Your Senior Transition Plan

The whole path, laid out across five phases | a complete SAMPLE

Prepared for: THE BENNETT FAMILY (sample)

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

This is a SAMPLE. The Bennett family is fictional, built to show, across all five phases, everything a Senior Transition Plan covers and every caveat we watch for. It is not a past client and not advice for any specific person. Riggins Strategic Solutions handles the home and the real estate and protects the family through it; we coordinate with your attorney, tax professional, financial advisor, and care team. Dollar figures appear as [to establish], the point where we do the real analysis for your family.

The five phases

- **1. Get Your Bearings.** Get everyone on the same page and see the whole picture honestly.
- **2. The Home and the Money.** Where the real money lives, and where families get taken.
- **3. Make the Move.** The right steps in the right order, with the house handled for you.
- **4. The Long Game.** The care plan and the team that turn the house money into a real future.
- **5. Cross the Finish Line.** The plan, the timeline, and the outcome.

Executive Summary

Margaret Bennett is 78, widowed 14 months ago when her husband Jim, an Army veteran, passed. She still lives in the paid-off four-bedroom brick ranch in Winston-Salem where she raised her family for 41 years. Three months ago she fell and fractured her wrist, and her doctor has flagged early memory changes. In the last month, three cash-buyer letters arrived and a man knocked on her door, told her the house needed too much work, offered $175,000 to close in ten days, and put a contract in front of her. She nearly signed.

The core tension

Her daughter Karen, 90 minutes away in Charlotte, is the overwhelmed coordinator. Her son David, in Denver, wants to sell fast and place her. This plan does not pick a side. It replaces the argument with real numbers and real timing, so the family decides from strength instead of fear.

The urgent flags

- **No power of attorney.** If Margaret's memory slips past capacity before this is fixed, the family is forced into guardianship court. Most time-sensitive item in this plan.
- **A predator already at the door.** The cash offer and letters are live. Nobody signs anything.
- **The Medicaid clock may be ticking.** If care is 12 to 24 months out, moving the home or the rental now can trigger a five-year look-back penalty later.

1 GET YOUR BEARINGS

First we get the family on the same page and look at the whole picture honestly. The first job is not the house, it is clarity.

The family and the roles

- **Margaret, 78.** Independent today but recovering from a fall and showing early memory changes. Deeply attached to the home. Trusting by nature.
- **Karen, 52, Charlotte.** Daughter, the default coordinator, overwhelmed and carrying guilt.
- **David, 49, Denver.** Son, loves his mom, wants a fast clean answer from 1,600 miles away, and is pushing the exact lever (speed) that gets families skinned.
- **Jim (deceased).** Handled all the money and the rental, leaving a knowledge gap the family is only now discovering.

The current-situation dashboard, five dimensions

- **Home and real estate:** paid-off 1974 ranch, dated kitchen and baths, ~22-year-old roof and aging HVAC; value as-is and improved [to establish]. Plus a paid-off duplex with two tenants, about $1,300 a month, and deferred maintenance.
- **Care and health:** a recent fall and early cognitive changes; independent now; no long-term care insurance and no care plan on file.
- **Money and benefits:** Social Security, a small survivor pension, about $85,000 in savings, and the rental income. VA survivor benefits and, eventually, Medicaid likely on the table but unclaimed.
- **Legal and documents:** no financial POA, no healthcare POA, no HIPAA release, will unconfirmed. The weakest corner of the whole picture.
- **Family and roles:** one local coordinator, one out-of-state pusher-for-speed, no shared plan.

What is coming in the next one to five years

- Health and memory can change fast; plan for the Margaret who is two years older, not just today's.
- The home gets more expensive to keep, and the roof and HVAC are near the end.
- The offers do not stop; they get more frequent and aggressive as she ages.
- The Medicaid clock: moves made now without planning can penalize her right when care money is needed.

