

## Chapter 6: Benefits

### 6.01 Retirement Benefits

remove and add the following

The **City of Toledo** provides retirement benefits through the **Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)** and the **Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System (LEOFF)**, as administered by the **Washington State Department of Retirement Systems (DRS)**. **Full-time employees** are eligible for retirement benefits, while **temporary and part-time employees** do not receive this benefit unless they meet specific criteria for PERS eligibility.

#### Social Security Contributions

In addition to state retirement benefits, the City of Toledo makes **contributions to Social Security** on behalf of all eligible employees. Employees also contribute to Social Security through **FICA payroll deductions**, as required by federal law.

#### Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System (LEOFF)

- All **regular full-time uniformed police employees** are enrolled in **LEOFF**, as required by state law.
- **Benefit levels and contribution rates** for LEOFF are set by the **State of Washington**.
- Employees can find more information about LEOFF on the **Washington State DRS website** ([drs.wa.gov](https://drs.wa.gov)).

#### Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)

- **Full-time non-uniformed employees** are automatically enrolled in **PERS**.
- **Part-time and temporary employees** are **not initially eligible** but may become enrolled if they meet the following criteria:
  - Work **at least 70 hours per month** for **five (5) months** within a **12-month period**.
  - Once eligibility is met, enrollment in **PERS is required** per Washington State regulations.
- **Employer and Employee Contributions:**
  - Both the City of Toledo and enrolled employees contribute to PERS.
  - Contribution rates and benefit levels are determined by the **Washington State DRS** and may change over time.
  - Employees should refer to the DRS website ([drs.wa.gov](https://drs.wa.gov)) or contact Human Resources for details on contribution rates.

#### Retirement Notification Requirement

**Deleted:** The City of Toledo makes contributions on behalf of all eligible employees to the Social Security System in addition to those contributions made by the employee through FICA payroll deductions. All regular uniformed employees in the police are covered by the Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters Retirement System (LEOFF). Benefit levels and contribution rates are set by the State of Washington. All regular full-time and eligible part-time non-uniformed employees are covered under the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Benefit levels, contribution rates, and eligibility criteria are determined by the State of Washington. Employees should notify their department head of their intent to retire at least three months prior to the date of retirement.

- Employees planning to **retire** must notify their **department head at least three (3) months** before their intended retirement date.
- This ensures a smooth transition and allows for proper **processing of retirement benefits**.

### Policy Compliance & Additional Information

- The City of Toledo **reserves the right to modify** retirement benefit policies in accordance with state law.
- Employees are encouraged to review their **individual retirement accounts** and stay informed of any updates from the **Washington State Department of Retirement Systems (DRS)**.

### Deferred Compensation Plan

[remove and add the following](#)

The **City of Toledo** offers a **voluntary Deferred Compensation Plan (457 Plan)** to provide employees and elected officials with an additional **retirement savings option**. This plan allows participants to contribute a portion of their **pre-tax earnings**, helping them build long-term financial security while reducing their current taxable income.

**Deleted:** The City of Toledo provides a voluntary deferred compensation 457 plan for employees and elected officials to contribute pre-tax dollars. (See **Appendix "C"** for more details on retirement plan benefits and contributions.)

### What is a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan?

A **457 Plan** is a **tax-advantaged retirement savings plan** available to government employees, including municipal workers and elected officials. Contributions to the plan are deducted **before taxes** and grow **tax-deferred** until withdrawn, typically at retirement.

### Plan Features & Benefits

- **Voluntary Participation** – Employees and elected officials may choose to enroll at any time.
- **Pre-Tax Contributions** – Contributions are deducted from each paycheck before taxes are applied, reducing taxable income.
- **Flexible Investment Options** – Participants may choose from a variety of investment options to align with their **retirement goals**.
- **Contribution Limits** – Annual contribution limits are set by the **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** and are subject to change each year.
- **Penalty-Free Withdrawals at Retirement** – Unlike other retirement plans, a **457 Plan does not have an early withdrawal penalty** if funds are withdrawn upon leaving employment, regardless of age.

