

Merrill Small Business 401(k)

Workplace retirement plan solutions
built for you and your employees



A plan that's powerful,
easy to maintain and
affordable. What else
do you need?

Establishing a retirement plan through the Merrill Small Business 401(k) offering can be a very smart decision. That's because it helps you and your employees save for retirement and provides potential tax advantages. A secure online platform makes opening and maintaining your retirement plan simple—and straightforward pricing means no surprises. The bottom line: A Merrill Small Business 401(k) is a cost-effective, accessible way to help your business and your employees thrive.



Designed specifically for small businesses

With the Merrill Small Business 401(k) offering, you get:

The power to securely set up and maintain your 401(k) plan

Ascensus, the plan's recordkeeper, has 401(k) consultants available to help you set up an appropriate plan for your unique needs. Once your plan is set up, self-directed plan administration resources help keep you in control while making ongoing account maintenance easy and convenient.

A simple process for managing your fiduciary responsibilities

Merrill offers one streamlined menu of investments designed exclusively for small businesses to help take the guesswork out of fund selection. Merrill also provides trading and custodial services with access to webinars and other online resources that can help you as you make decisions about your 401(k) and financial life.

Introduction (continued)



Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (also referred to as "MLPF&S" or "Merrill") makes available certain investment products sponsored, managed, distributed or provided by companies that are affiliates of Bank of America Corporation ("BoFA Corp."). MLPF&S is a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, Member [SIPC](#) and a wholly owned subsidiary of BoFA Corp.

Investment products:

Are Not FDIC Insured

Are Not Bank Guaranteed

May Lose Value



Ready to get started? Taking the next step is easy.

Once you've made the decision to establish your plan, you'll proceed through the online process. This will involve adding additional company information, entering or uploading employee data, and reviewing and accepting important plan agreements—which include additional details about plan services and fees.



Visit merrilledge.com/401k
to sign up or call **866.890.4177**
for more information.^{1,2}



Making your life a little easier

Ascensus and Merrill have taken much of the administrative burden out of the Small Business 401(k), making it simple for you to maintain.

- **Managed recordkeeping**

Ascensus manages the recordkeeping, plan administration and related services for your plan. An Ascensus 401(k) consultant is just a phone call or click away to assist with plan setup.²

- **Online access**

Secure online platform makes plan setup and ongoing administration simple and convenient, helping keep you in control.

Information and resources at your fingertips give you convenient access to online reporting, plan summary and transaction details virtually 24/7.

- **Investment and Fiduciary services**

Merrill is responsible for the initial and ongoing selection of the investments within the Plan Menu, simplifying the process for you in managing your fiduciary responsibilities.

- **Helpful financial wellness resources**

Merrill provides access to virtual education seminars and online resources can help inform decisions about your 401(k) and financial life.

- **Easy, secure payments**

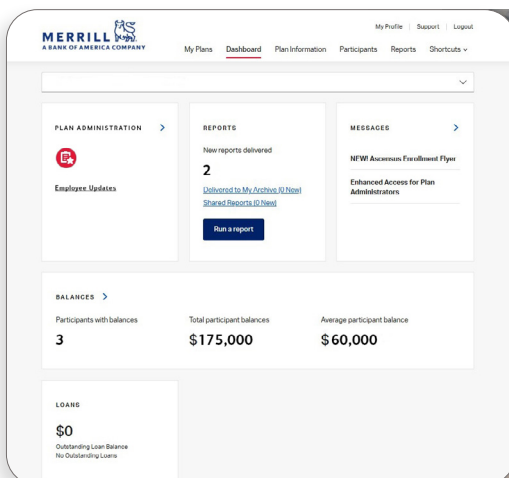
Contributions and monthly administrative fees for your 401(k) are remitted securely via Automated Clearing House (ACH).

- **Simplified reporting**

You'll receive a step-by-step guide from Ascensus to help make year-end plan review and report processing a little easier.

- **Transparent fees**

No hidden fees, which means you'll get no surprises.



For illustrative purposes only.



Giving your employees the power to save for tomorrow

- **Fast and easy enrollment**

Online enrollment makes it easy for employees to get started in the plan.

