Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

Voluntary Retirement Savings Plans [1]

Grow your retirement savings with CU's voluntary plans.

Want to put more money aside for your retirement? CU’s three voluntary retirement savings plans are a great way to supplement your basic retirement plan. You can enroll or adjust your contributions at any time, fees are low and each plan gives you the flexibility to choose your own investments or have specialists do it for you.

Note: You can enroll in any of the voluntary plans, whether you qualify for a mandatory retirement plan or not. You make all plan contributions and assume investment risks and rewards.

Voluntary Retirement Plan Guide [2]

2027 contribution limits and annual catch-up contributions

Contribution Limits

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sets annual limits on how much you can contribute to retirement plans. The annual contribution limit for 2026 is $25,500.

Catch-up Contributions

In addition to standard contribution limits, the IRS allows extra contributions, called catch-up contributions, for certain employees age 50 or older.

- Catch-up contributions for employees age 50 and older may be required as Roth after-tax contributions.
- If you earned more than $155,000 in wages from CU in the prior year and are not a PERA participant, your catch-up contributions must be made on an **after-tax Roth basis** , even if you previously elected pre-tax contributions.
- The University of Colorado Voluntary Plans (403(b), 401(k) and 457) all have pre-tax and Roth after-tax options.

457 Plan Special Catch-up Contribution

Some plans provide additional contribution options beyond the standard catch-up.

- **The University of Colorado 403(b) or PERA 401(k):** No Special Catch-up contributions are allowed.

- **PERA 457:** If you have under-contributed to the PERA 457, you may be able to contribute up to twice the normal limit ($51,000) for three consecutive years before normal retirement age. PERA will determine your eligibility for the Special Catch-up contributions.

Aggregate Limits

Some plans share limits, while others are counted separately:

- 403(b) and 401(k) are combined and share one annual IRS limit.
- 457 contributions are tracked separately. The 457 does not aggregate, or share limits, with the 401(a), 401(k) or 403(b).
- If you participate in the CU 401(a) Mandatory Retirement Plan, your combined contributions to CU 401(a) and PERA 401(k) cannot exceed $75,000 annually (excluding on age 50+ catch-up contributions).

Use the tables below to see your contribution and catch-up options by wage level and age group:

- If your prior year FICA wages were $155,000 or less, see Table 1.
- If your prior year FICA wages were over $155,000, see Table 2.

Table 1: Prior Year FICA Wages $155,000 or less

Age Group	Annual Contribution Limit (2027)	Catch-Up Contribution Rate (2027)	403(b) and 401(k) Individual or Combined (Aggregate) Limit	457 (Does not aggregate with limits for 403(b) or 401(k)
Under Age 50	$25,500	Not eligible for catch-up contributions	$25,500	$25,500
Age 50-59 & 64 or older	$25,500 + $8,500 catch-up = $34,000	$8,500 can be designated as pre-tax or Roth after-tax	$34,000	$34,000
Age 60-63	$25,500 + $11,750 catch-up = $37,250	$11,750 can be designated as pre-tax or Roth after-tax	$37,250	$37,250

Table 2: Prior Year FICA Wages Greater Than $155,000 (Catch-up contributions must be Roth after-tax)

Age Group	Annual Contribution Limit (2027)	Catch-Up Contribution Rate (2027)	403(b) and 401(k) Individual or Combined (Aggregate) Limit	457 (Does not aggregate with limits for 403(b) or 401(k)

Under Age 50	$25,500	Not eligible for catch-up contributions	$25,500	$25,500
Age 50-59 & 64 or older	$25,500 + $8,500 catch-up = $34,000	$8,500 can only be designated as Roth after-tax	$34,000	$34,000
Age 60-63	$25,500 + $11,750 catch-up = $37,250	$11,750 can only be designated as Roth after-tax	$37,250	$37,250

