

Before You Retire...

If you've worked, saved and planned for retirement, you may think you can ease up during your final years of work. But there are actually many things to do and consider as you approach the finish line to retirement. Here are a few:

Get one-time expenses out of the way. You may want to tackle the big house repair or renovation you've been planning before you quit working. If costs are more than expected, you can work a few extra months to cover them.

Review your employee handbook. Working through a certain date may qualify you for an annual bonus, extra vacation pay, full vesting on your retirement account or a bigger pension. If a stressful work situation or health issues make working difficult, you may be able to take a leave of absence or combine short-term medical benefits, vacation and sick time to reach the target.

Use health benefits. Use up medical, vision or dental benefits that will expire and any funds in a flexible spending account before the deadline. If you haven't done so, determine what Medicare options best suit your needs.

Max out your tax-advantaged contributions. You can contribute to a 401(k) or solo 401(k) as long as you are working (regardless of age), and may be able to delay required minimum distributions if your plan allows it. If neither you nor your spouse has a 401(k), you can contribute to a traditional IRA (regardless of income) until you are 70½ if you are working. If you do have a 401(k) and your earned income doesn't exceed the maximum allowed, you can contribute to a traditional IRA until you are 70½. As long as you have earned income, you can contribute to a Roth IRA (regardless of age) if your earned income falls below the maximum allowed.

Consider consolidating accounts. If your employer allows you to keep your 401(k) when you leave, compare its fees and range of investments to your IRA's options. Consolidating can reduce paperwork and make it easier to balance investments, plan required minimum distributions and update beneficiary changes.

Do a dry run. Work with your advisor to create a distribution plan for your investments. After determining your monthly post-retirement income, try living on that amount for a few months. If it's difficult, explore possible changes.

I want your retirement experience to be the one you've dreamed of. Let me help you evaluate all the aspects related to your retirement years and create a personalized, comprehensive plan.