



RESTAURANT & HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION BENEFIT TRUST
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
for State Restaurant Associations



The National Restaurant Association and UnitedHealthcare are pleased to announce the launch of the new **Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust**. We anticipate high interest in this brand-new benefit for our smaller restaurant members. Below are some FAQs to help with any questions your members may have.

Q: What is the Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust?

One of the biggest challenges smaller restaurants face is keeping great employees, and the costs associated with training new employees. Health insurance is an important benefit to attract and retain employees, but small restaurant businesses often face higher costs and fewer options than larger restaurants. The new Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust (also referred to here as the “Trust” or the “RHA Benefit Trust”) provides smaller restaurants with more options when shopping for health plans.

The Trust is open to members of the National Restaurant Association with fewer than 100 insurance-eligible employees. It allows smaller restaurants to band together, giving them the buying power of large employers. The result is a wider range of plans that keep smaller employers’ budget constraints in mind. Participating employers can choose from more than 120 health plan designs for medical and specialty benefits, similar to the range of options typically available to larger employers.

Q: Which restaurant companies are eligible for the plan?

The Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust is aimed at restaurants with between 2 and 99 insurance-eligible employees. Since businesses with 100 or more insurance-eligible employees are generally treated as large employers, they already realize many of the benefits that the Trust offers. However, if you enroll as a small employer and then grow to over 100 insurance-eligible employees, you can remain in the plan.

Q: Do you have to be an NRA member to be eligible for the plan?

Yes. Our small-business members are very important to us, and we wanted to offer a healthcare solution unique to them. You must be a member of the National Restaurant Association to buy an RHA Benefit Trust plan, which is available to employers, rather than individuals. There is no member discount but we expect that most National Restaurant Association members who buy health plans through the Trust will save money.

Q: How do Trust plans compare with other health plan options for small restaurants?

- The RHA Benefit Trust can offer smaller members of the National Restaurant Association the same advantages that larger employers enjoy.
- Trust plan rates are competitive, administration is simple and pricing is flexible.
- The Trust offers more than 120 different plan designs. These are not the traditional “metallic plans (i.e., “platinum,” “gold” and “silver” plans) offered through the Affordable Care Act’s federal and state health insurance marketplaces. Instead, the Trust offerings are similar to plans typically in place for large employers. The range of plans includes rich options, often at lower costs, than many of the so-called “metallic” plans available in the state and federal marketplaces.

- All plans offered through the Trust are fully compliant with the Affordable Care Act's requirement that health plans cover "minimum essential benefits."
- The Trust is fully insured and UnitedHealthcare is liable for all claims payments.

Q: Are these plans available now?

The Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust is available in all states except New York, Minnesota and Vermont, where state regulations prevent such plans being administered. The program is available now but we will not formally launch the Trust until March 2018.

Q: Are plans offered through the Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust related to the Executive Order that President Trump signed?

No. However, the National Restaurant Association is very encouraged that President Trump signed an Executive Order in October 2017 to expand Association Health Plans, also known as "small business health plans." We are working closely with the Department of Labor as the agency writes rules to make it easier for associations to offer such plans.

Q: Who runs the Trust?

The RHA Benefit Trust was created under ERISA, the federal law that regulates employer health plans. ERISA requires that an "employer" hold the policy for a group plan. In this case, the RHAA Benefit Trust holds the group insurance policy issued by UnitedHealthcare. A group of Trustees oversees the plan and serve as the "employer."

The National Restaurant Association itself could have served as the organizing entity/employer, but our large Board of Directors and complex corporate governance structure would have made it more difficult to operate as an "employer" maintaining health insurance for our members. By creating a separate entity, we can provide benefits for National Restaurant Association members while discharging the plan's duties independently and keeping funding separate from Association, as required by law.

Q: Is the Trust a product or component of the Affordable Care Act? Will it go away if the ACA gets changed or repealed?

No. The Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust is governed under ERISA, a law that's been on the books since 1974. Our Benefit Trust plans are compliant with the ACA, but our Trust will remain in place even if the ACA is repealed or modified. The power of the Trust is that it allows economies of scale and better buying power for smaller employers; that remains true even if the ACA is repealed or modified.

Q: Can employers covered by the ACA's employer mandate buy a Trust plan?

Yes. Even though President Trump signed a tax bill in December 2017 that repeals the ACA's penalties for individuals who don't buy health plans, the ACA's "employer mandate" is still in effect, and plans offered through the RHA Benefit Trust can help employers comply with the mandate. The ACA requires all employers with 50 or more full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees to offer affordable, minimum-value health plans to their full-time employees and dependents or face possible penalties.

Whether a business is below, at, or above the ACA's 50-FTE threshold, the RHA Benefit Trust can have advantages. Small employers can offer health care to their employees with options and pricing similar to what larger employers typically receive. If a small business grows to the 50-FTE employee threshold that triggers the ACA's employer mandate, they can continue in the plan knowing they remain ACA-compliant, since Trust plans meet the requirements of the ACA.

If you're a National Restaurant Association member that currently has 50+ FTE employees, you now have two great options for providing health plans: Buy a direct plan through our partner UnitedHealthcare (which provides NRA members with a 5 percent discount) or through the Restaurant & Hospitality Association Benefit Trust. UnitedHealthcare can walk interested businesses through the pros and cons of each option.

Q: Does this replace the current program with UnitedHealthcare?

No. This is an additional offering. All components of the UnitedHealthcare program continue to exist including member only discounts for certain Fully Insured Medical, Self-Insured Administrative Fees, Dental, Vision, Life and Disability products.

Q: Where can I get more information?

Please join us for a State Restaurant Association-exclusive webinar on February 27 2 p.m. EST for a deep dive into the new offering and an opportunity to directly ask any questions you may have as you begin promoting this new benefit to your members. You can register [HERE](#). You may also visit RestaurantHealthCare.org or email healthcareinfo@restaurant.org.