

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Which employees are eligible to participate in CalSavers?

If you are at least 18 years of age and employed by an eligible employer, you are eligible to participate in CalSavers. There are no minimum requirements based on hours worked or tenure with your employer.

Specifically, if you have the status of an employee under Unemployment Insurance Code Sections 621 et seq, receive an Internal Revenue Service Form W-2 with California wages from a participating employer, or are a sole proprietor or partner in a partnership that is an eligible employer, then you are likely to be eligible to participate in the Program subject to California law and the federal rules governing Roth IRAs.

There are two ways you can join the program: through an employer, or on their own if they do not have access to a retirement savings plan through their employer.

Do I have to have a bank account to participate?

No, not if your employer is deducting the money directly out of your paycheck. If you choose to self-enroll in CalSavers separate from an employer arrangement, then you would need to link your bank account to your CalSavers account through the [Saver website](#).

Do I need to have a Social Security Number to participate?

You must either have a Social Security Number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number.

Account Information

How do I make changes to my CalSavers account if I want to save more, or less, or choose different investments?

Simply log in to [your account](#) or contact Client Services at 855-650-6918. You will be able to change your contribution rate, investment choices, designate a beneficiary, and turn automatic escalation on or off.

What happens to my CalSavers account if I die?

When you enroll you are asked to designate a beneficiary (person/s who should get your money if you die). If you don't designate a beneficiary, then the money will be passed along to your spouse. If you are not married at the time of your death, the money will go to your estate if you haven't designated a beneficiary. It is important to add a beneficiary to your account so you can make sure that the person you designate receives your money.

Enrollment and Opt-Out Processes

How does the enrollment process work?

There are two ways employees can join the program: through an employer, or on their own if they do not have access to a retirement savings plan through their employer.

When your employer facilitates their employees' participation in the CalSavers program, they will provide the names, SSN/ITIN, and contact information of eligible employees to the CalSavers Program. The Program will then contact the employees directly using the email or mailing address provided by the employer and provide them an employee information packet, which details the program. When you receive the packet you can:

- Do nothing, and then after 30 days you will be automatically enrolled in the program under the default contribution elections;
- Customize your account [online](#) or by contacting Client Services, allowing you to select a different contribution amount and/or investment option; or
- Decide not to participate and opt-out of the program by going [online](#), by completing and returning the [opt-out form](#) in the employee information packet, or by contacting Client Services.

Do I have to participate?

No, the CalSavers Program is completely voluntary for employees. If you do not wish to participate, you can opt out at any time.

How do I opt out?

You can opt out [online](#) or by contacting Client Services at [855-650-6918](tel:855-650-6918) or clientservices@calsavers.com. You can also opt out by mail using the form found on our website. In order to opt out, you must provide the last four digits of their Social Security Number or Individual Tax Identification Number, date of birth, and ZIP Code.

What happens after I opt-out?

After you opt out, you will receive a notification confirming your decision. At any time in the future, you can opt in to the Program.

California law requires that CalSavers conduct an Open Enrollment Period once every two years during which eligible employees that previously opted out of the Program shall be re-invited to participate under automatic enrollment and must opt out again if they still do not wish to participate in the Program.

If I opt out, how and when can I get back in?

You can opt back in at any time [online](#), by phone, or by mailing in a [form](#).

What if I do nothing?

If you do nothing after you receive the employee information packet by email or mail, a payroll-deduction of 5% of your gross pay will be contributed to your account each pay cycle and invested in CalSavers' default investment fund, beginning with the first payroll cycle after 30 days from when the employee information packet detailing the program is sent to you. You can change this contribution amount, opt out, or make other changes to your account at any time.

Contributions

Is the contribution rate based on gross or net income?

Contribution rates are based on your gross income.

Can I contribute a flat dollar amount instead of a percentage of pay?

If you are enrolled through your employer you may only contribute as a percentage of your paycheck. The ability to contribute a flat dollar amount may be added in the future.

If you self-enroll into CalSavers independent of an employer and make contributions from your bank account, you may only contribute in flat dollar amounts.

Can I have my contribution automatically increase each year?

Yes, with the default settings in the Program, your contributions will start at 5% of your gross salary and increase 1% each year up to a maximum of 8%. You may opt-out of the automatic increase feature or customize it as you wish.

