



New Employee Benefits Guide

PLAN YEAR 2024

Sept. 1, 2023 – Aug. 31, 2024

For state agency employees

A message from ERS Executive Director Porter Wilson



Congratulations on your new job! Let me be among the first to welcome you to public service.

As a State of Texas employee, you earn benefits that are comprehensive and, on average, make up about one-third of total compensation. The valuable benefits offered to you are designed to enhance your wellness and help secure your future.

The decisions you make—some of which must be made in your first 31 to 60 days of employment—will affect your health care, retirement security and take-home pay. I encourage you to take time to read about your options in this guide so you can make informed choices during your first few weeks on the job. Then, make the most of your benefits to improve your health, your financial well-being and your peace of mind.

At the Employees Retirement System of Texas, we're proud to support excellence in public service by administering health insurance, retirement and other benefits to state agency employees and their families. We're committed to supporting you as you serve your fellow citizens. This New Employees Benefits Guide provides the information you need to make the most of your State of Texas retirement, insurance and related benefits. For more information, visit the ERS website at www.ers.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Porter Wilson
Executive Director
Employees Retirement System of Texas

The New Employee Benefits Guide for Plan Year 2024 highlights benefits that are effective at the time of publication. All Texas Employees Group Benefits Program (GBP) benefits could change without notice. The Texas Legislature decides the funding level for GBP benefits and has no obligation to provide for them beyond each fiscal year.

Employees Retirement System of Texas

Always available online at www.ers.texas.gov.


24/7 access to information about insurance and retirement benefits.

To speak to a representative, call (877) 275-4377 (TDD: 711), Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CT.

August 2023

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	Go Online For a quick overview of your new employee benefits, visit ers.texas.gov/Employees/New-Employee/Overview
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ERS offers competitive benefits to enhance the lives of its members.

Getting started: Signing up for your benefits

As a State of Texas employee, ERS will automatically enroll you in:

- **HealthSelect of Texas®**, a point-of-service health plan, which includes prescription drug coverage. Automatic enrollment in health insurance applies only to full-time employees.
- **\$5,000 Basic Term Life and accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance.** This comes automatically with your health insurance at no cost to you if you are a full-time employee. (Part-time employees who enroll in health insurance pay half the cost of their Basic Term Life and AD&D insurance.)
- **State of Texas Retirement.** As a state agency employee starting after Aug. 31, 2022, you are in ERS' Retirement Group 4, with a type of defined benefit retirement called a cash balance benefit. Group 4 members contribute 6% of salary, an amount set by the Texas Legislature, to their State of Texas Retirement accounts. You cannot opt out of, increase or decrease this contribution, which is taken from your monthly paycheck before taxes. When you're eligible and ready to retire, the state will match your account's entire balance—the monthly 6% contributions you made while working for the state and any interest earned (a minimum of 4% to 7% every year)—by 150%. See page 34 to learn more about your State of Texas Retirement account. If you started at a state agency before Sept. 1, 2022 or think you might be in a different retirement group, please see pages 33–34 for more information.
- **TexaSaverSM 401(k)** retirement savings account. If you're a first-time state employee—or returning after a break in state employment—you will automatically contribute to a TexaSaver 401(k). Your 1% monthly contribution is deducted from your paycheck before taxes and invested in an investment product selected by the ERS Board of Trustees (currently a target date fund that correlates with the date you reach traditional retirement age). You can also open a 457 account, instead of or in addition to a 401(k), and choose the amount you want deducted from your paycheck. If you transferred directly from another state agency or are a return-to-work retiree, you can enroll in a TexaSaver 401(k) and/or 457 account and choose the contribution amount you want deducted from your paycheck. Both the 401(k) and 457 plans allow you to increase your contribution and/or make changes to your account or investments at any time. See page 35 to learn more, including how to make changes or opt out and how TexaSaver can help you achieve a more financially secure retirement.

You have a choice

If you don't want to enroll in HealthSelect of Texas, you may choose Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM, a high-deductible health plan and tax-free health savings account (HSA) with a monthly HSA contribution from the State of Texas.

You can also enroll in these following optional benefits:

- one of two dental insurance plans;
- State of Texas VisionSM insurance;
- additional life insurance for you and/or your eligible dependents;
- additional accidental death and dismemberment insurance;
- short-term and/or long-term disability coverage through the Texas Income Protection PlanSM (TIPP);
- TexFlexSM health care, limited-purpose (depending on your health plan) and/or dependent care flexible spending account(s).

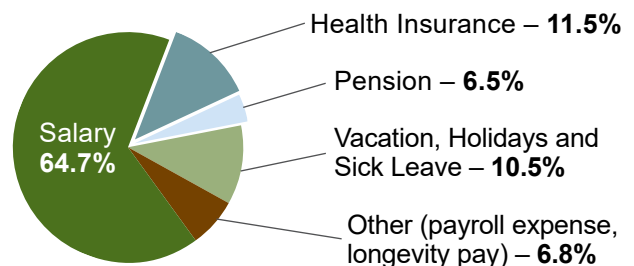
What are your benefits worth?

For the average state employee, the State of Texas benefits package makes up more than one-third of their total compensation.

Average state employee total compensation = \$78,146

- \$50,590 in salary
- \$27,556 in benefits

Great benefits are a major reason new employees choose state employment (Source: <https://sao.texas.gov/reports/main/22-705.pdf>).



A note to full-time employees



Unless you opt out of health coverage or select another plan, ERS will automatically enroll you in HealthSelect of Texas. You can change health plans or enroll in TexFlex health care and limited-purpose FSAs during your health coverage waiting period, but your participation won't begin until the end of your health coverage waiting period. You have 31 days from your hire date to sign up for optional benefits. If you miss this deadline, you will have to wait until the Summer Enrollment period or until you experience a qualifying life event (QLE), such as marriage or a new child. If you wait to sign up, coverage in some plans is not guaranteed.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When will my benefits start?

Your benefits begin based on your hire date, when you enroll and the benefits you choose. See page 23 of this guide for detailed information about important dates and when your coverages take effect.

If I'm transferring from one state agency to another, do I need to re-enroll in insurance benefits?

Yes. As part of your onboarding, your new agency will need to re-enroll you and will ask you to make your health insurance and optional benefits elections.

Can I make changes to my benefits anytime throughout the year?

No. See the Benefits Checklist on page 4 of this guide for more information.

What happens if I don't make my health insurance elections within 60 days of my start date and elections for other benefits within 31 days of my start date?

As a new employee with a health coverage waiting period you have 31 days to enroll in optional benefits and 60 days to decide on health insurance. If you don't enroll in certain optional coverages within your first 31 days or decide on health insurance within your first 60 days, you must wait until Summer Enrollment or until you have a life change, also called a qualifying life event (QLE). After your first 31 days of employment, you may be required to submit evidence of insurability (EOI) for certain optional insurance plans and coverage is not guaranteed. See page 27 of this guide for detailed information.

What's the most important thing to know about coverage for my dependents?

There are many important details to know about dependent eligibility. See the Dependent Coverage and Eligibility information on pages 5–6 of this guide. You can also find GBP eligibility information on the ERS website at <https://ers.texas.gov/Benefits-at-a-Glance/GBP-Eligibility> and <https://ers.texas.gov/PDFs/Dependent-eligibility-chart.pdf>.

Are there resources to help me estimate monthly costs for my insurance options?

Yes. Find premium rates, a helpful rate calculator and plan comparison charts on the ERS website at <https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Rates>.

Where can I find more information about ERS retirement Group 4?

Visit the State of Texas Retirement for Active Employees page on the ERS website at <https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/State-of-Texas-Retirement> to view the “ERS Group 4 Retirement Benefits” explainer video and the “Overview of Group 4 Retirement” fact sheet. There's also other helpful information on that page.

What's the “three-legged stool” of retirement income?

Your ERS pension is only one part of a financially secure retirement. With this in mind, state agency employees should plan to have at least two other sources of income in retirement: Social Security benefits and personal retirement savings. To learn more, see pages 34–35 of this guide or visit the Retirement at a Glance page at <https://ers.texas.gov/benefits-at-a-glance/retirement>.

Why should I contribute to a 401(k) or 457 if I plan to retire with the state?

Even with your State of Texas Retirement pension, a comfortable income after you retire requires careful planning and steady investment over time in personal retirement savings. Texa\$aver allows you to increase your retirement savings with voluntary pre-tax or post-tax (Roth) contributions to a 401(k) and/or 457 account directly from your paycheck. The program offers low fees, a wide variety of investment options and free consultations with investment advisors. Learn more on pages 35–36 or at [https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/Texa\\$aver-401\(k\)-457-Program](https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/Texa$aver-401(k)-457-Program).

What is “cost sharing”?

The GBP health insurance plans cover about one in every 56 Texans. As your employer, the State of Texas currently covers more than two-thirds of the costs for all plan participants. Plan participants share the rest of the health costs through copays, coinsurance, prescription and/or medical deductibles, and dependent and/or tiered retiree premium contributions. In addition to designing health plans, in which the state and participants share costs, ERS makes every effort to keep administrative expenses low and manage health care cost inflation for members. For a quick explainer, watch the “Cost sharing and how it works” video at <https://youtu.be/8X2EFNup580>.

Where can I find more FAQs?

Visit the Frequently Asked Questions page on the ERS website at <https://ers.texas.gov/Contact-ERS/Additional-Resources/FAQs>.

Benefits checklist

Within 31 days of your start date

Enroll yourself and your eligible dependents in optional coverage. You cannot enroll your dependents in any coverage that you're not enrolled in.

-
- Dental insurance – coverage for you and your family**
 - DeltaCare® USA dental health maintenance organization (DHMO) or
 - State of Texas Dental Choice PlanSM preferred provider organization (PPO)
-
- Vision insurance – coverage for you and your family**
 - State of Texas Vision
-
- Optional Term Life Insurance – coverage for yourself**
 - Coverage at 1 or 2 times your annual salary
 - Coverage at 3 or 4 times your annual salary, through EOI
-
- Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance – coverage for you and your family**
 - \$10,000 – \$200,000 for yourself or for yourself and your family.
-
- Dependent Term Life Insurance – coverage for your family**
 - Coverage for eligible dependents
-
- Texas Income Protection Plan (TIPP) – coverage for you**
 - Short-term disability insurance
 - Long-term disability insurance
-
- TexFlex dependent care FSA**
 - Reimburses you for eligible child (under age 13) and adult care expenses
 - For information on health care or limited-purpose flexible spending accounts (FSAs), please see the TexFlex entry under “Within 60 days of your hire.”



Note: If you opt out and have other group health insurance that is comparable to the GBP health insurance, you can get a Health Insurance Opt- Out Credit to apply toward premiums for dental, vision and/or Voluntary AD&D Insurance.

Within 60 days of your hire

-
- Health insurance**

If you are a full-time employee subject to a health insurance waiting period, change your health insurance from HealthSelect of Texas to one of the following options:

 - Consumer Directed HealthSelect or
 - opt out of or waive health coverage.

If you are a part-time employee, enroll yourself in one of the following:

 - HealthSelect of Texas or
 - Consumer Directed HealthSelect.

Enroll eligible dependents in the same plan you're enrolled in.

 - Complete dependent child certification and begin the dependent eligibility verification process. See page 5.
-
- Certify tobacco-use status for yourself and any covered dependents.**
-
- TexFlex flexible spending accounts (FSAs) for health-related expenses**
 - Health care FSA (not available to Consumer Directed HealthSelect participants)
 - Limited-purpose FSA (available only to Consumer Directed HealthSelect participants)

Note: Your dependents don't need to be enrolled in your health insurance for you to set up flexible spending accounts and submit claims.
-
- ### At any time
-
- Texa\$aver voluntary retirement savings account(s)**
 - Open a 457 account.
 - Increase your 401(k) and/or 457 account contribution.
 - Change how your 401(k) and/or 457 account is invested.
 - Opt out of your Texa\$aver account.
-
- Add and update beneficiaries for:**
 - Life insurance
 - Texa\$aver
 - State of Texas Retirement
 - Health savings account (if enrolled in Consumer Directed HealthSelect)



IMPORTANT: Enroll in valuable coverage, no questions asked, for 31 days

If you want optional life insurance at one or two times your annual salary, Dependent Term Life Insurance and/or TIPP disability insurance, now is the best time to sign up. If you enroll within your first month of employment, you or your eligible dependents will not need to provide EOI. EOI is an application process that requires you to provide information about your or your dependents' health.

If you wait, you will have to apply for these benefits through EOI and run the risk of not qualifying based on your results. Don't miss this 31-day window of opportunity! (**Note:** Optional life insurance at three or four times your annual salary always requires EOI, even in your first month of employment.)



After your first 31 or 60 days of employment, you can make benefit changes only during Summer Enrollment unless you have a qualifying life event (QLE)—for example, you get married or divorced, or you have a child. However, you must make benefit changes within 31 days of that QLE.

EXAMPLE: Your spouse can now provide health insurance for your child. You will have 31 days to drop your child from your plan.

EXCEPTION: If your child loses Medicaid or CHIP eligibility, you will have 60 days to enroll them for GBP health coverage.

Dependent coverage and eligibility



Your spouse and other eligible dependents can get health insurance and other coverage for an additional premium. However, you must enroll in a health, dental and/or vision plan before you can enroll your dependents.

Your dependents must meet certain criteria to be eligible. Please see the dependent eligibility chart on page 6.

You can also go online at <https://ers.texas.gov/New-Employee/Insurance-Eligibility> to learn more about who qualifies for GBP insurance coverage.

If you want to enroll eligible dependents in Dependent Term Life Insurance, now is the best time to sign up. Your dependent will not need to provide evidence of insurability (EOI) if you sign up within your first month of employment.

Certifying dependent children

If you enroll a child or children through your ERS OnLine account, you'll have to certify each one before you submit your enrollment elections.

If you enroll your children with help from your benefits coordinator/human resources department or the HHS Employee Service Center, you must fill out, sign and return the Dependent Child Certification form. Get the form:

- from your benefits coordinator/HR department or the HHS Employee Service Center or
- at <https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Forms>. Scroll down until you see the link to the Dependent Child Certification form. You can fill it out online and print it, or you can print it and write the information in ink. The certification is legally binding. If you submit false information, you and your dependents could lose your benefits or be subject to other penalties.

Verifying all dependents enrolled in health insurance

Once ERS processes your dependents' enrollment in health coverage, third-party administrator Aight Solutions will contact you. ERS works with Aight Solutions to verify your dependents are eligible to participate in GBP plans.

Aight Solutions will mail you a letter that outlines the steps in the dependent verification process. The letter will list the names of the dependents to be verified, the documents needed to verify them and your deadline for sending in those documents.

Important: If you get a letter from Aight Solutions, open it right away! Be sure to carefully review all the information and keep the deadline in mind. If you don't send the right documents or you send documents after the deadline, your dependents may be found ineligible and dropped from all coverage. Your next chance to enroll dependents will be during Summer Enrollment. You should get your Summer Enrollment guide in your mailbox in June or July.

If you have questions about verifying your dependents, call Aight Solutions toll-free at (800) 987-6605 (TTY: 711).



Please note: If both you and your spouse work for the State of Texas and enroll in separate GBP health plans, each of you will have a separate total out-of-pocket maximum and, if applicable to your plan, a separate annual deductible. Consider enrolling your dependents in coverage under the member who is more likely to meet the total out-of-pocket maximum and/or, if applicable, the deductible. For more information on out-of-pocket maximums and deductibles, see pages 14 and 37–41.

Dependent eligibility chart

Make sure your dependents are eligible for insurance and you have the appropriate documentation to show eligibility before you enroll them in any coverage. If you are unable to provide the documents listed below, please contact Alight Solutions Customer Service toll-free at (800) 987-6605 (TTY: 711). Find more details at <https://ers.texas.gov/new-employee/dependent-eligibility-verification>. False information can lead to removal from the GBP and/or criminal prosecution.

Note: You must provide a birth certificate to enroll a child. Alight Solutions will accept a hospital-issued birth certificate for a child age three months or younger.

