

The background of the entire page is a warm, orange-toned image of a piggy bank. The piggy bank is filled with coins, and some coins are scattered on the surface in front of it. The lighting is soft, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional, suitable for a financial document.

**Roth IRAs**

# **The Roth IRA**

*2019 and 2020*

**Questions & Answers**

## **What is a Roth Individual Retirement Account (Roth IRA)?**

A Roth IRA is a type of tax-preferred savings and investment account authorized by Internal Revenue Code section 408A. The Roth IRA allows you to accumulate assets for retirement purposes and for other purposes, such as transferring to your children or grandchildren after you have died.

## **What are the tax benefits of a Roth IRA?**

A Roth IRA will produce tax-free income if certain rules are met. You or your beneficiary(ies) will not be required to include in income, for income tax purposes, a distribution paid from a Roth IRA, whether it be the return of a contribution or the account's earnings. In some cases, you may be eligible to claim a tax credit because of your Roth IRA contribution.

## **What is the basic concept of a Roth IRA, and what are the associated tax benefits?**

If you are eligible, you may make contributions, within limits, to the Roth IRA. You make these contributions with after-tax dollars. The earnings realized by the Roth IRA are not presently taxed, and if certain distribution rules are met, will never be taxed. For example, if you are age 42 on January 1, 2020, and you contribute \$1,000 a year for 34 years (2020-2053) to a Roth IRA, then your contributions of \$34,000 would accumulate to \$110,434.88 as of December 31, 2053, if an earnings rate of 6% compounded annually were realized. You and your beneficiary(ies) would not pay any federal income tax on the contribution amount of \$34,000 when distributed, because you cannot claim a tax deduction for your contributions. However, the great tax benefit to be realized from a Roth IRA is that you and your beneficiary(ies) will not have to include in your taxable income the earnings of \$76,434.88 (and subsequent future earnings) when distributed to you or your beneficiary(ies), as long as the distributions are qualified distributions, as defined later.

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## **THE CONTRIBUTION RULES**

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### **When do I have to establish the Roth IRA?**

You have until the due date (without extensions) for filing

your federal income tax return, normally April 15, to establish and fund your Roth IRA for the previous tax year.

## **Am I eligible to make an annual contribution to a Roth IRA?**

You are eligible if you satisfy the following two requirements: (1) you have earned income or compensation; and (2) you meet certain income limitations. Be aware that you are eligible to make contributions to a Roth IRA even though you are age 72 or older.

If your income (and your spouse's income, if you are married) is too high, you will not be eligible to make a contribution to a Roth IRA. For 2019, if you are single, you become ineligible when your adjusted gross income is \$137,000 or greater. If you are married, and file a joint return, you become ineligible when the combined adjusted gross income (AGI) of you and your spouse is \$203,000 or greater. If you are married and file a separate return, you become ineligible when your adjusted gross income is \$10,000 or greater.

For a given year, you may be ineligible to contribute to a Roth IRA, but still be eligible to contribute to a traditional IRA .

## **May I contribute to a Roth IRA after age 72 as long as I meet the eligibility requirements?**

Yes, no age limit is imposed for Roth IRA contributions.

## **May I contribute to a Roth IRA even though I'm making 401(k) elective deferral contributions?**

Yes, you may make both types of contributions. In general, the amount you contribute to your Roth IRA is independent of any amount you contribute to the 401(k) plan in which you participate.

## **How much am I eligible to contribute to my Roth IRA for the 2019 and 2020 tax years if I will NOT be at least age 50 as of December 31?**

For 2019 and 2020 you are eligible to contribute the lesser of 100% of your compensation, or \$6,000, as reduced by (1) application of the special income and filing status limitation rule and (2) any amount you contributed to your traditional IRA for the same tax year.

## How much am I eligible to contribute to my Roth IRA for the 2019 and 2020 tax years if I will be at least age 50 as of December 31?

For 2019 and 2020 you are also eligible to contribute the lesser of 100% of your compensation, or \$7,000, as reduced by (1) application of the special income and filing status limitation rule and (2) any amount you contributed to your traditional IRA for the same tax year.

