



# 2023 Wealth Strategy Guide

SEEING THE  
BIGGER PICTURE

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A thoughtfully constructed wealth strategy takes a holistic approach to wealth management and understands how each piece interacts with the others. As your wealth increases, so do the complexities, potential risks, and unique opportunities available to you and your family.

The new year provides a great opportunity to evaluate where updates may be needed and to assess your financial wellness. Our guide below summarizes some key areas to review in 2023. We encourage you to speak to your NewEdge Wealth team regarding any changes in your personal or financial circumstances that may require a course correction.



## Notable Legislative Updates for 2023

### Build Back Better Act (BBBA) Becomes the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

The Biden Administration was unable to advance the \$1.75 trillion Build Back Better Act (“BBBA”) through both houses of Congress, in large part due to objections from Senators Manchin of West Virginia and Sinema of Arizona. While BBBA had initially targeted raising income tax rates for high earners and lowering the estate exemption, such tax proposals were left out of the Inflation Reduction Act, aside from the IRA incorporating an additional \$80 billion of funding to the IRS.

The larger legislative package was ultimately scaled back to the Inflation Reduction Act (\$430 billion) and was signed into law by President Biden on August 16, 2022. The \$430 billion bill aims to combat climate change, lower healthcare costs, and reduce the deficit.

PROVISION	NOTES
15% Minimum Tax Rate for Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Corporations with at least \$1 billion in income will be subject to a new minimum tax rate of 15%</li></ul>
1% Excise Tax on Corporate Stock Buybacks <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New excise tax will apply to repurchased stock, less the fair market value of any stock issued in that same year</li><li>Certain exceptions apply</li></ul>
IRS Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$80 billion of additional funding over the next 10 years is provided to the IRS for greater tax enforcement<sup>1</sup></li><li>The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates this additional funding will yield \$180 billion in additional tax revenue<sup>2</sup></li></ul>
Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Beginning in 2023, Medicare will be able to negotiate the price for certain prescription drugs (targeting approximately 100 drugs over the next decade)</li><li>Starting in 2025, Medicare recipients will have a \$2,000 annual cap on out-of-pocket prescription drug costs</li></ul>
Extend Subsidies for Affordable Care Act (ACA) <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Federal government subsidies for ACA medical insurance premiums, which were set to expire at the end of 2022, are extended through 2025</li></ul>
Funding to Address Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nearly \$369 billion will be directed towards clean energy, with the targeted aim of significantly lowering carbon emissions by the end of the decade<sup>3</sup></li></ul>
Reduce the Deficit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Based on scoring by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the IRA would reduce deficits by \$238 billion over a decade<sup>2</sup></li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Forbes: “The Inflation Reduction Act is Now Law – Here’s What It Means for You” (August 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Source: CFRB: “CBO Scores IRA with \$238 Billion of Deficit Reduction” (September 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Source: CNBC: “The U.S. passed a historic climate deal this year — here’s a recap of what’s in the bill” (December 2022).



## Secure Act 2.0

Building on retirement enhancements made under SECURE Act 1.0 (which became law in 2020), Congress passed SECURE Act 2.0 on December 23, 2022, as part of the \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending bill. Among the many changes, the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) age will increase to age 73 and eventually to age 75, and individuals will have expanded opportunities to save for retirement including potentially utilizing Roth accounts. Changes from SECURE 2.0 will be phased in between 2023, 2024, and future years.