The threats circling right now

- **The cash buyer at the door.** Lowball the value, inflate the repairs, lean on speed and a signature. NC has no wholesaler-disclosure law yet, so here the family is the only safeguard.
- **The missing signature authority.** No POA plus slipping memory equals guardianship risk that grows every week.
- **The linked-decisions trap.** Selling, moving the rental, gifting, and Medicaid are one connected problem, not separate errands.

The paths in front of you

- **Option 1, stay and modify with care brought in.** Keeps her where she is most oriented; buys time. Risk: in-home memory care gets expensive and a 1974 house is hard to make fully safe.
- **Option 2, local assisted living or memory care, funded by selling the home.** Care that scales; removes the house burden. Risk: a dated home dumped fast to a cash buyer loses the very money meant to pay for her care.
- **Option 3, move near a child.** Family close by. Risk: uprooting a person with memory changes is hard, and it is a two-transaction move.

2 THE HOME AND THE MONEY

Here is where the real money lives, and where most families get taken. This is our lane.

Establish the real numbers first

- The true as-is market value and the realistic after-repair value [to establish]. Every other decision hangs on these two numbers, and right now the only number in the room is a cash buyer's lowball.
- Net proceeds, not sale price: value minus payoff, selling costs, repairs, and taxes. That is the money that actually funds care.

Spend smart on the house

- Triage every project into three buckets: earns its money back at resale, safety-only, and money-loser. On a dated 1974 home you do the few thousand in strategic repairs that move the number, not an $80,000 gut.
- The roof and HVAC are the swing items; a buyer cannot easily insure or finance a house with a failing roof. Decide fix-or-price with real bids.

! ***Caveat.*** *Do not let anyone make the house HGTV-ready. Spending $60,000 to chase a $30,000 bump is a classic loss, and grief makes families vulnerable to it.*

! ***Caveat.*** *Aging-in-place repairs and resale-value repairs are not the same dollars. Know the goal of each one.*

The protection playbook, since predators are already here

- No signatures on any cash offer without a real estate attorney reading it. Watch for "and/or assigns" by the buyer name; that is a wholesaler.
- Get a free comparative market analysis first, so a lowball is obvious. Verify the buyer: proof of funds, end buyer or assigning, a real company behind them.
- Consider all five exits, not just fast cash: a traditional listing with strategic repairs, an as-is listing, a vetted honest cash buyer, owner-financing, or keeping and renting.

The rental and the family property

- Frame the real options on the duplex: hold for income, sell, 1031 exchange into simpler passive income, or owner-finance for steady cash flow.
- Tie it to leaving a home to a child: how it is titled, the step-up in basis at death, and what happens to the income if one spouse passes.

! ***Caveat.*** *Do not gift or deed the duplex or the home to the children to "protect" it without an elder law attorney and a CPA first. A transfer inside the five-year look-back can block Medicaid when it is needed.*

! ***Caveat.*** *Selling the duplex can trigger capital gains and depreciation recapture. A 1031 defers the tax only with a qualified intermediary (a 1031 exchange specialist) engaged before closing and the strict 45- and 180-day deadlines met.*

Money and benefits

- **VA benefits, often missed:** as a wartime veteran's surviving spouse, Margaret may qualify for VA Aid and Attendance to help pay for care. Free to apply.
- **Reverse mortgage, honestly:** a HECM could turn equity into cash to age in place, with no monthly payment, but it has fees, reduces the inheritance, and must be weighed against simply selling.
- **Medicaid:** if long-term care is needed and the money runs low, Medicaid may cover it after a spend-down and a five-year look-back; the home may be exempt while she lives there, but estate recovery can come back later.

! ***Caveat.*** *A reverse mortgage can disqualify Medicaid if funds sit unspent, and usually comes due if she moves to memory care. If a move is likely within a couple of years, it is usually the wrong tool. Model it with the financial planner, not off a TV commercial.*

! ***Caveat.*** *Every property decision has to be checked against the care plan and the Medicaid picture before it is executed. These rooms cannot be separate.*

The bottom line of this phase: on a home like theirs, the gap between a rushed cash sale and a guided one is routinely tens of thousands of dollars. Closing that gap, and protecting it from the people at the door, is the entire reason this phase exists.