2027 contribution limits

CU Voluntary Retirement Plans				
	CU 403(b)		**PERA 401(k) pre-tax and Roth (post-tax)**	**PERA 457 pre-tax and Roth (post-tax)**
	(pre-tax dollars)	**Roth Option (post-tax dollars)**		
Contribution limit	$25,500 (See aggregate limits below)		$25,500 (See aggregate limits below)	$25,500
Additional catch-up contributions for ages 50-59 or 64+	$8,500 (See aggregate limits below)		$8,500 (See aggregate limits below)	$8,500
Additional catch-up contributions for ages 60-63	$11,750 (See aggregate limits below)		$11,750 (See aggregate limits below)	$11,750

CU Voluntary Retirement Plans				
Bonus catch up	N/A	N/A	N/A	If you've under contributed, you may be able to contribute up to twice the normal limit ($51,000) for three consecutive years before normal retirement age.
Aggregate limits	CU voluntary retirement plans combined contribution limit between the 403(b) and 401(k): $25,500 Combined contribution limit for age 50+ between these three plans: $34,000 Combined contribution limit for ages 60-63 between these three plans: $37,250 Any combination of contributions made to the 403(b) pretax option, 403(b) Roth option or 401(k) cannot exceed these limits.			The PERA 457 has no aggregation limits with the 401(a), 401(k) or 403(b) plans.

CU Voluntary Retirement Plans				
Notes			If you're enrolled in the CU 401(a) Mandatory Retirement Plan, you can't contribute more than $75,000 a year to the CU 401(a) and the PERA 401(k). This excludes the $8,500 or $11,750 catch up contribution.	

2026 contribution limits and annual catch-up contributions

Contribution Limits

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sets annual limits on how much you can contribute to retirement plans. The annual contribution limit for 2026 is $24,500.

Catch-up Contributions

In addition to standard contribution limits, the IRS allows extra contributions, called catch-up contributions, for certain employees age 50 or older.

- Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, catch-up contributions for employees age 50 and older may be required as Roth after-tax contributions.
- If you earned more than $150,000 in wages from CU in the prior year and are not a PERA participant, your catch-up contributions must be made on an **after-tax Roth basis** , even if you previously elected pre-tax contributions.
- The University of Colorado Voluntary Plans (403(b), 401(k) and 457) all have pre-tax and Roth after-tax options.

457 Plan Special Catch-up Contribution

Some plans provide additional contribution options beyond the standard catch-up.

- **The University of Colorado 403(b) or PERA 401(k):** No Special Catch-up contributions are allowed.
- **PERA 457:** If you have under-contributed to the PERA 457, you may be able to contribute up to twice the normal limit ($49,000) for three consecutive years before normal retirement age. PERA will determine your eligibility for the Special Catch-up contributions.

Aggregate Limits

Some plans share limits, while others are counted separately:

- 403(b) and 401(k) are combined and share one annual IRS limit.
- 457 contributions are tracked separately. The 457 does not aggregate, or share limits, with the 401(a), 401(k) or 403(b).
- If you participate in the CU 401(a) Mandatory Retirement Plan, your combined contributions to CU 401(a) and PERA 401(k) cannot exceed $72,000 annually (excluding on age 50+ catch-up contributions).

Use the tables below to see your contribution and catch-up options by wage level and age group:

- If your prior year FICA wages were $150,000 or less, see Table 1.
- If your prior year FICA wages were over $150,000, see Table 2.

Table 1: Prior Year FICA Wages $150,000 or less

Age Group	Annual Contribution Limit (2026)	Catch-Up Contribution Rate (2026)	403(b) and 401(k) Individual or Combined (Aggregate) Limit	457 (Does not aggregate with limits for 403(b) or 401(k)
Under Age 50	$24,500	Not eligible for catch-up contributions	$24,500	$24,500

Age Group	Annual Contribution Limit (2026)	Catch-Up Contribution Rate (2026)	403(b) and 401(k) Individual or Combined (Aggregate) Limit	457 (Does not aggregate with limits for 403(b) or 401(k)
Age 50-59 & 64 or older	$24,500 + $8,000 catch-up = $32,500	$8,000 can be designated as pre-tax or Roth after-tax	$32,500	$32,500
Age 60-63	$24,500 + $11,250 catch-up = $35,750	$11,250 can be designated as pre-tax or Roth after-tax	$35,750	$35,750