## How is my allowable contribution to a Roth IRA calculated?

There is a special formula which must be used, as described in the "Roth IRA Contribution Chart." The formula is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{AGI-Threshold Level} - \text{Phaseout Level}}{\text{Threshold Level} - \text{Phaseout Level}} = \text{Ineligible Contribution \%}$$

<u>2019 Limits</u> <u>Tax-Filing Status</u>	<u>Threshold Level</u>	<u>Phaseout Level</u>
Single	\$122,000	\$137,000
Married/Joint Return	\$193,000	\$203,000
Married/Separate Return	\$0	\$10,000
<u>2020 Limits</u> <u>Tax-Filing Status</u>	<u>Threshold Level</u>	<u>Phaseout Level</u>
Single	\$124,000	\$139,000
Married/Joint Return	\$196,000	\$206,000
Married/Separate Return	\$0	\$10,000

The result is the percentage which cannot be contributed to the Roth IRA. You must then apply this percentage to the maximum contribution amount and then subtract this amount from the allowed contribution amount to get the amount which you can contribute.

**Example** — Bob and Lynn Brown have adjusted gross income of \$197,000 in 2019, and file a joint tax return. Both are 47 years old. They wish to make contributions to Roth IRAs. How much can each contribute to a Roth IRA? Using the formula for a married taxpayer, filing jointly:

Step 1  $\$197,000 - \$193,000 / \$10,000$

Step 2  $\$4,000 \div \$10,000 = .4$

Step 3  $6,000 \times .4 = \$2,400$  *Ineligible Amount*

**(Note: \$6,000 is used, not \$10,000)**

Step 4  $\$6,000 - \$2,400 = \$3,600$  *Eligible Amount*

This formula must be calculated separately for each spouse, but is based on their combined income. Bob and Lynn could each contribute up to \$3,600 to a Roth IRA in 2019, for a total contribution amount of \$7,200.

## When might I or my spouse be eligible to use the spousal IRA contribution rules?

If your compensation is less than the \$6,000 or \$7,000 limit, as applicable, then you are permitted to use your spouse's compensation when making your Roth IRA contribution. This generally means both of you will be able to contribute \$6,000 or \$7,000 as applicable. For example, you have compensation of \$3,500 or \$0.00 and your spouse has compensation of \$42,000. You are both age 54. You are eligible to contribute \$7,000 to your Roth IRA. Your spouse is also eligible to contribute \$7,000. The following rules must be satisfied:

- You and your spouse must each have your own traditional IRA.
- You must be married as of the end of the tax year (i.e. December 31).
- You must file a joint income tax return.
- You must have compensation includible in gross income which is less than that of your spouse.

The combined contribution by both spouses must equal or be less than their combined eligible compensation.

## The following Charts summarize the special income and filing status rules for 2019 and 2020:

### **Roth IRA Contribution Chart for 2019**

Amount of AGI and Filing Status

#### **Single, Head of Household or Qualifying Widow(er)**

Below \$122,000	Entitled to full contribution amount
\$122,000-\$136,999.99	Entitled to prorated contribution amount—use special formula*
\$137,000 or more	No contribution permissible

\*Explanation of special formula. Multiply the permissible contribution by the following ratio: amount of adjusted gross income in excess of \$122,000/\$15,000. This will give you a ratio that determines the amount you cannot contribute. Round to the lowest \$10.00.

#### **Married Filing Jointly**

Below \$193,000	Entitled to full contribution amount.
\$193,000-202,999.99	Entitled to prorated contribution amount—use special formula.*
\$203,000 or more	No contribution permissible.

\*Explanation of special formula. Multiply the permissible contribution by the following ratio: amount of adjusted gross income in excess of \$193,000/\$10,000. This will give you a ratio that determines the amount you cannot contribute. Round to the lowest \$10.00.

#### **Married Filing Separate Returns**

\$0-\$9,999.99	Entitled to prorated contribution amount—use special formula*
\$10,000 or more	No contribution permissible

\*Explanation of special formula. Multiply the permissible contribution by the following ratio: amount of adjusted gross income in excess of \$0/\$10,000. This will give you a ratio that determines the amount you cannot contribute. Round to the lowest \$10.00.

## Roth IRA Contribution Chart for 2020

Amount of AGI and Filing Status

### Single, Head of Household or Qualifying Widow(er)

Below \$124,000	Entitled to full contribution amount
\$124,000-\$138,999.99	Entitled to prorated contribution amount - use special formula*
\$139,000 or more	No contribution permissible

\*Explanation of special formula. Multiply the permissible contribution by the following ratio: amount of adjusted gross income in excess of \$124,000/\$15,000. This will give you a ratio that determines the amount you cannot contribute. Round to the lowest \$10.00.