### Eligibility & Enrollment

- **All full-time employees and elected officials** are eligible to participate.
- Enrollment is **voluntary**, and employees may choose their contribution amount, up to the **IRS annual limit**.

### Administration & Changes

- The **City of Toledo** does not contribute to the **457 Plan**—it is funded solely by employee contributions.
- Employees may **increase, decrease, or stop** contributions at any time, subject to plan rules.
- The City reserves the right to **change providers** or modify plan options as needed.

For more details on **plan benefits, investment options, and contribution limits**, refer to **Appendix C** or contact Human Resources.

This policy ensures that City employees and officials have access to **additional retirement savings opportunities** while maintaining compliance with **IRS regulations and Washington State guidelines**.

### 6.02 Disability Benefits (Workers' Compensation)

remove and add the following

remove and add below

All employees and authorized volunteers of the **City of Toledo** are covered under **Washington State's Workers' Compensation (Industrial Insurance) Program** through the **Department of Labor & Industries (L&I)**. This program provides benefits for qualifying work-related injuries or illnesses, including compensation for lost wages and medical expenses.

#### Reporting and Coverage

- Employees must **immediately report** all **work-related injuries or illnesses** to their supervisor.
- Workers' Compensation may **not cover** activities performed outside the employee's **normal job duties or work hours**.

#### Filing a Claim and Compensation

- Employees who miss work due to an **on-the-job injury** must file a **Workers' Compensation claim** through L&I.

**Deleted:** All employees and authorized volunteers are covered by the State Workers' Compensation (Industrial Insurance) Program. For qualifying cases, State Industrial Insurance will pay the employee for workdays lost and for medical costs due to job-related injuries or illnesses. All job-related accidents should be immediately reported to the supervisor. Activities undertaken by employees outside their normal scope of work and/or workday may not be covered by the State Workers' Compensation Program.

**Deleted:** When an employee is absent due to an on-the-job accident, he/she is required to file a claim for Workers' Compensation. If the employee files a claim, the City of Toledo will continue to pay (by use of the employee's unused sick leave or other forms of leave) the employee's regular net salary pending receipt of Workers' Compensation benefits.

- While awaiting **Workers' Compensation benefits**, the City of Toledo will allow employees to use **accrued sick leave, vacation leave, or other paid leave** to maintain their **regular net salary**.
- Once Workers' Compensation payments begin, employees may choose to **supplement** their benefits with available leave to make up the difference between their regular wages and the L&I compensation amount.

This policy ensures that employees receive **support and financial continuity** while recovering from workplace injuries or illnesses in compliance with **Washington State Workers' Compensation regulations**.

During an approved **Workers' Compensation leave**, certain benefits and insurance provisions will be handled as follows:

#### Accrual of Benefits

- **Paid vacation, holiday, and sick leave do not accrue** during unpaid leave or while an employee is receiving **Workers' Compensation benefits**, as these benefits are based on **hours worked**.

#### Health Insurance Coverage

- The **City of Toledo** will continue to pay the employer's portion of health insurance premiums for up to **three (3) months** from the date of injury, provided the employee **continues to pay their share of premiums**.
- After **three (3) months**, health insurance benefits will **cease**, unless an exception is granted by the **City Administrator**, as outlined in **Section 1.04 – Changing the Policies**.
- Employees may **elect to continue health coverage** beyond this period by **self-paying** insurance premiums under the terms of the City's health plan or through **COBRA continuation coverage**, if eligible.

[remove, stated above](#)

### 6.03 Health Insurance Benefits

[remove and add the following](#)

The **City of Toledo** offers health insurance benefits to **regular full-time** employees and their **eligible dependents**, including **registered domestic partners**. **Temporary and part-time employees are not eligible** for health insurance coverage.