### CHANGES EFFECTIVE FOR 2023

Proposal	Notes
<b>Increase in Age for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)</b>	Effective January 1, 2023, the required minimum distribution (RMD) age will increase from age 72 to age 73 and will increase further over the next decade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RMD age = 72 ...for individuals born in 1950 or earlier</li><li>• RMD age = 73 ...for individuals born between 1951-1959</li><li>• RMD age = 75 ...for individuals born in 1960 or later</li></ul>
<b>Reduced RMD Penalties</b>	The penalty for failing to take a full RMD decreases from 50% to 25%; the penalty is further reduced to 10% if the taxpayer corrects the error promptly.
<b>“Rothification” of Employer-Matching Contributions and Non-Elective Contributions</b>	Retirement plans may allow participants to elect some or all of matching and/or non-elective contributions to be deposited to the participant's designated Roth account.  If the participant makes this election, the contribution amount is includable in the employee's income. If elected, such a contribution must be non-forfeitable.
<b>SIMPLE Roth IRAs, SEP Roth IRAs</b>	Individuals will now have the ability to fund a SIMPLE Roth IRA or a SEP Roth IRA.  Practically speaking, however, it may take some time for custodians to make this an available option, as well as for the IRS to provide further procedural clarifications/updates. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Increased Purchase Limit for Qualified Longevity Annuity Contracts (QLACs)</b>	QLACs begin payment at or near the end of a participant's life expectancy. Under SECURE Act 2.0, the previous 25% limit on a retirement account balance to fund a QLAC is repealed and the available purchase amount is increased to \$200,000 (from \$145,000 previously). <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Morgan Lewis – “SECURE Act 2.0: Congress Delivers Retirement Plan Legislation and Holiday Cheer” (December 27, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Source: SECURE 2.0 Act Paves the Way for Big Changes as of January 2023



## CHANGES EFFECTIVE FOR 2024

Proposal	Notes
<b>IRA Catch-Up Limit, Indexed for Inflation</b>	IRA catch-up limits will be indexed for inflation (thus aligning with similar treatment as applies to the annual adjustment for IRA “regular” contribution limits)
<b>“Rothification” of Catch-up Contributions</b>	If participants are taking advantage of catch-up contributions and their wages exceeded \$145,000 in the prior calendar year, such participants will be required to make catch-up contributions on a Roth (after-tax) basis
<b>Removal of RMD Requirement for Employer Roth Accounts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pre-death distribution requirement for in-plan Roth accounts is eliminated</li> <li>This change does not apply to distribution amounts prior to the 2024 effective date</li> </ul>
<b>Employer Matching Contributions for Student Loan Repayments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to qualified retirement plans (401(k), 403(b), 457(b) plans and SIMPLE IRAs)</li> <li>Plan Sponsors may provide matching contributions on qualified student loan payments</li> <li>Student loan match must be subject to the same vesting schedule as the regular match</li> <li>Employee must be eligible to receive matching contributions, and all employees eligible for matching contributions must be eligible for a student loan match</li> </ul>
<b>Rollover of Unused 529 Plan Funds</b>	<p>Unused 529 fund assets may be rolled over directly to a Roth IRA, subject to the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 529 account must have been maintained for at least 15 years</li> <li>Any contributions made within the previous five years are ineligible for rollover</li> <li>The eligible rollover amount is limited to the annual IRA contribution limit, less any other IRA contributions made for that same year</li> <li>The receiving Roth IRA must be in the same name as the 529 beneficiary</li> <li>The maximum allowable rollover amount is \$35,000 during an individual's lifetime</li> </ul>
<b>Qualified Charitable Distributions, Indexed for Inflation</b>	The annual limit for QCDs has remained at \$100,000 since its 2006 inception; beginning in 2024, the annual QCD limit will be indexed for inflation. Also of note, while the RMD age will continue to rise over the coming decade, the eligible age for making a QCD remains at 70½.
<b>Emergency Expenses &amp; Emergency Savings <sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pension-linked emergency savings account (PLESA)</li> <li>Participants may make Roth (after-tax) contributions until account balance reaches \$2,500 (although Plan Sponsor can set a lower limit)</li> <li>Employee contributions are match-eligible (not made to PLESA)</li> <li>Automatic enrollment option available (employer)</li> <li>Highly compensated employees are not eligible</li> <li>Participants must be able to take emergency savings distributions at least once per month</li> <li>Distributions are not subject to early withdrawal penalties and are not taxable</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: SECURE 2.0 Act Paves the Way for Big Changes as of January 2023

