

THE ROUND TABLE

Have You Checked Your Social Security Statement Lately?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides personalized Social Security Statements to help Americans age 18 and older better understand the benefits that Social Security offers. Your Statement contains a detailed record of your earnings and estimates of retirement, disability, and survivor benefits — information that can help you plan for your financial future.

You can view your Social Security Statement online at any time by creating a *my* Social Security account at the SSA's website, ssa.gov/myaccount. If you're not registered for an online account and are not yet receiving benefits, you'll receive a Statement in the mail every year, starting at age 60.

Monthly benefit estimates

Your Social Security Statement tells you whether you've earned enough credits by working and paying Social Security taxes to qualify for retirement and disability benefits and, if you qualify, how much you might receive. Generally, monthly retirement benefits are projected for up to nine claiming ages from 62 to 70. If you qualify, you can also see how much your survivors might receive each month in the event of your death.

The amounts listed are estimates based on your average earnings in the past and a projection of future earnings. Actual benefits you receive may be different if your earnings increase or decrease in the future. Amounts may also be affected by other factors, including cost-of-living increases (estimates are in today's dollars) and other income you receive. Estimates are based on current law, which may change.

Annual earnings record

In addition to benefit information, your Social Security Statement contains a year-by-year record of your earnings. This record is updated when your employer reports your earnings (or if you're self-employed, when you report your own earnings). Earnings are generally reported annually, so your most recent earnings may not yet be on your Statement.

Because Social Security benefits are based on average lifetime earnings, it's important to make sure your earnings have been reported correctly. Compare your earnings record against past tax returns or W-2s. If you find errors, let the Social Security Administration know right away by calling (800) 772-1213.



Because estimates change over time, check your Social Security Statement annually to stay on top of future benefits you or your family members might receive.

Key Retirement and Tax Numbers for 2025

Every year, the Internal Revenue Service announces cost-of-living adjustments that affect contribution limits for retirement plans and various tax deduction, exclusion, exemption, and threshold amounts. Here are a few of the key adjustments for 2025.

Estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer tax

- The annual gift tax exclusion (and annual generation-skipping transfer tax exclusion) for 2025 is \$19,000, up from \$18,000 in 2024.
- The gift and estate tax basic exclusion amount (and generation-skipping transfer tax exemption) for 2025 is \$13,990,000, up from \$13,610,000 in 2024.

Standard deduction

A taxpayer can generally choose to itemize certain deductions or claim a standard deduction on the federal income tax return. In 2025, the standard deduction is:

- \$15,000 (up from \$14,600 in 2024) for single filers or married individuals filing separate returns
- \$30,000 (up from \$29,200 in 2024) for married joint filers
- \$22,500 (up from \$21,900 in 2024) for heads of households

The additional standard deduction amount for the blind and those age 65 or older in 2025 is:

- \$2,000 (up from \$1,950 in 2024) for single filers and heads of households
- \$1,600 (up from \$1,550 in 2024) for all other filing statuses

Special rules apply for an individual who can be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer.

IRAs

The combined annual limit on contributions to traditional and Roth IRAs is \$7,000 in 2025 (the same as in 2024), with individuals age 50 or older able to contribute an additional \$1,000. The limit on contributions to a Roth IRA phases out for certain modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) ranges (*see table*). For individuals who are active participants in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the deduction for contributions to a traditional IRA also phases out for certain MAGI ranges (*see table*). The limit on nondeductible contributions to a traditional IRA is not subject to phaseout based on MAGI.

MAGI Ranges: Contributions to a Roth IRA

| | 2024 | 2025 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Single/Head of household | \$146,000–\$161,000 | \$150,000–\$165,000 |
| Married filing jointly | \$230,000–\$240,000 | \$236,000–\$246,000 |
| Married filing separately | \$0–\$10,000 | \$0–\$10,000 |

MAGI Ranges: Deductible Contributions to a Traditional IRA

| | 2024 | 2025 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Single/Head of household | \$77,000–\$87,000 | \$79,000–\$89,000 |
| Married filing jointly | \$123,000–\$143,000 | \$126,000–\$146,000 |

Note: The 2025 phaseout range is \$236,000–\$246,000 (up from \$230,000–\$240,000 in 2024) when the individual making the IRA contribution is not covered by a workplace retirement plan but is filing jointly with a spouse who is covered. The phaseout range is \$0–\$10,000 when the individual is married filing separately and either spouse is covered by a workplace plan.

Employer-sponsored retirement plans

- Employees who participate in 401(k), 403(b), and most 457 plans can defer up to \$23,500 in compensation in 2025 (up from \$23,000 in 2024); employees age 50 or older can defer up to an additional \$7,500 in 2025 (the same as in 2024), increased to \$11,250 in 2025 for ages 60 to 63.
- Employees participating in a SIMPLE retirement plan can defer up to \$16,500 in 2025 (up from \$16,000 in 2024), and employees age 50 or older can defer up to an additional \$3,500 in 2025 (the same as in 2024), increased to \$5,250 in 2025 for ages 60 to 63.