#### **Deleted: Coordination of Benefits**

When the employee receives Workers' Compensation benefits, he/she is required to repay to the City of Toledo the amount covered by Workers' Compensation and previously advanced by the City of Toledo. This policy is to ensure that employees receive prompt and regular payments during periods of injury or disability as long as accrued sick or other leave is available, while also ensuring that no employee receives more than he/she would have received had the injury not occurred. Upon the repayment of funds advanced, the appropriate amount of sick leave shall be restored to the employee's account. Employees may supplement Workers' Compensation salary benefits by using accrued sick or other forms of leave to increase their Workers' Compensation disability payments up to an amount not to exceed their net pay if they were working their regular schedule.

The City of Toledo may require a medical examination, at its expense, performed by a physician of its choice, to determine when the employee can return to work and whether he/she will be capable of performing the duties of the position.

Citizens who volunteer for the "staff equivalent" services at the City of Toledo shall be covered by the State Workers' Compensation program. They must submit in a timely manner, in writing, the hours volunteered to ensure L & I contributions are made on their behalf for the time worked. Advisory Boards and Committees are not covered under this provision.

**Deleted:** Regular full-time and regular part-time employees, and their dependents, and registered domestic partners are eligible to participate in the City of Toledo's various insurance programs which are determined by the first day of employment with the City of Toledo. Employees will be covered by insurance beginning the first day of the month after date of hire. The programs and the criteria for eligibility are explained upon hire. The City of Toledo provides a monthly benefits allowance toward the cost of premiums in the amounts authorized by the City of Toledo Council. The remainder of the premiums, if any, shall be paid by the employee through payroll deduction. The City of Toledo reserves the right to make changes in the carriers and the provisions of these programs when deemed necessary or advisable and without prior notice to affected employees, except as otherwise provided in Section 1.02. (See Appendix "B" for more details and plan benefits.) Temporary employees and Trial employees will not be eligible for insurance coverage.

## Eligibility & Coverage Start Date

- **Full-time employees** become eligible for health insurance after **90 days** of continuous employment.
- Coverage begins on the **first day of the month following the 90-day eligibility period.**
- **Temporary employees** are **not eligible** for insurance benefits.

## Premiums & Contributions

- The City of Toledo provides a **monthly benefits allowance** to offset premium costs, as authorized by the **City Council.**
- Employees are responsible for any remaining premium costs, which are deducted through **payroll deductions.**

## Plan Details & Changes

- Employees receive an explanation of **benefits and eligibility** upon hire.
- The City reserves the right to **modify insurance providers, plan provisions, or coverage levels** as necessary.
- Employees will be notified of significant changes, except as otherwise provided in **Section 1.02.**
- For additional details on plan benefits, refer to **Appendix B.**

### 6.04 Paid Family and Medical Leave

Remove and add the following

The **City of Toledo** participates in **Washington State's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program**, as required under **RCW 50A.04.** This **statewide insurance program** provides eligible employees with **paid leave** for qualifying family and medical events.

#### Eligibility & Benefits

Employees who have worked **at least 820 hours** in a qualifying period may be eligible for:

- **Up to 12 weeks** of paid leave for:
  - Bonding with a **new child** (birth, adoption, or foster placement).
  - Recovering from a **serious illness or injury.**
  - Caring for a **family member with a serious health condition.**
  - Certain **military family-related events.**
- **Up to 16 weeks** for multiple qualifying events in the same year.
- **Up to 18 weeks** if an employee experiences a pregnancy-related serious health condition.

#### Premiums & Coordination with Other Leave

- **PFML is funded by employee contributions**, which are withheld from paychecks and submitted to the **Employment Security Department (ESD).**
- Employees may choose to use **accrued vacation, sick, or other paid leave** while

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0"

**Deleted:** Paid Family and Medical Leave, RCW 50A.04 is a mandatory statewide insurance program that will provide almost every Washington employee with paid time off to give or receive care.¶

¶ If you qualify, this program will allow you to take up to twelve (12) weeks, as needed, if you:¶  
Welcome a child into your family (through birth, adoption, or foster placement)¶

