

Form 5500 Center of Excellence (COE)

Here when you need us!

Do I need to file a Form 5500?

Health & Welfare Plans with 100 or more participants at the start of the plan year are required to file Form 5500 and Schedule A and/or C by 7 months after the end of the Plan Year, for calendar year plans, the filing due date is July 31st. There are exceptions such as health and welfare plans sponsored by a governmental entity or by a church.

Form 5500	Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation	This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 401 and 408 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), sections 6057(b) and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.
Part I Annual Report Identification Information	
For calendar plan year 2017 or fiscal plan year beginning _____ and ending _____	
A This return/report is for:	<input type="checkbox"/> a multiemployer plan <input type="checkbox"/> a multiple-employer plan (Fileers check participating employer information)
	<input type="checkbox"/> a single-employer plan <input type="checkbox"/> a DFE (specify) _____
B This return/report is:	<input type="checkbox"/> the first return/report <input type="checkbox"/> the final return/report
	<input type="checkbox"/> an amended return/report <input type="checkbox"/> a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months)
C If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here.	
D Check box if filing under:	<input type="checkbox"/> Form 5558 <input type="checkbox"/> automatic extension

What health & welfare plans are in a 550- filing? One 5500 or many?

- Health Plans: Insured and Self-funded
- Dental
- Vision
- Group Term Life/A&D
- Supplemental Life/A&D
- Group Short-Term Disability
- Group Long-Term Disability
- Voluntary Plans such as STD/LTD
- Flexible Spending Accounts (excluding dependent care)
- Health Reimbursement Arrangements
- Employee Assistance Plans (EAPs)

Many plan sponsors use a “Wrap” Summary Plan Description so that the plan only files one Form 5500 under one plan number (which reduces filing workload and potential penalties). However, if using a Wrap SPD and one benefit hits 100+ participants, you must file for ALL Wrap SPD benefits. Penalties for non-compliance can be up to \$1,100 per day!

Thanks for telling me ... but I didn't file!

It's not too late to take corrective measure - If the Department of Labor (DOL) hasn't already found you! The DOL offers the Delinquent Filer Voluntary Compliance Program (DFVCP) for a fee of \$2,000 per year and capped at \$4,000 per plan. This means a plan could file for numerous years and only pay of total fee of \$4,000. The DFVCP also relieves plan sponsors of potential penalties and interest for those filings.

How do I file and what do I give my employees?

Plan sponsors are required to file their Form 5500 and all applicable schedules electronically. Plan Sponsors will need to obtain their credentials (PIN) and “sign” the Form 5500 with their PIN. There is also a requirement that the Plan Sponsor have a “wet-signature” paper copy on file. Once the Form 5500 and schedules have been submitted and approved by the DOL, the Summary Annual Report (SAR) must be provided to all participants (COBRA as well) within 9 months of the end of the plan year. Plan sponsors can provide the SAR electronically if they meet **ALL** of the electronic delivery requirements.

Form 5500 filing is not for the faint of heart, it's complicated and time consuming. Alera Form 5500 COE is a team of subject matter experts who will provide the knowledge and expertise to complete the plan sponsors mandatory filing requirement using a sophisticated software system with impeccable validation processes. (See the FAQ's.) **For more information on the Alera Form 5500 Center of Excellence contact your Alera firm representative.**

Visit the IRS Form 5500 Corner at <https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/form-5500-corner>

Plan Sponsor Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What type of Form 5500 filings may be completed by the Alera Form 5500 Center of Excellence (COE)?

COE can prepare health and welfare plan filings for first-year, amended and delinquent Form 5500 filings. COE does NOT prepare filings for funded welfare plans (when benefits are paid from a trust or a financial account other than the plan sponsor's general assets) or pension plan filings.

2. What is the cost to complete the Form 5500 and accompanying Schedules?

The Alera firm offering this service will review pricing with you.

3. As the Plan sponsor, what are my responsibilities with our plan's Form 5500 if I work with Alera Form 5500 Services to complete our welfare plan Form 5500?

