

Health Care Flexible Spending Account Carryover Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Health Care Flexible Spending Account carryover?

An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) change to the Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSAs) modifies the “Use-It-or-Lose-It” rule and allows participating active employees to carry over up to \$500 in unused funds from one year to the next. The District allows HCFSAs participants to carry over up to \$500 of unused funds from the previous year into the next plan year. This means that if you were enrolled in a 2017 HCFSAs, you may be eligible to carry over up to \$500 of unused funds from 2017 (after the March 31 run-out period).

Does the carryover affect how much money I can put in my Health Care Flexible Spending Account?

No. The carryover will not count toward the annual contribution limit of \$2,650; it is in addition. You may still choose to contribute up to \$2,650 during Open Enrollment for the new plan year even if you carry over \$500 from the previous year. Therefore, \$3,150 is the HCFSAs annual maximum allowed balance.

Who is eligible to receive the carryover funds?

You are automatically eligible to receive the carryover funds as long as you are an active employee and eligible to participate in the HCFSAs on the day the funds are carried over to the new plan year’s HCFSAs. If eligible, carryover funds will be credited to your HCFSAs in late April (after the March 31 run-out period). If you terminate employment or are not eligible to participate in the HCFSAs, normal termination rules will be applied and any carryover balance may be forfeited. The rollover amount will be sent to the new FSA provider, Benefit Resource, Inc. (BRI) and added to your account. It will be available for use by May 2018.

***Example:** You are an active, benefits-eligible employee. On March 1, your job changed and you are scheduled to work less than 50% time. If you work less than 50% time you are not a benefits-eligible employee. As a result, you will not receive the carryover funds in late April. Instead, any monies (including carryover funds) left in your HCFSAs from the prior year will be forfeited.*

How does the \$500 carryover work?

Employees have until December 31 to incur eligible expenses for reimbursement from their HCFSAs. The last day to submit a claim for reimbursement is March 31 of the next calendar year, referred to as the “run-out period.” Up to \$500 of the unused balance left in the previous year’s HCFSAs may be carried over after all disbursements are final and the run-out-period has ended. The funds will be credited to your account in late April and be available for use by May 1.

When will the carryover funds be in my Health Care Flexible Spending Account?

The carryover balance will be determined after the run-out period from the previous year has closed and all outstanding claims for the FSA plan year have been processed and paid. Once all claims have been disbursed, the final balance will be determined. March 31 is the last day of the run-out period for the previous FSA plan year, so any carryover balance will be available in the new HCFSAs by mid-April. The unused balance of \$500 or less will carry over to the new plan year’s HCFSAs and added to your Available Balance.

***Example:** You contributed the maximum of \$2,600 to your HCFSAs in 2017, but you only claimed \$1,800 of eligible expenses by December 31, 2017. You have until March 31, 2018 to submit eligible receipts dated on or before December 31, 2017 for reimbursement of the remaining \$800 of eligible claims. If you don’t claim the remaining \$800 unused balance, only \$500 may be carried over in late April 2017. The extra \$300 balance will be forfeited.*

After late April, you can log on to BRI’s website to view your FSA account information and the carryover balance. The carryover balance will be added to your Available Balance. The amount in your Available Balance is what you will be reimbursed from. If you are an active employee and you are eligible to participate in the HCFSAs at the time the funds are carried over, a new HCFSAs will be automatically created for you and you will be able to access and track your carryover funds balance by logging on to BRI’s website and viewing your account. You do not have to re-enroll in an HCFSAs during Open Enrollment. Your HCFSAs annual election will be \$0; however, the Carryover field and Available Balance will be populated with the carryover amount.

Can I carry over my unused Health Care Flexible Spending Account dollars from year-to-year?

Yes, you may carry over up to \$500 of unused funds in your HCFSAs from year to year as long as you are an active employee and eligible to participate in the FSA plan. However, you cannot carry over the same \$500 of unused funds from 2017 into the 2019 plan year. You have one year to use the unused HCFSAs funds.

Does the Dependent Care FSA include a carry over?

No. IRS rules do not allow you to carry over Dependent Care FSA funds.

What if I have more than \$500 in my Health Care Flexible Spending Account at the end of the run-out period?

The IRS “Use-It-or-Lose-It” rule applies. To avoid forfeiting any monies, it is important to spend down your account by December 31. After the end of the run-out period, you lose any money left in your HCFSAs that is more than the maximum carryover limit of \$500. The forfeited funds will not be returned to you or transferred to another account — this follows current IRS rules.

Example: You have an \$850 unused balance from the 2017 HCFSAs plan year (after the March 31, 2018 run-out deadline), but only \$500 of the remaining \$850 will carry over in late April 2018 and be available by May 2018. The remaining \$350 will be forfeited.

What if I enroll in the Aetna Consumer High-Deductible Health Plan with a Health Savings Account?

