

Roth IRA Distributions

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Sec. 1.408A-6 Distributions.

This section sets forth the following questions and answers that provide rules regarding distributions from Roth IRAs:

Q-1. How are distributions from Roth IRAs taxed?

A-1. (a) The taxability of a distribution from a Roth IRA generally depends on whether or not the distribution is a qualified distribution. This A-1 provides rules for qualified distributions and certain other nontaxable distributions. A-4 of this section provides rules for the taxability of distributions that are not qualified distributions.

(b) A distribution from a Roth IRA is not includible in the owner's gross income if it is a qualified distribution or to the extent that it is a return of the owner's contributions to the Roth IRA (determined in accordance with A-8 of this section). A qualified distribution is one that is both--

- (1) Made after a 5-taxable-year period (defined in A-2 of this section); and
- (2) Made on or after the date on which the owner attains age 59 1/2, made to a beneficiary or the estate of the owner on or after the date of the owner's death, attributable to the owner's being disabled within the meaning of section 72(m)(7), or to which section 72(t)(2)(F) applies (exception for first-time home purchase).
- (c) An amount distributed from a Roth IRA will not be included in gross income to the extent it is rolled over to another Roth IRA on a tax-free basis under the rules of sections 408(d)(3) and 408A(e).
- (d) Contributions that are returned to the Roth IRA owner in accordance with section 408(d)(4) (corrective distributions) are not includible in gross income, but

any net income required to be distributed under section 408(d)(4) together with the contributions is includible in gross income for the taxable year in which the contributions were made.

Q-2. When does the 5-taxable-year period described in A-1 of this section (relating to qualified distributions) begin and end?

A-2. The 5-taxable-year period described in A-1 of this section begins on the first day of the individual's taxable year for which the first regular contribution is made to any Roth IRA of the individual or, if earlier, the first day of the individual's taxable year in which the first conversion contribution is made to any Roth IRA of the individual. The 5-taxable-year period ends on the last day of the individual's fifth consecutive taxable year beginning with the taxable year described in the preceding sentence. For example, if an individual whose taxable year is the calendar year makes a first-time regular Roth IRA contribution any time between January 1, 1998, and April 15, 1999, for 1998, the 5-taxable-year period begins on January 1, 1998. Thus, each Roth IRA owner has only one 5-taxable-year period described in A-1 of this section for all the Roth IRAs of which he or she is the owner. Further, because of the requirement of the 5-taxable-year period, no qualified distributions can occur before taxable years beginning in 2003. For purposes of this A-2, the amount of any contribution distributed as a corrective distribution under A-1(d) of this section is treated as if it was never contributed.

Q-3. If a distribution is made to an individual who is the sole beneficiary of his or her deceased spouse's Roth IRA and the individual is treating the Roth IRA as his or her own, can the distribution be a qualified distribution based on being made to a beneficiary on or after the owner's death?

A-3. No. If a distribution is made to an individual who is the sole beneficiary of his or her deceased spouse's Roth IRA and the individual is treating the Roth IRA as his or her own, then, in accordance with section 1.408A-2 A-4, the distribution is treated as coming from the individual's own Roth IRA and not the deceased spouse's Roth IRA. Therefore, for purposes of determining whether the distribution is a qualified distribution, it is not treated as made to a beneficiary on or after the owner's death.

Q-4. How is a distribution from a Roth IRA taxed if it is not a qualified distribution?

A-4. A distribution that is not a qualified distribution, and is neither contributed to another Roth IRA in a qualified rollover contribution nor constitutes a corrective distribution, is includible in the owner's gross income to the extent that the amount of the distribution, when added to the amount of all prior distributions from the owner's Roth IRAs (whether or not they were qualified distributions) and reduced by the amount of those prior distributions previously includible in gross income, exceeds the owner's contributions to all his or her Roth IRAs. For purposes of this A-4, any amount distributed as a corrective distribution is treated as if it was never contributed.

Q-5. Will the additional tax under 72(t) apply to the amount of a distribution that is not a qualified distribution?

A-5. (a) The 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t) will apply (unless the distribution is excepted under section 72(t)) to any distribution from a Roth IRA includible in gross income.

(b) The 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t) also applies to a nonqualified distribution, even if it is not then includible in gross income, to the extent it is allocable to a conversion contribution, if the distribution is made within the 5-taxable-year period beginning with the first day of the individual's taxable year in which the conversion contribution was made. The 5-taxable-year period ends on the last day of the individual's fifth consecutive taxable year beginning with the taxable year described in the preceding sentence. For purposes of applying the tax, only the amount of the conversion contribution includible in gross income as a result of the conversion is taken into account. The exceptions under section 72(t) also apply to such a distribution.