Dependent of the Participant (employee, retiree or other individual enrolled in the GBP program as recognized by Texas law)	Eligibility	Examples of Supporting Documents (these documents are required)
Spouse	Spouse as recognized by law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government-issued marriage certificate AND • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current federal tax return or – Proof of joint ownership** issued within last six months or – Government-issued marriage certificate only (if married in the last 12 months)
Common Law Spouse	Spouse as recognized by law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of informal marriage with the county courthouse AND • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current federal tax return or – Proof of joint ownership** issued within last six months
Biological Child*	Natural-born child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government-issued birth certificate (see note above)
Adopted Child*	Child is eligible at time of placement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adoption certificate or – Adoption placement agreement or – Petition for adoption Note: Adoption documentation must state that the child has been placed with the member and include the date of the placement.
Stepchild*	Child is not required to live in participant's household.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government-issued marriage certificate or – Declaration of informal marriage with the county courthouse AND • Child's government-issued birth certificate AND • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current federal tax return or – Proof of joint ownership** issued within last six months
Child of Managing Conservator*	Child is identified in the managing conservatorship granted to the participant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing conservatorship court document signed by judge
Foster Child*	Child must not have other governmental insurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement order AND • Affidavit of foster child
Legal Ward Child*	Child is under the protection or in the custody of the participant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court order signed by a judge appointing participant as the child's guardian (documentation of legal custody) AND • Government-issued birth certificate
Other Child*	<p>Child is related to participant by blood or marriage, was claimed as dependent on participant's federal income tax return for previous tax year, and will continue to be claimed on participant's federal income tax return for every calendar year the child is covered.</p> <p>A child who is acquired or born in the current calendar year will be claimed and continue to be claimed on participant's federal income tax return for every calendar year the child is covered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government-issued birth certificate (see note above) or – Government-issued marriage license to prove family relationship AND • One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current federal tax return or – Affidavit of good cause

*Child must be under age 26 for health insurance, and can be married or unmarried. Child must be under age 26 and unmarried for dental insurance, State of Texas Vision and Dependent Term Life Insurance. Disabled dependent children age 26 and over may be eligible for insurance. For more information, visit <https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Life-Changes/Children/Disabled-Dependent-Child>.

**See Alight Solutions' Documentation Requirements for examples of Joint Ownership documents.

Understand your health plan options

Choosing the right health insurance for you and your family is an important decision. You have a responsibility to understand how the benefits you choose could affect your family's health and finances.

As a State of Texas agency employee, you can choose HealthSelect of Texas or Consumer Directed HealthSelect.

Both health plans are network-based. This means you'll save money—sometimes a lot of money—if you go to doctors and other providers in the plan's network. The two HealthSelect plans have a large network of primary care providers (PCPs), specialists, mental health professionals, hospitals and other providers across Texas.

Both plans require cost-sharing. You and the State of Texas, as your employer, both pay for coverage and care. The state pays 100% of the monthly premium for eligible full-time employees and 50% of the premium for their eligible dependents. The state pays 50% of the premium for eligible part-time employees and 25% of the premium for their eligible dependents.

You may also pay out of pocket for some of your care—through copays, coinsurance, deductibles for prescriptions, and in some cases, deductibles for medical care. How much you pay out of pocket depends on the plan you choose and, once you're enrolled, the providers you see. With the Consumer Directed HealthSelect high-deductible health plan (HDHP), you could have much higher upfront out-of-pocket costs. However, this plan also gives you the chance to save money tax-free in a health savings account (HSA) for health care costs and, if you're eligible, includes a monthly contribution from the state to your HSA. The HSA is portable, meaning you keep the account and all the funds in it, even if you leave state employment. In addition, you don't have to use the money during the plan year—you can save it as long as you want and use it when you decide to.

Which plan is best for you and your family? The table on the next page shows features of each plan. You can also use the decision tool at healthselect.bcbstx.com/medical-benefits/healthselect-plans. Part-time and dependent premium information is on page 37.

Set up an ERS OnLine account

With an ERS OnLine account, you can check your coverage, update contact information and do other benefits-related activities at any time of the day or night, without having to call or visit ERS. Follow these steps to set up an account:

1. Go to <https://www.ers.texas.gov/account-login>.
2. Click on **Register Now**.
3. Enter your information and create a username and password.

Because you are a new employee, your benefits coordinator will likely enroll you and your dependents in the coverage you choose. You will be able to update your elections on your own during the next Summer Enrollment period with your ERS OnLine account.

Don't forget to update your ERS OnLine account if you move or have other life changes. Sign up for ERS news and updates at <https://www.ers.texas.gov/subscribe>.



Health insurance

Health insurance plan features

Health insurance plan features at a glance	HealthSelect of Texas	Consumer Directed HealthSelect
Key advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower out-of-pocket costs for in-network care • Copays for certain in-network services, like primary care provider (PCP) office visits • Large statewide network, and large nationwide network for those who live or work outside Texas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For eligible participants, tax-advantaged health savings account (HSA), with monthly contributions from the state • Large statewide and nationwide networks • Referrals not required • Lower monthly premium than HealthSelect of Texas for dependents and part-time employees
In-network preventive care covered at 100%	Yes	Yes
Prescription drug coverage	Yes	Yes
Key downside(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals needed for most specialty care • Monthly premiums for dependents and part-time employees are higher than Consumer Directed HealthSelect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except for specific preventive services and a few limited items, the plan pays nothing until the deductible is met • Must meet IRS' eligibility guidelines to participate in the HSA
Might be good for people who...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to keep their out-of-pocket costs low • Don't mind getting referrals for specialty care • Are willing to pay higher dependent or part-time employee premiums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually have low (or very high) health expenses • Can afford to pay for medical and pharmacy expenses out-of-pocket until deductible is met • Want the state's tax-free HSA contribution • Don't want to get referrals for specialty care

What is the GBP?

Employees of State of Texas agencies and many higher education institutions can participate in the GBP. Created by the Texas Legislature in 1991, the GBP offers insurance and related benefits that help State of Texas employees and their families live healthy, financially secure lives.

You are a member of the GBP while you're employed at:

- a state agency,
- a Texas public institution of higher education that is not part of The University of Texas or Texas A&M University systems,
- Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD),
- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS),
- Windham School District,
- Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS) or
- Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS).

HealthSelect of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect

You can choose between HealthSelect of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect. With both plans, you have access to a large network of medical and mental health providers in Texas. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) manages the provider network, processes claims and provides customer service. Both plans include a comprehensive prescription drug program.



Prescription Drug Program administrator change

Express Scripts will be the HealthSelect of Texas Prescription Drug Program administrator starting Jan. 1, 2024. OptumRx will continue to manage the program through Dec. 31, 2023. For more information about the prescription drug program, visit <https://ers.texas.gov/what-s-happening-now/healthselect-rx-transition>.

HealthSelect^{of Texas}

Key features of HealthSelect of Texas:

- You do not have to meet an annual medical deductible if you use providers in the HealthSelect network. If you get care outside the network, you will have to meet a \$500 annual deductible per person, with a maximum annual deductible of \$1,500 per family.
- You have prescription drug coverage, which includes a \$50 per person deductible before the plan begins to pay for prescription drugs. This deductible resets at the beginning of each calendar year from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. (The plan year for health benefits and premiums follows the state's fiscal year calendar from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31) See page 13 for more information about the HealthSelectSM Prescription Drug Program.
- You are responsible for copays and/or coinsurance for doctor and hospital visits and other medical services, such as outpatient surgery and high-tech radiology.
- You need to choose a primary care provider (PCP) on file with BCBSTX and get referrals from your PCP to see some in-network specialists. After the first 60 days in the plan, if you do not choose a PCP, you will have out-of-network coverage until you choose one, even if you see in-network providers. A PCP helps keep your costs as low as possible, while ensuring you get the care you need.
- If you do not have a referral from your PCP on file with BCBSTX before you get treatment from some specialists, you could pay more for your treatment, even if the provider is in the HealthSelect network.

You do not need a referral for:

- Eye exams (both routine and diagnostic)
- OB-GYN visits
- Mental health services
- Chiropractic visits
- Occupational therapy, speech therapy and physical therapy
- Virtual Visits through Doctor on Demand[®] or MDLIVE[®] for medical or mental health care
- Virtual Visits for medical and mental health care are covered at no cost for HealthSelect of Texas participants.
- Urgent care centers and convenience care clinics

Please note:

- You must select a primary care provider (PCP) if you enroll in HealthSelect of Texas. If you don't choose a PCP, you may end up paying more—possibly a lot more—for services.
- If you are in HealthSelect of Texas and need to see a specialist (that is, someone other than your PCP), you will need a referral from your PCP on file with BCBSTX to see a specialist and receive in-network benefits.
- You do not need to designate a PCP or get referrals to specialists if you enroll in Consumer Directed HealthSelect, or if you enroll in HealthSelect of Texas and your address on file with ERS is outside Texas.

Consumer Directed HealthSelect is a high-deductible health plan (HDHP) paired with a tax-free health savings account (HSA). The high deductible means you could have higher out-of-pocket costs before your health plan begins to pay for non-preventive medical services and prescription drugs. The plan covers 100% for in-network preventive services. It is available to GBP participants who are not enrolled in any part of Medicare.

Key features of Consumer Directed HealthSelect:

- You do not need to designate a PCP or get referrals to specialists.
- The monthly dependent premium is lower than HealthSelect of Texas, but you pay the full cost of doctor visits, prescriptions, hospital stays and any other non-preventive health services or products until your annual deductible is met.
- You get a monthly health savings account (HSA) contribution from the state to help pay for eligible medical costs. (See information on HSAs on page 11.)
- After you meet the deductible, you pay coinsurance (20% in-network, 40% out-of-network) for medical services and prescriptions, rather than a copay.
- You have prescription drug coverage. (See pages 13 and 19 for more information about the Consumer Directed HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program.)
- Your deductible and total out-of-pocket maximums for individual and family coverage reset on January 1. (The plan year for premiums and health benefits follows the state’s fiscal year calendar – September through August.)

For more information on Consumer Directed HealthSelect, see <https://ers.texas.gov/Contact-ERS/Additional-Resources/FAQs/High-Deductible-Health-Plan>.

Consumer Directed HealthSelect annual deductibles For Calendar Years 2023 and 2024 (includes prescription drugs)

	In-network	Out-of-network
Individual	\$2,100	\$4,200
Family	\$4,200	\$8,400



Eileen Eiden Understanding the HDHP with HSA

When Eileen Eiden joined Austin Community College in 2014, a HDHP wasn’t among her health plan options. “I was surprised, and I kept asking when ERS would offer a high-deductible plan,” Eiden recalled.

Two years later, when ERS began offering Consumer Directed HealthSelect, Eiden promptly signed up and found this HDHP with a health savings account (HSA) to be a good fit for her.

An HDHP “is perfect for healthy adults, especially if you see a doctor only once a year. Your in-network preventive care is fully covered, with no copay or coinsurance,” Eiden explained. Then, there is the HSA. “It’s like a 401(k), but for health.”

The State of Texas contributes money to the HSA every month, if a Consumer Directed HealthSelect member opens an HSA with Optum Bank. Plus, GBP members can contribute their own pre-tax money. HSA funds are tax-free when spent on eligible health care expenses (even in retirement).

And, if you leave your job or retire, the money in your account—even the portion contributed by the state—is yours to keep. In time, the funds in an HSA can accumulate with contributions, earned interest and investment earnings. None of this growth is taxed when spent on eligible health care expenses.

Eiden acknowledged that plans like Consumer Directed HealthSelect might be risky for people who don’t have enough cash to cover the plan’s annual high deductible, which includes both covered pharmacy and medical costs. After they meet the deductible, the GBP member pays 20% coinsurance (not copays) for in-network health care services and prescription drugs. If you haven’t saved enough in your HSA to meet the deductible, you could be faced with a financial challenge.

“What scared me the most was the possibility that I wouldn’t be able to pay for my medical care,” Eiden stated. “Once I started adding money to my HSA, that was no longer an issue.”

Health savings account (HSA)

Available only with Consumer Directed HealthSelect

- An HSA allows you to set money aside, tax free, and use the funds to pay for eligible out-of-pocket health expenses anytime, even in retirement. (Once you reach age 65, you can even use your HSA for non-health expenses, but you'll pay taxes on any funds spent on non-health costs.)
- You can use your HSA funds, tax free, for qualified medical expenses for yourself, your spouse and eligible dependents—even if they're not covered under your health insurance.
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) defines qualified medical expenses. Visit [optumbank.com/resources/medical-expenses.html](https://www.optumbank.com/resources/medical-expenses.html) for more information.
- To help cover your out-of-pocket health costs, the state makes a monthly contribution to the HSA of every eligible GBP member enrolled in Consumer Directed HealthSelect. You are not eligible to make or receive any contributions to an HSA if you are enrolled in Medicare or in certain other cases. (To learn more about HSA eligibility, visit <https://www.optumbank.com/all-products/hsa/hsa-eligibility.html>) Contributions—both from the state and, optionally, a GBP member's paycheck—are usually available in the HSA by the middle of the month.
- You can make pre-tax contributions to your HSA through payroll deductions. The IRS sets the maximum contribution amount each year. See the table below for maximum contributions.
- You can also make a contribution (or contributions) directly to your HSA. They would be after-tax contributions that you could claim when you file your tax return for the year.
- Member HSA contributions are voluntary. You do not have to contribute if you don't want to.
- All the money in your HSA carries over from one year to the next—there is no use-it-or-lose-it rule—and you can keep the funds if you change health plans or even leave state employment.

Contribute for TRIPLE TAX SAVINGS



1. Contribute money into the account tax free.
2. Pay for qualified medical expenses tax free.
3. Earn interest or investment growth on the account tax free.

For more information about HSAs, see <https://ers.texas.gov/Contact-ERS/Additional-Resources/FAQs/Consumer-Directed-HealthSelect-Health-Savings-Account>.

HSA contributions and maximums*

Contribution	Individual Account	Family Account*
Calendar Year 2023 annual total maximum contribution (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023)	Up to age 54: \$3,850 Age 55 and older: \$4,850	\$7,750
Calendar Year 2024 annual total maximum contribution (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024)	Up to age 54: \$4,150 Age 55 and older: \$5,150	\$8,300
Fiscal Year 2024 annual state contribution (Sept. 1, 2023 – Aug. 31, 2024)	\$540 (\$45 monthly)	\$1,080 (\$90 monthly)

*A family account includes the GBP participant plus any number of dependents enrolled in Consumer Directed HealthSelect.

Note: HSA contributions and limits may change from year to year. They may also change based on eligibility requirements and the participant's age. Maximums are set by the IRS and include both pre-tax and post-tax contributions to an HSA. Contributions are based on the calendar year, and maximums reset Jan. 1.

Open your HSA



Enrolling in Consumer Directed HealthSelect? Open your HSA as soon as possible.

If you enroll in Consumer Directed HealthSelect, open your HSA as soon as possible, so the state's monthly contributions and any other funds can be deposited into your account. Optum Bank manages the ERS HSA program. Even if you don't plan to make your own pre-tax contributions, you must open an Optum Bank HSA to get the state's contributions. You can go to [optumbank.com/texasers](https://www.optumbank.com/texasers) to open an account, or to get an application mailed to you, call Optum Bank toll-free at (866) 234-8913.

Like state paychecks, state HSA deposits are paid in arrears—that is, at the end of each month worked—so the state's HSA funds may be deposited in your account some time after the 15th of the month following the month worked. For example, if you elect Consumer Directed HealthSelect during Summer Enrollment and open your HSA by early September, the first state deposit into the account will typically occur two or three weeks after you get your Sept. 30 retirement payment or your Oct. 1 paycheck.

If you want to contribute to your HSA via payroll deduction, you must elect your payroll deductions through your ERS OnLine account—or your agency's benefits coordinator can do it for you. (You don't have to contribute to your HSA with payroll deductions, but it's a convenient and consistent way to make pre-tax contributions.) You can change your contributions any time during the year, as long as your and the state's total contributions don't exceed the IRS' contribution maximum for the calendar year.

Once you open your HSA, Optum Bank will send you a debit card to pay for eligible health expenses. You will have access only to the amount of money that has accumulated in your HSA, not any funds that are pledged to be deposited in the future.



Please note!

You can opt out of health insurance coverage—and get credit.

If you can certify that you already have health insurance that is equal to or better than that offered through ERS, you can sign up for a monthly health insurance Opt-Out Credit of up to \$60 for full-time employees and \$30 for part-time employees.

- The credit helps pay your dental, vision and/or Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance premiums.
Note: No portion of the Opt-Out Credit will be refunded if the full Opt-Out Credit is not used for dental, vision and/or AD&D premium.
- The credit is not available if your only other insurance is Medicare, you have health insurance coverage through ERS as a dependent or you get a state contribution for other insurance coverage.

Important: If you opt out of an ERS health plan, you give up your prescription drug coverage and will no longer have \$5,000 Basic Term Life Insurance and \$5,000 AD&D coverage.

If you opt out of or waive ERS health coverage and later lose your other coverage, you can enroll in one of the health insurance plans offered through ERS. Losing coverage is a qualifying life event, and you will have 31 days after losing your other plan to enroll in an ERS health plan.