- **Helpful communications**

The Ascensus recordkeeping service includes alerts to provide proactive, relevant messaging to remind employees about the importance of participating in their retirement journey.

- **Live support**

Education and support provided by Ascensus' call center consultants.

- **Investments**

Access to one fixed plan menu with low cost investments representing a broad array of asset categories.

- **Accessible information**

Convenient online statements and forms.



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Your financial goals matter to us

We can help you achieve them with educational articles, videos and tips.

What are your financial priorities?

Answer a few simple questions, and we'll direct you to the right resources for every stage of life.

[Get Started](#)

Merrill Small Business 401(k) Plan Menu

Discretionary advice

Under the Merrill Small Business 401(k) Advisory Service (the "Program"), Merrill provides one type of investment menu containing specific and diversified asset classes including a qualified default investment alternative (QDIA) and cash alternative.

Under the program:

- Merrill is responsible for the initial and ongoing selection of the investments within the Plan Menu and will provide limited discretionary investment advice with respect to investment options made available to participants in your plan.
- The Chief Investment Office (CIO) for Merrill provides initial and ongoing investment due diligence and monitoring of the investments within the plan menu³.
- You receive quarterly reporting on the plans' investment performance.

Symbol	Fund Name	Morningstar Category	Gross Expense Ratio
RBFGX	American Funds Bond Fund of America R6	Intermediate Core Bond	0.25
FXNAX	Fidelity US Bond Index Fund	Intermediate Core Bond	0.03
AIADX	American Century Inflation-Adjs Bond R6	Inflation Protected Bond	0.29
LSGNX	Loomis Sayles Global Bond N	Global Bond	0.67
BRHYX	BlackRock High Yield Bond K	High Yield Bond	0.49
HAITX	Hartford Core Equity Fund Class R6	Large Blend	0.36
FXAIX	Fidelity 500 Index Fund	Large Blend	0.02
MLRSX	NYLI Winslow Large Cap Growth R6	Large Growth	0.63
JDVWX	John Hancock Disciplined Value R6	Large Value	0.61
CSMUX	Carillon Scout Mid Cap R6	Mid-Cap Blend	0.88
FSMDX	Fidelity Mid Cap Index Fund	Mid-Cap Blend	0.03
DCZRX	Macquarie Small Cap Core R6	Small Blend	0.68
FSSNX	Fidelity Small Cap Index Fund	Small Blend	0.03
WSCRX	Allspring Small Company Growth Fund R6	Small Growth	0.92
ESPRX	Allspring Special Small Cap Value R6	Small Value	0.99
RIGGX	American Funds Intl Gr and Inc R6	Foreign Large Blend	0.54
FTIHX	Fidelity Total International Index Fund	Foreign Large Blend	0.06
SEMTX	Hartford Schroders Emerging Mkts Eq SDR	Diversified Emerging Mkts	0.96
CSFZX	Cohen & Steers Global Realty Z	Global Real Estate	0.84
VSCGX	VSCGX Vanguard LifeStrategy Conservative Growth Fund	Global Moderately Conservative Allocation	0.12
VSMGX	VSMGX Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth Fund	Global Moderate Allocation	0.13
VASGX	Vanguard LifeStrategy Growth Fund	Global Moderately Aggressive Allocation	0.14

Cash Alternative

Symbol	Fund Name	Morningstar Category	Gross Expense Ratio
VMFXX	Vanguard Federal Money Market Fund Investor Shares*	Money Market	0.11

Qualified Default Investment Alternative (QDIA) — Target Date

Symbol	Fund Name	Morningstar Category	Gross Expense Ratio
LINKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2030 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2030	0.13
LIJKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2035 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2035	0.13
LIKXK	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2040 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2040	0.13
LIHKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2045 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2045	0.14
LIPKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2050 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2050	0.14
LIVKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2055 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2055	0.14
LIZKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2060 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2060	0.14
LIWKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2065 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2065+	0.14
LIYKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index 2070 Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date 2065+	0.33
LIRKX	BlackRock LifePath® Index Retirement Fund Class K Shares	Target-Date Retirement	0.12

