



## Denise Appleby's Retirement Plans Comparison Table for Small Businesses 2024 Plan Year

(For the purpose of this table, use of the term "employer" means a small business, including those that are part of a Controlled Group or Affiliated Service Group)

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Feature/ Benefit	SEP IRA Plan	SIMPLE IRA Plan	SIMPLE 401(k) Plan	Small Business Owner (SBO) 401(k) Plan	Traditional 401(k)	Money Purchase Pension Plan	Profit Sharing Plan	Defined Benefit Pension Plan
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<b>Eligible Employer</b>	Any employer. Employers who use the services of leased employees or maintain any other retirement plan cannot use the form 5305-SEP, but may use a prototype or individually designed SEP.	Any employer, providing the employer had no more than 100 employees with \$5,000 or more in compensation during the preceding year. Generally, the SIMPLE IRA must be the only plan maintained by the employer.  'Exclusive plan rule' applies	Any employer, providing the employer had no more than 100 employees with \$5,000 or more in compensation during the preceding year.  'Exclusive plan rule' applies	Any employer, providing only the business owner/s is/are eligible to participate in the plan. Spouses of owners and partners in a partnership are considered owners.	Any employer	Any employer	Any employer	Any employer
<b>Age Requirement</b>	Can exclude employees under age 21	N/A	Can exclude employees under age 21	Can exclude employees under age 21	Can exclude employees under age 21	Can exclude employees under age 21	Can exclude employees under age 21	Can exclude employees under age 21



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<b>Service and compensation requirement</b>	<p>Must include employees who worked 3 of the 5 preceding years.</p> <p>A year of service is any work performed during the year, however short a period.</p> <p>Can exclude employees who earn less than \$750 during the year.</p>	<p>Must include employees who received at least \$5,000 in compensation during any 2 preceding calendar years (whether or not consecutive) and are reasonably expected to receive at least \$5,000 in compensation during the calendar year.</p>	<p>Must include employees who have performed at least one year of service. A year of service can be defined as up to 1,000 hours of service during a 12-month period.</p> <p>For part-timers with &lt;1,000 hrs.: 500 hours per year for at least three consecutive years.</p>	<p>Must include employees who have performed at least one year of service. A year of service can be defined as up to 1,000 hours of service during a 12-month period.</p> <p>For part-timers with &lt;1,000 hrs.: 500 hours per year for at least three consecutive years.</p>	<p>Must include employees who have performed at least one year of service. A year of service can be defined as up to 1,000 hours of service during a 12-month period.</p> <p>For part-timers with &lt;1,000 hrs.: 500 hours per year for at least three consecutive years.</p>	<p>Must include employees who have performed at least two years of service. A year of service can be defined as up to 1,000 hours of service during a 12-month period.</p>	<p>Must include employees who have performed at least two years of service. A year of service can be defined as up to 1,000 hours of service during a 12-month period.</p>	<p>Must include employees who have performed at least two years of service. A year of service can be defined as up to 1,000 hours of service during a 12-month period.</p>



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<b>Salary deferral allowed</b>	Not for 5305-SEP. Up to \$23,000 + catch-up of \$7,500 may be allowed under SARSEPs. As of 01/01/97, new SARSEPs may not be created.	Yes. Up to \$16,000 + catch-up of \$3,500.	Yes. Up to \$16,000 + catch-up of \$3,500.	Yes. Up to \$23,000 + catch-up of \$7,500.	Yes. Up to \$23,000 + catch-up of \$7,500.	No	No	No
<b>Limitation on Compensation that can be used to calculate plan contributions</b>	Compensation cap of \$345,000	Compensation cap of \$345,000 applies only to employer 2% non-elective contribution	Compensation cap of \$345,000	Compensation cap of \$345,000	Compensation cap of \$345,000	Compensation cap of \$345,000	Compensation cap of \$345,000	Compensation cap of \$345,000
<b>Corporate Deductible limit</b>	25% of eligible compensation of all eligible employees	Up to the SIMPLE IRA contribution amounts. NTE allowed contribution	Up to the SIMPLE 401(k)'s contribution amounts. NTE allowed contribution.	25% of compensation of all eligible employees	25% of compensation for all eligible employees	25% of compensation for all eligible employees	25% of compensation for all eligible employees	Generally, up to amount needed to satisfy minimum funding requirement.



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<b>Maximum contributions allowed for employee</b>	Lesser of 25% of employee's compensation or \$69,000	\$16,000 deferral + catch-up of \$3,500 + employer match of dollar for dollar up to 3% of compensation	\$16,000 deferral + catch-up of \$3,500 + employer match of dollar for dollar up to 3% of compensation	Lesser of 100% of employee's compensation or \$69,000+ catch-up of \$7,500.	Lesser of 100% of employee's compensation or \$69,000+ catch-up of \$7,500.	Lesser of 100% of employee's compensation or \$69,000.	Lesser of 100% of employee's compensation or \$69,000.	Amount required to fund employees benefit for the year.
<b>Vesting of Contributions</b>	100% immediate vesting	100% immediate vesting	100% immediate vesting	100% immediate vesting	100% immediate vesting for salary deferrals. Vesting schedule can generally be applied to employer contributions	If eligibility is one year, vesting schedule can be either cliff or graded.  100% immediate vesting after 2-years if eligibility is more than 1-year.	If eligibility is one year, vesting schedule can be either cliff or graded.  100% immediate vesting after 2-years if eligibility is more than 1-year	If eligibility is one year, vesting schedule can be either cliff or graded.  100% immediate vesting after 2-years if eligibility is more than 1-year



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<b>Deadline to Establish Plan</b>	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions	October 1. Except for businesses that are created after October 1, for which the plan must be established as soon as administratively feasible.	October 1. Except for businesses that are created after October 1, for which the plan must be established as soon as administratively feasible. Special rules apply. See Sec. 1.401(k)-4.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.  It is recommended that the plan is established as early in the year as possible to allow salary deferrals	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.  It is recommended that the plan is established as early in the year as possible to allow salary deferrals.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.
<b>Loans</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>5500 Filing</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes. But only if assets exceed \$250,000	Yes. N/A for owner-only plans with balances of \$250,000 or less.	Yes. N/A for owner-only plans with balances of \$250,000 or less.	Yes. N/A for owner-only plans with balances of \$250,000 or less.	Yes. N/A for owner-only plans with balances of \$250,000 or less.



