



The Israelite Group Monthly Newsletter

Five Things to Know Before Becoming a Landlord



Increased cash flow, property appreciation, and tax benefits are three major reasons why people want to own rental properties. But being a landlord takes time and money, so before you purchase an investment

property or rent out your own home, make sure you understand what's involved.

1. Basic duties of a landlord

Your rental property is a business, and being a landlord comes with a great deal of financial and legal responsibility. Some of the major duties of a landlord include:

- **Finding responsible tenants.** This includes advertising and showing your property, and screening applicants.
- **Preparing and executing a lease.** The lease, or rental agreement, must conform to legal requirements, and include information such as the lease period, rent amount, and tenant names, and must specify lease terms and conditions.
- **Maintaining the property.** Your property must be safe and fit to live in, and must comply with all health and building codes. You may need to be available at all hours to respond to urgent tenant issues.
- **Collecting rent.** There may be periods when the property is vacant or your tenant hasn't paid the rent on time, so make sure you're prepared for the financial ramifications.

2. Rental laws

Each state has its own laws designed to protect the interests of both landlords and tenants. These laws cover many areas, including security deposits, how and when you can access the property, and what rights each party has. Local laws may also apply.

You'll also need to adhere to federal laws governing housing and discrimination. One of these laws is the Fair Housing Act that prohibits discrimination due to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. Another is the Fair Credit Reporting Act. You

must comply with this Act if you run consumer reports such as background checks or credit reports when screening potential tenants or making decisions about current tenants.

3. Insurance requirements

Contact your insurance company to find out what type of insurance you need to cover your rental property. You may need a landlord or rental dwelling policy that covers damage to the home's structure, and that provides liability coverage to protect against legal fees and medical costs in the event your tenant or someone else is hurt on the property.

4. Keeping records

Keeping good records is essential. Having accurate maintenance and repair records will substantiate that you've fully addressed property issues in the event of a dispute with a tenant. Other important documentation includes legally required records such as move-in/move-out inspections and security deposit receipts, and supporting documents for rental income and expenses that will be especially important at tax time.

5. How to get help

There's no doubt that being a landlord is a lot of work. Fortunately, professional help is available.

Hiring a property management company may be a good option when you don't have the time or the expertise to manage your property directly, or when you live out of town. A property manager can handle all the details and legal requirements of renting out your property. Of course, this know-how comes at a cost, but it may be well worth it if you want to minimize the risks and maximize the rewards of being a landlord.

You may also need the advice of an attorney and a tax professional who can help you navigate the complexities of owning rental property.

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Please join us in congratulating Chris Prince on his recent promotion to Associate Director – Investments. Since joining us in January 2015 Chris has added a tremendous amount of energy to our team. His tireless work ethic has increased our abilities to research investments, create portfolios and provide service to our clients.

We are very fortunate to have Chris as a member of The Israelite Group

March 2019

Quiz: How Much Have You Thought About Health and Health-Care Costs in Retirement?

Four Reasons Your Parents Might Be in Financial Trouble

How can I get a tax break for child care?

How much does child care really cost?





According to the 2018 Senior Report from America's Health Rankings, social isolation is associated with increased mortality, poor health status, and greater use of health-care resources. The risk of social isolation for seniors is highest in Mississippi and Louisiana and lowest in Utah and New Hampshire.

Quiz: How Much Have You Thought About Health and Health-Care Costs in Retirement?

When planning for retirement, it's important to consider a wide variety of factors. One of the most important is health and its associated costs. Thinking about your future health and the rising cost of health care can help you better plan for retirement in terms of both your finances and overall well-being. This quiz can help you assess your current knowledge of health and health-care costs in retirement.

Questions

1. Health-care costs typically rise faster than the rate of inflation.

True.

False.

2. You could need more than \$500,000 just to cover health-care costs in retirement.

True.

False.

3. Medicare covers the costs of long-term care, as well as most other medical costs.

True.

False.

4. The southern, warmer states are generally the healthiest places for seniors to live.

True.

False.

5. If you're concerned about health-care costs in retirement, you can just delay your retirement in order to maintain your employer-sponsored health benefits.

