July 2026

Welcome to *Fiduciary Insights*, our monthly newsletter that keeps you in touch with issues, trends, events, and insights of significance to individuals connected with the retirement plan industry. The articles have been carefully selected from a variety of high-quality sources.

2026 IRS Limits for Retirement Plans have been Released, Please See Link Below

" 2026 IRS Limits for Retirement Plans"

Reminder:
Please contact us to schedule enrollment/update meetings and plan level review meetings.
Also, we would like to schedule retirement planning sessions with your near retiree employees.

-- In This Month's Issue --

Quick Links

Benchmarking Your 401(k): A Fiduciary Best Practice

4 Hidden Tradeoffs of Bundled 401(k) Providers

Payroll providers often market bundled 401(k) plans as a simple, all-in-one solution. The convenience of having

Benchmarking allows plan sponsors to compare fees, investment offerings, performance, and plan features with industry standards, which can help reduce fiduciary liability. Benchmarking your employee retirement plan is a very important step in protecting the plan sponsor from fiduciary liability. If you work with an Independent Financial Advisor who is a Certified Plan Fiduciary Advisor (CPFA), benchmarking can also lead to lower fees, easier administration, and increased employee satisfaction. Source:psca.org

Youngest Workers Get a 10-Year Head Start on Retirement Savings

A new study finds that the youngest generation in the workforce is starting to save for retirement 10 years earlier than their eldest peers — and feel more confident that they're on track for retirement. Those findings come from Bank of America's newly released 2026 Workplace Benefits Report, which is based on a survey of both employees and employers on the latest trends and issues shaping employee benefits.
The study revealed that, even though more than half of employees overall wish they had started saving for retirement earlier, younger workers are taking action, with Gen Z starting to save for retirement by age 24 (on average), compared to age 34 for Baby Boomers and age 33 for Gen X.
Source:napa-net.org

Private vs. Public Pensions: How Does Their Funding Stack Up?

Running any pension plan entails challenges and has characteristics different from those of other retirement saving vehicles. But even among pension plans themselves there are variations.
Pension plans run by private-sector employers and those run by governmental entities for their employees share their ultimate purpose of providing dependable and predictable revenue to their covered retirees. Still, however, they do vary from each other. One of the ways that private and public pension plans differ is in their funding status. Source:asppa-net.org

Cash Balance Plans: Key Deduction and Funding Considerations for CPAs

As a CPA, you are likely familiar with contribution and deduction limits in defined contribution plans. However, cash balance plans may require additional consideration. This is because allowable contributions and deductions are determined through actuarial calculations, in addition to fixed statutory limits. As a result, an enrolled actuary is required to determine the plan's minimum required and maximum deductible contributions each year. Because cash balance plans are defined benefit plans, annual contribution requirements can vary based on participant demographics, compensation, plan design, investment payroll, recordkeeping, and retirement plan administration under one roof can be appealing, especially for small and midsize businesses. However, convenience does not always translate into the best long-term outcome for the plan or its participants. For plan sponsors, understanding the potential drawbacks of bundled payroll provider 401(k) plans is essential when fulfilling fiduciary responsibilities and ensuring employees receive a competitive retirement benefit. Source:consultrms.com

Alternatives gain traction in 401(k) plans as DOL rules open the door

Nearly half of defined contribution plan sponsors want to know more about adding alternative investments to their 401(k) menus, with the largest plans showing the sharpest jump in interest, according to new research. Escalent's 2026 Retirement Planscape report, part of its Cogent Syndicated series, found that 44% of DC plan sponsors are interested in learning more about alternatives. The annual study polls more than 1,000 401(k) plan sponsors and tracks how leading recordkeepers and DC investment managers stack up on brand strength and sponsor experience. Source:investmentnews.com

How Plan Sponsors Should Be Evaluating Their Recordkeeper

Every plan sponsor has sat through an investment advisor or recordkeeper review that spends 45 minutes on fund performance and 5 minutes on everything else. That ratio is backwards. The investment menu matters, but it's one piece of a much larger relationship, and it's usually the piece that's easiest to evaluate. The bigger questions, the ones that actually determine whether a plan works, tend to get skipped. In our decades of experience working with plan sponsors, we've seen time and time again where glossing over the critical aspects of an employer benefits plan can come back to haunt plan sponsors later. Let's examine what a good plan evaluation should include. Source:planpilot.com

How Plan Advisers Smooth Communications Between Providers, Clients

Advisers are increasingly the central hub for the multi-provider ecosystem, connecting recordkeepers, third-party administrators, investment providers and clients. A growing part of retirement plan advisers' work is helping different parties communicate. Recordkeepers and other providers are shifting toward self-service models, pushing more operational responsibility onto advisers, who then have to share provider needs and information. . Source:planadviser.com