### Married Filing Jointly

Below \$196,000	Entitled to full contribution amount.
\$196,000-205,999.99	Entitled to prorated contribution amount - use special formula*
\$206,000 or more	No contribution permissible.

\*Explanation of special formula. Multiply the permissible contribution by the following ratio: amount of adjusted gross income in excess of \$196,000/\$10,000. This will give you a ratio that determines the amount you cannot contribute. Round to the lowest \$10.00.

### Married Filing Separate Returns

\$0-\$9,999.99	Entitled to prorated contribution amount - use special formula*
\$10,000 or more	No contribution permissible

\*Explanation of special formula. Multiply the permissible contribution by the following ratio: amount of adjusted gross income in excess of \$0/\$10,000. This will give you a ratio that determines the amount you cannot contribute. Round to the lowest \$10.00.

## To what extent may I be entitled to a tax credit for my Roth IRA contributions?

You may be eligible for a tax credit for contributions you make to your traditional and/or Roth IRA. A formula is used to calculate your credit. Your credit may vary from \$1 to \$1,000, depending on the amount you contribute to your Roth IRA, your filing status and your modified adjusted gross income. Because of the complexity of this credit, you will want to review IRS Publication 590-A for a complete explanation.

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## ROLLOVER CONTRIBUTIONS

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## If I receive a distribution from one Roth IRA, may I roll over the funds to a second Roth IRA?

A rollover from a Roth IRA is a tax-free distribution to you of cash or other assets that you contribute to another Roth IRA or the same Roth IRA in order to continue the tax benefits. You must comply with two rules. First, you must com-

plete your rollover within 60 days. Secondly, you must comply with the rule limiting a person to rolling over only one distribution within a 12-month period (365 days).

### **May I roll over or directly roll over funds from a qualified plan, a governmental 457 plan, or a section 403(b) plan to a Roth IRA?**

Such a rollover is permitted. The sponsor is required to furnish you with distribution and rollover information so you can make an informed decision how you want to structure your distribution and/or direct rollover. It might be taxable or it might be nontaxable.

### **May I convert part or all of my traditional IRA to a Roth IRA?**

Anyone having a traditional IRA is eligible to convert funds from their traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. An individual's RMD for the current year is ineligible to be converted.

You can convert amounts from your traditional IRA to a Roth IRA by using any of the following three methods. The first method is the standard rollover. You can receive a distribution from a traditional IRA and roll it over (contribute it) to a Roth IRA within 60 days of the distribution. The second method is a trustee-to-trustee transfer. The third method is you direct the custodian/trustee of your traditional IRA to transfer an amount from your traditional IRA to your Roth IRA.

Whatever conversion method is used, the custodian/ trustee of the traditional IRA will prepare a Form 1099-R to report the distribution, and the custodian/trustee of the Roth IRA will prepare a 5498 to report the conversion contribution.

Any Roth IRA conversion made on or after January 1, 2018, is irrevocable. It cannot be undone by recharacterizing it.

### **Why might I want to convert my traditional IRA to a Roth IRA?**

You may find it advantageous to incur the tax consequences of a present distribution in order to qualify to earn the right to have no taxation when the earnings are ultimately distributed from the Roth IRA.

### **What are the tax consequences of converting funds from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA?**

In general, the amount distributed to you from your traditional IRA will be included in your income in the year of receipt and will be subject to income taxes for that year. The 10% premature distribution excise tax, however, will not be owed, even if you

are younger than age 59½. No income tax is paid with respect to that portion of your conversion comprised of basis (i.e. nontaxable funds.) The tax rules permit you to un-do a conversion contribution for any reason. You have until April 15 of the following year (plus extensions) to recharacterize some or all of your conversion, this allows you to lessen the tax amount to be paid.

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## THE WITHDRAWAL RULES

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### **When may I start to withdraw money or assets from my Roth IRA?**

You may begin withdrawals at any time. However, you will want to understand the income tax consequences.

### **Must I commence required minimum distributions from my Roth IRA at age 70½?**

No. The required minimum distribution rules for living accountholders (age 70½ or older) do not apply to distributions from a Roth IRA.

### **What distributions from a Roth IRA will be tax free?**

“Qualified distributions” will be tax free. To be a qualified distribution, the distribution must occur after you have met the five-year holding requirement, and the distribution is made to you (1) after you have attained age 59½, (2) after you have become disabled, (3) because of a first-time home purchase, or (4) to your beneficiary after your death.