Experience a serious illness or injury¶  
Need to care for a serious ill or injured relative¶  
Need time to prepare for a family member's pre- and post-deployment activities, as well as time for childcare issues related to a family member's military deployment. (For specifics on military-connected paid leave, visit

[www.dol.gov/whd/reqs/compliance/whdfs28mc.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/whd/reqs/compliance/whdfs28mc.pdf)

)¶  
¶ If you face multiple events in a year, you might be eligible to receive up to sixteen (16) weeks, and up to eighteen (18) weeks if you experience a serious health condition during pregnancy that results in incapacity.¶

¶ **Payment of Premiums**¶

The program is funded by premiums paid by both employees and employers. It will be administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD). The City of Toledo will calculate and withhold premiums from paychecks and send both employee and employer shares to the ESD on a quarterly basis.¶

¶ **Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave Coordinated with Other Leaves**¶

Employees who have accrued vacation, sick, or other paid time off may choose to take such leave or receive paid family and medical leave benefits, as provided for in RCW 50A.04.020.¶

¶ An employee receiving Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave payments during family and/or medical related leave shall use only the number of leave hours that, together with the Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave benefits payments, represents the employee's normal pay for the same period. Financial Services "Payroll" will calculate use of paid leave hours on a retroactive basis back to the first day in which the employee was off work. In no event shall the accumulation of leave and Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave income result in any employee receiving income in excess of one hundred percent (100%) of their regular straight-time income for the same period of time.¶

¶ If the employee elects to use paid leave to supplement the employee's earnings, the employee must notify Human Resources as the start of his/her Washington Paid Family and Medical ... [1]

receiving PFML benefits, provided total earnings do not exceed **100% of their regular wages**.

- Additional details on how PFML works in coordination with other leave policies can be found in **Chapter 7 of the Personnel Policy**.

#### **Application & Protections**

- Employees apply for benefits directly through the **Washington Employment Security Department** at [www.paidleave.wa.gov](http://www.paidleave.wa.gov).
- Employees may be entitled to **job protection** upon return from leave if they meet eligibility criteria under **FMLA** and work for an employer with **50 or more employees**.
- Employers are **prohibited from retaliating** against employees for requesting or taking leave under this program.

For full details on PFML, refer to **Chapter 7** of the Personnel Policy or visit [www.paidleave.wa.gov](http://www.paidleave.wa.gov).

The City of Toledo, Washington, employs fewer than 50 individuals. Under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), public agencies like the City of Toledo are considered "covered employers" regardless of size. However, FMLA's employee eligibility criteria require that the employee work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius. Consequently, City of Toledo employees do not meet this eligibility threshold and are not entitled to FMLA-protected leave. [paidleave.wa.gov+3mrsc.org+3mrsc.org+3mrsc.org+1dol.gov+1](http://paidleave.wa.gov+3mrsc.org+3mrsc.org+3mrsc.org+1dol.gov+1)

Regarding Washington State's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program, all employers, including those with fewer than 50 employees, must participate by collecting and remitting employee premiums. However, employers with fewer than 50 employees are not required to pay the employer portion of the premium. Additionally, these employers are not mandated to provide job protection or maintain health insurance benefits during an employee's PFML leave.

[paidleave.wa.gov+4action.momsrising.org+4paidleave.wa.gov+4paidleave.wa.gov+3mrsc.org+3paidleave.wa.gov+3](http://paidleave.wa.gov+4action.momsrising.org+4paidleave.wa.gov+4paidleave.wa.gov+3mrsc.org+3paidleave.wa.gov+3)

In summary, while the City of Toledo complies with state requirements by facilitating employee access to PFML benefits, it is not obligated to offer job protection or health insurance maintenance during such leave due to its size.

## 6.05 Continuation of Insurance Continuation of Health Insurance Coverage & COBRA

[remove and add the following](#)

The **City of Toledo** recognizes that employees may need to take an **unpaid leave of absence** or experience a change in employment status that affects their health insurance coverage. In such cases, employees may have options to continue their health insurance coverage either through the City or under **federal COBRA regulations**.

