

Weekly Insight  
May 4, 2026

# Use These Tools to Start Your Retirement Journey Confidently

## This Week's Focus

If retirement feels confusing, that is normal. Many people say they do not know where to go for retirement guidance, and worries are rising about healthcare and the cost of living.

This edition of SFL Weekly Insights gives you a safe order of steps so you stop guessing. You will start with the cost most people underestimate, then find your monthly essentials number, then check if your plan can handle surprises. You will finish with a one-page worksheet you can bring to Randy so he can help you turn confusion into a clear plan.

## Content Overview



Why pre-retirees feel stuck even when they saved



The 3-step order that reduces confusion



A healthcare cost table that compares your expenses



A one-page roadmap towards a confident retirement



# If Retirement Feels Confusing, Do *This* First



If retirement feels confusing, you are not alone. Many Americans still say they do not know where to go for retirement guidance. That is why this page gives you a simple order. It helps you stop spinning and start moving.

## ***Step 1: Make healthcare real first***

Healthcare is the cost that can break a plan, because it is not a one-time bill. It can show up every month, and it can spike without warning. Many people have not even estimated what they may need for healthcare in retirement. And here is a key fact most pre-retirees miss: Medicare does not pay for long-term care. Medicare also does not cover custodial nursing home care if that is the only care you need.

Fidelity estimates a 65-year-old retiring in 2025 could spend \$172,500 on healthcare and medical expenses in retirement (average). Our guidebook warns that rising healthcare and living costs can drain savings faster than expected, especially if you plan like today's budget will always work.

What to do now: use the healthcare table on page 4 and fill in your best estimate for:

- Insurance premiums
- Out-of-pocket expenses
- Prescriptions
- Long-term care planning

## ***Step 2: Find your monthly essentials number***

This is the number that makes you feel safe. It answers: "What do I have to cover every month no matter what?" Write down your must-pay bills: housing, utilities, groceries, insurance, and basic transportation. Then total it. Miscalculating income needs can lead to overspending early and stress later. If you do not know your essentials number, you cannot know if you are ready.

## ***Step 3: Match your risk to your timeline***

Pre-retirement is a delicate balance. Too much risk can create losses you may not have time to recover from. Too little risk can leave you falling behind rising costs. Your guidebook calls this out as poor asset allocation and warns that both extremes can hurt retirement income.

**What to do now:** answer one question in plain words: "If the market drops, what would I do to pay bills?" If you do not like your answer, that is a sign you need a written plan.

## ***The simple takeaway***

You do not need more articles. You need the right order:

- Healthcare estimate
- Monthly essentials number
- Risk matched to your timeline

# Your *7-Minute* Retirement Roadmap



## Step 1: Pick your target

My best retirement date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: 12 months | 1-3 years | 4-5 years | Not sure

## Step 2: Your monthly essentials (must-pay)

Housing: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Groceries: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance (non-medical): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other essentials: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Essentials: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 3: Projected healthcare costs in retirement (your demo page)

Fill in what you expect today. You can refine it later.

Insurance premiums (monthly): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Out-of-pocket expenses (monthly): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Prescription medications (monthly): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Long-term care planning (monthly): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Healthcare Estimate (monthly): \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Quick reminder: Medicare does not pay for long-term care services like help with daily living.

## Step 4: The "stuck points" check (Yes or No)

YES / NO I have estimated my healthcare costs.

YES / NO I know my monthly essentials number.

YES / NO I know what income will cover essentials.

YES / NO I know what I would cut if needed.

YES / NO I have a plan for a medical surprise.

If you answered NO to 2 or more, do not guess. Call Solutions For Life.

## Step 5: Bring this to your review (so it is fast)

My biggest worry:

Healthcare | Taxes | Market risk | Social Security | Running out

The one cost I fear most: \_\_\_\_\_

A question I need an answer to: \_\_\_\_\_



## Mistake 9: Ignoring Healthcare Costs

**Overview:** Not planning for healthcare expenses can lead to financial hardship, especially if unexpected medical issues arise.

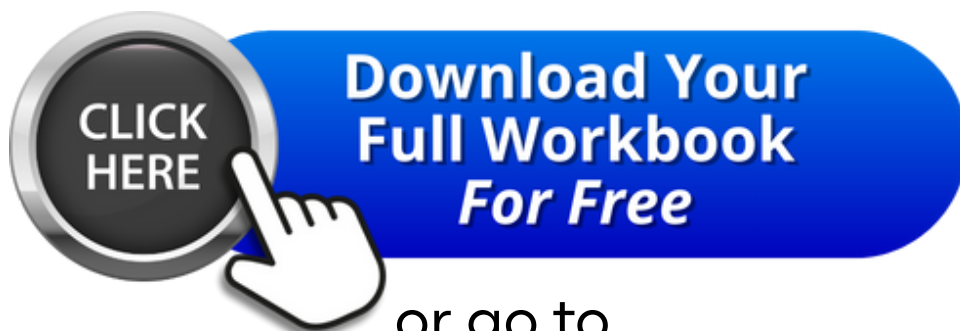
### Table: Estimated Healthcare Costs

Estimate potential costs in each category to better understand the healthcare expenses you might face in retirement.

PROJECTED HEALTHCARE COSTS IN RETIREMENT		
Healthcare Category	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
Insurance Premiums		
Out-of-Pocket Expenses		
Prescription Medications		
Long-Term Care		

### Healthcare Cost Preparation Checklist:

- Have I researched health insurance options for retirement?
- Have I factored in the cost of potential long-term care?
- Do I have an emergency fund for unexpected medical expenses?



or go to  
**SolutionsForLifeKS.com/SFLVault**  
and access even more  
complimentary content

