

## **Planning for Retirement from Windstream**

Congratulations on your decision to retire! You are embarking upon a major life change and we want to help guide you through the transition! Below you will find answers to many of the most-asked questions, as well as links to important resources, vendor websites, and helpful phone numbers that will guide you through this process.

### **Eligibility for Retirement.**

The following eligibility rules determine if an employee is retirement eligible:

#### **Eligibility Rules for Windstream Retiree Health Benefits.**

- Age 55-with at least 20 years of service
- Age 60-with at least 15 years of service
- Age 65-with at least 5 years of service

**\*\*Many Bargaining groups have different eligibility rules. Please reference your bargaining agreement for details.**

### **Retirement First Steps.**

- Visit <https://windstreambenefits.com/retirement/> for all of the great retirement resources on our Windstream Benefits site.
- Employees should give Windstream a 30-day notice regarding plans for retirement.
- Notify your Manager or Supervisor of your intent to retire and schedule your last date of employment with Windstream.
- Provide a formal retirement notice that includes your last date of employment in writing to your Manager or Supervisor and copy your Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP). You may locate your HRBP using the [HR Self-Service Portal](#).
- If you are over age 65 and did not enroll in all parts of Medicare when you turned 65 because you still had Windstream sponsored medical coverage, you will need a completed [Medicare Form CMS-L564](#) to enroll in Medicare at the point of retirement. This form verifies that you and / or your spouse had Windstream's medical coverage until the point of your retirement and allows you to begin Medicare coverage without a rate penalty for late enrollment. The form can be found at [Medicare Form CMS-L564](#). Please complete your portion of the form and create a ticket in the [HR Solutions Center](#) to have the employer section of the form completed by the Benefits team and returned to you.

### **VACATION PAY**

Employees who are leaving the Company due to retirement will be paid total eligible unused vacation. Upon your effective termination date, any unused vacation pay will automatically payout in a lump sum payment. You may choose to use your vacation days up until your last date of employment instead of receiving the payout of vacation in a lump sum after your retirement date.

## **OPTIONAL HOLIDAY PAY**

Windstream does not payout unused Optional Holidays.

**\*\*Bargaining unit employees should check your collective bargaining agreement.**

## **SICK LEAVE**

Windstream does not payout unused, accrued sick leave upon termination of employment.

## **INSURANCE BENEFITS**

Please notify Businessolver at **888.850.1712** if your mailing address will change after your retirement. Your address will be used for your final IRS Form 1095-C, *Employer-Provided Health Insurance Offer and Coverage*.

*Your benefits will continue through the end of the month of your last date of employment.* It takes approximately one (1) week after your last date of employment for benefit vendors to receive the files needed to end your coverage. There is nothing you need to do to initiate this process as it will happen automatically.

## **Retiree Benefit Options.**

Your retirement benefits are determined by your current benefits as an active employee. The following plans can be carried into retirement if enrolled as an active employee at the point of employment termination:

- Medical with prescription (up to age 65)
- Dental
- Vision
- Supplemental Life
- Supplemental AD&D
- Spouse Life
- Child Life

## **Medical Plans Overview**

Windstream eligible retirees under age 65 and dependents under age 26 may elect coverage from the Windstream Retiree High Deductible Health Plans. For pre- 65 eligible retiree and dependents, 2 packets will be mailed to you in separate mailings. One packet is for retiree insurance and the other packet will be for COBRA continuation coverage.

Retiree insurance and COBRA packets are mailed 2-3 weeks after your retirement date. Packet generation is dependent upon your retirement record being entered in the Hub and being transmitted to Businessolver. Packets cannot be generated prior to retirement, and you will have several weeks to enroll after you receive the packets. Retiree and COBRA rates are posted on [windstreambenefits.com](http://windstreambenefits.com).

COBRA provides certain former employees, retirees, spouses, and dependent children the right to temporary continuation of group health plan coverage at group rates. It allows you to continue your current group health plan coverage for up to 18-months. Coverage may be continued longer than 18 months in certain circumstances. COBRA coverage, however, is only available when coverage is lost due to certain events. You cannot elect COBRA continuation coverage and retiree insurance coverage for the same benefits. COBRA continuation coverage allows you to continue only your medical, dental and vision insurance for a limited period of time. Retiree insurance coverage allows you to continue your medical, dental and vision insurance as long as you continue to pay for coverage. If you are interested in maintaining your medical, dental, or vision coverage for longer than 18 months, you may want to consider electing retiree insurance coverage for those benefits (although there are not any guarantees of its continuation into the future).