## CHANGES EFFECTIVE FOR 2025 OR LATER

Proposal	Notes
<b>Increased Limit for Catch-up Contributions <sup>1</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective for taxable years after December 31, 2024, individuals aged 60-63 will be able to make additional catch-up contributions – the greater of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$10,000 for eligible plans (\$5,000 for SIMPLE plans), or</li> <li>150% of the current year catch-up contribution limit (indexed for inflation)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Automatic Enrollment, Automatic Escalation <sup>2</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For new 401(k)/403(b) plans established after SECURE Act 2.0 enactment, for plan years after December 31, 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan must contain an automatic enrollment provision for employees (unless the employee opts out)</li> <li>The plan must contain an automatic escalation provision which begins at least at 3% (but not more than 10%) and the contribution percentage must automatically increase by 1% each year, until the contribution percentage is at least 10% (but not more than 15%)</li> <li>Certain exceptions are in place for governmental and church plans and for plans sponsored by new and small businesses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source: SECURE 2.0 Act Paves the Way for Big Changes as of January 2023

<sup>2</sup> Source: Morgan Lewis – “SECURE Act 2.0: Congress Delivers Retirement Plan Legislation and Holiday Cheer as Part of Year-End Spending Bill” (December 27, 2022)

# Income Tax Planning

## Federal Income Tax Brackets<sup>1</sup>

Marginal Tax Rate	Single Filers	Head of Household	Married Filing Jointly	Trusts and Estates <sup>2</sup>
10%	0 – 11,000	0 – 15,700	0 – 22,000	0 – 2,900
12%	11,000 – 44,725	15,700 – 59,850	22,000 – 89,450	
22%	44,725 – 95,375	59,850 – 95,350	89,450 – 190,750	
24%	95,375 – 182,100	95,350 – 182,100	190,750 – 364,200	2,900 – 10,550
32%	182,100 – 231,250	182,100 – 231,250	364,200 – 462,500	
35%	231,250 – 578,125	231,250 – 578,100	462,500 – 693,750	10,550 – 14,450
37%	578,125 +	578,100 +	693,750 +	14,450 +

Source: Tax Foundation, as of October 2022

## Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT)<sup>1</sup>

	AMT Exemption	AMT Exemption Phaseout
Single and Head of Household	81,300	578,150
Married Filing Jointly	126,500	1,156,300

The AMT exemption is reduced by \$0.25 for each dollar that a taxpayer's Alternative Minimum Taxable Income (AMTI) exceeds the phase-out threshold

<sup>1</sup> Source: The Tax Foundation – "2023 Tax Brackets" (October 18, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Source: Putnam Investments – "2023 tax rates, schedules, and contribution limits"

## Long-Term Capital Gains Tax Rates<sup>1</sup>

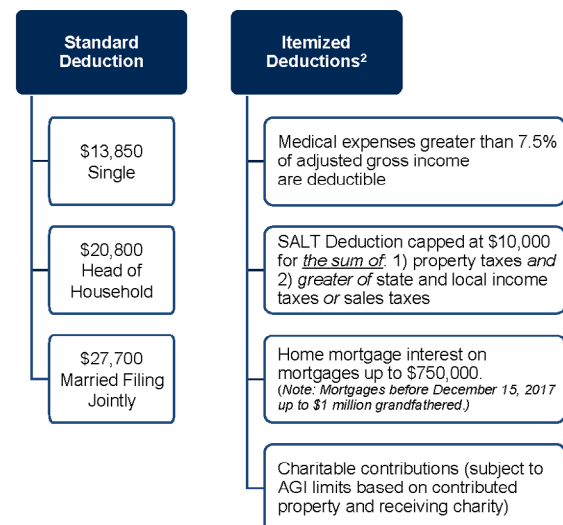
### Taxable Income:

0%	<	44,625 Single 59,750 Head of Household 89,250 Married Filing Jointly
15%	between	44,625 – 492,300 Single 59,750 – 523,050 Head of Household 89,250 – 553,850 Married Filing Jointly
20%	>	492,300 Single 523,050 Head of Household 553,850 Married Filing Jointly

Taxpayers may take the greater of the standard deduction or total itemized deductions.

## Standard Deduction vs. Itemized Deductions<sup>1</sup>

Taxpayers may take the greater of the standard deduction or total itemized deductions



<sup>1</sup> Source: The Tax Foundation – "2023 Tax Brackets" (October 18, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Source: Putnam Investments – "2023 tax rates, schedules, and contribution limits"



## "Must Know" Healthcare Taxes<sup>2</sup>

### Net Investment Income Tax (NIIT):

3.8%	On the <i>lesser</i> of net investment income or Modified AGI above threshold: \$ 200,000 for Single/Head of Household \$ 250,000 for Married Filing Jointly \$ 125,000 for Married Filing Separately
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Note: These threshold amounts are not indexed for inflation.

