

When Downsizing Might Be the Smart Move for Homeowners Facing Financial Stress

Southern California Realtor urges homeowners under financial stress to explore all options before selling

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, July 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For homeowners struggling with rising living costs, high monthly mortgage payments or mounting debt, the famous question from the 1982 hit song—"Should I Stay or Should I Go?"—has taken on new financial meaning.



For some homeowners, the best answer is to stay and restructure their finances with a Reverse Mortgage. For others, selling proactively, preserving the equity they've built and "rightsizing" into a more affordable home may provide a stronger financial future. Senior homeowners should always compare both options to find the best answer to "Should I stay or should I go?"

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Too many homeowners think selling means they've failed. I see it differently. Rightsizing is about taking control of your finances before circumstances make that decision for you.”

Sarah Scheper, Southern California real estate professional

Southern California real estate professional [Sarah Scheper](#), a Realtor since 2012, says too many homeowners view selling as a sign of failure instead of a financial strategy.

"I call it rightsizing instead of downsizing," Scheper said. "You're not necessarily giving up something. You may be trading an expensive house and stressful monthly payment for a more affordable home, greater financial flexibility and, most importantly, peace of mind."

Scheper says homeowners experiencing financial stress often wait too long before seeking professional guidance. Whether the best solution is staying or selling, exploring options early typically provides more flexibility than waiting until foreclosure becomes a possibility.

Four Reasons Rightsizing May Make Financial Sense

1. Protect the Equity You've Worked Years to Build

For many families, home equity represents their largest financial asset.

Selling before financial problems escalate may allow homeowners to preserve that equity and use it strategically—whether to purchase another home, reduce debt, build emergency reserves or strengthen retirement savings.

"The goal isn't simply to sell a house," Scheper said. "The goal is to protect what you've worked so hard to build and position yourself for the next chapter of your life. Sometimes a smaller mortgage—or no mortgage at all—can provide a much bigger sense of financial freedom."

2. Lower More Than Just the Mortgage Payment

Moving to a more affordable home may reduce multiple monthly expenses, including:

- Mortgage payments

- Property taxes

- Homeowners insurance

- Utility costs

- Maintenance and repair expenses



Sarah Scheper

Reducing several expenses at once can significantly improve monthly cash flow and relieve financial pressure.

3. Replace Financial Stress With Financial Flexibility

Financial stress affects more than a household budget—it can affect health, relationships and peace of mind.

"A home should provide security, not constant anxiety," Scheper said. "If maintaining your

current home is costing you your financial and emotional peace, moving into something more affordable may be the beginning of something better—not the end of something good." Depending on available equity, some homeowners may even be able to purchase their next home with cash, eliminating a monthly mortgage payment altogether.

4. Acting Early Preserves More Choices

Waiting and hoping financial problems improve often reduces available options.

Homeowners who recognize challenges early have more time to compare whether refinancing, restructuring debt or selling makes the most financial sense.

"Too many homeowners wait until the bank starts making decisions for them," Scheper said. "I want my clients making those decisions themselves while they still have options."

Staying May Still Be the Right Choice

Scheper emphasizes that rightsizing is not the right solution for everyone. Sometimes, a reverse mortgage might make more sense, if the senior homeowner wants to stay put.

Mortgage professional Paul E. Scheper, CRMP, CSA, SRES, encourages homeowners—particularly those age 62 and older with substantial home equity—to explore financing alternatives before deciding to sell.

"Selling isn't automatically the right answer," Paul Scheper said. "For some homeowners, a reverse mortgage may allow them to pay off an existing mortgage and remain in the home without required monthly principal-and-interest mortgage payments. For others, selling and rightsizing may provide the better financial outcome. The key is to compare the numbers early."

Qualification is not guaranteed, and loan programs have different age, equity, occupancy and underwriting requirements.

Compare Your Options Before You Decide

According to Sarah Scheper, homeowners facing financial pressure generally have three paths to consider:

Stay and refinance. Some homeowners may benefit from refinancing or, if eligible, a reverse mortgage.

Sell and purchase with cash. Rightsizing may allow homeowners to preserve equity while eliminating a mortgage payment.

Sell and finance a more affordable home. Purchasing a less expensive replacement home with appropriate financing may improve long-term affordability.

The right solution depends on each homeowner's financial circumstances, equity, age, income and long-term goals.

"There is no shame in changing direction," Scheper said. "Life changes. The economy changes. Our financial needs change. Sometimes the smartest move you can make is to take control, understand all of your options and move forward with less debt, lower expenses and more peace of mind."

For homeowners asking themselves, "Should I stay or should I go?," Scheper believes the answer shouldn't be driven by fear or emotion—it should be guided by careful planning, sound financial analysis and a clear understanding of every available option.

"Rightsizing isn't about settling for less," Scheper concluded. "It's about creating a home and a financial future that fit your life today. Whether you stay or go, the best decision is the one you make before circumstances make it for you."

About Sarah Scheper

Sarah Scheper is a Southern California real estate professional who has helped homeowners navigate residential real estate decisions since 2012. Her "rightsizing" philosophy encourages homeowners to evaluate not only how much home they can own, but how their housing decisions support their financial goals, lifestyle and long-term peace of mind. She is part of the Father-Daughter Scheper Dream Team.

Holly Hackett

Loangevity Mortgage

+1 800-662-6784

info@LoangevityMortgage.com

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