

2021 Limitations Adjusted as Provided in Section 415(d), etc.

Notice 2020-79

Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code) provides for dollar limitations on benefits and contributions under qualified retirement plans. Section 415(d) requires that the Secretary of the Treasury annually adjust these limits for cost-of-living increases. Other limitations applicable to deferred compensation plans are also affected by these adjustments under § 415. Under § 415(d), the adjustments are to be made under adjustment procedures similar to those used to adjust benefit amounts under § 215(i)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act.

Cost-of-Living Adjusted Limits for 2021

Effective January 1, 2021, the limitation on the annual benefit under a defined benefit plan under § 415(b)(1)(A) remains unchanged at \$230,000.

For a participant who separated from service before January 1, 2021, the participant's limitation under a defined benefit plan under § 415(b)(1)(B) is computed by multiplying the participant's compensation limitation, as adjusted through 2020, by 1.0122.

The limitation for defined contribution plans under § 415(c)(1)(A) is increased for 2021 from \$57,000 to \$58,000.

The Code provides that various other dollar amounts are to be adjusted at the same time and in the same manner as the dollar limitation of § 415(b)(1)(A). After taking into account the applicable rounding rules, the amounts for 2021 are as follows:

The limitation under § 402(g)(1) on the exclusion for elective deferrals described in § 402(g)(3) remains unchanged at \$19,500.

The annual compensation limit under §§ 401(a)(17), 404(l), 408(k)(3)(C), and 408(k)(6)(D)(ii) is increased from \$285,000 to \$290,000.

The dollar limitation under § 416(i)(1)(A)(i) concerning the definition of "key employee" in a top-heavy plan remains unchanged at \$185,000.

The dollar amount under § 409(o)(1)(C)(ii) for determining the maximum account balance in an employee stock ownership plan subject to a 5-year distribution period is increased from \$1,150,000 to \$1,165,000, while the dollar amount used to determine the lengthening of the 5-year distribution period remains unchanged at \$230,000.

The limitation used in the definition of "highly compensated employee" under § 414(q)(1)(B) remains unchanged at \$130,000.

The dollar limitation under § 414(v)(2)(B)(i) for catch-up contributions to an applicable employer plan other than a plan described in § 401(k)(11) or § 408(p) for individuals aged 50 or over remains unchanged at \$6,500. The dollar limitation under § 414(v)(2)(B)(ii) for catch-up contributions to an applicable employer plan described in § 401(k)(11) or § 408(p) for individuals aged 50 or over remains unchanged at \$3,000.

The annual compensation limitation under § 401(a)(17) for eligible participants in certain governmental plans that, under the plan as in effect on July 1, 1993, allowed cost-of-living adjustments to the compensation limitation under the plan under § 401(a)(17) to be taken into account, is increased from \$425,000 to \$430,000.

The compensation amount under § 408(k)(2)(C) regarding simplified employee pensions (SEPs) is increased from \$600 to \$650.

The limitation under § 408(p)(2)(E) regarding SIMPLE retirement accounts remains unchanged at \$13,500.

The limitation on the aggregate amount of length of service awards accruing with respect to any year of service for any bona fide volunteer under § 457(e)(11)(B)(ii) concerning deferred compensation plans of state and local governments and tax-exempt organizations remains unchanged at \$6,000.

The limitation on deferrals under § 457(e)(15) concerning deferred compensation plans of state and local governments and tax-exempt organizations remains unchanged at \$19,500.

The limitation under § 664(g)(7) concerning the qualified gratuitous transfer of qualified employer securities to an employee stock ownership plan remains unchanged at \$50,000.

The compensation amount under § 1.61-21(f)(5)(i) of the Income Tax Regulations concerning the definition of “control employee” for fringe benefit valuation purposes remains unchanged at \$115,000. The compensation amount under § 1.61-21(f)(5)(iii) is increased from \$230,000 to \$235,000.

The dollar limitation on premiums paid with respect to a qualifying longevity annuity contract under § 1.401(a)(9)-6, A-17(b)(2)(i) of the Income Tax Regulations remains unchanged at \$135,000.

The Code provides that the \$1,000,000,000 threshold used to determine whether a multiemployer plan is a systemically important plan under § 432(e)(9)(H)(v)(III)(aa) is adjusted using the cost-of-living adjustment provided under § 432(e)(9)(H)(v)(III)(bb). After taking the applicable rounding rule into account, the threshold used to determine whether a multiemployer plan is a systemically important plan under § 432(e)(9)(H)(v)(III)(aa) is increased from \$1,135,000,000 to \$1,176,000,000.

