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Year-End Checklist

for Federal Employees & Retirees

Key dates through January 2027

Updated November 25, 2026

A missed deadline can mean forfeited annual leave, a Roth conversion taxed in the wrong year, or an open season choice that costs more than expected. This checklist puts key federal year-end deadlines in order, from use-or-lose leave to the first annuity increase of 2027, with the 2027 retirement plan and Medicare numbers needed to plan around them. Reading it before the holidays helps catch costly mistakes while there is still time to fix them.

Late November

- ☐ **Nov. 28 (Saturday):** Last day for most federal employees to schedule use-or-lose annual leave in writing to preserve eligibility for restoration if qualifying circumstances prevent its use. Because the deadline falls on a weekend, most employees should submit their requests by Friday, Nov. 27, or earlier if required by their agency. See the use-or-lose annual leave guide.

December

- ☐ **Dec. 7:** Medicare annual enrollment ends, one week before federal open season closes. The timing matters for retirees comparing Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage and Medicare Advantage options.
- ☐ **Dec. 11 (Friday):** The continuing resolution funding affected government agencies is scheduled to expire, and a partial shutdown is possible if Congress does not extend funding or pass appropriations legislation. The shutdown cash-gap article covers how to prepare.
- ☐ **Dec. 14 (Monday):** Open season ends for FEHB, Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB), the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS). FEDVIP and FSAFEDS close at 11:59 p.m. Eastern time. The enrollee share of FEHB premiums rises 10.9% on average for 2027, and the overall average premium rises 9.3%, so a current plan may cost more than expected. Carrying over up to $680 in unused 2026 health flexible spending account funds requires re-enrolling in FSAFEDS for at least $100 and meeting the program's other eligibility requirements. Details are in the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) open season highlights and on the FEHB open season page.
- ☐ **Late December:** OPM usually publishes the final 2027 pay tables. The president's alternative pay plan holds General Schedule base and locality pay at 2026 levels while directing OPM to increase pay by 3.8% for certain federal law enforcement personnel through its special salary rate authority. Congress can still change the pay plan.

December 31: Year-End Deadlines

- ☐ **Roth conversions:** A conversion of traditional Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) savings must be completed by Dec. 31, 2026, to count toward the 2026 tax year. TSP processing deadlines may require participants to submit requests earlier. Check tsp.gov for year-end processing deadlines before waiting until the last day.
- ☐ **Required minimum distributions (RMDs):** Separated TSP participants who have already begun taking required minimum distributions generally must receive their 2026 RMD by Dec. 31. Those turning 73 in 2026 who have already separated, or those retiring in 2026 at age 73 or older, can generally delay their first TSP RMD until April 1, 2027, but would then have two RMD deadlines in 2027. Active federal employees generally are not required to take TSP RMDs. Traditional individual retirement accounts (IRAs) are subject to RMD deadlines regardless of employment status. Roth TSP and Roth IRA balances are not subject to lifetime RMDs for their original owners, and a Roth conversion cannot satisfy an RMD.
- ☐ **FSAFEDS:** The 2026 plan year ends. The dependent care account has a grace period through March 15, 2027, for eligible participants. See the FSAFEDS website.

Early January

- ☐ **Jan. 1 (Friday):** New Year's Day holiday. The 2027 plan year starts for FEDVIP, FSAFEDS, PSHB, and annuitants' FEHB coverage. The Medicare Advantage open enrollment period runs Jan. 1 to March 31 for beneficiaries already enrolled in Medicare Advantage.
- ☐ **Jan. 4 (Monday):** First annuity payment reflecting the 2027 cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). Eligible Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retirees receive a full COLA of 3.6%, and eligible Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees receive a full COLA of 2.6%. Recent retirees may receive a prorated increase. FERS retirees under age 62 generally receive no COLA, apart from special categories such as certain disability and survivor annuitants. Track the numbers on the COLA Watch page.
- ☐ **Jan. 9 (Saturday):** The 2026 leave year ends for most federal employees. Most employees can carry over up to 240 hours of annual leave, and unused leave above the applicable limit is generally forfeited unless it qualifies for restoration. For a Monday-to-Friday schedule, the last workday is Friday, Jan. 8. OPM publishes the leave year dates.
- ☐ **Jan. 10 (Sunday):** The first full biweekly pay period of the calendar year begins for most federal employees, and the 2027 leave year starts. Any applicable new pay rates take effect beginning with this pay period.

Mid-January and Beyond

- ☐ **January:** The TSP issues Form 1099-R to participants with reportable distributions, including taxable withdrawals, Roth conversions and certain taxable loan distributions. OPM also makes 1099-R forms available to annuitants. OPM generally mails paper tax forms by the end of January, though they may arrive in February. Annuitants with an email address on file generally receive digital copies by default.

See OPM's tax information for annuitants.

- ☐ **Jan. 15 (Friday):** Fourth-quarter estimated tax payments for 2026 are due for taxpayers required to make them. A Roth conversion or large taxable TSP withdrawal may increase the amount owed.
- ☐ **Late January to Feb. 1:** New FEHB premiums appear in paychecks and annuity payments. Employees generally see them in the first paycheck covering the new benefits plan year, rather than in early-January paychecks that still carry 2026 rates. Exact paycheck dates depend on the agency's payroll provider. Annuitants see the new premium in the Feb. 1 payment, because annuities are paid after the month ends.

2027 Limits and Premiums at a Glance

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced the 2027 retirement plan limits on Nov. 12, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the 2027 Medicare Part B premium on Nov. 17.

Item	2026	2027
TSP and 401(k) employee deferral limit	$24,500	$25,500
Catch-up contribution, age 50 and over (standard limit)	$8,000	$8,500
Catch-up contribution, ages 60 through 63	$11,250	$11,750
IRA contribution limit	$7,500	$7,500
Medicare Part B standard premium (monthly)	$202.90	$209.40
Medicare Part B annual deductible	$283	$292

The IRS figures come from its 2027 retirement plan limits announcement, and the Part B figures come from the Federal Register notice. The TSP limits page and Medicare premiums page carry the full details.

What to Confirm Before Acting

Dates and amounts above come from OPM, the TSP, the IRS, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Agency payroll offices differ on exact pay dates, and TSP year-end processing deadlines may vary by transaction type, so check tsp.gov and agency payroll notices before relying on a specific cutoff.