

Important Numbers 2026

The one-page reference for retirees and pre-retirees · Figures as of June 2026 · Pin it to the fridge.

1 2026 FEDERAL INCOME TAX BRACKETS ★

MARRIED FILING JOINTLY		SINGLE	
10%	\$0 – \$24,800	10%	\$0 – \$12,400
12%	\$24,801 – \$100,800	12%	\$12,401 – \$50,400
22%	\$100,801 – \$211,400	22%	\$50,401 – \$105,700
24%	\$211,401 – \$403,550	24%	\$105,701 – \$201,775
32%	\$403,551 – \$512,450	32%	\$201,776 – \$256,225
35%	\$512,451 – \$768,700	35%	\$256,226 – \$640,600
37%	\$768,701+	37%	\$640,601+

Brackets apply to taxable income, not gross — after deductions.

2 STANDARD DEDUCTION + SENIOR ADD-ONS ★

Base — married filing jointly	\$32,200
Base — single	\$16,100
Extra if 65+ (MFJ)	+\$1,650 per spouse
Extra if 65+ (single)	+\$2,050
Senior bonus deduction (65+)	up to \$6,000 / person

Phase-out: the \$6,000 starts shrinking at \$75,000 single / \$150,000 MFJ of income; gone at \$175,000 / \$250,000. Drops \$60 per \$1,000 over the line.

All three stack. The \$6,000 bonus runs 2025–2028 only.

3 SOCIAL SECURITY — CLAIMING & COLA ★

Full Retirement Age — born 1960+	67
Claim at 62 (FRA 67)	–30% permanently
Wait past FRA, to age 70	+8% / yr (+24% total)
2026 cost-of-living increase	+2.8%
Max benefit at FRA	\$4,152 / mo
Max benefit at 70	\$5,181 / mo
Earnings test — under FRA all year	\$24,480 · lose \$1 per \$2 over
Earnings test — year you reach FRA	\$65,160 · lose \$1 per \$3 over

Born 1955–1959? FRA climbs 2 months per year, 66+2mo to 66+10mo. After FRA there is no earnings limit at all.

4 HOW SOCIAL SECURITY GETS TAXED ★

FILING STATUS	UP TO 50% TAXED	UP TO 85% TAXED
Single	\$25,000 – \$34,000	over \$34,000
Married filing jointly	\$32,000 – \$44,000	over \$44,000

Provisional income = AGI + tax-free interest + half your benefits. These thresholds have never been inflation-adjusted since the 1980s–90s.

7 2026 CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

ACCOUNT	LIMIT	CATCH-UP
401(k) / 403(b) / 457 / TSP	\$24,500	50+: +\$8,000
401(k) "super" catch-up, ages 60–63	—	+\$11,250
Traditional / Roth IRA	\$7,500	50+: +\$1,100
HSA — self-only / family	\$4,400 / \$8,750	55+: +\$1,000

Roth IRA income phase-out: \$153K–168K single / \$242K–252K MFJ.

5 MEDICARE IRMAA — 2026 ★

2024 INCOME (SINGLE / MFJ)	PART B / MO	PART D EXTRA
≤ \$109,000 / ≤ \$218,000	\$202.90	\$0
to \$137K / \$274K	\$284.10	+\$14.50
to \$171K / \$342K	\$405.80	+\$37.50
to \$205K / \$410K	\$527.50	+\$60.40
to \$500K / \$750K	\$649.20	+\$83.30
≥ \$500K / ≥ \$750K	\$689.90	+\$91.00

It's a cliff, not a slope: one dollar over a line bumps your whole premium to the next tier. 2026 premiums look back at your 2024 income.

Part B deductible 2026: \$283 · MAGI = AGI + tax-free interest · IRMAA uses your 2024 income.

6 RMDs, PART D CAP & THE ACA LINE ★

RMD start age — born 1951–1959	73
RMD start age — born 1960 or later	75
Missed-RMD penalty	25% (10% if fixed fast)
Part D out-of-pocket cap (2026)	\$2,100 — then \$0
Part D max deductible (2026)	\$615
ACA subsidy cliff — 400% FPL	\$62,600 (1) / \$84,600 (2)

The ACA line: one dollar over can end all premium help for the year in 2026.

8 CHARITABLE, GIFT & ESTATE

QCD limit (age 70½+)	\$111,000
Annual gift, per recipient	\$19,000
Estate / gift exemption	\$15 million / person

A QCD from your IRA counts toward your RMD and skips your AGI entirely.

What the headlines *actually mean*

The story behind the numbers — and the three figures people misread most.

Shope & Associates
IMPORTANT NUMBERS 2026

IN THE NEWS · JUNE 2026

The 2026 Trustees Report projects Social Security's trust fund runs short in 2032.

If Congress does nothing before then, benefits could be trimmed automatically. Here is what the numbers in the headlines actually mean:

2032

Year the OASI trust fund is projected to run short (official)

~22%

Automatic benefit cut if Congress doesn't act (78% payable)

~\$500_{/mo}

Estimated cut for a typical retiree (CRFB)

~63M

People who would be affected

The point, plainly: this is a projection, not a promise of a cut — Congress has acted before every past deadline. It is one reason to look hard at **when** you claim. It is not a reason to claim early out of fear.

Three numbers most people misread

1

The \$6,000 senior deduction does NOT make Social Security tax-free.

It lowers your taxable income. Whether your benefits get taxed is a separate test (block ④ on the front). Two different numbers, two different rules. Plenty of people think the new deduction "fixed" the Social Security tax. It didn't.

Different math, different thresholds — don't assume one cancels the other.

2

IRMAA is a cliff, not a slope.

Go one dollar over a bracket line and your entire Medicare premium jumps to the next tier — there's no gentle ramp. A small year-end Roth conversion or capital gain two years ago can cost you hundreds a month today.

2026 IRMAA looks back at your 2024 income — plan two years ahead.

3

Your RMD age depends on your birth year.

Born 1951–1959, it's **73**. Born 1960 or later, it's **75**. There is no single "RMD age" anymore. Guessing wrong by a year can mean a 25% penalty on what you should have withdrawn.

Check your birth year before you assume 72, 73, or 75.

Have a number you're not sure how to read?

A conversation costs nothing, and you'll leave with a clearer read on where you stand.

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