

# New Year Checklist

## Planning Points to Review

The beginning of the new year is a perfect time to re-evaluate your financial situation. This checklist will address some common planning issues. Once you've reviewed it, have a discussion with your financial professional and determine whether any changes are needed.

### Personal Life Changes

Changes in your personal life or family structure can have a significant impact on your financial planning priorities. Review the following life events checklist and identify any changes that may have occurred in the past year:

#### Life Events Checklist – Check all that apply

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce of an adult child  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rollover                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Birth of a grandchild      | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in company retirement plan provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Remarriage                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Illness of a family member | <input type="checkbox"/> Establishment of a trust                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth of a child            | <input type="checkbox"/> Death of a family member   | <input type="checkbox"/> Assignment of power of attorney            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Death of a beneficiary     | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision to will/estate planning document  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child attained age 18 or 21 | <input type="checkbox"/> Inheritance                |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child in/going to college   | <input type="checkbox"/> New insurance policy       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage of an adult child  | <input type="checkbox"/> New job                    |   |

#### Notes:

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If life events have occurred, you may want to conduct the following:

- A beneficiary review (qualified plans, IRAs, life insurance, etc.)
- Review the titling of assets, bank accounts, brokerage accounts, property, etc.
- Update wills, trusts, power of attorney, and other estate planning documents

### Update Goals

Changes in your personal life can also have an impact on your financial goals. Review the following list to see what adjustments may need to be made:

- Have your long-term savings goals changed (e.g., target retirement income, target retirement date)?  Yes  No
- Have your intermediate-term savings goals changed (e.g., vacation home, college savings, etc.)?  Yes  No
- Has your ability to save changed (e.g., change in income or expenses)?  Yes  No
- Have you set any new financial goals?  Yes  No

#### Notes:

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## Prepare for the Unexpected

Many financial experts recommend a liquid “emergency fund” large enough to cover 3 to 6 months of expenses. Use the following formulas to determine an adequate emergency fund balance in the event of a temporary decrease or loss of income:

Monthly Expenses: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ X 3 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Monthly Expenses: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ X 6 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Emergency Fund Balance: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes:

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## Review Your Tax Status

The amount of taxable income you receive in a year can impact not only your effective and marginal tax rates, but also the investment strategy in your taxable investment accounts.

What was your employer-sponsored income last year? \_\_\_\_\_  
What do you estimate your marginal tax rate to be this year? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you anticipate a change in your income this year?  Yes  No + / - \_\_\_\_\_  
Have you reviewed your taxable investments with your financial professional?  Yes  No

### Notes:

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## Review Retirement Plan Contributions and Eligibility

Participating in an employer-sponsored retirement plan can be one of the easiest ways to save for retirement as well as reduce your current taxable income. The salary deferral contribution limit to an employer-sponsored qualified plan in 2015 is \$18,000 with a \$6,000 catch-up contribution for individuals age 50 or over.

Are you participating in an employer-sponsored plan?  Yes  No  
If yes, what is your current contribution amount? \$ \_\_\_\_\_ % of compensation \_\_\_\_\_  
If you are 50 or older, have you signed up for catch-up contributions?  Yes  No  Unsure  
Does your plan offer a designated Roth option?  Yes  No  Unsure

### Notes:

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## Fund a Simplified Employee Pension (SEP IRA), Solo 401(k), or Solo Defined Benefit Plan

Business owners often sponsor small business retirement plans as a way to save for retirement. These plans can also offer the business a significant income tax deduction. Also, as a small business grows, its retirement plan needs and goals often change.

If you are a small business owner, do you have a small business retirement plan?  Yes  No  Unsure  
If you have a small business retirement plan in place, does it still meet your needs?  Yes  No  Unsure  
When was the last time your plan was reviewed? \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes:

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## Check IRA Eligibility

The maximum annual IRA contribution for 2015 is \$5,500 with an additional \$1,000 catch-up contribution allowed for individuals age 50 or older. The ability to deduct a Traditional IRA contribution is dependent on your level of income and whether you or your spouse are covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan at work. Your ability to make a Roth IRA contribution is also dependent on your level of income. IRA contributions can be made up until the individual tax filing deadline without extensions (April 15).

Are you eligible to make a deductible Traditional IRA contribution?  Yes  No  Unsure  
Are you eligible to make a Roth IRA contribution?  Yes  No  Unsure  
Would you like to make a non-deductible Traditional IRA contribution?  Yes  No  Unsure

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## Plan for RMDs

On certain qualified accounts, required minimum distributions (RMD) must begin no later than April 1 of the year following the owner's attainment of age 70½. Account owners over the age of 70½ must take their RMD by December 31 of the current year.

If you are turning age 70½ this year, have you arranged to take your first RMD?  Yes  No  
If you are over age 70½, have you taken or arranged to take your RMD for the current year?  Yes  No  
Are your RMDs being used for necessary living expenses?  Yes  No

Notes:

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## Help Protect Assets

Having adequate levels of insurance coverage can protect you and your family from financial ruin if a catastrophic event were to happen. Complete the following chart and review it with your financial professional to ensure the current coverage meets your needs:

Type	Insurer	Coverage
Life Insurance		
Health Insurance		
Long Term Care Insurance		
Disability Insurance		
Liability Insurance		
Umbrella Insurance		

I do not have one or more of the above types of insurance.

Notes:

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## Evaluate Annual Gifting and Charitable Donations

Gifting away assets can be an effective way to reduce your taxable estate as well as give your beneficiaries immediate enjoyment of those assets. In 2015, individuals can gift up to \$14,000 per person per year without any gift or estate tax concerns. (Spouses can combine this amount and gift up to \$28,000 per person per year.) If you are charitably inclined, making gifts to charitable organizations during your lifetime may also provide a current income tax deduction. Any eligible deduction is dependent on your income and the nature of the organization or type of charity.

Do you plan on gifting assets to individuals such as family members or friends this year?  Yes  No  
Do you plan on making any charitable donations or gifts?  Yes  No

Notes:

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## Investors:

Contact your financial professional or visit our website: [transamerica.com](http://transamerica.com).

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