FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Domestic Partner Coverage

ENROLLMENT

What do I need to do to enroll my domestic partner in my medical, dental, and/or vision benefits?

Register your partnership with a municipality offering formal registration of domestic partnerships. Boston and Cambridge are two municipalities that register domestic partnerships without residency requirements.

Contact Harvard University Benefits to request an enrollment packet. You will have 30 days from the date of the qualifying event (registration of domestic partnership, birth of a child, etc.) to complete the online enrollment and submit the supporting documentation. Changes to your coverage will be retroactive to the date of the qualifying event and you will be charged retroactive premiums.

IMPUTED INCOME and TAXES

What is imputed income and how will it affect my pay?

Federal tax law considers the fair market value of coverage for non-qualified dependents as imputed income. IRS guidelines consider imputed income part of an employee’s taxable wages.

What are the tax implications of covering a Domestic Partner?

If you are covering one or more dependent children who all qualify as tax dependents as defined by the IRS, and/or a non-qualified domestic partner, you will be taxed on the fair market value of the cost of the individual coverage, and the individual plan premium will be deducted on an after-tax basis (the balance of the premium will be deducted on a pre-tax basis).

If you are covering any children who do not qualify as tax dependents as defined by the IRS and a non-qualified domestic partner, you will be taxed on fair market value of the cost of the family coverage minus the cost of the individual coverage and the individual premium will be deducted on a pre-tax basis (the balance of the premium will be deducted on a post-tax basis).

If you are covering only qualified tax dependents (including your domestic partner) the IRS rules permit the cost of coverage provided for medical and/or dental insurance coverage for qualifying dependents to be excluded from income. This means your full medical and dental plan contribution will be pre-tax and no additional income will be imputed.

What can I do to offset any increased taxable income?

In 2010 Harvard began to withhold Federal & State taxes on imputed income that is calculated for Domestic Partner medical and/or dental coverage. The change in withholdings does NOT change the amount of taxes the employee pays; however it changes the timing of the payment of the taxes: the taxes are now withheld in each paycheck, which may result in a decrease of net pay. Employees may change their taxes withholding amounts (Federal and/or State) at any time by going to PeopleSoft Self Service > Payroll and Compensation > W-4 Tax Information.
What is meant by an IRS Qualified Dependent and where can I find more information?


How do I notify Benefits of a change in dependent status from non-qualified to qualified or qualified to non-qualified?

Contact Benefits at 617-496-4001 or by email at benefits@harvard.edu as soon as possible. If your dependent’s status has changed from non-qualified to qualified, you will need to complete and return an Attestation of Qualified Dependent(s) form.

If your dependent has changed from qualified to non-qualified, you will need to notify us of the change in writing.

Changes will be made to the taxability of your benefits and the imputed income on your check in accordance with the information provided.

Will my paycheck be retroactively adjusted based on completion of an Attestation form?

No, adjustments to your paycheck will be made going forward.

GENERAL

Can a domestic partner’s eligible medical/dental expenses or dependent care costs be reimbursed through Harvard’s flexible spending account (FSA) program?

No, IRS regulations that govern FSAs allow reimbursement of expenses only for the employee, spouse, and qualified dependents.

I have terminated my domestic partnership and want to remove my domestic partner from my coverage. What do I need to do?

You need to contact the Benefits office within 30 days of the termination of the partnership in order to make changes to your benefits. You will need to submit a copy of the Statement of Termination of Domestic Partnership filed with the municipality where the partnership was registered.

Can I enroll my new domestic partner?

There is a twelve-month wait period before a new domestic partner can be enrolled. The former partnership will be deemed terminated as of the signature date on the Statement of Termination of Domestic Partnership.

Additional information may be obtained from Harvard Benefits, 114 Mt. Auburn St., 4th Floor, Cambridge, MA, (617) 496-4001 or by email at benefits@harvard.edu