LEDGER · ESTATE SALE AT \$372,000

LINE ITEM	TYPICAL BASIS	AMOUNT
Broker commission	5% (always negotiable)	– \$18,600
Flip tax	\$45 per share × 240 shares (building-specific)	– \$10,800
NYC transfer tax (RPTT)	1.00% (sales under \$500K)	–\$3,720
NY State transfer tax	0.40%	–\$1,488
Seller’s attorney	Flat fee, Queens typical	–\$2,500
Managing agent + move-out fees	Building-specific schedule	–\$1,000
Lien search & misc.	Estimate	–\$500
Sale-side costs (≈10.4%)		– \$38,608

The estate-side stack, to the dollar

TABLE 3 — ESTATE-SIDE COSTS · UNCONTESTED QUEENS ESTATE

LINE ITEM	TYPICAL BASIS	AMOUNT
Estate / probate attorney	Flat fee, uncontested	-\$5,500
Surrogate's Court filing fee	Statutory schedule (SCPA 2402)	-\$625
Date-of-death appraisal	Licensed appraiser	-\$450
Cleanout & light prep	Declutter, paint touch-up, deep clean	-\$3,500
Estate-side costs		-
		\$10,075
Net to the heirs (sale \$372,000 – both stacks)		\$323,317



The cleanout is the journey's emotional center — go slowly, keep what matters.

Two honest notes: Elena waived the statutory executor commission (about **\$15,160**), keeping it in the family; and every month of delay adds **\$900–\$1,400 of maintenance**.

The happiest ending the market could write

Thirteen months after that Tuesday phone call, Elena sat at a closing table in Long Island City. The letters had arrived to a market-ready apartment; the buyer's package sailed through the board in one pass.

Carmen's one-bedroom closed at **\$372,000** — under four months from listing, because every document the board could want was already in the folder. After both cost stacks, **\$323,317** flowed to the estate. Elena split the proceeds with her brother and set aside a piece for her daughters' college funds — the granddaughters who grew up running down that 43rd Avenue hallway.

What she kept wasn't the apartment. It was the recipe box, the photo albums, and the knowledge that her mother's planning had carried the family through the last gate.



The signatures done, the keys passed, and a family walking out lighter than they walked in.

“My work is helping families write the real estate fairytale with the happiest ending — even the chapter nobody wanted to open.”

The heir's readiness checklist

HOW TO SCORE

Check every statement that is **true today, with documents in hand**. Eight or more: you're ready to list the moment letters arrive. Five to seven: a focused month closes the gap. Fewer than five: start at item one — the order is deliberate.

- ☐ **The apartment is secured**, insured, and checked regularly.
- ☐ **The managing agent has been notified** and has answered, in writing, what the building requires.
- ☐ **Maintenance is current** and budgeted for the months ahead.
- ☐ **The original will has been located** — or you know none exists.
- ☐ **Death certificates (8–10)** have been ordered.
- ☐ **The stock certificate and proprietary lease** are in the folder.
- ☐ **An estate attorney has been engaged** and the petition filed or prepared.
- ☐ **A date-of-death valuation** has been ordered or scheduled.
- ☐ **The flip tax formula and share count** are confirmed to the dollar.
- ☐ **The family agrees on the plan** — sell, hold, or transfer — in writing if possible.

Item ten is the one estates skip. If your family hasn't had that conversation yet, this checklist is your excuse to start it.

Inherited co-op questions, answered plainly

How long does it take to sell an inherited co-op in Queens?

Plan on 9–18 months end to end. In an uncontested estate, letters testamentary commonly issue in about 3–7 months; the sale itself — listing, contract, board package, closing — adds roughly 3–4 more. Families who prepare during the court wait land near the short end.

Do I have to pay capital-gains tax on an inherited co-op?

Usually very little, often none. Inherited property receives a stepped-up basis equal to its date-of-death market value, so only appreciation after that date is taxable. On a Sunnyside co-op sold within a year or two, the taxable gain is frequently near zero. Confirm your numbers with a CPA.

Can a co-op board reject the sale of an inherited apartment?

The board can reject an individual buyer, as in any resale, but it cannot stop the estate from selling the unit, and it must follow its governing documents and the law. Most rejections trace to weak buyer financials — which is why buyer vetting matters so much in estate sales.

My parent died without a will. Can we still sell?

Yes. The Surrogate's Court opens an administration proceeding instead of probate and issues letters of administration to the closest next of kin. New York's intestacy law decides who inherits. The sale then proceeds exactly like any other estate sale.

More questions heirs ask

Can we rent out the inherited co-op instead of selling?

Rarely. Most Sunnyside co-ops restrict subletting — often prohibiting it for estates entirely — and a tenant complicates showings, financing, and board approval. Read the proprietary lease's sublet clause before planning on rental income.

Who pays the maintenance while the estate is in probate?

The estate does, from the date of death until closing — typically \$900–\$1,400 a month on a Sunnyside one-bedroom. Boards stall sales with arrears, so keeping the account current is both an obligation and a strategy.

What is a stepped-up basis, in plain English?

It's the IRS resetting the clock: instead of owing tax on decades of appreciation since your parent's purchase price, you're treated as if you "bought" the co-op at its value on the date of death. Sell near that value and there is little or no gain to tax.

Does the estate owe New York estate tax?

Only if the total estate exceeds \$7,350,000 for deaths in 2026 — and above roughly \$7.8 million, New York's "cliff" taxes the entire estate at rates up to 16%. A Sunnyside co-op estate is almost always far below the line. The federal exemption is \$15 million per person in 2026.

YOUR NEXT STEP

You don't have to carry this alone



You now know the three gates, the two tracks, and the order to walk them. The last step is making the map *yours*.

I offer Sunnyside families a **confidential Estate & Transition Review** — your building's estate-sale requirements in writing, your flip tax calculated to the dollar, a line-by-line net proceeds estimate, and a timeline built around your court date. No obligation, no pressure, and no follow-up you didn't ask for.

Whether the closing is this year or simply on the horizon, you deserve to know exactly where your family stands.

A stylized, handwritten-style logo of the name "Shalinthia" in a dark gray or black color.

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Request your Estate & Transition Review at **shalinthia.com**

“The best time to draw the map is before the journey forces you to.”

Disclosures & sources

Not professional advice. This guide is for general informational purposes only and is not legal, tax, accounting, or financial advice. Estate, probate, and tax outcomes turn on individual facts; consult a licensed estate attorney and a qualified tax professional about your specific situation before making any decision.

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Sources. New York State Dept. of Taxation & Finance, Estate Tax (basic exclusion amount of \$7,350,000 for dates of death in 2026; graduated rates to 16%; “cliff” above 105% of the exclusion). Internal Revenue Code §1014 and IRS Publication 551 (stepped-up basis). One Big Beautiful Bill Act, P.L. 119-21 (federal estate, gift, and GST exemption of \$15,000,000 per person from January 1, 2026). N.Y. Surrogate’s Court Procedure Act: Article 13 (voluntary administration, \$50,000 personal-property limit), §2307 (executor commissions), §2402 (filing fees). Queens County Surrogate’s Court, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, NY. NYC and NYS real property transfer tax schedules. Market context as in the companion volume, *The Sunnyside Co-op Equity & Net Proceeds Audit* (Realtor.com, June 2026; Redfin, spring 2026).
