



## 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 September 30, include:

HEALTH CARE  
SPENDING ACCOUNT

**15,093**

State employees  
enrolled

ADOPTION  
ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT

**6**

State employees  
enrolled

DEPENDENT CARE  
ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT

**8,217**

State employees  
enrolled



**PRE-TAX TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT**  
NYS-RIDE

As of September 30, **4,328** 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 **\$644** per year. Parking participation continues to grow, with **410** employees enrolled.

### Highlights

#### Flex Spending Account

This quarter, TASC and FSA program staff continue working on the 2024 open enrollment campaign and continued customer service. The open enrollment campaign will include vendor and program staff attendance at union conventions and employee benefit fairs.

#### The Empire Plan - Hospital Program

Empire BlueCross is expanding their customer service hours from 8:00 am -5:00 pm to 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, still Monday through Friday.

#### The Empire Plan - Medical/Surgical Program

Employee Benefits Management Unit staff continue to oversee the operation of all current medical programs as they enhance employee benefits and provide cost savings to the State.

#### The Empire Plan Medical/Surgical Program

Staff was advised of two changes to United Health Care Medical Policy that affect the Empire Plan. The elimination of their former policy to not cover Vitamin D testing – routine testing for Vitamin D levels will now be covered again. As well as the coverage of sub-lingual immunotherapy.

## STATEWIDE TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

### WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Professional Development Committee (PDC)

The PDC, which is on a six-week meeting schedule, met once this quarter.

#### Public Service Workshops Program (PSWP)

PSWP delivered **72** workshops to **1,513** participants completing training.

#### Statewide Training Initiatives

This quarter, **2** Training Directors' Roundtable webinars were held with **125** training professionals in attendance for both sessions.

#### Excelsior Service Fellowship Program

Two professional development sessions were held for **40** fellows in cohort nine and **64** new fellows in cohort ten.

#### New York State Leadership Institute for M/C Employees

**103** applications from **30** agencies for the 2023-24 New York State Leadership Institute. A total of **40** applicants were selected to participate.

#### PEF Leadership Development Program

**271** applications were received from **32** agencies for both an in-person and a virtual program for 2023. A total of **40** were selected to attend the in-person program and an additional **40** were selected to attend the virtual program. During this quarter, the orientations and first professional sessions were held.

#### PEF College Tuition Reimbursement (CTR) Program

800 applications from 487 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$1,195,007. Of these applications, 196 were reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced CTR Program at an amount of \$237,258.

#### PEF Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement Program

1,212 applications from 885 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$310,251.

#### PEF Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program

140 applications from 123 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$52,388.

#### PEF Certification and License Renewal Fee Reimbursement Pilot Program

475 applications from 472 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$78,031.

#### M/C Tuition Reimbursement Program

14 applications from 12 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$12,449.

#### M/C Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program

Reimbursements were not issued during this quarter.

### NYS & CSEA PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

#### Job Skills and Professional Development

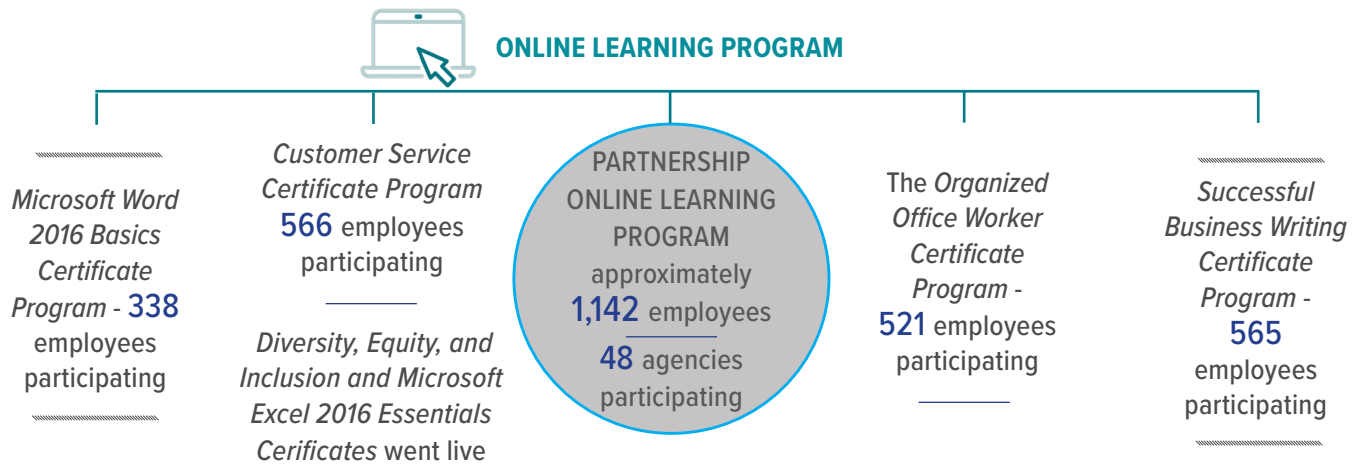
(ASU, ISU, OSU, DMNA)

