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SAVERS CREDIT - HOW TO GET CREDIT FOR RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

By Victor Sy, CPA

If you make eligible contributions to an employer-sponsored retirement plan or to an individual retirement arrangement, you may be eligible for a tax credit. Here are six things you need to know about the Retirement Savings Contributions Credit:

Income Limits: The Savers Credit, formally known as the Retirement Savings Contributions Credit, applies to individuals with a filing status and income of:

- Single, married filing separately or qualifying widow (er), with income up to \$28,250 in 2011 or \$28,750 in 2012.
- Head of Household, with income up to \$42,375 in 2011 or \$43,125 in 2012.
- Married Filing Jointly, with income up to \$56,500 in 2011 or \$57,500 in 2012.

Eligibility Requirements: To be eligible for the credit -

- You must at least 18 years old,
- You cannot be a full-time student during the calendar year, and
- You cannot be claimed as a dependent on another person's return.

Credit Amount: If you make eligible contributions to a qualified IRA, 401(k) and certain other retirement plans, you may be able to take a credit of up to \$1,000 or up to \$2,000 if filing jointly. The credit is a percentage of the qualifying contribution amount, with the highest rate for taxpayers with the least income.

Distributions: When figuring this credit, you generally must subtract the amount of distributions you have received from your retirement plans from the contributions you have made. This rule applies to distributions received in the two years before the year the credit is claimed, the year the credit is claimed, and the period after the end of the credit year but before the due date - including extensions - for filing the return for the credit year.

Other Tax Benefits: The Retirement Savings Contributions Credit is in addition to other tax benefits which may result from the retirement contributions. For example, most workers at these income levels may deduct all or part of their contributions to a traditional IRA. Contributions to a regular 401(k) plan are not subject to income tax until withdrawn from the plan.

Forms To Use: To claim the credit use Form 8880, Credit for Qualified Retirement Savings Contributions.