



# 2024 FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS BENEFITS GUIDE



**Metro**<sup>™</sup>

# FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS



We partner with The Advantage Group (TAG) as our health care and dependent care Flexible Spending Account (FSA) administrator. TAG offers:

- A debit card you can use to pay for qualified expenses such as a doctor's office visit or the cost to fill your prescriptions, and dependent care providers. The funds are automatically deducted from your account, so you don't have to file a paper claim\*.
- Access to your spending account 24/7 at [enrollwithtag.healthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.healthcareportal.com) so you can monitor your spending.
- Mobile App to monitor your accounts and/or submit claims in the event you do not use the debit card.
- Remember, you lose any funds left in your account at the end of the two and one-half month FSA grace period (March 15 of the following year).

\* With TAG you still have an option to either use the debit card or file a claim. Using the card will eliminate the need to file paper claims.

## What is a Flexible Spending Account (FSA)?

Flexible Spending Accounts allow employees to set aside money, before taxes, to use on eligible health care and dependent care expenses. You elect how much you want to contribute, and your employer deducts the amount from your paychecks. Since you use pretax dollars you lower your taxable income, and you use pre-tax money to pay for eligible expenses.

**The Health Care FSA** allows you to contribute up to **\$3,050** to pay for eligible health care services and items not covered by insurance for you and your dependents.

The following are just a few of the many services and items eligible under this account:

- Prescriptions
- Over-the-counter items and medicines (a doctor's prescription is required for over-the-counter (OTC) drugs and medicines; over-the-counter items, such as bandages, do not require a prescription)
- Co-payments
- Dental care, orthodontia
- Vision care, eye surgery
- Therapies

**The Dependent Care FSA** allows you to contribute up to **\$5,000** annually to pay for eligible childcare expenses, and under certain circumstances, may be used to help pay for the care of elderly dependents or a disabled spouse or dependent. The following are examples of eligible expenses:

- Before- and after-school programs
- Day care and nursery schools
- Preschool
- Dependent adult day care
- Transportation provided by care giver

A complete list of eligible expenses is provided on [enrollwithtag.healthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.healthcareportal.com).

## Important! Use-It-Or-Lose-It!

Note the deadline for submitting 2023 claims. You have until March 15, 2024, to use your 2023 funds and until March 31, 2024, to submit claims. You may continue to use your debit card for purchases during this period.

Please remember the “Use-It-Or-Lose-It” rule – you must use all the money you set aside in your 2023 flex spending accounts, or you will lose it!

## Cards Expiring In 2023

The Advantage Group Flex Benefit Cards that expire December 2023, will have access via their debit card through December 31, 2023. New preloaded cards will be issued by January 2024 with your 2024 healthcare elected funds. If using remaining funds before March 15, 2024, claims will have to be reimbursed through The Advantage Group's claim process.

For claim assistance and claim forms contact the Advantage Group at 877.506.1660 or visit their website at, [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](https://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com).

If your card does not expire this year, new cards will not be issued unless you request a new card on The Advantage Group website. Healthcare elected funds for 2023 will be preloaded to your current card effective January 1, 2024.

More information can be found on [benefits.metro.net](https://benefits.metro.net) under Guidebooks.

## How to Enroll for 2024

If you are enrolling in the FSAs for 2024, you will need to follow these steps:

Enroll via the Benefits Online Enrollment System during the Annual Open Enrollment period November 6-19, 2023.

Your new FSA debit cards will be sent to your home address and should arrive prior to January 1.

**Note:** your debit card(s) will arrive in an ordinary plain white envelope. As a special security feature, activate your card by using the last four digits of your Employee Badge Number, NOT your Social Security Number as indicated in the general notice included with your new debit card or on the TAG website. For example: if your Badge Number is 88888, you would enter it in the SSN field as 000-08-8888.

If you need assistance with your account setup, please contact the Customer Support Center at [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](https://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com) or call toll free at 877.506.1660.

You can contact TAG at 877.506.1660 on January 2nd for any questions regarding your account set-up or your 2023 and 2024 funds or debit card.

