

Before You Retire Checklist

A timeline from five years out | Reviewed October 2026

Five to ten years out

- ☐ Use catch-up room: **\$8,000** more at 50+ in workplace plans (\$11,250 at 60 to 63), **\$1,100** more in IRAs.
- ☐ Study the low-income years for **Roth conversions**.
- ☐ Check my **Social Security record** at ssa.gov.
- ☐ Review **beneficiaries** on every account.

One to two years out

- ☐ Compare Social Security at 62, full retirement age and 70 (with my spouse).
- ☐ Plan **healthcare** until Medicare starts, if retiring before 65.
- ☐ Ask about my workplace plan options after I leave.
- ☐ Build a **tax projection** for my first few years.

The year I stop working

- ☐ **Medicare:** 7-month window around my 65th birthday month. Employer coverage can change timing.
- ☐ **HSA:** stop contributions about 6 months before applying.
- ☐ **Age 59 1/2:** most withdrawals after this age avoid the 10% additional tax.
- ☐ Income dropped? Ask Social Security about **Form SSA-44**.

After retirement begins

- ☐ **Age 70 1/2:** qualified charitable distributions (2026 limit \$111,000).
- ☐ **Age 73 or 75:** required withdrawals begin (73 for birth years 1951 to 1959, 75 for 1960 or later).
- ☐ Every year: revisit taxes, beneficiaries and withdrawals.

My three biggest decisions in the next 24 months

Sources: General education only. Figures from IRS, Social Security and Medicare sources, reviewed October 2026. Sources: IRS Notice 2025-67, SSA, Medicare.gov, final regulations T.D. 10001.