

# HORIZONS



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## Get geared up with our enhanced services

We've just enhanced our service model to offer exciting new ways to get the support you need.

### Introducing the Retirement Resource Group®

Whether you're enrolling in Savings Plus, preparing for retirement, consolidating assets, need an account review, or have questions about your investment options, we have added this new resource for you! You can often make a same- or next-day appointment to ensure that you get the help you need.

With this new option, you have 3 ways to connect:

- **Retirement Resource Group** — Schedule your virtual appointment for your retirement planning needs at a time that is convenient for you, with no hold times.

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- **Savings Plus Solutions Center** — Call (855) 616-4776 for your transactional, plan changes, or web support needs.
- **Workplace On-site Support** — Our field team is available for on-site and in-person workshops and meetings. To request an on-site visit, contact your [Retirement Specialist](#).

For self-service options, we recently [refreshed our website](#) to add intuitive navigation; education filtering; a sleek, modern design that's fully ADA-accessible; and enhancements that include:

- **[My Income & Retirement Planner<sup>SM</sup>](#)** — Enjoy enhanced flexibility and precision in your retirement and financial planning with our personalized, guided experience that helps you take control of your future with confidence.
- **Revised webinar series** — Retirement planning can be complex, but our webinar series includes a variety of engaging topics designed to empower you as you continue your retirement planning journey.

With these enhancements, we continue to uphold our mission: “To enthusiastically serve our fellow California State employees and their families by empowering them to achieve and maintain a brighter financial future.”



**To discuss your retirement planning needs, [schedule a virtual appointment](#)** at a time

that is convenient for you, with no hold times.

## Help cultivate lifelong growth to enjoy your future

Whether you are just starting your work career or are approaching or living in retirement, there are always ways to improve your financial literacy. As April is National Financial Literacy Month, Savings Plus is offering the following tips to help you grow your financial literacy at any age.

### College students and early career

- Plant the seeds of savings in your budget
- Cultivate an emergency fund that can cover 6 months of living expenses
- Begin saving for retirement early, and nurture your savings with small increases each year

Savings Plus offers [articles, videos and webinars](#) that can help you learn more about getting started with saving for retirement.

### Midcareer

- Trim your budget as needed to stay on track for your goals
- Evaluate your savings options to determine whether they're still appropriate for you
- Regularly review your financial goals and track your progress

[Log in to your Savings Plus account](#), then use My Income & Retirement Planner to assist with reviewing your financial goals and progress.

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## Nearing retirement

- Start planning a retirement budget that accounts for changes in income and expenses
- Grow an emergency savings fund that can cover 6 months of expenses
- [Log in to your Savings Plus account](#), then use My Income & Retirement Planner<sup>SM</sup> to help you plan a withdrawal strategy
- Work with your Retirement Specialist to help your retirement plans blossom at no additional charge

## Retirees

- Maintain but adjust your budget as needed
- Consider additional income sources, especially in the early retirement years
- Revise your withdrawal strategy as your financial needs change
- Keep tabs on legislative changes that may affect you
- Complete estate planning to ensure that your assets are distributed according to your wishes

**These are just a few tips that workers and retirees found helpful. We can help you put together a financial literacy plan that works for you and your family.**



Plant the seeds for a prosperous financial future. To learn more, visit the [Savings Plus Financial Literacy Month webpage](#).



## Let us help you plan and track your progress toward financial wellness.

Savings Plus has made it easy for you to use National Financial Literacy Month as a launching point toward better financial wellness. We've developed a month-by-month guide with simple steps you can use to improve and protect your personal finances. Get started today. Visit our [2025 personal finance calendar webpage](#) to begin your journey toward better financial wellness.



# Finding the right asset allocation for you

Once you have decided how much money to contribute to your retirement plan each payday, your next decision involves where that money goes.

As a Savings Plus participant, you choose how to allocate your contributions across 4 major asset classes: stocks, bonds, cash equivalents and alternatives. Generally, the greater the potential risk, the greater the potential return.