Lower your health care costs with HealthSelectShoppERSSM

HealthSelect of Texas, HealthSelectSM Out-of-State and Consumer Directed HealthSelect participants can lower their health care costs and earn incentives with HealthSelectShoppERS. Shopping for lower-cost options for care can save you money on certain medical services or procedures and reward you with contributions to your TexFlex health care or limited-purpose flexible spending account (FSA). See page 42 or visit healthselect.bcbstx.com/content/medical-benefits/healthselectshoppers to learn more.

Prescription drug coverage



Your HealthSelect insurance plan includes coverage for prescription drugs. OptumRx administers the HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program for both HealthSelect of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect through Dec. 31, 2023. Starting Jan. 1, 2024, Express Scripts will administer the prescription drug program. You will get separate ID cards from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (for medical coverage) and the prescription drug program administrator (for prescription drug coverage). You may need to present your HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program ID card when filling a prescription.

Under the HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program, prescription drugs fall into three categories, called tiers, with different costs for each tier.

- Tier 1 prescriptions are usually inexpensive medications, such as generic drugs.
- Tier 2 prescriptions are usually lower-cost preferred brand-name drugs.
- Tier 3 prescriptions are non-preferred brand-name drugs with a higher cost.

New prescription drug program ID card in January



If your health insurance waiting period ends before Jan. 1, 2024, you will get a HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program ID card from OptumRx. Use that card through Dec. 31, 2023.

Because the HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program administrator is changing Jan. 1, 2024, you will get a second prescription drug program ID card, from Express Scripts, in December. Starting Jan. 1, 2024, use the Express Scripts card (and destroy the OptumRx card).

You will get more information about the administrator change in November and December.



To find out which pharmacies you can use under your plan, visit www.HealthSelectRx.com.



Participants in the GBP are also eligible for discounts on a variety of products and services offered through the Discount Purchase Program, administered by Beneplace. There are no fees or membership requirements. Visit <https://ers.texas.gov/Discount-Purchase-Program> for more information.

Out-of-pocket limits on health expenses

To help protect you from extremely high health costs, the HealthSelect plans have in-network out-of-pocket maximums. This is the maximum amount you or your family will pay in one year for in-network copays, coinsurance and deductibles for covered medical and prescription drugs. If you reach this maximum, the plan will pay 100% of covered in-network health and pharmacy expenses for the rest of the year. (There is no out-of-pocket maximum for out-of-network services.)

The out-of-pocket maximums reset every calendar year (on Jan. 1).

In-network out-of-pocket maximums (all plans)	
Calendar Year 2023 (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2023)	\$7,050 individual \$14,100 family (GBP member + one or more covered family member)
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2024)	\$7,500 individual \$15,000 family (GBP member + one or more covered family member)

Note: Family includes the GBP member plus one or more covered family member(s).



You must certify your status—whether you use tobacco or not

You must certify yourself and any covered dependents as tobacco users or non-users if you enroll in a GBP health insurance plan. Certified tobacco users pay a higher premium for their health coverage.

ERS' tobacco policy defines tobacco products as all types of tobacco, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff and dip; and all electronic cigarettes and vaping products. Vaping products that do not contain tobacco or nicotine are also considered tobacco products.

A tobacco user is a person who has used any tobacco product, as defined above, five or more times within the past three consecutive months.

If you or a covered dependent uses tobacco products, you are required to certify yourself or your dependents as a tobacco user and pay the monthly tobacco user premium.

Note: You need to certify your status only once, unless your status changes. You can update your tobacco-use status through your ERS OnLine account, by phone or by returning the online Tobacco Use Certification form to ERS.

Ready to quit?

All HealthSelectSM plans cover programs and prescription drugs that will help tobacco users quit. If a participant remains tobacco-free for three consecutive months, they can re-certify as a tobacco non-user and will no longer have to pay the higher premiums.

Tobacco user premium alternative

If you are a tobacco user, you may qualify for an alternative to the tobacco user premium, if it complies with your doctor's recommendations. For more information, see the ERS tobacco policy on ERS website at <https://ers.texas.gov/About-ERS/Policies/Tobacco-Policy-and-Certification> or contact ERS toll-free at (877) 275-4377.

Improve your health and lifestyle!

The tobacco cessation program is only one of the programs and tools your state benefits package offers to help you get healthier. Visit the HealthSelect website to find out more about the tobacco cessation and other wellness programs available to you.



If you or one of your covered family members is a tobacco user and you certify them as a non-user, or if you fail to update the tobacco-use status when you or a covered family member starts using tobacco, you could lose your GBP health insurance coverage.

Health plans comparison chart

Employees and retirees not eligible for medicare – Effective Sept. 1, 2023

This chart shows your share of costs for commonly used medical, mental health, prescription drug and diabetes supply benefits in the HealthSelect of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect plans. For in-depth information about eligibility, services that are covered and not covered, and how benefits are paid, view the Master Benefit Plan Document (MBPD) on your plan's website. If there is a conflict between the MBPD, MBPD Amendments and this chart, the MBPD and its Amendments will control.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) administers medical and mental health benefits in both plans. OptumRx, an affiliate of UnitedHealthcare, will manage prescription drug benefits for the plans through Dec. 31, 2023. As administrators, they process claims and oversee the provider networks and drug formularies. ERS designs the benefits and pays the claims.

Note: On Jan. 1, 2024, Express Scripts will become the new plan administrator for prescription drug benefits. The Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) will provide more information about this change in the coming months.

	HealthSelect ^{of Texas}		CONSUMER DIRECTED HealthSelect SM	
	HealthSelect of Texas [®] and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State In-Network	HealthSelect of Texas and HealthSelect Out-of-State Out-of-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM High-deductible Health Plan In-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect High-deductible Health Plan Out-of-Network
Administrator	Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX)			
Annual deductible	None	\$500 per individual \$1,500 per family	\$2,100 per individual, \$4,200 per family To help cover part of the deductible, the State contributes to an eligible participant's health savings account: \$540/year for an individual, \$1,080/year for a family	\$4,200 per individual, \$8,400 per family To help cover part of the deductible, the State contributes to an eligible participant's health savings account: \$540/year for an individual, \$1,080/year for a family
Out-of-network benefits?		Yes. See next page for details.		Yes. See next page for details.
Balance billing? (Balance billing is when an out-of-network provider charges you the difference between their billed charges and the plan's allowed amount.)		Yes. Balance billing may apply to certain out-of-network services. For more information, see the plan's Master Benefit Plan Document.		Yes. Balance billing may apply to certain out-of-network services. For more information, see the plan's Master Benefit Plan Document.
Total in-network out-of-pocket maximum (including deductibles, coinsurance and copays)*	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023: \$7,050 per person; \$14,100 per family Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024: \$7,500 per person; \$15,000 per family		Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2023: \$7,050 per person; \$14,100 per family Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024: \$7,500 per person; \$15,000 per family	
Out-of-pocket coinsurance maximum	\$2,000 per person	\$7,000 per person	None	None
Inpatient copay maximum	\$750 copay max, up to 5 days per hospital stay \$2,250 copay max per calendar year per person		None	None
Primary care provider (PCP) required?	Participants who live and work in Texas: Yes Out-of-state participants: No	No	No	No
Referrals required?	Participants who live and work in Texas: Yes Out-of-state participants: No	No	No	No

*Includes medical and prescription drug copays, coinsurance and deductibles. Excludes non-network and bariatric services.

All Texas Employees Group Benefits Program (GBP) benefits could change without notice. The Texas Legislature decides the level of funding for such benefits and has no continuing obligation to provide those benefits beyond each fiscal year.

Medical Benefits

Service	HealthSelect of Texas® and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State In-Network	HealthSelect of Texas and HealthSelect Out-of-State Out-of-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM High-deductible Health Plan In-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect High-deductible Health Plan Out-of-Network
Allergy treatment	Covered at 100% if administered in a physician's office; 20% coinsurance in any other outpatient location	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Ambulance services (for emergencies)	20% coinsurance	20% coinsurance; annual deductible does not apply	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual in-network deductible is met
Bariatric surgery*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deductible: \$5,000 • Coinsurance: 20% • Lifetime max: \$13,000 	Not covered	Not covered	Not covered
Chiropractic care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without office visit: 20% coinsurance • With office visit: \$40 copay plus 20% coinsurance • Maximum benefits of \$75 per visit and maximum of 30 visits per calendar year 	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met. Maximum benefits of \$75 per visit and maximum of 30 visits per calendar year	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met. Maximum benefits of \$75 per visit and maximum of 30 visits per calendar year	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met. Maximum benefits of \$75 per visit and maximum of 30 visits per calendar year
Diagnostic A1c testing (for participants diagnosed with diabetes)	20% coinsurance; see page 20 for details	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met; see page 20 for details	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met; see page 20 for details	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met; see page 20 for details
Diabetes equipment*	20% coinsurance; see page 20 for details.	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met; see page 20 for details.	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met; see page 20 for details.	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met; see page 20 for details.
Diabetes supplies	See page 20 for details.			
Diagnostic X-rays and lab tests	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Diagnostic mammography	Covered at 100%	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	Covered at 100%	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Durable medical equipment*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Facility-based providers (radiologists, pathologists and labs, anesthesiologists, emergency room physicians, etc.)	20% coinsurance	Emergencies: 20% coinsurance; annual deductible does not apply. Non-emergencies: 40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	Emergencies: 20% coinsurance after annual in-network deductible is met. Non-emergencies: 40% coinsurance after annual out-of-network deductible is met.
Facility emergency care (non-FSER) and hospital-affiliated freestanding emergency departments*	\$150 copay plus 20% coinsurance (If admitted, copay will apply to hospital copay.)	Emergencies: \$150 copay plus 20% coinsurance (If admitted, copay will apply to hospital copay.) Annual deductible does not apply. Non-emergencies: \$150 copay plus 40% coinsurance after annual out-of-network deductible is met.	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	Emergencies: 20% coinsurance after annual in-network deductible is met. Non-emergencies: 40% coinsurance after annual out-of-network deductible is met.
Freestanding emergency room facility	\$150 copay plus 20% coinsurance	Emergencies: \$300 copay plus 20% coinsurance; annual deductible does not apply. Non-emergencies: \$300 copay plus 40% coinsurance after annual out-of-network deductible is met.	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	Emergencies: 20% coinsurance after annual in-network deductible is met. Non-emergencies: 40% coinsurance after annual out-of-network deductible is met.

*Prior Authorization may be required.

Service	HealthSelect of Texas® and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State In-Network	HealthSelect of Texas and HealthSelect Out-of-State Out-of-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM High-deductible Health Plan In-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect High-deductible Health Plan Out-of-Network
Habilitation and rehabilitation services - outpatient therapy (including physical, occupational and speech therapy)*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Hearing aids requiring a prescription (for covered participants over age 18)	Plan pays up to \$1,000 per ear for any consecutive 36-month period and \$1 per battery. In-network and out-of-network hearing aids are covered at the same benefit level.		Plan pays up to \$1,000 per ear every three years after deductible is met.	
Hearing aids requiring a prescription (for participants 18 years of age and younger)	Plan pays 100%; limit of one hearing aid per ear for any consecutive 36-month period and \$1 per battery (In-network and out-of-network hearing aids are covered at the same benefit level.)		20% coinsurance after annual in-network deductible is met (In-network and out-of-network hearing aids are covered at the same benefit level.)	
High-tech radiology (CT scan, MRI and nuclear medicine)*	\$100 copay plus 20% coinsurance	\$100 copay plus 40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Home health care*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Hospice care*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Inpatient hospital facility (semi-private room and day's board, and intensive care unit)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$150/day copay plus 20% coinsurance \$750 copay max, up to 5 days per hospital stay \$2,250 copay max per calendar year per person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$150/day copay plus 40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met. \$750 copay max, up to 5 days per hospital stay \$2,250 copay max per calendar year per person 	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Maternity care doctor charges only; inpatient hospital copays will apply	\$25 or \$40 for first pre-natal visit; no charge for routine postnatal appointments	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	No charge for routine prenatal and postnatal appointments after annual deductible is met and 20% coinsurance for initial visit	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Medications and injections administered by a provider (see below for outpatient medications and injections)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician's office: Covered at 100% after copay (or 100% if no charge is assessed for office visit) Any other outpatient location: 20% coinsurance. Preventive vaccines covered at 100% 	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met Preventive vaccines covered at 100%	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Office surgery and diagnostic procedures	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
PCP office visit	\$25 copay	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Private duty nursing*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met Maximum of 96 hours per calendar year	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met Maximum of 96 hours per calendar year
Retail health/ convenience care clinic	\$25 copay	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Routine eye exam, one per year per participant	\$40 copay	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Routine preventive care	No cost to participant(s)	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	No cost to participant(s)	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Skilled nursing facility/ inpatient rehabilitation facility services*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Specialist physician office visit	\$40 copay with valid PCP referral on file	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met

*Prior Authorization may be required.

Service	HealthSelect of Texas® and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State In-Network	HealthSelect of Texas and HealthSelect Out-of-State Out-of-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM High-deductible Health Plan In-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect High-deductible Health Plan Out-of-Network
Surgery (outpatient) other than in physician's office*	\$100 copay plus 20% coinsurance	\$100 copay plus 40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Telemedicine visit	Coverage is based on place of treatment billed. • Provider's office: \$25/\$40 copay for physician's office visit • Any other outpatient telemedicine: 20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Therapeutic treatments - outpatient	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Urgent care clinic	\$50 copay plus 20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Virtual visits (medical)	\$0 copay for virtual visits when provided by Doctor on Demand® or MDLIVE®	Not covered	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met if Doctor on Demand or MDLIVE is used	Not covered

*Prior Authorization may be required.

Mental Health Benefits

Benefits apply to all covered mental health services (including serious mental illness treatment, substance abuse treatment, autism spectrum disorder services, etc.).

	HealthSelect of Texas® and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State In-Network	HealthSelect of Texas and HealthSelect Out-of-State Out-of-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM High-deductible Health Plan In-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect High-deductible Health Plan Out-of-Network
Inpatient hospital mental health stay*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$150/day copay plus 20% coinsurance • \$750 copay max, up to 5 days per hospital stay • \$2,250 copay max per calendar year per person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$150/day copay plus 40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met • \$750 copay max, up to 5 days per hospital stay • \$2,250 copay max per calendar year per person 	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Mental health telemedicine	Coverage is based on place of treatment billed. • Provider's office: \$25 • Any other outpatient telemedicine: 20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Outpatient facility care (partial hospitalization/day treatment and extensive outpatient treatment)*	20% coinsurance	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Outpatient physician or mental health provider office visit	\$25 copay	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) treatment	Coverage is based on place of treatment. • \$25 copay if administered in a mental health provider's office • 20% coinsurance for any other outpatient location, including the home	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Virtual visits/e-visits (mental health)	\$0 copay for virtual visits when provided by Doctor on Demand or MDLIVE	Not covered	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	Not covered

*Prior Authorization may be required.

Prescription Drug Benefits

The cost share you pay for your medication depends on its drug tier, the quantity you purchase (30-, 60- or 90-day supply) and whether the prescription is filled at a retail pharmacy (network or non-network), Extended Day Supply Pharmacy (EDS) or mail service pharmacy.

You will pay less for your drugs when you fill your prescription at a network pharmacy. The Optum Rx network includes thousands of retail locations, including national chains and many community pharmacies. To find a network pharmacy near you, use the Find a Pharmacy tool at www.HealthSelectRx.com or call an OptumRx customer care representative toll-free at (855) 828-9834 (TTY: 711).

Non-maintenance medications are those prescribed for temporary use or for short-term conditions. Maintenance medications are those taken more regularly for long-term conditions.

