



A FRESH START OF THE YEAR AHEAD

The beginning of a new year offers a natural opportunity to pause, reflect, and make sure your financial plans remain aligned with your priorities. January is an ideal time to review retirement accounts, required minimum distributions, and beneficiary designations, as well as to begin thinking intentionally about the year ahead.

In this newsletter, we highlight a few timely considerations to help you start the year with clarity and confidence.

LAYING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE YEAR AHEAD



UNDERSTANDING RMD RULES FOR YOUR RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

Required minimum distributions, or RMDs, are an important part of retirement planning and can vary depending on the type of account you own. For your own traditional IRA or retirement accounts, RMDs generally begin once you reach the applicable required age, and the amount is based on IRS life expectancy tables.

Inherited IRAs follow a different set of rules, which depend on your relationship to the original account owner and the year the inheritance occurred. Some beneficiaries may be required to take annual distributions, while others may be subject to a ten-year distribution window. Because these rules can be complex and continue to evolve, it is important to review how they apply to your specific situation.

A helpful starting point is to confirm which of your accounts are subject to RMDs this year, when distributions must be taken, and how they fit into your overall income plan. Reviewing this early in the year can help avoid missed deadlines and allow time to coordinate distributions with other sources of income.



WHY REVIEWING BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION MATTERS

Beneficiary designations play a critical role in how assets are transferred and often override instructions in a will or trust. Life events such as marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, or the loss of a loved one can all signal the need for an update, but beneficiary designations can also become outdated simply due to the passage of time.

An annual review helps ensure that your retirement accounts, insurance policies, and other assets reflect your current wishes. Keeping these designations up to date can help reduce confusion, support your intentions, and provide clarity for those you care about.

If it has been a while since you last reviewed your beneficiaries, January is a practical time to revisit them and make any necessary updates.



SETTING INTENTIONAL FINANCIAL GOALS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

With the year just beginning, many clients find it helpful to revisit their financial goals and priorities. This may include reviewing savings targets, retirement contributions, charitable giving plans, or broader long-term objectives.

Rather than making sweeping changes, thoughtful adjustments grounded in your current circumstances can help keep your plan on track. Clarifying what has changed since your last review and identifying one or two areas to revisit can provide a strong foundation for the year ahead. Setting clear intentions early in the year allows for greater flexibility and proactive decision-making as the months unfold.

We welcome the opportunity to talk through your goals and help you translate them into actionable next steps within your financial plan.



CONCLUSION

At Phases Financial Group, we believe a strong financial plan evolves alongside your life. As the new year begins, we are here to help you review, refine, and move forward with confidence.

If you would like to discuss required minimum distributions, beneficiary reviews, or your goals for the year ahead, please do not hesitate to reach out. We value the opportunity to continue supporting you as your plans and priorities take shape.

As always, we are grateful for the trust you place in our team. If someone close to you is navigating similar questions around planning for the years ahead, we are always honored to be a resource and welcome personal introductions.

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REACH OUT TO US



650.313.2740



703 High Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301

JUAN ROJAS

AAMS®, AIF® – Financial Advisor, RJFS CA
Insurance License #0D21604 Partner, PFG

MICHAEL LIPKINS

AIF® – Financial Advisor, RJFS CA Insurance
License #0C73111 Partner, PFG



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STANDARDS IN EVERY PHASE OF LIFE»

— John W. Gardner —

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