3 MAKE THE MOVE

The order matters as much as the plan. We handle the house so the family does not have to.

Sequencing and timing

- Time the home sale to the care move or the entry-fee deadline, and arrange a bridge if the dates do not line up. The right order funds the plan instead of costing the family money they do not have.
- Keep the home sale-ready throughout, so a health crisis never forces a distressed, as-is fire sale, which is exactly when the cash buyers win.

The physical move

- Bring senior move managers and downsizing help so sorting a lifetime of belongings does not fall on family.
- Clear the home with respect; the keepsakes that matter go where they belong, not to a dumpster.
- Use the SeniorSafe app to keep everyone, including the out-of-state son, coordinated and informed.

If the path is relocation

- Research realistic price points in the destination neighborhood, so the move starts with a real number.
- Place vetted agents on both ends, the sale here and the purchase there, and quarterback the chain. Set up a rent-first period if the family wants to test the town.
- Protect the survivor: structure the sale so funding a move does not strand the survivor or end the plan to leave a home to a child.

4 THE LONG GAME

This is where the team comes in, and where the house money turns into a real plan for the years ahead.

Care and health

- Start with a real care assessment, a life care plan from a clinical professional (the care partner's lane, not ours), so the family plans around what Margaret actually needs now and next.
- Understand the levels, in-home care, assisted living, and memory care, and choose a setting that can step up in care so a confused person is not moved twice.
- Home safety and a check-in system now, regardless of the path, so a fall does not go undiscovered.

Legal and documents, the most urgent gap

- **Durable financial POA** so a trusted person can handle the house, the rental, and the money if Margaret cannot. Signed while capacity is clear.
- **Healthcare POA and a HIPAA release** so the family can make medical decisions and even talk to her doctors.
- **Will and titling** confirmed and updated; titling, not just the will, often controls what happens at death and whether probate is triggered.
- **Guardianship risk:** if capacity slips before the POA is signed, guardianship court is the only path left. The POA avoids it entirely.

! ***Caveat.*** *Do not use a generic online POA for something this consequential. State-specific, attorney-drafted documents, coordinated with the Medicaid and property plan.*

Your senior transition team

No one person does all of this, and anyone who claims to is a red flag. We find and vet the ones the family does not already have.

Role	What they own	When to pull them in
Ryan / RSS	The home, the rental, the sale, protection from predators, quarterbacking	Now, and any time a property or cash offer is in play
Care partner (life care planner)	The clinical assessment, the care plan, the level-of-care call	Now, to set the care picture that drives everything
Elder law attorney	POA, will, Medicaid planning, guardianship avoidance	This month, before capacity is ever in question
CPA / tax advisor	Capital gains, depreciation recapture, gifting consequences	Before any property is sold, moved, or gifted

1031 exchange specialist (qualified intermediary)	Holds the sale funds and runs the 1031 within its 45- and 180-day deadlines	Before a rental sale closes, if a 1031 is the plan
Financial planner	Care funding, reverse mortgage analysis, survivorship math	Before big money moves
VA benefits specialist	Aid and Attendance for the surviving spouse	Early; applying is free
Senior move manager	Downsizing, sorting a lifetime of belongings, the physical move	When a move is chosen

The long-term money

- Medicaid estate recovery can come back against the home and the rental after death; plan for it rather than be surprised by it.
- If leaving property to the kids matters, set the titling and the plan now, with the attorney and CPA, so a windfall or an inheritance is not lost to taxes or a preventable penalty.

5 CROSS THE FINISH LINE

The house sells for what it is actually worth, the family has real money and a real plan, and nobody is carrying it alone.

The preferred path, at this point in time

- First 30 days: sign the legal documents, decline the cash offer, establish the true home value, and schedule the care assessment. Nothing gets sold or moved yet.
- Months 1 to 4: run the money map (VA, Medicaid look-back, reverse-mortgage-or-not) and choose between staying and moving based on the care assessment, not fear, while quietly getting the home sale-ready.
- The likely landing: a dual track. Keep Margaret home safely with in-home care for now, while building the assisted-living and home-sale plan in parallel, so the family moves on their terms and sells from strength.

