

How to Find Help When You're Ready to Downsize

Any move is tremendously stressful! And moving from your long-time residence is even more so. So much so that losing a spouse is the only other event more stressful, according to stress studies. How wonderful to have an experienced Downsizing Professional help reduce that stress by walking with you through the steps to a successful relocation.

What is a Downsizing Professional?

A Downsizing Professional or Senior Move Manager is a professional who provides emotional, organizational, and hands-on support to older adults and their families during the move process. He/she understands the difficult experience of moving from a long-time residence and makes that move as stress-free as possible.

A downsizing professional will

- Set up a time-line and comprehensive plan for your move
- Locate and oversee a mover
- Draw up a scale-model floor plan of your new residence
- Create scale-models of your furniture to help you plan your space
- Help you stay focused on the task at hand
- Help you sort through your possessions
- Pack those items to be moved
- Arrange for the disposal of unwanted items (donations, estate sales, etc.)
- Unpack and organize your new home
- Help you prepare your home for sale.

How Do I Find a Downsizing Professional?

Help is at your fingertips when trying to locate a qualified downsizing professional. The National Association of Senior Move Managers (www.nasmm.com) provides a directory of Senior Move Managers in your locale. The National Association of Professional Organizers (www.napo.net, phone 847-375-4746) lists professional organizers by geographic area, as well. Look for those specializing in working with seniors.

Friends, senior citizen organizations, realtors, lawyers, and retirement communities may also provide referrals to help you locate a Senior Move Manager.

What Questions Do I Ask?

As you interview potential senior move managers, keep in mind some pertinent questions to ask:

- How long have you been a downsizing professional?
- Are you insured and licensed by your state?
- Do you have letters of reference/phone numbers I may call?
- What is your fee structure?
- Will you provide me with a written contract?
- What services do you provide yourself and which ones are provided by others?

Even if you have family or friends who are willing to help you, a downsizing professional possesses expertise and experience, thereby providing you with economical and insightful solutions as well as connections to local resources to expedite your move.

Beverly Coggins is a professional organizer, speaker, and author of the 1-2-3...Get Organized series, including [Three Steps to Downsizing](#) and [Three Steps to Becoming a Downsizing Professional](#). Follow her organizing tips at www.1-2-3GetOrganized.blogspot.com. She is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers and Faithful Organizers.