

Alabama Probate *County Guide*

*What your family can expect in every Alabama county—
timelines, complexity, and what it means for your estate plan.*

67

COUNTIES COVERED

40+

YEARS EXPERIENCE

\$12M+

RECOVERED FOR
CLIENTS

3

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*Protecting your assets &
fighting for your fair share.*

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Probate in Alabama is local — and the experience varies.

Probate is handled at the county level, and your family's experience can look very different depending on where you live. This guide summarizes what to expect across all 67 Alabama counties — including estimated timelines, complexity, and practical notes from our team.

What you'll find inside

Each of Alabama's 67 counties, with its county seat, a complexity rating, an estimated timeline for an uncontested estate, an overall cost level, and field notes on what to expect from that probate court.

Why a guide like this matters

The right plan depends on where your assets are and where your family lives. A few months of probate in a small rural county is a very different experience than a year or more in a busy urban court.

Complexity Legend

LOW

Typically efficient. Straightforward estates move quickly through court.

MODERATE

Expect routine delays. Mid-sized caseloads and standard administrative wait times.

MOD-HIGH

Growing caseloads and longer waits. Plan extra time for administration.

HIGH

Significant delays are common. A revocable living trust may provide real value.

Note: Timelines are estimates for straightforward, uncontested estates. Contested matters or complex assets can significantly extend these timeframes.

Counties A — Bu

AUTAUGA · BALDWIN · BARBOUR · BIBB · BLOUNT · BULLOCK · BUTLER

COUNTY	COUNTY SEAT	COMPLEXITY	EST. TIMELINE	COST LEVEL	WHAT TO EXPECT
Autauga	Prattville	LOW	3–6 months	Low–Mod	Generally efficient court. Straightforward estates typically move quickly.
Baldwin	Bay Minette	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	One of Alabama's fastest-growing counties. Increasing caseloads can cause delays. Common with out-of-state property owners.
Barbour	Clayton	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Small, rural court. Simple estates often handled efficiently.
Bibb	Centreville	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural county with a manageable caseload. Straightforward process for simple estates.
Blount	Oneonta	LOW–MOD	4–7 months	Low–Mod	Growing population has increased caseloads slightly in recent years.
Bullock	Union Springs	LOW	3–5 months	Low	Small rural court. Limited staff but manageable caseload.
Butler	Greenville	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Generally straightforward process. Rural court with manageable volume.

Counties Ca – Cu

CALHOUN · CHAMBERS · CHEROKEE · CHILTON · CHOCTAW · CLARKE · CLAY · CLEBURNE · COFFEE · COLBERT · CONECUH · COOSA · COVINGTON · CRENSHAW · CULLMAN

COUNTY	COUNTY SEAT	COMPLEXITY	EST. TIMELINE	COST LEVEL	WHAT TO EXPECT
Calhoun	<i>Anniston</i>	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Mid-sized court serving the Anniston/Oxford area. Moderate caseload. Plan for routine delays.
Chambers	<i>LaFayette</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Small rural court. Relatively efficient for straightforward estates.
Cherokee	<i>Centre</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural court with low caseload. Simple estates typically handled efficiently.
Chilton	<i>Clanton</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Growing area but still manageable caseload. Generally efficient.
Choctaw	<i>Butler</i>	LOW	3–5 months	Low	Very small rural court. Low caseload means quicker processing for simple estates.
Clarke	<i>Grove Hill</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural court. Generally manageable for straightforward estates.
Clay	<i>Ashland</i>	LOW	3–5 months	Low	One of Alabama's smaller counties. Low volume typically means faster processing.
Cleburne	<i>Heflin</i>	LOW	3–5 months	Low	Small rural court. Low caseload supports quicker turnaround.
Coffee	<i>Elba</i>	LOW-MOD	3–7 months	Low-Mod	Enterprise/Elba area. Growing population has modestly increased caseloads.
Colbert	<i>Tuscumbia</i>	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Muscle Shoals area. Moderate caseload. Allow extra time for contested matters.
Conecuh	<i>Evergreen</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Small rural court with manageable caseload.
Coosa	<i>Rockford</i>	LOW	3–5 months	Low	One of Alabama's least populated counties. Very low caseload.
Covington	<i>Andalusia</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural court. Generally efficient for simple estates.
Crenshaw	<i>Luverne</i>	LOW	3–5 months	Low	Very small rural court. Low volume supports faster processing.
Cullman	<i>Cullman</i>	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Growing county. Increased population has raised caseloads in recent years.