### **Continuation of Coverage During Unpaid Leave**

**Deleted:** Upon mutual agreement between the employee and the City of Toledo, and in accordance with the terms and the conditions of the insurance policy, the City of Toledo will continue health insurance coverage at the employee's expense during an approved unpaid leave of absence. The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) continuation rights may apply in the event coverage is not extended through the City of Toledo.

- **Mutual Agreement:** Employees on an **approved unpaid leave of absence** may continue their health insurance coverage if agreed upon by both the **City of Toledo** and the employee.
- **Employee Responsibility:** The employee is responsible for paying the **full cost of the premiums**, including both the employee and employer share.
- **Payment Terms:** Payment arrangements must be made in advance, and failure to pay premiums on time may result in termination of coverage.
- **Eligibility & Policy Terms:** Coverage continuation is subject to the **terms and conditions of the City's insurance policy** and must comply with all applicable laws.

#### **COBRA Coverage**

Under the **Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986**, eligible employees and their covered dependents may continue their health insurance benefits **at their own expense** if coverage is lost due to a **qualifying event**.

#### **COBRA Qualifying Events (for employees):**

- **Voluntary or involuntary termination of employment**, except for cases of gross misconduct.
- **Reduction in work hours**, making the employee ineligible for employer-sponsored health insurance.

#### **COBRA Qualifying Events (for dependents):**

- **Death of the covered employee.**
- **Divorce or legal separation** from the covered employee.
- **Dependent child aging out of coverage** (turning 26).

#### **COBRA Coverage Details:**

- Employees and dependents may **continue the same health coverage** they had while employed.
- COBRA coverage can last **up to 18 months** for job loss or reduced hours and **up to 36 months** for certain dependent-related qualifying events.
- Employees must pay **100% of the premium cost**, plus an additional **2% administrative fee**.
- Enrollment requires employees to **elect COBRA coverage within 60 days** of receiving notice.

#### **COBRA Notification & Enrollment**

- Employees will receive a **COBRA election notice** from the City's health insurance provider explaining their rights and options.
- Employees must elect coverage within **60 days** and arrange payment directly with the insurance carrier.

This policy ensures that employees understand their **rights and responsibilities** regarding health insurance continuation **during unpaid leave or after employment ends**.

For more information, employees may contact **Human Resources** or visit the **U.S. Department of Labor COBRA webpage** at [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).

#### **Termination or Retirement:**

- **Coverage End Date:** If an employee's termination or retirement occurs on or before the 15th of the month, coverage continues until the end of that month. If the termination or retirement occurs on or after the 16th, coverage extends until the end of the following month.
- **Premium Responsibility:** The City of Toledo will cover its portion of the health insurance premium through the coverage end date. Employees are responsible for their share of the premium for the month following their last working month.



~~removed and added above under workers comp policy~~

Removed and added above under COBRA policy

~~remove and added above~~

## 6.06 Unemployment Compensation

~~remove and add the following~~

The **City of Toledo** acknowledges that employees may be eligible for **Washington State Unemployment Compensation** upon separation from employment, contingent upon meeting specific state-defined criteria.

### Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for unemployment benefits in Washington State, individuals must generally:

- **Be Unemployed Through No Fault of Their Own:** This typically includes layoffs or terminations not related to misconduct.
- **Meet Work and Wage Requirements:** Applicants must have worked at least **680 hours** in their "base year," defined as the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before the claim is filed.
- **Be Able and Available to Work:** Claimants must be mentally and physically capable of working and actively seeking employment.

### Application Process:

Employees seeking unemployment benefits should:

1. **Gather Necessary Information:** Including Social Security number, work history for the past 18 months, and employer details.
2. **Apply Promptly:** File a claim with the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) as soon as possible after employment ends. Applications can be submitted online or by phone. [esd.wa.gov](http://esd.wa.gov)
3. **Maintain Eligibility:** Continue to meet all eligibility requirements, such as being able and available to work, and fulfill job search requirements as stipulated by the ESD.

