

KEY SOCIAL SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR RETIREMENT PLANNING

Income & Benefit Amounts

- Check your benefit estimate:** Confirm your projected Social Security payment at different claiming ages (e.g., 62, full retirement age, 70) via your SSA account.
- Know the 2026 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA):** Benefits have been adjusted by about 2.8% for 2026, which may increase monthly amounts received.
- Understand average vs. maximum:** Average monthly retirement benefits and the maximum monthly benefit (for those delaying until age 70) have risen with the COLA increase.

Claiming Timing & Full Retirement Age

- Know your full retirement age (FRA):** For most people born in 1960 or later, FRA is 67 in 2026 and beyond.
- Decide your claiming strategy:** You can claim benefits as early as age 62, but earlier claiming generally reduces monthly benefits, while delaying past FRA increases them, up to age 70.
- Consider longevity and cash flow:** Think through whether claiming early or waiting best fits your health, income needs, and retirement timeline.

Working & Earnings Limits

- If you plan to work while claiming, understand the earnings limits before FRA:** For 2026, the limit is higher than prior years, and earnings above the threshold may temporarily reduce benefits.
- Be aware that once you reach FRA, earnings no longer reduce benefits under the retirement earnings test.

Taxes & State Rules

- Review how benefits may be taxed:** Social Security benefits may be subject to federal income tax depending on your combined income.
- Check your state:** Some states tax Social Security benefits under certain conditions (e.g., based on income levels).



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Special Considerations

- Work history accuracy:** Confirm your earnings record with SSA; your benefits are based on your highest 35 years of earnings.
- Survivor & spousal benefits:** If applicable, understand how claiming strategies may affect spousal or survivor benefits.
- SSI & disability:** Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and disability benefits also received a 2026 COLA.

Planning Actions

- Review annually:** Social Security rules and your personal circumstances can change year by year. Revisit your benefit estimates regularly.
- Model scenarios:** Use retirement calculators to compare claiming at different ages (62, FRA, 70).
- Coordinate with broader retirement income:** Social Security is one pillar: coordinate with pensions, savings, and investment income.

Important Disclosures:

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All information is believed to be from reliable sources; however, LPL Financial makes no representation as to its completeness or accuracy.
Prepared by LPL Marketing Solutions

Sources

[2026 Cost-of-Living Adjustment \(COLA\) Fact Sheet | News | SSA](#)
[Social Security Age Hits 67 as Retirement Rules Change in 2026 | US Business News](#)
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