The action plan

Action	When	Who
Sign durable POA, healthcare POA, HIPAA; confirm will	Now, this month	Elder law attorney + Karen
Decline the cash offer; no signatures	Now	Family (coached by Ryan)
Establish true as-is and improved home value	0 to 30 days	Ryan
Schedule a clinical care assessment	0 to 30 days	Care partner
Apply for VA Aid and Attendance	0 to 60 days	VA specialist
Model Medicaid look-back before any property move	0 to 60 days	Elder law attorney + CPA
Decide keep, sell, 1031, or owner-finance the duplex	1 to 3 months	Ryan + CPA + 1031 specialist
Choose the path together	by month 4	Whole family
Keep the home sale-ready in the background	Ongoing	Ryan

Pivot points to watch

- Another fall or a hospital stay: move from planning to acting.
- A memory decline that threatens capacity: if the POA is not signed, it is an emergency.
- A new cash offer or an aggressive wholesaler: route it straight to Ryan; nobody engages alone.
- The savings cushion running low: trigger the Medicaid and benefits plan before it is a crisis.

The outcome

The home sells for what it is actually worth. The family keeps the money a rushed cash sale would have signed away, Margaret is cared for with a real plan and real money behind it, and Karen and David have a team instead of a weight on their shoulders.

Appendix: Every Caveat, In One Place

The details are where families get hurt. Here is the full stack for a situation like the Bennetts.

- ! ***Caveat.*** *No signatures on any cash offer or contract before a real estate attorney reads it.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Sign the durable POA and healthcare POA while capacity is clear; once it slips, the only door is guardianship court.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Do not gift or deed a property to the kids to "protect" it without elder law and CPA review; the five-year look-back penalizes exactly that move.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Do not over-improve a house you may sell; grief and pressure push families into remodels chasing a smaller bump.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Aging-in-place repairs and resale-value repairs are not the same dollars.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *A failing roof or HVAC shrinks the buyer pool and the price; decide fix-or-price with real bids.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *A reverse mortgage can disqualify Medicaid if funds sit unspent, and usually comes due if she moves to memory care.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Selling the rental can trigger capital gains and depreciation recapture; a 1031 defers tax only with a qualified intermediary and the strict 45- and 180-day deadlines.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Titling, not just the will, often controls what happens at death and whether probate hits.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Medicaid estate recovery can come back against the home and rental after death.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *VA survivor benefits are commonly missed; ask the question, applying is free.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *North Carolina has no wholesaler cooling-off law yet, so the family is the only safeguard.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Never let a buyer act as the family's advisor.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Do not move a person with memory changes twice; choose a setting that can step up in care.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Keep the home sale-ready even if staying, so a health crisis never forces a distressed sale.*
- ! ***Caveat.*** *Every property decision must be checked against the care plan and the Medicaid picture before it is executed.*

Resources and Tools the Family Can Use Today

- Free tools at rigginsstrategicsolutions.com/tools: the strategic-exit engine (5 ways to sell), net-proceeds calculator, aging-in-place vs move calculator, readiness assessment, and the senior help directory.
- Free guides at rigginsstrategicsolutions.com/freeguide: the Cash Buyer Beware guide and the Simple Blueprint starter guide.
- The SeniorSafe app to keep the family coordinated, at seniorsafeapp.com.
- Where to get help: an elder law attorney, an accredited VA benefits specialist, and a clinical life care planner, all of whom we help find and vet.

How We Work, and What We Do Not Do

The five phases decide the direction and turn it into protected action. We take the real estate: the home, the rental, the sale, and shielding the family from the people who prey on this exact moment. The care, the legal, the tax, and the medical stay with the specialists we help you find. We place families with vetted agents rather than taking the listing ourselves, and that piece is covered by a referral fee from the agent, at no added cost to the family beyond the commission they were already going to pay. Our incentive is the right outcome, not the sale. And we came to it from the other side of the table, which is exactly why we know where to look.