The Code also provides that several retirement-related amounts are to be adjusted using the cost-of-living adjustment under § 1(f)(3). After taking the applicable rounding rules into account, the amounts for 2021 are as follows:

The adjusted gross income limitation under § 25B(b)(1)(A) for determining the retirement savings contributions credit for married taxpayers filing a joint return is increased from \$39,000 to \$39,500; the limitation under § 25B(b)(1)(B) is increased from \$42,500 to \$43,000; and the limitation under §§ 25B(b)(1)(C) and 25B(b)(1)(D) is increased from \$65,000 to \$66,000.

The adjusted gross income limitation under § 25B(b)(1)(A) for determining the retirement savings contributions credit for taxpayers filing as head of household is increased from \$29,250 to \$29,625; the limitation under § 25B(b)(1)(B) is increased from \$31,875 to \$32,250; and the limitation under §§ 25B(b)(1)(C) and 25B(b)(1)(D) is increased from \$48,750 to \$49,500.

The adjusted gross income limitation under § 25B(b)(1)(A) for determining the retirement savings contributions credit for all other taxpayers is increased from \$19,500 to \$19,750; the limitation under § 25B(b)(1)(B) is increased from \$21,250 to \$21,500; and the limitation under §§ 25B(b)(1)(C) and 25B(b)(1)(D) is increased from \$32,500 to \$33,000.

The deductible amount under § 219(b)(5)(A) for an individual making qualified retirement contributions remains unchanged at \$6,000.

The applicable dollar amount under § 219(g)(3)(B)(i) for determining the deductible amount of an IRA contribution for taxpayers who are active participants filing a joint return or as a qualifying widow(er) is increased from \$104,000 to \$105,000. The applicable dollar amount under § 219(g)(3)(B)(ii) for all other taxpayers who are active participants (other than married taxpayers filing separate returns) is increased from \$65,000 to \$66,000. If an individual or the individual's spouse is an active participant, the applicable dollar amount under § 219(g)(3)(B)(iii) for a married individual filing a separate return is not subject to an annual cost-of-living adjustment and remains \$0. The applicable dollar amount under § 219(g)(7)(A) for a taxpayer who is not an active participant but whose spouse is an active participant is increased from \$196,000 to \$198,000.

Accordingly, under § 219(g)(2)(A), the deduction for taxpayers making contributions to a traditional IRA is phased out for single individuals and heads of household who are active participants in a qualified plan (or another retirement plan specified in § 219(g)(5)) and have adjusted gross incomes (as defined in § 219(g)(3)(A)) between \$66,000 and \$76,000, increased from between \$65,000 and \$75,000. For married couples filing jointly, if the spouse who makes the IRA contribution is an active participant, the income phase-out range is between \$105,000 and \$125,000, increased from between \$104,000 and \$124,000. For an IRA contributor who is not an active participant and is married to someone who is an active participant, the deduction is phased out if the couple's income is between \$198,000 and \$208,000, increased from between \$196,000 and \$206,000. For a married individual filing a separate return who is an active participant, the phase-out range is not subject to an annual cost-of-living adjustment and remains \$0 to \$10,000.

The adjusted gross income limitation under § 408A(c)(3)(B)(ii)(I) for determining the maximum Roth IRA contribution for married taxpayers filing a joint return or for taxpayers filing as a qualifying widow(er) is increased from \$196,000 to \$198,000. The adjusted gross income limitation under § 408A(c)(3)(B)(ii)(II) for all other taxpayers (other than married taxpayers filing separate returns) is increased from \$124,000 to \$125,000. The applicable dollar amount under § 408A(c)(3)(B)(ii)(III) for a married individual filing a separate return is not subject to an annual cost-of-living adjustment and remains \$0.

Accordingly, under § 408A(c)(3)(A), the adjusted gross income phase-out range for taxpayers making contributions to a Roth IRA is \$198,000 to \$208,000 for married couples filing jointly, increased from \$196,000 to \$206,000. For single individuals and

heads of household, the income phase-out range is \$125,000 to \$140,000, increased from \$124,000 to \$139,000. For a married individual filing a separate return, the phase-out range is not subject to an annual cost-of-living adjustment and remains \$0 to \$10,000.

Drafting Information

The principal author of this notice is Tom Morgan of the Office of the Associate Chief Counsel (Employee Benefits, Exempt Organizations, and Employment Taxes). However, other personnel from the IRS participated in the development of this guidance. For further information regarding this notice, contact Mr. Morgan at 202-317-6700 or John Heil at 443-853-5519 (not toll-free calls).