

Office of Employee Relations  
and Labor-Management Committees

# QUARTERLY UPDATE

January - March 2024



Office of  
Employee Relations

## 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 2024 FSA as of March 31, include:

HEALTH CARE SPENDING ACCOUNT	ADOPTION ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT
<b>14,913</b>	<b>17</b>
State employees enrolled	State employees enrolled

DEPENDENT CARE  
ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT

**9,114**  
State employees  
enrolled



### PRE-TAX TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT NYS-RIDE

As of December 31, **4,469** employees participated in NYS-Ride transit. With NYS-Ride, the State realized a 12-month annualized savings of **\$63,120** (the net of FICA savings minus lost tax revenue), and employees saved an average of **\$662** per year. Parking participation continues to grow, with **551** employees enrolled.

### Highlights

#### New Centers of Excellence and Network improvements

- Instride Health now offering intensive in-home service and outreach with follow-up visits.
- LiveWell, a longstanding eating disorder provider in Albany, added family-based treatment to their agreement.
- Charlie Health, added a location in Rochester, and soon Nassau County
- Fusion Recovery, expanded substance use treatment access for the membership in the Capital District
- Forge Health, with specialized programs for veterans, active-duty military, emergency and health care professionals, first responders, in addition to LGBTQ+ individuals, and their families
- Ongoing recruitment for providers in areas around correctional facilities in the more rural areas of the State

### WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### The Public Service Workshop Programs (PSWP)

65 workshops were delivered to 1,468 participants.

#### Professional Development Committee (PDC)

The PDC met once in this quarter.

#### Training Directors' Roundtable

2 webinars were held this quarter, providing the training community with professional development, updates, and discussions on State training initiatives. There were approximately 140 training professionals in attendance for both sessions.

#### Learning and Development Series

The series of 7 virtual courses was held in January and February, with a total of 92 participants. 675 participants completed the Fall and Winter series, both in-person and virtually in training locations in Albany, Rochester, Binghamton, Rome, Hauppauge, and New York City.

#### Mandated Training

The Mandated Training Program was launched on March 1. Agency and authority training offices were sent correspondence announcing the mandated trainings. New to this year's mandated training is *Gender Identity in the Workplace*.

#### Statewide Learning Management System Primary Administrator Training

A two-day training was held in February with a total of 17 participants trained.

#### 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 3 two-day sessions during this quarter. The participants graduated in March.

#### PEF Leadership Development Program

40 participants attended and completed the virtual leadership program and graduated this quarter.

#### Public Employees Federation (PEF) Reimbursement Programs

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

One thousand two hundred and seventy-nine applications from 729 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$1,817,685. Of these applications, 359 were reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced CTR Program at an amount of \$464,695.

##### PEF Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement (WSR) Program

One thousand and eighty-six applications from 815 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$161,609.

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

One hundred and seventy-seven applications from 161 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$70,001.

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

Three hundred and sixty-nine applications from 366 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$58,617.

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#### Management/Confidential (M/C) Reimbursement Program

##### M/C Tuition Reimbursement Program

Eighty-two applications from 69 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$49,206.

##### M/C Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (CLEFR) Program

Five applications from three applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$1,401.

## NYS & CSEA PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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

The Spring 2024 Skills for Success program is underway. To date, **625** unique members have applied for **1,359** seats in one or more classes. From February to May, a total of **83** courses and webinars are available in ten categories.

#### Applied Skilled Trades Program

One hundred seven employees are participating in the 2023-2025 Applied Skilled Trades Program. Participants are currently taking their Trade 2 theory courses during the spring semester in the following regions: Long Island (electrician), Southern (carpenter and electrician), Capital (electrician), Central (plumber/steamfitter), and Western (plumber/steamfitter and electrician).

#### Adult Education Basics

Math Refresher 1 (Online) began in March with 18 participants. Focus on *Pronunciation: Level 2* in CSEA Capital Region 4 continues this month with 14 participants. Applications are being accepted for our newest class, *Getting Started with English for Speakers of Other Languages* in CSEA Capital Region 4, starting in April.

#### Labor-Management Services

Staff presented a customized *DiSC®/Labor-Management Committee* training to the SUNY Geneseo labor-management committee in January.

Staff conducted a pre-training needs assessment of the SUNY New Paltz labor and management teams in January. The assessments provide the groundwork for designing the customized Labor-Management Committee Process training.