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<b>Deadline for making/ depositing contributions</b>	Employers tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Salary deferrals- as soon as contributions can reasonably be segregated from the employer's general assets. <sup>1</sup>  Employer contributions – employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Salary deferrals- as soon as such contributions can be reasonably segregated from the employer's general assets. <sup>2</sup>  Employer contributions – by the employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions	Salary deferrals- as soon as such contributions can be reasonably segregated from the employer's general assets <sup>3</sup> .  Employer contributions – by the employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Salary deferrals- as soon as such contributions can be reasonably segregated from the employer's general assets <sup>4</sup> .  Employer contributions- by the employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.	Employer's tax filing deadline, including extensions.

<sup>1</sup> No later than 30 calendar days following the month to which the deferral applies. The 30-day period is the latest deadline, and applies only if the assets cannot be segregated sooner.

<sup>2</sup> No later than the 15<sup>th</sup> business day of the month, following the month to which the deferral applies. The 15<sup>th</sup> business day is the latest deadline, and applies only if the assets cannot be segregated sooner. Plans with fewer than 100 participants as of the beginning of the plan year, may remit salary deferrals within 7 business days

<sup>3</sup> Id

<sup>4</sup> Id



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<b>Non-discrimination testing</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required-for features, options & formulas used to compute contributions.  Actual deferral percentage (ADP) and actual contribution percentage (ACP) waived if plan is a safe-harbor 401(k).	Required-for features options and formulas used to compute contributions.	Required-for features, options and formulas used to compute contributions.	Required-for features, options and formulas used to compute contributions.
Complexity	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Very High
Administrative cost	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Very High



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<b>Notable notes</b>	Gives a business that has not established a profit pattern or one that experiences fluctuation in profits, flexibility due to a discretionary contribution feature.	Employers often overlook the annual notification requirements that apply to SIMPLEs, resulting in them being subject to penalties.	These have not been popular, as employers often choose either the SIMPLE IRA or the safe-harbor 401(k) instead, possibly because the desired features are usually in either of the two.	This is really a traditional 401(k) plan, branded with a different name. Because no testing is required, paperwork is trimmed/reduced, to exclude options that don't apply to owner-only plans.	Employers that want a traditional 401(k) plan, but want to avoid the ADP and ACP tests may adopt safe-harbor provisions for the 401(k) plan.	Since the deductibility limit for contributions to Profit Sharing plans are now the same as the limit for Money Purchase Pension Plans, business owners usually have no need to adopt a Money Purchase Plan.	Gives a business that has not established a profit pattern or one that experiences fluctuation in profits, flexibility due to discretionary contribution feature.	Often chosen by employers that want to contribute more than amounts permitted under SEPs and defined contribution plans.





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<b>Ideally suited for ...</b>	Employers that are looking for a plan that is easy/ inexpensive to administer, has a discretionary feature for contributions, contributions are immediately 100% vested, and does not mind that employees can take their contributions at any time.	Employers that are looking for a plan that is easy/ inexpensive to administer, has a mandatory feature for employer contributions, allows employees to share the cost of funding their accounts, contributions are immediately 100% vested, and does not mind that employees can take their contributions at any time.	Employers that are looking for a plan that is easy/ inexpensive to administer, has a mandatory feature for employer contributions, allows employees to share the cost of funding their accounts, and does not mind that employer contributions are 100% immediately vested, though employees must wait for a triggering event to take distributions.	Business where the only eligible employees are the business owners, and their spouses. Business must either have no non-owner (common-law) employees, or all common-law employees who are under age 21 and/or work less than 1,000 hours each year. The business owner must be at least age 21 and work at least 1,000 hours or they too would be ineligible if	Employers that do not mind a plan that involves complex/ costly administration, allows employees to share the cost of funding their retirement accounts, allows a vesting schedule so employees can 'earn' employer contributions, and allows employers to determine when employees can	Employers that do not mind a plan with a mid-range cost for administration, has a mandatory feature for employer contributions, allows a vesting schedule so employees can 'earn' their contributions, and allows employers to determine when employees can make withdrawals within certain limits.	Employers that do not mind a plan with a mid-range cost for administration, has a discretionary feature for employer contributions, allows a vesting schedule so employees can 'earn' their contributions, and allows employers to determine when employees can make withdrawals within certain limits.	Employers that do not mind a plan that involves complex/ costly administration, allows a vesting schedule so employees can 'earn' employer contributions, and allows employers to determine when employees can make withdrawals within certain limits.



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				those requirements are chosen.	make withdrawals within certain limits.			
					The vesting schedule can be an attractive feature for businesses with high employee turnover, if the vesting schedule can be used to prevent employees who work for a short period with the employer from being vested in employer contributions.			

**Not to be considered tax, financial, or legal advice.** Employers must consult with their advisors about choosing the most suitable retirement plans for their businesses. Many factors must be taken into consideration when determining suitability. This table covers only a few of those factors.