



Optional Payment Election Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Who is eligible for the Optional Payment Election?

Eligible employees include full –time annual salaried employees who have commenced work on or after July 1, 2026 and shall not include any other employee classification or any employee who has not yet actively commenced work. An eligible employee will also include any individual who returns to State service after a prior separation from state service if they were inactive for at least one full payroll period and, if applicable, fully completed any prior optional payment(s) repayment. Eligible employees, where applicable to a particular bargaining unit, shall also include College Year Full (CYF), Calendar (CAL) and 21 Pay Periods (21P).

I am a part time employee. Am I eligible for this optional payment?

No.

I am a 21 Pay Period (21P) employee. Am I eligible for this optional payment?

Yes.

I am a Calendar (CAL) employee. Am I eligible for this optional payment?

Yes.

I am a College Year Full (CYF) employee. Am I eligible for this optional payment?

Yes.

I am an hourly/temp employee. Am I eligible for this optional payment?

No.

What bargaining unit do I need to be in to be eligible?

The Office of Employee Relations (OER) has agreements to cover the following bargaining units, or has extended this program to unrepresented units as follows: Bargaining unit 01, 02, 03, 04, 06, 08, 13, 21, 31, 46, 47, 66, 78, 96, 97, 98. If you have a question as to whether you are in an eligible bargaining unit please contact your human resources office.

I am a previous State employee returning to State Service. Am I eligible for the optional payment?

Yes. An individual who returns to State service is eligible for the optional payment, provided they were inactive for at least one full pay period and, if applicable, fully completed any prior option payment(s) repayments.

Is the election for this optional payment voluntary?

Yes. It is an employee's choice to choose or not choose to receive an optional payment.

What do I have to do to take part in the program?

In order to take part in the Optional Payment Election Program, the employee must fill out the Optional Payment Election Form, have it notarized, and submit to their agency, authority, or other entity's Human Resources Office.

Does the Optional Payment Election form have to be notarized?

Yes, if an employee elects to participate in the Optional Payment Election Program, they will need to have the election form notarized.

Is there a digital PDF I can fill out?

Participants may fill out the Optional Payment Election Form electronically, however the form must be notarized before it can be submitted.

When is the Optional Payment Election form due?

In order to ensure timely payment of the optional payment, the employee must submit the form prior to their start date. Employees may be able to submit the form after the commencement of employment but will affect the timing of the payment.

To whom do I submit the Optional Payment Election form?

Employees should submit their completed election form to the Human Resources Office of the agency for which they will be employed.

Will I receive confirmation that my form was received and processed?

Yes. The agency that is hiring you will confirm that they have received your form, processed the form and send you information on what your approximate bi-weekly deduction will be after they have received and processed your form.

What is a hiring rate and how do I find out what mine is?

The hiring rate of a position is generally either set in statute, or an amount negotiated between the State and one of the various employee organizations. For questions related to your specific position, contact your agency HR department.

How do I find my Employee Identification Number?

New State employees should contact the HR department of the agency, authority, or other entity for which they will be employed. If an N number is not available, the employee should use the last 4 digits of their social security number. At the time of processing the form, the agency will add the employee identification number when they have it.

Is the optional payment subject to any withholding?

The optional payment will not be subject to any withholding including but not limited to taxes, health insurance or other deductions.

Does the eligible employee’s written election and receipt of optional payment impact the earning or accumulation of accruals, seniority, or any other benefit?

No.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

Employees should direct all questions to the agency, authority, or other entity’s Human Resources Office for which they will be employed.

I was given a conditional offer. What happens if I do not get appointed to the position?

An employee will not receive the optional payment unless an official appointment is made.

Can I cancel my election prior to the payment being made?

No. Once the election is made it cannot be revoked.

When do I have to decide if I want to elect to receive the optional payment?

You will be provided with information on this program and process to elect before you start. Ideally you will elect and submit the election prior to starting but the option must be exercised no later than your first day of employment, which may delay your receipt of funds.

