

# Breed's Hill Newsletter

## Planning Your Financial Future

Dan Novotny, CRPC®, CFS®

Investment Advisors

Breed's Hill Wealth Management

Kirk Tassell, CFP®

301 North Park Avenue, Suite A • Winter Park • FL

800-599-5077 • 800-599-0338

dnovotny@breedshillwm.com • www.breedshillwm.com



## Tax Time: Procrastination Is Common and Can Be Costly

April 15, 2025, is the tax filing deadline for most taxpayers. In a nationwide survey, three out of 10 Americans said they wait until the last minute to file their tax returns, and 50% rush to complete the filing process as quickly as possible. If you procrastinate, you might face an unexpected tax bill with little or no time to come up with the money. It may also be too late to act on opportunities to reduce your tax burden. In fact, taking a thoughtful approach to tax planning throughout the year could help you keep more of your earnings and improve your finances.

### Top reasons taxpayers procrastinate



Source: Chamber of Commerce, 2024

# Catch Up for a More Comfortable Retirement

A 2024 survey found that only a third of U.S. workers age 50 and older feel that their savings contributions have them on track to enjoy a comfortable retirement.<sup>1</sup>

If your retirement account balance is lagging — or even if your nest egg seems robust — you can give your savings a boost by taking advantage of catch-up contributions that are available to those age 50 or older. This is often a time when salaries are highest, and you may thank yourself later if you put your current income to work for the future.

This opportunity is available for IRAs and employer-sponsored retirement plans — and there is a new opportunity in 2025 for some workers to make even bigger contributions to employer plans. You might be surprised by how much your savings could grow late in your working career.

## Employer plans

Employer plans offer the most generous tax-advantaged contribution limits, and employers often match employee contributions up to a certain percentage of salary. Employer plan contributions for a given tax year must be made by December 31 of that year, but employers will generally allow you to adjust your contributions during the year.

For 2025, the individual contribution limit for 401(k), 403(b), and government 457(b) plans is \$23,500, with an additional \$7,500 catch-up contribution for those age 50 and older, for a total of \$31,000. However, beginning in 2025, workers age 60 to 63 can make a larger catch-up contribution of \$11,250 for a total of \$34,750. Like all catch-up contributions, the age limit for this "super catch-up" is based on age at the end of the calendar year. It is not prorated, so you are eligible to make the full \$11,250 contribution if you are age 60 to 63 at any time during 2025 and do not turn 64 by the end of the year.

SIMPLE retirement plans have lower but still generous limits: \$16,500 in 2025 plus an additional \$3,500 catch-up contribution for employees age 50 and older or an additional \$5,250 for employees age 60 to 63. (Some plans have higher standard and age-50 catch-up limits: \$17,600 and \$3,850, along with the \$5,250 super catch-up.)

## IRAs

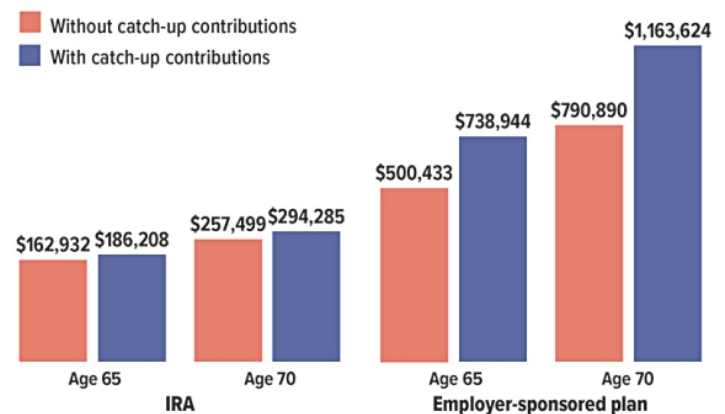
Unlike contributions to employer plans, IRA contributions can be made for the previous year up to the April tax filing deadline. So you can make contributions for 2024 up to April 15, 2025, and contributions for 2025 up to April 15, 2026. Make sure your IRA administrator knows which year the contributions are for.

The federal contribution limit in 2024 and 2025 for all IRAs combined is \$7,000, plus a \$1,000 catch-up

contribution for those 50 and older — for a total of \$8,000 each year. An extra \$1,000 might not seem like much, but it could make a big difference by the time you're ready to retire. If only one spouse is working, a married couple filing a joint return can contribute to an IRA for each spouse as long as the working spouse has earned income that is at least equivalent to both contributions.

## Savings Boost

Additional amounts that might be accrued between age 50 and age 65 or 70, based on making maximum annual contributions at current limits to an IRA or an employer-sponsored plan (includes additional catch-up for ages 60 to 63)



Assumes a 6% average annual return. If annual inflation adjustments to maximum contribution amounts were included, actual totals could be higher. This hypothetical example of mathematical compounding is used for illustrative purposes only and does not represent any specific investment. It assumes contributions are made at end of the calendar year. Rates of return vary over time, particularly for long-term investments. Fees and expenses are not considered and would reduce the performance shown if they were included. Actual results will vary.

## IRA MAGI limits

IRA contributions up to the combined limit can be traditional, Roth, or both. If an individual is an active participant in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the ability to deduct traditional IRA contributions phases out in 2025 at a modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) of \$79,000–\$89,000 for single filers or \$126,000–\$146,000 for joint filers (\$77,000–\$87,000 and \$123,000–\$143,000 in 2024). If one spouse is an active participant in an employer-sponsored plan and the other is not, deductions for the nonparticipant phase out from \$236,000–\$246,000 in 2025 (\$230,000–\$240,000 in 2024).