Table 2: Prior Year FICA Wages Greater Than $150,000 (Catch-up contributions must be Roth after-tax)

Age Group	Annual Contribution Limit (2026)	Catch-Up Contribution Rate (2026)	403(b) and 401(k) Individual or Combined (Aggregate) Limit	457 (Does not aggregate with limits for 403(b) or 401(k)
Under Age 50	$24,500	Not eligible for catch-up contributions	$24,500	$24,500
Age 50-59 & 64 or older	$24,500 + $8,000 catch-up = $32,500	$8,000 can only be designated as Roth after-tax	$32,500	$32,500
Age 60-63	$24,500 + $11,250 catch-up = $35,750	$11,250 can only be designated as Roth after-tax	$35,750	$35,750

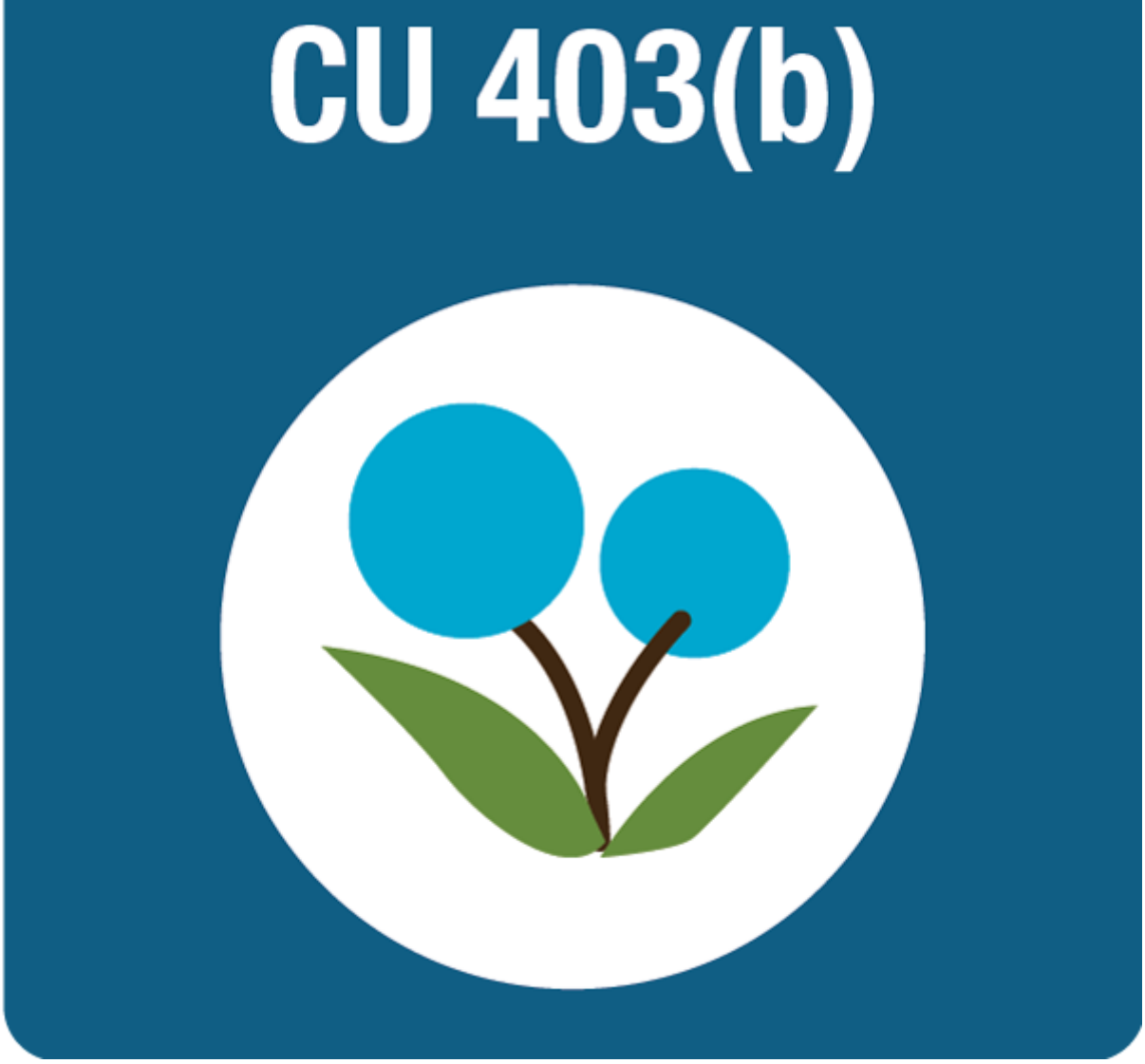
2026 contribution limits

CU Voluntary Retirement Plans				
	CU 403(b)		PERA 401(k) pre-tax and Roth (post-tax)	PERA 457 pre-tax and Roth (post-tax)
	(pre-tax dollars)	Roth Option (post-tax dollars)		

CU Voluntary Retirement Plans				
Contribution limit	$24,500 (See aggregate limits below)		$24,500 (See aggregate limits below)	$4,500
Additional catch-up contributions for ages 50-59 or 64+	$8,000 (See aggregate limits below)		$8,000 (See aggregate limits below)	$8,000
Additional catch-up contributions for ages 60-63	$11,250 (See aggregate limits below)		$11,250 (See aggregate limits below)	$11,250
Bonus catch up	N/A	N/A	N/A	If you've under contributed, you may be able to contribute up to twice the normal limit ($49,000) for three consecutive years before normal retirement age.

CU Voluntary Retirement Plans				
Aggregate limits	CU voluntary retirement plans combined contribution limit between the 403(b) and 401(k): $24,500 Combined contribution limit for age 50+ between these three plans: $32,500 Combined contribution limit for ages 60-63 between these three plans: $35,750 Any combination of contributions made to the 403(b) pretax option, 403(b) Roth option or 401(k) cannot exceed these limits.			The PERA 457 has no aggregation limits with the 401(a), 401(k) or 403(b) plans.
