RCW 11.98.039 Nonjudicial change of trustee—Judicial appointment or change of trustee—Liability and duties of successor fiduciary. (1) Where a vacancy occurs in the office of the trustee and there is a successor trustee who is willing to serve as trustee and (a) is named in the governing instrument as successor trustee or (b) has been selected to serve as successor trustee under the procedure established in the governing instrument for the selection of a successor trustee, the outgoing trustee, or any other interested party, must give notice of such vacancy, whether arising because of the trustee's resignation or because of any other reason, and of the successor trustee's agreement to serve as trustee, to each permissible distributee. The successor trustee named in the governing instrument or selected pursuant to the procedure therefor established in the governing instrument is entitled to act as trustee except for good cause or disqualification. The successor trustee is deemed to have accepted the trusteeship as of the effective date of the discharge of the predecessor trustee as provided in RCW 11.98.041.

(2) Where a vacancy exists or occurs in the office of the trustee and there is no successor trustee who is named in the governing instrument or who has been selected to serve as successor trustee under the procedure established in the governing instrument for the selection of a successor trustee, and who is willing to serve as trustee, then all parties with an interest in the trust may agree to a nonjudicial change of the trustee under RCW 11.96A.220. The successor trustee is deemed to have accepted the trusteeship as of the effective date of the discharge of the predecessor trustee as provided in RCW 11.98.041 or, in circumstances where there is no predecessor trustee, as of the effective date of the trustee's appointment.

(3) When there is a desire to name one or more cotrustees to serve with the existing trustee, then all parties with an interest in the trust may agree to the nonjudicial addition of one or more cotrustees under RCW 11.96A.220. The additional cotrustee is deemed to have accepted the trusteeship as of the effective date of the cotrustee's appointment.

(4) Unless subsection (1), (2), or (3) of this section applies, any beneficiary of a trust, the trustor, if alive, or the trustee may petition the superior court having jurisdiction for the appointment or change of a trustee or cotrustee under the procedures provided in RCW 11.96A.080 through 11.96A.200: (a) Whenever the office of trustee becomes vacant; (b) upon filing of a petition of resignation by a trustee; or (c) for any other reasonable cause.

(5) For purposes of this subsection, the term fiduciary includes both trustee and personal representative.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in the governing instrument, a successor fiduciary, absent actual knowledge of a breach of fiduciary duty: (i) Is not liable for any act or omission of a predecessor fiduciary and is not obligated to inquire into the validity or propriety of any such act or omission; (ii) is authorized to accept as conclusively accurate any accounting or statement of assets tendered to the successor fiduciary by a predecessor fiduciary; and (iii) is authorized to receipt only for assets actually delivered and has no duty to make further inquiry as to undisclosed assets of the trust or estate.

(b) Nothing in this section relieves a successor fiduciary from liability for retaining improper investments, nor does this section in any way bar the successor fiduciary, trust beneficiaries, or other

party in interest from bringing an action against a predecessor fiduciary arising out of the acts or omissions of the predecessor fiduciary, nor does it relieve the successor fiduciary of liability for its own acts or omissions except as specifically stated or authorized in this section.

(6) A change of trustee to a foreign trustee does not change the situs of the trust. Transfer of situs of a trust to another jurisdiction requires compliance with RCW 11.98.005 and RCW 11.98.045 through 11.98.055. [2013 c 272 s 12; 2011 c 327 s 21; 2005 c 97 s 13; 1999 c 42 s 618; 1985 c 30 s 44. Prior: 1984 c 149 s 72; 1959 c 124 s 5. Formerly RCW 30.99.050.]

Application—2013 c 272: See note following RCW 11.98.002.

Application—Effective date—2011 c 327: See notes following RCW 11.103.020.

Effective date—1999 c 42: See RCW 11.96A.902.

Short title—Application—Purpose—Severability—1985 c 30: See RCW 11.02.900 through 11.02.903.

Severability—Effective dates—1984 c 149: See notes following RCW 11.02.005.