

2025 Retirement Plan Reference Guide

This retirement plan reference guide provides general information about the available retirement savings options including IRAs, 401(k), and other plan type, whether you are just starting to save for retirement or looking for another vehicle to help maximize retirement savings.

	IRA	Roth IRA	SEP IRA	SIMPLE IRA	Traditional 401(k)	Safe Harbor 401(k)	
Maximum Annual Contribution Limits	<p>\$7,000 (\$8,000 for account holders age 50 and older) or 100% of earned income, whichever is less.</p> <p>A nonemployed spouse may contribute up to \$7,000 per year (\$8,000 for account holders age 50 and older) if joint taxable income permits.</p>	<p>\$7,000 (\$8,000 for account holders age 50 and older) or 100% of earned income, whichever is less.</p> <p>A nonemployed spouse may contribute up to \$7,000 per year (\$8,000 for account holders age 50 and older) if joint taxable income permits.</p>	<p>Lesser of 25% of W-2 pay or \$70,000 (based on the first \$350,000 of compensation); the contribution is effectively limited to 20% of pay if self-employed.</p>	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$16,500. For employers with 25 employees or fewer, the limit is \$17,600.</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$20,000 (inclusive of an up to \$3,500 catch-up contribution). For employers with 25 employees or fewer, the limit is \$21,450.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (at the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$21,750 (inclusive of an up to \$5,250 super catch-up contribution). For employers with 25 employees or fewer, the limit is \$22,850.</p> <p>Employers with more than 25 employees must either increase the match to 4% or the nonelective to 3% for deferral limits to increase by 10%.</p> <p>The employer must match deferrals dollar-for-dollar, up to 3% of compensation (can be reduced to 1% in two out of five years) or make a 2% nonelective contribution to all eligible employees.</p> <p>Employers may make additional nonelective contributions not to exceed the lesser of 10% of compensation or \$5,100.</p>	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$16,500. For employers with 25 employees or fewer, the limit is \$17,600.</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$20,000 (inclusive of an up to \$3,500 catch-up contribution). For employers with 25 employees or fewer, the limit is \$21,450.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (at the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$21,750 (inclusive of an up to \$5,250 super catch-up contribution). For employers with 25 employees or fewer, the limit is \$22,850.</p> <p>Employers with more than 25 employees must either increase the match to 4% or the nonelective to 3% for deferral limits to increase by 10%.</p> <p>The employer must match deferrals dollar-for-dollar, up to 3% of compensation (can be reduced to 1% in two out of five years) or make a 2% nonelective contribution to all eligible employees.</p> <p>Employers may make additional nonelective contributions not to exceed the lesser of 10% of compensation or \$5,100.</p>	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$23,500. Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$70,000.</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$31,000 (inclusive of an up to \$7,500 catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$77,500.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (at the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$34,750 (inclusive of an up to \$11,250 super catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$81,250.</p> <p>The employer is required to make either a 3% nonelective contribution or 100% of employee deferrals up to 3% of compensation, plus 50% of employee deferrals in excess of 3% up to 5% of compensation (for a total of 4%).</p>	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$23,500. Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$70,000.</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$31,000 (inclusive of an up to \$7,500 catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$77,500.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (at the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$34,750 (inclusive of an up to \$11,250 super catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$81,250.</p> <p>The employer is required to make either a 3% nonelective contribution or 100% of employee deferrals up to 3% of compensation, plus 50% of employee deferrals in excess of 3% up to 5% of compensation (for a total of 4%).</p>

