

ADOPTION/FOSTER CARE LEAVE

Frequently Asked Questions

When you are growing your family through adoption or foster care, your Heritage employer provides you with up to four weeks of paid time off to bond with your child(ren).

Do I qualify for the adoption/foster care benefit?

If you are a regular, full-time, salaried (exempt) or hourly (non-exempt) employee scheduled to work 30+ hours per week, you are eligible for the adoption or foster care benefit the first of the month following your date of hire.

If both you and your spouse/partner are Heritage employees, you are both eligible for this benefit.

Note: Union employees please contact your HR team or reference your collective bargaining agreement regarding eligibility.

When am I eligible to take this leave?

If approved, the leave must be taken within the first 12 months after adoption or foster placement. For foster parents, the approved leave will be the shorter of 4 weeks or the time the foster child resides with the foster parent.

A total of up to four weeks in any 52-week rolling period can be taken for either Bonding (newborn, adoption, or foster) or Family Leave or some combination of the two leave types.

Note: Eligible unpaid time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will run concurrently with paid time-off benefits under this benefit policy.

When do I need to notify my HR team member of my adoption/foster care leave of absence?

Please notify your HR team member as soon as possible so they and your manager can plan for your absence.

What information do I need to provide regarding my leave of absence?

Your HR team will review required documentation with you:

- Complete and provide the [Parental & Family Leave Request Form](#) available in the *Forms* section under *Benefits* on the *Total Rewards & Benefits Portal*.
- For adoption, provide:
 - Court order or filed petition;
 - Official documentation from adoption agency;
 - Consent to Adoption document; **OR**
 - Other legal documentation demonstrating adoption
- For foster placement, provide:
 - Proof of foster parent license **AND**
 - Placement documentation from Dept of Child Services

What is my adoption benefit and how is it paid?

Your Heritage employer provides you with a paid 4-week leave of absence to care and bond with your child(ren). You will receive 100% of your current weekly base earnings (excluding overtime and shift differential) from the date of placement through week 4 of your approved leave.



The benefit is paid through payroll. Your normal taxes and benefits deductions, including 401(k) contributions, apply to your payment. You will receive your payment using the same method as your regular paycheck.

What is my foster care benefit and how is it paid?

Your Heritage employer provides you with up to a 4-week leave of absence to care and bond with your child(ren). You will receive 100% of your current weekly base earnings (excluding overtime and shift differential) from the date of placement through the lesser of week 4 or the time the foster child resides with you.

The benefit is paid through payroll. Your normal taxes and benefits deductions, including 401(k) contributions, apply to your payment. You will receive your payment using the same method as your regular paycheck.

Note: This benefit has a lifetime maximum of 12 weeks of paid time off.

May I take the time off intermittently?

Any intermittent bonding leave must be taken in minimum of 2-week increments and must be fully used within 12 months of adoption or foster placement.

Once my 4-week benefit ends, I plan to take additional time off. Will I get paid?

With approval, you may use any accrued and unused vacation or personal time-off benefits available to you to bridge the gap in pay until you return to work. If you do not have any time off benefits remaining, work with your HR Business Partner to request an unpaid Leave of Absence (if eligible).

Will my current benefit elections remain active while I'm on leave?

Yes, your benefits are active while you are on leave of absence. Your benefits deductions, including 401(k), will continue to be deducted from your pay.

I would like to add my adoptive child(ren) to my health plan. What do I do?

The legal adoption of your child(ren) is a qualifying life event which allows you to make changes to your current benefit elections during the calendar year (outside of the Open Enrollment period). **You have 31 days from the official court approved adoption date to contact HR Shared Services** (800-303-0408 or [HR Shared Services](#)) to update your benefits. You will need to provide official court adoption documents and the child(ren)'s Social Security Number(s).

I would like to add my foster child(ren) to my health plan. What do I do?

If you are awarded legal custody/guardianship of the child(ren) by a court, this is a qualifying life event which allows you to make changes to your current benefit elections (outside of the Open Enrollment period). **You have 31 days from the official court approved date for custody/guardianship to contact HR Shared Services** (800-303-0408 or [HR Shared Services](#)) to update your benefits. You will need to provide official court documents and/or a Medical Support Order and the child(ren)'s Social Security Number(s).