	HealthSelect of Texas® and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State In-Network	HealthSelect of Texas and HealthSelect Out-of-State Out-of-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM High-deductible Health Plan In-Network	Consumer Directed HealthSelect High-deductible Health Plan Out-of-Network
Pharmacy benefits manager (PBM)	OptumRx (UnitedHealthcare)			
Out-of-network benefits?		Yes		Yes
Deductible	\$50 prescription drug deductible per participant per calendar year applies before the plan pays for any prescription drugs (except covered preventive medications, specific diabetic supplies (as listed on page 20) and insulin dispensed by an in-network pharmacy).		\$2,100 per individual; \$4,200 per family Medical and prescription drug expenses apply to the deductible.	\$4,200 per individual; \$8,400 per family Medical and prescription drug expenses apply to the deductible.
Tier 1 (mostly generic drugs)	Non-maintenance and maintenance: \$10 copay Mail order or extended day supply pharmacy (90 days' supply): \$30 copay	Non-maintenance and maintenance: \$10 copay plus 40% coinsurance Mail order or extended day supply pharmacy (90 days' supply): \$30 copay plus 40% coinsurance	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Tier 2 (mostly preferred brand name drugs)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-maintenance: \$35 copay Maintenance: \$45 copay Mail order or extended day supply pharmacy: \$105 copay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-maintenance: \$35 copay plus 40% coinsurance Maintenance: \$45 copay plus 40% coinsurance Mail order or extended day supply: \$105 copay plus 40% coinsurance 	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Tier 3 (mostly non-preferred brand name drugs)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-maintenance: \$60 copay Maintenance: \$75 copay Mail order or extended day supply pharmacy: \$180 copay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-maintenance: \$60 copay plus 40% coinsurance Maintenance: \$75 copay plus 40% coinsurance Mail order or extended day supply pharmacy: \$180 copay plus 40% coinsurance 	20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met
Specialty drugs*	If purchased through a pharmacy, specialty drugs are covered at the specific tier level (generic, preferred or non-preferred) as listed above. Otherwise, they are covered as a medical benefit.		20% coinsurance after annual deductible is met	40% coinsurance after annual deductible is met

*Prior Authorization may be required.

Diabetes Equipment and Supplies

Other diabetes equipment, supplies, and prescription drugs not listed below may be covered under these plans. For more information about your prescription drug benefits or for help finding an in-network pharmacy, contact HealthSelect PDP customer care toll-free at **(855) 828-9834 (TTY: 711)**. For more information on your medical plan benefits, contact a BCBSTX Personal Health Assistant toll-free at **(800) 252-8039 (TTY: 711)**.

	HealthSelect of Texas® and HealthSelect SM Out-of-State		Consumer Directed HealthSelect SM	
	Prescription Drug Program (PDP) benefits	Medical plan benefits	Prescription Drug Program (PDP) benefits	Medical plan benefits
Diabetes glucometers	Certain brands of preferred glucometers are covered at no cost to participants when received through the free glucometer program*. For more information, call OptumRx.	Refer to Prescription Drug Program (PDP) benefits	Certain brands of preferred glucometers are covered at no cost to participants when received through the free glucometer program*. For more information, call OptumRx.	Refer to Prescription Drug Program (PDP) benefits
Continuous glucose monitors / insulin pumps	Certain brands of continuous glucose monitors and related supplies will be available starting Jan. 1, 2024.	20% coinsurance for in-network and out-of-network covered continuous glucose monitors, insulin pumps, and related supplies through durable medical equipment benefits	Certain brands of continuous glucose monitors and related supplies will be available starting Jan. 1, 2024.	20% coinsurance for in-network and out-of-network covered continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps, and related supplies after annual deductible is met; through durable medical equipment benefits
Diabetic supplies	Certain brands of preferred diabetic test strips* are covered at no cost to participants when purchased from a PDP in-network pharmacy. Lancets and lancing devices, and syringes are covered at no cost to participants when purchased from a PDP in-network pharmacy.	Refer to Prescription Drug Program (PDP) benefits	20% coinsurance for covered diabetic supplies after annual in-network deductible is met when purchased from a PDP in-network pharmacy 40% coinsurance after annual out-of-network deductible is met when purchased from a PDP out-of-network pharmacy	Refer to Prescription Drug Program (PDP) benefits
Prescription insulin	In-network pharmacy: Insulin products on the PDP drug list (formulary) are covered with a maximum \$25 copay per 30-day supply, regardless of tier Out-of-network pharmacy: Insulin products are covered at a Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 copay and 40% coinsurance	Not covered under medical plan benefits	In-network pharmacy: 20% coinsurance (up to \$25 maximum per 30-day supply) for insulin products on the PDP drug list (formulary) Out-of-network pharmacy: 40% coinsurance for insulin products after annual out-of-network deductible is met	Not covered under medical plan benefits

*Benefits and covered brands of glucometers and test strips are subject to change.

Programs for a healthy life

HealthSelect[®]
of Texas

CONSUMER DIRECTED
HealthSelect[™]

Participants can:

- Get support for managing chronic conditions like diabetes, heart failure, coronary artery disease (CAD), asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Enroll in health coaching programs for physical activity, stress, nutrition, weight management and tobacco cessation.
- Get clinical support making informed choices about treatment options or services related to coronary disease, chronic back pain, hip or knee replacement, benign prostate disease, prostate and breast cancer, benign uterine condition, endometriosis and fibroids.
- Enroll in one of two online weight management programs, Wondr Health and Real Appeal. Both programs feature interactive components and user-friendly resources.

Online health and wellness tools

Go to healthselectoftexas.com and click the Log In button to go to your personal Blue Access for Members account. On Blue Access for Members, you can do any or all of the following to help improve or maintain your healthy habits:

- Take the online health assessment to identify your personal health needs and learn healthy habits. Then take your personal health report to your PCP.
- Use wellness trackers to help you stay on target with your goals. Trackers are available for stress management, tobacco usage, nutrition and more.
- Sync your fitness device such as a Fitbit or Jawbone and see activity minutes, miles traveled and calories burned on the dashboard.
- Learn about our wellness incentive program called BluePoints and begin earning points by engaging in healthy activities to purchase merchandise from the online shopping mall.
- Use interactive tools like the symptom checker.
- Get coaching support via phone
- Download mobile apps like the BCBSTX app, Centered and AlwaysOn.
- View your and your family's claims history.
- Chat with a Personal Health Assistant.

Health and wellness discounts

Save money on health and wellness products and services from top retailers that are not covered by insurance. There are no claims to file and no referrals or prior authorizations required. Visit healthselectoftexas.com and click Wellness Resources. From the drop down, click on Wellness Discount Program.

"AMP" up your health

Get to know your health risks to improve your overall health. AMP is an ERS wellness initiative that encourages you to **Assess** your health through online assessments, **Manage** your weight and take steps to **Prevent** potential issues through preventive care.



Both HealthSelect plans offer a full menu of scientifically based health and wellness programs for state employees, retirees and their families:

- Health assessments
- Diabetes management
- Exercise
- Heart health
- Nutrition
- Tobacco cessation
- Weight management
- Stress management
- Disease management
- Healthy pregnancy

Get physical!

Did you know that even moderate exercise helps prevent or delay disease and disabilities? Be sure to warm up before exercising.

Stretch your muscles slowly. Try a little slow walking and light arm pumping. When doing endurance activities that make you sweat, drink plenty of liquids, especially water or drinks that contain electrolytes. Avoid holding your breath while exercising.



From getting enough exercise to eating a well-balanced diet, there are many ways to maintain your health and wellness. The GBP offers several wellness resources and tools to help you and your covered dependents meet your physical and mental health goals. Medical plan resources and GBP wellness webinars will help you on your journey to wellness

Wellness events:

<https://ers.texas.gov/event-calendars/wellness-events>

Wellness resources:

<https://ers.texas.gov/wellness-resources>



Jennica Preston Benefits Coordinator

Seeing results with Real Appeal

When Jennica Preston joined Real Appeal, she wanted to lose the weight she had gained while pregnant with her now 10-year-old son. Preston, a human resources specialist at the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC), wasn't happy with the woman she saw in her mirror.

"I'd always been petite and small," says Preston, who was enthusiastic about the Real

Appeal approach from the beginning. "Real Appeal motivated me to make the right choices," she said. "Right off the bat, I went cold turkey and stopped eating fast food and sodas. I started using my husband's workout equipment to get exercise at home. A few times each week, I walked the twelve flights of stairs to my office."

Preston's commitment paid off. In less than six months, she lost 32 pounds. Today, she is 64 pounds lighter and delighted with the results of her lifestyle change. "I'm thrilled to be getting back to the person I really am."

Preston is also eager to help other GBP members as they seek to become healthier—and happier. She recently agreed to become the new wellness coordinator at the Texas RRC and is excited to "have an opportunity to help my colleagues by sharing the benefits of getting and staying fit."

When do my insurance benefits start?

First day of employment

Coverage for your optional benefits—dental, vision, optional life insurance elections 1 and 2, dependent life, AD&D, TIPP disability insurance and TexFlex dependent care FSA—could begin right away if you enroll on your first day.

First of the month following your date of hire

If you don't enroll in optional benefits on your first day, but within 31 days of your hire date, coverage begins on the first day of the month after you added the coverage.

Note: For optional life insurance elections 3 and 4, coverage begins when you are approved through evidence of insurability (EOI). Learn more about EOI on page 27.

First of the month after 60 days of employment

Health insurance coverage, prescription drug coverage and, if you elect it, a TexFlex health care or limited- purpose FSA become active on the first day of the month following your 60th day of employment. If your 60th day of employment falls on the first of the month, coverage begins on that day. For example, if you are hired on March 2, your 60th day will be May 1. If your hire date falls later in the month, your coverage begins the first day of the month after your 60th day of employment. For example, if you are hired on July 23, your coverage will begin on Oct. 1.

Your health coverage, prescription drug coverage and/or TexFlex health care or limited-purpose FSA become active on May 1—you don't have to wait until June 1.

This waiting period does not apply to your medical coverage, prescription drug coverage and TexFlex health care or limited-purpose FSA if you:

- transferred from one GBP agency or higher education institution to another GBP agency or institution without a break in GBP health coverage,
- transferred from the University of Texas or Texas A&M University system without a break in health coverage,
- are a return-to-work retiree enrolled in GBP health coverage as a retiree,
- are enrolled in GBP health coverage as a dependent on the date of hire or rehire,
- are enrolled in GBP health coverage in accordance with the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) on the date of hire or rehire, or
- were rehired on or after Sept. 1, 2015 and returned to employment at the same state agency within 90 days of leaving active military duty.

If you are in one of the categories above, please notify your HR department within 31 days to start receiving your health benefits. For those starting mid-month, coverage under your new employer begins the first of the next month.

If you do not have a waiting period, you will have 31 days to make health coverage changes. Those changes will begin the first day of the next month. However, if you transferred as an employee from one GBP entity to another with no break in service, start your job on the first day of the month and change your health coverage that day, the change takes place immediately.

If you enroll in a dependent care FSA on your hire date, your enrollment begins on that day. If you don't enroll on your first day, but within 31 days of your hire date, your enrollment begins on the first of the following month. If you enroll because of a qualifying life event, your coverage begins the first of the following month. For example, if you adopt a child on Oct. 4 and enroll in a dependent care account, your enrollment would begin on Nov. 1. Your November contribution will be deducted from your December paycheck and be available for use once it is deposited into your account.

Return-to-work retirees



If you are a return-to-work retiree, you can switch

between retiree and active benefits by contacting your agency's benefits coordinator or human resources department. If you are a Health and Human Services Enterprise employee, please contact the HHS Enterprise Employee Service Center.

Dental insurance

For an additional premium, you may enroll in one of the following dental plans.

You must enroll in a dental plan before you can add dependents, and your dependents must be enrolled in the same plan as you.

Go online

Find a list of providers for the State of Texas Dental Choice PlanSM or DeltaCare USA DMHO at **ERSdentalplans.com** or by calling Delta Dental, toll-free, at (888) 818-7925 (TTY: 711), Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. CT.

State of Texas Dental Choice is a preferred provider organization (PPO) dental insurance plan. You can see any dentist you want, but you will pay less if you go to a dentist in one of the two Delta Dental networks:

- Delta Dental PPO
- Delta Premier



Dentists of both the Delta Premier and Delta Dental PPO are in-network providers. You will get the same coverage in either network, but you may pay less for covered services in the Delta Dental PPO network. Delta Premier dentists can charge higher rates for the same services, which means your costs might be higher with those dentists.

If you receive benefits outside of the United States, eligible services will be reimbursed in US currency at the out-of-network benefit level.

DeltaCare USA is a dental health maintenance organization (DHMO) dental insurance plan.

- Coverage applies only to dentists in the Texas service area. Before you enroll, make sure there is a DHMO network dentist in your area who is accepting new patients. For a list of providers, visit **www.ERSdentalplans.com** or call at (888) 818-7925 (TTY: 711).
- You must choose a primary care dentist (PCD) from a list of approved providers. You and your enrolled dependents can choose different PCDs.
- Services from participating specialty dentists cost 25% less than the dentists' usual charge, if your PCD coordinates your specialty care.

DeltaCare[®] USA

“Smart” benefits

To keep costs low, active employees who sign up for GBP dental insurance will not get an ID card from the plan, and participating Delta dentists should not require them.

Instead, if you want a card, you can download a digital card to your smartphone through the Delta Dental app. If you don't have a smartphone, you can download and print your information from **ERSdentalplans.com** or call Delta Dental toll-free at (888) 818-7925 (TTY: 711) and they will mail a paper copy to you.

Note: Covered dependents cannot access the app, and their names are not listed on the card. A dependent can verify coverage with a provider by giving either their name or the GBP member's name and plan ID number.

Check the Discount Purchase Program for dental discounts

The Discount Purchase Program, administered by Beneplace, offers dental discount programs and discounted dental services. You can view them at **beneplace.com/discountprogramers/**. (To access discounts, you will need to register using your email address.)

Dental plans comparison chart

This chart is a summary of benefits in the two dental insurance plans. See plan booklets at www.ERSdentalplans.com for actual coverage and limitations. Delta Dental administers both plans. Before starting treatment, discuss the treatment plan and all charges with your dentist.

	State of Texas Dental Choice Plan PPO – In-Network	State of Texas Dental Choice Plan PPO – Out-of-Network	DeltaCare® USA DHMO (Services from participating PCDs only)
Dentists	In-network dentist	Out-of-network dentist	You must select a primary care dentist (PCD). NOTE: Not all in-network dentists accept new patients. Dentists are not required to stay on the plan for the entire year.
Deductibles	Preventive: Individual-\$0; Family-\$0 Combined Basic/Major: Individual-\$50; Family-\$150 Orthodontic services: no deductible In State of Texas Dental Choice, deductibles are based on the calendar year and reset on January 1.	Preventive: Individual-\$50; Family-\$150 Combined Basic/Major: Individual-\$100; Family-\$300 Orthodontic services: no deductible	None
Copays / coinsurance	Preventive and Diagnostic Services: none Basic Services: 10% coinsurance after meeting the basic services deductible Major Services: 50% coinsurance after meeting the major services deductible There is no charge for anything over the allowed amount. After reaching the maximum calendar year benefit, the participant pays 60% until January 1.	Preventive and Diagnostic Services: 10% coinsurance after meeting the preventive and diagnostic deductible Basic Services: 30% coinsurance after meeting the basic services deductible Major Services: 60% coinsurance after meeting the major services deductible Participants may be required to pay the difference between the allowed amount and billed charges. Once the maximum calendar year benefit is reached, the participant pays 100% until January 1.	Primary care dentist (PCD): Copays vary according to service and are listed in the “Schedule of Dental Benefits” booklet. Specialty dentistry: 75% of the dentist’s usual and customary fee when specialty care is coordinated by the PCD (DHMO pays nothing)
Maximum calendar year benefits	\$2,000 per covered individual (includes orthodontic extractions) plus 40% after maximum calendar year benefit is met	Does not apply to orthodontic services provided by out-of-network dentists (plan pays \$0)	Unlimited
Maximum lifetime benefit	\$2,000 per covered individual for orthodontic services	\$2,000 per covered individual for orthodontic services	Unlimited
Average cost of cleaning / oral exams	Up to two cleaning/oral exams per calendar year allowed	10% of the allowed amount after deductible is met Up to two cleaning/oral exams per calendar year allowed	Vary according to service and are listed in the “Schedule of Dental Benefits” booklet Up to two cleaning/oral exams per calendar year allowed
Orthodontic coverage	50% of the allowed amount	50% of the allowed amount Participants may be required to pay the difference between the allowed amount and billed charges	Orthodontic services performed by a general dentist listed in the directory with a “0” treatment code: child-\$1,800; adult-\$2,100 Orthodontic services performed by a specialist: 75% of the usual fee (plan pays \$0)

Vision Plan



GBP health insurance plans cover some vision and eye health services, including an annual eye exam and treatment for diseases of the eye.

GBP health plans do not cover the cost of eyeglasses or contact lenses. For this type of coverage, you and your eligible dependents can enroll in State of Texas VisionSM for an additional monthly premium. (Besides the eye exam, any additional vision offerings through the health plans are value-added benefits. ERS does not guarantee the length of time that a specific value-added product will be offered.)