Kiddie tax: child's unearned income

Under the kiddie tax, a child's unearned income above \$2,700 in 2025 (up from \$2,600 in 2024) is taxed using the parents' tax rates.

Debt After Death: What Happens to Debt When Someone Dies?

Losing a loved one is never easy. In addition to the emotional challenges you may face, you might also be worried about what will happen to their debts once they are gone.

Generally, with limited exceptions, when a loved one dies you will not be liable for their unpaid debts. Instead, their debts are typically addressed through the settling of their estate.

How are debts settled when someone dies?

The process of settling a deceased person's estate is called probate. During the probate process, a personal representative (known as an executor in some states) or administrator if there is no will, is appointed to manage the estate and is responsible for paying off the decedent's debts before any remaining estate assets can be distributed to the beneficiaries or heirs. Paying off a deceased individual's debts can significantly lower the value of an estate and may even involve the selling of estate assets, such as real estate or personal property.

Debts are usually paid in a specific order, with secured debts (such as a mortgage or car loan), funeral expenses, taxes, and medical bills generally having priority over unsecured debts, such as credit cards or personal loans. If the estate cannot pay the debt and no other individual shares legal responsibility for the debt (e.g., there is no cosigner or joint account holder), then the estate will be deemed insolvent and the debt will most likely go unpaid.

Estate and probate laws vary, depending on the state, so it's important to discuss your specific situation with an attorney who specializes in estate planning and probate.

What about cosigned loans and jointly held accounts?

A cosigned loan is a type of loan where the cosigner agrees to be legally responsible for the loan payments if the primary borrower fails to make them. If a decedent has an outstanding loan that was cosigned, such as a mortgage or auto loan, the surviving cosigner will be responsible for the remaining debt.

For cosigned private student loans, the surviving cosigner is usually responsible for the remaining loan balance, but this can vary depending on the lender and terms of the loan agreement.

If a decedent had credit cards or other accounts that were jointly held with another individual, the surviving account holder will be responsible for the remaining debt. Authorized users on credit card accounts will not be liable for any unpaid debt.

Are there special rules for community property states?

If the decedent was married and lived in a community property state, the surviving spouse is responsible for their spouse's debt as long as the debt was incurred during the marriage. The surviving spouse is responsible even if he or she was unaware that the deceased spouse incurred the debt.

What if you inherit a home with a mortgage?

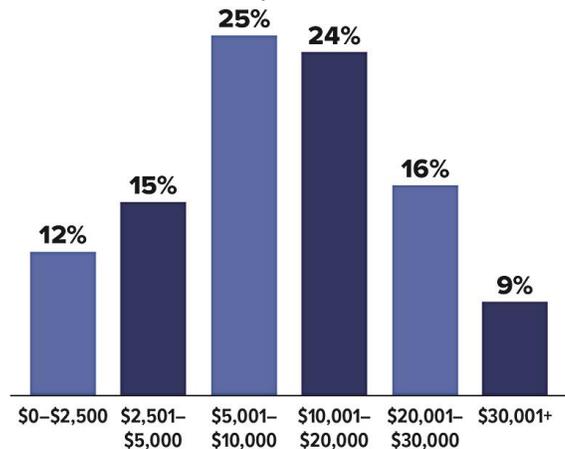
Generally, when you inherit a home with a mortgage, you will become responsible for the mortgage payments. However, the specific rules will vary depending on your state's probate laws, the type of mortgage, and the terms set by the lender.

Can you be contacted by debt collectors?

If you are appointed the personal representative or administrator of your loved one's estate, a debt collector is allowed to contact you regarding outstanding debts. However, if you are not legally responsible for a debt it is illegal for a debt collector to use deceptive practices to suggest or imply that you are. Even if you are legally responsible for a debt, under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), debt collectors are not allowed to unduly harass you.

Finally, beware of scam artists who may pose as debt collectors and try to coerce or pressure you for payment of your loved one's unpaid bills.

How much debt Americans expect to leave behind when they die:



Source: Debt.com Death and Debt Survey, 2024

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What's New at King Wealth Management Group



King Wealth Management Group is pleased to introduce Jolyn Sweet, Financial Analyst and Tax Specialist. She began her career as a financial advisor with The Ayco Company, LP, a Goldman Sachs Company, where she decided to focus on tax planning and preparation for high-net-worth clients. After Ayco, Jolyn worked at an estate planning law firm working with attorneys and clients on sophisticated tax planning and tax return filings. Most recently Jolyn was the Tax Director at Atlas Private Wealth Management, LLP. She holds a Series 65 License.

Jolyn is an Enrolled Agent, authorized by the IRS with unlimited practice rights to represent taxpayers before the IRS. She grew up in Clinton, NY and graduated from Hamilton College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Policy. Jolyn lives in Wilton, NY with her husband and three daughters.

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