Notes			If you're enrolled in the CU 401(a) Mandatory Retirement Plan, you can't contribute more than $72,000 a year to the CU 401(a) and the PERA 401(k). This excludes the $11,250 catch up contribution.	

Choose a voluntary plan to learn more



[3]



[4]



[5]

Compare plans

	University of Colorado		PERA	
	403(b)	403(b) ROTH (after tax)	401(k) pre-tax and ROTH (post-tax)	457 pre-tax and ROTH (post-tax)

Qualifying distributions	Attain age 59 ½ Retirement Severance of employment Disability Financial hardship	5-taxable-year period has passed Attain age 59 ½ Retirement Severance of employment Disability Financial hardship	Attain age 59 ½ Retirement Severance of employment Disability Financial hardship	Attain age 59 ½ while employed Required minimum distribution (RMD): attain age 72 while employed (age 70 ½ if born before July 1, 1949) Retirement Severance of employment Financial hardship
Early withdrawal penalties	Before age 59 ½	Before age 59 ½	Before age 59 ½	N/A
Plan loan provisions	Limited*	Limited*	Limited**	Limited**
Special catch-up contributions (as defined by the plan)	None	None	None	Limited***

**See plan document or contact a TIAA representative for further plan details.*
www.tiaa.org/cu [6]

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***See plan information or contact PERA for further plan details.*
PERA 401(k) plan information [4]
PERA 457 plan information [5]
www.copera.org [7]

******PERA 457 additional catch-up information:** For three consecutive years before Normal Retirement Age and if the participant has under contributed in prior years, the participant may be able to contribute up to twice the available contribution limit per PERA's approval.*

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Employee Services
Right Sidebar:
ES: Benefits - Contact Information
ES: Benefits - Contact TIAA
ES: Benefits & Wellness - TIAA/PERA Financial Webinars

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