	IRA	Roth IRA	SEP IRA	SIMPLE IRA	Traditional 401(k)	Safe Harbor 401(k)
Deadline to Establish	Tax-filing deadline, not including extensions (usually April 15).	Tax-filing deadline, not including extensions (usually April 15).	Employer's tax-filing deadline, including extension period (if filed for).	October 1 for current year. (A 60-day notice must be given to eligible employees.)	Plan must be established by tax-filing deadline (plus extensions, if filed for).	October 1 to be eligible for current year.
Deadline to Contribute	Tax-filing deadline, not including extensions (usually April 15).	Tax-filing deadline, not including extensions (usually April 15).	Employer's tax-filing deadline, including extension period (if filed for).	Employer contributions by employer's tax-filing date, including extension period (if filed for). Employee salary deferrals should be deposited as soon as administratively possible but no later than 7 calendar days following the last day of the month for which deferrals are withheld.	Employer contributions by employer's tax-filing date, including extension period (if filed for). Salary deferrals as soon as administratively possible, but no later than the 15th of the month following the month in which they were deferred.	Employer contributions by employer's tax-filing date, including extension period (if filed for). Salary deferrals as soon as administratively possible, but no later than the 15th of the month following the month in which they were deferred.
Eligibility Requirements	Must have earned income for the year.	Must have earned income for the year; \$7,000 contribution limit phased out for single filers with MAGI of \$150,000–\$165,000, married filing jointly with MAGI of \$236,000–\$246,000, or married filing separately with MAGI of \$0–\$10,000.	Employer must include all employees who have reached age 21, worked three out of the past five years, and earned at least \$750 in the current year; employer must contribute same percentage to all employees.	All employees who have earned at least \$5,000 during any two preceding years and who are reasonably expected to earn \$5,000 this year.	Varies by plan, but, in general, employers must allow employees who have reached age 21 and who have completed one year of service to participate.	Varies by plan, but, in general, employers must allow employees who have reached age 21 and who have completed one year of service to participate.
Can Be Suitable For	Wage-earning taxpayer and nonworking spouse who file a joint return.	Wage-earning taxpayer and nonworking spouse who file a joint return.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, and nonprofit entities.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, nonprofit entities, and government entities with 100 or fewer eligible employees.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, and nonprofit entities.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, and nonprofit entities.

	IRA	Roth IRA	SEP IRA	SIMPLE IRA	Traditional 401(k)	Safe Harbor 401(k)
Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)	RMDs must begin by April 1 of the year following the year in which the individual turns 73.*	None.	RMDs must begin by April 1 of the year following the year in which the individual turns 73.*	RMDs must begin by April 1 of the year following the year in which the individual turns 73.*	RMDs begin at age 73 or the year in which you retire, whichever is later, but 5% owners must start RMDs at age 73.*	RMDs begin at age 73 or the year in which you retire, whichever is later, but 5% owners must start RMDs at age 73.*
Distributions	Penalty-free distributions include reaching age 59½, death, permanent disability, higher-education expenses, first-time home purchase (with a \$10,000 lifetime limit), payment of health insurance for unemployed, payment of medical expenses (income thresholds may apply), and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (up to \$5,000, additional conditions may apply). For the full list of exceptions to the 10% additional tax, please visit the IRS website listing here .	Cost basis is distributed tax and penalty free. Earnings are tax- and penalty-free if Roth has been open for five years and client meets one of the following exceptions: reaching age 59½, death, disability, or first-time home purchase (\$10,000 lifetime limit). Earnings spent for higher education, payment of medical expenses (income thresholds may apply), and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (up to \$5,000, additional conditions may apply) are penalty free but taxed. Distributions of Roth conversions are always tax free and are penalty free only if the conversion has aged five years or client meets one of the withdrawal exceptions. For the full list of exceptions to the 10% additional tax, please visit the IRS website listing here .	Penalty-free distributions include reaching age 59½, death, permanent disability, higher-education expenses, first-time home purchase (with a \$10,000 lifetime limit), payment of health insurance for unemployed, payment of medical expenses (income thresholds may apply), and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (up to \$5,000, additional conditions may apply).	Penalty-free distributions include reaching age 59½, death, permanent disability, higher-education expenses, first-time home purchase (with a \$10,000 lifetime limit), payment of health insurance for unemployed, payment of medical expenses (income thresholds may apply), and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (up to \$5,000, additional conditions may apply). For the full list of exceptions to the 10% additional tax, please visit the IRS website listing here . Additional penalties apply if one of the above exceptions is not met and distributions occur before the account has been funded for two years.	Penalty-free distributions include reaching the plan's normal retirement age, death, permanent disability, separation from service at age 55, reaching age 59 1/2, and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (if allowed by employer, up to \$5,000, additional conditions may apply). For the full list of exceptions to the 10% additional tax, please visit the IRS website listing here . Plan sponsors can offer additional penalty free distributions for participants affected by major disasters, terminal illness, personal emergency expenses, long-term care insurance and domestic abuse.	Penalty-free distributions include reaching the plan's normal retirement age, death, permanent disability, separation from service at age 55, reaching age 59 1/2, and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (if allowed by employer, up to \$5,000, additional conditions may apply). For the full list of exceptions to the 10% additional tax, please visit the IRS website listing here . Plan sponsors can offer additional penalty free distributions for participants affected by major disasters, terminal illness, personal emergency expenses, long-term care insurance and domestic abuse.

*Please note: For individuals who turned age 70½ before January 1, 2020, RMDs must begin at age 70½. For individuals who turned 72 between January 1, 2020, and January 1, 2022, RMDs must begin at age 72.

