

	FIRST- PARTY	THIRD- PARTY	POOLED
Who establishes the account?	Beneficiary, parent, grandparent, legal guardian, or court order.	Donor; parent, grandparent, or legal guardian. Not beneficiary.	Beneficiary, parent, grandparent, legal guardian, or court order.
Who funds the trust?	Only the beneficiary	Anyone other than the beneficiary	Anyone, including the beneficiary
What assets can fund the trust?	Sums of money that belonged to the Beneficiary (e.g., inheritance, settlement, work-related bonus, back payment, lottery, etc)	Sums of money that DID NOT ever belong to the beneficiary (e.g., inheritance, gifts, etc)	Sums of money (e.g., inheritance, settlement, work-related bonus, back payment, lottery, etc)
How much money does it take to start the trust?	Varies on the trust – many financial institutions require large deposits	Varies on the trust – many financial institutions require large deposits	Varies on the trust (e.g., at My Choice, all documents are drafted so it takes \$250 to start).
Age requirements?	Before beneficiary turns 65	No age requirements	No age requirements
Who manages the account?	Varies; corporate trustees, financial institutions, individuals	Varies; can be individual or professional	Non-profit organization must be trustee; bank must be co-trustee
What happens to the assets upon the death of the beneficiary?	Payback to Medicaid	No Medicaid payback. Can be directed towards individuals and/or charities	No Medicaid payback. Account closed and funds retained by the trust.

Note: these are generalizations and do not pertain to specific circumstances. This should not be taken as legal advice.

WHAT ARE SUPPLEMENTAL NEEDS TRUSTS (SNTs)?

A Supplemental Needs Trust (or “Special Needs Trust”) holds and manages funds for the benefit of a person with disabilities, allowing them to receive supplemental needs (e.g., medical expenses not covered by public programs, education, recreation, transportation, housing, etc.) that go beyond what “means-tested” government assistance (i.e., Medicaid, SSI) provides.

By keeping excess assets in the trust, the beneficiary’s countable assets remain below the limits set by Medicaid and SSI, preserving their eligibility for these vital benefits.