Payment Questions

What is the amount of the optional payment?

The optional payment will be two weeks of the employee’s base salary, calculated at the negotiated hiring rate in statute, equated salary grade hiring rate, or in accordance with established salary setting guidance, but not to exceed \$10,000. If you are unsure of the salary amount that will be used for your calculation, contact the HR department of the agency, authority, or other entity for which you will be employed. Please note that the amount will not be prorated for any reason, even if an individual starts in the middle of a payroll period.

Are any other payments included in the optional payment?

No, the optional payment only includes base salary. Payments such as location pay, geographic pay, inconvenience pay, shift differentials, etc. are not included.

Can I opt to receive more or less than two weeks’ pay for the optional payment?

No.

If I enroll in the program, when will I receive the optional payment?

Once enrolled timely, you can expect to receive the optional payment approximately two weeks after the employee begins their new position.

Is it guaranteed that I will receive my optional payment two weeks after my start date?

It is not guaranteed that an employee will receive their payment exactly two weeks after their start date. Employees can use the approximate two-week timeline as a guide but should not rely on that to determine a specific date of receipt.

How will I receive the payment? Will it be received as a check or direct deposit?

The optional payment will be made via check mailed directly to the employee.

Will I receive additional money if I am subject to an increased hiring rate?

No, if an eligible employee is in a graded position subject to an increased hiring rate, the amount of the optional payment will be based on the regular hiring rate of the position.

My position does not have a hiring rate. How do I know how much I will be paid? If an eligible employee elects to participate in the optional payment program and their position does not have a specific hiring rate, they will be paid two weeks of the basic annual salary at the lower end of the range for such position in accordance with established salary setting guidance, not to exceed \$10,000.

What if I do not receive my optional payment two weeks after my start date?

In the small chance this occurs, employees should contact their Human Resources Office.

Will I receive the payment in a paper check or via direct deposit?

The payment will most likely come in a paper check unless direct deposit has been set up.

Repayment Questions

Do I have to repay the optional payment?

Yes, the optional payment is an advance against salary and must be paid back pursuant to the plan outlined in the Optional Payment Election Form.

How much do I have to pay back?

Employees who participate in the program must pay the amount of the original payment back in full.

What are the terms of the repayment?

Repayment will begin in an employee's first regular paycheck and then continuing for an additional 13 checks (a total of 14 checks). Repayment from each regular paycheck will be 1/14th of the amount of the optional payment. This amount will not change even if an employee goes on a part-time or other reduced schedule.

When does the repayment start?

Repayment is anticipated to begin with the employee's first regular paycheck which is to be received around 4 weeks after the employee's start date

Can I pay the optional payment back under alternative terms (quicker or longer etc.)?

No, the only repayment plan offered is 14 pay periods. There is no ability to pay the optional payment back in a manner that is longer or shorter. There is also no mechanism to accept additional payments.

Is there anything I have to do to initiate the repayment?

No. Repayment will be automatically deducted from the employee's paycheck.

Do I pay interest on the advance upon repayment?

No interest is taken during repayment. Only the full principal amount of the optional payment is repaid.

Will the repayment be made pre- or post-tax?

The repayment of the optional payment will be made on a post-tax basis.

What if I leave State service after receiving the payment but before repayment is complete?

If a recipient separates from State service before repayment is complete, any amount still owed shall be deducted from the recipient's final paycheck and/or any payment for vacation accruals. The State may take legal action to recoup any amounts that were not repaid. Amounts not repaid may have tax consequences for the recipient.

What if during repayment I go on a paid long-term leave?

The reimbursement payments will continue to be taken out of the funds the employee receives during the period of paid leave.

What if during repayment I go on an unpaid long-term leave

If a recipient goes on a period of unpaid leave that does not permit a bi-weekly repayment or repayments to be made, the reimbursement payments will continue once the recipient returns to payroll and extend beyond 14 consecutive payroll periods. If the employee does not return, they will be subject to legal action to recover any unpaid advance.