Your asset allocation strategy should reflect your financial situation and goals. To create your strategy, you should consider your:

- **Financial goals** — How well your retirement budget meets your goals may depend on the income you can generate from these investments
- **Time horizon** — The period between now and when you will begin to convert your investments into income, usually your retirement date
- **Risk tolerance** — Your comfort level with the possibility of investment loss



Many asset allocation strategies incorporate diversification as a key tactic. Diversification is the process of spreading money across several asset classes and, as your account grows, across several assets in each class. By investing in different asset classes, you reduce the risk of overall investment loss. The theory is, if one asset class underperforms, others may perform better, helping to stabilize returns. Diversification within an asset class helps reduce the risk of loss from a single underperforming fund in that class.

A well-developed asset allocation strategy should adapt as your financial needs and risk tolerance change, helping ensure that your portfolio remains aligned with your goals. You can help accomplish this by committing to regularly reviewing and, when necessary, rebalancing the investments in your Savings Plus retirement account.



For assistance in understanding asset allocation and how to use it as an investment strategy, [contact your Savings Plus Retirement Specialist](#).



To review or revise your asset allocation, [log in to your Savings Plus account](#).

# How a target date fund can help make investing easier



For most Savings Plus participants, diversifying investments is important because it can help reduce the potential of overall market losses in your account. If you are unsure about how to manage your asset allocation or prefer not to manage it yourself, selecting a target date fund (TDF) could be the ideal solution.

A TDF is a mutual fund that is managed to adjust its asset allocation to become more conservative as you approach retirement — your target date. In the early years, the fund invests more heavily in growth-oriented assets such as stocks. As the target date nears, the fund gradually shifts toward more conservative investments such as bonds and cash equivalents.

## Benefits of using a target date fund

- **Professional management** — TDF portfolio managers adjust the fund's investments based on market conditions and its target date, helping to optimize returns and manage risk
- **Diversification within a single fund** — The fund manager invests to spread risk across various asset classes, which can enhance the stability and performance of your investments over time
- **Automatic asset rebalancing** — You don't have to worry about making adjustments yourself as you get closer to retirement
- **Convenience** — Simply choose a fund with a target date closest to your expected retirement year, and the fund takes care of the rest

## Things to consider about TDFs

- Because retirement assets held outside of the Plan might affect your overall asset allocation and diversification, you may end up assuming more risk than you planned for and paying more fees than you might need to
- TDF glide paths — how its asset mix changes to become more conservative over time — even among those with the same target date
- Investing in a TDF doesn't necessarily safeguard against losses or guarantee that you'll have enough income for retirement



For assistance in understanding how to use a TDF as an investment strategy, [contact your Savings Plus Retirement Specialist](#).



To select a TDF or otherwise manage your investments, [log in to your Savings Plus account](#).

## Changes are coming to your Savings Plus investment options

As part of our ongoing efforts to adapt to market changes and align with our fiduciary responsibilities, the Savings Plus Investment Committee regularly monitors, reviews and explores new investment options that may better align with participant needs.

Our goal is to ensure that you have access to investments that are in your best interest and are designed to improve your long-term financial security.

The changes to the investments will be implemented automatically, ensuring a seamless transition for you. No action is required on your part. You will not have

to do anything; however, you may want to review your current investments to ensure that they align with your long-term retirement goals.

To keep you up to date on the upcoming changes, we have [established a webpage](#) that we will update regularly with information about these changes, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), information on the new investment options, and timing. We encourage you to visit the webpage to learn about these changes.

Thank you for your trust in Savings Plus. We're dedicated to helping you achieve a secure and prosperous retirement.

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## Take advantage of the new age 60-63 additional catch-up provision

If you are between the ages of 60 and 63, the SECURE 2.0 Act makes you eligible to make additional contributions to your Savings Plus 401(k) or 457(b) plan. The act essentially increases the age 50+ catch-up limit from \$7,500 to \$11,250 for eligible participants.

