

PREFACE

This brochure briefly describes the coverage provided through the Washington Life and Disability Insurance Guaranty Association (“Association”).

The Association is a nonprofit unincorporated legal entity created by the Washington Life and Disability Insurance Guaranty Association Act, Chapter 48.32A RCW (“Act”). Every company licensed as a life or disability insurer, health care service contractor or health maintenance organization and authorized to do business in Washington state is a member of the Association. A Board of Directors (“Board”), composed of representatives from member insurers, and the Insurance Commissioner, ex officio, oversee the operation of the Association.

The expenses of the Association are paid by assessments made against each member insurer. Persons covered by the Act are not charged for the expenses of the Association or the protection provided under the Act.

Coverage is provided for certain life, annuity and disability insurance products - including health benefit plans. However, the Association does not cover all such insurance. Coverage that is provided is subject to the definitions, limitations and exclusions provided by the Act.

The purpose of this brochure is to help you understand the general nature and the conditions of the protection provided under the Act. It is only a summary, however, and if you have specific questions that are not discussed here you may contact either the Association or the Office of the Insurance Commissioner.

Washington Life and Disability
Insurance Guaranty Association
P.O. Box 2292
Shelton, WA 98584
360-426-6744

Company Supervision Division
Office of the Insurance Commissioner
P.O. Box 40255
Olympia, WA 98504-0255
360-725-7220

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. WHAT INSURANCE POLICIES ARE COVERED UNDER THE ACT?

The Act applies to life insurance policies, disability insurance policies, and annuity contracts issued by an insurance company or health plan authorized to do business in Washington state. The term “disability insurance,” as used in the Act, includes not only disability income insurance, but also policies commonly referred to as “health insurance” (which includes long term care policies). Together, all these policies and contracts are sometimes referred to as “covered policies,” a term used in this brochure.

2. ARE THERE POLICIES OR INSURERS NOT COVERED BY THE ACT?

The Act specifically excludes certain types of policies or portions of policies, including, but not limited to: The portion of a policy not guaranteed by the insurer; the portion of a policy to the extent the interest rate or crediting rate exceeds the limits in the Act; policies of reinsurance, unless assumption certificates have been issued; policies issued in Washington state by an insurer at a time when the insurer was not licensed or did not have a certificate of authority; policies issued to a self-insured plan or program; certain unallocated employee benefit plan annuities protected by federal law; and unallocated annuity contracts not issued to or in connection with a benefit plan or a government lottery.

The Act also does not apply to policies or contracts issued fraternal benefit societies, self-funded multiple employer welfare arrangements, mandatory state pooling plans, mutual assessment companies, insurance exchanges, or an organization that has a certificate or license limited to issuance of certain charitable gift annuities.

3. WHO IS PROTECTED UNDER THE ACT?

You are covered by the Act if you are an owner of or certificate holder under a policy or contract (other than an unallocated annuity contract or structured settlement annuity), and:

- You are a Washington resident; or
- You are not a Washington resident, but only if: the insurer is domiciled in Washington; there is an association like the Washington Association in your state of residency; and you are not covered in your state of residency, because the insurer was not licensed in that state; or
- You are a beneficiary, assignee, or payee of one of the above, regardless of where you reside (except for nonresident certificate holders under group policies).

Owners of unallocated annuity contracts are covered if the contract was issued to or in connection with a specific benefit plan whose plan sponsor has its principal place of business in Washington, or the contract was issued to or in connection with a government lottery and the owner is a Washington resident.

A payee under a structured settlement annuity (or beneficiary of a deceased payee) is also covered, if the payee is a Washington resident, or the payee is not a Washington resident, but the contract owner is a resident; or the insurer that issued the annuity is domiciled in Washington and coverage is not available in the state in which the payee resides.

Residency is generally determined at the earlier of the time of entry of an order of rehabilitation or an order of liquidation against the insurer. If you move to another state and reside there when such an order is entered, you may still have protection under the law of that state. You should contact the insurance department in your new state of residence to find out about guaranty act protection there.

