INCOME GUIDE

Using RSU Income to Qualify

How mortgage lenders can count restricted stock units as income, what history and documents they need, how the income is calculated, and what changes if you recently switched employers.

Reviewed November 18, 2026 against the sources listed at the end of this guide.

Who this guide is for

You receive part of your pay as restricted stock units (RSUs) or restricted stock, and you want to know whether a mortgage lender will count it. This is common for people in tech, biotech and other publicly traded companies. RSU income can make a large difference in how much you qualify for, but only if it meets the lender's rules.

How lenders look at RSU income

The rules depend on the type of loan.

- **Conforming loans** follow Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. Fannie Mae updated its RSU rules in Selling Guide section B3-3.3-07 (dated October 7, 2026). The summary below follows that section.
- **Jumbo and non-QM loans** follow each lender's own guidelines. Many borrow ideas from Fannie Mae's approach, but some are more conservative and some more flexible. Always confirm the specific lender's rules.

Fannie Mae's basic requirements

- **The stock must be publicly traded.** Private-company shares don't qualify under this section.
- **It must vest and be distributed to you without restrictions.** Unvested shares are not income yet.
- **Sign-on awards don't count.** Stock received as a sign-on bonus is not eligible.
- **There must be a history.** For time-based awards, Fannie Mae requires at least a 12-month history from your **current employer**. For performance-based awards, two years is recommended; 12 months can work with offsetting factors, such as future vesting that equals or exceeds past vesting for at least 24 months, or restricted stock income over the past five years from any employer.
- **It must be likely to continue, depending on the award type.** For time-based one-time awards, the vesting schedule must show income continuing at least three years from your application. For time-based recurring awards and performance-based awards, the lender doesn't have to verify continuance unless it has reason to believe the income may stop.

How the income is calculated

Fannie Mae uses an average, not your best year. For awards **paid in shares**:

1. Take the **number of vested shares distributed** (before taxes) over the past 24 months.
2. Multiply by the stock's **200-day moving average** price, which smooths out short-term swings.

3. Divide by **24**, or by the actual number of months if you have 12 to 24 months of history.

For awards **paid in cash**, the lender totals the cash distributed (before taxes) for vested awards over the past 24 months and divides the same way.

> **Hypothetical example.** Priya has worked at a public software company for three years. Over the last 24 months, 2,400 of her RSUs vested and were distributed. The stock's 200-day moving average is $150.
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> 2,400 shares × $150 = $360,000 ÷ 24 months = **$15,000 a month** in qualifying RSU income, added to her salary, as long as her vesting schedule shows the income continuing. If the stock's moving average were $100 instead, the same shares would produce $10,000 a month. The figures are illustrations only.

Documents lenders usually ask for

- A recent pay stub, W-2s for the last two years, or Fannie Mae's Form 1005 (Request for Verification of Employment)
- Your vesting schedule or grant agreements, showing future vests
- Brokerage or plan statements showing shares vested and distributed
- A verbal verification of employment shortly before closing

If you changed jobs recently or have stock from more than one employer

This is where RSU income most often gets complicated. Use this checklist before you apply.

- ☐ **How long have you received RSUs from your current employer?** Under Fannie Mae's rules, time-based RSU income generally needs a 12-month history with your current employer. If you started recently, your new RSUs may not count yet, even if your offer letter promises them.
- ☐ **Are you still receiving stock from a former employer?** Shares that already vested at a previous job are generally not continuing income. They may still count as **assets** for your down payment or reserves.
- ☐ **Was any of your new grant a sign-on or "make-whole" award?** Sign-on awards are not eligible income under Fannie Mae's rules. Check your grant documents for how the award is described.
- ☐ **Are the awards time-based or performance-based?** The history and continuance tests differ.
- ☐ **Do you have the vesting schedule and grant agreement for each award?** Lenders will need both current and future vesting.
- ☐ **Do you have brokerage statements from each plan administrator?** If shares from different employers sit in different accounts, gather all of them.
- ☐ **Did you sell shares to pay taxes at vesting?** Your statements should show the shares vested and what happened to them. Keep the full statements, not just summaries.
- ☐ **Is your new employer's stock publicly traded?** Pre-IPO stock generally does not count as income.

If your RSU income doesn't qualify yet, there may still be a path: qualifying on salary alone, using vested shares as assets, adding a co-borrower, or using a jumbo or non-QM lender with different rules.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Counting unvested shares in your budget for the payment.

- Assuming last year's high stock price will be used. Lenders use averages.
- Moving or selling shares without keeping a clear paper trail.
- Starting a new job in the middle of the loan process without telling your lender first.

What to gather

- [ ] Offer letter and grant agreements for every RSU award
- [ ] Vesting schedules showing past and future vests
- [ ] Brokerage or equity-plan statements for the last 24 months
- [ ] Pay stubs for the last 30 days and W-2s for the last two years
- [ ] Federal tax returns for the last two years, if requested
- [ ] For a recent job change: start date and the same documents from your prior employer

Questions to ask

- Which RSU rules will this lender use: Fannie Mae's or its own?
- How much of my RSU income will count, and how did you calculate it?
- Does my recent job change or sign-on grant affect what counts?
- Can my vested shares count toward my down payment or reserves?
- Would a different lender count more of my income?

Your next step

Tell us what you are trying to do and we will tell you, plainly, which options fit and what to gather. There is no cost to talk it through.

Start a free loan evaluation: journeymac.com/evaluation

Call: (626) 716-0585 **Email:** info@journeymac.com

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This guide is general education, not a loan offer, a rate quote or legal, tax or financial advice. Program rules change and lenders add their own requirements; confirm details for your situation before you act. Examples marked "hypothetical" are illustrations only.

Sources

Reviewed November 18, 2026. Program rules change; check the current version of each source.

1. Fannie Mae Selling Guide B3-3.3-07: Restricted stock units and restricted stock as employment income
   selling-guide.fanniemae.com/sel/b3-3.3-07/restricted-stock-units-and-restricted-stock-employment-income
2. CFPB: What is the ability-to-repay rule?
   www.consumerfinance.gov/ask-cfpb/what-is-an-ability-to-repay-rule-en-1787/
3. CFPB: Review your Loan Estimates
   www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/compare/review-loan-estimates