- FSA Mastercard Debit Card
- Reimbursement Request – file a claim online, by fax or mail for reimbursement
- Mobile App – view your account information and submit claims

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

## Why should I enroll in an FSA?

With an FSA, your out-of-pocket health and/or dependent care expenses are paid with tax-free dollars. You can save an average of 30 percent on all your eligible expenses! To calculate your potential savings, go to [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com).

## Am I eligible to participate in a Dependent Care FSA?

You are eligible for this benefit if you have a dependent under age 13 (whose expenses are eligible) who requires care to enable you to work. This includes before and after school care. In addition, you must meet one of the following eligibility criteria:

- You are unmarried
- Your spouse works, is a full-time student, is actively seeking work, or is disabled (incapable of self-care)
- You are divorced or legally separated and have custody of your child even though your former spouse may claim the child for income tax purposes

Your Dependent Care FSA can be used to pay for childcare services provided during the period the child resides with you. For a complete list of expenses that are eligible for reimbursement through a Dependent Care FSA, please go to [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com).

## What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?

### Health Care FSA

Health care plan deductibles, co-payments, prescription glasses, orthodontia and certain over-the-counter medicines and supplies are eligible if incurred while you are a participant in the plan. For a comprehensive list, please go to [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com).

### Important Notes:

- Expenses are treated as having been incurred at the time the medical care was provided, not when you are formally billed, charged, or pay for the medical expenses
- You cannot receive reimbursement for future or projected expenses
- All submitted expenses are reviewed for eligibility according to Internal Revenue Code Section 125 guidelines

### Dependent Care FSA

Eligible dependent care expenses may include services inside or outside your home by anyone other than your spouse or a person you list as a dependent for income tax purposes or one of your children under the age of 19. Services may be provided at a child or adult care center, nursery, preschool, after-school, or summer day camp.

### Important Notes:

Dependent care for a child over 13, overnight camp, baby-sitting that is not work related, schooling in kindergarten and higher grades, and long-term care services are not eligible expenses

All submitted expenses are reviewed for eligibility according to Internal Revenue Code Sections 125 and 129 guidelines

## How do I get started?

- Review and estimate your expenses to help determine the amount you should elect. Reviewing your checkbook, credit card statements and insurance statements from the past year and calculating your health and/or dependent care costs is a good way to start. You can also use TAG's online calculator by going to the following website: [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com).
- Sign up for the FSA account(s) along with your other benefits during the Annual Benefits Open Enrollment period or during the new hire benefit orientation session.

## What happens if I do not use all the money in my account by the end of the plan year?

Federal law governing flexible spending accounts specifies that any money remaining in your account at the end of the plan year will be forfeited. This is more commonly known as the "Use-It-or-Lose-It" rule.

However, your plan has a "grace period," until March 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year, that allows additional time to use money from your FSA.

## Can I change my election amount during the plan year?

Your decision to participate in an FSA is binding for the entire plan year, and you may change your election only as permitted by IRS regulations.

Generally, to make an FSA election change, you must experience a significant life event such as marriage, divorce, birth, or death in your immediate family. For a Dependent Care FSA only, you may also make election changes that simply correspond with changes in your cost of the care. You may not reduce your election amount to an amount less than either your then-current FSA balance or your year-to-date FSA contributions.

A change to your FSA election constitutes the end of your prior election and the beginning of a new election period. Expenses incurred during the period prior to the election change are subject to the initial election amount; expenses incurred during the period after the election change are subject to the new election amount.

## What happens to my FSA if I terminate employment?

Participation in the FSA ends if you terminate employment. This means only expenses incurred prior to the date your participation in the plan ends are eligible for reimbursement. Claims for expenses incurred prior to the plan termination date must be submitted within the "runout" period.

## What is the "runout" period?

The runout is a specified period of time after the end of the plan year, or following your termination in the plan, in which you may continue to submit claims incurred during your period of coverage. This is not a period when you are able to continue to incur new expenses, but rather it allows you time to gather and submit expenses before forfeitures are applied.

For plan assistance, contact:

- **TAG Participant Support Phone:** 877.506.1660
- **Website:** [enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com](http://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com)

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Debit Card

Some cards are worth holding on to and your Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card is one of them! Your card is good for three years, so even if you've exhausted your current plan year account balance, your current card is valid for the next plan year when you enroll in the plan.



