



# 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/](http://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](http://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](http://www.afsa.org/retirement-services)*
- Social Security:** understand pros and cons of various starting ages between 62 and 70  
*References: [www.ssa.gov](http://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](http://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](http://www.afsa.org/retirement-services)*
- AFSA:** review retiree resources on AFSA website; maintain AFSA membership  
*Reference: [www.afsa.org/retirement-services](http://www.afsa.org/retirement-services)*