Staff presented the customized Labor-Management Committee Process Training to SUNY Delhi.



### PARTNERSHIP ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

For 2024, approximately **764** employees from **44** agencies participated in the Partnership's Online Learning Program.

**72** employees are participating in the *Customer Service Certificate Program* for 2024. This program helps employees enhance their communication skills with customers.

**330** employees are participating in the *Microsoft Excel 2016 Essentials Certificate Program*. This program helps employees develop and improve their Microsoft Excel 2016 skills.

**180** employees are participating in the *Microsoft Word 2016 Basics Certificate Program* for 2024. This program helps employees enhance their skills in the Microsoft Word application.

**161** employees are participating in the *Successful Business Writing Certificate Program* for 2024. This program helps employees acquire a better understanding of grammar and the writing process.

**166** employees are participating in the *Organized Office Worker Certificate Program* for 2024. This program helps employees identify strategies to take control of their daily schedule and projects.

**377** employees are currently participating in the *Basics of Supervision Certificate Program* for 2024. This program helps employees gain an understanding of the responsibilities involved in being a supervisor.

### Tuition Benefits

A total of 2,790 employees have applied for 6,867 benefits since the 2023-2024 Tuition Benefits Program began on April 1. A total of 3,905 benefits have been paid, totaling \$3,585,385.

Six hundred forty-three employees are participating in the following targeted tuition programs: Commercial Driver's License (175), English for Speakers of Other Languages (16), HVAC (13), Information Technology (60), Legal Assistant Trainee (6), RN/LPN (349), and Welding (24).

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

No new grants were reviewed or approved this quarter. The grant totals for the NYS and CSEA contract period spanning from 2021 to 2026 are provided below:

- A total of **180** Quality of Work Life grants have been approved for **14** NYS agencies and **16** CSEA locals, totaling \$347,292.
- One Safety and Health grant has been approved for \$37,200.
- One Labor-Management Workforce Development grant has been approved for \$971.



### Safety and Health

An application submitted by the NYS Department of Financial Services for Computer Ergonomics Assessor training was approved.

An application submitted by Upstate Correctional Facility for Forklift Operator Safety Awareness training was approved.

The NYS and CSEA Safety and Health Planning Committee met in January, February, and March to plan for the next Statewide meeting.

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

### ADVISEMENT SERVICES

Advisors responded to **2,814** 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 **32** NYS agencies/facilities and CSEA events.

Field associates made **1,847** phone, text, and email contacts with NYS managers and CSEA leaders statewide regarding Partnership programs and services. They also held **22** meetings with CSEA leaders and NYS managers across the State to provide an overview of Partnership programs and services.



## WORK-LIFE SERVICES



### Network Child Care Centers

The Network Child Care Centers are eligible to participate in the 2023-2024 Health and Safety and Professional Development Grants. During this quarter, staff has been in the process of revising the reimbursement procedures for centers and reviewing the grant applications. Of the 29 centers participating the Network, 27 centers applied, totaling approximately \$260,000.

### Directions: Pre-Retirement Planning Webinar Sessions

The delivery of DIRECTIONS: Pre-Retirement Webinars, offered to Executive Branch employees, has changed. Employees who are at least 50 years old and eligible to retire within five years may attend during their normal workday with supervisory approval. Webinars will be held monthly, starting in April. Four 90-minute webinars will be held, with Deferred Compensation Plan and Pension webinars held on Tuesdays, and Social Security and NYS Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP) webinars are held on Wednesdays.

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

### Employee Assistance Program Utilization

There were **4,607** first contacts by employees and family members during this quarter. In addition, the EAP main office received **140** calls from employees requesting assistance and **52** website requests for assistance. The most frequently reported issues were related to mental health, followed by work, stress, financial, and housing/transportation.

### Critical Incident Response

EAP coordinators responded to **22** critical incidents.

### Certified Employee Assistance Professionals Program

The CEAP certification is a nationally recognized professional credential in the employee assistance field. **12** coordinators and **10** staff members have earned the CEAP credential. **5** coordinators and **1** regional representative were enrolled this quarter.

### Wellness

**86** WellNYS Ambassadors participated from **23** agencies.

**4** Statewide wellness webinars were provided to **1,452** participants related to WellNYS Daily To-Do topics: Create and engage in a wellness challenge with a friend or coworker, Connect and socialize, and Shop and make your meals instead of dining and take-out.