If I have automatic increases, when does the savings rate increase?

Automatic increases take effect with the first payroll of each new calendar year. The first automatic increase on your account will not take place until you've been in the Program for at least six months and are contributing less than 8% of your salary.

How are contributions made?

Your employer will withhold your contribution amounts from your paycheck and submit them directly to the Program to be placed into your account and allocated to your designated investments. There is nothing you will need to do. You can track your contributions and make changes to your contribution rate by signing into your account online or through the mobile app.

If you are participating as an individual outside of an employment context, your contributions will be made directly from your bank account to your CalSavers account according to your directions.

Can I make pre-tax contributions?

Currently, the CalSavers Program uses after-tax Roth IRAs. CalSavers is working on adding a Traditional IRA choice in late 2019 or early 2020. When that option is available, contributions to those accounts may be tax deductible. You may wish to consult a tax advisor for more information.

How will I know if I'm getting close to the contribution limits?

The Program will monitor your contribution amounts and notify you and your employer when you are approaching the standard annual IRS contribution limit. For 2019, the limit is \$6,000 if you're under 50 and \$7,000 if you're over 50. Note that this limit applies to all of your IRA accounts in aggregate. If you have IRA accounts in addition to your CalSavers account, you will need to ensure that in combination, you are not contributing more than federal limits allow.

Eligibility to participate in a Roth IRA is limited to certain annual income levels. To determine if you are eligible to contribute to a Roth IRA, please visit the [IRS website](#).

Distributions and Withdrawals

Can I borrow money from my CalSavers account?

No, you cannot borrow funds from IRA accounts, including your CalSavers IRA. If you would like access to your funds, you would simply request a distribution.

How can I take my money out when I retire?

You can choose to take it out in one lump sum or periodic withdrawals.

You also may withdraw money before you retire.

Do I have to pay taxes on my money when I take it out when I retire (over 59 ½ years old)?

You may wish to consult a tax advisor for more information, but the following generally apply:

You do not have to pay taxes on your contributions to a Roth IRA at any age, because you paid taxes on the money before you made the contribution. Before age 59 ½ you may have to pay taxes on the earnings on your contributions, but this varies depending on how long your account has been open, and the purpose for which you are withdrawing the funds.

If you contributed to a Traditional IRA, that money may be tax deductible. When you withdraw money from that account, it will be taxed at your tax rate at the time of withdrawal.

How do I take money out and how long will it take to get my money?

Distributions from your CalSavers Account may be requested online or by phone. Alternatively, you can mail us a completed distribution form. Once a completed request and any additional documentation required are received, the distribution will be processed. Please allow up to ten (10) Business Days for the proceeds to reach you, although the time may be a little longer if you request a distribution after an address change or change to your bank information.

Is there a fee or penalty or restrictions for taking money out?

The Program assesses no fees or penalties to withdraw money from your account.

The IRS may charge taxes and/or penalties on distributions from your account before you reach the age of 59 ½, although there are several exceptions that may apply (such as if you are disabled). You should [consult the IRS](#) or your tax advisor before making any withdrawals in this circumstance. You may review IRS guidelines at the [IRS website](#).

You also may establish your own IRA outside of CalSavers and transfer your account to that IRA. Contact Client Services at [855-650-6918](tel:855-650-6918) or clientservices@calsavers.com for more information on how to transfer your account.

Investments

How do I find out more about my investment options?

Visit the [Investment page](#) on www.calsavers.com or contact Client Services at [855-650-6918](tel:855-650-6918) or clientservices@calsavers.com

Employment Related

What happens to my account if I change employers?

Your CalSavers account belongs to you and is not tied to your employer. If you change employers, your money remains in your account and you can contribute to it independent of an employer. If you work for a new employer that facilitates the CalSavers Program, you will receive enrollment notification and payroll deductions will begin at your new employer unless you choose to opt out.

What if my new employer doesn't offer a private retirement plan or CalSavers?

State law mandates that all California employers with 5 or more employees facilitate employee contributions into the CalSavers Program if they don't offer an employer-sponsored retirement plan. If you believe your employer is in violation of this mandate, please contact us and we will research your inquiry.

What happens to my account if I move out of state?

