



OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MISSION

To advance the performance of state government through collaborative labor relations, workforce training, education, and benefits.

NYS HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN/EMPLOYEE BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

PRE-TAX PROGRAMS Flex Spending Account (FSA): Health Care Spending Account (HCSA), Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA), and Adoption Advantage Account

FLEX SPENDING ACCOUNT (FSA) is a pre-tax program that saves employees money on health care and dependent care expenses.

Enrollments for the 2023 FSA as of December 31, include:

HEALTH CARE
SPENDING ACCOUNT

15,093

State employees
enrolled

ADOPTION
ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT

5

State employees
enrolled

DEPENDENT CARE
ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT

8,730

State employees
enrolled



PRE-TAX TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT
NYS-RIDE

As of December 31, **4,390** employees participated in NYS-Ride transit. With NYS-Ride, the State realized a 12-month annualized savings of **\$59,488** (the net of FICA savings minus lost tax revenue), and employees saved an average of **\$656** per year. Parking participation continues to grow, with **486** employees enrolled.

Highlights

The Empire Plan Medical/Surgical Program
Pursuant to updated guidance under the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), The Empire Plan will automatically treat bills from any out of network provider at an in-network hospital as Surprise Bills. Prior to December 10, 2023, only certain categories of services at a network hospital performed by an out-of-network provider were automatically treated as a surprise bill. This change is being made to ensure that enrollees are receiving the maximum billing protections under the No Surprises Act.

The Empire Plan - Mental Health and Substance Use Program
Carelton and Employee Benefits Management Unit met with Department of Civil Service once this quarter to review program utilization which included the first admission to the newly implemented Centers of Excellence program for Substance Use Disorder Treatment. PEF and UUP enrollees and dependents will have access to these benefits effective January 1, 2024.

WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Public Service Workshop Programs (PSWP)

81 workshops were delivered to 1,712 participants.

Professional Development Committee (PDC)

The PDC met once in this quarter.

Training Directors' Roundtable

2 webinars were held in quarter, providing the training community with professional development, updates, and discussions on State training initiatives. There were approximately 144 training professionals in attendance for both sessions.

Learning and Development Series

43 in-person and virtual classes were held during this quarter. Training locations included Albany, Rochester, Binghamton, Rome, Hauppauge, and New York City.

Excelsior Service Fellowship Program

40 fellows in cohort nine participated in a one-day emerging leader in-person professional development session. 62 new fellows in cohort ten participated in a one-day professional development session.

New York State Leadership Institute for M/C Employees

40 participants participated in the Orientation and two-day professional development session. Two-day sessions were held in November and December for this cohort.

PEF Leadership Development Program

A total of 40 participants attended and completed the in-person leadership program and graduated in December. An additional 40 participants

PEF College Tuition Reimbursement (CTR)

Program: Nine hundred and sixty-six applications from 522 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$1,436,520. Of these applications, 242 were reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced CTR Program at an amount of \$262,956.

PEF Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement (WSR)

Program: Seven hundred and twenty-nine applications from 591 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$191,200. Of these applications, one was reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced WSR Program in the amount of \$297.

PEF Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (CLEFR) Program:

One hundred and nine applications from 104 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$37,967.

PEF Certification and License Renewal Fee Reimbursement (CLRFR) Pilot Program:

One hundred and seventy-six applications from 175 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$28,829.

M/C Tuition Reimbursement Program: Thirty-one applications from 24 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$26,593.

M/C Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (CLEFR) Program: Four applications from two applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$1,376.

Job Skills and Professional Development (ASU, ISU, OSU, DMNA)

The *Fall 2023 Skills for Success* program concluded in December with **880** unique members applying for **1,612** seats in one or more classes held from September through December.

Applied Skilled Trades Program

108 employees are participating in the *2023-2025 Applied Skilled Trades Program*, which is underway in the following regions: Long Island Region (electrician), Southern Region (carpenter and electrician), Capital Region (electrician), Central Region (plumber/steamfitter), and Western Region (plumber/steamfitter and electrician). Participants completed their Trade 1 course in December. The program is on break until the start of the spring semester, which will begin in February.

Adult Education Basics

14 participants were awarded certificates for completing the 13-week course *Enhance Your Skills: Reading, Writing, and Math Basics* held in CSEA Capital Region 4.

7 participants were awarded certificates for completing the six-week course *Focus on Pronunciation: Level 1* held in CSEA Metropolitan Region 2.

21 participants were awarded certificates for completing the six-week course *Focus on Pronunciation: Level 1* held in CSEA Capital Region 4.