### Employee Assistance Program Training

During this quarter, trainings programs provided included: *OPDV Gender-Based Violence-Part 1 and 2, Regional Rep Coordinator/Committee/Supervisor Orientations, Case Studies, Building Resiliency and Burnout Prevention, Housing Workshop, Coordinator Best Practices, Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide*

Data refers to January - March 2024 unless otherwise noted.

*Prevention, Challenging Client Situations, Employee Benefits Management, Career Mobility Office Overview, EAP Statistical Report, Interviewing and Assessment Skills, Work Life Services, Deferred Compensation Plan Overview, Citizen Preparedness Corps, Overview of the American Red Cross, and Burnout.* Overall, **29** sessions total were held with **923** participants.

### The New Coordinator Institute

**51** new coordinators attended the March session.

### Multi-Agency Programs

Capital Area Multi-agency conducted meet and greets at multiple agencies. ITS has created an EAP committee and held its first committee meeting in January.

Binghamton Multi-agency committee hosted **3** tabling events for over **200** employees. DOL and OTDA hired new coordinators to serve their agencies, as well as the other member agencies.

The Utica Multi-agency hosted a tabling event with **40** attendees obtaining EAP information.

The Syracuse Multi-agency held an open house and was able to recruit **5** new committee members, as well as provided EAP information to over **100** employees.

The Watertown Multi-agency has been actively recruiting to replace the second EAP coordinator from DOT.

The Buffalo Multi-agency coordinator held a meet and greet in the Ellicott Square building in March.

The Rochester Multi-agency continue to promote EAP and wellness to the member agencies and are trying to add additional committee members from the larger agencies.

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

During this quarter, NYS/UUP JLMC staff resumed with the administration of labor-management funded programs and activities for UUP-represented employees as follows:

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

Applications were reviewed 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.

- **69** applications were received, **36** applicants are currently being reviewed, and **33** were reimbursed for a total of **\$25,583**.

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

This program was launched on January 1. The Program reimburses the fees for certification, licensure, or designation renewals that are required for the employee's position. The fee renewal is based on the requirements in the classification standard for the applicant's current title, or as included in the job description or job announcement for a specific position.

- **97** applications were received and reviewed, and **75** applications were approved for reimbursement for a total of **\$12,166**.

### Empire KnowledgeBank (EKB)

**23** new EKB eLearning licenses were activated.

### Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program

This Program assists pre-tenure employees who are under-represented in their department, unit, program, or school with the opportunity to focus on research and other activities that will assist them attain continuing or permanent appointment by granting them a leave and financial support. Applications for the Fall 2024 semester were reviewed by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee in March.

- **15** applications were reviewed and **10** were approved for a total of **\$68,282**.

### Individual Development Award (IDA) Program

The Program guidelines were revised to expand funding opportunities for professional development, particularly to assist with projects and activities related to an employee's research. Applications submitted by campuses were reviewed and approved for retroactive expenditures related to projects or activities that took place from April 1 to July 2, 2023.

- **190** applications were reviewed and approved for a total of **\$206,231**.
- Campuses continue to submit their summary reports and applications for review for the current 2023-2024 award period.

### Statewide Joint Labor-Management Committee Orientation

NYS/UUP JLMC staff has been planning an orientation training session for members of the Statewide joint labor-management committees.

### Other ongoing projects including:

- Preparing a summary report of labor-management funds expenditures by program to send to campuses.
- Preparing a survey to assess if current programs are meeting employee and campus needs, and to determine if there are any initiatives we may consider implementing to provide additional professional development opportunities to enhance employees' skills and knowledge.
- Continuing to work on strategies to develop promotional materials on labor-management programs to provide to campus staff and employees.
- Meeting with statewide labor-management committees to discuss and review programs and revise guidelines as needed.
- Reviewing the NYS/UUP JLMC website and updating the information as needed.

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

Due to the expiration of the Agreement between the State and GSEU on July 1, 2023, unexpended funds were available for a nine-month extension through March 31, 2024 to continue labor management programs. Due to limited funds being available, the only program funded during the extension period was reimbursement for the Student and Exchange Visitor and Information Systems (SEVIS) fee, which all visitors to the United States who are on student or exchange visas are required to pay the Department of Homeland Security the first time they apply for a visa. SEVIS applications were reviewed and approved, and staff worked with SUNY System Administration and the Comptroller's office to implement a process to pay the applicants since it has been determined this is taxable income.

- **123** applications were received and approved for a total of **\$43,050**.