CPA
Practice Advisor

earn a special tax credit in 2014 and years ahead, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Nov. 04, 2014

Low- and moderate-income workers can take steps now to save for retirement and earn a special tax credit in 2014 and years ahead, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

The saver's credit helps offset part of the first $2,000 workers voluntarily contribute to IRAs and 401(k) plans and similar workplace retirement programs. Also known as the retirement savings contributions credit, the saver's credit is available in addition to any other tax savings that apply.

Eligible workers still have time to make qualifying retirement contributions and get the saver's credit on their 2014 tax return. People have until April 15, 2015, to set up a new individual retirement arrangement or add money to an existing IRA for 2014. However, elective deferrals (contributions) must be made by the end of the year to a 401(k) plan or similar workplace program, such as a 403(b) plan for employees of public schools and certain tax-exempt organizations, a governmental 457 plan for state or local government employees, or the Thrift Savings Plan for federal employees. Employees who are unable to set aside money for this year may want to schedule their 2015 contributions soon so their employer can begin withholding them in January.

The saver's credit can be claimed by:

- Married couples filing jointly with incomes up to $60,000 in 2014 or $61,000 in 2015;
- Heads of Household with incomes up to $45,000 in 2014 or $45,750 in 2015; and

- Married individuals filing separately and singles with incomes up to $30,000 in

is used to claim the saver's credit, and its instructions have details on figuring the credit correctly.

In tax year 2012, the most recent year for which complete figures are available, saver's credits totaling $1.2 billion were claimed on more than 6.9 million individual income tax returns. Saver's credits claimed on these returns averaged $215 for joint filers, $165 for heads of household and $127 for single filers.

The saver's credit supplements other tax benefits available to people who set money aside for retirement. For example, most workers may deduct their contributions to a traditional IRA. Though Roth IRA contributions are not deductible, qualifying withdrawals, usually after retirement, are tax-free. Normally, contributions to 401(k) and similar workplace plans are not taxed until withdrawn.

Other special rules that apply to the saver's credit include the following:

- Eligible taxpayers must be at least 18 years of age.
- Anyone claimed as a dependent on someone else's return cannot take the credit.
- A student cannot take the credit. A person enrolled as a full-time student during any part of 5 calendar months during the year is considered a student.

Certain retirement plan distributions reduce the contribution amount used to figure the credit. For 2014, this rule applies to distributions received after 2011 and before the due date, including extensions, of the 2014 return. Form 8880 and its instructions have details on making this computation.

Started in in 2002 as a temporary provision, the saver's credit was made a permanent part of the tax code in legislation enacted in 2006. To help preserve the value of the credit, income limits are now adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation. More information about the credit is on IRS.gov.