Your CalSavers account belongs to you and stays with you even if you move out of state. You have a few options. You may continue to make deposits directly from your bank account if you would like, or you may simply leave your investments in your account and discontinue new contributions, or you may move your funds to another IRA. You will not be able to make payroll contributions through your employer if you are working outside of California.

Can I participate if I'm a gig worker, self-employed or independent contractor?

Yes, you will be able to sign up for an account directly on your own and make contributions through your bank account starting in September 2019.

I hold multiple jobs with eligible employers, can I participate with each one?

Yes, as long as each employer is a CalSavers participating employer. Unless you opt-out or make a different election, each employer will automatically deduct contributions from your pay and send them to your CalSavers account.

Even if you have multiple employers, all your contributions will be held in a single account in your name.

My employer doesn't provide access to CalSavers. How can I participate?

Starting in September 2019, you will be able to sign up for an account on your own and make automatic payments from your bank account. After establishing your own account, you may ask your employer if they would be willing to make a payroll deduction for you, but the employer is not required to do this.

Before deciding to contribute to CalSavers, you should determine if your employer offers a retirement plan and consider whether you'd be better off contributing to your employer's plan rather than CalSavers.

When can my employer register for the Program?

Eligible employers can request to register at any time. There are deadlines for eligible employers to either begin to offer their own retirement plan or register for CalSavers. The deadlines vary depending on the size of the business:

- For eligible employers with more than 100 employees, June 30, 2020.
 - For eligible employers with more than 50 employees, June 30, 2021.
 - For eligible employers with five or more employees, June 30, 2022.
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How will I know if my employer is sending my payroll contribution to my CalSavers account?

You can monitor your account [online](#) at any time. If you don't see your contribution, call Client Services at 855-650-6918.

Can my employer make matching contributions to my account?

No. Employers are not allowed to make contributions into an employee's account

What if my employer submits an invalid Social Security number or ITIN?

If an employee's Social Security Number or ITIN appears to be invalid or cannot otherwise be confirmed then the employee will not be enrolled or have an account established. CalSavers will advise the employee's employer to not make payroll deductions, but we will not give a reason. CalSavers will not share any information with anyone, including your employer or government agencies, about whether an SSN or ITIN is invalid or cannot be confirmed.

Fees and Costs

Do I have to pay any fees for my account?

The only administrative charge for CalSavers is in the form of an asset-based fee of approximately 0.825% to 0.95%, depending on your investment choice. This means you will pay between \$0.83 and \$0.95 per year for every \$100 in your account. You will not get a bill. This cost is automatically taken out of your CalSavers balance on a regular basis to help pay for the administration of the program.

How often are the fees taken out?

Invested amounts are subject to annualized asset-based fees that are deducted at the investment option level evenly over the course of the year. The asset-based fees accrue daily and are factored into the price of an investment option. The fees cover the cost of the underlying investments and program administration.

Risk of Investment Funds

Is my money and rate of return guaranteed?

No. All investments have some form of risk. However, the program offers a range of investment types to help you build an investment option that balances different levels of risk for your individual circumstance.

General

Do you need my signature?

Most transactions can be completed through the CalSavers website or by contacting Client Services at [855-650-6918](tel:855-650-6918) or clientservices@calsavers.com. Certain transactions, like making someone other than your spouse (if married) the primary beneficiary to your account would require a signature. You will be given additional instructions when your signature is required to complete a transaction.

What are the default elections?

If you don't specify your settings, your contributions will start at 5% of your gross pay and will automatically increase 1% each year for three years up to a maximum of 8%. The first \$1,000 of your contribution will go into a Money Market Fund aimed at maximizing current income while seeking preservation of funds and liquidity. The Money Market Fund has less of a focus on growth than the other investment options in the Program. Your contributions after the first \$1,000 will be put into a Target Retirement Date Fund which has a balance of stocks and bonds based on your age that automatically adjusts over time (i.e., when you're young, your investments will be more aggressive and as you age, they will be more conservative). You may change these settings at any time. For more information on investments visit the [Investment webpage](#) on the CalSavers website.

What is the difference between a Roth IRA and a Traditional IRA?

With a Roth IRA you make contributions to your account that are not tax deductible, but all the money you contribute can be withdrawn at any time without incurring any tax or penalties if you need it. The earnings on your contributions may also be withdrawn on a tax-free basis if certain qualifications are met. In a Traditional IRA, you are generally contributing on a pre-tax basis. When you withdraw money in retirement, you pay taxes on all money withdrawn. This is a simplified summary. Please consult a financial advisor for information specific to your own circumstances.

