Submit your own question about personal finances at ***cnnmoney.com/helpdesk*** *or e-mail* ***helpdesk@cnnmoney.com.***

Q

RETIREMENT

I'm 62 and just went on Social Security. If I take a high-paying job, what should I do?

—CHARLIE HADDEN, *Clarkston, Mich.*

Collect at 62, then return to a $100,000-a-year job, and you'll have to pay back some $7,200—or get a smaller check at 66.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT AT AGE 66

NOTES: *Assumes benefit collected for four months; 2% COLA; for survivors benefit calculation, recipient dies at age 65.* ***SOURCE:*** *Robert Bruce, Social Security Inside Out*

A *Repay the money* and withdraw your claim. Do it within a year of filing; you can reapply later, qualifying for higher benefits.

In case you can't or don't want to repay the money, tell Social Security about your job so your benefits can be adjusted. Before you reach the year of your full retirement age, the checks you're due are reduced $1 for every $2 you earn over a limit that's now $15,120; a hefty salary would cut your payments to zero. When you reach full retirement age, each month of unreturned checks will cut your permanent benefits about half a percentage point, says Robert Bruce, author of *Social Security Inside Out* (see the above illustration).

Married? Definitely return the cash: Otherwise, dying before age 66 could cut your widow's survivors benefits up to 17.5%.

—BETH BRAVERMAN

Q

SAVINGS

My 11-year-old earns money umpiring baseball games. Can he open an IRA? Will it affect his college aid?

—RICK GROSS, *Avon, Conn.*

A Assuming Junior is willing, a Roth IRA (which grows and can be tapped tax-free) is a home run. In 2013 he can put in the lesser of $5,500 or his earned income. Does he earn just a few hundred dollars? You'll need a firm with a low minimum, such as Charles Schwab.

Don't worry about college. IRAs aren't used to set federal aid. Though about 260 schools doling out aid ask about IRAs, retirement money is counted only sometimes, such as when a wealthy family has split up assets, says FinAid.org publisher Mark Kantrowitz.

Your son may make too little to file taxes, says H&R Block's Gil Charney, but it's not a bad idea to save W-2s or 1099s proving earned income.

—STEPHANIE AUWERTER

Q

REAL ESTATE

What are the advantages and disadvantages of real estate investments overseas?

—DANIEL L., *New York City*

A Direct investment in foreign property, be it a mall or a second home, is a risky proposition. Sure, you could nab greater gains than in the U.S., should you be smart, knowledgeable, and lucky. But noncitizens can face extra expenses and red tape, and back in the U.S., you're subject to complex investment rules, warns Rapid City, S.D., real estate broker and financial planner Rick Kahler.

A safer bet is a fund with global real estate holdings. Try **SPDR DJ International Real Estate** (RWX), a MONEY 70 ETF; it returned 39% in 2012, compared with 18% for U.S. REITs, though five-year results lagged. Keep foreign holdings at half or less of your real estate allocation, which itself should be at most 8% of your portfolio, says Miami planner Jorge Padilla.

—LAUREN GENSLER