Investment income includes, but is not limited to:

- Interest
- Dividends
- Capital Gains
- Rental/Royalty Income
- Taxable Portion of Non-Qualified Annuity Payments
- Business Income from Financial Trading
- Passive Activities

### Medicare Surtax:

0.9%	On <i>earned</i> income above: \$ 200,000 for Single \$ 250,000 for Married Filing Jointly \$ 125,000 for Married Filing Separately
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Note: These threshold amounts are not indexed for inflation.



## Net Investment Tax (NIIT)

3.8% on the lesser of net investment income or Modified AGI above threshold:

- \$200,000 for Single/Head of Household
- \$250,000 for Married Filing Jointly
- \$125,000 for Married Filing Separately

Note: These threshold amounts are not indexed for inflation.

Investment income includes, but is not limited to, interest, dividends, capital gains, rental/royalty income, the taxable portion of non-qualified annuity payments, business income from financial trading, and passive activities.

## Medicare Surtax

0.9% on earned income above:

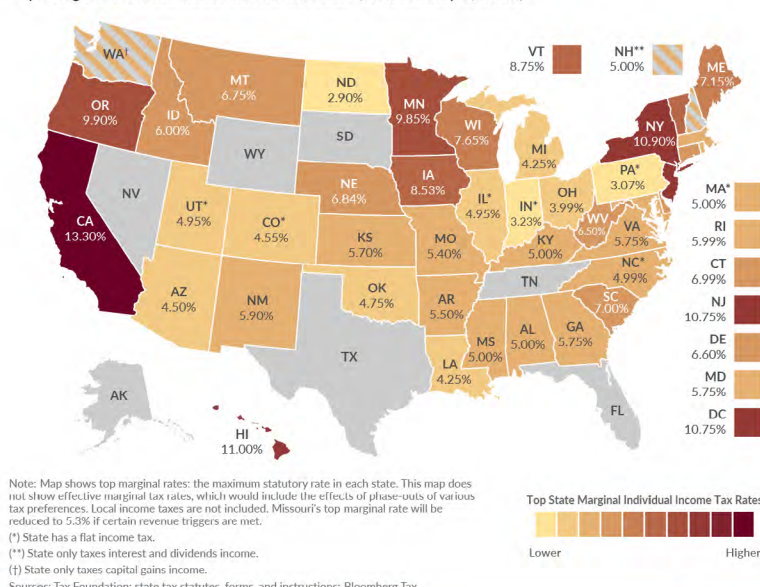
- \$200,000 for Single/Head of Household
- \$250,000 for Married Filing Jointly
- \$125,000 for Married Filing Separately

Note: These threshold amounts are not indexed for inflation.

## How High Are Individual Income Tax Rates in Your State?

Top Marginal State Individual Income Tax Rates (as of January 1, 2022)

- 41 States with individual income taxes
- 1 States which only tax dividends and interest (New Hampshire)
- 1 States which only tax capital gains (Washington)
- 7 States with no individual income tax (Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wyoming)





## Charitable Planning

### Accelerated Charitable Giving

The charitable giving landscape changed substantially in 2018, as the Tax Cut and Jobs Act nearly doubled the standard deduction but capped the state and local tax (SALT) deduction at \$10,000 and eliminated “miscellaneous two percent itemized deductions.” Due to the new changes, taxpayers should evaluate whether or not a portion of charitable giving would produce a tax benefit. Taxpayers may benefit from accelerating (“bunching”) charitable gifts to maximize itemized deductions in a single tax year while taking the standard deduction in other years. This planning strategy can be particularly effective for charitably inclined taxpayers without deductible medical expenses ( $>7.5\%$  of Adjusted Gross Income) and with no/minimal mortgage interest.

### Charitable Giving Vehicles

There are numerous considerations to evaluate whether a donor-advised fund (DAF), private foundation, or a combination of such paired with other vehicles might be an effective charitable giving strategy.



