

BENEFITS INSIGHTS

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Comparison of HSAs, HRAs and FSAs

This chart provides a quick and easy comparison of the different types of tax-advantaged health care accounts.

| | Health Savings Account (HSA) | Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) | Flexible Spending Account (FSA) |
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| Who owns the account? | Individual or employee | Employer | Employer |
| Eligible individual | Individuals and families covered by a qualified high deductible health plan (HDHP) and no other health plan that covers the same benefits. Individuals are not eligible if they can be claimed as a dependent on another person's tax return. | Current and former employees whose employers offer such a plan. | Current and former employees whose employers offer such a plan. |
| Eligibility of spouse or dependents | Spouses and dependents are eligible to use employee's account. | Spouses and dependents are eligible to use employee's account. | Spouses and dependents are eligible to use employee's account. |
| Who may fund the account? | Employer or employee, can both be in the same year. Employee can contribute pretax dollars through a Section 125 plan. | Employer* | Employer or employee* Typically the employee contributes pretax dollars through a Section 125 plan. |

*Self-employed individuals, including partners and more than 2-percent shareholders in a subchapter S-corporation **cannot** contribute.



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| <p>What plans may be offered with the tax-advantaged account?</p> | <p>An HDHP as follows: <u>Minimum Deductible:</u> 2016 and 2017: \$1,300 individual \$2,600 family <u>Out-of-pocket Maximum:</u> 2016 and 2017: \$6,550 individual \$13,100 for family</p> | <p>Effective for 2014 plan years, an employer must offer a health plan and the HRA must be considered integrated with group health plan coverage. Stand-alone HRAs are not permitted unless they are limited to excepted benefits or fall under an exemption to the Affordable Care Act (ACA).</p> | <p>Effective for 2014 plan years, health FSAs must qualify as excepted benefits to satisfy ACA reforms. To qualify as an excepted benefit, the FSA must meet a maximum benefit requirement and other group health plan coverage must be offered by the employer.</p> |
| <p>Is there a limit on the amount that can be contributed per year?</p> | <p>Yes 2016: \$3,350 (\$3,400 for 2017) \$6,750 family (same for 2017) Catch-up contributions of \$1,000 per year are permitted for individuals who are age 55 by the end of the tax year.</p> | <p>No, there is no IRS prescribed limit.</p> | <p>Effective for taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2012, employees may not elect to contribute more than \$2,500 per year to a health FSA offered through a cafeteria plan. For 2014, the amount remained at \$2,500. For the 2015 and 2016 taxable years, however, the annual dollar limitation on employee salary reduction contributions to a health FSA is \$2,550. This dollar limit increases to \$2,600 for 2017.</p> |
| <p>Can unused funds be rolled over from year to year?</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>No, with two exceptions. If the FSA allows, unused amounts may be used for expenses incurred during a grace period of 2 ½ months after the end of plan year. Also, if the FSA does not incorporate a grace period, it may allow employees to carry over up to \$500 in unused funds into the next plan year.</p> |

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| <p>What expenses are eligible for reimbursement?</p> | <p>Section 213(d) medical expenses, including: -COBRA premiums -QLTC premiums -Health premiums while receiving unemployment benefits -If Medicare eligible due to age, health insurance premiums except medical supplement policies</p> <p>Effective Dec. 31, 2010, over-the-counter (OTC) medicine or drug expenses cannot be reimbursed unless they are prescribed or are insulin.</p> | <p>Section 213(d) medical expenses, including health insurance premiums for current employees, retirees and qualified beneficiaries, and QLTC premiums.</p> <p>Employer can generally define “eligible medical expenses” to be more restrictive than the IRS guidelines.</p> <p>Effective Dec. 31, 2010, OTC medicine or drug expenses cannot be reimbursed unless they are prescribed or are insulin.</p> | <p>Section 213(d) medical expenses.</p> <p>Effective Dec. 31, 2010, OTC medicine or drug expenses cannot be reimbursed unless they are prescribed or are insulin.</p> <p>Expenses for insurance premiums are not reimbursable.</p> <p>Employer can generally define “eligible medical expenses” to be more restrictive than the IRS guidelines.</p> |
| <p>Must claims submitted for reimbursement be substantiated?</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>Yes</p> |
| <p>May account reimburse non-medical expenses?</p> | <p>Yes, but taxed as income and 20 percent penalty (no penalty if distributed after death, disability or age 65).</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Is interest earned on the tax-advantaged account?</p> | <p>Yes, accrues tax-free.</p> | <p>Yes, paid to the employer.</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>Federal tax treatment of employee contributions</p> | <p>Tax-deductible for individual, even if he or she does not itemize, provided funds are used for eligible expenses. (Note: Some states do not follow federal tax law for state purposes.) If an employee contributes to his or her HSA through salary reduction, the contributions are considered to be made by the employer and are not subject to FICA and other employment taxes.</p> | <p>n/a</p> | <p>If an employee contributes to an FSA through salary reductions under a cafeteria plan, the contributions are tax-free and are not subject to FICA and other employment taxes.</p> |

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| State tax treatment of employer contributions | State laws may vary | n/a | State laws may vary |
| Federal tax treatment of employer contributions | Employers get expense deductions for payments. Employer contributions are generally excludable from employee's gross income. | Employers get expense deductions for payments. Employer contributions are generally excludable from employee's gross income. | Employers get expense deductions for payments. Employer contributions are generally excludable from employee's gross income. |