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How to Access the Benefits and Entitlements Telephone Automated System and Reach a Counselor

To reach the BEST phone system:

- Stateside employees will dial **1-800-616-3775**.
- Employees calling from outside the United States will first dial a toll-free AT&T direct access number for the country in which located, then 800-997-2378. You'll enter the phone system below at "Welcome to the Air Force Personnel Center." AT&T direct access numbers can be found on the web at http://www.att.com/business_traveler/guides_and_access/dialing_instr.html#outside.

Stateside employees: When the phone system answers, you will hear:

"Welcome, and thank you for calling the Air Force Customer Service Center." Listen carefully to the menu. You'll press 2 for Air Force-serviced civilian employee, then 2 again for BEST Benefits and Entitlements Services. You'll hear two tones followed by music while your call is being transferred- don't hang up – then you'll hear:

"Welcome to the Air Force Personnel Center." *(NOTE: This is where OVERSEAS callers enter the phone system.)*

Press "2" to access the Benefits and Entitlements services system, then "1" for current Air Force-serviced employees.

Next, press "1" to enter your social security number and PIN; press "2" if you have forgotten your PIN.

-- If you press 1, the system will ask you to enter your social security number and PIN. Listen carefully, the system will tell you if it's looking for a four-digit or six-digit PIN. The **first** time you access the BEST automated system, your PIN will be a four-digit number equivalent to your month and year of birth, for example, June 1960 will be 0660. (This is set automatically by the automated system. We do not mail PIN numbers to employees.) The system will then require you to change your PIN to a six-digit number of your choice, as long as it meets the DoD security guidelines listed below. This six-digit PIN will be your PIN for both the BEST phone and EBIS web systems, unless you change it. If this is not your first time accessing the automated system, your PIN should be a six-digit number that you personally selected.

-- If you press 2, the system will allow you to reset your PIN to a new six-digit numeric PIN of your choice, after you provide the following information which can be obtained from your most recent Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) or SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action): your social security number, date of birth, service computation date for leave, civilian pay plan, grade, and step. Once the system verifies this information, it will ask you to input a new six-digit number that complies with the following DoD security guidelines: your PIN must be a combination of numbers that are not easily identifiable, thus, it cannot repeat the same number, cannot equal the first or last six digits of your social security number, cannot equal your date of birth or service computation date for leave, and cannot include any single number

repeated three or more times. If your PIN meets these guidelines, you will be prompted to enter your six-digit PIN again. If both entries match, you will hear "Your PIN has been changed."

The system will then voice the commercial duty phone number on file for you. If correct, press 1, otherwise press 2. (Overseas employees should exclude their country code.)

Once you have cleared the PIN and telephone verification modules, you will be at the benefits main menu where you will select the program area related to your question. Press 1 for Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), 2 for Retirement, 3 for Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), 4 for Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), 6 to request a Faxed Document, or 9 to Exit the system.

To speak with a Benefits Counselor, call the BEST telephone system as described. When you reach the benefits main menu, press the number for the program area relating to your question, and then press "0" to be transferred to a counselor.

Hearing impaired employees with access to Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) equipment may reach a benefits counselor by calling our toll-free TDD number: 1-800-382-0893, or commercial 565-2276 if calling within the San Antonio, Texas area.

Benefits counselors are available Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Central Time.

A note for new employees and employees transferring to the Air Force from other agencies: if you're unable to access the BEST phone system after your second duty day, please notify your local Civilian Personnel Office and they'll contact us on your behalf.