### Additional Resources:

For comprehensive information on unemployment benefits, eligibility criteria, and the application process, employees are encouraged to visit the Washington State Employment Security Department's website. [esd.wa.gov](http://esd.wa.gov)

## 6.07 Relocation Benefits

~~remove~~

## 6.08 Benefits Upon Hire/Return from Leave

~~remove should change to the following to meet WA state law~~

The **City of Toledo** will determine benefit eligibility for rehired employees on a **case-by-case basis**, with terms outlined in the employee's **rehire agreement or**

**Deleted: Worker's Compensation Leave**  
Benefits that accrue according to length of service, such as paid vacation, holiday, and sick days do not accrue during unpaid leave or during periods in which the employee receives Workers' Compensation. The City of Toledo also continues to pay for the employer's portion of health insurance premiums, provided that the employee continues to pay his/her share of premiums or co-insurance for up to three (3) months from the date of injury. After three (3) months, the employee's benefits shall cease unless the City of Toledo administrator makes an exception based upon the criteria stated in Changing the Policies, Section 1.04. The employee may continue health care benefits by self-paying insurance premiums for the remainder of the time he/she receives Workers Compensation benefits.

**Deleted: Termination, Retirement, Leave of Absence**  
For eligible employees who terminate, retire, or are on an approved leave of absence, the employee's coverage ends as follows. If employees term ends on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, coverage terminates at the end of that month. If the employees term ends on or after the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the month, coverage ends at the end of the following month. Employee will be responsible for the premium the month following the last month for which the City of Toledo has paid the premium.

**Deleted: City of Toledo employees may qualify for State Unemployment Compensation upon termination from City of Toledo employment depending on the reason for termination and if certain qualifications are met.**

**Deleted: Relocation benefits may be offered to new employees subject to City of Toledo Council approval.**

**Deleted: Upon hire or return from an unpaid leave, an employee's benefits, leave accruals and insurance coverage will commence on the first of the month following the month of the date of hire or return from leave. The employee must be on paid status on the day before and after a holiday to qualify for a paid holiday.**



contract.

#### **Benefit & Leave Accrual**

- Upon rehire, an employee's **benefits, leave accruals, and insurance coverage** will **not automatically resume** from the prior employment period.
- Eligibility for benefits and the date coverage begins will be specified in the **rehire agreement** based on the employee's position, length of prior service, and any applicable regulations.

#### **Holiday Pay Eligibility**

- A rehired employee must be on **paid status** on both the **workday before** and the **workday after** a holiday to qualify for **paid holiday leave**.

This policy ensures that **rehired employees** understand how their **benefits and leave accruals** will be handled upon re-employment.

## 6.10 Benefits for Part-time and Temporary Employees

remove and add the following, this is also address in Chapter 7

### Summary of Benefits for Part-Time and Temporary Employees

- **Regular Part-Time Employees:** Benefits, including **leave and holiday pay**, are **pro-rated** based on hours worked, with eligibility starting at **20 hours per week**.
- **Temporary Employees:** Generally **not eligible** for benefits, including paid leave and insurance, unless an **exception** is granted by the **City Administrator**.

### Sick Leave for Part-Time and Temporary Employees

- **Accrual Rate:** **1 hour of sick leave** for every **40 hours worked** (excluding vacation, paid time off, or sick leave).
- **Usage:** Sick leave may be used **as soon as it is accrued**.

### Vacation Leave for Part-Time Employees

- **Pro-Rated Accrual:** Vacation time is **pro-rated** based on the ratio of hours worked compared to a **40-hour full-time schedule**.
- **Usage:** Vacation leave may be used **after the employee's probationary period is completed**.

### Exceptions & Employee Contracts

- Benefits and leave policies **may differ** if specifically outlined in an **employee's contract**.

For additional details, see **Chapter 7** of the Personnel Policy.