Under the Alera Form 5500 service model, plan sponsors are required to:

- Sign the service agreement
- Work with your Alera firm as needed to complete the data collection form (DCF), which is the form the COE uses to gather and understand the information needed to properly prepare your Form 5500.
- Work with your Alera firm as needed to collect the Schedules A for the fully insured benefits under the plan.
- Once the filing is complete, review the filing.
- Have the plan sponsor/administrator sign the filing with EFAST2 filing credentials (obtained by the DOL). Instructions on how to obtain DOL credentials may be provided.
- Once the summary annual report (SAR) is provided, distribute the SAR to participants as required. (Complete distribution instructions will be provided when SAR is provided).

4. What is the timeline for the COE to prepare the filing?

The COE will start the process to gather the data needed for the Form 5500 filing 4 months before the month of the filing's normal due date. For example, if a filing is due July 31st, the COE will start the process to complete the filing around April 1st. If information is not received by the COE, periodic reminders will be sent at 3 months and 2 months prior to the form's due date. If all required information is not received by the COE 1 month prior to the due date, an extension, Form 5558 will be completed and submitted by the COE (A copy of the submitted Form 5558 will be provided to plan sponsor.) Form 5558 extension filed by request or due to non-receipt of data will incur a fee of \$75. The COE will complete and timely mail the Form 5558 via an approved mailing method with shipping confirmation.

5. How does the COE complete the 5500?

COE has experienced Form 5500 preparers familiar with the Form 5500, accompany Schedules and filing requirements. The COE will complete the Form 5500 filing based solely on the data provided in the DCF form and Schedules provided. The COE uses DOL approved web-based software to prepare the filing. The software runs a strict validation audit to mitigate the risk of unaccepted filings.

6. How will the Form 5500 prepared by COE be accessed?

The COE uses a web-based portal to complete the filing since DOL rules require that filings are submitted electronically through DOL approved software. The portal allows the plan sponsor and referring Alera firm to review the filing. Once the filing is complete by the COE, the plan sponsor and referring Alera firm will receive an email notification that includes a link to the portal and login instructions. Forms and Schedules may be printed in the portal if the

reviewer prefers a paper copy to review. Note that paper copies of the Form are no longer accepted, and filings must be submitted electronically.

7. What if changes are required to the Form 5500 before it is submitted to the DOL?

If changes are required on the filing please notify the COE or your referring Alera firm.

8. How is the Form 5500 filing signed?

The individual authorized to sign as the plansponsor/administration should have DOL filing credentials. The credentials include a User ID (assigned by the DOL) and 4-digit PIN (chosen by the signer). These credentials are required to sign the filing. Individuals may apply for credentials at www.efast.dol.gov. If the signer has received filing credentials in the past, the same signing credentials may be used year after year. Individuals may go through the DOL process to retrieve a forgotten login ID and/or password.

9. How will I know if the DOL accepts the filing?

The COE will notify the plan sponsor (employer) and the referring Alera firm through email once the DOL accepts the filing.

10. When and how will the Summary Annual Report (SAR) be distributed?

The SAR will be prepared within 2 weeks of the DOL's acceptance of the filing and emailed to the Form's signer with instructions for distribution. The referring Alera firm's gatekeeper will be copied on the email.

11. When is payment due?

Once the DOL has accepted the filing, and the COE has prepared the SAR, the COE will prepare an invoice for the plan sponsor that will be sent directly to the plan sponsor (unless the Alera firm will be paying for the services.) The preferred method of payment is ACH withdrawal. The ACH form will be provided with the service agreement. Payment submitted via paper checks will incur an additional \$25 fee.

12. Can the COE assist with delinquent or amended filings?

Yes. The COE can assist with amended or delinquent filings. Reach out to your employee benefits advisor for more assistance with this.

13. Who can I contact with questions?

Questions should be sent to the COE mailbox: 5500@alera.com. The COE will work to route your email to the member of our team who will contact you.

For more information on the Alera Form 5500 Center of Excellence, contact your Alera firm representative.