

**Department of the Navy  
Human Resources Service Center Northeast  
Benefits and Performance Branch – Code 51.1  
111 S. Independence Mall East  
Philadelphia PA 19106-2598**

**Information for New Employees**

**AUTOMATED SYSTEMS FOR ACCESS TO BENEFITS INFORMATION**

The Human Resources Service Center Northeast has two automated systems that allow employees to access general and personal benefits information. The Employee Benefits Information System (EBIS) utilizes a personal computer and the Internet, and "The Benefits Line" uses a touch tone telephone. Both systems provide general and personal benefits information and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Eligible employees can make changes to their health insurance, life insurance and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) enrollments using either system. The attached brochure gives more information regarding EBIS and The Benefits Line. New employees are generally able to make benefits elections the second week after commencing employment. If you are unable to access your personnel information in EBIS or the Benefits Line, you can contact a Customer Service Representative on the Benefits Line at (888) 320-2917 during the hours of 7:30 am to 4:30 pm EST Monday through Friday and they will provide assistance.

**FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS (FEHB)**

You can elect to be covered by the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) within 60 days of eligibility (usually your initial appointment). There is no automatic FEHB coverage. You must make your election to enroll or not to enroll in FEHB within 60 days of your appointment. FEHB elections are effective on the first day of the first pay period that begins after your election is processed through EBIS or The Benefits Line following a pay period in which you were in a pay status (full or partial pay status). This means that your FEHB election will never be effective during your first pay period. You may make your FEHB election either through EBIS or The Benefits Line.

Numerous health plans, both fee for service and HMOs, participate in FEHB. The attached Guide to Federal Employees Health Benefits Plans, RI 70-1, gives you an overview of the FEHB and its participating plans. Health plan brochures are available by calling The Benefits Line or the individual Health Benefit Carriers. Brochures are also available from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) FEHB homepage at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/index.html>.

Premiums for FEHB are withheld before federal taxes are calculated, thereby reducing gross income for tax purposes. This is called FEHB Premium Conversion (FEHB-PC). If you participate in FEHB-PC, you are not able to deduct FEHB premiums as a medical deduction on your income tax return. By participating in FEHB-PC, you can cancel your FEHB coverage or change to a self-only enrollment from a family enrollment only in conjunction with a qualifying life event or during the annual FEHB open season. Paying FEHB premiums with pre-tax money reduces the earnings reported to the Social Security Administration. This may result in a somewhat lower Social Security benefit when you retire; however, the tax savings generally offset the lower Social Security benefit.

If you elect FEHB coverage you will automatically be participating in the FEHB-PC. If you do not wish to participate in FEHB-PC, please call The Benefits Line and request a waiver form. The form must be submitted to the HRSC-NE at the address above at the time that you make your FEHB enrollment. Changes to FEHB-PC participation can be made in conjunction with a qualifying life event or during FEHB open season. Additional information is available from EBIS, the Benefits Line or the OPM web site at: <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/pretaxfehb/index.htm>.

Each year you will have the opportunity to enroll in FEHB, change plans or change options during open season. The annual FEHB open season for enrollment changes is normally held from the Monday of the second full workweek in November through the Monday of the second full workweek in December.

There are various life events such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, etc. that allow changes to FEHB throughout the year. If you are unsure whether an event allows an FEHB change, please call The Benefits Line

for guidance. The changes must be made within 60 days of the event. If you have any questions about health insurance, please call The Benefits Line at (888) 340-2917.

### FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (FEGLI)

Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) provides group term life insurance. As such, it does not build up any cash value or paid-up value. If you elect coverage, premiums will be deducted from your pay. Pre-existing physical conditions will not prevent you from electing FEGLI coverage when given the initial opportunity to elect (usually when you are first appointed). Please read the attached OPM Publication RI 76-21, FEGLI Description and Certification of Enrollment for complete information about the program.

You are automatically covered by the Basic Life Insurance from your first day in a duty (at work) and pay status unless you waive the coverage. If you do not want any FEGLI coverage you must waive coverage.

In addition to the Basic Life Insurance, you can elect Option A – Standard, Option B – Additional and Option C – Family. These options are described in the RI 76-21 booklet. You do not have any optional insurance unless you elect it within 31 days of your appointment.

You may make your FEGLI election or waive all coverage through EBIS or The Benefits Line. Since FEGLI coverage is effective upon date of receipt of the form or date processed through EBIS or The Benefits Line and new employees may experience a delay in accessing their personal information in EBIS or the Benefits Line, we have enclosed a FEGLI Life Insurance Election Form, SF 2817, to be completed and mailed to the address on the top of this notice. **This form will only be accepted for processing within the first two weeks following the effective date of your employment.** After that date, all changes must be made through EBIS or the Benefits Line.