(c) The 5-taxable-year period described in this A-5 for purposes of determining whether section 72(t) applies to a distribution allocable to a conversion contribution is separately determined for each conversion contribution, and need not be the same as the 5-taxable-year period used for purposes of determining whether a distribution is a qualified distribution under A-1(b) of this section. For example, if a calendar-year taxpayer who received a distribution from a traditional IRA on December 31, 1998, makes a conversion contribution by contributing the distributed amount to a Roth IRA on February 25, 1999 in a qualifying rollover contribution and makes a regular contribution for 1998 on the same date, the 5-taxable-year period for purposes of this A-5 begins on January 1, 1999, while the 5-taxable-year period for purposes of A-1(b) of this section begins on January 1, 1998.

Q-6. Is there a special rule for taxing distributions allocable to a 1998 conversion?

A-6. Yes. In the case of a distribution from a Roth IRA in 1998, 1999 or 2000 of amounts allocable to a 1998 conversion with respect to which the 4-year spread for the resultant income inclusion applies (see section 1.408A-4 A-8), any income deferred as a result of the election to years after the year of the distribution is accelerated so that it is includible in gross income in the year of the distribution up to the amount of the distribution allocable to the 1998 conversion (determined under A-8 of this section). This amount is in addition to the amount otherwise includible in the owner's gross income for that taxable year as a result of the conversion. However, this rule will not require the inclusion of any amount to the extent it exceeds the total amount of income required to be included over the 4-year period. The acceleration of income inclusion described in this A-6 applies in the case of a surviving spouse who elects to continue the 4-year spread in accordance with section 1.408A-4 A-11(b).

Q-7. Is the 5-taxable-year period described in A-1 of this section redetermined when a Roth IRA owner dies?

A-7. (a) No. The beginning of the 5-taxable-year period described in A-1 of this section is not redetermined when the Roth IRA owner dies. Thus, in determining the 5-taxable-year period, the period the Roth IRA is held in the name of a beneficiary, or in the name of a surviving spouse who treats the decedent's Roth IRA as his or her own, includes the period it was held by the decedent.

(b) The 5-taxable-year period for a Roth IRA held by an individual as a beneficiary of a deceased Roth IRA owner is determined independently of the 5-taxable-year period for the beneficiary's own Roth IRA. However, if a surviving spouse treats the Roth IRA as his or her own, the 5-taxable-year period with respect to any of the surviving spouse's Roth IRAs (including the one that the surviving spouse treats as his or her own) ends at the earlier of the end of either the 5-taxable-year period for the decedent or the 5-taxable-year period applicable to the spouse's own Roth IRAs.

Q-8. How is it determined whether an amount distributed from a Roth IRA is allocated to regular contributions, conversion contributions, or earnings?

A-8. (a) Any amount distributed from an individual's Roth IRA is treated as made in the following order (determined as of the end of a taxable year and exhausting each category before moving to the following category)--

- (1) From regular contributions;
- (2) From conversion contributions, on a first-in-first-out basis; and
- (3) From earnings.

(b) To the extent a distribution is treated as made from a particular conversion contribution, it is treated as made first from the portion, if any, that was includible in gross income as a result of the conversion.

Q-9. Are there special rules for determining the source of distributions under A-8 of this section?

A-9. Yes. For purposes of determining the source of distributions, the following rules apply:

(a) All distributions from all an individual's Roth IRAs made during a taxable year are aggregated.

(b) All regular contributions made for the same taxable year to all the individual's Roth IRAs are aggregated and added to the undistributed total regular contributions for prior taxable years. Regular contributions for a taxable year include contributions made in the following taxable year that are identified as made for the taxable year in accordance with section 1.408A-3 A-2. For example, a regular contribution made in 1999 for 1998 is aggregated with the contributions made in 1998 for 1998.

(c) All conversion contributions received during the same taxable year by all the individual's Roth IRAs are aggregated. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, all conversion contributions made by an individual during 1999 that were distributed from a traditional IRA in 1998 and with respect to which the 4-year spread applies are treated for purposes of A-8(b) of this section as contributed to the individual's Roth IRAs prior to any other conversion contributions made by the individual during 1999.

(d) A distribution from an individual's Roth IRA that is rolled over to another Roth IRA of the individual in accordance with section 408A(e) is disregarded for purposes of determining the amount of both contributions and distributions.

(e) Any amount distributed as a corrective distribution (including net income), as described in A-1(d) of this section, is disregarded in determining the amount of contributions, earnings, and distributions.