At age 65 or older, you will have the option to select individual medical insurance coverage through Businessolver. Businessolver is not an insurance company; they provide an “insurance exchange” that allows individuals to choose coverage that best meets their needs and budget from leading health insurance carriers. Businessolver will mail you a welcome kit when your date of retirement is communicated by Windstream to Businessolver.

The welcome kit provides detail about your new health care options, instructions on how to setup a consultation, and explains how your Businessolver Benefits Counselor will assist you with your enrollment. For retiree and/ or dependents over 65, you may receive up to 3 packets. One packet is your welcome kit from Businessolver for your over 65 coverage, one packet will be for your dental, vision or life insurance benefits if you were enrolled in those benefits at the time of retirement, and a cobra continuation packet. ***In order to elect individual coverage through Businessolver, you or your dependent age 65+ must be enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B.***

Here are a few ways to research and reach out to the Social Security Administration:

- To enroll in Medicare coverage, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) on the web, or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778.
- To learn more about Medicare, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- You may also go to your local Social Security Administration and talk to someone in person.

Delta Dental and VSP are our dental and vision coverage providers. The retiree Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage is offered through Standard Insurance Company. To learn more about the healthcare plans and life insurance please visit [www.windstreambenefits.com](http://www.windstreambenefits.com) and click on the retirement tab.

## **HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (HSA)**

If you participate in a Health Savings Account, your account is yours to keep even if you terminate employment with Windstream. Your account can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses tax-free, even if you no longer have high deductible health plan coverage. The funds in your account roll over automatically each year and remain indefinitely until used. There is no time limit on using the funds.

If you elect a high deductible COBRA medical plan, you can continue to contribute to your account on a post-tax basis and file the information using form 8889 with your tax return. If you do not enroll, you will not be able to make new contributions to your account; however, you will be able to use the funds you have already contributed.

**Contact Businessolver if you have a MyChoice HSA account at 888.850.1712.**

**Mercer Marketplace by Wex charges a \$3/month fee to maintain your account. Contact Mercer Marketplace by Wex at 877.248.0510 for more information.**

## **MEDICAL AND LIMITED FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS (FSA)**

If you participate in the Medical Flexible Spending Account, your coverage ends when your employment terminates. You may receive reimbursement for eligible expenses incurred from January 1 of the plan year (or your FSA effective date, if later) through your retirement date. However, you have the right to continue making contributions (on a post-tax basis) to your account for up to 18 months after your retirement. Information on continuing your coverage will be sent to your home within 3 weeks. If you choose not to continue your FSA through COBRA enrollment, you will have until March 31 of the following year to file a claim for reimbursement for any outstanding eligible medical expenses incurred prior to your date of termination.

## **401(k) PLAN THROUGH MERRILL LYNCH**

The Windstream 401(k) Plan is self-service and you should contact Merrill Lynch approximately 2 weeks after you receive your final paycheck from Windstream and request a distribution from your 401(k) plan.

- 2 weeks after you retire from Windstream, your 401(k) account will become eligible for distribution.
- You may elect a distribution on Benefits OnLine at [www.benefit.ml.com](http://www.benefit.ml.com) or by contacting Merrill Lynch at 800.228.4015.
- The distribution process is automated; no forms are required.
- You may also contact [www.windstreambenefits@windstream.com](mailto:www.windstreambenefits@windstream.com) with questions involving your 401(k) account.

## 401(k) LOANS

If you separate employment and you have an outstanding 401(k) plan loan, you have the option to either 1) repay the entire outstanding balance or 2) have the unpaid balance reclassified as a distribution and recorded as taxable income. If your loan balance is reclassified as taxable income, you will receive a Form 1099-R at year-end. If you have questions on your loan options, please reach out to Merrill Lynch at 800.228.4015 or visit the site at [www.benefit.ml.com](http://www.benefit.ml.com).

