

I'VE STARTED PLANNING, BUT I HAVEN'T INVESTED AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE.

Planning for your retirement can feel daunting. It's a long term project that easily takes a back seat to immediate financial obligations—like paying for education or a mortgage—and unexpected obligations—like medical costs or caring for a sick loved one. Whether you're off track because you simply haven't had the resources or because an unforeseen financial strain derailed your plans, assessing where you're at and beginning again is simpler than you think. In reenergizing your retirement planning approach, there are several steps you can take to make sure you're on the right track.

5 Steps to Strengthening Your Retirement Plan

1 Figure out your budget.

Whether you've prepared a lot or a little, you first need to figure out how much you're living on today. Calculate your fixed expenses (those that remain the same each month), your discretionary expenses (those you choose like vacations, cable TV or Starbucks) and your monthly income. Is there money left over for retirement?

Readiness Tool: *CNN Money Budget Maker*

2 Understand your investment portfolio & retirement income.

If you're able, annually max out your eligible contributions to your TSP or 401(k). Look at your expected monthly income from all sources (CSRS or FERS retirement benefit, Social Security, military retirement, etc.). Then, determine if you will need additional cash flow from your TSP in retirement. If you need help thinking through your options, consult a financial planner, attend a pre-retirement seminar at your agency or view a free Educational Webinar at LTCFeds.com.

Readiness Tools:

- *TSP Retirement Income Calculator*
- *CSRS and FERS Annuity Calculator*
- *Social Security Benefits Calculator*

3 Make sure you have the health coverage you need.

Make sure you can continue your FEHB plan coverage in retirement. According to OPM, federal employees are eligible to continue health benefits coverage if you retire under a qualifying federal retirement system and have been continuously enrolled (or covered as a family member) in any FEHBP plan for the five years of service immediately before the date your annuity starts, or for the full period of service since your first opportunity to enroll, if less than five years. For more information, read Tammy Flanagan's "[Five Year Test.](#)"

Readiness Tools:

- *The Five Year Test*
- *Medicare & You*

4 Verify your life insurance coverage.

Ensure your personnel file includes information on your current Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI) program coverage. As with health benefits, you will be eligible to continue your life insurance coverage if you've been enrolled for five years prior to your retirement. Along with this, be sure that your Designation of Beneficiary form is current for all your benefits, including FGLI, CSRS or FERS, TSP and any other compensation.

Readiness Tool:

Retirement and FEGLI Benefits Information

5 Prepare for the unexpected.

An unexpected medical event or financial burden can derail even the most diligent planning. Thinking long term about your care is essential, especially when you consider that 41% of long term care is provided to people under age 65. Make sure your advance directives are in place and see if the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program is right for you. For more information, [read page 5 of "Your Total Retirement Readiness Guide."](#)

Readiness Tools:

- *Long Term Care Online Consultant Tool*
- *Educational Webinar Programs at LTCFeds.com*

