

# Benefits Bulletin

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To: All USGS Employees

From: Cathleen M. Smith  
Chief, Employee/Labor Relations and Benefits Team

Subjects: TSP Contributions for 2017  
myRA – Retirement Savings Plan  
Federal Employees Benefits Open Season ends December 12, 2016

The purpose of this memo is to inform you of the 2017 Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) contribution limit, the myRA retirement savings plan, especially for those ineligible for FERS or CSRS, and to remind you of the current benefits open season.

## Thrift Savings Plan

- The 2017 annual limit for regular TSP contributions (traditional tax-deferred and/or Roth) remains **\$18,000**. You may contribute any dollar amount or percentage of your basic pay (including locality). This amount is separate from the government's contribution. To have equal payments deducted over the 26 pay periods in 2017, you will need to make your election in Employee Express by **December 10, 2016**. The contribution amount would be **\$693** each pay period to reach the maximum limit of \$18,000 for the year. If you make your election later than this, you can adjust the amount by the number of [pay periods remaining](#). Your current contribution will continue automatically at the current rate. **No action is required unless you wish to make a change.**
- **FERS participants** receive an automatic 1% contribution from the agency. You also receive Agency Matching Contributions on the first 5% of basic pay that you contribute each pay period. The first 3% of your basic pay will be matched dollar for dollar; the next 2% will be matched at 50 cents per dollar. Your contributions above 5% are not matched. If you reach the IRS [elective deferral limit](#) before the end of the year, your contributions and Agency Matching Contributions must stop for the remainder of the year. As a result, you will lose some of your Agency Matching Contributions.
- The TSP [Paycheck Estimator](#) allows you to estimate your take home pay and [TSP calculator](#) can help you to determine the specific dollar amount to be deducted each pay period in order to maximize your contributions. Refer to the [pay period calendars](#) if you make a change after pay period 26. For additional information, read the "[Annual Limit on Elective Deferrals](#)" fact sheet.
- Some employees may be eligible for the IRS [Credit for Qualified Retirement Savings Contributions](#).
- If you are age 50 or older (or will reach age 50 at any time during 2017) and contribute the maximum amount of regular TSP contributions (\$18,000), you may also elect to make TSP catch-up contributions (traditional tax-deferred and/or Roth) up to the IRS deferral limit of **\$6,000**.
- The annual limit for TSP catch-up contributions remains **\$6,000** for 2017. If you made TSP catch-up contributions during 2016, they will **automatically stop** at the end of the year or when you reach the maximum dollar limit for the year. If you want to make TSP catch-up contributions in 2017, **you must make a new TSP catch-up election** in [Employee Express](#). If you do nothing, catch-up contributions **will stop** after pay period 26 in 2016. If you want to distribute the \$6,000 over 26 pay periods, you should elect to contribute **\$231** per pay period by December 10, 2016. If you make your election later than this, you can adjust the amount by the number of [pay periods](#) remaining. Go to the [TSP catch-up contributions](#) fact sheet for more information.
- You can enroll, change, or cancel your contributions **at any time** using [Employee Express](#). Contact the Employee Express helpdesk at EEXHelp@opm.gov should you need assistance. The email should include your name, daytime phone number, and a detailed description of the request. **Do not** include your Social

Security Number, LoginID, or password. The EEX helpdesk will call the phone number listed in the description if more information is needed to resolve the issue.

- [Maximize your TSP savings](#) for a comfortable retirement.

### **myRA – Retirement Savings Plan for those not eligible for a Federal Retirement Program**

The [myRA](#) is a [Roth IRA](#) that invests in a new U. S. Treasury retirement savings bond, which will not lose money. myRA costs nothing to open, has no fees, and doesn't require a minimum amount of savings. It is designed for people without access to employer-sponsored retirement savings such as TSP or the FERS retirement system. You can contribute up to \$5,500 per year (up to \$6,500 if you are 50 or older). The interest rate is the same as the TSP Government Securities Investment Fund. The money you save in myRA is portable; you can take it to your next employer. When your account reaches \$15,000, you must then transfer the balance to a Roth IRA at a financial institution, where you can continue investing. It [cannot be rolled over](#) to a TSP account.

There are several ways to participate. You can set up a discretionary allotment in Employee Express using recurring or one-time only contributions from your salary, another bank or credit union account, or you can direct all or part of your federal tax refund to your myRA account. Visit myRA [Top Questions](#) to read more about [Roth IRA's](#) and [view this video](#) to learn more.

Employees covered by the FERS and CSRS retirement systems can also contribute to myRA. FERS employees will likely first want to contribute at least 5% to TSP to take advantage of the matching contributions.

### **Federal Benefits Open Season**

- This Open Season continues through Monday, December 12th. Go [here](#) to read the Benefits Bulletin about Open Season.
- The Health Care [Flexible Spending Account](#) allows you to roll over up to \$500 if you re-enroll for 2017.

### **Additional Resources**

The [Pay and Benefits website](#) is a resource on your benefits. This link is on the internet so you may share it with your family or view it from home at <http://www.usgs.gov/humancapital/pb/paybenefitslinks.html>. Contact your [Benefits Specialist](#) if you have questions.