## WINDSTREAM PENSION PLAN:

The Windstream Pension Plan is closed to new participants and currently covers between 1,500 to 2,000 active employees of Windstream. Employees who are covered by this plan include:

- Certain union employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement providing for participation in the pension plan, and
- Former participants of one of the following pension plans with a pension benefit that transferred to the Windstream Pension Plan

Former Pension Plan	Year pension benefit transferred from former plan to Windstream Pension Plan
Alltel Corporation Pension Plan	2006
Valor Telecommunications Enterprises, LLC Pension Plan	2006
Pension Plan of The Concord Telephone Company	2007
The Conestoga Telephone & Telegraph Company Pension Plan for Members of Local 1671	2009
D&E Communications, Inc. Employees' Retirement Plan	2009
Iowa Telecom Pension Plan for Transferred Salaried Employees	2010
Iowa Telecom Pension Plan for Transferred Hourly Employees	2010

When you are ready to retire, *(if you participate in the Windstream Pension Plan)*, you may generate your pension application package through the Merrill Lynch Benefits On-Line System, by following these instructions. Call Merrill Lynch at (800) 228-4015 or go to [www.benefits.ml.com](http://www.benefits.ml.com).

1. Log onto [www.benefits.ml.com](http://www.benefits.ml.com)
2. From My Accounts
3. Select> Windstream Pension Plan
4. Select> Benefits Calculation
5. Select> Calculate Benefits
6. Enter a "Name" for your calculation
7. Enter your Last Day of employment
8. Enter your Pension Start Date *(normally 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month following your Last Day of Employment)*
9. Enter Spouse Birth Date (if married)
10. Enter your annual pay or enter \$0

11. Select> Continue, to view the calculation results
12. View your “Summary of Estimated Future Benefits”
13. Select the “SUBMIT PAPERWORK REQUEST” button to request the Pension Application Package to be mailed to your home address with 7-10 business days.

### **Submitting Your Completed Pension Election Forms**

- Confirm your pension start date is correct on your election forms.
- Contact Merrill Lynch at (800) 228-4015 before completing the forms, if your pension start date is incorrect on your pension election forms.
- Depending on the option you choose, your spouse **MUST** consent to your election by signing certain forms in the presence of a Notary.
- Make copies of your election forms for your personal record.
- Send Merrill Lynch these documents with your package when applicable:  
*Spouse Birth Certificate: Marriage Certificate: Divorce Decree with Settlement agreement: Death Certificate for spouse.*
- Complete all forms in their entirety and mail your election forms to Merrill Lynch.

### **Timing of Your First Pension Payment**

Approximately 2 months after your last day of employment, you should receive your pension payment.

See [www.windstreambenefits.com/pension-plan/](http://www.windstreambenefits.com/pension-plan/) for additional information.

### **RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS**

If you are a vested participant in any retirement or savings plan sponsored by Windstream, detailed information regarding your account balance and distribution rights will be mailed to your home address, usually within 90 days after your termination date.

### **PORTABILITY OF GROUP LIFE AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH INSURANCE**

Upon termination of employment, you may elect to continue your group basic life, supplemental life, dependent life, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance through the portability provision (up to the maximum amount eligible). Continuing your insurance through the portability provision allows you to continue your current coverage until age 100; however, coverage reductions begin at age 65. You will have 31 days from your termination date to enroll and pay the applicable premiums to Standard Insurance Company. The employee is responsible for requesting information on portability. You must contact the The Standard at 800.378.4668 ext 6785 for a Portability Notice if you plan to continue your coverage under this option.

### **CONVERSION OF BASIC OR SUPPLEMENTAL GROUP LIFE INSURANCE**

Upon loss of any of your active group basic life, supplemental life, or dependent life insurance coverage, you may convert your coverage to an individual policy. To do so, you must apply in writing to Standard Insurance Company within 31 days of your termination. The individual life insurance offered to you will be a form of universal life insurance, and does not include accidental

death and dismemberment coverage. Contact The Standard at 800.378.4668 ext 6785 to obtain a Request for Group Life Conversion Materials form. The employee is responsible for requesting conversion information.

