



FREE GUIDE · CANADIAN WEALTH PLANNERS

The Retirement *Planning Guide*

5 steps to plan your retirement income, your taxes and
your legacy, in plain language.

Retirement isn't a number. *It's a paycheque you build.*

For most of your life, an employer or your business pays you. In retirement, you pay yourself, from savings, government benefits, pensions and what you've built. The question isn't just "do I have enough?" It's "where will each month's income come from, and will it last?"

This guide walks through the five steps we use with every family and business owner we work with. Each step ends with a short list of things you can do this month.

Inside this guide

- **Step 1 · Picture your retirement.** What it looks like, and what it costs.
- **Step 2 · Know where your income will come from.** CPP, OAS, pensions, savings and your business.
- **Step 3 · Plan withdrawals and taxes.** The order you draw money matters.
- **Step 4 · Protect your income.** Living longer, market drops, inflation and health.
- **Step 5 · Plan your legacy.** Wills, beneficiaries and what happens to what you've built.

A good retirement doesn't happen by chance. It happens by plan.

General education only. Not personal financial, tax or legal advice. Rules mentioned are current as of October 2026 and can change.

Picture your *retirement*.

You can't plan for a retirement you haven't described. Where will you live? How will you spend a normal Tuesday? How often will you travel or help family?

Costs don't simply drop when work stops. Some go down (commuting, work clothes, saving for retirement). Others often go up (travel, hobbies, health and dental costs once workplace benefits end). And prices rise over time, so a plan for 25 or 30 years needs room for inflation.

Your retirement month, in today's dollars

Home (mortgage or rent, property tax, utilities, upkeep)	\$ _____
Food and household	\$ _____
Getting around (car, insurance, transit)	\$ _____
Health and dental (no workplace plan anymore)	\$ _____
Travel, hobbies and fun	\$ _____
Family and giving	\$ _____
Insurance and everything else	\$ _____
Total per month	\$ _____

Do this month

- Fill in the table above with your partner, if you have one.
- Circle the costs that will likely **rise** in retirement.
- Write down the age you'd like to stop working full-time.

Know where your *income will come from.*

Most Canadians retire on a mix of sources. Each one has its own rules about when you can start it and how it's taxed.

CPP	Canada Pension Plan. You can start it anywhere from age 60 to 70. Starting earlier means smaller payments; waiting means larger ones.
OAS	Old Age Security. Usually starts at 65 and can be delayed up to 70 for a larger payment. It can be reduced at higher incomes.
Pension	A workplace pension, if you have one. Know whether it's a defined benefit (a set income) or defined contribution (a pot of money).
RRSP → RRIF	Your RRSP must be converted, usually to a RRIF, by the end of the year you turn 71. Withdrawals are taxed as income.
TFSA	Withdrawals aren't taxed and don't count as income for OAS. Very flexible in retirement.
Non-registered	Investments or savings outside registered accounts. Growth may be taxed along the way.
Your business	For owners, often the biggest asset. But it isn't retirement income until it's sold, wound down or paid out to you, and each route is taxed differently.

The simple gap test

Your monthly spending (Step 1) **minus** your steady income (CPP, OAS, pension) = the gap your savings and business have to fill, every month, for as long as you live.

Do this month

- Get your CPP estimate from your My Service Canada Account.
- List every account you have and roughly what's in it.
- Business owners: write down how you expect to turn the business into income.

Plan withdrawals *and taxes.*

Two people with the same savings can end up with very different incomes after tax. The difference is usually **which account they draw from, and when.**

Ideas worth understanding

- **Smooth your income.** Large withdrawals in one year can push you into a higher tax bracket. Spreading them out can keep more in your pocket.
- **Pension income splitting.** Couples can generally split up to half of eligible pension income (including RRIF income from age 65) to balance their tax.
- **Spousal RRSPs.** Another way couples can even out income in retirement.
- **Watch the OAS threshold.** At higher incomes, OAS is gradually reduced. Planning withdrawals can help.
- **Use your TFSA on purpose.** Because TFSA withdrawals aren't taxed, it can cover bigger expenses without raising your taxable income.
- **Owners: timing matters.** How and when you take money out of your company (salary, dividends, a sale) changes your tax. Plan it with your accountant years ahead.

