



Beneficiary Frequently Asked Questions

Who is a beneficiary?

Required spousal beneficiary. If you're married at the time of death, your surviving spouse will be your sole beneficiary by law. Your spouse may consent to other designated beneficiaries—choose your beneficiary online and then complete the spousal consent form you receive with your confirmation. For example, married couples may decide to name their children as designated beneficiaries instead of each other. If you name your spouse as your beneficiary and you get divorced, your ex-spouse will be automatically revoked as a designated beneficiary. If you want your ex-spouse to remain a designated beneficiary, you must re-designate him or her as a beneficiary following the divorce.

Designated beneficiaries. If you're not married—or if you're married and your spouse consents to other designated beneficiaries—you may choose one or more beneficiaries to receive your plan benefits. Beneficiaries may be designated as primary or secondary beneficiaries. The **primary beneficiary** you name will receive 100% of eligible benefits. If you designate more than one primary beneficiary, the benefits will be divided equally among them unless otherwise specified. The **secondary beneficiaries** you name will only receive benefits if no primary beneficiaries are living at the time of your death (or none can be located).

What happens if I don't choose a beneficiary?

If you fail to designate a beneficiary, or in circumstances when your beneficiary predeceases you or Wespath is unable to locate any designated beneficiaries, benefits will be paid to the default beneficiary. If you're married at the time of your death, the default beneficiary is your surviving spouse. If you're not married, your default beneficiary is your estate, and the heirs of your estate may be determined by state laws.

What benefits are payable to beneficiaries?

Your beneficiaries may receive the following benefits from your Wespath-administered plans:

- Any amount remaining in your plan account balance.
- Any monthly payments due under a term certain and or life and term certain annuity if the participant dies before the end of the term certain period.
- Death or survivor benefits under the **Comprehensive Protection Plan**.

What is a contingent annuitant?

It's helpful to understand the difference between a beneficiary and a contingent annuitant.

You can designate a *beneficiary* for any defined contribution retirement plans you have (i.e., the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan, the Retirement Plan for General Agencies, the Horizon 401(k) Plan, the Clergy Retirement Security Program defined contribution component, and the portion of the account balance that must be distributed as a lump sum from the Ministerial Pension Plan.) The beneficiary receives a known amount of money—usually the remaining account balance of your retirement accounts. A beneficiary can be changed at any time before your death if your family or circumstances change.

A *contingent annuitant* is the person who receives continuing monthly benefits upon your death for your defined benefit retirement plan (e.g., the Clergy Retirement Security Program defined benefit component, including the Pre-82 Plan and monthly benefits payable from the Ministerial Pension Plan). Your contingent annuitant is determined when you apply for benefits from your plan. Your contingent annuitant receives a series of monthly payments for the remainder of his or her life. Contingent annuitants cannot be changed once you set up your monthly benefits, even if your contingent annuitant dies before you or if you marry, divorce or remarry. The reason for this is because the amount of benefits payable per month is computed based on the original contingent annuitant's life expectancy.

How do I add or update beneficiaries?

It is quick and easy to update beneficiaries on **Benefits Access**. Updating beneficiaries online:

- Improves accuracy—no handwriting decoding
- Saves effort—you need only update the information that has changed, rather than re-entering all the data for all of your beneficiaries
- Saves time—data is updated immediately, while paper updates take a minimum of 5 business days
- Helps the environment—no paper or ink waste and no CO₂ emissions from mail delivery

To add or change beneficiaries, or to update beneficiaries' personal information, enter the changes on **Benefits Access**. Log in; then from the **Retirement details** page select **Accounts > Beneficiaries**. Click the **Manage Beneficiaries** link toward the bottom of the page. If you are an alternate payee receiving benefits from a Wespeth-administered plan, you may view beneficiary designations online, but must make changes using the paper **Beneficiary Designation form**.

When you designate a beneficiary, provide as much detail as possible to make it easier for Wespeth to locate your beneficiary. Names, birth dates, addresses, relationships and Social Security or tax ID numbers should be included. In order to be valid, beneficiary designations must be received by Wespeth during your lifetime.

If you sign a "power of attorney" making someone else your agent or attorney-in-fact to act on your behalf, be aware that state law may limit that agent's authority to designate beneficiaries on your behalf. If you want an agent or attorney to have the authority to designate beneficiaries for plan benefits, it should specifically be stated in the power of attorney document, particularly if you want the agent or attorney-in-fact to be able to name himself or herself as the beneficiary.

If you are entitled to any benefits administered by Unum, such as UMLifeOptions optional life insurance, contact Unum directly at **1-800-985-0242** to designate or change your beneficiary.

We're Here to Help Time to review your beneficiaries? Go to **benefitsaccess.org** to update beneficiary designations. For more information about beneficiaries, contingent annuitants or your benefits under Wespeth plans, call Wespeth at **1-800-851-2201** business days from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Central time.

Participants should consult an attorney about the specific legal and tax implications regarding beneficiary designations.