

Title/Subject: **SURVIVOR BENEFITS**

Applies to: faculty staff students student employees visitors contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: November 1, 2015

Contact for More Information: Human Resources

Board Policy Administrative Policy Procedure Guideline

BACKGROUND:

The death of an employee is a tragic and often unexpected event. The intent of survivor benefits is to assist the Spouse [including Other Eligible Individual] and Dependent Child(ren) of the deceased employee during their time of loss by extending certain benefits programs for which the employee was eligible and/or enrolled in as an employee.

PURPOSE:

To establish uniform treatment and procedures for extending benefits to survivors of employees who have deceased while in a paid status. Survivor benefits are to be extended to the Spouse [including Other Eligible Individual] and Dependent Child(ren) of the deceased employee as described below:

DEFINITIONS:

Beneficiary: The individual who is designated to receive the benefit of the employee's life insurance and/or retirement plan upon death of the employee.

Dependent Children: Refers to Dependent Child(ren) as defined in the applicable plan document or benefit policy.

Other Eligible Individual: Refers to Other Eligible Individual as described at the Other Eligible Individual website: https://www.cmich.edu/fas/hr/HRBenefitsandWellness/Pages/Other_Eligible_Individual.aspx.

Spouse: Refers to Spouse as defined in the applicable plan document or benefit policy.

POLICY:

CMU will extend the following benefits to surviving dependents of employees who have deceased while in a paid status:

Benefit Coverage Continuation: If eligible, benefit coverage may be continued under COBRA. CMU will continue the employer contribution toward COBRA premiums for the first three (3) months following the death of an employee. The dependent(s) will be responsible for the deceased employee's portion of the premium cost for the first three (3) months following death, and thereafter the full premium cost. CMU will waive the 2% administrative fee on COBRA premiums for up to thirty-six (36) months. Refer to the Continuation of Health Insurance – COBRA policy for details.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services will be extended to all members of the deceased employee's household for 1 year following the employee's death.

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Employee Life Insurance will provide the Beneficiary with a lump sum benefit payment. Any grief, financial and legal counseling offered by the life insurance carrier will be available to the surviving Spouse [including Other Eligible Individual] and Dependent Child(ren).

Dependent Life Insurance Any dependent life insurance in force at the time of the employee's death may be continued as an individual policy. Spouses [including Other Eligible Individual] and Dependent Child(ren) may elect to port/ convert their life insurance coverage. However, the Dependent child(ren) cannot become insured for portable coverage unless the Spouse or Other Eligible Individual also becomes insured for portable coverage.

Retirement Plan:

Benefits will be determined according to the plan in which the employee had been enrolled.

Final Paycheck:

Wages: All wages (including fringe benefits not paid in accordance with written contract, written policy or written plan) will be paid in the order named: surviving spouse, children, father or mother, sister or brother, unless employee established designee(s) by signed statement filed with CMU. This payment, in form of a check, will include the following:

Retirement Service Award/Sick Leave Payoff: If the employee was eligible for and qualified to receive a retirement service award or sick leave payoff at time of death,

Vacation Bank Payout: 100% of the deceased employee's accrued unused vacation time will be paid up to a maximum of 300 hours.

Tuition Benefit Tuition Benefit will be extended to the surviving Spouse [including Other Eligible Individual] and Dependent Child(ren) following the parameters in the [Tuition Benefit policy](#). To be eligible for tuition benefits under the survivor benefit policy:

- Dependent Child(ren) must be in their junior or senior year of high school, or be currently enrolled or accepted for enrollment at CMU.
- Spouses [including Other Eligible Individual] must be currently enrolled, or enroll in an undergraduate degree within two years of the date of death.

Tuition benefits will be available for the Spouse [including Other Eligible Individual] and/or dependent child(ren) through the completion of an undergraduate degree. If the Spouse [including Other Eligible Individual] and/or dependent child(ren) is currently enrolled in a graduate program, tuition benefit eligibility will continue through the completion of the graduate degree.

PROCEDURE:

1. Upon notification of an employee's death the Benefits and Wellness Office will take the steps necessary to contact Spouses [including Other Eligible Individual] and/or the Dependent Child(ren) of deceased employees and provide detailed information regarding the specific benefits for which they are eligible based upon the employee group and benefit package in which the deceased employee was enrolled.
2. In order to be eligible for the employer contribution during the first three (3) months of COBRA coverage, Spouses [including Other Eligible Individual] and/or the Dependent Child(ren) need to return the COBRA election form indicating the coverage to be continued within sixty (60) days from the date on the COBRA election form and pay their portion of the premium per the requirements under COBRA.

Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures and directives relative to its subject. Please refer questions or concerns to the originating department.