### **CONVERSION OF LONG-TERM DISABILITY COVERAGE**

Long-term disability coverage ceases on your last date of employment. If you have been covered under the Plan for at least 12 months, you may be able to convert your coverage to an individual policy with Cigna. To do so, you must apply in writing to the insurance company within 31 days after your coverage terminates. Contact Cigna at 855-250-9412 for questions regarding the disability conversion form. It is the employee's responsibility to request a conversion packet upon termination of employment.

### **PORTABILITY OF CRITICAL ILLNESS, HOSPITALIZATION AND ACCIDENT PLANS**

Upon termination of employment, your coverage of supplemental plans ends at the end of the month in which your employment terminates. However, you may apply to port your policy into an individual one by contacting Aetna at 888.772.9682 within 30 days of your termination date.

### **DEPENDENT CARE PLAN**

If you participate in the Dependent Care Plan, your coverage under the Plan ends when your employment terminates. You may receive reimbursement for eligible expenses incurred from January 1 of the plan year (or your FSA effective date, if later) through your employment termination date. You may be required to refund any expenses paid from the plan that exceeded your contributions. If this situation applies to you, the Windstream Corporate Benefits Department will notify you within 45 to 60 days after your employment terminates. You have until March 31 of the following year to file a claim for reimbursement for any outstanding dependent care expenses incurred prior to your date of termination.

### **PARKING AND MASS TRANSIT PLANS**

If you participate in the Parking or Mass Transit Reimbursement Plans, your coverage under the Plan ends when your employment terminates. You have until March 31 of the following year to file a claim for reimbursement for any outstanding expenses incurred prior to your date of termination.

### **EQUITY**

In general, unvested stock options and restricted stock units will cancel effective with your termination date and, depending upon the terms of your grant agreement, you will have 30 to 90 days following your termination date to exercise any vested stock options. Please refer to your grant agreements to understand the specific details for each agreement.

### **NEXT GEN COLLEGE INVESTING PLAN**

If you are enrolled in the Next Gen College Investing Plan, your payroll direct deposit will end with your last paycheck. You retain control over the use of the account and can change



beneficiaries at any time and may continue to invest in the plan. For more information about Next Gen, please contact a Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor at (877) 4NEXTGEN.

### **LEGAL INSURANCE**

Upon termination of employment, your coverage under the Hyatt Legal plans ends at the end of the month in which your employment terminates. However, you may elect to continue your coverage through the portability provision. You will have 30 days from your termination date to port and pay the applicable premiums to MetLife. The employee is responsible for requesting information on portability. You must contact MetLife at 800.GET.MET 8 if you plan to continue coverage under this option.

### **PET INSURANCE**

Upon termination of employment, your Nationwide Pet group coverage will end. Nationwide will contact you to set up direct payment if you want to continue this coverage.

### **ID THEFT INSURANCE**

Upon termination of employment, your ID Theft insurance group coverage will end. InfoArmor will reach out to you via the email you entered when setting up your InfoArmor account advising you that your coverage has been cancelled due to termination and to contact InfoArmor and provide billing information if you desire to continue your coverage.

### **AUTO & HOME PLAN**

Upon termination of employment, your Auto & Home Plan and Pet group discount will continue until the end of your policy period, provided payment is made to the carrier. However, your payroll deduction discount will end upon termination of employment. Upon policy renewal, you will be offered individual policy rates from your carrier. For questions on continuing your Auto & Home Plan, contact Mercer at 866-553-9409.

### **WELL-BEING PROGRAM**

Participation in the wellbeing program ends upon termination of employment. Preventive care (biometric) screenings will remain available at no cost to you if you continue coverage in a Windstream medical plan.

The Windstream Benefits Center provided by the Businessolver team can assist you with questions you have regarding your Windstream benefits and can be reached at 888.850.1712. If you have a question for Human Resources, you may contact 855.411.MYHR.

### **WINDSTREAM CORPORATE CREDIT CARD**

If you were issued a Bank of America Visa Corporate Card and you have outstanding charges at the time of your retirement, your immediate supervisor will complete the final expense report on your behalf. You should send receipts for unfilled charges to your manager. Any charges found to be personal in nature will be subject to withholding on your final paycheck and/or severance. (Federal and state laws apply as related to authorization of withholdings from paychecks.) Shred or cut up your company credit card.