If you enroll in the Aetna Consumer High-Deductible Health Plan (CDHP) with the Health Savings Account (HSA), you are not eligible to have an HCFSAs. If you are currently enrolled in an HCFSAs and decide to enroll in the Aetna CDHP with an HSA during Open Enrollment for the upcoming year, you must spend down your HCFSAs balance to zero by December 31. IRS rules do not allow employees to have an active Health Care FSA and HSA at the same time. As a result, you can choose to either spend down your remaining HCFSAs funds before December 31 or forfeit your balance, which would include the carryover balance.

Which monies will be used first — the new plan-year amount or the carryover amount from the previous year?

If you incur expenses before the carryover funds are credited to your account, you will use your annual election for the new plan year before being reimbursed for any claims from the carryover funds from the previous plan year.

Please Note: Carryover funds will not be credited to your account until late April. If you have expenses in the early part of the year, those expenses may be reimbursed from your new annual election. Once the carryover amount is credited to your account, the carryover funds will appear in the Carryover field when you log into BRI’s website. The carryover amount will also be added to your Available Balance in May 2018, so you may see the total funds that will be available to you for the rest of the plan year.

Example: You elected to contribute \$1,000 to an HCFSAs during Open Enrollment. In January, you incur medical expenses in the amount of \$780. Because the carryover funds will not be available until May, you will be reimbursed \$780 from your \$1,000 annual amount. You will still have \$220 remaining in your Available Funds. As of May 2018, you had \$400 from the previous year that you have not used. The \$400 is the carryover balance and will be added to the \$220 that remains from the new annual election. The carryover funds and the leftover balance are blended and show as the Available Balance in the amount of \$620. You will need to re-submit a claim for any unreimbursed amount after your carryover funds are credited to your FSA account. You may also use your debit card to access Available Balance, including any carryover funds, when they become available.

What happens to my carryover funds if I leave the District or am no longer eligible for the Health Care Flexible Spending Account plan?

If you terminate employment, termination rules will be applied to the HCFSAs. If applicable, you will be offered COBRA to continue your HCFSAs. This will be determined at the time of termination. COBRA allows you the opportunity to continue participating in a benefit in which you were actively enrolled immediately before you terminated your employment, such as medical, dental, vision and flexible spending accounts. In addition to having been enrolled, you can only continue an HCFSAs through COBRA if your current year-to-date contribution amount exceeds your year-to-date reimbursements from your HCFSAs. If you have contributed less than what you have already been reimbursed through your HCFSAs, then COBRA will not be available to you.

Whether you enroll in COBRA, you can submit claims for eligible expenses through the March 31 run-out period, as long as the service date(s) of the expense is on or before the end of the month in which you terminate. If carryover funds have already been credited to your Available Balance before you terminate, then the Available Balance is the amount that would be reimbursable against eligible expenses. If carryover funds have not been credited before your termination date, then the carryover funds will only be available if you are eligible to enroll in and pay for COBRA.

Example 1: You terminate in November 2017 If applicable, you may be offered COBRA to continue your HCFSAs. If you elect COBRA and make contributions through the end of the year, claims must be submitted by March 31. If there is a remaining balance of \$500 or less left in your HCFSAs by March 31, the balance is carried over to a new 2018 HCFSAs account. You may continue to use the funds until they are exhausted or until the COBRA period is exhausted, whichever comes first.

Example 2: You terminate in 2018 before late April If you enrolled in an HCFSAs in 2017 and also enroll in an HCFSAs for \$800 in 2018. You have until March 31 to claim reimbursement for any expenses incurred through 2017. If you terminate before late April, then you must incur expenses through the end of the month in which you terminate. Otherwise, if COBRA is offered, you can continue to participate in your HCFSAs.

Please Note: For you to be eligible for the carryover, you must be offered COBRA and elect COBRA to remain active in the 2016 HCFSAs. If you are active and contributing to COBRA when the carryover is determined, any carryover balance of \$500 or less will be added to your 2018 Available Balance. As long as you remain active through COBRA, you will have access to the Available Balance. If you terminate COBRA, any balance will be forfeited.

Example 3: You terminate in 2018 after late-April You enroll in the 2018 HCFSAs for \$1,500. In addition, you have a carryover balance from 2017 in the amount of \$200, which was added to your 2018 HCFSAs Available Balance for a total of \$1,700. Your termination date is July 31, 2018. If the Available Balance at the time of your termination is \$1,000, in order for COBRA to be offered, your year-to-date Health Care FSA contributions must be higher than the year-to-date amount that has already been reimbursed. Your HCFSAs contributions to date equal \$875; total reimbursements are \$500. Because the year-to-date amount contributed is higher than the total year-to-date reimbursements, COBRA would be offered. You would need to elect and pay your COBRA contributions to keep the HCFSAs active. If you terminate COBRA, any balance will be forfeited. If you had the carryover balance of \$200 added to a 2018 HCFSAs, but did not enroll in an HCFSAs for 2017, COBRA would not be offered and the carryover balance would not be available after your termination date of July 31, 2018.