Counties D – H

DALE · DALLAS · DEKALB · ELMORE · ESCAMBIA · ETOWAH · FAYETTE · FRANKLIN · GENEVA · GREENE · HALE · HENRY · HOUSTON

COUNTY	COUNTY SEAT	COMPLEXITY	EST. TIMELINE	COST LEVEL	WHAT TO EXPECT
Dale	<i>Ozark</i>	LOW-MOD	3-7 months	Low-Mod	Fort Rucker area. Military community means frequent out-of-state heir coordination.
Dallas	<i>Selma</i>	MOD-HIGH	5-10 months	Moderate	Older court system with some administrative delays. Complex family situations common. Budget extra time.
DeKalb	<i>Fort Payne</i>	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	Growing area in northeast Alabama. Moderate caseload.
Elmore	<i>Wetumpka</i>	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	Fast-growing county near Montgomery. Increasing caseloads. Plan for moderate delays.
Escambia	<i>Brewton</i>	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Rural court. Generally efficient for straightforward estates.
Etowah	<i>Gadsden</i>	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	Mid-sized court serving Gadsden area. Moderate caseload and routine wait times.
Fayette	<i>Fayette</i>	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Small rural court. Generally manageable process.
Franklin	<i>Russellville</i>	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Rural northwest Alabama. Low caseload.
Geneva	<i>Geneva</i>	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Small rural court in southeast Alabama. Generally efficient.
Greene	<i>Eutaw</i>	LOW-MOD	3-7 months	Low	Small court. Limited staff can occasionally cause delays despite low volume.
Hale	<i>Greensboro</i>	LOW-MOD	3-7 months	Low	Rural court. Occasional delays related to staffing.
Henry	<i>Abbeville</i>	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Small rural court in southeast Alabama. Generally straightforward.
Houston	<i>Dothan</i>	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	One of Alabama's larger courts outside Birmingham/Montgomery/Mobile. Dothan area. Plan for moderate timelines.

Counties J – Ma

JACKSON · JEFFERSON · LAMAR · LAUDERDALE · LAWRENCE · LEE · LIMESTONE · LOWNDES · MACON · MADISON · MARENGO · MARION

COUNTY	COUNTY SEAT	COMPLEXITY	EST. TIMELINE	COST LEVEL	WHAT TO EXPECT
Jackson	Scottsboro	LOW-MOD	3–7 months	Low-Mod	Northeast Alabama. Moderate caseload for the region.
Jefferson	Birmingham	HIGH	6–18 months	Mod-High	Alabama's largest and busiest probate court. Significant caseloads and administrative delays are common. A trust can provide meaningful value for Jefferson County families.
Lamar	Vernon	LOW	3–5 months	Low	Very small rural court. Low caseload typically means faster processing.
Lauderdale	Florence	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Florence/Shoals area. Moderate caseload. Routine delays are common.
Lawrence	Moulton	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural north Alabama. Generally efficient for simple estates.
Lee	Opelika	MOD-HIGH	5–10 months	Moderate	Auburn/Opelika area. Rapidly growing. Increasing caseloads have led to longer wait times in recent years.
Limestone	Athens	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Fast-growing Huntsville suburb. Caseloads rising with population growth.
Lowndes	Hayneville	LOW-MOD	3–7 months	Low	Small rural court. Limited resources can occasionally cause delays.
Macon	Tuskegee	LOW-MOD	3–7 months	Low	Small court. Generally manageable but staffing can affect timelines.
Madison	Huntsville	MOD-HIGH	5–12 months	Moderate	Huntsville's rapid growth has strained the probate court. Significant delays common. A trust can offer real advantages for Madison County families.
Marengo	Linden	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural west Alabama. Small court with manageable caseload.
Marion	Hamilton	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural northwest Alabama. Generally efficient for straightforward matters.