The right order depends on you. Your income, your accounts, your age and your province all change the answer. Tax rules also change. Review any withdrawal plan with your accountant before acting on it.

Do this month

- Find your last Notice of Assessment and note your tax bracket.
- Ask: if I retired tomorrow, which account would I draw from first, and why?

Protect *your income*.

A plan that works on paper can still be knocked off course. Four risks do most of the damage:

Living longer

Your money may need to last 30+ years.

Bad timing

An early market drop hurts the most.

Inflation

Rising prices shrink a fixed income.

Health

Illness or care can be expensive.

Insurance-based tools that can help (each has trade-offs)

- **Life annuities.** You exchange a lump sum for an income the insurer pays for as long as you live, by contract. Trade-offs: that money is no longer available to you, and payments may not rise with inflation unless the contract includes it.
- **Segregated funds.** Insurance contracts that invest in underlying funds. They include maturity and death-benefit guarantees, typically 75% to 100% of what you deposit depending on the contract, and subject to its conditions. Fees are usually higher than many mutual funds, and the value of the underlying funds goes up and down.
- **Critical illness and long-term care coverage.** Can help pay for health costs so they don't drain your savings.

No single tool fits everyone. The right mix depends on your health, your other income, your family and how much certainty you want. Guarantees apply only as set out in each contract.

Do this month

- Write down how much of your monthly spending you'd want covered by income that doesn't depend on markets.

Plan *your legacy*.

Your legacy is more than what you leave. It's how smoothly it reaches the people you love, and how much stays with them.

The basics every family needs

- **An up-to-date will and powers of attorney** for property and personal care.
- **Named beneficiaries** on RRSPs, RRIFs, TFSAs, pensions and insurance, where your province allows. Assets with a named beneficiary can usually pass outside your estate, which can reduce probate fees and delays. (In Ontario, probate fees are called the Estate Administration Tax.)
- **Know what's taxed at death.** RRSPs and RRIFs are generally taxed as income on the final tax return unless they pass to a spouse or common-law partner, or in some cases a dependent child.
- **Life insurance.** A death benefit paid to a named beneficiary is generally not taxable to them. It can provide cash to cover final taxes or to leave a gift.
- **Owners: a succession plan.** Who takes over, how a buy-out is funded, and what happens if something happens to you first.

Work as a team. Estate planning involves legal and tax decisions. We coordinate with your lawyer and accountant, who handle the legal and tax advice.

Do this month

- Check when your will was last updated.
- Log in to each account and confirm who your beneficiaries are.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Ten questions *to answer this year.*

If you can't tick a box yet, that's your starting point.

- ☐ I know what my retirement month will cost.

- ☐ I know my CPP estimate and when I plan to start CPP and OAS.

- ☐ I know how big my gap is between steady income and spending.

- ☐ I know which account I'll draw from first, and why.

- ☐ I've looked at pension income splitting with my spouse or partner.

- ☐ I know how much of my income will be safe from market drops.

- ☐ I have a plan for health and long-term care costs.

- ☐ My will and powers of attorney are up to date.

- ☐ My beneficiaries are correct on every account and policy.

- ☐ Business owners: I know how the business becomes my income.

Full picture first. Product last.



CANADIAN WEALTH PLANNERS

Your bank sold you products. *We build plans.*

We're a team of licensed advisors who help Canadian business owners and families plan what comes next: retirement income, protection, taxes and legacy, in the right order.

Diagnose first

We look at everything before suggesting anything.

Plain language

You'll understand why you have what you have.

What happens next

- **A Financial Clarity Consultation.** Free, about an hour, no obligation. We listen first: where you are, what keeps you up at night, what "on track" looks like.
- **A plan in the right order.** Biggest risk first, in plain language. You decide what to do, and when.
- **We stay with you.** Life changes, so the plan does too.

Book your free consultation

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For general education only. Not personal financial, tax or legal advice; every situation is different. Insurance products are offered by licensed advisors where they are licensed. Guarantees are subject to the terms and conditions of each contract. Government program rules (CPP, OAS, RRSP/RRIF, TFSA) are current as of October 2026; confirm details at canada.ca.