



2026 FINANCIAL PLANNING CHECKLIST

A practical guide to help you stay on top of your
financial life this year



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Welcome to Your 2026 Financial Planning Checklist

At Paragon Wealth, we believe proactive financial planning is one of the best gifts you can give your future self. Whether you're a business owner juggling priorities, newly navigating finances after a major life event, or preparing for retirement, this checklist is designed to help you spot the key areas that need attention each year.

We've broken it down into 10 easy-to-review sections—everything from cash flow and investments to estate planning and insurance—so you can stay organized and confident about your next steps.

This checklist is not intended to overwhelm you. Instead, think of it as a conversation starter—either with your financial advisor (that's us 🙌), your family, or even yourself. Don't worry about checking every box on day one. Use this as a guide to gradually build momentum throughout the year.

Need help working through the list?

If you'd like help prioritizing or working through this checklist, give us a call or email to schedule a review.



2026 Financial Planning Checklist

1) Life updates (the stuff that changes everything)

- ☐ Any changes in job, income, or business revenue?
- ☐ Marriage/divorce/new partner/new baby/empty nest?
- ☐ Move, new home, or major purchase planned?
- ☐ Health changes that affect coverage or costs?
- ☐ Any big goals for 2026 (travel, retirement date, business sale, sabbatical)?

2) Cash flow + emergency fund

- ☐ Review monthly spending (what stayed, what crept up?)
- ☐ Refill emergency savings (typical target: 3–6 months; more if self-employed/variable income)
- ☐ Confirm high-yield savings/cash accounts are still a good fit
- ☐ Set (or update) automatic transfers for savings

3) Debt + credit “quick wins”

- ☐ List all debts + interest rates (mortgage, HELOC, cards, student loans)
- ☐ Refinance/accelerate payoff where it makes sense
- ☐ Check credit report for errors
- ☐ Confirm protections against identity theft (freezes/alerts if desired)

4) Investing + retirement contributions

- ☐ Confirm 401(k)/403(b) contributions for 2026 (aim for at least company match)
- ☐ Decide on IRA/Roth IRA contributions for 2026 (if eligible)
- ☐ Rebalance if your allocation drifted
- ☐ Review employer plan investment choices and fees
- ☐ Update retirement timeline and “income plan” assumptions



5) Tax planning

- ☐ Update your tax withholding/estimated payments (especially if income changed)
- ☐ Plan charitable giving (including donor-advised fund if relevant)
- ☐ Review capital gains strategy (harvesting gains/losses as appropriate)
- ☐ If you're a business owner: confirm payroll, entity, and retirement plan strategy

6) Insurance check (protect the plan)

- ☐ Life insurance: still needed? right amount? right beneficiaries?
- ☐ Disability coverage: in place, especially for peak earning years?
- ☐ Home/auto umbrella liability: consider if net worth/risk increased
- ☐ Health insurance: HSA eligible? max HSA if it fits your plan
- ☐ Long-term care: evaluate if you're in the planning window

7) Estate planning (the “adulthood” section)

- ☐ Beneficiaries updated on all accounts (401k/IRA, bank, life insurance)
- ☐ Powers of attorney + healthcare directives current?
- ☐ Will/trust reviewed after major life changes
- ☐ “In case of emergency” document: where things are + who to call

8) Business owners

- ☐ Business cash reserve target set
- ☐ Retirement plan review (Solo 401(k), SEP, SIMPLE, cash balance plan—whatever applies)
- ☐ Key person coverage / buy-sell planning considered
- ☐ Bookkeeping clean-up + quarterly tax rhythm confirmed



9) Near-retirees

- ☐ Retirement date penciled in + spending plan tested
- ☐ Social Security strategy reviewed
- ☐ Medicare timeline understood (avoid enrollment penalties)
- ☐ “Paycheck replacement” plan mapped (which accounts fund which years)
- ☐ RMD planning (if applicable) and beneficiary strategy reviewed

10) One simple action for momentum

- ☐ Pick ONE goal for Q1 (increase savings %, pay off a debt, automate investing, update beneficiaries)