Administered by EyeMed Vision Care, LLC (EyeMed), State of Texas Vision covers an eye exam, contact lens fitting and other eyewear options. The plan includes an allowance for eyeglass frames or contact lenses, as well as discounts for LASIK. The State of Texas Vision plan gives you an annual \$200 retail allowance to use toward either contact lenses OR eyeglasses (frames and lenses) in the same plan year. For example, if you choose to use your \$200 allowance to purchase contact lenses, you will not have an allowance for eyeglasses for the remainder of the year. For a complete list of plan benefits and a list of providers, visit StateofTexasVision.com.

Vision coverage comparison chart, in-network services

Vision plan participants have access to EyeMed's INSIGHT network which includes independent, national and regional retailers and online providers. All allowances are retail; you are responsible for any charges in excess of the retail allowances, minus available discounts. Discounts are not funded benefits and may vary or change based on provider or manufacturer. Beginning June 26, you can search the EyeMed provider network at member.eyemedvisioncare.com/stateoftexasvision.

Vision Care Services	In-Network Member Cost	Out-of-Network Member Reimbursement
Exam services		
Exam	\$15 copay ¹	Up to \$40 after \$15 copay
Contact Lens Fit and Follow-Up²		
Fit and Follow-up – Standard	\$25 copay ¹	Up to \$100
Fit and Follow-up – Premium	\$35 copay ¹	Up to \$100
Frame		
Frame	\$200 retail allowance; 20% off amount over \$200	Up to \$75
Lenses		
Single Vision	\$10 copay ¹	Up to \$30
Bifocal	\$15 copay ¹	Up to \$45
Trifocal	\$20 copay ¹	Up to \$60
Progressive – Standard³	\$70 copay plus bifocal \$15 ¹	Not covered
Lens Options		
Polycarbonate - Standard	\$40 copay ¹	Not covered
Scratch Coating - Standard Plastic	\$10 copay ¹	Not covered
Tint - Solid and/or Gradient	\$10 copay ¹	Not covered
UV Treatment	\$10 copay ¹	Not covered
Anti-Reflective Coating - Standard	\$40 copay ¹	Not covered
Contact Lenses		
Contacts - Elective	\$200 allowance	Up to \$200
Contacts - Medically Necessary	\$0 copay	Up to \$210
OTHER		
LASIK or PRK from U.S. Laser Network	15% off retail or 5% off promo price; call (800) 988-4221	Not covered
Retinal Imaging	You are responsible for 100% of the cost, which is up to \$39 for EyeMed customers.	Not covered

¹ Covered in full after copay is met.

² A Contact Lens Fit and Follow-Up has its own copay and is separate from the eye exam copay. Standard Contact Lens Fit and Follow-up applies to a current contact lens user who wears disposable, daily wear, or extended wear lenses only. Premium Contact Lens Fit and Follow-up applies to new contact wearers and/or a participant who wears toric, gas permeable, or multi-focal lenses.

³ Standard progressives are covered in full after a \$70 copay. The \$15 bifocal copay also applies to standard progressive lenses. For premium progressive lenses (in-network only), the plan coverage is up to the in-network plan payment for standard progressive lenses.

Optional life insurance

Optional Term Life Insurance

Your GBP health coverage includes \$5,000 of Basic Term Life Insurance and \$5,000 of Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) coverage at no cost to you. You can purchase additional life insurance coverage in increments based on your annual salary. Both Basic and Optional Term Life Insurance are insured by Securian.

If you choose **Optional Term Life Election 1 or 2** (one or two times your annual salary) during your first 31 days of employment, you will not have to provide evidence of insurability (EOI). If you do not sign up as a new employee, you can apply when you have a qualifying life event or during Summer Enrollment, but you will have to provide EOI and coverage is not guaranteed.

You can apply for **Optional Term Life Election 3 or 4** (three or four times your annual salary) up to \$400,000. You will have to provide EOI, a process that requires you to provide information about your health. Coverage is not guaranteed; you may not be approved for benefits based on the information included in your EOI.

Each Optional Term Life election provides an equal amount of additional Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) coverage.

Securian's website for GBP members can help you decide how much life insurance coverage you might need: securian.com/content/securian/en/insights-tools/life-insurance-needs-calculator.

Premiums and coverage amounts for each plan year (Sept. 1 – Aug. 31) will be based on the salary reported to ERS on Sept. 1 of that plan year. Your monthly premiums for Optional Term Life Insurance will depend on your age, salary and level of coverage each plan year. To calculate your premium, see page 39 of this guide.

Like with most group term life policies, premiums for the GBP's Optional Term Life Insurance increase as the policyholder ages. Age-based coverage reductions start at age 70. For more information, visit the Securian website to review a plan overview and learn more about coverage options for yourself and your dependents.

Dependent Term Life Insurance

For an additional premium, you can enroll your eligible dependents in term life insurance. The plan includes \$5,000 term life with \$5,000 AD&D for each covered dependent, for a monthly premium of just a few dollars. You will get the life insurance benefit if your covered dependents die. You will get the AD&D benefit if they die or suffer certain injuries in an accident. One monthly premium covers all your eligible dependents, but all eligible dependents must be named under the coverage.

If you do not sign up as a new employee, you can apply for this insurance when you have a qualifying life event (QLE) or during Summer Enrollment, but you will have to supply EOI and coverage is not guaranteed. You do not need to supply EOI for Dependent Term Life Insurance if you add a new dependent, such as a new spouse or child, within 31 days of getting married or within 31 days of the child's birth or placement.

Designate your beneficiaries

Although you aren't required to do so in your first month, it's a good idea to designate your beneficiaries for your State of Texas Retirement account, life insurance policy and Texa\$aver account(s) as soon as you can.

You can find instructions on how to designate your beneficiaries for each at <https://ers.texas.gov/About-ERS/Update-Your-Beneficiaries>.



First 31 days: No questions



If you want additional life insurance coverage and disability insurance, your first month of employment is the best time to sign up because you will not have to provide evidence of insurability (EOI) for Optional Term Life Election 1 or 2, or for short-term or long-term disability insurance. EOI is an application process during which you must provide information about your or your dependents' health. Don't miss this 31-day window of opportunity! If you wait, you run the risk of not qualifying for these benefits based on EOI results.

Voluntary AD&D insurance

Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance coverage can provide additional financial support if there is an accidental death or injury of a certain type. You can choose insurance in increments of \$5,000, starting at \$10,000 up to \$200,000. You will not have to provide EOI for AD&D Insurance. Securian insures AD&D insurance benefits.

You can sign up for coverage for yourself only, or for yourself and your eligible dependents.

Coverage includes the following:

- If you die as the direct result of an accidental bodily injury, your beneficiaries will receive the full amount of your coverage.
- Enrolled family members are covered at partial benefit levels. Your spouse is covered at 50% of your enrolled amount. Eligible children are covered at a lower percentage, which is reduced if your spouse is alive at the time of your child's death.
- If you have an accident and suffer any of the covered injuries, such as loss of a hand, a foot, or sight in one or both eyes, you will receive a percentage of the full amount of your coverage.
- If an eligible family member loses a hand, a foot, or sight of one or both eyes in an accident, you receive a percentage of the benefit if you have coverage for that family member.

You can update your beneficiaries at any time. Go to <https://ers.texas.gov/Beneficiary-Designation> for step-by-step instructions.

Disability insurance



The Texas Income Protection PlanSM (TIPP) provides you with money to help pay your bills if an illness, injury or other health-related condition makes it impossible for you to work.

1. **Short-term disability insurance** provides a maximum benefit of 66% of your monthly salary, with a cap of \$6,600 per month for those making more than \$10,000 monthly, for up to five months (a maximum of 150 days). For example, if your monthly salary is \$4,800, the highest amount you'll get for short-term disability is \$3,168 per month.
2. **Long-term disability insurance** provides a maximum benefit of 60% of your monthly salary, with a cap of \$6,000 per month for those making more than \$10,000 monthly. For example, if your salary is \$4,800 per month, your monthly long-term disability payment would be \$2,880. Benefits are paid until you return to work, reach full Social Security retirement age or are no longer considered disabled under the plan.

If you become disabled at 69 or older, benefits are payable for up to 12 months.

Note: For some mental diseases and disorders, the maximum benefit period for disability is two years.

Pre-existing conditions are subject to certain exclusions.

You must use all of your sick leave (including extended sick leave, donated sick leave and sick leave pool) or complete a waiting period (30 days for short-term, 180 days for long-term), whichever option is longest, before disability payments will be paid. You are not required to use your vacation time.

If you are eligible for Workers' Compensation payments and/or State of Texas Disability Retirement, your long-term disability payments may be reduced.

The minimum benefit is 10% of your monthly salary.

TIPP coverage is not available for family members.

Please review the plan documents, including the User's Guide at [reedgrouptipp.com/forms-users-guide](https://ers.texas.gov/forms-users-guide), before applying for TIPP disability insurance.

Important notice concerning short-term disability insurance for parental leave

The 88th Texas Legislature recently passed Senate Bill 222, which provides paid leave to some state agency employees who are new parents. This new paid parental leave policy is effective Sept. 1, 2023 and may impact some employees' decisions to enroll in Texas Income Protection Plan (TIPP) short-term disability insurance. Agency employees who are thinking about becoming parents should carefully review the new legislation, federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policies and TIPP short-term disability coverage. It is important to understand how state and federal laws affect your access to both paid and unpaid leave, and how TIPP might provide income during at least part of parental leave.

Please note: ERS does not manage paid leave for state agency employees. If you have questions about leave policies, including FMLA and paid parental leave, please consult with your organization's human resources staff.

TIPP coverage overview

	Short-term disability coverage	Long-term disability coverage
Monthly benefits	66% of your monthly salary, up to a \$6,600 benefit each month	60% of your monthly salary, up to a \$6,000 benefit each month
Potential benefit reduction	Benefits are reduced if you get other disability payments. The minimum benefit is 10% of your monthly salary.	Benefits are reduced if you get other disability payments. The minimum benefit is 10% of your monthly salary.
When do benefits start?	After a waiting period of 30 consecutive days or after you've used all your sick leave (whichever is longer); sick leave can be used during the 30-day waiting period	After a waiting period of 180 consecutive days or after you've used all your sick leave (whichever is longer); sick leave can be used during the 180-day waiting period
How long are benefits paid?	Up to 150 days after the completion of your waiting period	Until you are able to return to work or until you reach your Maximum Benefits Period (based on the age you become disabled) or based on the condition causing your disability

TIPP disability insurance coverage is administered by ReedGroup.

If you do not sign up as a new employee, you can apply for this insurance when you have a qualifying life event (QLE) or during Summer Enrollment, but you will have to supply EOI and coverage is not guaranteed. EOI for short-term and long-term disability coverage is managed by Guardian Life Insurance.



Thomas Barker-White Statewide intake supervisor

Since 1995, GBP participant Thomas Barker-White has worked for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), currently as a statewide intake supervisor overseeing a staff of nine.

Barker-White and his wife, Lutishia, a former state employee, value their ERS-administered health and retirement benefits.

They set aside money for retirement through Texa\$aver to prepare for their future. They believe it is a good benefit for employees who don't trust their own judgment with investments.

But in 2011, the most important benefit became short-term and long-term disability insurance.

In 2011, Lutishia became disabled due to arthritis and related injuries. Her disability insurance payments made up for a portion of the income she lost when she could no longer work.

As a result, the couple was able to manage their finances without any substantial changes.

Having both short-term and long-term disability insurance made a huge difference by providing the financial support the couple needed when one of them could no longer work, says Barker-White.

"I know people who work in the private sector who do not have access to disability insurance through their employer. They can buy it on their own, but the premium is not as reasonable as what we have as state employees."

Barker-White appreciates that the state covers the full cost of the employee's health insurance premium. It's another valuable benefit that makes working for the state attractive, he says.

"Having good insurance coverage is so important. You may never need it (and I hope you don't), but if you do, you are probably REALLY going to need it. Life can come at you quick, so it's best to cover all your bases."

TEXFLEXSM

Participating in one or more of the TexFlexSM flexible spending accounts (FSAs) allows you to set aside pre-tax dollars from your paycheck to cover eligible out-of-pocket health care and dependent care expenses. Your TexFlex contribution is automatically withdrawn from your paycheck and deposited in your account each month.

Before you enroll, you may want to use the tools in the Program Resources section of the TexFlex website at [textflexers.com](https://www.textflexers.com) to figure out how much to contribute to each account.

Summer Enrollment is the only time you can change the amount you contribute to your TexFlex FSA(s), unless you have a qualifying life event during the plan year. Once you're enrolled, if you do not make a change during Summer Enrollment, you will continue enrollment and your annual contribution will stay the same in the next plan year.

Save on taxes

The benefit of TexFlex accounts is the ability to save on taxes. Contributions to an FSA are deducted before you pay income taxes, lowering your taxable income. The federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulates FSAs. The IRS says what you can spend FSA funds on and sets deadlines for when you must use the money in your FSAs. If you don't spend your FSA money by those deadlines, you could lose at least some of that money. If you are considering enrolling, you should use the contribution worksheet or calculator at [textflexers.com](https://www.textflexers.com) to help you decide how much you should contribute based on your planned expenses.

Active employees may be eligible to enroll in more than one TexFlex account at a time. See the following chart for rules that apply to each type of account.

If you enroll in Consumer Directed HealthSelect, you cannot enroll in a health care FSA. But you can enroll in a limited-purpose FSA. You can use the limited-purpose FSA for eligible out-of-pocket dental and vision expenses only. General health care expenses that are eligible under a health care FSA—such as doctor visits and prescription medicines—are NOT eligible under a limited-purpose FSA.

Visit [textflex.payflex.com/textflex/program-resources.html](https://www.textflex.payflex.com/textflex/program-resources.html) for more information.

Leftover TexFlex dollars?

Health care or limited-purpose FSA: At the end of Plan Year 2024 (Sept. 1, 2023 – Aug. 31, 2024), you can carry over unused health care or limited-purpose funds between \$25 and \$610 to Plan Year 2025. You will lose any funds over \$610 if you do not spend them by the end of the plan year on Aug. 31.

Dependent care FSA: You cannot carry over any funds in a dependent care FSA, but you have extra time to spend unused funds, called the grace period. The grace period allows you 2½ more months after the plan year ends on Aug. 31 (through Nov. 15) to use any leftover money in that account. You will lose any funds from the previous plan year that you don't use by Nov. 15.

See the following chart for more details on carryovers and the grace period. Forfeited money goes into the overall TexFlex fund to help pay administrative costs of the program.

How to pay with TexFlex

After you enroll in a TexFlex health care or limited-purpose FSA, you will get a debit card in the mail that you can use to pay eligible expenses, such as a prescription or a dentist visit. If you have a TexFlex dependent care account, you must submit a claim for reimbursement after the eligible services have been provided. You cannot use a TexFlex debit card to pay dependent care expenses.

For the health care FSA or limited-purpose FSA, you can choose not to use the debit card and instead submit a claim for reimbursement online, or by mail or fax.

If you submit a claim for reimbursement online or by mail or fax, TexFlex will mail a check to you. For quicker reimbursement, set up a direct deposit for funds to be deposited directly into your bank account within a few days.

Keep your receipts

Because TexFlex accounts are tax-free, the IRS requires all purchases with TexFlex funds to be validated.

PayFlex, the TexFlex plan administrator, may ask you to submit proof that you used your TexFlex funds to pay for eligible expenses. Please remember to **SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS**, regardless of how you pay. If you cannot

provide a receipt for an eligible purchase with your TexFlex debit card, PayFlex might ask you to reimburse your account for the funds. Your debit card will be suspended if you do not submit documentation for purchases made with your debit card that require validation.

Flexible spending accounts in Plan Year 2024

Health care, limited-purpose and dependent care

	Health care FSA	Limited-purpose FSA (Consumer Directed HealthSelect participants only)	Dependent care FSA
Eligible expenses See complete list at https://texflex.payflex.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copays, coinsurance and other out-of-pocket medically necessary charges not covered by insurance or reimbursed by another source Prescription drug deductible and copays Over-the-counter medicine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified vision and dental expenses not paid by insurance or reimbursed by another source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day care, after-school care and summer day camp for dependent children under age 13 Adult day care programs for qualifying individuals
Maximum annual contribution	\$3,050 per participant	\$3,050 per participant	\$5,000 per household
Funds availability	Full election available Sept. 1	Full election available Sept. 1	Funds available monthly as contributions are made
Debit card (no fee)	Yes	Yes	No
Carryover of funds or grace period	Up to \$610 in carryover is allowed from Plan Year 2024 (ending Aug. 31, 2024) to Plan Year 2025 (starting Sept. 1, 2024). Unspent Plan Year 2024 funds above \$610 will be forfeited).	Up to \$610 in carryover is allowed from Plan Year 2024 (ending Aug. 31, 2024) to Plan Year 2025 (starting Sept. 1, 2024). Unspent Plan Year 2024 funds above \$610 will be forfeited).	There is a 2½-month grace period from Sept. 1 through Nov. 15, 2024. Any Plan Year 2024 funds not spent by Nov. 15, 2024 will be forfeited.
Runout period	Submit claims for eligible expenses you paid between Sept. 1, 2023 and Aug. 31, 2024 by Dec. 31, 2024.	Submit claims for eligible expenses you paid between Sept. 1, 2023 and Aug. 31, 2024 by Dec. 31, 2024.	Submit claims for eligible expenses you paid between Sept. 1, 2023 and Nov. 15, 2024 by Dec. 31, 2024.