**Deleted:** Unless otherwise noted in these policies, benefits for regular part-time and temporary employees are as follows:¶

**Regular part-time employees:** All leaves (except sick leave), including holidays, and benefit allowances are pro-rated. Pro-rated means the ratio between the number of hours in the¶ employee's normal work schedule of at least 20 hours per week and the regular full-time schedule of forty (40) hours per week.¶

**Temporary employees:** Temporary employees normally are not eligible to receive benefits, including leave, paid holidays, and insurance. The City of Toledo administrator, however, may make exceptions to this policy at his/her discretion or in certain circumstances.¶

¶ Sick Leave for Part-time and Temporary Employees¶ Sick leave will be accrued by a minimum of one-hour (1) for every forty (40) hours worked (vacation, paid time off or on sick leave is not counted for accrual purposes). Employees are not eligible to take sick leave until after the ninetieth (90<sup>th</sup>) calendar day following the date of employment.

## 6.11 Employee Wellness Program

remove and add

The **City of Toledo** is committed to promoting the health and well-being of its employees through a comprehensive **Employee Wellness Program**. This voluntary program encourages staff participation in various health-focused activities, fostering a culture of wellness and camaraderie across departments.

### **Program Highlights:**

- **Voluntary Participation:** While participation is encouraged, employees are not obligated to join the wellness initiatives.
- **Wellness Activities:** The program offers a range of activities designed to promote healthy lifestyles, including:
  - **Physical Activities:** Group exercises, walking clubs, and fitness challenges.
  - **Educational Workshops:** Sessions on nutrition, stress management, and preventive health.
  - **Health Screenings:** Periodic health assessments to monitor and improve employee health metrics.
- **Incentives and Rewards:** To motivate participation, the City provides various incentives, such as:
  - **Prizes:** Recognition and rewards for achieving wellness milestones.
  - **Team Competitions:** Friendly contests that build teamwork and promote healthy habits.
- **Interdepartmental Engagement:** To strengthen relationships among departments, the City organizes:
  - **Sponsored Lunches:** When budget permits, lunches are provided to encourage interaction and camaraderie.
  - **Collaborative Events:** Joint activities that bring together staff from various departments.

### **Program Benefits:**

- **Health Insurance Premium Discount:** Active participation in the wellness program may qualify the City for a **2% discount** on monthly medical premiums, as recognized by the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Employee Benefit Trust's WellCity Award program.
- **Enhanced Employee Well-Being:** Engaging in wellness activities contributes to improved physical and mental health, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction.
- **Supportive Work Environment:** The program fosters a supportive atmosphere where employees feel valued and motivated to pursue healthier lifestyles.

### **Additional Resources:**

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Employees have access to confidential counseling and support services to address personal and work-related challenges.

The City of Toledo remains dedicated to supporting the health and wellness of its employees, recognizing that a healthy workforce is integral to the overall success and vitality of the community.

**Deleted:** An Employee Wellness Program is offered to City of Toledo employees at no cost. Wellness program promotes and encourages a healthy lifestyle for employees and their families. Employees can participate in a variety of wellness activities during normal working hours as well as on their own. The City of Toledo may be eligible for a two percent (2%) discount on monthly medical premiums for active participation.

## 6.12 Washington Cares Fund - Long-term Care

[remove and add the following](#)

**Overview:** The **Washington Cares Fund** is a state-operated public insurance program designed to provide long-term care services to Washington residents. Funded through employee payroll contributions, the program aims to alleviate the financial burden of long-term care and reduce reliance on Medicaid.