	IRA	Roth IRA	SEP IRA	SIMPLE IRA	Traditional 401(k)	Safe Harbor 401(k)
Tax Treatment of Distributions	Generally taxed as ordinary income (excluding nondeductible contributions).	Distributions tax free if they meet the criteria above.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.
Features	Earnings grow tax deferred; contributions may be tax deductible.	Earnings grow tax free; contributions not tax deductible.	Easy to establish and maintain; minimal IRS filings; low cost; flexible contribution limits; employer not committed for future years.	Easy to establish and maintain; pretax contributions may reduce employee's taxable income; no discrimination testing; employer may not run any other retirement plan in conjunction with a SIMPLE IRA.	Pretax contributions may reduce employee's taxable income; flexible plan design.	Pretax contributions reduce employee's taxable income; flexible plan design; allows maximum deferrals for highly compensated employees.
Who Contributes	Individuals	Individuals	Employer	Employer and employees	Employees only or employees and employer	Employer and employees
Vesting	Always 100%.	Always 100%.	Always 100%.	Always 100% for both employer and employee contributions.	100% for employee contributions; vesting for employer matching contributions is maximized at three-year cliff or six-year graded.	100% for employee elective and employer required contributions and required match made by employer; any additional profit sharing may have gradual vesting for employer contributions up to six years or cliff vesting up to three years.
Loan Feature	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	May be permitted	May be permitted
Administration	None	None	None	None	IRS 5500 filings and other ERISA requirements	IRS 5500 filings and other ERISA requirements

Additional Retirement Plan Options

	Individual 401(k)	Profit-Sharing Plan	403(b)	457(b)	Cash Balance Plan	Defined Benefit Plan
Maximum Annual Contribution Limits	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$23,500. Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$70,000.</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$31,000 (inclusive of a \$7,500 catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$77,500.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (by the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$34,750 (inclusive of an \$11,250 super catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$81,250.</p> <p>The employer contributions are limited to a maximum of 25% of compensation; for self-employed, it's based on a specific computation using IRS guidelines.</p>	<p>Contributions are limited to the lesser of 25% of W-2 compensation or \$70,000 (based on first \$350,000 of compensation); contributions are effectively limited to 20% of pay if self-employed.</p>	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$23,500. Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$70,000.</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$31,000 (inclusive of a \$7,500 catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$77,500.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (by the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$34,750 (inclusive of an \$11,250 super catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$81,250.</p>	<p>Employees under age 50 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$23,500. Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$70,000.</p> <p>For governmental 457(b) plans that currently offer catch-up contributions:</p> <p>Employees ages 50 to 59 or older than 63 can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$31,000 (inclusive of a \$7,500 catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$77,500.</p> <p>Employees ages 60, 61, 62, and 63 (by the end of the calendar year) can defer 100% of taxable income up to \$34,750 (inclusive of an \$11,250 super catch-up contribution). Total employer/employee contributions cannot exceed \$81,250.</p>	<p>Contributions are dependent on participant's age and income (older employees generally receive higher contributions) and a formula that is specified in the plan document. It can be either a percentage of pay or a flat dollar amount. An annual interest credit is also included. The rate of return changes each year, but is guaranteed and independent of the plan's investment performance.</p>	<p>In general, the annual benefit for a participant under a defined benefit plan cannot exceed the lesser of 100% of the participant's average compensation for their highest three consecutive calendar years or \$280,000. Actuarial assumptions and computations are required to calculate contributions.</p>

	Individual 401(k)	Profit-Sharing Plan	403(b)	457(b)	Cash Balance Plan	Defined Benefit Plan
Deadline to Establish	Best practice is to establish the plan by December 31 of the year in which you want to start contributing.	Plans must be established by tax-filing deadline plus extensions plan as having been adopted as of the last day of the taxable year.	Plan must be established by business's fiscal year-end, generally December 31.	N/A	Plans must be established by tax-filing deadline plus extensions day of the taxable year.	Plans must be established by tax-filing deadline plus extensions day of the taxable year.
Deadline to Contribute	Best practice is to make the employee deferral contribution by the end of the tax year or soon thereafter. Per the IRS, employer contributions (profit sharing) need to be made by the tax filing deadline, including any extension.	Employer's tax-filing date, including extension period (if filed for).	Employer contributions by employer's tax-filing date, including extension period (if filed for); salary deferrals as soon as possible, but no later than the 15th of the month following the month in which they were deferred.	Employee contributions withheld each pay period and deposited no later than seven days into the plan.	For sole proprietorships and C corporations, April 15 (October 15 if extension filed); for partnerships and S corporations, March 15 (September 15 if extension filed).	Generally, quarterly installment payments of the minimum funding required contributions must be made. The due dates for the installments are 15 days after the end of each quarter. For a calendar-year plan, the installments are due April 15, July 15, October 15, and January 15 (of the following year). Additional contributions required to satisfy the minimum funding requirement for a plan year will be considered timely if made by 8½ months after the end of that year.

