

Acronyms for Your HR Needs

Confused about acronyms related to HR and benefits information? The following listing provides descriptions of common terms.

AA - Affirmative Action.

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act. Requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

ADEA - Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. Legislation that prohibits age discrimination in employment.

BIW - Bi-Weekly - paid a bi-weekly rate for a defined number of pay periods.

BFOQ or BOQ - Bona Fide Occupational Qualification. A minimum qualification requirement needed as a prerequisite to being able to do a particular job. A defense in certain disparate treatment claims.

CHIPRA - Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act

COBRA - Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985. Provides for limited continuation of health insurance.

DSI--Discretionary Salary Increase.

DOB - Date of Birth.

DOL—U.S. Department of Labor, and used for state labor offices

DOT - Dictionary of Occupational Titles - a federal title classification document that categorizes and describes the type of work typically associated with job titles and places titles into statistical reporting categories.

EAP - Employee Assistance Program.

EBSA - Employee Benefits Security Administration.

EEO - Equal Employment Opportunity. Backed by legislation and executive orders, this acronym is used to notify the public that an employer's provide equal treatment and opportunity for all job applicants and employees.

EEOC - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

EPA - Equal Pay Act, or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

EPPA - Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988. Employers must display a poster in the workplace apprising employees of their rights under EPPA.

ERISA - Employee Retirement Income Security Act

FLSA - Fair Labor Standards Act. A law that ensures fair treatment of employees and establishes the employment categories exempt and non-exempt. Non-exempt employees must be paid time and one half for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a defined work week.

FMLA - Family and Medical Leave Act - federal law that requires employers to extend medical coverage and guarantee leaves of limited duration.

FOIA - Freedom of Information Act. Requires agencies to disclose records requested in writing by any person. However, agencies may withhold information pursuant to nine exemptions and three exclusions contained in the statute.

FSA - Flexible Spending Arrangement. Allows employees to be reimbursed for medical expenses. FSAs are usually funded through voluntary salary reduction agreements with an employer.

FTA - Full-time annual salary.

FUTA - Federal Unemployment Tax Act. With state unemployment systems, FUTA provides for payments of unemployment compensation to workers who have lost their jobs. Most employers pay both a Federal and a state unemployment tax. A list of state unemployment tax agencies, including addresses and phone numbers, is available in Publication 926, Household Employer's Tax Guide.

HCFA - Health Care Financing Administration - federal agency responsible for oversight of social security and Medicare.

HCTC - Health Coverage Tax Credit - pays a percentage of health insurance premiums for qualified individuals and their families.

HIPAA - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

HMO - Health Maintenance Organizations. Alternative local/regional health insurance providers that generally require participants to use their doctors and clinics unless treatment is required when they are traveling or living out of the region.

HRA - Health Reimbursement Arrangement. Employees are reimbursed tax free for qualified medical expenses up to a maximum dollar amount for a coverage period. A health reimbursement arrangement must be funded solely by an employer.

HRMS - Human Resource Management System - Information system for management of employee and position data.

HRV - Hourly - paid at an hourly rate for hours worked.

HSA - Health Savings Account. Designed to help individuals save for future qualified medical and retiree health expenses on a tax-free basis.

I-9 - I-9 Form. An Immigration and Naturalization Services form employers are required to obtain from every appointee, along with documentation to prove their identity and right to employment.

IRA—Individual Retirement Account. A trust or custodial account set up in the United States for the exclusive benefit of an individual or his or her beneficiaries.

IRCA - Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

IRS - Internal Revenue Service

KSA - Knowledge, Skills, or Abilities.

LEAP - Labor Education Action Program. A program that provides training for employees.

LIFE - Legal Immigration Family Equity Act.

LWO - Leave without pay.

LWP - Leave with pay.

MSA - Medical Savings Account. Help self-employed individuals and employees of certain small employers meet the medical care costs of the account holder, the account holder's spouse, or the account holder's dependent(s).

NLRA - National Labor Relations Act.

NRA - Nonresident Alien. Individual who is not a U.S. citizen, does not have a green card, and is not a resident alien for tax purposes. NRAs are taxed under an entirely different system.

OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A federal agency responsible for ensuring safe work environments.

PPO - Preferred Provider Organization- A network of doctors, hospitals and others that provide services that contract with a health insurer to provide services to its members.

PTO - Paid Time Off. A system of paid days off work for employees that combines personal, sick, vacation or other employer-provided leave into one bank.

RA - Resident Alien. Individual who is not a U.S. citizen and does not have a green card, but who has passed the substantial presence test for U.S. residency. A resident alien is taxed like a U.S. citizen.

RIF - Reduction In Force. Reducing the work force through a plan that includes layoffs or retrenchments.

SL (SLxx) - Salary Level (for professional employee position, non-statutory salary charts).

SS - Social Security

SSN - Social Security Number

SSA - Social Security Administration

SEP - Simplified Employee Pension plan.

SEPPAA - Single-Employer Pension Plan Amendments Act (1986)

SIC - Standard Industrial Classification

SIMPLE Plan - Savings Incentive Match Plan for Employees.

TPA - Third Party Administrator

USCIS - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USERRA - Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act

WARN - Workers' Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. Protects workers, their families, and communities by requiring most employers with 100 or more employees to provide notification 60 calendar days in advance of plant closings and mass layoffs.

WC - Workers' Compensation

WCB - Workers' Compensation Board