

The 5-Year Pre-Retirement Checklist

Everything you need to review in the 5 years before you retire

Congratulations on taking this step. The 5 years before retirement are the most important of your financial life. Small decisions now can add — or cost — tens of thousands of dollars in retirement income. Work through this checklist carefully, and if you have questions, reach out.

1. Know Your Numbers

- Calculate your expected Social Security benefit at ages 62, 67, and 70
- Add up all retirement account balances (401k, IRA, Roth IRA, pension)
- Estimate your monthly retirement expenses (housing, food, healthcare, travel)
- Identify any income gaps: expenses minus expected Social Security & pension
- Calculate how much you need to save to close that gap

2. Social Security Strategy

- Decide whether to claim at 62 (reduced), 67 (full), or 70 (maximum)
- If married: coordinate claiming strategy with your spouse
- Review your earnings record at ssa.gov for any errors
- Understand the earnings test if you plan to work while collecting early
- Consider the impact of pension income on Social Security taxes

3. Healthcare & Medicare Planning

- Confirm your Medicare enrollment window (3 months before your 65th birthday)
- Understand the difference between Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D
- Budget for Medicare premiums, deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs
- If retiring before 65: plan for private health insurance to bridge the gap
- Research Medigap or Medicare Advantage plan options in your area

4. Investment & Withdrawal Strategy

- ☑ Shift your asset allocation gradually toward income-producing investments
- ☑ Understand Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) starting at age 73
- ☑ Consider Roth conversions before retirement to reduce future tax burden
- ☑ Establish a withdrawal order: taxable first, tax-deferred, then Roth last
- ☑ Build 6-12 months of cash reserves to avoid selling in a down market

5. Estate & Legal Essentials

- ☑ Update your will and ensure it reflects your current wishes
- ☑ Review and update all beneficiary designations on retirement accounts
- ☑ Establish a durable power of attorney and healthcare directive
- ☑ Review life insurance: do you still need it in retirement?
- ☑ Organize all financial documents in one place your family can access

Want personalized guidance on your retirement plan?

I work with a small number of pre-retirees each year. If you'd like to talk, visit [www.JamesVeal.com] to schedule a free 30-minute consultation.