

CAREERS

Get a Raise ... Without a Raise

Don't miss out on job benefits that can save you money

By Laura Petrecca,

Published January 02, 2024



ANDRE RUCKER

Looking for an income lift but don't see a [salary bump](#) in the near future? It's time to take a fresh look at your benefits package.

In recent years, many employers have added financially fruitful perks that go well beyond the usual health insurance and 401(k) match. Among the popular new offerings is extra time off, via policies that let

workers use paid days off for [caregiving](#), volunteering and other purposes that in the past required taking vacation days.

Unfortunately, many workers don't capitalize on all that's given to them. "Employees are unaware of the full breadth of benefits and resources at their disposal," says Rachael McCann Jones, global diversity, equity and inclusion solutions leader at benefits consultancy WTW.

To see what your employer offers, schedule a meeting with your HR rep or take some time to scour your workplace intranet. Here's a sampling of benefits that innovative companies offer.

Reimbursement for home office costs

As remote work remains commonplace, nearly 6 in 10 employers subsidize [work-from-home](#) necessities such as office supplies and internet service, contributing an average maximum of \$857 a year, according to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

Extra time with your family

With grandparent (or "granternity") leave and paid time off for family care, workers can receive compensation specifically for spending meaningful time with relatives. One-third of employers offer paid leave to care for immediate family members and almost 20 percent provide paid leave to care for extended family, SHRM says.

Menopause-support services

Among organizations with 500 or more employees, 15 percent offer menopause benefits or plan to do so in 2024, according to benefits consulting firm Mercer. This includes access to specialists and medical coverage for symptoms.

Paid time off for community engagement

While at food banks, animal shelters and even protest marches, workers can still earn their pay. Nearly 30 percent of employers grant paid time off for volunteering, and about 5 percent do so for protests or activism, SHRM reports.

Access to professional advice

Nearly half of employers offer retirement planning or investment advice online, in a group setting or one-on-one, SHRM says. Almost 10 percent of large employers offer or plan to offer employer-paid legal services, according to Mercer. Typically, this includes help with legal documents, including leases, powers of attorney and small-claims court filings.

Reduced commuter costs

Nearly 20 percent of large organizations offer employer-provided or subsidized transportation distinct from IRS-qualified flexible spending accounts for commuters.

Cash for medical expenses

Of the 60 percent of employers that offer a health savings account (HSA) as part of a high-deductible health plan, nearly two-thirds contribute matching dollars to that account.

Pet-related perks

Nearly 1 in 5 employers offer pet insurance, according to SHRM. Some organizations (including 7 percent of large service-industry employers, Mercer says) offer days off to care for a [sick pet](#) and “pawternity” leave when you adopt.

Along with these extras, many employers will subsidize your gym membership, says WTW’s McCann Jones. And a growing number offer lifestyle spending accounts to fund physical, financial, emotional or

mental well-being through measures such as nutritional counseling and meditation apps.

Also, a benefit for long-term care is one of the biggest areas of growth for benefits, McCann Jones says. That might include discounted long-term care insurance or long-term care as a rider to life insurance.

Laura Petrecca is a contributing writer for AARP. She has written for USA Today, Real Simple, Digiday's WorkLife, Kiplinger, AARP, Men's Health, Worth, Crain's New York Business and Advertising Age.