(f) If an individual recharacterizes a contribution made to a traditional IRA (FIRST IRA) by transferring the contribution to a Roth IRA (SECOND IRA) in accordance with section 1.408A-5, then, pursuant to section 1.408A-5 A-3, the contribution to the Roth IRA is taken into account for the same taxable year for which it would have been taken into account if the contribution had originally been made to the Roth IRA and had never been contributed to the traditional IRA. Thus, the contribution to the Roth IRA is treated as contributed to the Roth IRA on the same date and for the same taxable year that the contribution was made to the traditional IRA.

(g) If an individual recharacterizes a regular or conversion contribution made to a Roth IRA (FIRST IRA) by transferring the contribution to a traditional IRA (SECOND IRA) in accordance with section 1.408A-5, then pursuant to section 1.408A-5 A-3, the contribution to the Roth IRA and the recharacterizing transfer are disregarded in determining the amount of both contributions and distributions for the taxable year with respect to which the original contribution was made to the Roth IRA.

(h) Pursuant to section 1.408A-5 A-3, the effect of income or loss (determined in accordance with section 1.408A-5 A-2) occurring after the contribution to the FIRST IRA is disregarded in determining the amounts described in paragraphs (f) and (g) of this A-9. Thus, for purposes of paragraphs (f) and (g), the amount of the contribution is determined based on the original contribution.

Q-10. Are there examples to illustrate the ordering rules described in A-8 and A-9 of this section?

A-10. Yes. The following examples illustrate these ordering rules:

Example 1. In 1998, individual B converts \$80,000 in his traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. B has a basis of \$20,000 in the conversion amount and so must include the remaining \$60,000 in gross income. He decides to spread the \$60,000 income by including \$15,000 in each of the 4 years 1998-2001, under the rules of section 1.408A-4 A-8. B also makes a regular contribution of \$2,000 in 1998. If a distribution of \$2,000 is made to B anytime in 1998, it will be treated as made

entirely from the regular contributions, so there will be no Federal income tax consequences as a result of the distribution.

Example 2. The facts are the same as in Example 1, except that the distribution made in 1998 is \$5,000. The distribution is treated as made from \$2,000 of regular contributions and \$3,000 of conversion contributions that were includible in gross income. As a result, B must include \$18,000 in gross income for 1998: \$3,000 as a result of the acceleration of amounts that otherwise would have been included in later years under the 4-year-spread rule and \$15,000 includible under the regular 4-year-spread rule. In addition, because the \$3,000 is allocable to a conversion made within the previous 5 taxable years, the 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t) would apply to this \$3,000 distribution for 1998, unless an exception applies. Under the 4-year-spread rule, B would now include in gross income \$15,000 for 1999 and 2000, but only \$12,000 for 2001, because of the accelerated inclusion of the \$3,000 distribution.

Example 3. The facts are the same as in Example 1, except that B makes an additional \$2,000 regular contribution in 1999 and he does not take a distribution in 1998. In 1999, the entire balance in the account, \$90,000 (\$84,000 of contributions and \$6,000 of earnings), is distributed to B. The distribution is treated as made from \$4,000 of regular contributions, \$60,000 of conversion contributions that were includible in gross income, \$20,000 of conversion contributions that were not includible in gross income, and \$6,000 of earnings. Because a distribution has been made within the 4-year-spread period, B must accelerate the income inclusion under the 4-year-spread rule and must include in gross income the \$45,000 remaining under the 4-year-spread rule in addition to the \$6,000 of earnings. Because \$60,000 of the distribution is allocable to a conversion made within the previous 5 taxable years, it is subject to the 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t) as if it were includible in gross income for 1999, unless an exception applies. The \$6,000 allocable to earnings would be subject to the tax under section 72(t), unless an exception applies. Under the 4-year-spread rule, no amount would be includible in gross income for 2000 or 2001 because the entire amount of the conversion that was includible in gross income has already been included.

Example 4. The facts are the same as in Example 1, except that B also makes a \$2,000 regular contribution in each year 1999 through 2002 and he does not take a distribution in 1998. A distribution of \$85,000 is made to B in 2002. The distribution is treated as made from the \$10,000 of regular contributions (the total regular contributions made in the years 1998-2002), \$60,000 of conversion contributions that were includible in gross income, and \$15,000 of conversion contributions that were not includible in gross income. As a result, no amount of the distribution is includible in gross income; however, because the distribution is allocable to a conversion made within the previous 5 years, the \$60,000 is subject to the 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t) as if it were includible in gross income for 2002, unless an exception applies.

