

Office of Employee Relations  
and Labor-Management Committees

# QUARTERLY UPDATE

Q3 | July - September 2024



Office of  
Employee Relations

## OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MISSION

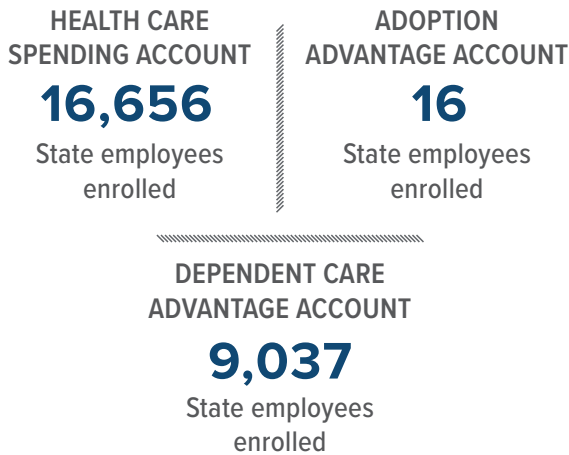
To advance the performance of state government through collaborative labor relations, workforce training, education, and benefits.

## NYS HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN/EMPLOYEE BENEFITS MANAGEMENT UNIT

**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 September 30, include:



### PRE-TAX TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT NYS-RIDE

As of September 30, **4,527** employees participated in NYS-Ride transit. With NYS-Ride, the State realized a 12-month annualized savings of **\$64,387** (the net of FICA savings minus lost tax revenue), and employees saved an average of **\$667** per year.

Parking participation continues to grow, with **575** employees enrolled.

### Highlights

#### The Empire Plan - Prescription Drug Program

The Employee Benefits Management Unit (EBMU) staff worked with CVS and Department of Civil Service (DCS) to conduct the annual Empire Plan formulary review, which has been completed. Changes will be implemented January 1, 2025.

#### The Empire Plan - Mental Health and Substance Use Program

EBMU is focused on bringing awareness to the new Centers of Excellence and network improvements through shared communications with the unions, DCS, and Carelon.

- Instride Health is 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 location in Rochester, and soon Nassau County.
- Fusion Recovery, expanded substance use treatment access for the membership in the NY 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.

**NYS Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) Vision Care Program**  
Visionworks.com now allows members to shop and purchase glasses online using their benefits and to monitor vision benefits.

## STATEWIDE TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

### WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

PSWP delivered **84** workshops to **1,374** participants.

#### Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee met in July.

#### Statewide Training Initiatives

Two Training Directors' Roundtable webinars were held in July and September providing the training community with professional development, updates, and discussions on State training initiatives.

An in-person *Statewide Learning Management System (SLMS) Primary Administrator* training was held in September, with a total of **16** participants trained to be new SLMS primary administrators.

An in-person *Introduction to SLMS Queries* class was held in August, with a total of **19** participants trained to be query managers.

An additional Train-the-Trainer (TTT) on *Respectful Communications in the Workplace* was held in September, with one final TTT held to meet agency demands. There were **23** employees from NYS agencies in attendance.

The *Fall and Winter Learning and Development Series* was announced with a total of **38** class offerings available beginning in November and concluding in February.

#### Leadership Development Programs

##### Excelsior Service Fellowship Program

**28** Fellows participated in a one-day *Offboarding/Goal Setting* session in August. The eleventh cohort of Fellows started their first year in September with a one-day orientation session.

##### PEF Leadership Development Program

**213** applications were received from **26** agencies for two PEF Leadership Development Programs.

##### New York Leadership Institute (NYSLI) for Management / Confidential (M/C) Employees

**82** applications were received from **29** agencies for the upcoming eighth cohort of NYSLI. This program will begin in November and will run through April with **40** participants selected.

New York State/New York State Correction Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYS/NYSCOPBA) Joint Labor-Management Committee Reimbursement Program

##### NYSCOPBA Education and Training Program

One application was approved for a total expenditure of \$2,250.