Retirement Plan Cybersecurity Insurance

At the PSCA national conference in May, one of the sessions discussed the current landscape of retirement performance, and the plan's funded status. Understanding a few key rules can help CPAs better advise clients who sponsor these plans. Source: spconsultants.com

The Participant Case for Retirement Plan Auto Portability

Early cash outs, voluntary and involuntary, when employees change jobs, greatly damages their retirement security. Auto-portability, which moves small balances between employers automatically, can be part of the solution. Today's workforce is more mobile than ever — but their retirement savings shouldn't be left behind. Each time workers change jobs, they face an important decision: what to do with their retirement account. For many — especially those with smaller balances — this moment often leads to costly mistakes, including cashing out savings early, or winding up in a dead-end safe harbor IRA that charges excessive fees and is invested in low-yielding default investment funds. Auto portability changes that. Source:psca.org

Dual-Class ETFs, Mutual Funds Could Reshape 401(k) Landscape

A recent SEC ruling on dual-class share structures may allow ETFs to overcome operational hurdles that have kept them out of retirement plans for decades. In the 2000s, when ETFs started to explode in the retail market, a couple of high-flying firms like iShares and Nasdaq announced their intent to enter the 401(k) market with great fanfare and compelling arguments. Though there are and were great advantages to ETFs over mutual funds, like price, efficiency and transparency, due to record-keeper operational challenges, ETFs never took off beyond being building blocks within professionally managed investments like target-date funds. Source:wealthmanagement.com

What Employers Need to Know About IRAs and the Saver's Match

Learn how TrumpIRA.gov and the Saver's Match could expand retirement savings access, which workers and account types may be affected, and what plan sponsors should consider as 2027 implementation approaches. TrumpIRA.gov is a platform that will connect workers who do not have access to employer-sponsored retirement plans with high-quality, low-cost traditional individual retirement accounts (IRAs) offered by private-sector financial institutions. Why It Matters: Boosting awareness about IRAs is important in 2026 to prepare for the Saver's Match in 2027. Eligible workers must have a retirement plan that can accept the Saver's Match (when it becomes available) but because many workers face barriers to setting up an IRA, the Trump marketplace will make set up quick and easy. Source:ifebp.org

plan litigation. One of the recommendations was to help protect the plan was to review your fiduciary liability insurance and make sure it has a cybersecurity rider. We asked in last week's QOTW if plan sponsors have such a policy, or if they have a separate corporate policy. Forty percent of respondents stated that they have a cybersecurity rider to their fiduciary liability policy, 37 percent have a separate cybersecurity insurance policy, and 15 percent do not have a policy that covers cybersecurity breaches (the rest were unsure). Source:psca.org

Treasury Department Unveils Trump Account Investment Lineup

In gearing up for Trump Accounts to go live on July 4, the U.S. Department of the Treasury today announced the investment lineup for the accounts. The lineup, according to the announcement, includes the initial default investment that will be available at launch and four additional low-cost index fund options that responsible parties will be able to elect in the coming months. At launch, all contributions to Trump Accounts will be invested in the State Street SPDR Portfolio S&P 500 ETF (SPYM) a low-cost exchange-traded fund (ETF) that tracks the performance of the S&P 500 Index. Source:napa-net.org

PEPs Become Key Part of Recordkeepers' Growth Strategy

A Cerulli report found that 71% of recordkeepers call the pooled employer plans a major or moderate business priority. More than 50,000 employers in the U.S. have joined a pooled employer plan, creating opportunities for recordkeepers to grow their businesses and differentiate their organizations in the retirement plan marketplace, according to new data from Cerulli. PEPs first launched 5.5 years ago after being authorized in the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act of 2019. The PEP market boomed to about $30 billion in assets as of the end of 2025, according to a recent report from the Georgetown Center for Retirement Initiatives. Source:plansponsor.com

Western Benefits & Pension Council
Please visit **westernpension.org** for all current and upcoming programs.

Small Business Council of America
Please visit the Small Business Council of America (SBCA) website at **SBCA.net**. The SBCA is the only national organization whose sole purpose is to represent the interests of privately held businesses in the areas of federal income and estate tax, retirement, pension, healthcare, and other employee benefits concerns.

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Online Resources
Our company website is filled with resources for your financial planning needs. Please visit: **lwarner.com**.

WPBC
Please find all the upcoming panel and speaking events for Western Pension and Benefits Council at: **westernpension.org**.

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