Data as of June 30, 2025

*** You could lose money by investing in the Fund. Although the Fund seeks to preserve the value of your investment at \$1.00 per share, it cannot guarantee it will do so. An investment in the Fund is not a bank account and is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency. The Fund's sponsor is not required to reimburse the Fund for losses, and you should not expect that the sponsor will provide financial support to the Fund at any time, including during periods of market stress.**

Merrill Small Business 401(k) Plan Menu (continued) 

³ The Chief Investment Office (CIO) provides thought leadership on wealth management, investment strategy and global markets; portfolio management solutions; due diligence; and solutions oversight and data analytics. CIO viewpoints are developed for Bank of America Private Bank, a division of Bank of America, N.A., ("Bank of America") and Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated ("MLPF&S" or "Merrill"), a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser and a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of America Corporation ("BofA Corp.").

Important fund information

Investors should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of investment options carefully before investing. This, and additional information about the investment options, can be found in the prospectuses and, if available, the summary prospectuses which can be obtained by calling Ascensus at 866.890.4177. Please read these documents carefully before investing.

Important risk disclosures

Investing involves risk, including possible loss of the principal value invested. There are ongoing fees and expenses associated with investing. Bear in mind that higher return potential is accompanied by higher risk.

Equity: Investments in sector funds, including technology or real estate stocks, are subject to adverse political, economic or other developments and may carry additional risk resulting from lack of industry diversification. Funds that invest in small or mid-capitalization companies experience a greater degree of market volatility than those of large-capitalization stocks and are riskier investments. Investments in foreign securities involve special risks including foreign currency and the possibility of substantial volatility due to adverse political economic or other developments which are magnified in emerging markets. Growth funds primarily seek capital appreciation but usually at above-average risk while value funds primarily hold stocks they deem to be undervalued in price and that are likely to pay dividends. Investing in commodities or the securities of companies operating in the commodities market involves a high degree of risk, including leveraging strategies and other speculative investment practices that may increase the risk of investment loss, including the principal value invested. Investments may be highly illiquid and subject to high fees and expenses.

Fixed income: Bond funds have the same interest rate, inflation and credit risks associated with the underlying bonds owned by the fund. Generally, the value of bond funds rises when prevailing interest rates fall and falls when interest rates rise. Investing in lower-grade debt securities ("junk" bonds) may be subject to greater market fluctuations and risk of loss of income and principal than securities in higher rated categories. Any guarantee by the U.S. government, its agencies or instrumentalities applies only to the payment of principal and interest on the guaranteed security and does not guarantee the yield or value of that security.

Index: It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

Target date: The target date [or retirement date, as applicable] for these funds is the approximate date when an investor plans to start withdrawing the assets from their retirement account. The principal value of these funds is not guaranteed at any time, including at the target date. These funds are designed to become more conservative over time as the target date approaches.

Because a target date fund is a "fund of funds," it will bear its allocable share of the costs and expenses of the underlying investment vehicles in which it invests (including its allocable share of the management fees and incentive compensation payable to the investment managers of such vehicles). The target date fund is thus subject to two levels of fees and a potentially higher expense ratio than would be associated with an investment in a fund that trades directly in financial instruments under the direction of a single manager.

The Merrill Small Business 401(k) includes investment advisory services sponsored by Merrill. Merrill offers a broad range of brokerage, investment advisory and other services. There are important differences between brokerage and investment advisory services, including the type of advice and assistance provided, the fees charged, and the rights and obligations of the parties. It is important to understand the differences, particularly when determining which service or services to select. Please refer to the Merrill Small business 401(k) Program Brochure for information on the program including a description of the series and related fees.