## **PENDING MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**

Send details to your immediate supervisor to complete the request on your behalf.

## **COPIES OF PAYROLL STUBS AND W-2's**

You may visit [My ADP](#), Click on "New User? CREATE ACCOUNT". Click on "I have a Registration Code" and enter [WindstrCo-myADP](#). Enter the following information to validate your identity:

- First and Last Name
- Last 4 digits of your Social Security Number
- Full Date of Birth: MM / DD/ YEAR (example: 06/28/1988)

Create and enter a unique password. Answer the security questions. *\*\*Keep in mind these are case sensitive. Also, keep them in a safe place. If you forget your security answers, ADP cannot help you retrieve them.*

Once registration is finished, ADP will send you an email with instructions on how to activate your email address. Click the link in the email you receive to complete the activation. A mobile app version is also available. Search for "**ADP Mobile Solutions**" in the Apple App Store or on Google Play.

## **RETIREE ELIGIBILITY FOR REHIRE**

Federal tax and pension laws do not permit companies to recognize transactions without substance. Therefore, Windstream cannot permit an employee to "terminate" employment, receive a distribution from a pension plan, and be immediately rehired. The law provides that there must be a clear and permanent intent to separate from service in order for a pension distribution to be made.

To assure compliance with federal tax and pension laws that all pension distributions commence after a bona fide retirement, Windstream requires a minimum no re-hire period of six (6) months for Windstream retirees who are eligible for and have received a pension distribution. In addition, please note that retirees have no absolute right to re-employment.

Pension distributions and medical benefits will be handled according to the applicable plan guidelines. Accordingly, a rehired retiree who becomes an active employee may lose retiree medical benefits. Also, applicable pension distributions will cease, and future distributions will be delayed until active employment is terminated.

Eligibility for health and welfare benefits, retirement plans, and all time-off benefits will follow the new hire guidelines outlined in this document or the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

## **Equipment Return:**

**Remote Employees:** You will coordinate the return of any Company provided equipment with your Manager and Offboarding Team: [windstream.itss.offboarding@windstream.com](mailto:windstream.itss.offboarding@windstream.com).

**Employees Reporting to an Office Location: You will make arrangements to leave any Company provided equipment with your manager at your reporting location.**

**Security Badge Return:**

- Return your security badge with your equipment.

**HELPFUL RESOURCES**

The [Windstream Benefits Retirement](#) site is a wonderful place to start.

The [“How to Retire”](#) link is also a great resource.

Resource	Phone	Web/Email
Aetna (accident, hospital and critical illness)	888-772-9682	
New York Life ( <i>Formerly Cigna</i> ) - Disability (STD/LTD/FMLA)	800-644-5567	<a href="#">New York Life Group Benefit Solutions</a>
Mercer Marketplace by Wex COBRA, HSA and FSA Accounts	877-248-0510	<a href="#">Windstream - HSA and FSA Accounts</a> Email: <a href="#">Email Mercer Marketplace</a>
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	800-327-5569	<a href="#">www.magellanhealth.com/member</a>
HR Solutions Center-Windstream	855-411-MYHR	<a href="#">HR Solutions Center</a>
Livongo – Diabetes Management	800-945-4355	<a href="#">Livongo by Teladoc Health</a>
Businessolver (Windstream Benefits)	888-850-1712	<a href="#">www.windstreambenefits.com</a>
Businesssolver (Retiree Benefits)	888-850-1712	<a href="#">www.windstreambenefits.com</a>
Merrill Lynch (401k and Pension)	800-228-4015	<a href="#">www.benefit.ml.com</a>
Standard Life Insurance Company	844-689-7832	<a href="#">Life, Accident, Disability and LTD</a>
Windstream Paystubs through ADP		<a href="#">My ADP</a>
Windstream Corporate HRIS (Address changes)		<a href="#">CORP.HRIS@windstream.com</a>
Windstream ITSS Offboarding (Company Equipment Return)		Windstream.itss.offboarding@windstream.com