Example 5. The facts are the same as in Example 4, except no distribution occurs in 2002. In 2003, the entire balance in the account, \$170,000 (\$90,000 of contributions and \$80,000 of earnings), is distributed to B. The distribution is treated as made from \$10,000 of regular contributions, \$60,000 of conversion contributions that were includible in gross income, \$20,000 of conversion contributions that were not includible in gross income, and \$80,000 of earnings. As a result, for 2003, B must include in gross income the \$80,000 allocable to earnings, unless the distribution is a qualified distribution; and if it is not a qualified distribution, the \$80,000 would be subject to the 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t), unless an exception applies.

Example 6. Individual C converts \$20,000 to a Roth IRA in 1998 and \$15,000 (in which amount C had a basis of \$2,000) to another Roth IRA in 1999. No other contributions are made. In 2003, a \$30,000 distribution, that is not a qualified distribution, is made to C. The distribution is treated as made from \$20,000 of the 1998 conversion contribution and \$10,000 of the 1999 conversion contribution that was includible in gross income. As a result, for 2003, no amount is includible in gross income; however, because \$10,000 is allocable to a conversion contribution made within the previous 5 taxable years, that amount is subject to the 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t) as if the amount were includible in gross income for 2003, unless an exception applies. The result would be the same whichever of C's Roth IRAs made the distribution.

Example 7. The facts are the same as in Example 6, except that the distribution is a qualified distribution. The result is the same as in Example 6, except that no amount would be subject to the 10-percent additional tax under section 72(t), because, to be a qualified distribution, the distribution must be made on or after the date on which the owner attains age 59 1/2, made to a beneficiary or the estate of the owner on or after the date of the owner's death, attributable to the owner's being disabled within the meaning of section 72(m)(7), or to which section 72(t)(2)(F) applies (exception for a first-time home purchase). Under section 72(t)(2), each of these conditions is also an exception to the tax under section 72(t).

Example 8. Individual D makes a \$2,000 regular contribution to a traditional IRA on January 1, 1999, for 1998. On April 15, 1999, when the \$2,000 has increased to \$2,500, D recharacterizes the contribution by transferring the \$2,500 to a Roth IRA (pursuant to section 1.408A-5 A-1). In this case, D's regular contribution to the Roth IRA for 1998 is \$2,000. The \$500 of earnings is not treated as a contribution to the Roth IRA. The results would be the same if the \$2,000 had decreased to \$1,500 prior to the recharacterization.

Example 9. In December 1998, individual E receives a distribution from his traditional IRA of \$300,000 and in January 1999 he contributes the \$300,000 to a Roth IRA as a conversion contribution. In April 1999, when the \$300,000 has increased to \$350,000, E recharacterizes the conversion contribution by transferring the \$350,000 to a traditional IRA. In this case, E's conversion

contribution for 1998 is \$0, because the \$300,000 conversion contribution and the earnings of \$50,000 are disregarded. The results would be the same if the \$300,000 had decreased to \$250,000 prior to the recharacterization. Further, since the conversion is disregarded, the \$300,000 is not includible in gross income in 1998.

Q-11. If the owner of a Roth IRA dies prior to the end of the 5-taxable-year period described in A-1 of this section (relating to qualified distributions) or prior to the end of the 5-taxable-year period described in A-5 of this section (relating to conversions), how are different types of contributions in the Roth IRA allocated to multiple beneficiaries?

A-11. Each type of contribution is allocated to each beneficiary on a pro-rata basis. Thus, for example, if a Roth IRA owner dies in 1999, when the Roth IRA contains a regular contribution of \$2,000, a conversion contribution of \$6,000 and earnings of \$1,000, and the owner leaves his Roth IRA equally to four children, each child will receive one quarter of each type of contribution. Pursuant to the ordering rules in A-8 of this section, an immediate distribution of \$2,000 to one of the children will be deemed to consist of \$500 of regular contributions and \$1,500 of conversion contributions. A beneficiary's inherited Roth IRA may not be aggregated with any other Roth IRA maintained by such beneficiary (except for other Roth IRAs the beneficiary inherited from the same decedent), unless the beneficiary, as the spouse of the decedent and sole beneficiary of the Roth IRA, elects to treat the Roth IRA as his or her own (see A-7 and A-14 of this section).

Q-12. How do the withholding rules under section 3405 apply to Roth IRAs?

A-12. Distributions from a Roth IRA are distributions from an individual retirement plan for purposes of section 3405 and thus are designated distributions unless one of the exceptions in section 3405(e)(1) applies. Pursuant to section 3405(a) and (b), nonperiodic distributions from a Roth IRA are subject to 10-percent withholding by the payor and periodic payments are subject to withholding as if the payments were wages. However, an individual can elect to have no amount withheld in accordance with section 3405(a)(2) and (b)(2).

