

# Money

THE BEST TRAVEL CARD OFFER IN YEARS IS HERE P. 16

JUNE/JULY 2019 • MONEY.COM

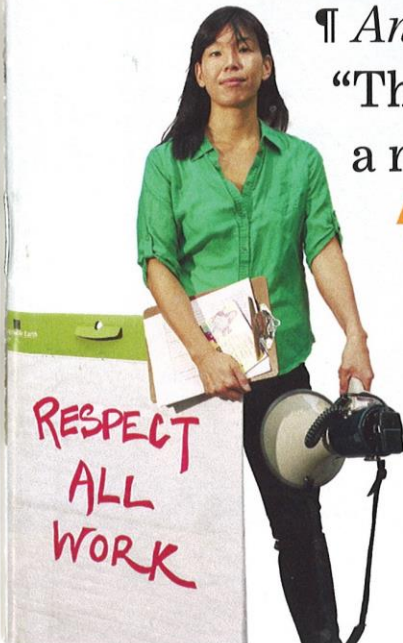


● These real-life **Golden Girls** 🌈 moved in together in 🧓 retirement. Here's how they're making it work. ¶ *Plus:* We plan a 💰 **money makeover** for KC, a 29-year-old with a "terrifying" 😬 financial future.

¶ *And:* "There is a real crisis" ⚡ among **domestic workers**, who are in high demand but have few protections—👉 and little pay.

# MIDYEAR INVESTOR'S GUIDE

5 TRENDS YOU CAN BET ON NOW!



\$4.99US \$5.99CAN 06  
0 70989 10095 4





## 69-Year-Old Gloria Gaynor Has a Roommate

And she says more older Americans should do the same.

Gloria Gaynor may have recorded dozens of singles and sung one of the most recognizable songs of all time, but she still has a roommate.

When a friend going through a divorce needed a place to stay, the “I Will Survive” singer, who is 69, invited her to move into Gaynor’s four-bedroom home in Somerset County, N.J., while she sorted out a newly single life. She never left.

“I cannot tell you how wonderful it is to have the companionship, to have the camaraderie,” says Gaynor, who is the spokesperson for the Home Sharing Program run by the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens. “It’s the security of having someone there with you if something happens and who cares enough to help you. Sometimes senior citizens need extra support.”

Gaynor and her roommate are part of a growing cohort of older Americans who are deciding to home share or find a roommate. While Gaynor was helping a lifelong friend, the vast majority of older people turning to roommates are seniors who simply can’t afford to live alone anymore. According to SpareRoom, a home-sharing and roommate-finding service, the company’s fastest-growing demographic is people

over 50, and the number of users in this age group on SpareRoom has surged 27% in the past year alone.

“We asked roommates over 50 why they share, and the overwhelming reason was financial,” says Matt Hutchinson, communications director for SpareRoom.

### TIPS FOR SHARING A HOME

If you or an older friend or family member wants to find a roommate, make sure you do it through a company like SpareRoom, which vets candidates, or a reputable municipal organization. The New York Foundation for Senior Citizens, for example, has been running a free home-sharing program for 38 years for New Yorkers who are 60 and older (55-year-olds can apply to host someone with developmental disabilities).

The foundation uses a proprietary matching system called Quick-Match to pair a “host” (someone offering a room) and a “guest” (someone looking for a room) to find compatible people. Applicants fill out a questionnaire addressing 31 lifestyle-related topics such as allowing pets, visitors, and alcohol in the home. Once a match is made, the two people meet in person to ensure they both agree. Potential roommates are vetted through personal references and social workers.

As always, it’s important to be aware of your personal safety when dealing with new people. Be wary of anything that seems too good to be true, like an apartment that seems too cheap for its condition and location, and always trust your instincts if someone doesn’t feel right to you.

To conduct a background check on your own, you can use a free service like Naborly, and you can request an additional credit check through a credit bureau like Experian. SpareRoom has roommates answer questions similar to those of the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens, and a team of moderators reviews the posted ads to ensure legitimacy. Using SpareRoom is free also, but to promote your room and generate quick interest, you have the option to upgrade to a premium version that starts at \$10.99 a week. The company also hosts its regular “speed roommating” meet-ups so people can figure out whether they really click in person.

The benefits are clear from the get-go once you find a trusted roommate, proponents of home sharing say. “When I retired, I didn’t want to have to give up a lot of things I love doing,” says Janice Raiford, 70, who found a true friend and companion in her roommate, Lillian Otero, 67, through the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens. Otero took the smaller bedroom in Raiford’s home, but the two pay equal rent (the foundation does not use the term “rent” in its roommate agreements and refers to payments instead as “monthly contributions”), with the extra portion of Otero’s payment counting as her contribution to utilities. “I don’t know where I would be today” without home sharing, Raiford says, adding, “I’ve got a lot of life to live and a lot of love to give.” —A.L.