# Retirement Planning

## Retirement Contribution Limits

	2022	2023
Contribution Limits for 401(k)/403(b) Plans	20,500	22,500
Age 50+ Catch-up	6,500	7,500
Contribution Limits for SIMPLE IRA Plans	14,000	15,500
Age 50+ Catch-up	3,000	3,500
Contribution Limits for IRAs	6,000	6,500
Age 50+ Catch-up	1,000	1,000
Contribution Limits for Defined Benefit Plans	245,000	265,000
Contribution Limits for SEP IRA and Solo 401(k) Plan	61,000	66,000

## Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Limitations for IRA Contributions

	2022	2023
<u>Traditional IRA</u>		
Single, Head of Household	68,000 – 78,000	73,000 – 83,000
Married Filing Jointly	109,000 – 129,000	116,000 – 136,000
<u>Roth IRA</u>		
Single, Head of Household	129,000 – 144,000	138,000 – 153,000
Married Filing Jointly	204,000 – 214,000	218,000 – 228,000
Married Filing Separately	0 – 10,000	0 – 10,000
Roth Conversions	None	None

Beware of the Five-Year Rule: Converted Funds must remain in your Roth IRA for at least five years, regardless of an individual's age. Failure to do so may result in a 10% early withdrawal penalty.





## Ways to Maximize Retirement Savings Beyond Your 401(k) Plan

After maximizing contributions to retirement plans (401(k), 403(b)) and deferring at least your company's match, investors can look to take advantage of the following:

1. Maximize after-tax assets in your portfolio:
  - Maximize contributions to after-tax accounts
  - Consider Backdoor Roth IRA contributions (if allowable)
  - Consider a Roth IRA conversion
2. Consider establishing a Spousal IRA
3. If self-employed, maximize retirement savings by contributing to a Solo 401(k), SEP-IRA, or Defined Benefit Plan

## The "Stretch IRA" Replaced by 10-Year Rule

SECURE Act 1.0 largely eliminated the "stretch IRA." Most non-spouse beneficiaries can no longer 'stretch' IRA withdrawals out over their lifetime and are instead required to fully withdraw inherited retirement account assets by December 31 of the tenth calendar year following the account owner's death. Importantly, beneficiaries do not need to make withdrawals each year over the 10-year period. Instead, consider deferring withdrawals into tax year(s) when taxable income will be lower.

## Who is Still Eligible for the Extended Payout Period?

- Heirs of IRAs whose original owners died before 2020
- Surviving spouses
- Chronically ill or disabled heirs
- Heirs within 10 years of age of the original owner
- Minor children of the account owner, up to the age of majority or age 26 if the child is still in school; at that point, the 10-year payout begins



## Traditional vs. Roth IRA

Review objectives and marginal income tax brackets to evaluate whether to contribute to a Traditional retirement account, a Roth retirement account, or a combination of both. As a form of tax diversification, individuals may consider utilizing a combination of both Traditional and Roth retirement plan accounts as a ‘tax hedge’ given the uncertainty over future income tax rates.

	Traditional IRA <sup>1</sup>	Traditional 401(k)/403(b) <sup>2</sup>	Roth IRA <sup>1</sup>	Roth 401(k)/403(b) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Tax Benefits</b>	Tax-deferred growth		Tax-free growth and tax-free qualified withdrawals	
<b>Tax Deduction</b>	Contributions may be tax-deductible depending on AGI	Yes, for current year contributions	No, funded with after-tax contributions	
<b>Taxation of Withdrawals</b>	Taxed as ordinary income		Qualified withdrawals are tax-free	
<b>Early Withdrawal Penalties</b>	With limited exceptions, withdrawals prior to age 59½ result in a 10% penalty (in addition to the distribution being treated as ordinary income)		Contributions can be withdrawn penalty-free while earnings are taxable and may be subject to a 10% penalty	The earnings portion of a non-qualified distribution will be taxable and may be subject to a 10% penalty
<b>Income Limits for Contributions</b>	No, but deductibility is subject to income limits	None	Yes	None
<b>Age Limits for Contributions</b>	As of 2022, none	None	As of 2022, none	None
<b>Eligibility to Contribute</b>	Must have earned income	Actively employed	Must have earned income	Actively employed
<b>Deadline to Contribute</b>	April 15 of the following tax year	December 31	April 15 of the following tax year	December 31

