

5 Financial Considerations When Caring For An Elderly Loved One

Providing care for an elderly loved one can be a difficult transition that requires planning and preparation for all contingencies. Following are five financial considerations when caring for an elderly loved one.

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1. Look into obtaining a power of attorney

Depending on the level of your loved one's physical or mental incapacitation, consider whether or not you will need a power of attorney. This legal document enables you to make legally binding decisions on your loved one's behalf, and to access their bank accounts and financial records. It is an essential tool in order for you to pay bills, manage finances, sell assets, and secure Medicare benefits for your loved one.

If your loved one cannot grant you power of attorney, a conservatorship could be an alternative. If your loved one is not able to communicate with others or sign documents, a court-designated conservator would manage their assets in a way that is in their best interests.

2. Determine whether your loved one can remain at home

Again, based on the level of your loved one's physical or mental incapacitation, you must decide if they are able to live on their own. If not, you may need to consider moving your loved one in with you, an assisted living facility, or a nursing home.

Assisted living facilities are suitable for people who can generally take care of themselves independently, but may need some help with routine tasks such as preparing meals, housekeeping, and getting around. Nursing homes are designed to house and care for very frail or disabled people who are not capable of caring for themselves.

Understandably, this may be a difficult thing for your loved one to accept. Discuss the options candidly with your loved one and their doctors, nurses, physical therapists, and mental health care providers.

3. Be sure that the home is safe and accessible

If you determine that your loved one will move in with you, you will then need to make plans to accommodate for safety and mobility concerns. You may need to install items such as ramps, lifts, and grab bars to facilitate accessibility. You also need to ensure there's enough space around furniture for a walker or wheelchair. Easy-to-use remote controls for heat, air conditioning, entertainment systems, and lighting can ease frustration for people who can't readily get around on their own.

In regard to safety, it's recommended that you remove rugs and seal loose wires, both of which can trip people who use walkers, canes, or crutches.

4. Understand all fees and costs for assisted living facilities and nursing homes

If you've determined that your loved one needs to live in an assisted living facility or nursing home, there are several considerations to review before selecting a place.

It's important to get a detailed list of all fees and costs that indicate what services are covered by the base payment. It should also explain the costs for any optional services and any costs that might be contingent on a particular circumstance.

Take time to review and understand the details of billing arrangements. You may be expected to make regularly scheduled payments without receiving any prior notice or statement, or to set up a cash reserve to finance any optional costs or services. Rate adjustments may be a factor for indefinite arrangements. Ascertain how frequently rate adjustments can be made and how much advance notification of changes you can expect.

5. Consider atmosphere and quality of life when selecting an assisted living facility or nursing home

Choosing the right facility for your loved one might seem like a daunting task, but the decision will be much easier if you give yourself time to research the facilities that will best match the needs of your loved one.

The size and general layout of the facility are the most important. Check out the living quarters, dining area, recreational facilities, and group activity spaces to be sure they are suitable for the needs of your loved one.

Location also plays a large part in the evaluation process. You will likely want to find a facility in close proximity to family and friends, a hospital or urgent care clinic, and other resources like parks, libraries, theaters, and stores.

Lastly, make sure the facility offers adequate lighting, smoke and fire alarm systems, and clearly marked exits. You can request evidence that the facility has all mandated features and is current with its code and safety inspections.

The Financial Impact of Caregiving

While these financial considerations when caring for an elderly loved one can present a number of important and sometimes difficult decisions, the best thing you can do for your loved one is be thorough in your efforts to ensure their situation is defined by stability, high quality of care, and attention to their specific needs.

For more information on how PlainsCapital Bank can help you with the financial considerations of [caring for an elderly loved one](#), please visit your local branch or call 866.762.8392.