

Benefits Administration: Overview

Effective Date: March 10, 2003
Function: Human Resources
Contact: Kathleen Caggiano-Siino

Procedure Summary

This document describes the benefits administration function, the intent of the Research Foundation's (RF's) benefits administration policies, and the regulations that apply to benefits administration.

Procedure

Benefits Administration Function

Benefits administration consists of managing employee benefits in compliance with RF policies, procedures, and federal and state regulations, as well as educating employees on available benefits and helping them to obtain benefits to which they are entitled.

Central office is responsible for determining the plan design and creating the framework for benefits administration. Operating locations manage the day-to-day operations of benefits administration.

Fringe Benefit Rate

Employee benefit costs are paid from a predetermined "fringe benefit rate" that is negotiated with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and is charged against all employee salaries.

Benefit Information

The RF must comply with federal regulations mandating that employers provide employees with information on new benefits and changes in existing benefits. The RF disseminates new policy or policy changes to operating locations and employees as a routine practice prior to the implementation of the change.

Policy Intent

The RF has developed policies and procedures for benefits administration that

- provide operating locations with information on federal and state regulations that govern benefits administration.
- can be used as a reference by benefits administrators to assist in educating employees on their benefits, to aid in training new benefits administrators, and to serve as a source of information for day-to-day operations.

Regulations

As a private, not-for-profit organization, the RF is subject to the following regulations that apply to benefits administration:

Regulation	Description

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Department of Labor (DOL) regulations	IRS and DOL regulations govern retirement and other benefit plans. They require that employers design and operate plans in a nondiscriminatory way, prepare annual reports on all benefit plans, and inform employees about their benefits.
Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA)	ERISA is a complex law governing the establishment, operation, and administration of retirement and other employee benefit plans.
Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA)	COBRA regulations mandate that employers allow employees and dependents the opportunity to continue health, dental, and vision benefits under the employer's plan after losing eligibility. Refer to Continuation of Benefits in EPSS under Employees: Benefits and Retirement, Procedures and Guidance.
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA)	This law requires that health plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide members with written certification of prior health insurance when health coverage ends, and • protect the privacy of individual health information. Refer to Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information in EPSS under Employees: Benefits and Retirement, Procedures and Guidance.
Family and Medical Act (FMLA)	This law requires that employers allow employees to continue health benefits when on leave under FMLA. Refer Continuation of Benefits in EPSS under Employees: Benefits and Retirement, Procedures and Guidance.
NYS Labor and Workers' Compensation Laws	These laws require that employers provide employees with unemployment, Workers' Compensation, Disability Benefits, Paid Family Leave Benefits, and with information on how to obtain benefits. Refer to the Benefits Website for more information.

Review of Eligibility and Benefit Changes

New appointments, changes in appointments, and requests for coverage changes must be carefully reviewed to ensure that employee's receive the benefits for which they are eligible and that policies and procedures are followed.

Change History

Date	Summary of Change
March 10, 2020	Added Paid Family Leave Benefits. Reformatted in Procedure template.
March 10, 2003	New document. Replaces BE-P-02 from Benefits Manual

Feedback

Was this document clear and easy to follow? Please send your feedback to webfeedback@rfsuny.org.