Q-13. Do the withholding rules under section 3405 apply to conversions?

A-13. Yes. A conversion by any method described in section 1.408A-4 A-1 is considered a designated distribution subject to section 3405. However, a conversion occurring in 1998 by means of a trustee-to-trustee transfer of an amount from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA established with the same or a different trustee is not required to be treated as a designated distribution for purposes of section 3405. Consequently, no withholding is required with respect to such a conversion (without regard to whether or not the individual elected to have no withholding).

Q-14. What minimum distribution rules apply to a Roth IRA?

A-14. (a) No minimum distributions are required to be made from a Roth IRA under section 408(a)(6) and (b)(3) (which generally incorporate the provisions of section 401(a)(9)) while the owner is alive. The post-death minimum distribution rules under section 401(a)(9)(B) that apply to traditional IRAs, with the exception of the at-least-as-rapidly rule described in section 401(a)(9)(B)(i), also apply to Roth IRAs.

(b) The minimum distribution rules apply to the Roth IRA as though the Roth IRA owner died before his or her required beginning date. Thus, generally, the entire interest in the Roth IRA must be distributed by the end of the fifth calendar year after the year of the owner's death unless the interest is payable to a designated beneficiary over a period not greater than that beneficiary's life expectancy and distribution commences before the end of the calendar year following the year of death. If the sole beneficiary is the decedent's spouse, such spouse may delay distributions until the decedent would have attained age 70 1/2 or may treat the Roth IRA as his or her own.

(c) Distributions to a beneficiary that are not qualified distributions will be includible in the beneficiary's gross income according to the rules in A-4 of this section.

Q-15. Does section 401(a)(9) apply separately to Roth IRAs and individual retirement plans that are not Roth IRAs?

A-15. Yes. An individual required to receive minimum distributions from his or her own traditional or SIMPLE IRA cannot choose to take the amount of the minimum distributions from any Roth IRA. Similarly, an individual required to receive minimum distributions from a Roth IRA cannot choose to take the amount of the

minimum distributions from a traditional or SIMPLE IRA. In addition, an individual required to receive minimum distributions as a beneficiary under a Roth IRA can only satisfy the minimum distributions for one Roth IRA by distributing from another Roth IRA if the Roth IRAs were inherited from the same decedent.

Q-16. How is the basis of property distributed from a Roth IRA determined for purposes of a subsequent disposition?

A-16. The basis of property distributed from a Roth IRA is its fair market value (FMV) on the date of distribution, whether or not the distribution is a qualified distribution. Thus, for example, if a distribution consists of a share of stock in XYZ Corp. with an FMV of \$40.00 on the date of distribution, for purposes of determining gain or loss on the subsequent sale of the share of XYZ Corp. stock, it has a basis of \$40.00.

Q-17. What is the effect of distributing an amount from a Roth IRA and contributing it to another type of retirement plan other than a Roth IRA?

A-17. Any amount distributed from a Roth IRA and contributed to another type of retirement plan (other than a Roth IRA) is treated as a distribution from the Roth IRA that is neither a rollover contribution for purposes of section 408(d)(3) nor a qualified rollover contribution within the meaning of section 408A(e) to the other type of retirement plan. This treatment also applies to any amount transferred from a Roth IRA to any other type of retirement plan unless the transfer is a recharacterization described in section 1.408A-5.

Q-18. Can an amount be transferred directly from an education IRA to a Roth IRA (or distributed from an education IRA and rolled over to a Roth IRA)?

A-18. No amount may be transferred directly from an education IRA to a Roth IRA. A transfer of funds (or distribution and rollover) from an education IRA to a Roth IRA constitutes a distribution from the education IRA and a regular contribution to the Roth IRA (rather than a qualified rollover contribution to the Roth IRA).

Q-19. What are the Federal income tax consequences of a Roth IRA owner transferring his or her Roth IRA to another individual by gift?

A-19. A Roth IRA owner's transfer of his or her Roth IRA to another individual by gift constitutes an assignment of the owner's rights under the Roth IRA. At the time of the gift, the assets of the Roth IRA are deemed to be distributed to the owner and, accordingly, are treated as no longer held in a Roth IRA. In the case of any such gift of a Roth IRA made prior to October 1, 1998, if the entire interest in the Roth IRA is reconveyed to the Roth IRA owner prior to January 1, 1999, the Internal Revenue Service will treat the gift and reconveyance as never having occurred for estate tax, gift tax, and generation-skipping tax purposes and for purposes of this A-19.

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