2025 · COMMON PENSION PLANS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS



| | TRADITIONAL DEFINED BENEFIT (DB) | CASH BALANCE (DB) | TARGET BENEFIT (DC) | MONEY PURCHASE (DC) |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| WHAT EMPLOYER IS ELIGIBLE TO OFFER THIS PLAN? | Any employer | Any employer | Any employer | Any employer |
| WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS PLAN? | Eligible employees (can be limited to employees age 21 and over, with at least one year of service (1,000 hours) or 2 years of service if 100% vested) ¹ | Eligible employees (can be limited to employees age 21 and over, with at least one year of service (1,000 hours) or 2 years of service if 100% vested) ¹ | Eligible employees (can be limited to employees age 21 and over, with at least one year of service (1,000 hours) or 2 years of service if 100% vested) ¹ | Eligible employees (can be limited to employees age 21 and over, with at least one year of service (1,000 hours) or 2 years of service if 100% vested) ¹ |
| CAN PARTICIPANTS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PLAN? | The plan may prohibit, permit, or require participant contributions of after-tax dollars | Participants cannot contribute to this plan | Participants cannot contribute to this plan | The plan may prohibit, permit, or require participant contributions of after-tax dollars |
| HOW ARE MINIMUM ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS MADE? | Employer must contribute for each participant an actuarially determined benefit amount per the plan's formula (e.g., flat amount, percentage of earnings, or unit benefit method) | Employer must credit a participant's hypothetical account with pay credits (set monthly dollar amount, % of compensation, or formula based on age and service) and interest credits | Employer must contribute to a participant's account based on an actuarially determined contribution formula to fund a target amount when the participant reaches the plan's normal retirement age | Employer must contribute to a participant's account a fixed minimum percentage of their covered compensation |
| WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM ANNUAL BENEFIT AMOUNT THAT CAN BE PAID? | The lesser of \$280,000 or 100% of participant's average compensation ² over the highest 3 consecutive years (subject to age and service adjustments) | The lesser of \$280,000 or 100% of participant's average compensation ² over the highest 3 consecutive years (subject to age and service adjustments) | No limit on benefits, see contribution limit below | No limit on benefits, see contribution limit below |
| WHAT IS THE AGGREGATE ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION LIMIT? | Contributions are limited to the amount needed to fund benefits promised to participants | Contributions are limited to the amount needed to fund benefits promised to participants | Up to the lesser of 25% of total annual compensation of all plan participants, 100% of a participant's compensation ² or \$70,000 | Up to the lesser of 25% of total annual compensation of all plan participants, 100% of a participant's compensation ² or \$70,000 |
| MAY LOANS BE PERMITTED? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| HOW ARE BENEFITS PAID? | Plan must offer annuitization options (in most cases) and may offer lump sum | Plan must offer annuitization options (in most cases) and may offer lump sum | Plan must offer annuitization options (in most cases) and may offer lump sum | Plan must offer annuitization options (in most cases) and may offer lump sum |

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|--|---|--|--|--|
| CAN THE PLAN INTEGRATE WITH SOCIAL SECURITY? | Yes (excess or offset method) | Yes (excess or offset method) | Yes (excess method) | Yes (excess method) |
| IS THE PLAN SUBJECT TO ANNUAL TESTING? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| WHAT IS THE MOST RESTRICTIVE VESTING SCHEDULE ALLOWED FOR EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS? | Either a 5-year cliff or graduated vesting over 7 years is required. If the plan is top-heavy, the DC vesting schedule must be followed | A 3-year cliff | A 3-year cliff or graduated vesting over 6 years is required | A 3-year cliff or graduated vesting over 6 years is required |
| IS PBGC INSURANCE REQUIRED? | Yes (unless professional services firm with 25 or fewer active participants) | Yes (unless professional services firm with 25 or fewer active participants) | No | No |
| WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR ESTABLISHING THIS PLAN FOR THIS TAX YEAR? | Generally, the plan must be adopted by the income tax filing deadline including extensions | Generally, the plan must be adopted by the income tax filing deadline including extensions | Generally, the plan must be adopted by the income tax filing deadline including extensions | Generally, the plan must be adopted by the income tax filing deadline including extensions |
| WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR FUNDING EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THIS TAX YEAR? | Deadlines are dependent on the rules of the plan documents (generally paid in quarterly installments) | Deadlines are dependent on the rules of the plan documents (generally paid in quarterly installments) | Income tax filing deadline including extensions | Income tax filing deadline including extensions |
| MUST FORM 5500 BE FILED ANNUALLY WITH THE IRS? | Yes (unless owner-only plan with balance of \$250,000 or less) | Yes (unless owner-only plan with balance of \$250,000 or less) | Yes (unless owner-only plan with balance of \$250,000 or less) | Yes (unless owner-only plan with balance of \$250,000 or less) |
| WHAT IS THE BASIS OF THE BENEFIT? | Benefits are a set amount based on an actuarial formula | Benefits equal the hypothetical account balance | Benefits equal the accumulated account balance | Benefits equal the accumulated account balance |

*Many factors / features may be modified by the employer. Review plan options and terms.

¹Note the changes introduced by Section 112 of the SECURE Act regarding long-term part-time employees.

²401(a)(17) compensation limit of \$350,000 applies.



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