The ability to contribute to a Roth IRA phases out in 2025 at a MAGI of \$150,000–\$165,000 for single filers and \$236,000–\$246,000 for joint filers (\$146,000–\$161,000 and \$230,000–\$240,000 in 2024).

1) AARP Financial Security Trends Survey, 2024

# A Critical Combo: Life Insurance with Long-Term Care Benefits

An important part of any retirement strategy involves accounting for potential long-term care (LTC) expenses, which can be surprisingly high. The median cost of a private room in a nursing home was \$9,733 in 2023, while a full-time home health aide was \$6,292 per month.<sup>1</sup>

If you plan to pay for care out of pocket, consider how long your retirement savings would last if you or your spouse end up needing care in a nursing home for several years. How would writing those checks every month affect the healthy spouse's quality of life?

On the other hand, you may not like the idea of paying costly premiums for traditional long-term care insurance that you might never need. If so, you may be interested in one of these alternatives that combine permanent life insurance with long-term care coverage.

## An efficient hybrid

Although LTC insurance is typically a "use-it-or-lose-it" proposition, a hybrid (or linked-benefit) policy can help pay for care if it's needed or provide a larger death benefit for your beneficiaries if it's not. Hybrid policies are generally more expensive than standalone LTC policies, and the maximum LTC benefit may be smaller. Currently, the max LTC benefit amount is typically equal to about five times the premium.<sup>2</sup>

A hybrid policy may be purchased with a single premium, or installments paid over a few years (usually no more than 10). And you won't have to worry about future rate increases or the issuer canceling the policy, which can happen with a traditional LTC policy.

## Tack on a rider

Another option is to buy a life policy with an attached long-term care rider — which typically can't be added later. Any LTC payments are usually limited to the death benefit, which means they are generally not as robust as with a standalone LTC policy or a linked-benefit policy. However, the death benefit is larger (for the same premium).

If you consider either of these strategies, you should have a need for life insurance and evaluate the policy on its merits as life insurance.

## Collecting benefits

Long-term care benefits kick in when the insured person needs help with two or more activities of daily living (such as eating, bathing, and transferring) or is severely cognitively impaired, though there is typically a 90-day waiting, or elimination, period. Care may be provided in your home or at a facility.

## Probability of needing care, by attained age (for someone who is currently age 65)

Age	Female	Male
70	5.6%	5.3%
75	13.9%	12.7%
80	27.2%	24.3%
85	43.9%	38.7%
90	58.3%	51.1%

Source: American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance, 2022

With linked-benefit policies and LTC riders, benefits may be paid through reimbursement of the actual cost of care or an indemnity model that pays a certain cash benefit regardless of the actual cost of care. If your policy uses an indemnity model, it might allow you to pay a family caregiver. When you use the LTC benefit, the death benefit is reduced, but some policies may still offer a small death benefit even if you use up the LTC coverage.

Plus, permanent life policies and most hybrid life-LTC policies have a cash-value component that you could tap into for emergencies or retirement income if you are lucky enough to need little or no care. (Loans and withdrawals will reduce the policy's cash value and death benefit.)

The danger in waiting to explore combination life-LTC policies — beyond the fact that premiums rise with age — is that you could develop a health condition that would disqualify you from coverage.

*The cost and availability of life insurance depend on factors such as age, health, and the type and amount of insurance purchased. Policies commonly have mortality and expense charges. If a policy is surrendered prematurely, there may be surrender charges and income tax implications. Optional benefit riders are available for an additional cost and are subject to the contractual terms, conditions, and limitations outlined in the policy; they may not, however, benefit all individuals. Any guarantees are contingent on the financial strength and claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company.*

1) Genworth Cost of Care Survey, December 2023

2) American Association for Long-Term Care Insurance, 2024 (estimate is for benefits at age 90 for policies with inflation growth option)

# Have You Checked Your Social Security Statement Lately?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides personalized Social Security Statements to help Americans age 18 and older better understand the benefits that Social Security offers. Your Statement contains a detailed record of your earnings and estimates of retirement, disability, and survivor benefits — information that can help you plan for your financial future.

You can view your Social Security Statement online at any time by creating a *my* Social Security account at the SSA's website, [ssa.gov/myaccount](https://ssa.gov/myaccount). If you're not registered for an online account and are not yet receiving benefits, you'll receive a Statement in the mail every year, starting at age 60.

## Monthly benefit estimates

Your Social Security Statement tells you whether you've earned enough credits by working and paying Social Security taxes to qualify for retirement and disability benefits and, if you qualify, how much you might receive. Generally, monthly retirement benefits are projected for up to nine claiming ages from 62 to 70. If you qualify, you can also see how much your survivors might receive each month in the event of your death.

The amounts listed are estimates based on your average earnings in the past and a projection of future earnings. Actual benefits you receive may be different if your earnings increase or decrease in the future.

Amounts may also be affected by other factors, including cost-of-living increases (estimates are in today's dollars) and other income you receive. Estimates are based on current law, which may change.



*Because estimates change over time, check your Social Security Statement annually to stay on top of future benefits you or your family members might receive.*

## Annual earnings record

In addition to benefit information, your Social Security Statement contains a year-by-year record of your earnings. This record is updated when your employer reports your earnings (or if you're self-employed, when you report your own earnings). Earnings are generally reported annually, so your most recent earnings may not yet be on your Statement.

Because Social Security benefits are based on average lifetime earnings, it's important to make sure your earnings have been reported correctly. Compare your earnings record against past tax returns or W-2s. If you find errors, let the Social Security Administration know right away by calling (800) 772-1213.

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