This means individuals who will be age 60, 61, 62 or 63 at the end of this calendar year can make the standard maximum contribution amount of \$23,500 plus another \$11,250 for a total of up to \$34,750 in 2025.

These contributions can help you significantly increase your retirement savings during these key pre-retirement years. Additionally, they may lower your taxable income.

To take advantage of this benefit, [log in to your Savings Plus account](#) and increase your contribution amount. No additional steps are required. If you need assistance with adjusting your contributions, contact the Solutions Center at (855) 616-4776.



## Why you should consider estate planning

One of the most important decisions you may make with your Savings Plus retirement account is beneficiary designation, through which you inform the plan of whom you want to control your assets in the event of death. Beneficiary designations bypass probate court, allowing the individuals you designate to gain access to your account without having to wait for a court decision.

Beneficiary designation is also one of the first steps in estate planning, a process designed to protect the property you've accumulated and money you've saved. No matter how old or young you are and regardless of your wealth, having an estate plan can be essential. Without a plan, the state probate court would make the decisions, and they might not reflect your wishes.

### Benefits of an estate plan

With an estate plan, you can reduce the potential for family disputes and legal battles; avoid handing heirs a lengthy and costly probate process; ensure that more of your assets go to your loved ones rather than the government; and designate who should care for minor children, your spouse or other loved ones.

A well-developed estate plan documents your wishes clearly and accounts for all your assets and situations that may arise. That's why, in most cases, you will need an attorney to write your estate plan and file the necessary paperwork with your state.

However, you can get started on your own by either completing or revising the beneficiary designation form on file with Savings Plus.

### Start building your estate plan

Log in to your [Savings Plus account](#) to:

- Make sure that your beneficiary designations are up to date
- Learn more by registering for a Savings Plus retirement-planning webinar

## Savings Plus is geared up to assist participants responding to the recent natural disasters

The Civilian Reservist Emergency Workforce (CREW) Act, enacted in 2022, offers additional protections for employees who are on leave to serve as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reservist or in the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS).

As a result of the expanded protections, employees on leave under FEMA and NDMS may:

- Request to have any active loan repayments suspended for the duration of their service period (interest is still accruing on the outstanding loan amount during this period).
- Request to make up missed contributions because of their period of leave. The employee must apply and be approved for make-up contributions.

The updated Loan Deferral and Make-Up forms are available for download [from the Savings Plus website](#) and by request through a Solutions Center representative.

Under separate law, military service members have the expanded benefit of early withdrawal options. Please note that employees on leave to serve with FEMA and NDMS are not included in these options. Military personnel wishing to take advantage of early withdrawal options should visit our [early withdrawal page](#) to access more information and download the form to apply.





## WEBINAR SPOTLIGHT

"Investing with  
Savings Plus"

Monday, May 12, 1 p.m.

Register for this  
webinar today!

## DID YOU KNOW?

That the target  
date funds available  
through Savings Plus  
are designed for  
investors who will retire  
at or near age 62?

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**Savings Plus  
Solutions Center**

(855) 616-4776

(800) 848-0833 (TTY)

5 a.m. – 8 p.m. PT weekdays



**Retirement Resource  
Group**

Schedule your  
virtual appointment



This material is not a recommendation to buy or sell a financial product or to adopt an investment strategy. Investors should discuss their specific situation with their financial professional.

Investing involves market risk, including possible loss of principal. No investment strategy or program can guarantee to make a profit or avoid loss. Actual results will vary depending on your investment choices and market experience.

Target date funds are designed to provide diversification and asset allocation across several types of investments and asset classes, primarily by investing in underlying funds. Therefore, in addition to the expenses of the target date fund, an investor is indirectly paying a proportionate share of the applicable fees and expenses of the underlying funds.

Savings Plus representatives are registered representatives of Nationwide Investment Services Corporation, member FINRA, Columbus, Ohio.

Neither Nationwide nor its Savings Plus representatives can offer investment, tax or legal advice. Consult your own counsel before making retirement plan decisions.

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