**IMPORTANT:** If, after you have made an election, it is determined that you have chosen coverage for which you are not eligible, there will be a retroactive adjustment of premiums recovered from your pay. Also, if you have been separated from Federal service for more than 180 days, upon your return as a rehire to an appointment which permits life insurance enrollment, you have 31 days to choose optional coverage. If you do not choose any optional coverage within 31 days, we must enroll you in the same optional coverage you had upon separation from your previous appointment in accordance with 62 FR 48731 (10/19/97).

To elect FEGLI coverage (or increase coverage) after initial appointment you must successfully pass a physical exam and be approved for coverage by the Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (OFEGLI). You cannot apply for FEGLI coverage after your initial waiver unless one year has elapsed.

There are various life events such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, etc. that allow changes to FEGLI throughout the year. If you are unsure whether an event allows a FEGLI change, please call The Benefits Line for guidance. The changes must be made within 60 days of the event. OPM *may* announce an open season for FEGLI enrollment, but it is not an annual or regular event. If you have any questions about the FEGLI, please call The Benefits Line at (888) 340-2917.

### THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP)

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan. It offers Federal civilian employees the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under so-called "401k" plans. For employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), TSP is a major portion of your retirement benefits.

If you are appointed or reappointed following a break in service to a position covered by FERS or CSRS on or after July 1, 2001, you will have 60 days to make a TSP contribution election. In 2002, FERS employees may contribute up to **12%** of basic pay; CSRS employees may contribute up to **7%**. The total annual amount an employee can contribute will continue to be capped at the elective deferral limit determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) which for 2002 is **\$11,000**. Contribution elections can be made through EBIS or The Benefits Line.

You may invest all or any portion of these contributions in any of the five TSP investment funds: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, the Fixed Income Index

Investment (F) Fund, the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund, and the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund.

Employees must submit all requests for fund contribution allocations and interfund transfers directly with the Thrift Savings Board (TSP). These requests for fund contribution allocations and interfund transfers can be made at any time after your account has been established with TSP. TSP will establish your account after they receive either an employee or agency contribution in your name from this agency. You will receive a letter from the TSP (National Finance Center) notifying you that your account has been established and assigning a PIN to your account. New participants cannot allocate contributions until receipt of this PIN number. Until a new participant requests a fund allocation with TSP, their contributions and any agency contributions will be invested in the G Fund.

You may make your request for fund contributions or interfund transfers in any of the three ways:

**TSP Website** – [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) (Account Access section). If you have Internet access and your browser supports the 128-bit encryption, you can make your request in the secure area of the TSP Website. You will need your Social Security Number (SSN) and your TSP Personal Identification Number (PIN)\*\*. Your request is recorded immediately, avoiding the mailing and processing time of a paper request.

**TSP ThriftLine** – (504) 255-8777. You must call from a touch-tone telephone. You will need your SSN and TSP PIN\*\*. Your request is recorded immediately, avoiding the mailing and processing time of a paper request.

**Form TSP-50.** The Form TSP-50, Investment Allocation was developed to be used for all allocations of monies and interfund transfers. **The completed TSP-50 form should be mailed directly to the TSP Service Office.** Do not submit the TSP-50 form to our office. We cannot process contribution allocations or interfund transfers. A TSP-50 form can be obtained by calling the Benefits Line. This form **is not** available on the TSP Website since it was designed to be read by an optical scanner. Photocopies of the form cannot be used and will not be processed by TSP.

\*\* If you do not know your PIN, you can request a new one at <http://www.tsp.gov> (click on Account Access) or from the ThriftLine at (504) 255-8777.

Your investment election applies to all contributions to your TSP account, i.e., Employee, Agency Automatic (1%), and Agency Matching Contributions. Even if FERS employees do not contribute their own money, they can invest their Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions in any of the five TSP investment funds. For all new participants, their contributions and any Agency Automatic (1%) Contributions will be invested in the G Fund until they request a fund contribution allocation with TSP.

Please read the Plan Summary before you request a fund contribution allocation. The section on investment options describes the risks and advantages of the five TSP Funds and should be read carefully before you make an election to allocate TSP contributions to your account.

If you have a retirement savings account from a previous employer, you may be able to transfer or roll over that money into your TSP account. The TSP can accept these "eligible rollover distributions" only from qualified retirement plans or from conduit IRAs that were set up to accept eligible rollover contributions. Only employees who have an open TSP account can transfer money into the TSP. If you have already received your money from your former plan, you have 60 days from the date you receive the funds to roll them into the TSP. To request a transfer, obtain TSP Form-60, Request for a Transfer Into the TSP which is available from the TSP web site or by calling the Benefits Line.

The attached Thrift Board publication "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees" provides an overview of the plan. Additional information is available from EBIS, the Benefits Line or the TSP web site at <http://www.tsp.gov/forms/index-booklets.html>.