Serena Lopez

GBP participant Serena Lopez has helped many active employees and retirees understand which benefits options are right for them. For this mother of three, TexFlex makes sense.

“TexFlex allows me to put aside money tax-free for medical expenses and lowers my taxable income.”

“My kids seem to get sick like clockwork in November, just when I’m starting to make my holiday shopping list. That’s when I’m glad I have my TexFlex health care flexible spending account to pay for doctor visits and medicine. By setting aside a certain amount from my paycheck each month, I know the money will be there when I need it.”

State of Texas Retirement

As a state agency employee, you will contribute a portion of your salary each month to a State of Texas Retirement account that ERS manages and invests for you. Your contributions begin the month you start working for the state.

Note: The following information about the cash balance retirement benefit applies to the following State of Texas employees:

- Those starting their first job with a Texas agency on or after Sept. 1, 2022
- Those who worked for the state before, withdrew their State of Texas Retirement account and are returning to state employment on or after Sept. 1, 2022

If you were previously employed at a State of Texas agency, left state employment, but kept your money in your State of Texas Retirement account, your retirement benefit might be different than the benefit described below. For more information, see the “Retirement groups” information on page 33 and visit the ERS website at the URL provided there.

“Defined benefit” retirement with a lifetime monthly payment

Your State of Texas Retirement is a type of defined benefit retirement called a cash balance benefit. Defined benefit retirement plans are valuable benefits that few employers offer anymore. Defined benefit plans are different than 401(k)s and many other workplace retirement plans because they pay a lifetime benefit after retirement. If you do not withdraw your funds, when you become eligible to retire you will get a monthly payment (called an annuity) for the rest of your life—no matter how long you live or if your account runs out of money. (Plans like 401(k)s don’t provide a benefit after the account runs out of money.)

Employee contributions, guaranteed growth and the state’s match

In a defined benefit plan, employees must contribute a percentage of their salary (currently 6%) to the ERS retirement fund. Throughout your career, in addition to

your contributions, your State of Texas Retirement account will grow by at least 4% every year. Depending on the Trust Fund’s investment performance, your account could grow by an additional 3% (up to a total of 7%) each year, through a feature called gain-sharing. Your account will never earn less than 4% a year, even in years when investments don’t perform well. Until you retire with the state, your account will continue to grow 4% to 7% each year—even if you quit

working for the state and no longer contribute to the account, as long as you leave your account with ERS when you exit your state job.

When you’re eligible and ready to retire, the state will match your account’s entire balance—made up of your monthly 6% contributions while working for the state, the 4% annual interest earnings and any gain-sharing—by 150%. ERS will use the entire final balance, including the state’s 150% match, to calculate your lifetime monthly payment.

Mandatory participation

Employees sometimes ask if they can opt out of or contribute less to their State of Texas Retirement. The answer is no. Defined benefit plans are designed with the understanding that all employees will participate and contribute a set portion of their salary. An employee cannot take out loans against their account and cannot transfer or withdraw money from the ERS retirement fund while they are employed by the state.

Eligibility to retire

You will be eligible to retire with a lifetime annuity when you have at least five years of service with the state and:

- turn 65 years old

or

- meet the Rule of 80, when your age (in years and months) plus your state service (in years and months) equal 80.

If you are a part-time employee, a year of service counts the same as a year of service for a full-time employee.

Leaving state employment before retirement eligibility

If you leave state employment before you’re eligible to retire, you can keep your retirement contributions where they are or move them to another retirement account.

You can also withdraw the amount you contributed plus interest, minus taxes. You should consult a tax advisor to learn if you might face any tax penalty for withdrawing the funds before a certain age.

It’s important to remember that if you leave your account with ERS:

- it will continue to grow by 4% to 7% each year and
- if you have at least five years of service with the state, you can still get a lifetime annuity from ERS when you reach retirement eligibility, even if you’re not working for the state when you become eligible.

Different eligibility and benefits for different types of employees

Retirement eligibility and benefits are different for law enforcement and custodial officers, statewide elected state officials, legislators, district attorneys and judges. If you're one of these employees, you can find more information about your State of Texas Retirement, including annuity calculators, your minimum retirement age and retirement benefits, at <https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/State-of-Texas-Retirement>.

Health insurance in retirement

Texas Employees Group Benefits Program (GBP) retiree insurance is currently available to retirees with at least 10 years of service at a state agency or higher education institution participating in the GBP. A retiree who meets this requirement is eligible for GBP retiree health insurance benefits at age 65 or after meeting the Rule of 80. You meet the Rule of 80 when the sum of your age and service credit—in both months and years—equal or exceed 80. For retirees eligible for GBP health insurance, the amount the state pays toward their monthly premium varies depending on their years of service. For more information on health insurance in retirement, go to <https://ers.texas.gov/Retirees/Health-Benefits-for-retirees>.

As with all GBP benefits, health insurance for retirees is subject to change without notice. The Texas Legislature sets the level of funding for such benefits and has no continuing obligation to provide those benefits beyond each fiscal year.

State of Texas Disability Retirement for regular state employees, certified peace officers (CPOs) and custodial officers (COs)

If you become disabled, you may be eligible for retirement and insurance benefits sooner than your normal retirement age. The ERS Medical Board must certify that the disability is likely to be permanent and prevents you from continuing your state job or any other occupation offering comparable pay.

ERS has two retirement eligibility plans for disability: non-occupational and occupational. Occupational disability retirement applies to regular state employees, CPOs and COs who become injured or disabled due to a specific event occurring on the job, have at least one month of ERS or creditable state service, and meet certain other criteria.

(Occupational disability is possible for an injury or disability that is solely from an extremely dangerous risk or severe physical or mental trauma or disease uncommon to the public, or peculiar and inherent in a dangerous duty arising from the nature and in the course of the member's state employment.)

If ERS approves your disability retirement, you are eligible for:

- a monthly retirement payment based on your age at retirement and
- retiree health insurance through the GBP.



Retirement groups

Over the years, the Texas Legislature has changed retirement benefits and eligibility requirements based on when employees started working for the State of Texas. These changes led to the creation of four separate retirement groups, each with different eligibility requirements and annuity calculations.

.....
Group 1 started working for the state before Sept. 1, 2009.
.....

.....
Group 2 started working for the state between Sept. 1, 2009 and Aug. 31, 2013.
.....

.....
Group 3 started working for the state between Sept. 1, 2013 and Aug. 31, 2022.
.....

.....
Group 4 started working for the state on or after Sept. 1, 2022.
.....

Groups 1, 2 and 3 have a traditional defined benefit retirement, with a retiree's annuity based on their years of service and highest average salary. These members also contribute more to their retirement accounts than Group 4.

Group 4 has a cash balance benefit, with a retirement annuity based on the total account balance when the employee retires. The Group 4 retirement benefits paid for by the state are equitable with Group 3.

To learn more about the different retirement groups, go to <https://ers.texas.gov/PDFs/Retirement-Insurance-State-overview.pdf>.



.....
View a short video explaining your Group 4 retirement benefit.
.....

Service from other Texas retirement systems

The following Texas retirement systems are part of the Proportionate Retirement Program (PRP):

- City of Austin Retirement System
- City of Austin Police Retirement System
- El Paso City Employees' Pension Fund
- El Paso Firemen and Policemen's Pension Fund
- Employees Retirement System of Texas
- Judicial Retirement System of Texas Plan 1
- Judicial Retirement System of Texas Plan 2
- Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS)
- Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS)
- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)

As a state employee, you can combine service from two or more of these systems to become eligible for retirement. When you retire, you will receive a retirement payment from each system based on your service with each system. For example, if you have at least three years of ERS service credit, you can apply previous TRS service to become eligible for ERS retirement.

Learn more about the PRP by visiting [https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/Service-Credit-for-State-of-Texas-Retirement/Proportionate-Retirement-Program-\(PRP\)](https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/Service-Credit-for-State-of-Texas-Retirement/Proportionate-Retirement-Program-(PRP)).

Three income sources for a financially secure retirement

State employees contribute to the retirement fund while they work to earn a steady monthly benefit in retirement. However, this is only one part of a financially secure retirement. Both federal Social Security and personal savings are other important components of your retirement income security. Currently, the average state retiree's annuity is equal to only about half their working salary, and there is no assurance of regular cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). The cash balance benefit for future Group 4 retirees is expected to include regular annuity increases in retirement through gain sharing, but it is still important to think about opportunities for personal retirement savings. ERS offers options for personal retirement savings through the Texa\$averSM 401(k) / 457 Program. (See pages 35–36 for more information on Texa\$aver.)



Jo Ann Norman Continued income... and continued service

For nearly 17 years, GBP member Jo Ann Norman's day job was to guard the women serving time in the Crain Unit in Gatesville, the state women's prison. Even in retirement, Norman continues to watch over and support the women imprisoned at Gatesville, leading Friday evening prayer services as a volunteer prison minister.

Some 50 to 100 inmates attend services at one of four different Gatesville units every Friday night. Women of different ages and backgrounds gather in the prison prayer room for two hours of prayer and fellowship.

Her ministry has contributed to Norman's own sense of self-worth, and she tries to build the same self-confidence in the women in her care. "I try to instill in them that they need to build lives on their own."

In retirement, Norman has led an independent and active life. In addition to her ministry, she has provided sensitivity training for prison staff members who interact directly with Gatesville inmates. At home, she has driven her own John Deere tractor to mow the three acres of grass on her property. "Somebody forgot to tell me I'm supposed to be old!"

Norman says her ERS retirement annuity combined with Social Security have allowed her to live by herself and to avoid having to move in with her children. (She has four children, 10 or 11 grandchildren, and more great-grandchildren than she can keep track of.) She has also been able to provide financial help when a grandchild was diagnosed with cancer.

She herself has had knee surgery. The experience made her especially grateful for the health insurance and prescription drug coverage she receives as an ERS retiree. "I had one of the best knee surgeons in the state. The care I received was tremendous."

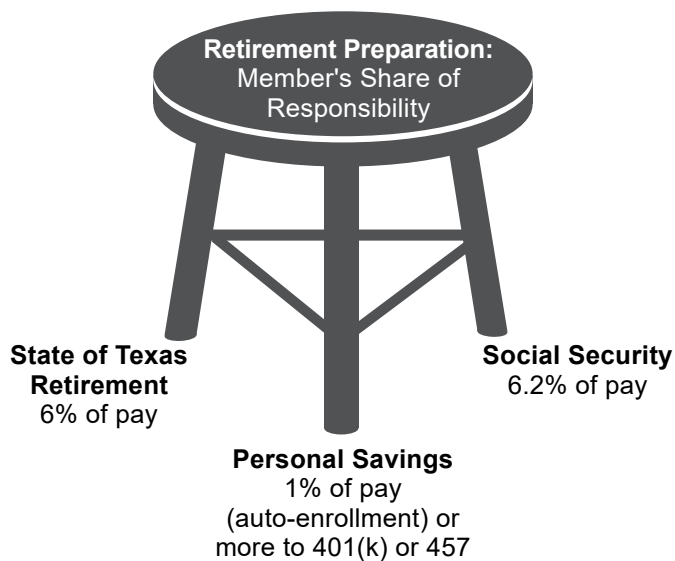
Norman acknowledges that, without the support of the ERS benefits she earned in her career, her rich and blessed life would not be possible.

Texa\$averSM 401(k) / 457 Program

TEXA\$AVERSM 401(k) / 457 Program Your monthly State of Texas Retirement annuity will be an important source of income during retirement, but it probably won't replace your full salary as an active employee. In fact, for most retirees, their annuity is about half the salary they earned while working. Even with Social Security, you probably will need another source of income to maintain financial security throughout retirement. That's why it's important for you to have other sources of retirement income, such as personal retirement savings.

The Texa\$aver 401(k) / 457 Program offers the chance to save for retirement through a variety of investment opportunities at lower-than-average fees.

As a new state agency employee, you will automatically be enrolled to contribute 1% of your monthly salary to a Texa\$aver 401(k). Your contributions will be deducted from your monthly paycheck before taxes and invested to help you save for a more secure retirement. The investment product (currently a target date fund that correlates with the date you reach traditional retirement age) is selected by the ERS Board of Trustees.



If you don't want to participate in the Texa\$aver program and don't want money taken out of your first paycheck, you can cancel your auto-enrollment by calling Empower Retirement toll-free at (800) 634-5091 within 30 days of employment and request a refund, which will process within 90 days.

You can increase your contribution if you would like to save more. You can make other changes, including enrolling in a 457 account, stopping contributions or changing how your contributions are invested. You can make these changes at any time during the year—you do not have to wait for an enrollment period or qualifying life event.

You can keep your Texa\$aver account even after you no longer work for the state, and the Texa\$aver program can help you manage your retirement income. Because the Texa\$aver program has lower fees than many other retirements savings plans, you could save money by keeping your Texa\$aver account.

Among the things you can do with your Texa\$aver account are:

- Purchase state service credit
- Defer unused annual leave when you leave state employment (instead of taking a cash payout, to reduce taxes)
- Consolidate and roll over money from other qualified IRAs or 401(k) or 457 accounts.
- Roll over a payment from your State of Texas Retirement account, if you opt for a partial lump-sum payment upon retirement
- Make periodic (monthly or quarterly) withdrawals*
- Make partial withdrawals*
- Withdraw your entire account at once.*

*Withdrawals from a traditional 401(k) before age 59½ may be subject to a 10% early distribution penalty tax, above what you will owe in income tax.



Are you a direct transfer from another state agency?

If so, you may participate in Texa\$aver, but you will have to enroll in the program on your own—your contribution is not automatically deducted from your paycheck.

What is a target date fund?

For many people, one of the hardest parts of saving for retirement is knowing how best to invest their individual account, like a TexaSaver 401(k) or 457 account. With a target date fund, you get a professionally managed portfolio in a single investment option, with a mix of investments that changes based on your “target” retirement date. The mix of investments (or asset allocation) grows more conservative as you approach the target date when you are expected to start withdrawing your money (generally assumed to be age 65). The principal value of the fund(s) is not guaranteed at any time, including at the time of the target date and/or withdrawal.

Beginning the first month of your employment, 1% of your paycheck will automatically be invested in an investment product selected by the ERS Board of Trustees. At the time of this publication, the 1% automatic investment is directed to a target date fund. You can change your TexaSaver investment option at any time, but keep in mind, a target date fund is intended to be diversified in a way that correlates with the date you reach traditional retirement age.

Note: Investing your account in multiple target date funds defeats the purpose of a target date fund. To learn more, click the Investing tab to visit the Investment Information page on the TexaSaver website (www.texasaver.com). A helpful TexaSaver Target Date Funds Explained video is also available at <https://empower.wistia.com/medias/hzuxpo59vg>.

Administrative fees for your TexaSaver account

Administrative fees for new TexaSaver accounts are waived for six months. At the end of the waiver period, a monthly fee will be deducted from your account. Fees are charged at \$1.50 per participant, per month and are assessed to the 401(k) and 457 plans separately.

Rolling over funds from other retirement accounts to TexaSaver

Do you have retirement savings accounts from other jobs? You can transfer—or “roll over”—money from a qualified prior eligible employer’s 401(k), 401(a), 403(b) or governmental 457 plan into your TexaSaver 401(k) or 457 account. You can also roll over money from an eligible individual retirement account (IRA). The TexaSaver 401(k) and 457 plans accept Roth rollovers from other qualified plans as well, but you cannot roll over Roth IRAs to the TexaSaver Program.

Consider all your options and their features and fees before moving money between accounts.

The example below shows how, depending on your age, a \$68 monthly contribution in a TexaSaver account until age 65 can potentially grow into a higher monthly payment to yourself in retirement.