### Key Features:

- **Premium Contributions:** As of July 1, 2023, employers are required to deduct a premium of **0.58%** from employee wages to fund the program. For example, an employee earning \$50,000 annually would contribute approximately \$290 per year.
- **Benefit Eligibility:** Starting July 1, 2026, eligible individuals can access benefits up to a **lifetime maximum of \$36,500**, adjusted annually for inflation. To qualify, individuals must have contributed to the program for:
  - **10 years** without a break of **5 or more consecutive years**, or
  - **3 of the past 6 years** at the time of application, and
  - Worked at least **500 hours per year** during those years.
- **Covered Services:** Benefits can be utilized for various long-term care services, including:
  - Professional in-home care
  - Assisted living facilities
  - Nursing home care
  - Home modifications
  - Adaptive equipment
  - Transportation
  - Meal delivery services
  - Family caregiver support

### Employee Exemptions:

Certain employees may be exempt from participating in the WA Cares Fund. Exemption categories include:

1. **Veterans with Disabilities:** Veterans with a **70% or higher service-connected disability** can apply for a permanent exemption.
2. **Non-Immigrant Visa Holders:** Individuals working in Washington on non-immigrant visas are eligible for conditional exemptions.
3. **Spouses or Registered Domestic Partners of Active-Duty Military Members:** Spouses or registered domestic partners of active-duty U.S. armed forces members can apply for conditional exemptions.
4. **Out-of-State Workers:** Employees whose permanent residence is outside of Washington State are eligible for conditional exemptions. [esd.wa.gov](https://www.esd.wa.gov)

**Deleted:** The Washington Cares Fund Program, established by Washington State in 2019, is the first state-operated public insurance program in the nation designed to support long-term care services. It is funded solely through employee payroll assessments, aiming to alleviate the financial burden on families and reduce reliance on Medicaid.¶

¶ Employers began deducting 0.58% of employee wages in July 2023 to fund the program. Starting in July 2026, eligible individuals can access benefits up to \$36,500 (adjusted for inflation) for a variety of long-term care services. Eligibility requires paying into the program for a set duration, with specific provisions for those born before January 1, 1968. Workers moving out of state can continue their participation, and self-employed individuals have the option to join voluntarily. Certain groups can opt out under defined conditions. This foundational coverage parallels the relationship between Social Security and 401(k) plans, allowing for supplemental private insurance.¶

¶ Long-term care is offered through Washington State Long-term Care Trust Act. It is offered to those who require services and have paid premiums into the account. Every employee is required to participate in the state program unless they have purchased an alternative qualifying plan and have received an exemption from the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD). An employee's exemption status is permanent; once they receive an exemption, they are permanently disqualified from WA Cares. Employees who have "opted out" must supply employer with their approved exemption letter.¶

¶ If a new hire produces an exemption approval letter, then they are not subject to the premiums. If a new hire does not have an exemption approval letter, even if they have proof of private long-term care insurance, they are subject to the premiums.

### Exemption Application Process:

- **Employee Responsibility:** Employees must apply for an exemption through the **Employment Security Department (ESD)**. Employers cannot apply on behalf of employees.
- **Approval Notification:** Upon approval, employees receive an exemption approval letter from the ESD.
- **Employer Notification:** Employees must provide a copy of the exemption approval letter to their employer. Employers are required to maintain this documentation and cease withholding WA Cares premiums from exempt employees.

### Employer Responsibilities:

- **Premium Collection:** Employers must **deduct the 0.58% premium** from employee wages starting July 1, 2023.
- **Reporting and Remittance:** Employers are responsible for **reporting employee wages and hours** and **remitting collected premiums** to the ESD on a quarterly basis.
- **Exemption Management:** Employers must **track employee exemptions** by:
  - Keeping a copy of the employee's exemption approval letter on file.
  - Ensuring premiums are **not deducted** from exempt employees.

### Additional Considerations:

- **Portability:** Benefits are generally **not portable** outside Washington State. However, certain exemptions apply, and legislation may evolve. Employees planning to relocate should consult the latest guidelines.
- **Supplemental Coverage:** The WA Cares Fund provides foundational coverage. Employees may consider purchasing additional private long-term care insurance to supplement the state-provided benefit.

For comprehensive and up-to-date information, employees and employers should refer to the official WA Cares Fund website and consult the Employment Security Department as needed.

WA Cares is self-funded entirely by employee contributions, employers do not contribute

