Retirement Planning: Mid-Career Checklist
By John K. Naland

☐ Beneficiary designations: ensure they are up to date: SF-2823 (FEGLI), TSP-3 (TSP), DS-5002 (FS retirement benefit), and SF-1152 (unpaid compensation)
Reference: ALDAC 19 State 35376 of April 9, 2019 “Retirement Planning One Year Out”

☐ Retirement planning seminars: take one or more FSI courses: RV105 (2-day, mid-career, annuity/TSP/financial planning/estates/LTC), RV101 (4-day, late career, all key topics), RV103 (1-day, financial planning/estates), RV104 (1-day, annuity/TSP)
References: FSI intranet, www.state.gov/career-transition-center-ctc/

☐ Understand your benefits: pension, annuity supplement, Social Security, TSP, and FEHB
References: FSI seminars, Employee Retirement Portal online seminars (State), “Retirement Planning 101” in April 2020 Foreign Service Journal

☐ Prior service (if applicable): buy back military, Peace Corps, or other service; obtain retirement credit for prior CS service; verify your retirement Service Computation Date
Reference: ALDAC 21 State 10876 of Feb 9, 2021 “Retirement Credit for Prior Service”

☐ Divorce decree (if applicable): have divorce documentation reviewed by GTM/RET
References: ALDAC 19 State 53266 of May 20, 2019 “Divorce and FS Retirement Benefits”

☐ TSP: maximize contributions, chose a portfolio with long-term average returns that outpace inflation, decide between Roth and Traditional accounts
References: www.tsp.gov, FSI seminars, ERP online seminars (State)

☐ Estate planning: obtain documents such as a will, power of attorney, and medical directive
Reference: FSI seminars

☐ Long-term care insurance: consider getting it or be prepared to self-fund if needed
References: FSI seminars, videos by experts on www.afsa.org/retirement-services

☐ Social Security: understand pros and cons of various starting ages between 62 and 70
References: www.ssa.gov, FSI seminars, ERP online seminars (State)

☐ Post-Retirement Employment: network to find opportunities, understand the potential impact on annuity supplement and Social Security payments
References: FSI seminars, "Next Stage" videos on post-foreign Service careers on www.afsa.org/retirement-services

☐ FEHB health and FEGLI life insurance: maintain coverage during last five years of service
Reference: ALDAC 15 State 35130 of April 1, 2015 “Retirement Planning Five Years Out”

☐ Medicare Part B: understand pros and cons of getting it at age 65
Reference: video “2021 FEHB Insurance and Benefits” on www.afsa.org/retirement-services

☐ AFSA: review retiree resources on AFSA website; maintain AFSA membership
Reference: www.afsa.org/retirement-services

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