



## January 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**

- [Uncashed Checks in a Pension Plan: Best Practices](#)
- [Beyond the Plan: How Diversified Practices Boost Profitability](#)
- [T. Rowe Explores 4 Key Trends Shaping Retirement Policy in 2026](#)
- [Rollovers Hit \\$1 Trillion as Workers Move to Employer Plans](#)
- [How To: Get Your Plan Organized in the New Year](#)
- [Roth Catch-Ups, Alternative Investments Are Top of Mind for 2026](#)
- [IRAs, 401\(k\)s, Drive Growth in U.S. Retirement Assets](#)

- [Plan to Plan Rollovers Are Becoming More Popular](#)
- [IRS Extends SECURE 2.0 Deadlines for IRAs by 1 Year](#)
- [Plan Sponsors, Participants May Target Income Solutions in 2026](#)
- [ERISA, Innovation, and the Future of Retirement Plans](#)
- [Seven priorities for DB sponsors to consider in 2026](#)
- [Roth Catch-Up Contribution Final Rules: Takeaways for Employers](#)
- [Big Changes Ahead for 401\(k\) Plans in 2026](#)

[Uncashed Checks in a Pension Plan: Best Practices](#)

[Plan to Plan Rollovers Are Becoming More Popular](#)

Handling uncashed checks is a fiduciary duty with tangible financial and regulatory implications. Part I of a two-part series concerning uncashed checks looks at what a pension plan can do about them. It's not unusual for pension plans to have to handle unclaimed funds when benefits are issued. For electronically issued pension payments, fewer than 1 in 500 ACH credits (about 0.1%–0.3%) are returned for administrative reasons, such as a closed account or incorrect account information.

Source: asppa-net.org

### **Beyond the Plan: How Diversified Practices Boost Profitability**

Advisors who integrate retirement and wealth management aren't just growing faster—they're building more durable, higher-margin businesses in an era of fee pressure. For advisors, retirement plans offer scale, consistency and access to institutional assets, but those advantages are increasingly offset by declining margins and rising operational demands. By contrast, wealth management is often viewed as more profitable and relationship-driven, yet slower and less predictable to grow. As a result, the two have traditionally been treated as separate and distinct businesses.

Source: wealthmanagement.com. Source: wealthmanagement.com

### **T. Rowe Explores 4 Key Trends Shaping Retirement Policy in 2026**

With a theme of "adapting to an evolving ecosystem," T. Rowe Price experts during the firm's 2026 retirement outlook press briefing explored four key trends in the retirement arena and how they may influence decision-making across the industry.

Source: napa-net.org

### **Rollovers Hit \$1 Trillion as Workers Move to Employer Plans**

U.S. households moved an estimated \$1 trillion in retirement plan rollovers in 2025, reports the latest findings out today from Hearts & Wallets.

The new market intelligence report by the data and benchmarking firms finds that one in eight rollover transactions, or 16%, are over \$100,000. Rollovers in new employer plans have doubled in dollars terms, at \$160 billion today compared to \$80 billion in 2022. Source: 401kspecialistmag.com

### **How To: Get Your Plan Organized in the New Year**

As a plan sponsor, one of your primary duties is to ensure your plan data is organized. The start of each year presents a perfect opportunity to conduct an organizational review!

While most households still prefer to roll their employer-sponsored retirement savings to an IRA, a new study finds that employer plans are becoming an attractive rollover option, particularly as in-plan retirement income solutions improve.

Source: psca.org

### **IRS Extends SECURE 2.0 Deadlines for IRAs by 1 Year**

The IRS extended by one year the deadline to update an individual retirement account to adopt SECURE 2.0 amendments, providing the relief after providers asked for additional time.

Stakeholders and administrators of IRAs, Simplified Employee Pension plans, and Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees IRA plans have until the end of 2027 to make the necessary amendments authorized by the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022. Source: planadviser.com

### **Plan Sponsors, Participants May Target Income Solutions in 2026**

Experts from Athene, Apollo, and Vitera argue the case for lifetime income products in new report. As workers struggle with competing financial priorities and high day-to-day costs, more could soon demand for a return to pension-like security in retirement.