### **When will I have met the 5-year rule in order to determine if the withdrawal from my Roth IRA is a Qualified Distribution?**

The five-year period starts on January 1 of the year for which the first contribution to a Roth IRA is made. All Roth IRA contributions, including rollovers, are aggregated for purposes of satisfying the 5-year rule. Exception: a distinct five-year period applies to inherited Roth IRAs.

However, for IRS reporting purposes, the Roth IRA custodian/trustee determines if the 5-year period has been met based on the contributions made to it and does not consider contributions you made at another Roth IRA custodian/trustee. Therefore, your Form 1099-R may indicate your distribution was nonqualified, when in fact, it was qualified. You will explain on your tax return that your distribution is tax-free as you met the 5-year requirement because of other Roth IRA contributions made with another Roth IRA Custodian/Trustee.



## **Does the law define the order for distributions?**

Yes. The law mandates the following order for distributions: (1) from regular/annual contributions; (2) from conversion contributions on a first-in-first-out basis and (3) from earnings. The order is determined as of the end of the taxable year, and each category must be exhausted before the next is used. With respect to a conversion contribution, it is treated as being made first from the portion, if any, that was includible in gross income as a result of the conversion.

## **May I withdraw the basis in my Roth IRA at any time without tax or penalty?**

Normally, yes. Even though you may not have met the 5-year requirement, you may withdraw your basis at any time without being taxed on the amount. Because of the tax-ordering rules, the first funds distributed from a Roth IRA are your basis. Because a Roth IRA is funded with after-tax dollars, you will not be taxed again on this amount.

It is possible that a financial institution may impose an early-withdrawal penalty for a Roth IRA. Such penalty would be indicated in the information you received when you established the Roth IRA.

## **What Roth IRA distributions will be taxed?**

To the extent that a nonqualified distribution is the return of the earnings on your contributions, you will need to include this distribution amount in income and pay the related tax.

## **May a Roth IRA be used to save for a down payment on a first home?**

Yes. A Roth IRA would be an excellent savings vehicle to accumulate funds to purchase a first home.

## **Are there advantages to funding a Roth IRA instead of placing funds in a normal savings account?**

As with a normal savings account, you are allowed to remove your basis from a Roth IRA tax free at any time. However, with a normal savings account, you will have to include any interest earned in your taxable income for the year (whether you withdraw it or not). The interest in a Roth IRA grows tax free, and will never be taxed if it is withdrawn as a qualified distribution.

## **Will the 10% additional tax ever be assessed?**

Yes. If you are not yet age 59½ (and none of the other

exceptions apply at the time you withdraw funds from your Roth IRA), then you will be liable to pay the 10% additional tax if you withdraw income and it is taxable. You may also have to pay the 10% additional tax if you do a conversion before attaining age 59½ and then you take a subsequent distribution of the conversion within a 5-year period when none of the exceptions to the 10% tax apply. A separate 5-year period applies to each conversion and commences on the date of the distribution.

### **Are there exceptions to the age 59½ rule?**

Yes. You will not owe the 10% additional tax even though you are withdrawing income with respect to a nonqualified distribution when you qualify for an exception. You should review Form 5329 for an explanation of the exceptions. One exception is if you're the beneficiary of a deceased Roth IRA owner. Another exception is, you use the distribution to buy or build a first home.

### **Are there rules which allow me to correct or undo a Roth contribution?**

Yes. You may correct a Roth contribution by either withdrawing it according to the withdrawal of excess contribution rules or by recharacterizing your Roth contribution according to special recharacterization rules.

### **What happens to my Roth IRA after I die?**

If your spouse is your beneficiary, most likely he or she will elect to treat your Roth IRA as his or her own Roth IRA since he or she is not required to take a distribution while alive. However, if you have designated one or more nonspouse beneficiaries, then certain beneficiaries will continue to be able to use the life distribution rule, but many beneficiaries will be required to close the inherited Roth IRA by December 31 of the year containing the tenth (10th) anniversary of your death. Only an eligible designated beneficiary is entitled to use the life distribution rule. The following are eligible designated beneficiaries: a beneficiary who is disabled, a beneficiary who is chronically ill, certain trusts, a beneficiary who is not more than 10 years younger than you and your child who has not reached the age of majority. Once the child reaches the age of majority, she or he will have 10 years in which to close the inherited Roth IRA. As long as the 5-year Roth IRA taxation rule has been met by either you or your beneficiary, a distribution to your beneficiary is tax-free.