New York State/Police Benevolent Association of New York State (NYS/PBANYS) Joint Labor-Management Committee Reimbursement Program

##### PBANYS Education and Training Program (ETP)

Reimbursements were not issued during this quarter.

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

##### PEF College Tuition Reimbursement Program

716 applications from 420 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$1,116,641. Of these applications, 63 were reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced CTR Program at an amount of \$108,444.

##### PEF Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement Program

318 applications from 275 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$73,113.

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

29 applications from 29 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$9,944.

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

71 applications from 71 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$14,704.

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

##### M/C Tuition Reimbursement Program

13 applications from 14 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$15,192.

##### 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, and DMNA)

**11** live instructor-led webinars were conducted in July as part of the *Summer Webinar Series*, with a total of **372** participants.

The *Fall 2024 Skills for Success Program* catalog went live on the website and social media. The catalog was also sent directly to agency managers, training directors, CSEA local presidents, and CSEA-represented NYS employees. There are over **80** in-person and online webinars and courses scheduled to be held from September through December.

**23** worksite training courses were completed, with a total of **280** participants.

### Applied Skilled Trades Program

**96** employees are participating in the *2023-2025 Applied Skilled Trades Program*. In September, participants began *Trade 3 Theory* courses 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

Our newest *Skills for Success* class, *English for Speakers of Other Languages 2* (CSEA Capital Region 4) will be held in October.

**2** Worksite Training Requests have been scheduled for *English for Speakers of Other Languages 1* at SUNY Albany in October, November, and December.

### Labor-Management Services

Staff presented a customized Labor-Management Committee Process training to SUNY New Paltz in September.

#### PARTNERSHIP ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

**369** employees are participating in the *Customer Service Online Learning Certificate Program*.

**376** employees are participating in the *Microsoft Word Basics Online Learning Certificate Program*.

**353** employees are participating in the *Successful Business Writing Online Learning Certificate Program*.

**368** employees are participating in *The Organized Office Worker Online Learning Certificate Program*.

**209** employees are participating in the *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate Program*. This

#### Tuition Benefits

**2,171** employees have applied for **5,214**, benefits since the 2024-2025 Tuition Benefits Program began in April. So far, **1,262** benefits have been paid, totaling **\$1,181,973**.

**498** employees are participating in the following targeted tuition programs: Commercial Driver's License (104), ESOL (1), HVAC (5), Information Technology (62), Legal Assistant Trainee (3), RN/LPN (306), and Welding (17).

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

**27** new grants were approved this quarter. Grant totals for the NYS and CSEA contract period spanning from 2021-2026 are:

- **219** Quality of Work Life grants have been approved for **14** NYS agencies and **19** CSEA locals, totaling **\$426,037**.
  - **4** Safety and Health grants have been approved for **\$104,250**.
  - **1** Labor-Management Workforce Development grant has been approved for **\$972**.
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### SAFETY AND HEALTH

The NYS & Civil Service Employee Association (CSEA) Safety and Health Planning Committee met in July and September to discuss areas of mutual concern.

The NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health (Article 15) Committee met in July to discuss matters of mutual concern.

Grant applications submitted by NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision for *De-escalation “Verbal Judo”* training and State University of New York Oswego for *Interplay Learning Online Safety and Health* training were approved.

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### ADVISEMENT SERVICES

Advisors responded to **3,100** 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 Associate Activities

Staff hosted information tables at **26** NYS agencies/ facilities and CSEA events.

Field associates made **1,005** phone, text, and email contacts with NYS managers and CSEA leaders statewide regarding Partnership programs and services. They also held **56** 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 Work-Life Services Network Child Care Centers continue to experience staffing shortages, which is consistent with what is occurring statewide and industry-wide. Such staffing shortages pose major challenges to the childcare centers. The lack of proper staffing contributes to the inability to open all classrooms and enroll the requisite number of children to operate at full capacity. The expansion of Universal Pre-K has severely impacted preschool enrollment within the centers. More three and four-year-old children are now enrolling within their local public schools rather than attending the Network Child Care Centers, adding to their inability to reach full capacity.