Counties Mar — R MARSHALL · MOBILE · MONROE · MONTGOMERY · MORGAN · PERRY
· PICKENS · PIKE · RANDOLPH · RUSSELL

COUNTY	COUNTY SEAT	COMPLEXITY	EST. TIMELINE	COST LEVEL	WHAT TO EXPECT
Marshall	<i>Guntersville</i>	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Lake area with growing population. Moderate and increasing caseloads.
Mobile	<i>Mobile</i>	HIGH	6–18 months	Mod–High	Alabama's second-largest probate court. High caseloads and significant delays are common. Families in Mobile County often benefit substantially from a trust.
Monroe	<i>Monroeville</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Small rural court. Generally manageable for simple estates.
Montgomery	<i>Montgomery</i>	HIGH	6–15 months	Mod–High	State capital and major urban court. High caseload and frequent delays. A trust can provide significant time and cost savings for Montgomery County families.
Morgan	<i>Decatur</i>	MODERATE	4–9 months	Moderate	Decatur area. Moderate to high caseload. Allow extra time for administration.
Perry	<i>Marion</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Small rural court. Low caseload.
Pickens	<i>Carrollton</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Rural west Alabama. Small court with manageable volume.
Pike	<i>Troy</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Troy University area. Generally efficient court for the region.
Randolph	<i>Wedowee</i>	LOW	3–6 months	Low	Small rural court in east Alabama. Generally straightforward.
Russell	<i>Phenix City</i>	MODERATE	4–8 months	Moderate	Phenix City/Columbus border area. Cross-state estate issues common. Plan accordingly.

Counties S – W

SHELBY · ST. CLAIR · SUMTER · TALLADEGA · TALLAPOOSA · TUSCALOOSA · WALKER · WASHINGTON · WILCOX · WINSTON

COUNTY	COUNTY SEAT	COMPLEXITY	EST. TIMELINE	COST LEVEL	WHAT TO EXPECT
Shelby	Columbiana	MOD-HIGH	5-12 months	Moderate	One of Alabama's fastest-growing counties. Birmingham suburb with increasing caseloads and notable delays.
St. Clair	Ashville / Pell City	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	Growing Birmingham suburb. Two courthouses. Moderate and rising caseloads.
Sumter	Livingston	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Small rural court. Generally manageable for simple estates.
Talladega	Talladega	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	Mid-sized court. Moderate caseload. Routine delays expected.
Tallapoosa	Dadeville	LOW-MOD	3-7 months	Low-Mod	Lake Martin area. Increasing activity with growing recreational property ownership.
Tuscaloosa	Tuscaloosa	MOD-HIGH	5-12 months	Moderate	University of Alabama area. Growing court with increasing caseloads and delays. A trust can offer real value here.
Walker	Jasper	MODERATE	4-8 months	Moderate	Mid-sized court in northwest Alabama. Moderate caseload.
Washington	Chatom	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Small rural court. Generally efficient for straightforward estates.
Wilcox	Camden	LOW	3-6 months	Low	Small rural court. Low caseload.
Winston	Double Springs	LOW	3-5 months	Low	One of Alabama's smaller courts. Very low caseload typically means faster processing.

Counties highlighted in gold are typically the most complex — Jefferson, Mobile, Montgomery, Madison, Shelby, and Tuscaloosa — where families most often benefit from a revocable living trust strategy.

FOR YOUR FAMILY

What this means — and which plan is right for you.

Probate in Alabama is handled at the county level, and the experience can vary significantly. In smaller, rural counties, straightforward estates can move through in a few months. In larger, faster-growing counties — Jefferson, Mobile, Montgomery, Madison, Shelby, and Tuscaloosa — families routinely face delays of six months to over a year, even for relatively simple estates.

WHAT PROBATE TYPICALLY INVOLVES

The standard process — and why it takes time.

- ◆ Filing a petition with the probate court and paying court fees.
- ◆ Notifying all heirs and creditors — which takes time and can surface disputes.
- ◆ Waiting for the court to appoint a personal representative.
- ◆ Inventorying and appraising all assets subject to probate.
- ◆ Paying valid debts, taxes, and expenses before distributing to heirs.
- ◆ Receiving court approval before any assets are distributed.
- ◆ All of this becomes part of the public record — anyone can look it up.

WHEN A TRUST HELPS

A revocable living trust can make a real difference when...

- ◆ Assets held in a properly funded trust pass directly to beneficiaries — no court required.
- ◆ Your family avoids the public record and keeps your affairs private.
- ◆ Distribution can happen in days or weeks rather than months or years.
- ◆ You own multiple real properties, or own property in more than one state — a trust avoids multiple probate proceedings.
- ◆ You have a blended family or complex dynamics, where a trust reduces the risk of disputes.

WHEN A WILL MAY BE ENOUGH

A simpler, will-based plan may be the right fit when...

- ◆ Your estate is simple — a home, savings, and named beneficiaries on financial accounts.
- ◆ You live in a county where probate is relatively efficient and inexpensive.
- ◆ Privacy and speed are not significant concerns for your family.
- ◆ Most of your assets already pass outside of probate (retirement accounts, life insurance, jointly-held property).

Ready to protect your family? — *Let's talk about your goals.*

We offer a free, no-pressure consultation for Alabama families. We'll walk you through what makes sense for your specific situation — whether that's a will, a trust, or simply peace of mind.

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Protecting your assets & fighting for your fair share.

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