True.

False.

Answers

1. True. The average inflation rate from 2010 to 2017 was less than 2%, while the average spending on prescriptions, doctors, and hospitals grew between 4% and 5%. From 1970 to 2017, annual per-capita out-of-pocket spending on health care grew from about \$600 to approximately \$1,100 (in 2017 dollars).¹

2. True. In 2017, America's Health Rankings projected that a 45-year-old couple retiring in 20 years could need about \$600,000 to cover their health-care costs, excluding the cost of long-term care. The same report projected that about 70% of those age 65 and older will need some form of long-term care services. And according to the Department of Health and Human Services, the average cost of a one-year stay in a nursing home (semi-private room) was \$82,000 in 2016.²

3. False. Original Medicare Parts A and B help cover inpatient hospital care, physicians' visits, preventive care, certain laboratory and rehabilitative services such as physical therapy, and skilled nursing care and home health care that are not long term. Medicare Part D helps cover the cost of prescriptions (within certain guidelines and limits). Medicare does not cover several other costs, including long-term care, dental care, eye exams related to eye glasses, and hearing aids. Seniors may need to purchase additional insurance to cover these and other services not covered by Medicare.³

4. False. Interestingly, America's Health Rankings found that the five healthiest states for seniors were (1) Utah, (2) Hawaii, (3) New Hampshire, (4) Minnesota, and (5) Colorado.⁴

5. Maybe true, maybe false. Many people believe they will work well into their traditional retirement years, both to accumulate as large a nest egg as possible and to take advantage of employer-sponsored health benefits (if offered beyond Medicare age). While this is an admirable goal, you may not be able to control when you actually retire. In a 2018 retirement survey, nearly 70% of workers said they planned to work beyond age 65; 31% said they would retire at age 70 or older. But the reality is that nearly 70% of current retirees retired before age 65. Many of those individuals retired earlier than planned due to a health problem, disability, or other unforeseen hardship.⁵

The bottom line is that while it's hard, if not impossible, to predict your future health needs and health-care costs, it's important to work these considerations into your overall retirement planning strategies. Take steps now to keep yourself healthy — eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, and manage stress. And be sure to account for health-care expenses in your savings and investment strategies.

¹ Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018, and Peterson-Kaiser Health System Tracker, 2018

² Preparing for Health Care Costs in Retirement, America's Health Rankings, 2017, and LongTermCare.gov, 2018

³ Medicare.gov

⁴ Senior Report, America's Health Rankings, 2018

⁵ 2018 Retirement Confidence Survey, Employee Benefit Research Institute



When retirees were asked about their overall expenses and spending in retirement, 37% said they were higher than expected, 52% said they were about what they expected, and just 8% said they were lower than expected.

Source: 2018 Retirement Confidence Survey, Employee Benefit Research Institute

Four Reasons Your Parents Might Be in Financial Trouble

As your parents age, they will probably need more help from you. But it may be difficult to provide the help they need, especially if they're experiencing financial trouble.

Money can be a sensitive subject to discuss, but you'll need to talk to your parents about it in order to get to the root of their problems and come up with a solution. Before you start the conversation, consider the following four scenarios as signs that your parents might be experiencing financial challenges, and how you can make things easier for them.

1. They are dealing with debt

Perhaps your parents have fallen behind on their mortgage or credit card payments. Maybe they're dealing with the aftermath of a large, unexpected medical bill. Or it could be that years of generously supporting their children and grandchildren have left their finances in shambles.

Whatever the cause, debt among older Americans is a growing trend. In 2010, the average debt for a family in which the head of household was age 75 or older was \$30,288. In 2016 (most recent data available), that number grew to \$36,757.¹

2. They are falling for fraud

According to a report by the Federal Trade Commission, older adults have been targeted or disproportionately affected by fraud. Moreover, older adults have reported much higher dollar losses to certain types of fraud than younger consumers.²

Why do scammers target older individuals? There are many explanations for this trend. Some older individuals lack an awareness about major financial issues. Others may be attractive targets for scammers because they have access to retirement account assets or have built up home equity. Additional factors that increase an older adult's vulnerability to scams include cognitive decline and isolation from family and friends.