### Directions: Pre-Retirement Planning Webinar Sessions

The delivery of four 90-minute DIRECTIONS: Pre-Retirement webinars were held for executive branch employees who are at least 50 years old and eligible to retire within five years. **2,511** employees participated. To assist with coordinating the webinars, there are **103** liaisons at State agencies who promote the webinars to the employees.

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## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

### Utilization

There were **5,067** first contacts by employees and family members during this quarter. The EAP main office received **165** calls from employees requesting assistance and **57** website requests for assistance.

### Critical Incident Response

EAP coordinators responded to **28** critical incidents.

### Certified Employee Assistance Professionals (CEAP)

The CEAP certification is a nationally recognized professional credential in the employee assistance field. The new CEAP cycle commenced in July and there are **18** coordinators who are eligible this year.

### Wellness

**4** Statewide wellness webinars were held with **1,034** participants. The topics were *Kickoff to the WellNYS Summer Experience*, *Solutions to Manage Stress in 2024*, and *Journaling as a Path to Empowerment and Self-Care*.

A wellness webinar was held for **124** employees of the Office of the Attorney General.

**92** WellNYS Ambassadors from **23** different agencies promoted the WellNYS Everyday Program to employees.

**3,064** subscribers received the WellNYS Daily To-Do and/or It's Move Time email communications.

### Employee Assistance Program Coordinator Training

Staff continues to coordinate professional development training for coordinators, committee members, and regional representatives through EAP specialized trainings. The training contributes to developing skills, improving retention and knowledge. It will also provide an opportunity for coordinators to earn Professional Development Hours for the CEAP certification. There were **19** sessions with **581** participants.

### Multi-Agency Programs

The Capital Area Multi-agency will be participating in the Healthy Living Fair and the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Support health fair this fall. The grant subcommittee was successful in applying for an EAP grant for promotional items.

The Binghamton Multi-agency coordinators have hosted joint meet and greets that included NYS Insurance Fund (NYSIF) and unions. A grant for promotional items was obtained.

The Utica Multi-agency has no working committee.

The Syracuse Multi-agency held an EAP promotional event that featured yard games and contests with over 150 participants.

The Watertown Multi-agency hosted a walking program during the summer with many employees participating.

The Buffalo Multi-agency distributed promotional items at a NYSIF event and held a walking program to promote wellness.

The Rochester multi-agency coordinator continues to have consistent client contacts. They added an additional committee member and identified a chairperson.

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

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

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The statewide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee continued discussions to review the effectiveness of the Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program and the Disability Grants Program and how to better promote the program to widen the scope of applicants, and to explore opportunities for employees.

### Retraining Fellowship Program

The Retraining Fellowship Program assists employees who are retrenched, have been notified of retrenchment, are perceived to be at high risk of retrenchment, or whose retraining would accommodate shifting program needs. Funds are provided to pursue an organized course of study to attain other employment opportunities or to maintain their current employment.

- **2** applications have been submitted and one is being considered for funding pending required documentation.

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

Applications were reviewed and approved to reimburse employees for 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 (SUNY).

- **125** applications were received and are being reviewed.

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

The CLRP-Renewals which was implemented on January 1, 2024, 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.

- **115** applications were received.

### 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.

- **49** new EKB eLearning licenses were activated during this quarter.

### Individual Development Award (IDA) Program

The IDA Program is designed to support a variety of professional development projects or activities for eligible full-time and part-time academic and professional employees that will assist them to develop their full professional potential and to prepare for advancement.

The IDA Program guidelines were revised to expand funding opportunities to assist with projects and activities related to an employee's research and publication of manuscripts that are not provided by the employee's campus, department, program, or through other funding sources. Applications submitted by each Campus Professional Development Committee were reviewed and approved by NYSUUP JLMC staff:

- **1,986** applications were reviewed and **\$2,048,281** was awarded.

### Ongoing projects include:

- A summary report of labor-management funds expended and number of employees who participated by program to send to campuses.
- 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.