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Affordable, transparent plan pricing

Group 401(k)

Designed for a business owner and their employees

Your business pays:

Ascensus Recordkeeping Fees

No setup fee	\$0
Monthly administration	\$95

Your employees pay:

Monthly recordkeeping	\$5 per participant
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Annual Asset-Based Fee

Participant servicing through the call center	0.20%
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Merrill Fees

Annual Asset-Based Fees

Investment fiduciary services	0.08%
Trading, custodial & financial wellness	0.42%

Individual 401(k)⁴

Designed for a business owner with no employees, or that person and his or her spouse

Your business pays:

Ascensus Recordkeeping Fees

No setup fee	\$0
Monthly administration	\$22.50
Monthly recordkeeping	\$5 per participant

Annual Asset-Based Fee

Participant servicing through the call center	0.20%
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Merrill Fees

Annual Asset-Based Fees

Investment fiduciary services	0.08%
Trading, custodial & financial wellness	0.42%

Ascensus Recordkeeping Services:

- IRS-approved plan prototype agreement
- Summary plan description (SPD)
- Recordkeeping and trustee services
- Compliance testing and 1099 tax reporting
- Signature-ready IRS form 5500
- Online contribution processing with funding via ACH
- 24/7 access to manage your 401(k) plan on your schedule
- Toll-free call center support²

Merrill Services:

- Retirement education resources
- Trading and custodial services
- One fixed plan investment menu, simplifying the process in managing your fiduciary responsibilities
- Online enrollment and financial wellness educational resources



Additional information

Auto enrollment for group plans

Auto enrollment puts employees' inertia to work for them. If they don't enroll in your company's 401(k) plan when they become eligible, they will be automatically enrolled. Other things you should know about auto-enrollment:

- The contribution level for all automatically enrolled employees is usually set at 3%, but you can modify this amount during your plan setup process.
- Auto-enrolled participants can be invested into a qualified default investment alternative (QDIA).
- Employees can opt out at any time if they wish or change their contribution rate and investments.

Employer matching contributions

Employer matching contributions (excluding Safe Harbor match) can be structured as discretionary, meaning you can have the flexibility to contribute to participants in years when cash flow is ample or not contribute when cash flows are insufficient.

Combined total contributions for each individual account (employee contributions and any employer matching contributions) of up to \$70,000 or 100% of compensation, whichever is less (\$77,500 limit with catch-up contributions), for 2025.⁵

ERISA fidelity bond

Paid by employer to third-party insurance provider. It is the responsibility of the plan sponsor to obtain an ERISA fidelity bond from an insurance provider of their choice. The amount of the fidelity bond must be fixed at the beginning of each fiscal year of the plan and shall not be less than 10% of the total plan assets. In no case may the bond coverage be less than \$1,000 nor more than \$500,000. For example, \$10,000 coverage would be required for a plan with \$100,000 in assets with an estimated premium of \$100 annually. Please contact your business insurance agent for guidance to determine whether this is already included under your existing insurance policies. If your insurance agent is unable to assist you, Ascensus may be able to direct you to a potential provider.

Additional information (continued)





Additional information *(continued)*

Loans and withdrawals

Loans are a feature of most 401(k) plans. There are strict guidelines on making and administering loans, and you can restrict the reasons for loans. Most plans choose to allow loans for situations of hardship or significant event:

- Preventing eviction from home
- Paying for large unreimbursed medical expenses
- Buying a first residence
- Paying for educational expenses for the account holder, spouse or children

Withdrawals from an employee's account taken prior to age 59½ are subject to a 10% early withdrawal additional tax unless due to death, disability, separation from service and receiving substantially equal periodic payments, or separating from service after age 55. Hardship or early withdrawals can be allowed to satisfy an employee's immediate and heavy financial need for one of the following events:

- Preventing eviction from home
- Paying for large unreimbursed medical expenses
- Buying a first residence
- Paying for educational expenses for the account holder, spouse or children
- Burial or funeral expenses for employee's deceased parent, spouse, children or dependents

Note that this form of distribution is allowed only when an employee has no other means to meet his or her obligations. If an employee takes a hardship withdrawal, they may have a temporary suspension from making contributions to the plan.

Mandatory withdrawals are required once a participant reaches age 72 (age 73 if the participant was born on or after January 1, 1951, but before January 1, 1960). Required minimum distributions (RMDs) must be executed each year, unless the employee is still working and is a non-5% owner of the business.