The 2026 Retirement Outlook report fields insights from senior experts from Athene, Apollo, and Vitera, on the themes impacting retirement savers and retirees today, like guaranteed income in retirement planning. Source: 401kspecialistmag.com

### **ERISA, Innovation, and the Future of Retirement Plans**

Georgiene "Gina" Alsdorf is a nationally recognized ERISA attorney, regulatory strategist, and shareholder at Carlton Fields. With more than two decades in the financial services industry, she has served as a former Department of Labor investigator, in-house counsel for major financial institutions, and advisor to retirement plan providers, insurers, and fintech innovators. Known for translating dense fiduciary rules into practical guidance, Georgiene works at the intersection of law, business, and emerging technology such as AI and blockchain, and has built a career around her tagline: "Making ERISA fun since 2001." Source: fmgwebsites.com

### **Seven priorities for DB sponsors to consider in 2026**

Strong markets and higher discount rates have typically improved pension funding levels. This can create opportunities for sponsors to protect gains, manage costs, enhance data accuracy, and prepare

Why is this important? First, unorganized data leads to compliance issues – especially when it comes to meeting ERISA recordkeeping and IRS requirements. But aside from that, staying organized demonstrates diligent fiduciary oversight and streamlines plan administration and audits. Source: [Watkinsross.com](http://Watkinsross.com)

### **Roth Catch-Ups, Alternative Investments Are Top of Mind for 2026**

Other SECURE 2.0 provisions and pending legislation on 403(b) investments are also expected to shape sponsors' compliance priorities. In 2026, plan sponsors face multiple regulatory deadlines and pending guidance on new provisions. These include the December 31 deadline for SECURE 2.0 plan amendments, anticipated Department of Labor guidance on an August 2025 executive order that eases access to alternative investments in 401(k) plans, and expected clarification on a December 2025 executive order concerning proxy advisers. Source: [plansponsor.com](http://plansponsor.com)

### **IRAs, 401(k)s, Drive Growth in U.S. Retirement Assets**

ICI data shows assets in government and private-sector DB plans also increased in Q3 2025. U.S. retirement assets climbed 4.5% from June, accounting for 34% of all household financial assets across the country. Those are the latest findings from the Investment Company Institute (ICI), which analyzed retirement assets for Q3 2025. "The US Retirement Market, Third Quarter 2025" report found that assets in individual retirement accounts (IRAs) totaled \$18.9 trillion at the end of Q3, for an increase of 5.2% since the second quarter. Source: [401kspecialistmag.com](http://401kspecialistmag.com)

for long-term strategies like risk transfer and surplus asset management. Source: [principal.com](http://principal.com)

### **Roth Catch-Up Contribution Final Rules: Takeaways for Employers**

On September 16, 2025, the Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued final rules implementing a SECURE 2.0 Act provision requiring that catch-up contributions made by certain higher-income participants be designated as after-tax Roth contributions. The final rules also provide guidance relating to increased "super" catch-up contribution limits under the SECURE 2.0 Act for certain retirement plan participants, specifically employees between the ages of 60 and 63. Super catch-up contributions will be addressed in a future blog post. Source: [blog.ifebp.org](http://blog.ifebp.org)

### **Big Changes Ahead for 401(k) Plans in 2026**

As we move into 2026, several important regulatory updates are coming to 401(k) plans. These changes are designed to help give employees more flexibility and help employers stay compliant with evolving regulations. Here's what you need to know. Source: [savantwealth.com](http://savantwealth.com)

#### **Western Benefits & Pension Council**

Please visit [westernpension.org](http://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](http://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.

## **-- Contact Us --**

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#### Online Resources

Our company website is filled with resources for your financial planning needs. Please visit:  
[lwarner.com](http://lwarner.com).

#### WPBC

Please find all the upcoming panel and speaking events for Western Pension and Benefits Council at: [westernpension.org](http://westernpension.org).

#### Editor

This newsletter is compiled and edited by Ala Smochinsky. Please direct any comments to the Editor: [asmochinsky@lwarner.com](mailto:asmochinsky@lwarner.com).

**Thank you.**

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