The *Fall 2023 Skills for Success* program went live with **84** webinars and in-person courses set from September through December 2023.

**109** 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).

**14** participants enrolled in *Enhance Your Skills: Reading, Writing, and Math Basics* and twenty participants enrolled in *Focus on Pronunciation: Level 1*. Both courses began in September in CSEA Capital Region 4. So far, seven participants have registered for *Focus on Pronunciation: Level 1* in CSEA Metropolitan Region 2, which will begin in November.

Over **100** supervisors and CSEA leaders attended the informational webinar *Adult Education Basics: A Webinar for Supervisors*.



### Tuition Benefits

The 2023-2024 Tuition Benefits Program began on April 1. To date, 2,008 employees have applied for 4,876 benefits. In total, 1,285 benefits have been paid totaling \$1,173,732.

A total of 455 employees are participating in the following targeted tuition programs: Commercial Driver’s License (109), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (16), HVAC (1), Information Technology (54), Legal Assistant Trainee (4), RN/LPN (246), and Welding (15).

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

For the 2021-2026 NYS-CSEA contract period, **113** Quality of Work Life grants were approved for 10 NYS agencies and ten CSEA locals, totaling \$224,347.

Over **100** individuals joined us for the *How to Apply for Quality of Work Life Grants: A Webinar for NYS Managers and CSEA Leaders* in August. Participants gained knowledge of the application and reimbursement process.

### LABOR-MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Staff conducted a pre-training needs assessment of the Tax & Finance Labor-Management Committee members in July. The assessments provided the groundwork for designing the customized LMC Process training.

Staff presented a Labor-Management Soup to Nuts workshop at the CSEA Region 2 Conference in August with **13** participants.

Applications are being accepted for the 2023 Labor-Management Co-Chair Institute.

### Safety and Health

The NYS & CSEA Statewide Article 15 Committee met in July and September to discuss topics of mutual concern in the area of safety and health.

### ADVISEMENT SERVICES

Advisors responded to **2,819** 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 **27** NYS agencies/facilities and CSEA events.

Field associates made **1,077** phone, text, and email contacts with NYS managers and CSEA leaders statewide regarding Partnership programs and services. They also met with **19** CSEA leaders and NYS managers across the State to provide an overview of Partnership programs and services.



## WORK-LIFE SERVICES



### Network Child Care Centers

In May, the Office of Children and Family Services announced a Workforce Retention Grant, awarding center staff a bonus of \$3,000 if they met the eligibility requirements. On September 15, the application deadline closed. It is our understanding that all the Network Centers applied.

### Health and Safety and Professional Development Grants

Grants were announced for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, allowing each center to apply for a grant from \$9,000 to \$11,000. Award amounts are based on the number of State employee children enrolled at the child care center as of September 30.

### Directions: Pre-Retirement Seminars

During this quarter, the fall series was being planned with sessions beginning in September and ending in December. Held in September, the first session (four webinars) was offered serving **150** State employees.

Each participant is 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, Employee Benefits Division, and the Office of the State Comptroller.



## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

### Employee Assistance Program Utilization

There were **4,588** first contacts by employees and family members during this quarter. In addition, the EAP main office received **197** calls from employees requesting assistance and **52** website requests for assistance. The most frequently reported issues were related to work, followed by mental health, stress, bereavement/grief, and financial issues.

### Critical Incident Response

EAP coordinators responded to **25** critical incidents.

### Certified Employee Assistance Professionals Program

**11** coordinators and **8** staff members who have earned the CEAP credential. NYS EAP began the CEAP program in August for **7** coordinators and **3** regional representatives.

### Employee Assistance Program Grants

During this period, **89** applications have been approved, totaling approximately \$138,142.

### Employee Assistance Program Training

During this quarter, trainings provided were *Critical Incident*, *Statistical Report*, *Challenging Situations*, *Interviewing and Assessment*, *Case Study*, *Building Good Sleep Practices*, *Committee Orientations*, *New Employee Orientations*, *Supervisor Overview*, and *Self-Guided New Coordinator Institute Training*. Overall, **16** sessions total with **329** participants.

### Wellness

**91** WellNYS Ambassadors participate from **20** agencies.

**1,257** individuals attended **3** wellness webinars. Topics included: *Hike New York State*, *Building Healthy Meals*, and *Mind Your Health, Boost Your Brain*.

**2** webinars were provided to the employees of the Office of the Attorney General on *Solutions to Manage Stress* and *Self-Care*. There were **75** participants.

**1,578** employees and family members receive the WellNYS Daily which is an increase of **177** from last quarter.

### Multi-Agency Programs

The Binghamton Multi-agency committee filled the committee chairperson role. The Utica Multi-agency coordinator continues to see clients, but the committee continues to need more membership. The Syracuse Multi-agency's new coordinator started this quarter and began their initial training. The committee welcomed three new committee members. The Watertown Multi-agency had two coordinators resign and the committee has begun the recruitment process to find more coordinators. The committee held a summer walking program that was well received by the employees. The Buffalo Multi-agency committee has been meeting monthly and has selected co-chairpersons. The coordinator held several meet and greets at NYSIF, OAG, and WCB. The Rochester Multi-agency coordinator had several client contacts from various agencies.



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

During this quarter, NYS/UUP JLMC staff continued with the administration of several ongoing programs:

### Certification, Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program (CLEFR)

Applications were processed and approved to reimburse employees for certification and licensure exam preparation. One hundred and eighty three CLEFR applications were approved, totaling \$151,308. The program continues through December 31.

### Empire KnowledgeBank (EKB)

Applications 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 were processed.

**44** new EmpireKnowledge Bank (EKB) eLearning licenses were activated during this quarter.

In addition to administering ongoing programs, NYS/UUP JLMC staff began the implementation process of all other programs, since funds are now available, including changes to existing programs and establishing new programs that have been agreed to.

### Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program

NYS/UUP JLMC staff is updating the Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program guidelines and application, as well as preparing training sessions on the overview of the program to SUNY campuses. Applications for the Spring 2024 semester are being accepted.

### Individual Development Award (IDA) Program

Campuses were notified in September of their allocation of labor-management funds for implementing the Individual Development Awards Program. The allocation includes a

retroactive amount that is available for expenditures related to projects or activities that took place from July 2, 2022 to March 31, 2023. The guidelines and application are being drafted to incorporate mutually agreed upon changes to this program.

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

NYS/UUP JLMC staff have been developing guidelines and the application implementation process for the CLRP-R which the Executive Labor-Management Executive Committee has approved. The CLRP-R Program, which will be implemented January 2024, will reimburse fees for certification and licensure renewals that are required for the employee's position.

### Statewide Committee Orientation

NYS/UUP JLMC staff has been planning the committee orientation training session, tentatively scheduled for Fall 2023 for members of the Executive Level Committee and the five statewide joint labor-management committees.

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

- 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 and presentations to deliver to campus staff and employees.
- Reviewing the NYS/UUP JLMC website to update the information and make necessary revisions to the content.

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## 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.