<sup>1</sup>Source: Vanguard Investor Resources – “Roth vs. Traditional IRAs: A Comparison”

<sup>2</sup>Source: Nerdwallet – “Roth 401(k) vs. 401(k): Which Is Best for You?” (January 2023)

## Backdoor Roth Contributions

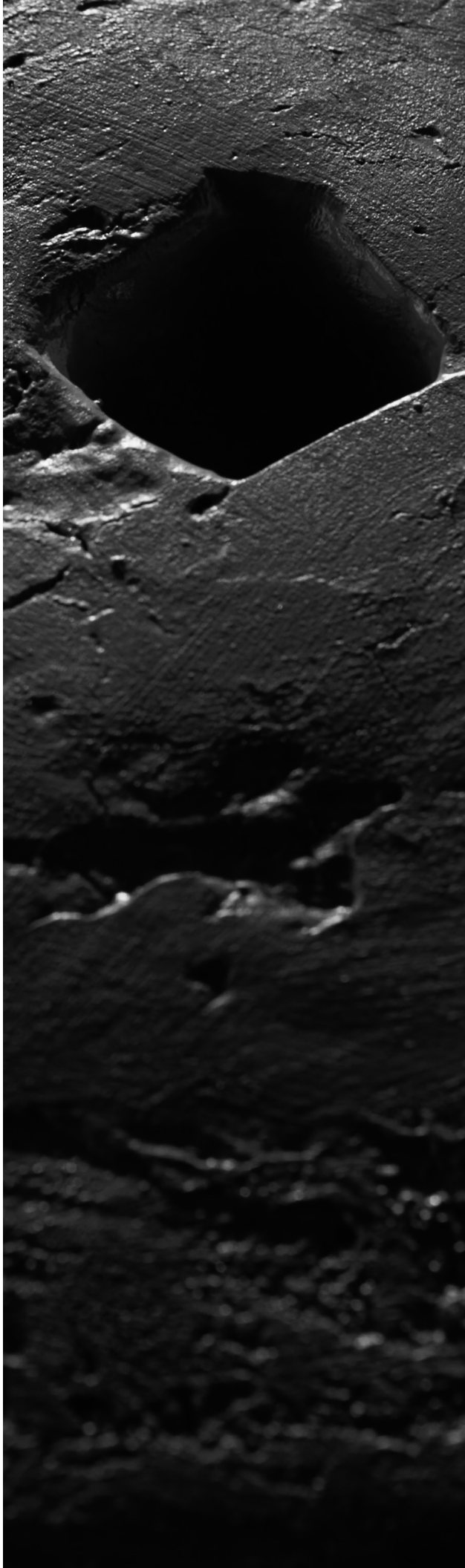
If a taxpayer’s income is higher than the noted thresholds for contributing to a Roth IRA, a taxpayer may fund a Traditional IRA with a “non-deductible” contribution. This contribution may, in turn, be converted to a Roth IRA tax-free, provided the taxpayer does not have any other holdings in a Traditional IRA. If a taxpayer has an outstanding Traditional, SEP, or SIMPLE IRA balance, a portion of the conversion will be treated as taxable income.

## Roth Conversions

Unlike income limits for Roth IRA contributions, there are no such income limitations for completing a Roth conversion. Taxpayers should recognize that converting a Traditional IRA to a Roth IRA typically produces taxable income. Individuals should evaluate their income tax picture to compare how their current tax bracket might compare to a future tax bracket:

Individuals might consider a partial conversion where income is recognized up to a certain tax bracket.

For ultra-high net worth individuals that will otherwise have a taxable estate, a Roth conversion may be beneficial as it reduces the size of the taxable estate by the amount of taxes paid on conversion while leaving a favorable asset to heirs. Inheriting a Roth IRA is preferable to inheriting a Traditional IRA as beneficiaries’ withdrawals are income tax-free.



### **Increase to the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) announced the 2022 cost of living adjustment (COLA) of 8.7%. The adjustment for 2023 represents the fourth largest since automatic adjustments began in 1975 and marks the largest annual increase since 1981.