Age at which you start contributing \$68 monthly	Gross monthly payment from age 65 to 85, assuming investments yield 6% rate of return
Age 30 (\$28,560 total investment)	\$694 (\$96,880 total savings + investment earnings)
Age 40 (\$20,400 total investment)	\$338 (\$47,124 total savings + investment earnings)
Age 50 (\$12,240 total investment)	\$142 (\$19,776 total savings + investment earnings)
Age 60 (\$4,080 total investment)	\$34 (\$4,744 total savings + investment earnings)

As an illustration only, this hypothetical scenario shows possible retirement income. Please note:

- It is not a projection or prediction of future investment results, nor is it intended as financial planning or investment advice.
- It assumes a 6% annual rate of return in both the accumulation and withdrawal phases.
- It assumes reinvestment of earnings and a payee lifespan of 20 years in retirement.
- Rates of return may vary.

Plan Year 2024 Rates

Monthly Premiums (Sept. 1, 2023 – Aug. 31, 2024)

Employees, retirees not eligible for Medicare, surviving dependents and COBRA

Full-time Employees and Retirees Not Eligible for Medicare

	Premium*	State Pays	You Pay
HealthSelect of Texas®			
You Only	\$ 624.82	\$ 624.82	\$ 0.00
You + Spouse	1,340.82	982.82	358.00
You + Children	1,104.22	864.52	239.70
You + Family	1,820.22	1,222.52	597.70
Consumer Directed HealthSelect^{SM**}			
You Only	624.82	\$ 624.82	\$ 0.00
You + Spouse	1,305.02	982.82	322.20
You + Children	1,080.24	864.52	215.72
You + Family	1,760.44	1,222.52	537.92

*Includes applicable premium for Basic Term Life Insurance

**The "State Pays" amount includes a monthly contribution to the member's Optum Bank health savings account (HSA). Please see the Consumer Directed HealthSelect HSA Contribution table below.

Part-time Employees and Retirees Not Eligible for Medicare, Graduate Students/Teaching Assistants, Post-doctoral and Adjunct Faculty†

	Premium*	State Pays	You Pay
HealthSelect of Texas®			
You Only	\$ 624.82	\$ 312.41	\$ 312.41
You + Spouse	1,340.82	491.41	849.41
You + Children	1,104.22	432.26	671.96
You + Family	1,820.22	611.26	1,208.96
Consumer Directed HealthSelect^{SM**}			
You Only	\$ 624.82	\$ 312.41	\$ 312.41
You + Spouse	1,305.02	491.41	813.61
You + Children	1,080.24	432.26	647.98
You + Family	1,760.44	611.26	1,149.18

*Includes applicable premium for Basic Term Life Insurance

**The "State Pays" amount includes a monthly contribution to the member's Optum Bank health savings account (HSA). Please see the Consumer Directed HealthSelect HSA Contribution table below.

†The state does not contribute to the cost of health insurance for adjunct faculty.

Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM Health Savings Account (HSA) Contribution

	State Pays
You Only	\$ 45 monthly (\$540 annually)
You + Spouse	90 monthly (\$1,080 annually)
You + Children	90 monthly (\$1,080 annually)
You + Family	90 monthly (\$1,080 annually)

An HSA is a tax-free savings account for qualified health expenses.

You can receive the "State Pays" HSA contribution if you are:

- enrolled in Consumer Directed HealthSelect,
- eligible for a portion of your health premium to be paid by the state and
- not eligible for Medicare.

Dental Insurance

DeltaCare® USA DHMO	You Pay	
You Only	\$	9.59
You + Spouse		19.18
You + Children		23.02
You + Family		32.59

State of Texas Dental Choice Plan SM	You Pay	
You Only	\$	28.73
You + Spouse		57.46
You + Children		68.95
You + Family		97.68

Vision Insurance

State of Texas Vision SM	You Pay	
You Only	\$	4.61
You + Spouse		9.22
You + Children		9.91
You + Family		14.52

Tobacco-user Premium

If you and/or a family member enrolled in medical insurance is certified as a tobacco-user, you will pay an additional tobacco-user premium of \$30, \$60 or \$90 each month, depending on how many tobacco-users or uncertified family members you cover.

Tobacco-users of Any Age and Adults age 18 and over Who Fail to Certify	Monthly Tobacco-user Premium
Member or Spouse or Children* Only	\$30
Member + Spouse or Member + Children* or Spouse + Children*	\$60
Family (Member + Spouse + Children*)	\$90

*The charge for a child is the same regardless of how many children in the household use tobacco or how many covered children age 18 or over are not certified.

If you are a tobacco-user, you may be able to participate in an alternative to the tobacco-user premium, if it is right for your health status and complies with your doctor's recommendations. Please visit www.ers.texas.gov/About-ERS/Policies/Tobacco-Policy-and-Certification for more information.

Optional Term Life Insurance

Optional Term Life Insurance					
Age	Election 1 Annual Salary x 1	Election 2 Annual Salary x 2	Election 3* Annual Salary x 3	Election 4** Annual Salary x 4	
Monthly Rate per \$1,000 of Annual Salary					
Under 25	\$ 0.05	\$ 0.10	\$ 0.15	\$ 0.20	
25 – 29	0.05	0.10	0.15	0.20	
30 – 34	0.06	0.12	0.18	0.24	
35 – 39	0.06	0.12	0.18	0.24	
40 – 44	0.08	0.16	0.24	0.32	
45 – 49	0.13	0.26	0.39	0.52	
50 – 54	0.20	0.40	0.60	0.80	
55 – 59	0.35	0.70	1.05	1.40	
60 – 64	0.60	1.20	1.80	2.40	
65 – 69	0.98	1.96	2.94	3.92	
70 – 74	1.56	3.12	4.68	6.24	
75 – 79	2.55	5.10	7.65	10.20	
80 – 84	4.15	8.30	12.45	16.60	
85 – 89	7.18	14.36	21.54	28.72	
90+	11.18	22.36	33.54	44.72	

After the first 31 days of employment, Elections 1 and 2 require approval through evidence of insurability (EOI).

Elections 3 and 4 always require EOI approval.

Beginning at age 70, Optional Term Life coverage is reduced to a percentage of your annual salary as follows:

Age 70 – 74	65%
Age 75 – 79	40%
Age 80 – 84	25%
Age 85 – 89	15%
Age 90+	10%

Retiree Fixed Optional Life Insurance (\$10,000 policy)
\$24.80 per month for \$10,000

Dependent Term Life Insurance	
Employee: \$1.45 per month for \$5,000 (includes \$5,000 AD&D coverage)	Retiree: \$3.23 per month for \$2,500

*Optional Term Life Insurance at Elections 3 and 4, AD&D, and short-term and long-term disability insurance are not available to retirees.

†Optional Term Life Insurance is limited to a maximum of \$400,000 or four times your annual salary, whichever is less.

Voluntary Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance*

You may enroll in AD&D coverage according to the following table:

Age	Minimum Coverage	Maximum Coverage	Minimum Increments
Under 70	\$ 10,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 5,000
70 – 74	6,500	130,000	3,250
75 – 79	4,000	80,000	2,000
80 – 84	2,500	50,000	1,250
85 – 89	1,500	30,000	750
90+	1,000	20,000	500

You Only

\$0.02 per \$1,000 of coverage

You + Family

\$0.04 per \$1,000 of coverage

Texas Income Protection PlanSM (TIPP)*

Short-term disability	Long-term disability
\$0.24 per \$100 of monthly salary	\$0.68 per \$100 of monthly salary

Learn more about your State of Texas benefits

ERS website: ers.texas.gov

The ERS website has information and tools to help you make the best use of your benefits. Use the Search function to find detailed information on ERS insurance, retirement and related benefits.

Monthly News About Your Benefits

This e-newsletter provides information on available programs, wellness, health plans and other benefits. You can sign up to get this every month and other news by email at service.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXERS/subscriber/new?topic_id=TXERS_45.

Your annual Statement of Retirement Benefits

After your birthday each year, ERS will send you a personalized statement that shows your earliest retirement date, retirement age and projected annuity. This statement provides important retirement planning information, including benefit estimates and vesting information. You should review it every year. If you are an ERS member, you can also get an estimate of your retirement annuity by signing in to your account at <https://ers.texas.gov/my-account-login>.

Your TexaSaver quarterly statement

You will get a statement each quarter from TexaSaver, currently administered by Empower Retirement, detailing your TexaSaver account balance and investment choices.

Your annual Personal Benefits Enrollment Statement

Before Summer Enrollment every year, ERS will send you a personalized statement listing your current coverage, costs and choices for the next plan year. You will have the opportunity to make changes each year during Summer Enrollment. You should review this statement even if you do not think you will make any changes.

Your benefits coordinator

See your agency's benefits coordinator or HR representative for help signing up for and understanding insurance benefits.

Presentations and events

ERS holds seminars, webinars, fairs and other events throughout the year.

- **Summer Enrollment fairs and webinars:** Every year during Summer Enrollment, ERS and our GBP program administrators offer webinars and travel around the state to inform employees and pre-Medicare retirees about any benefits changes for the upcoming plan year. We also share ways you can get the most from your GBP benefits.
- **Ready, Set, Retire!:** Conducted throughout the state and as a webinar, this is a free 90-minute seminar on ERS retirement and the TexaSaver 401(k) / 457 Program.
- **Medicare Preparation:** Conducted throughout the state and as a webinar, this presentation helps those approaching Medicare eligibility understand enrollment and how Medicare works with state health insurance.
- **Health and wellness:** ERS hosts wellness events and webinars that provide you with the tools you need to take charge of your health.

To see a list of upcoming events or to register, go to <https://ers.texas.gov/Event-Calendars/>.

Contacting ERS after hours

For 24/7 access to automated information on your insurance and retirement benefits, call toll free (877) 275-4377.

Designate your beneficiaries

It's not required within your first month, but it's a good idea to designate your beneficiaries for life insurance, your State of Texas Retirement account balance and TexaSaver account as soon as you can.

- For life insurance and State of Texas Retirement, log in to your ERS OnLine account. You will need to provide your beneficiaries' Social Security numbers, dates of birth and mailing addresses.
- For TexaSaver, download a beneficiary designation form from the website at texasaver.empower-retirement.com/.

You can find instructions on how to designate your beneficiaries for each type of account at <https://ers.texas.gov/Contact-ERS/Additional-Resources/Update-Your-Beneficiaries>.

Tips for saving money in HealthSelect plans

Making the best use of your HealthSelect benefits might require a little extra effort. Learn about your coverage, confirm that all providers are in the network, get referrals when needed and opt for lower-cost drugs and providers when appropriate. Taking those extra steps will help you save money—sometimes a lot of money— and avoid surprise bills, while getting high-quality care.

Get care from an in-network provider

In-network providers have a contract to provide care at a lower rate negotiated by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX), the third-party administrator of the HealthSelect plans. So, they typically cost you less than an out-of-network provider. BCBSTX also makes sure they have the credentials to provide appropriate, high-quality care.

Out-of-network providers do not have a contract with BCBSTX to accept the lower amount. If you see an out-of-network provider, you may be responsible for the difference between what the plan usually pays (the allowable amount) and what the provider charges, as well as any applicable out-of-network deductibles, coinsurance and copays.

Call BCBSTX or visit healthselectoftexas.com and click on "Find a Doctor/Hospital" to find in-network providers in your health plan. Call OptumRx or visit healthselectrx.com to find in-network pharmacies.

Consider a Virtual Visit when appropriate—for both medical and mental health.

Mental health Virtual Visits through Doctor on Demand[®] and MDLIVE[®] are covered at 100% if you are enrolled in HealthSelect of Texas, HealthSelectSM Out-of-State or HealthSelectSM Secondary. If you are enrolled in Consumer Directed HealthSelect, you must meet your annual deductible. After you meet your deductible, you will pay 20% coinsurance. Virtual Visits are more convenient—letting you consult with a Board-certified doctor or mental health professional via smartphone, tablet or computer from home or anywhere you have internet access. Learn more at healthselect.bcbstx.com/content/medical-benefits/virtual-visits.

In HealthSelect of Texas, choose a PCP and get referrals when needed.

If you are in HealthSelect of Texas, you need to designate a primary care provider (PCP) on file with BCBSTX and make sure you have your PCP's referral on file with BCBSTX before you see most specialists. Otherwise, your specialist visit will be considered out of network, even if the specialist is in the HealthSelect network. You can verify that a referral is in place by calling BCBSTX or logging in to your Blue Access for Members Account at healthselectoftexas.com. (Some specialist visits don't require referrals. Find out which on the HealthSelect website or by calling BCBSTX.)

Use the Provider Finder tool.

You can estimate health costs and compare costs for different providers. Log in to your Blue Access for Members account and click the "Doctors & Hospitals" tab at the top of the screen. Select "Find a Doctor or Hospital" and use "Provider Finder" to estimate health costs with different in-network providers. With Provider Finder, you'll be able to:

- compare costs for in-network providers and procedures,
- compare quality ratings for those providers,
- estimate out-of-pocket costs,
- consider your treatment options and
- save money and make the best use of your health care benefits.

Compare costs before you go

You can find the lowest-cost in-network providers for a number of procedures and services in your area:

1. Log in to your Blue Access for Members account at healthselectoftexas.com.
2. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the Cost Estimator.
3. Input the requested information to compare the costs of care with different in-network providers.

You can also save money on prescriptions by logging in to your OptumRx account at healthselectrx.com and using the **Drug Pricing Tool** to compare a drug's cost across in-network pharmacies, or learn what you could save by using the mail-order pharmacy.

Participate in HealthSelectShoppERSSM.



You may earn rewards when you choose to save with HealthSelectShoppERS on certain medical services. HealthSelectShoppERS is a health care shopping and savings program available to benefits-eligible active employees enrolled in HealthSelect of Texas[®], HealthSelectSM Out-of-State or Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM. Retirees, Medicare primary participants, COBRA members and HealthSelectSM Secondary participants are not eligible for the HealthSelectShoppERS program.

HealthSelectShoppERS can help you:

- Compare costs for many health care procedures
- Estimate out-of-pocket costs
- Earn rewards for certain medical services and procedures by shopping for care and choosing lower cost providers
- Save money and get the most value from your health care benefits

How does the HealthSelectShoppERS program work?

After your primary care provider (PCP) or specialist recommends a HealthSelectShoppERS-eligible medical procedure or service, you:

1. Log in to Blue Access for Members at healthselectoftexas.com, click the “Doctors and Hospitals” tab, and then the “Find a Doctor or Hospital” link.
2. In Provider Finder, select “Browse by Category” and type in the name of your procedure to search.
3. From the list of health care providers (facilities) that perform the procedure, follow the prompts to select a lower-cost, quality provider that qualifies for a HealthSelectShoppERS reward.
4. Have your medical service or procedure completed at the HealthSelectShoppERS-eligible facility.
Note: A referral or prior authorization may be required for your procedure. If you have questions about referrals or prior authorizations, call a BCBSTX Personal Health Assistant toll-free at (800) 252-8039, Monday–Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Saturday 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. CT.
5. When your medical service or procedure is complete, your provider will submit the claim to BCBSTX for processing. Once BCBSTX processes the claim and as long as you are still eligible, ERS will deposit your reward into your TexFlex health care flexible spending account (FSA) or limited-purpose FSA. If you do not have a TexFlex health care or limited-purpose FSA before you earn a reward, ERS will open one for you.

You can earn up to \$500 in rewards, total per family, each plan year. For more information, please see the HealthSelectShoppERS Frequently Asked Questions at healthselectoftexas.com.

Confirm network status and costs for doctor visits, lab work, radiology and other services.

- If your doctor orders lab work or imaging, confirm that the lab or imaging center is in your HealthSelect network by calling BCBSTX or visiting the Find a Doctor/Hospital page of healthselectoftexas.com.
- Find out how much you might owe for a test before you agree to it.

Confirm network status for facilities, surgery centers and emergency rooms.

- If possible, confirm in advance if the facility, surgery center or emergency room is in your health plan’s network. Most freestanding emergency rooms not affiliated with a hospital are not in the HealthSelect network.
- Use Provider Finder to locate in-network emergency room(s) and urgent care facilities closest to your home, work and other places where you spend a lot of time—before you need urgent or emergency care.
- If possible, confirm that all providers involved in your care are in the HealthSelect network. This includes providers of these types of services: anesthesia, pathology, radiology, surgery and surgical assistants. The Where to Go for Care handout at <https://healthselect.bcbstx.com/pdf/where-to-go-for-care.pdf> provides details on how much out-of-pocket costs can vary by provider.
- If you have an actual medical emergency, call an ambulance or go to the nearest emergency room.

For more tips on using your health care dollars wisely and avoiding unexpected health care costs, visit ers.texas.gov/ **Avoiding-Unexpected-Health-Costs**.

Know your benefits

Call a BCBSTX Personal Health Assistant toll-free at (800) 252-8039, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Saturday 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. CT.