Labor-Management Services

35 participants from NYS and CSEA labor-management committees joined the Partnership for the two-day Labor-Management Co-Chair Institute in Syracuse in November. Participants took a deep dive into crucial topics to strengthen their leadership skills, improve communication, and promote teamwork to effectively meet NYS agency missions. Co-chairs gained valuable insight into their leadership styles through the DiSC® Self-Assessment and acquired strategies to enhance committee relationships.

Staff conducted a pre-training needs assessments of the SUNY Delhi management team in November. They also conducted pre-training needs assessments for NYC DMV Local 0010 members in October. The assessments provide the groundwork for designing the customized Labor-Management Committee Process training.

Staff presented the customized Labor-Management Committee Process Training to OPWDD Broome DDSO in October.

PARTNERSHIP ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

For 2023, approximately **1,299** employees from **50** agencies participated in the Partnership's Online Learning Program.

Microsoft Word 2016 Basics Certificate Program - **708** employees participating

The Organized Office Worker Certificate Program - **626** employees participating

Microsoft Excel 2016 Essentials Certificate Program - **379** employees participating

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate Program - **259** employees participating

Customer Service Certificate Program - **661** employees participating

Successful Business Writing Certificate Program - **657** employees participating

Tuition Benefits

A total of 2,428 employees have applied for 5,916 benefits since the 2023-2024 Tuition Benefits Program began on April 1. A total of 2,555 benefits have been paid, totaling \$2,338,761.

A total of 545 employees are participating in the following targeted tuition programs: Commercial Driver's License (137), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (16), HVAC (11), Information Technology (58), Legal Assistant Trainee (5), RN/LPN (300), and Welding (18).

Staff continue to administer the tuition benefits program for CSEA, Inc.; Health Research, Inc.; NYS Teachers' Retirement System; State University Construction Fund; and VOICE/CSEA.

GRANT PROGRAMS

Quality of Work Life grants totaling **\$36,519** were approved. For the 2021-2026 NYS & CSEA contract period, **142** Quality of Work Life grants were approved for **11** NYS agencies and **16** CSEA locals, totaling **\$280,493**.

The Safety and Health Grants Review Committee received one grant application in December. For the 2021-2026 NYS & CSEA contract period, one grant has been approved totaling **\$37,200**.

The Labor Management Workforce Development Grants Review Committee received one grant application in December. For the 2021-2026 NYS & CSEA contract period, one grant has been approved totaling **\$972**.

Safety and Health

15 Gouverneur Correctional Facility employees participated in Forklift Operator Safety training.

25 Franklin County Correctional Facility employees participated in Fall Protection training.

9 NYS Department of Health Wadsworth Center employees took Forklift Training.

The NYS and CSEA Safety and Health Planning Committee met to plan for the next statewide meeting.

The NYS and CSEA Statewide Safety and Health Committee met on October 11 to discuss issues of mutual concern.

ADVISEMENT SERVICES

Advisors responded to **2,031** calls and emails from employees requesting advice and information on issues such as tuition benefits, financial aid, basic skills, nursing programs, starting, or returning to college, and high school equivalency test preparation.

Field Staff Activities

Staff hosted information tables at **36** NYS agencies/facilities and CSEA events.



Field associates made **1,644** phone, text, and email contacts with NYS managers and CSEA leaders statewide regarding Partnership programs and services. They also met with **15** CSEA leaders and NYS managers across the State to provide an overview of Partnership programs and services.



WORK-LIFE SERVICES



Network Child Care Centers

Work-Life Services Network Child Care Centers continued to experience staffing shortages which pose major challenges to the child care centers, making it nearly impossible for the child care centers to open all classrooms and enroll the requisite number of children to operate at full capacity.

Directions: Pre-Retirement Planning Webinar Sessions

28 webinar sessions were offered, serving approximately **900** executive branch employees who are at least 50 years old and eligible to retire within five years. Topics included: Deferred Compensation, Pension, Social Security, and Health Insurance.

Participants are sent the 11-chapter *Self-Help Guide to Pre-Retirement Planning*, the *Retirement Checklist for New York State Employees*, the Work-Life Services brochure, and other planning materials from the Department of Civil Service, the Employee Benefits Division, and the Office of the State Comptroller.



Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employee Assistance Program Utilization

There were **5,377** first contacts by employees and family members during this quarter. In addition, the EAP main office received **218** calls from employees requesting assistance and **50** website requests for assistance. The most frequently reported issues were related to mental health, followed by work, stress, financial, and bereavement/grief.

Critical Incident Response

EAP coordinators responded to **35** critical incidents.