3. They aren't used to managing finances

The loss of a spouse can create many challenges for the survivor, especially if the deceased spouse was in charge of finances. Many widows or widowers might find themselves keeping track of statements, paying bills, budgeting, and handling other financial matters for the first time, which can be a complicated reality to face.

4. They struggle with change

As financial institutions continue to innovate and increase online and mobile access to customer accounts, it can be difficult for older consumers to keep up. For example, some older adults may struggle with accessing their financial information online. Others might get frustrated or confused when financial institutions implement new policies and procedures, especially if they've had an account with an institution for decades.

One report described the most common issues that older consumers identified with bank accounts or services. The top three complaints involved account management (47%), deposits and withdrawals (27%), and problems caused by low funds (12%).³

Ways you can help

Regardless of the reasons why your parents might be having money problems, there are steps you can take to help them.

- **Set up a meeting with a financial professional.** Encourage your parents to meet with a professional to evaluate their financial situation.
- **Help them reduce spending.** Look for big and small ways that they can scale back on expenses, such as downsizing to a smaller home, cutting cable plans, or canceling unnecessary memberships/subscriptions.
- **Have them tested for dementia.** If you've noticed behavioral or memory changes in one or both of your parents, share your concerns with a medical professional. Cognitive decline can result in difficulty managing finances.
- **Lend money (using caution).** If you decide to help your parents monetarily, consider paying your parents' expenses directly rather than giving them cash so you can ensure that their bills are paid on time.
- **Help them apply for assistance.** The National Council on Aging has a website, BenefitsCheckUp.org, that can help you determine your parents' eligibility for federal, state, and private benefit programs.

¹ Debt of the Elderly and Near Elderly, 1992-2016, Employee Benefit Research Institute, 2018

² Protecting Older Consumers: 2017-2018, Federal Trade Commission, 2018

³ Monthly Complaint Report, Vol. 23, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, May 2017

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How can I get a tax break for child care?

More than 60% of children under age six in the United States have two parents in the workforce.¹ Many of these working parents must spend a burdensome share of their earnings on child care, especially if they don't have relatives who are willing and able to help out.

The following tax benefits may help you offset some of the costs paid for a nanny, babysitter, day care, preschool, or day camp, but only if the services are used so you can work.

Child-care tax credit

Families with one qualifying child (typically age 12 or younger) can claim up to \$3,000 per year in child-care expenses; those with two or more qualifying children have a \$6,000 annual limit. The credit is worth 20% to 35% of eligible child-care expenses, depending on income. As income rises, the credit amount drops until it hits a minimum of 20% for households with \$43,000 or more in adjusted gross income.

For example, families with one qualifying child can receive a credit of \$600 to \$1,050; those with two or more children can receive a credit of \$1,200 to \$2,100. A tax credit lowers a family's tax liability dollar for dollar.

Dependent-care flexible spending account (FSA)

Higher-income families may realize a bigger tax benefit from an FSA if it is offered by an employer. Up to \$5,000 a year can be set aside to cover eligible child-care costs for qualifying children, and this money is free of federal income tax and Social Security and Medicare taxes. You are not allowed to use pre-tax money from an FSA and take a credit for the same expenses. However, after spending \$5,000 from an FSA, you may take a tax credit for up to \$1,000 in additional child-care expenses if you have more than one child.

¹ Child Care Aware® of America, 2017

How much does child care really cost?

Typical child-care fees vary widely by state, as do other living costs. But in all regions, the average annual cost of center-based care for one infant now exceeds the average amount of money families spend on food and transportation combined. Child-care costs for two children exceed the median cost of housing for homeowners with a mortgage in 35 states and the District of Columbia.

Average annual cost for full-time child care (nationwide)

■ Center based ■ Private home

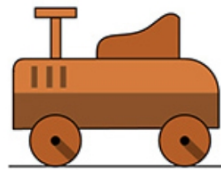
\$11,959 \$9,321

\$10,096 \$8,729

\$9,170 \$8,889



Infants



Toddlers



4-year-olds

Source: Child Care Aware® of America, 2018 (data for 2017)