

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR CASUALS HIRING UNIT GUIDANCE

To further the goal of providing affordable health insurance to Federal employees, the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued a final rule modifying coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program to include certain temporary, seasonal, and intermittent employees who are identified as full-time employees. This regulation makes FEHB coverage available to eligible casuals.

Hiring Unit

Each year the hiring official will include and require each casual to complete the Conditional Offer of Federal Employee Health Benefits Form at the time of hire, providing notification of the government's intent to offer coverage. The casual will complete the form indicating whether they wish to enroll or decline the offer. If the casual elected to enroll, the casual will be contacted when eligible, and provided with documentation to enroll. If the casual elected to decline coverage, their declination will be recorded and no further contact will be made. *The Conditional Offer of Federal Employee Health Benefits Form will be submitted to the Casual Payment Center (CPC) for processing.*

Eligibility

Casuals become eligible for benefits once the casual has worked 130 hours per month for 90 consecutive days.

The CPC will contact the casual directly via phone call/email/letter notifying them of eligibility and coverage options.

To enroll the casual, the Health Benefits Election Form (SF-2809) will be completed and sent to the CPC. If the casual is eligible and fails to return the SF-2809 within 60 days of eligibility, the choice will be recorded as a declination of enrollment. Premiums will be based on coverage options chosen and vary by plan, but generally the casual would pay approximately 30% and the agency approximately 70%.

Coverage

Initially the casual will have coverage for 28 days (2 federal pay periods) beginning on the first day of the following pay period after the CPC receives a completed Health Benefits Election Form (SF-2809).

- After 28 days, coverage ends and will automatically switch over to the free 31-day extension of coverage, unless
 - ✓ The casual has been ordered to a new assignment and has contacted the CPC to continue health benefits, or
 - ✓ The casual elects to cancel coverage by completing Part F-Cancellation of FEHB of the SF-2809. This form should be submitted to the CPC
- When casual employment ends and during the 31-day extension, the casual may choose to contact their health plan and convert the insurance plan to an individual contract, or
 - ✓ The casual can enroll in **Temporary Continuation of Coverage (TCC) to continue the coverage through a FEHB plan.** The TCC is available to eligible former employees for up to 18 months following the end of employment. The casual is then responsible for the full premium amount (government and enrollee share) plus a 2% administrative fee.
- If the casual works any time after health benefits have been terminated within the calendar year, the casual can reenroll by submitting a new Health Benefits Election Form (SF-2809) to the CPC.

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Payment Premiums

Premiums will be based on coverage options chosen and vary by plan but generally the casual would pay approximately 30% and the agency approximately 70%.

The Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS) will automatically calculate and deduct the premium from the casual's first time and attendance payment each month. When there is not a pending payment, a bill for collection will be created and mailed to the casual. The casual will forward the payment to Interior Business Center (IBC) for processing of the bill for collection.

References:

<https://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/plans/2016/>

https://www.nifc.gov/programs/programs_PaymentCenter.html