says Glass. EstateSales.net is a leading site used to advertise sales, so check advertising approaches there.

**Review the contract.** It should address what happens to items left after the sale and give specifics on what services are covered—and when you will be paid.

Nonpayment or late payments are a serious issue with the industry. EstateSales.net will take your complaint, and if not resolved within 60 days, it may ban the company from its site. In the past two years, EstateSales.net has removed about 10 companies, says Micky McQuade, co-owner of the site's parent company.

Be leery of a company that gives a precise estimate of how much the sale will make, says Glass. “Many estate companies give you an amount—an outrageous amount,” she says, after a quick walk through the home.

Because most companies base their quote on what they see when they walk through, be clear about which items you want to keep, McQuade says. Often you can't remove items after signing the sale contract.

The national average commission for a sale is 35%, according to the ASEL. Commissions vary by city and region, says Sanders, who is also NESAs treasurer.

Ask how much help the estate sale staff provides after the sale is over, since up to 50% of household goods may remain. Will the company schedule a charity to come pick up everything and help pack it up?

Be aware of ethically questionable issues. For example, a company that buys from its sales and then resells items in its own shop may want to set lower prices. And if a company sets aside some items for select friends or vintage shop owners, that favoritism may turn off other clients.

> **VICKIE ELMER**

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**Alternative Options**

**Auction.** Use an online auction website, such as eBay, or find an auction company in your city. Auction companies may send out a truck to pick up your items—and are good for quickly removing everything, says Mike Brandly, an auctioneer in Columbus, Ohio.

**DIY.** Go the do-it-yourself route and throw your own yard sale, perhaps during a neighborhood-wide sale. Just make sure that you sign up family or friends to help out before, during and after the sale.

**Donate.** Be prepared to divvy up items to go to a variety of charities. And you may need to take at least one trip to the dump or a recycling center, or offer free items on Nextdoor.com or Craigslist.org.

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**RETIREMENT LIVING**

**Getting Around When You Stop Driving**

LIKE MANY OLDER AMERICANS, DORIS GRIFFIN, 86, OF San Antonio, Tex., didn't plan on giving up her car keys. But when she suffered an eye injury in a car accident 15 years ago, she had no choice. She relied on her husband for rides, until he died in 2007. Now, Griffin leans on a patchwork of family, friends, co-workers, volunteers and even her 90-year-old sister. “It’s kind of white knuckles when you’re with her,” she says.

For many seniors, the end of their driving life plunges them into a tenuous and informal transportation network of family, friends and volunteers. Some, including Griffin, a longtime advocate who still runs a nonprofit social services agency for seniors, feel fortunate to have support. But many others have a hard time figuring out how to get around, which makes it difficult to plan ahead, schedule medical appointments and get out to socialize. “If you are an elderly person giving up your keys, you are in the position of cobbled solutions together,” says Lisa D’Ambrosio, a research associate with MIT’s AgeLab, in Cambridge, Mass.

Some 40 million licensed drivers were age 65 and over in 2015, or more than one in five drivers on the road, Federal Highway Administration figures show. Overall, 74% of seniors age 75 and older still have a driver’s license. When all these seniors stop driving, many will face a challenging landscape: About 75% of people ages 65 and older live in suburban or rural areas, where public transportation can be sporadic.

On the bright side, new options are cropping up for getting around in the post-driving years, from ride-sharing services to volunteers who will join you on the bus. Blue Cross Blue Shield announced in May it will partner with Lyft to provide free rides to the doctor for members who don’t have reliable transportation. “There is a lot of creative development going on,” says Virginia Dize, co-director of the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. “I do think there is hope.”

Start your search by calling your local Area Agency on Aging, Dize says. Use the Eldercare Locator at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or call 1-800-677-1116 if you need help. Ask specifically for a mobility manager or travel counselor; that person can assess your needs and guide you to
local transportation services, saving you time and legwork. Or ask for a travel specialist at your local public transit agency. “The reality is you may end up having to call a number of places,” Dize says.

Hundreds of volunteer driving programs around the U.S. offer everything from simple round-trip rides to assistance with getting in and out of the car. You can search the “Find a Program” map at the National Volunteer Transportation Center (www.nationalvolunteertransportationcenter.org) or check the “Rides in Sight” database (www.ridesinsight.org) at ITN America, a non-profit senior transportation organization. Some states, including Michigan and Florida, keep comprehensive lists of transportation programs on their government websites. Ask about ride programs at your church or local hospital.

Beatrice Huriega, 89, of San Antonio, uses one of her city’s four senior transportation co-ops for free rides to take her husband to his medical appointments. With her own cataract surgery coming up, she’ll also tap the co-op for a ride to and from the procedure. She still has a driver’s license, but she doesn’t feel comfortable driving beyond her immediate neighborhood. And she’s leery of public transportation. “I haven’t taken the bus since I was a teenager,” she says. “I wouldn’t even know where to find it or what stop to get off.”

**Find the Right Ride**
Before you use a service, be sure to spell out your needs, Dize says. Are you looking for someone to stay with you at a doctor’s appointment, or just drop you off? Are you willing to share rides? Make sure volunteers have gone through background checks and are required to have insurance. Also, some programs require you to schedule a day or two in advance.

Confirm that your ride will be guaranteed. Volunteers sometimes cancel, particularly if the drivers themselves are elderly, says Annette Sandler, aging services director for the Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Minneapolis. Ask if a program has paid staff, or offers more extensive services for a fee.

At JFCS, for example, seniors pay an average of $6 for one-way trips. Those who need someone to stay with them at the doctor’s office pay between $8 and $21 per hour, based on their income. The same fee covers a service for errands to the grocery store or bank, with three stops allowed in a two-hour window, Sandler says. One elderly client uses the service to visit her husband’s gravesite once a month; a JFCS driver waits during her visit and then takes her home.

For the ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft, you usually need a smartphone to book a trip. But you can use a flip phone or landline to call GoGoGrandparent (www.gogograndparent.com; 855-464-6872). The start-up will arrange your ride with Lyft or Uber, and it will have an operator available by phone if there’s any mixup. Millennials may not mind if a driver comes to the wrong entrance, but older riders can become upset, says founder Justin Boogaard. “A big part of what we do is managing the ride,” he says.

GoGoGrandparent charges 19 cents a minute, on top of ride costs, with no extra fee for a caregiver. The service works wherever Uber and Lyft operate. You also don’t need a smartphone to use SilverRide (www.silverride.com; 415-861-7433), a paid ride-assistance service.

Friends and neighbors may be your best sources in rural areas, Dize says. But even in smaller towns, some services are beginning to pop up. In Big Stone Gap, Va., trained volunteers will teach you how to use the transit system and ride the bus with you. Liberty Mobility Now (www.libertymobilitynow.com), a start-up, provides on-demand ride service in small and rural towns in Nebraska and Ohio, with plans to expand.

If you can’t find a service to fit your needs, consider building your own network. Join in with some neighbors. Start a barter service—do a chore for a neighbor in return for a ride. The TRIP program in Riverside, Calif., has a manual on how to run your own volunteer driver program at www.flipconnect.org/triptrans.

And get comfortable with asking for help. When you give up your keys, as Doris Griffin puts it, “you can’t imagine being dependent on someone else.” But you’ll need to learn how if you want to create a driving support community. **K MARY KANE**