### **Why do participants appreciate the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card?**

Participants who use the debit card won't have to pay qualified expenses out of their personal funds and then wait for a reimbursement. There's less paperwork.

For example, when the card is swiped for a co-pay at the doctor, pharmacy, or at IIAS (Inventory Information Approval System) retailers, no additional paperwork is required.

The Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card meets IRS requirements. The card can only be used by the participant (or their dependent(s) or spouse) at IRS-qualified providers to pay qualified expenses from their flex account.

### **Where is the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card accepted?**

The card can be used only at qualified locations, but not necessarily at all merchants that accept Mastercard. For example, it works at providers like pharmacies, doctors' offices, vision care centers, hospitals, IIAS retailers, etc.

These IRS-imposed limitations help ensure the card is used only when paying qualified expenses. When the card is swiped at a qualified location and there is a sufficient balance available in the participant's account, the card swipe is approved.

### **How do we verify that the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card is used ONLY for qualified expenses?**

The IRS requires that TAG, as your plan service provider, verify all card swipes. Most swipes are automatically verified. Card swipes for co-pays or multiple co-pays at qualified locations such as the doctor's office.

Card swipes at IIAS retailers. (Inventory Information Approval System). This is because IIAS retailers allow only qualified plan expenses to be paid with the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card.

Therefore, when the cardholder's shopping basket contains both qualified healthcare items and other merchandise, the transactions will be automatically split, and the cardholder will be asked for another form of payment to complete the purchase.

When a card swipe is automatically verified, we will not request a receipt be provided to us (*The IRS requires the participant to retain all itemized merchant receipts as well as the flex benefits card receipts*).

### **What happens if the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card is used to pay for services that are NOT IRS qualified?**

If any portion of a card swipe is considered questionable, the participant will be notified and asked to turn in receipts. If it is determined that a portion of a card transaction is not qualified, or the participant does not respond, they will be asked to repay the amount. The amount they owe may be repaid by logging into the website. It may also be repaid by deducting it from the participant's future claim.

If the participant does not respond by the deadline, their card may be suspended until the amount they owe is repaid. At the employer's option, the card may be reinstated.

### **Can participants file claims when the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card is not used?**

Yes. Participants may also pay expenses from their personal funds and then file a claim for reimbursement. This will be necessary if a merchant does not accept Mastercard cards.

### **What if the Flex Benefits Mastercard Debit Card is lost, stolen or was not received by a participant?**

To report a lost or stolen card, or if a participant did not receive their card in the mail at their home address on record, call 877.506.1660, weekdays, 8am to 5pm (PST).



# Flexible Spending Enrollment Form

Note: All Non-Contract, AFSCME and Teamster employees must enroll online during Open Enrollment November 6 through November 19, 2023 at [benefits.metro.net](https://benefits.metro.net).

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Employee Name

Badge Number

Healthcare Spending account election amount for the year: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Healthcare needs for family)  
*Option: You can defer any amount up to \$3,050 per year.*

Dependent Care Spending account election amount for the year: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Before and after school care)  
*Option: You can defer any amount up to \$5,000 per year.*

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Signature

Date

Phone Number

Enrollment/Deduction is for the calendar year of 2024. You must re-enroll each calendar year to participate. If you do not enter an amount, you will not be enrolled.

Return no later than November 30, 2023 by 4pm Print, sign,  
scan, and email to [PatinoNi@metro.net](mailto:PatinoNi@metro.net)

OR

ATTN: Nicole Patino or Leocricia Olmedo Mail Stop: 99-PL-9

# FOR BENEFITS ASSISTANCE



**Nicole Patino**  
**Leocricia Olmedo**

**213.922.5262**  
**213.922.1260**

Email: [patinoni@metro.net](mailto:patinoni@metro.net)  
Email: [olmedol@metro.net](mailto:olmedol@metro.net)

Plan Type	Provider	Phone Number	Website
<b>Flexible Spending Accounts</b>	The Advantage Group	877.506.1660	<a href="http://enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com">enrollwithtag.wealthcareportal.com</a>
<b>Open Enrollment Website</b>			<a href="http://Benefits.metro.net">Benefits.metro.net</a>





Employee Benefits Booklet designed and  
developed by



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Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Public  
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