A common misconception is that Social Security is going broke. Without any changes, the Social Security trust fund is estimated to be depleted by 2035; however, Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system and, as such, will continue to collect revenue from payroll taxes. Even if Congress were to enact no changes based on incoming payroll tax collections, Social Security would still be able to pay an estimated 80% of benefits.

## Estate Planning

### Increased Federal Estate Planning Limits

	2022	2023
Estate Exclusion	\$ 12,060,000	\$ 12,920,000
Maximum Estate Tax Rate	40%	40%
Lifetime Gifting Exemption	\$ 12,060,000	\$ 12,920,000
Maximum Gift Tax Rate	40%	40%
Annual Exclusion Gift	\$ 16,000	\$ 17,000
Annual Gifting Limit to U.S. Citizen Spouse	Unlimited	Unlimited
Annual Gifting Limit to Non-U.S. Citizen Spouse <sup>1</sup>	\$ 164,000	\$ 175,000

<sup>1</sup>Source: Forbes – “IRS Announces Estate And Gift Tax Exemption Amounts For 2023”  
(November 2022)

### Additional Gifting Opportunities

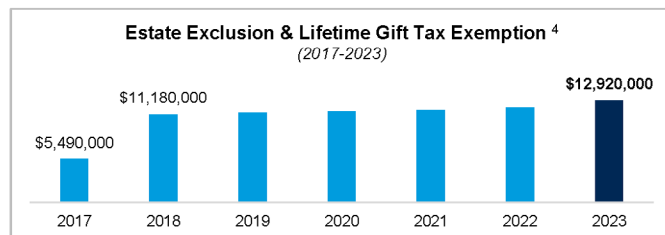
The estate and lifetime gift tax exemption increased substantially to \$12.92 million per person (from \$12.06 million as of 2022). Given the notable increase, high net worth individuals who may have previously exhausted the lifetime gift tax exemption may now have flexibility to gift additional assets out of an otherwise taxable estate. Under present federal legislation, this limit is set to decrease to \$5.0 million (adjusted for inflation) in 2026. In November 2019, the Treasury Department and IRS issued final regulations indicating individuals utilizing the increased gift and estate tax exclusion amounts (scheduled for 2018 to 2025) would not be adversely impacted by a clawback should the exclusion revert to pre-2018 levels.

The annual gift tax exclusion also increased to \$17,000 (from \$16,000 as of 2022).



### Be Mindful of State Estate or Inheritance Tax

Does your state have an estate or inheritance tax? Seventeen states and the District of Columbia have an estate or inheritance tax. Older estate plans should be reviewed to ensure trust provisions incorporate current federal and state estate tax limits.



<sup>4</sup> Source: Evans Estate Law Resources – "Federal Estate and Gift Tax Rates and Exclusions"