Certified Employee Assistance Professionals Program

11 coordinators and **8** staff members have earned the CEAP credential. **7** coordinators and **3** regional representatives were enrolled this quarter.

Employee Assistance Program Grants

NYS EAP ended the 2023 grant program cycle in October.

During this period, **103** applications were approved for funds totaling over **\$150,000**.

Wellness

94 WellNYS Ambassadors participate from **23** agencies.

624 individuals attended **3** wellness webinars. Topics were *Ways to Support Your Community*, *Share Your Favorite Compliments*, and *24 Healthy Habits To Do in Two Minutes*.

One webinar was provided to the employees of the Office of the Attorney General through their Diversity and Inclusion team on *Create and Stick to a Budget* with **70** participants.

Employee Assistance Program Training

During this quarter, trainings provided were *Psychological First Aid & Building Personal Resilience*, *Employee Benefits*, *Carelon Behavioral Health*, *Case Study*, *Safe-Talk*, *SONYMA*, *NYS 529 Plan & NYS ACS*, *Opioid/Substance Use Disorder in the Workplace (Virtual)*, *Human Trafficking (Virtual)*, *Committee Orientations*, *New Employee Orientations*, and *Supervisor Overview (Virtual)*. Overall, **40** sessions total with **1,014** participants.

Multi-Agency Programs

Capital Area Multi-agency coordinators had events with **6** agencies. The grant subcommittee received a grant for promotional items.

Binghamton Multi-agency committee has a new committee chairperson. They hosted a tabling event to re-establish an EAP presence in the building.

Utica Multi-agency continues to work on establishing a committee and hosted a 40th anniversary tabling event.

Syracuse Multi-agency's new coordinator is promoting the program and meeting with employees.

Watertown Multi-agency committee continues recruitment process to fill a vacancy for a second coordinator.

Buffalo Multi-agency committee appointed co-chairpersons and a secretary.

Rochester Multi-agency coordinator assisted several employees, attended training, and promoted EAP services to agencies.

NYS/UUP JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (NYS/UUP JLMC)

During this quarter, NYS/UUP JLMC staff resumed with the administration of existing programs as follows:

Certification, Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program (CLEFR)

Applications were processed and approved to reimburse employees for certification, licensure or designation exams that are job or career related to improve skills and gain the knowledge necessary for promotional opportunities and career mobility within the State University of New York.

98 applications were received and **16** were reimbursed for a total of **\$17,140**. Due to tax filing with OSC, 80 applicants were not reimbursed during this period.

Empire KnowledgeBank (EKB)

Applications were processed for licenses that provide employees access to a variety of eLearning products to enhance their professional and career development, for certification preparation, and continuing education in a variety of areas.

70 new EKB eLearning licenses were activated during this quarter.

Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program

Applications for the Spring 2024 semester were reviewed by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee in December. **20** applications were approved for a total of **\$153,985.25**.

Individual Development Award (IDA) Program

Applications submitted by campuses for retroactive expenditures related to projects or activities that took place from April 1 to July 2, 2023 were reviewed and approved. Twenty-seven applications were approved for a total of **\$27,696**.

NYS/UUP JLMC staff also revised guidelines to include changes made to certain programs, established guidelines for a newly established program, and planned an orientation for the statewide joint labor-management committees including:

The IDA Program guidelines were revised to expand funding other areas for employees who are required to do research for their job.

Certification and Licensure Reimbursement Program - Renewals (CLRP-Renewals)

NYS/UUP JLMC staff drafted guidelines and the application for the CLRP-Renewals which is a new program being implemented on January 1, 2024. The program will reimburse fees for certification, licensure, or designation renewals that are required for the employee's position.

Statewide Joint Labor-Management Committee Orientation

NYS/UUP JLMC staff has been planning the committee orientation training session, scheduled for January of 2024 for members of the statewide joint labor-management committees.

NYS/UUP JLMC staff continued with the administration of ongoing projects including:

- Preparing a summary report of labor-management funds expenditures by program to send to campuses.
- Assessing current programs to determine if they are meeting employee needs and to establish new programs to provide additional professional development opportunities to enhance employees' skills and knowledge.
- Continuing to work with union and management representatives on strategies to develop promotional materials on labor-management programs to provide to campus staff and employees.
- Reviewing the NYS/UUP JLMC website and updating the information as needed.

New York State/Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU) Labor-Management Programs

The Agreement between the State and GSEU expired on July 1, 2023, limited unexpended labor-management funds have been available to continue limited programs. OER staff and GSEU representatives are in the process of discussing the expenditure of these funds.