BCBSTX Personal Health Assistants are here to help you understand and use your HealthSelect benefits. They can:

- answer questions about benefits,
- assist with prior authorizations and referrals,
- provide information about programs and benefits available to you,
- help you locate an in-network provider,
- explain health care costs and options for care,
- provide you with cost estimates for services,
- schedule or cancel doctor's appointments,
- help you use self-service tools and connect you to other resources.

You can also visit healthselectoftexas.com to find out more about your HealthSelect benefits, locate an in-network provider, view claims and explanations of benefits (EOBs), and more!

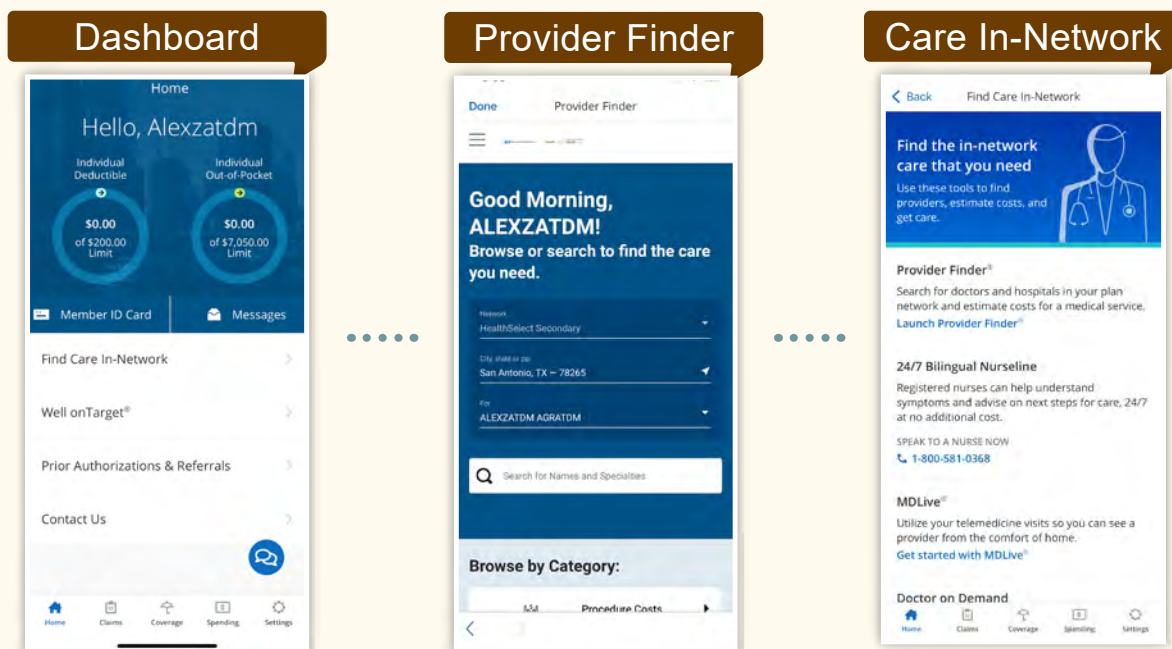


Use emergency rooms for emergencies only

Did you know that going to an emergency room can cost you more than five times as much as going to urgent care? Did you also know that it can cost the plan 10 times more, sometimes higher? A procedure that costs your health plan \$100 in an urgent care facility can cost more than \$1,000 at an emergency room. Why should you care? When costs for the plan increase, premiums increase. Help keep costs low. If you have a primary care provider, you can often schedule an office visit the same day. Urgent care centers have extended hours for whenever the unexpected occurs. Save money, and save the emergency room visit for life-threatening illnesses and accidents.

Keep plan information handy with the BCBSTX mobile app

Download the mobile app by texting BCBSTXAPP to the phone number 33633



Understanding insurance terms

Balance billing	When a patient owes an out-of-network provider for the difference between amount billed by their provider and the amount paid by the plan, after the GBP member pays any applicable deductibles, copays and/or coinsurance. You cannot be balance billed by an in-network provider.
Copay	A fixed amount you pay for a covered health service, usually at the time you receive the service. For example, HealthSelect of Texas has a \$25 copay per visit to your in-network primary care provider (PCP) for non-preventive care. If you see your PCP for a sore throat, you will pay \$25 before you leave the doctor's office.
Coinsurance	A percentage of the allowable amount for a covered service or product that you are required to pay for covered health care and prescription drug services.
Deductible	The amount you are required to pay for covered health care or prescription drug expenses before your plan begins to pay for any services (except in-network preventive care) each year. If you have a \$50 prescription drug deductible, for example, you must pay the full cost of the \$50 drug deductible of covered prescription drugs. Deductibles for the HealthSelect plans reset on Jan. 1.
Total out-of-pocket maximum	The maximum amount you and your covered dependents must pay for in-network copays, coinsurance and deductibles within a year. These maximums help protect you from catastrophic health costs. All health plans have the same total out-of-pocket maximums for covered in-network health and prescription drug costs. The total out-of-pocket maximums reset on Jan. 1 for the HealthSelect plans.
Out-of-pocket coinsurance maximum	The most you are required to pay each year for coinsurance for covered health services. This amount does not include copays. The out-of-pocket coinsurance maximum resets on January 1 for the HealthSelect plans.
Evidence of insurability (EOI)	Proof of good health, established during an application process for certain types of insurance, such as life and disability insurance. During the process, you provide information about your health.
Monthly premiums	The cost you pay monthly for health care coverage.
Plan year	For GBP plans, the plan year is Sept. 1 through Aug.31. However, certain aspects of some of the plans are based on the calendar year (Jan. 1 – Dec.31).
Third-party administrator (TPA)	The company contracted by ERS to manage certain aspects of many of our benefit plans. For example, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is the TPA for the HealthSelect of Texas and Consumer Directed HealthSelect medical plans. As such, it manages the provider network, processes claims (ERS pays the claims) and provides customer service. By contracting with TPAs, ERS saves money in administrative costs.

Benefits quick links

The valuable benefits available to you as a state employee are intended to help you care for yourself and your family as you provide vital services to the people of Texas. Health coverage and the retirement plan are competitive with benefits offered by other government and private-sector employers. Optional benefits, such as dental and vision insurance, and the Texa\$averSM 401(k) / 457 Program, are funded entirely by participating members. ERS oversees the benefits and contracts with third-party administrators (TPAs) who help manage some aspects of our programs. TPAs help keep administrative costs low to ensure the best value for our members.

Use the following quick links to find details about coverage, eligibility, saving for retirement, wellness, events and other ERS resources. Benefits coordinators or the Human Resources team at your agency can also answer questions and offer guidance.



Benefits at a Glance

<https://ers.texas.gov/benefits-at-a-glance>



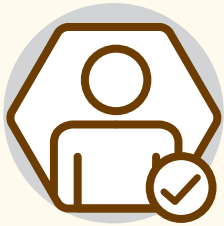
New Employee Benefits

<https://ers.texas.gov/new-employee>



Health Insurance

<https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Health-Benefits>



Eligibility

<https://ers.texas.gov/Benefits-at-a-Glance/GBP-Eligibility>



Retirement

<https://ers.texas.gov/Benefits-at-a-Glance/Retirement>



Texa\$aver

<https://ers.texas.gov/Active-Employees/Retirement/Benefits-of-Texa%24aver-Program>



Optional Benefits

<https://ers.texas.gov/Benefits-at-a-Glance/Optional-Add-on-Benefits>



Wellness Programs

<https://ers.texas.gov/Wellness-Resources-en/Wellness-Active>



ERS Events

<https://ers.texas.gov/Event-Calendars>

Notice of creditable coverage: Plan year 2024

This notice applies to you if you are both:

- entitled to Medicare Part A and/or enrolled in Medicare Part B and
- enrolled in Texas Employees Group Benefits Program health insurance.

Important notice from the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) about your Texas Employees Group Benefits Program (GBP) prescription drug coverage and Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (sometimes called Part D).

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. No action is required of you at this time.

Federal law requires ERS to send this notice to people who may be eligible for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and are enrolled in health insurance that is part of the GBP provided by the State of Texas. You have GBP prescription drug coverage through your enrollment in one of the GBP health plans.

This notice provides:

- important information about your current prescription drug coverage,
- answers that will assist you in deciding whether you should purchase Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage,
- contact numbers for more information and
- a document that you can use later to avoid a penalty for late enrollment in Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage.

Q. What is Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage (sometimes called Part D)?

A. Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage is a prescription program that is available to people who qualify for Medicare Part A or Medicare Part B. Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage started on January 1, 2006.

Q. What is creditable coverage and does GBP coverage meet this definition?

A. The prescription drug coverage offered by the GBP has been examined by ERS' consulting actuaries and is, on average for all plan participants, expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage pays. The GBP is therefore considered to be creditable coverage.

Q. Why is creditable coverage important to Medicare-eligible participants in the GBP?

A. Because you have creditable coverage under the GBP, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has said that you will not have to pay a penalty if you join a private Medicare prescription drug plan later. Each year, there is an enrollment period that allows people with Medicare to enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. Although you will have a chance to enroll every year, normally you would have to pay a penalty if you enrolled after your initial eligibility date. However, because you have creditable coverage under the GBP, you can choose to join a private Medicare prescription drug plan later without a penalty.

Q. Should I enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage?

A. Most Medicare-eligible participants in the GBP should NOT enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage because, for most people, the GBP prescription drug coverage will provide better benefits at a lower cost. If you qualify for financial assistance, you could benefit from private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and you would get savings on premiums, copays and coinsurance.

Q. How do I know if I qualify for financial assistance with private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage?

A. Financial assistance is available to Medicare beneficiaries with incomes up to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and limited resources. The FPL is set each year. ERS does not make this determination or set the guidelines. To determine if you qualify for financial assistance with private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage, you should contact the SSA toll-free at (800) 772-1213. TTY users should call toll-free at (800) 325-0778. Or visit SSA online at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Q. Is private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage free?

A. No. If you enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage, you will pay a monthly premium. The amount will likely increase each year. You will also have to pay the private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage deductibles and copays. Currently, the deductible may be as high as \$505, and will increase to \$545 in 2024.

Q. How does private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage work?

A. Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage is offered through private prescription drug plans that have been approved by Medicare. All private Medicare prescription drug plans offer a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans might also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium. If you enroll in a private Medicare prescription drug plan, you will receive a prescription drug card that you will present to your pharmacy to cover a portion of your prescription drug costs.

Q. Will private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage have any effect on my medical plan under the GBP?

A. Yes, if the private Medicare Prescription Drug plan also includes Medicare Advantage medical coverage. Medicare rules do not allow you to be enrolled in a GBP Medicare Advantage plan (HealthSelectSM Medicare Advantage) and a private Medicare Prescription Drug plan that includes Medicare Advantage medical coverage at the same time. If you enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and it has a Medicare Advantage medical plan included, your medical coverage with the HealthSelect Medicare Advantage plan will be terminated and you will be automatically enrolled in your previous non-Medicare Advantage plan under the GBP. If you are enrolled in a non-Medicare GBP medical plan, there is no change to your medical coverage.

If you enroll in ERS' HealthSelect Medicare Advantage, and do not decline ERS' HealthSelectSM Medicare Rx prescription drug coverage, your private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage will be terminated.

NOTE: You may receive this notice at other times in the future, such as before the next period you can enroll in Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage or if this coverage changes. You may also request a copy of this notice by calling ERS toll-free at (877) 275-4377.

Q. Will private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage have any effect on HealthSelect Medicare Rx?

A. Yes. Medicare rules do not allow you to be in two different Medicare prescription drug plans at the same time. If you enroll in a private Medicare prescription drug plan you will no longer be eligible for the HealthSelect Medicare Rx plan and will lose all prescription drug coverage through ERS.

Q. Most GBP participants were encouraged not to enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage last year. What about future years?

A. You do not need to sign up for private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage for the coming plan year. However, you should know that if you drop or lose your coverage under the GBP and do not enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage within 63 days after your current GBP coverage ends, you may be required to pay more to enroll in private Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage later.

Q. Where can I get more information?

A. More detailed information about private Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is available in the *Medicare & You* handbook. You may have received a copy of the handbook in the mail from Medicare. The handbook is also available at the website below. You may also be contacted directly by approved, private Medicare prescription drug plans. To get more information about private Medicare prescription drug plans:

- Visit www.medicare.gov for personalized help.
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program. (See your copy of the *Medicare & You* handbook for their telephone number.)
- Call toll-free at (800) MEDICARE (800) 633-4227. TTY users should call (877) 486-2048.

Keep this notice. If you enroll in one of the Medicare-approved prescription drug plans at a later date, you may need to submit a copy of this notice when you join to show that you are not required to pay a higher premium amount.

Contact information

Health Insurance

Plan	Administrator	Phone number	Website
HealthSelect of Texas[®] HealthSelectSM Out-of-State Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM	Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas Group number – 2380000	Toll-free: (800) 252-8039 (TTY: 711) Nurseline: (800) 581-0368	www.healthselectoftexas.com
HealthSelect Prescription Drug Program	Optum Rx NOTE: The administrator changes to Express Scripts on Jan. 1, 2024. More information will be provided in fall 2023.	Toll-free: (855) 828-9834 (TTY: 711)	www.HealthSelectRx.com
Consumer Directed HealthSelect health savings accounts (HSAs)	Optum Bank	Toll-free: (800) 791-9361 (TTY: 711)	www.optumbank.com

Dental Insurance

Plan	Administrator	Phone number	Website
State of Texas Dental Choice PlanSM PPO	Delta Dental Group number – 20020	Toll-free: (888) 818-7925	www.ERSdentalplans.com
DeltaCare[®] USA DHMO	Delta Dental Group number – 70140		

Vision Insurance

Plan	Administrator	Phone number	Website
State of Texas VisionSM	EyeMed Vision Care, LLC Group number – 1050072	Toll-free: (844) 949-2170 (TTY: 711)	www.StateofTexasVision.com

Life and accidental death & dismemberment insurance

Plan	Administrator	Phone number	Website
Basic Term Life and AD&D Insurance Optional Term Life Insurance Dependent Term Life Insurance Voluntary AD&D Insurance	Securian Financial Group, Inc.	Toll-free: (877) 494-1716 (TTY: 711)	www.lifebenefits.com/plandesign/ers

Short-term and long-term disability insurance

Plan	Administrator	Phone number	Website
Texas Income Protection PlanSM (TIPP)	Alight, Inc. (formerly Reed Group Management, LLC) Evidence of Insurability underwritten by Guardian Life Insurance	Toll-free: (855) 604-6230 (TTY: 711) EOI underwriting questions: Requested_Information@glic.com	www.texasincomeprotectionplan.com

Other programs

Plan	Administrator	Phone number	Website
TexFlexSM	Payflex [®] Systems, Inc.	Toll-free: (866) 353-9839 (TTY: 711)	www.texflexers.com
TexaSaverSM 401(k) / 457 Program	Empower Retirement	Toll-free: (800) 634-5091 (TTY: (800) 766-4952)	www.texasaver.com
Dependent eligibility verification	Alight Solutions	Toll-free: (800) 987-6605 (TTY: 711)	www.yourdependentverification.com/plan-smart-info
Discount Purchase Program	Beneplace	Toll-free: (800) 683-2886 (TTY: 711) Local: (512) 346-3300	www.Beneplace.com/DiscountProgramERS

Health and Human Services Enterprise Employees: DADS, DFPS, DSHS, HHSC, CPRIT

The HHS Employee Service Center acts as your benefits coordinator. Contact the Center toll-free at (888) 894-4747.

The Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. ERS provides free language aids and services, such as written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, and other formats), qualified interpreters and written information in other languages.

If you need these services, call: 1-877-275-4377 (TDD: 711).

If you believe that ERS has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, you can file a grievance by mail, fax or email:

Mail: Section 1557 Coordinator, Employees Retirement System of Texas

P.O. Box 13207, Austin, TX 78711

Fax: 512-867-3480.

Email: 1557coordinator@ers.texas.gov

For more information visit: www.ers.texas.gov

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services online, by mail or by email:

Online: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

Mail: Centralized Case Management Operations, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201.

Email: OCRComplaint@hhs.gov

Please visit <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/filing-a-complaint/index.html> for details.

ATTENTION: Language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you.	ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística.
CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn.	ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं।
注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。	توجه: اگر بہ زبان فارسی گفتگو می کنید، تسهیلات زبانی بصورت رایگان برای شما فراهم می باشد.
주의: 한국어를 사용하지는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다.	ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung.
ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اذكر اللغة، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوفر لك بالمجان.	સુચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે.
خبردار: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔	ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода.
PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad.	注意事項：日本語を話される場合、無料の言語支援をご利用いただけます。
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