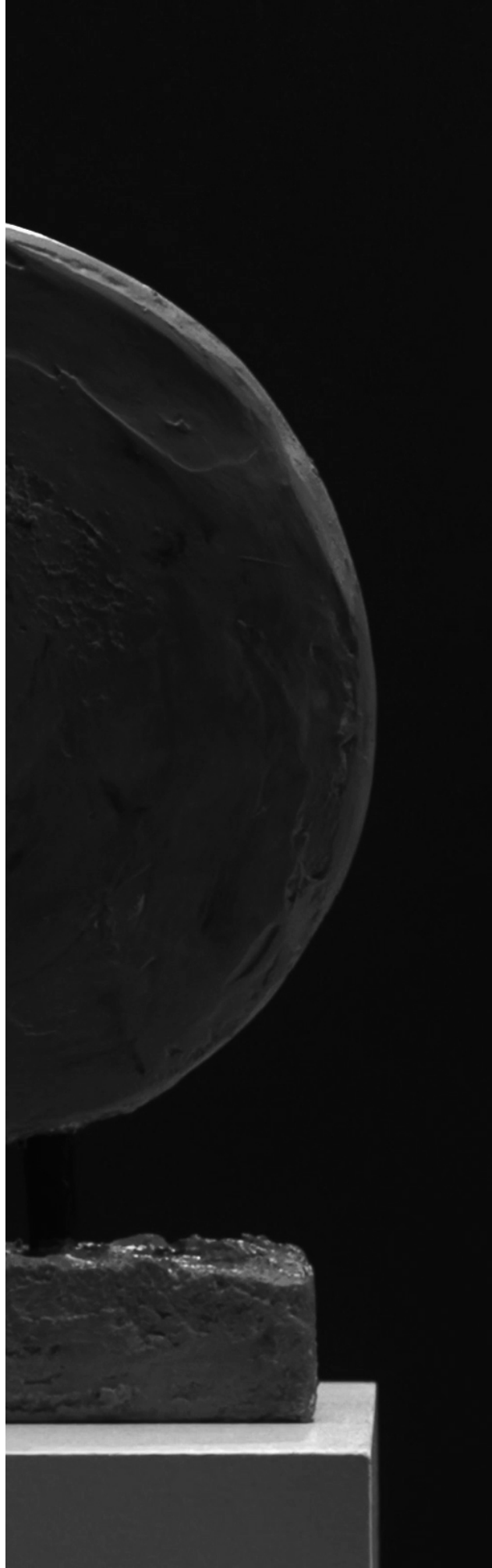
**Key Takeaways:** The federal estate exemption has increased significantly (+\$860,000) in 2023 due to the inflation adjustment, providing additional gifting opportunities to those who had previously exhausted the lifetime gift tax exemption<sup>4</sup>. With the scheduled decrease in exemption amounts in 2026, individuals who have – or are likely to have – a taxable estate and who have sufficient assets for retirement may want to consider gifting additional assets. Your NewEdge Wealth team will work to evaluate and analyze your personal situation to determine the optimal wealth transfer strategies.

## Changes to the 529 College Savings Plan in 2023

SECURE Act 2.0 provides a new allowance of tax- and penalty-free rollovers from unused 529 funds directly to a Roth IRA, subject to certain provisions.

FAFSA changes will benefit grandparent-owned 529 Plan accounts. Effective October 1, 2023 (for the 2024-25 academic year), students will no longer be required to disclose cash distributions from grandparent-owned 529 Plans.

Given the value of an individual's taxable estate, it may be more efficient to pay tuition directly from your estate and make annual exclusion gifts to another wealth transfer vehicle. When it comes to education, is also important to make sure you're coordinating your estate plan with the older generations.







## Cybersecurity

### PREVENT

1. **Strong Passwords:** Use a combination of numbers, symbols and letters to form a long, complex password. Use unique passwords for each online login and regularly change all passwords.
2. **Multi-Factor Authentication:** If available, enable two-factor authentication for email, social media, financial accounts, etc. This functionality sends a one-time code to a mobile device to verify access, thus preventing unauthorized parties from accessing your account without the code.
3. **Secure Wi-Fi Network:** Avoid unsecure access to public Wi-Fi networks, such as in coffee shops, airports, hotels, etc. A virtual private network (VPN) creates a personal, private network across public networks.
4. **Cautiousness with targeted telephone calls:** Avoid divulging any banking or personal information to a caller over the phone and do not give in to pressure to take immediate action. The IRS and law enforcement agencies will not call you. Beware of the question "can you hear me" which leads to the recording of you saying "yes" to authorize unwanted charges, etc.
5. **Safe Surfing:** Only open emails, attachments, and links from people you know. Pay attention to a website's URL; hover over any links to see where they lead. Only visit trusted websites.

### DETECT

1. **Account Review:** Open your credit card bills and bank statements right away. Check carefully for any unauthorized charges or withdrawals and report them immediately.
2. **Review Your Credit Report:** By law, you can obtain a free credit report every 12 months from [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). According to the Federal Trade Commission, this is the only authorized source for the free annual credit report (though it will not include your FICO score). You should review your credit report for any discrepancies (unauthorized accounts, etc.).

### REACT

If you have been a victim of identity theft:

- File a report with the local law enforcement agency.
- File Form 14039 (Identity Theft Affidavit) with the Internal Revenue Service.
- Contact one of the three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion) to report the crime and freeze credit. Once one of the credit bureaus issues a fraud alert, the other two bureaus are automatically notified.



## Sources

Fiducient Advisors 2023 Financial Planning Guide

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