

remain an approved nonbank trustee. These regulations affect nonbank trustees and custodians of individual retirement accounts, and nonbank custodians of qualified plans and tax-sheltered annuities.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** These regulations are effective December 20, 1995.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

On December 6, 1994, temporary regulations (TD 8570) under section 401 were published in the Federal Register (59 FR 62570). A notice of proposed rulemaking (EE-38-94), cross-referencing the temporary regulations, was published in the Federal Register (59 FR 62644) on the same day. The temporary regulations provide guidance on the adequacy of net worth requirements for nonbank trustees and custodians of individual retirement plans, and for nonbank custodians of custodial accounts of qualified plans and tax-sheltered annuities.

After consideration of all of the comments, the temporary regulations are replaced and the proposed regulations are adopted as revised by this Treasury decision. Because section 401(d)(1), under which § 1.401-12 was originally issued, was repealed by section 237(a) of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982, Public Law 97-248 (1982), these final regulations also move all the rules for nonbank trustees and custodians that were previously in § 1.401-12(n) to § 1.408-2.

**Explanation of Provisions**

The fiduciary conduct rules for nonbank trustees and custodians under longstanding Treasury regulations require nonbank trustees and custodians to maintain a minimum amount of net worth in order to qualify as an approved nonbank trustee or custodian. Under this requirement, the nonbank trustee or custodian's net worth must exceed the greater of a specified dollar amount or a percentage of the value of all assets held in fiduciary accounts of retirement plans. A primary objective of this adequacy-of-net-worth requirement has been to ensure that nonbank trustees and custodians maintain a level of solvency commensurate with their financial and fiduciary responsibilities.

Under the general net worth requirement, nonbank trustees and custodians may not accept new accounts unless their net worth exceeds the greater of \$100,000 or four percent

of the value of all assets held in fiduciary accounts. Additionally, nonbank trustees and custodians must take whatever steps are necessary (including the relinquishment of fiduciary accounts) to ensure that their net worth exceeds the greater of \$50,000 or two percent of the value of all assets held by them in fiduciary accounts.

For passive nonbank trustees and custodians (qualified nonbank entities that have no discretion to direct the investment of assets), the percentage requirements are lower. Specifically, passive nonbank trustees and custodians may not accept new accounts unless their net worth exceeds the greater of \$100,000 or two percent of the value of all assets held in fiduciary accounts. Additionally, they must take appropriate action (including the relinquishment of fiduciary accounts) to ensure that their net worth exceeds the greater of \$50,000 or one percent of the value of assets held in their fiduciary accounts.

The proposed and temporary regulations provide a special rule for passive nonbank trustees and custodians that are broker-dealers and members of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC). The proposed and temporary regulations provide that, to the extent that assets held in any fiduciary accounts are insured by SIPC in the event of the member's liquidation (\$500,000 per account, \$100,000 of which may be cash), the assets will be disregarded in determining the value of assets held in fiduciary accounts by the trustee or custodian for purposes of the percentage part of the net worth requirement.

The final regulations adopt the provisions of the proposed and temporary regulations. In addition, in response to comments, the final regulations extend the SIPC-related relief to all nonbank trustees and custodians that are broker-dealers and members of SIPC rather than limiting the relief to passive nonbank trustees and custodians. The final regulations provide that the amount of the minimum net worth requirement for nonbank trustees and custodians that are SIPC members is reduced by either two percent of assets insured by SIPC (in the case of the minimum net worth requirement that applies to a trustee or custodian accepting additional accounts) or one percent of assets insured by SIPC (in the case of the minimum net worth requirement that must be satisfied to avoid a mandatory relinquishment of accounts). An example in the regulations illustrates this rule.

The final regulations also retain the rule in the proposed and temporary regulations that increased the initial net worth requirement for all nonbank trustees and custodians. The purpose of the rule is to better assure that the enterprises are sound and well-funded during their start-up period. This initial net worth requirement requires all new entities applying for nonbank trustee or custodian status to have a net worth of not less than \$250,000 for the most recent taxable year preceding the applicant's initial application.

This new initial net worth requirement applies only to applications received after January 5, 1995. Previously approved nonbank trustees and custodians need only satisfy the ongoing net worth requirement.

**Special Analyses**

It has been determined that this Treasury decision is not a significant regulatory action as defined in EO 12866. Therefore, a regulatory assessment is not required. It also has been determined that section 553(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 5) and the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. chapter 6) do not apply to these regulations, and, therefore, a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required. Pursuant to section 7805(f) of the Internal Revenue Code, the notice of proposed rulemaking preceding these regulations was submitted to the Small Business Administration for comment on its impact on small business.

**Drafting Information**

The principal author of these regulations is Marjorie Hoffman, Office of the Associate Chief Counsel, (Employee Benefits and Exempt Organizations) IRS. However, other personnel from the IRS and Treasury Department participated in their development.

**List of Subjects in 26 CFR Part 1**

Income taxes, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

**Adoption of Amendments to the Regulations**

Accordingly, 26 CFR part 1 is amended as follows:

**PART 1—INCOME TAXES**

Paragraph 1. The authority citation for part 1 is amended by adding an entry in numerical order to read as follows:

Authority: 26 U.S.C. 7805. \* \* \*

§ 1.401-12 also issued under 26 U.S.C. 401(d)(1). \* \* \*