



Have a Downsizing and Relocation Plan

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Many people have accumulated too many things and when the time comes to downsize, they have a huge challenge. Sometimes life situations change and a person feels that it is time to move into a condominium, garden home, active retirement community, assisted living or skilled nursing care.

Selling your home can be a positive and rewarding experience, if you have the right information and resources to properly manage the process. The difference between success and failure can often be measured by the level of planning and amount of attention given to the details. Most states have an agency on aging, which will provide helpful information. One such agency is the Area Agency on Aging (www.aaaphx.org). One of the many helpful articles in their book, *AZSeniors Guide to Housing & Care* 2003 Edition is an article written by Connie Swenson (page 44) that gives a helpful checklist to help you in the relocation process.

To insure that the experience is a smooth and as stress-free as possible, there needs to be a proven strategy that can accommodate even the smallest details. Selling a home is a process – not a transaction. The process should begin with an evaluation of needs, desires and abilities and include those of your spouse, family and friends. Developing clear goals and realistic expectations improves your likelihood for success. To help you initiate a process there are some questions to consider:

Why am I selling my home?

- Lifestyle change such as desire for Independent Community Living
- Require some sort of assistance such as Assisted Living or Skilled Nursing Care
- Looking for more amenities, services or social atmosphere
- Friends/neighbors have moved away
- Current home is too large for what you need
- Need money/equity from home
- Unable to take care of home
- Tired of the maintenance associated with home ownership
- Want to live in a place that you can “lock and leave”

Is my home ready to sell?

- Fix items that require repair, they may appear more significant to prospective buyers
- Remove furniture or personal items that are not necessary. A large home appears smaller with too much furniture, so you may want to consider temporary storage.
- Apply a fresh coat of paint to your walls if necessary. This is often the least expensive and most beneficial improvement you can make
- Collect your warranty and operation manuals for your home and major appliances that will remain with the home. Prospective buyers may find this information very valuable.
- First and last impressions are critical; so do not ignore the exterior of your home.
- Locate important documents regarding your home such as title, loan information, tax records and past utility bills
- Ask a friend or realtor to walk through your home using their eyes, ears, nose and touch. An honest opinion may save you a lot of time and money.
- *What are some of the ancillary issues that need to be considered?*
- Establishing a new forwarding address with the US postal service
- Completing a change of address form with your bank, previous employers, credit card companies, pension, Social Security Administration, etc.
- Redirect magazine, newspaper and other subscription items to your new address
- Change drivers license and discuss potential adjustments that may need to be made to your auto insurance
- Sell or donate your vehicle if it is no longer needed.