

Domestic Partnership Benefits Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a domestic partnership?

- Two individuals of the same gender who live together in a long-term relationship of indefinite duration; and
- Both partners have an exclusive mutual commitment in which they agree to be jointly responsible for each other's common welfare and share financial obligations; and
- The partners are not related by blood to a degree of closeness which would prohibit legal marriage in the state in which they legally reside; and
- The partners may not be married to any other person.

Individuals who meet the criteria listed above must also demonstrate joint responsibility for each other's common welfare and financial obligations.

2. What benefits is my Domestic Partner eligible for?

Benefits-eligible faculty and staff may add domestic partners to their coverage under the

- Medical - Maroon Plan, Maroon Savings Choice Plan, the University of Chicago Health Plan (UCHP), BlueCross BlueShield HMO Illinois;
- Dental - MetLife Dental Plans (Copay and PPO),
- Vision - VSP Vision Plans (Basic or Premier);
- Spouse/Partner Life Insurance.

Domestic partners are also eligible for coverage under the University's Personal Accident Insurance Plan (PAI).

3. Why is the University of Chicago making changes to its domestic partner benefits?

Following the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing same sex marriage, the University is revising its program to reflect the change in law. To respect the relationships of current employees, the new program will continue to offer benefits to all employees who are currently participating in the program or register as domestic partners before January 1, 2017.

4. How is the new program different?

Effective January 1, 2017,

- Current participants will continue to receive benefits under the existing program and do not have to take any action, as long as they remain in their existing partnership.
- Current faculty and staff members who verify their domestic partnership arrangement on or before December 31, 2016, will be grandfathered into the existing program, as long as they remain in their existing partnership.
- Partners who are not grandfathered into the existing domestic benefit partnership program will need to be married or be in a civil union to receive benefits.

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5. Why is the University communicating the changes now?

To provide adequate time for faculty and staff to register current domestic partners with the University of Chicago. An employee with a domestic partner registered with the University on or before December 31, 2016, will be grandfathered into the existing program, as long as they remain in their existing partnership.

6. Are current domestic partners impacted by this change?

No, current registered domestic partners will continue to receive benefits under the existing program, as long as they remain in their existing partnership.

7. If my domestic partner is currently enrolled in health benefits, do I need to do anything?

No action is needed to continue health benefits for registered domestic partners, as long as they remain their existing partnership.

8. What happens if my registered domestic partner is not enrolled in health benefits prior to January 1, 2017?

After January 1, 2017, partners who are not grandfathered into the existing domestic benefit partnership program will need to be married or be in a civil union to receive benefits. Domestic partners registered before January 1, 2107 will be grandfathered in to the existing program and will remain an eligible dependent for health benefits after as long as they remain in their existing partnership.

9. What happens if my partner and I terminate our relationship, or my relationship no longer meets the criteria of a domestic partnership?

If a partnership that is grandfathered into the existing program is dissolved or ceases to meet the criteria of the current program after January 1, 2017, then the former partner is no longer eligible to receive partnership benefits.

10. What happens if I leave the University and return?

If you leave the University prior to December 31, 2016, and return after this date, your prior domestic partnership will no longer be honored.

11. Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Contact the Benefits Office to speak to a Benefit Specialist at 773-702-9634 or benefits@uchicago.edu.