How do I know if Roth or Traditional IRA is right for me?

There are many factors that go into this decision. If you are uncertain as to which is right for you, please contact a financial advisor. One important consideration is the income limit on Roth IRAs; please see the [IRS website](#) for more information on income limits.

If I have a CalSavers IRA, can I have another IRA or retirement plan at the same time?

Yes, but please note, the CalSavers Program will not have information on any other IRAs you may contribute to or whether you also participate in an employer retirement plan. It is your responsibility to ensure that across all of your IRAs, you are contributing within the IRS' annual limits, which can be found [here](#). Please consult a tax expert or financial advisor to discuss your specific circumstances.

Is CalSavers information available in other languages?

All program information is available in English and Spanish. The Program website (www.calsavers.com) is currently available in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese. Over time, communication materials and the website will be translated into additional languages. In addition, Client Services phone support is available in nearly all languages by calling 855-650-6918.

Can the state take my money?

No. The money in the account is your money and the state has no access to it.

How long can my money stay in my account?

Please consult your tax advisor for more information, but the following generally apply:

- For a Roth IRA (the standard CalSavers account type), it can stay in as long as you like until you pass away.
- If you contribute to a Traditional IRA when it becomes available, the IRS has Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's) that you must begin taking after reaching 70 ½ years old.

How much will I be able to save for retirement?

Check out the [Retirement Calculator](#) on the CalSavers website to see how much you can save.

Does saving through this program impact my eligibility for other programs like SNAP or TANF?

In general, federal benefits programs do not count retirement assets against a person's eligibility. For more information, check with your benefits office.

Does saving through this program impact my eligibility for financial aid for college?

In general, qualified retirement accounts are not counted for federal financial aid; however, you should carefully review your own circumstances with a tax expert or financial advisor. Withdrawals from IRAs can also jeopardize financial aid for the year following the withdrawal. For more information, check with your financial aid office.

Employer Assistance: (855) 650 - 6916

Employee Assistance: (855) 650 - 6918

clientservices@calsavers.com

treasurer.ca.gov/scib/

The CalSavers Retirement Savings Program ("CalSavers" or the "Program") is an automatic enrollment payroll deduction IRA overseen by the California Secure Choice Retirement Savings Investment Board ("Board"). Ascensus College Savings Recordkeeping Services, LLC ("ACSR") is the program administrator. ACSR and its affiliates are responsible for day-to-day program operations. Participants saving through CalSavers beneficially own and have control over their IRAs, as provided in the Program Disclosure Booklet available at saver.calsavers.com. CalSavers is not sponsored by the employer, and therefore the employer is not responsible for the Program or liable as a Program sponsor. Employers are not permitted to endorse the Program or encourage or advise employees on whether to participate, how much (if any) to contribute or provide investment help.

CalSavers offers investment options selected by the Board. For more information on CalSavers' investment options go to saver.calsavers.com. Account balances in CalSavers will vary with market conditions. Investments in CalSavers are not guaranteed or insured by the Board, the State of California, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or any other organization.

CalSavers is a completely voluntary retirement program. Savers may opt out at any time or reduce or increase the amount of payroll contributions. If a saver opts out they can later opt back into CalSavers. In addition, California law requires that CalSavers conduct an Open Enrollment Period once every two years during which eligible employees that previously opted out of the Program shall be re-invited to participate under automatic enrollment and must opt out again if they still do not wish to participate in the Program.

Saving through an IRA may not be appropriate for all individuals. Employer facilitation of CalSavers should not be considered an endorsement or recommendation by a participating employer, IRAs, or the investment options offered through CalSavers. IRAs are not exclusive to CalSavers and can be obtained outside of the Program and contributed to outside of payroll deduction. Contributing to a CalSavers IRA through payroll deduction may offer some tax benefits and consequences. However, not everyone is eligible to contribute to a Roth IRA and savers should consult a tax or financial advisor if they have questions related to taxes or investments. Employers do not provide financial advice and employees should not contact an employer for financial advice. Employers should refer all questions about the Program to CalSavers. Employers are not liable for decisions employees make pursuant to Section 100034 of the California Government Code.