

Know Your Options:

What To Do With Your Retirement Savings¹

It's important to understand the options for the savings you have in your former employer's retirement plan. If you are eligible to take your money out (this is known as a distribution), there are typically four possible options.

There are advantages and drawbacks for each option. You should consider the differences in investment options, fees and expenses, tax implications, services and penalty-free withdrawals.

This summary can help you identify some important considerations.² There may be other factors to consider due to your specific needs and situation. You may wish to consult with your tax or legal advisor.

Retirement Savings Options

- Roll savings into an Individual Retirement Account (IRA)
- Keep savings in your former employer's retirement plan (if allowed)
- Roll savings to your new employer's retirement plan
- Cash out savings and close the account

(May use a combination of these options)

Retirement Savings Options

Roll savings into an IRA

Advantages

- Maintains tax-deferred status of savings
- Continue to make contributions and save for retirement
- Combine other qualified plans or IRA savings into one account
- Offers greater control as it's your account and you make the decisions
- Offers broad range of investment options to fit needs as they change over time
- Protected from bankruptcy
- May have the services of a financial professional to help with investing and retirement planning
- Flexibility when setting up periodic or unscheduled withdrawals
- May help with planning and managing required minimum distributions at age 70½

Drawbacks

- Investment expenses and account fees may be higher than those of employer plans
- No fiduciary required to prudently monitor the cost and quality of the investment options
- IRS penalty-free withdrawals generally not allowed until age 59½
- Loans not allowed. Can only access money by taking a taxable distribution
- Limited protection from creditors
- In-kind transfers of company stock to an IRA will result in appreciated value being taxed as ordinary income at withdrawal from the IRA

It's important to know the types and range of investments and fees of an IRA.

Keep savings in your former employer's plan (if allowed)

Advantages

- Maintains tax-deferred status of savings
- Keeps current investment choices
- Preserves any guaranteed interest rate
- Keeps ownership of company stock in the account where it may have certain tax benefits at withdrawal
- Fees in employer plan may be lower than similar individual accounts
- Plan fiduciary required to prudently monitor the cost and quality of the investments options
- IRS penalty-free withdrawals if you're at least 55 years old in the year you left your job
- Protected from creditors and bankruptcy
- Plan may provide access to planning tools, educational resources and phone helpline

Check with your former employer's plan administrator to confirm plan details and requirements.

Drawbacks

- Changes made to the plan by your former employer will impact you (i.e., plan investments, fees, services, plan providers, plan termination)
- Investment choices limited to those offered through your former employer's retirement plan
- Subjects you to limitations of the plan, including income distribution provisions when you retire
- Account may be assessed fees for plan administration or other reasons
- Access to personalized investment advice or advice that takes into account your other assets or particular needs may not be available through the retirement plan
- No new contributions allowed

Roll savings to your new employer's plan

This is an option if you are joining a company that offers a retirement plan.

Advantages

- Maintains tax-deferred status of savings
- Continue to make contributions and save for retirement
- Combine other qualified plans or IRA savings into one account
- Fees in employer plan may be lower than similar individual accounts
- Plan fiduciary required to prudently monitor the cost and quality of the investments options
- IRS penalty-free withdrawals if you're at least 55 years old in the year you leave your new job^{*}
- Protected from creditors and bankruptcy
- Plan may provide access to planning tools, educational resources and phone helpline
- Loan provisions may allow borrowing from the rolled over money
- No required minimum distribution at age 70½ from a current employer's plan is required, unless you are a 5% or more owner of the company

Check with your former employer's plan administrator to confirm plan details and requirements.

Drawbacks

- Changes made to the plan by your employer will impact you (i.e., plan investments, fees, services, plan providers, plan termination)
- Investment choices limited to those the plan offers
- Subjects you to limitations of the plan, including income distribution provisions when you retire
- Account may be assessed fees for plan administration or other reasons
- Access to personalized investment advice or advice that takes into account your other assets or particular needs may not be available through the retirement plan
- Plan may offer fewer or more expensive investment options than your former employer's plan
- May be more restrictive on withdrawals while employed
- Roll-ins may not be allowed or an eligibility period may need to be satisfied
- In-kind transfers of company stock will result in appreciated value being taxed as ordinary income at withdrawal from the retirement plan

Cash out savings and close the account

Advantages

- Immediate access to cash
- May see significant tax advantage for company stock that has substantially appreciated
- If after-tax contributions were made, could take these amounts tax-free (though you will be required to pay tax on the earnings of these contributions)

If this money is no longer set aside for retirement, will you have the savings you need when you want to retire or can no longer work?

Drawbacks

- At distribution, 20% withheld on the taxable account balance for pre-payment of federal income taxes
- State taxes and a 10% early distribution penalty may also apply on taxable account balance
- May move you to a higher tax bracket
- Forfeits future tax-deferred growth potential
- Not protected from creditors or bankruptcy

^{*}In-service withdrawals may be allowed while you are still working for the company sponsoring the retirement plan. Check with the plan administrator for details and requirements.

¹These considerations were prepared for pre-tax 401(k) accounts. Some – but not all – of these considerations may also apply to other types of plans and/or accounts (e.g., Roth after-tax accounts). You may wish to consult a tax advisor if you participate in a different type of plan or hold a different type of account.

²These descriptions are for general educational purposes and should not be construed as advice or recommendations. This is not tax or legal advice and you may wish to consult with your tax or legal advisors on these issues.

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