	Individual 401(k)	Profit-Sharing Plan	403(b)	457(b)	Cash Balance Plan	Defined Benefit Plan
Eligibility Requirements	Only the business owner and their spouse or partner are eligible; only businesses that include those two individuals may participate in the plan.	Varies by plan, but, in general, employers must allow employees who have reached age 21 and who have completed one year of service to participate.	Employer must provide universal availability to all employees; employer may exclude employees who participate in a governmental 457(b) plan, are nonresident aliens, or normally work fewer than 20 hours/week if the employer expects the employee to work less than 1,000 hours in a 12-month period and in subsequent 12-month periods.	Employees or independent contractors with earned compensation from an eligible employer; employer may choose to offer plan to highly compensated employees or to other particular groups of employees.	Varies by plan.	Varies by plan, but, in general, employers must allow employees who have reached age 21 and who have completed one year of service to participate.
Can Be Suitable For	Businesses (including corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, and nonprofit entities) that employ only the owners and their spouses.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, and nonprofit entities.	Employees of public schools and tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations.	State and local government employees and their agencies, state political subdivisions and their agencies, and tax-exempt organizations.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships that already offer a 401(k) or profit-sharing plan.	Corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships.
Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)	RMDs begin at age 73 or retirement, whichever is later, but 5% owners must start RMDs at age 73.*					
Distributions	Penalty-free distributions include reaching the plan's normal retirement age, death, permanent disability, separation from service at age 55, reaching age 59½, and qualified childbirth or adoption expenses (if allowed by employer, up to \$5,000; additional conditions may apply). For the full list of exceptions to the 10% additional tax, please visit the IRS website listing here.			Penalty-free distributions include separation from service, death, and an unforeseeable emergency allowed by employer.	Penalty-free distributions include reaching the plan's normal retirement age, death, permanent disability, separation from service at age 55, and reaching age 59½.	Normal distributions are allowable upon achievement of the plan's retirement age. Distributions can be in the form of a lump sum or an annuity.
Tax Treatment of Distributions	Generally taxed as ordinary income.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.	All distributions taxed as ordinary income.	All distributions taxed as ordinary income; no 59½ rule for withdrawals.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.	Generally taxed as ordinary income.

*Please note: For individuals who turned age 70½ before January 1, 2020, RMDs must begin at age 70½. For individuals who turned 72 between January 1, 2020, and January 1, 2022, RMDs must begin at age 72.

	Individual 401(k)	Profit-Sharing Plan	403(b)	457(b)	Cash Balance Plan	Defined Benefit Plan
Features	Pretax contributions may reduce employee's taxable income; flexible plan design.	Contributions can vary annually.	Pretax contributions may reduce employee's taxable income; employer may make matching or discretionary contributions.	Pretax contributions may reduce employee's taxable income; plan allows for additional \$23,500 pretax contributions.	Earnings grow tax deferred; allow for higher contribution limits, particularly for older partners and owners, than defined contribution plans. Government backing provided by Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.	Earnings grow tax deferred; allow for higher contribution limits (and deductions) than defined contribution plans. Government backing provided by Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.
Who Contributes	Employees only or employees and employer	Employer	Employees only or employees and employer	Employees	Employer	Employer
Vesting	Always 100%.	Gradual vesting permitted up to six years or cliff vesting up to three years.	100% for employee contributions; gradual vesting for employer contributions permitted up to six years or cliff vesting up to three years.	100% for employee contributions; gradual vesting for employer contributions permitted up to six years or cliff vesting up to three years.	All benefits under a cash balance plan must be fully vested after three years of service.	Can follow a variety of schedules from immediate to spread out over seven years.
Loan Feature	May be permitted	May be permitted	May be permitted	May be permitted	N/A	May be permitted
Administration	IRS 5500 EZ required once plan assets exceed \$250,000; other ERISA requirements.	IRS 5500 filings and other ERISA requirements.	Plan document required for all plans; IRS 5500 filings and other ERISA requirements for ERISA plans.	None.	IRS 5500 filings and other ERISA requirements.	Annual filing of Form 5500 is required. An enrolled actuary must sign the Schedule B of Form 5500.

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