Additional information *(continued)*



Additional information *(continued)*

Qualified Default Investment Alternative (QDIA)

The default investment for the plan is set as the target date series to direct employee 401(k) contributions and/or funds that may arrive before an employee completes the enrollment process. The default is seen when employees are auto-enrolled in the plan but have not yet made their own fund selections or for employees who roll over funds from another 401(k) or IRA. The default investment selection stays in effect until the employee makes his/her investment election. During the enrollment process, employees are prompted to make their own selections and can adjust them any time thereafter. The default option provided is aligned with the Department of Labor (DOL) regulations regarding QDIA.

Use of a QDIA in the absence of an employee's election may provide the plan sponsor with the benefit of not having to prove that the default investment is deemed prudent.

Roth 401(k) contributions

A Roth 401(k) plan design is a feature that you, as the plan sponsor, may select and that allows for after-tax payroll deductions to be contributed to the plan, in addition to the pre-tax payroll deductions in a non-Roth 401(k). Employees participating in the plan can choose whether their contribution is to be 401(k) pre-tax, Roth 401(k) after-tax, or a combination of both. The annual contribution limit of \$23,500 for 2025 applies regardless of the contribution method selected.⁵

Safe Harbor plan design

Safe harbor plans are designed to automatically satisfy certain IRS nondiscrimination testing intended to ensure that plans are being administered in a way that is fair not just for owners and other highly compensated employees (HCEs), but for all company employees. Without such a "safe harbor," there may be restrictions on the amount that top-tier employees and owners can contribute to their 401(k) plans. This is accomplished through a mandatory employer contribution, usually in the form of a match percentage to participating employees or a non-elective contribution to all employees. This contribution is immediately 100% vested. Additional requirements apply in order for a plan to qualify for safe harbor status. Safe harbor 401(k) plans are ideal for smaller companies whose HCEs would like to maximize deferrals. A safe harbor plan may be appropriate for your business if you have one or more employees and face contribution restrictions for you, and your HCEs, because of low plan participation/deferral rates. By opting for the safe harbor provision, you as the business owner and your HCEs are able to make the maximum pre-tax and/or Roth 401(k) contributions, if applicable, to the 401(k) plan (\$23,500 in 2025⁵).

Additional information *(continued)*



Additional information *(continued)*

Signature-ready Form 5500

Ascensus will provide you with a signature-ready Form 5500, if applicable, for your review and submission to the IRS.

Form 5500 must be filed with the IRS for each year in which a qualified plan has assets in excess of \$250,000. Form 5500 is filed for plans with 100 or more participants, Form 5500 C or R for plans with less than 100 participants, and Form 5500 EZ for qualified plans with less than two participants. Plans that qualify for Form 5500 C/R must file 5500 Form C for the first year, and every three years thereafter. In the intervening years, those plans may file Form 5500-R.

¹ All new account applications are subject to review and approval by Merrill. Merrill, at its discretion, may elect not to open a Merrill Small Business 401(k) plan for various reasons, including but not limited to eligibility restrictions pertaining to certain business types.

² Ascensus 401(k) consultants are available Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time at **866.890.4177**.

⁴ The fees quoted will remain in effect if the organization does not employ any eligible employees. If the organization grows and hires an eligible employee or requires services or plan features beyond the scope of the Individual 401(k), the plan will migrate to the Merrill Small Business 401(k) product and the applicable fee structure will take effect upon completion of the migration.

⁵ Contribution limits apply for 2025, respectively, per IRS cost-of-living adjustments. Amounts for subsequent years may vary.

Merrill, its affiliates and financial advisors do not provide legal, tax or accounting advice. You should consult your legal and/or tax advisors before making any financial decisions.

The Merrill Small Business 401(k) Advisory Service is an investment advisory program sponsored by Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (also referred to as "MLPF&S" or "Merrill"). Merrill offers a broad range of brokerage, investment advisory and other services. There are important differences between brokerage and investment advisory services, including the type of advice and assistance provided, the fees charged, and the rights and obligations of the parties. It is important to understand the differences, particularly when determining which service or services to select. Please refer to the Merrill Small Business Advisory Service Brochure for information on the program, including a description of the services and related fees.

Plan administrative and recordkeeping services for Merrill Small Business 401(k) are provided by Ascensus. Educational call center support will be provided by Ascensus. Bank of America Corporation and Ascensus are not affiliated.

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