4. HOW DOES THE ASSOCIATION PROTECT COVERED PERSONS AGAINST LOSS?

After an order of liquidation is entered against a company, the Association begins its work of carrying out the purpose of the Act, which is to assure the performance of insurance obligations of that company. The Association is authorized to carry out its duties by working with insurance companies in good standing to assume or take over the covered policies. The association may also directly provide benefits and coverage as authorized by the Act. The Association has the authority to collect the funds necessary to provide protection to covered persons against losses on their covered policies.

5. WHERE DOES THE ASSOCIATION GET THE MONEY TO PROVIDE THIS PROTECTION?

The Association is authorized to collect money from all member companies doing business in Washington state. The funds collected from an assessment are used to pay claims to covered persons and/or to fund the assumption of covered policies by another insurer.

6. DOES THE ASSOCIATION PAY OUT THE MONEY IT COLLECTS RIGHT AWAY OR DO COVERED PERSONS HAVE TO WAIT?

The Association generally cannot make an assessment for covered policies issued by a company until after an order of liquidation has been entered against the company, and a reasonable estimate can be made of the amount of money needed. Insurance companies receiving an assessment notice must make their payments within thirty days.

Because it takes time for an action to be commenced against a financially impaired insurer, for a Court to issue an order, and for funds to be collected to satisfy the obligations of that insurer, some delay, hopefully short, is unavoidable before payments can be made. Although it is impossible to predict how long this process will take in any given case, an average time of twelve to eighteen months is not unusual.

When necessary, the Association may borrow money to make payments more promptly, particularly in cases that will take an unusual amount of time to be resolved.

7. WHAT IS THE AMOUNT OF PROTECTION PROVIDED BY THE ACT?

The Act provides the following maximum amounts of protection:

Life Insurance Death Benefits\$500,000

Disability and Health Benefits (including Long Term Care Benefits and Benefits under Health Benefit Plans).....\$500,000

Present Value of Individual Annuities..... \$500,000

Unallocated Annuity Contracts, other than certain government retirement plans (limit is per contract owner or plan sponsor).....\$5,000,000

Government Retirement Plans established under Internal Revenue Code § 401, 403(b), or 457 if covered by an unallocated annuity (limit per participant)\$100,000

This protection becomes effective at the time of entry of a Court order of liquidation against the insurer. Of course, if the amount owed under the contract or policy is less than the maximum benefit under the Act, the covered person will be entitled to protection only up to the actual amount owed.

Furthermore, the maximum protection available to each covered person remains the same, regardless of the number of contracts through which he or she has a claim. The maximum protection is per covered person per insolvent company.

8. IF A HUSBAND AND WIFE EACH INDIVIDUALLY OWN A COVERED POLICY, IS THE PROTECTION UNDER THE ACT PROVIDED TO EACH OF THEM?

Yes, if the residency requirements are met, both would be entitled to the protection provided by the Act, up to the maximum amount.

9. WHY DOESN'T MY INSURANCE COMPANY ADVERTISE THE FACT THAT ITS POLICIES AND CONTRACTS ARE PROTECTED UNDER THE ACT?

Under Washington law, insurance companies are prohibited from advertising that their policies or contracts may be covered under the Act.

You should not rely on coverage under the Act when selecting an insurance company.

10. WHY HASN'T MY AGENT TOLD ME ABOUT THE GUARANTY ACT?

Your insurance agent is subject to the same prohibitions as your insurance company. As a representative of the company, an agent must exercise great care when soliciting business and consequently, will generally not discuss the subject of a guaranty act with clients.

11. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I BELIEVE THERE HAS BEEN A VIOLATION OF THE ACT?

You should contact the Association if you believe your rights have been violated under the Act. If you are dissatisfied with the actions of the Association, you may also contact the Office of the Insurance Commissioner.

CONCLUSION

This brochure has been prepared by the Washington Life and Disability Insurance Guaranty Association. Its purpose is to inform the public in a general way of the protections that are available in this state on insurance policies and annuity contracts issued by companies authorized to do business in Washington. The Association does not, by this brochure, endorse any company or its products, but rather seeks to address some of the concerns that you may have regarding the security of insurance policies and annuity contracts.

For more information or answers to specific questions you may contact the Washington Life and Disability Insurance Guaranty Association or the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, whose addresses and telephone numbers are shown in the Preface.

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PROTECTION FOR YOU AND YOUR INSURANCE POLICY

