

QUARTERLY UPDATE

Q1 | January - March 2025



OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS MISSION

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

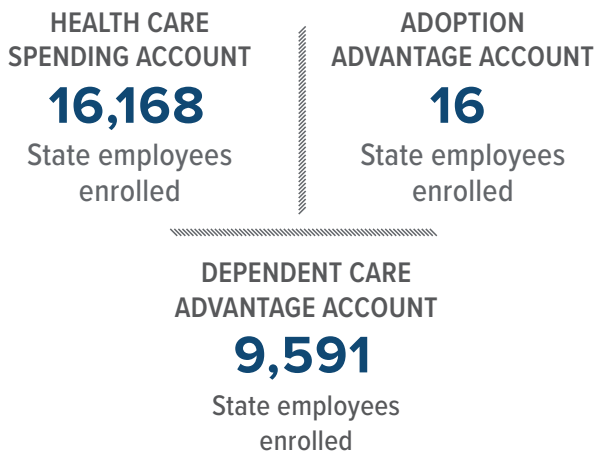
NYS HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN/EMPLOYEE BENEFITS MANAGEMENT UNIT

PRE-TAX PROGRAMS

Flex Spending Account (FSA): Health Care Spending Account (HCSA), Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA), and Adoption Advantage Account.

The Flex Spending Account (FSA) Program is a pre-tax program that saves employees money on health care and dependent care expenses.

Enrollments for the 2025 FSA as of March 31, include:



PRE-TAX TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT NYS-RIDE

As of March 31, **4,614** employees participated in NYS-Ride transit. With NYS-Ride, the State realized a 12-month annualized savings of **\$73,127** (the net of FICA savings minus lost tax revenue), and employees saved an average of **\$658** per year.

Parking remains constant with
594 employees enrolled.

Highlights

The Empire Plan - Hospital Program

Effective January 1, 2025, facility fee copayment charges for visits to a hospital extension clinic will be eliminated. Only a provider visit copayment and possibly an outpatient hospital service copayment will be charged.

The Empire Plan - Live Health Online

As of February 2025 there were:

- 744 new registrations
- 1,510 medical visits
- 617 Behavioral Health visits
- 8,069 (medical) 904 (behavioral) unique users
- 8,973 unique utilizers overall in January and February

The Empire Plan - Prescription Drug Program

A Chapter Amendment to a law passed in 2024 became effective in January 2025, requiring the coverage of scalp cooling systems during chemotherapy for large group policies, including the Empire Plan.

The Empire Plan - Mental Health and Substance Use Program

Carelon remains committed to actively expanding its network to provide comprehensive mental health and substance use treatment services throughout the state. In the last quarter, there were:

- Over 250 mental health and substance use (MHSU) practitioners added to the MHSU network in the state.
- Over 400 MHSU network locations added in the state.

STATEWIDE TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Public Service Workshop Programs (PSWP) PSWP delivered **44** workshops to **928** participants completing training. This represents 382 contact hours held during **66.5** training days.

Statewide Training Initiatives Training Directors' Roundtable

2 webinars were held providing the training community with professional development, updates, and discussions on Statewide training initiatives.

Fall through Winter 2024-2025 Statewide Learning and Development Series concluded with **5** virtual classes offered in February and one final in-person class in New York City offered in March. More than **400** employees statewide participated in the series, attending courses on a variety of topics, including: *Successful Supervision in a Remote Environment*, *Navigating Change*, *Emotional Intelligence*, and *Respectful Communications in the Workplace*.

Statewide Learning Management System (SLMS) Primary Administrator Training
Held in March with **19** participants.

2025-26 Empire KnowledgeBank (EKB)
56 agencies submitted applications to buy EKB licenses for a Statewide aggregate purchase.

Professional Development Committee (PDC)
The PDC which is on a six-week meeting schedule, met in January.

**Leadership Development Programs
Excelsior Service Fellowship Program**
40 Fellows from cohort ten who are in their second year of the fellowship participated in a February professional development session.

NYS Leadership Institute for M/C Employees
3 full-day sessions were held in January, February, and March for the eighth cohort of the NYSLI. **39** participants attended each session.

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

NYSCOPBA Education and Training Program (ETP): 23 applications from 12 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$31,268.

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

PBANYS Education and Training Program (ETP): 21 applications from eight applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$22,522.

**State-PEF Professional Development Committee (PDC)
Public Employees Federation (PEF) Reimbursement Programs**

PEF College Tuition Reimbursement (CTR) Program: 700 applications from 386 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$919,925. Of these applications, 106 were reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced CTR Program at an amount of \$160,879.

PEF Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement (WSR) Program: 640 applications from 468 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$152,682. Of these applications, one was reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced WSR Program at an amount of \$310.

PEF Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (CLEFR) Program: 113 applications from 106 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$39,987.

PEF Certification and License Renewal Fee Reimbursement (CLRFR) Pilot Program: 222 applications from 221 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$44,057.

Management/Confidential (M/C) Reimbursement Program

M/C Tuition Reimbursement Program: 139 applications from 94 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$130,461.

M/C Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement (CLEFR) Program: 8 applications from seven applicants were approved for a total expenditure of \$2,290.

NYS & CSEA PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING (Partnership)

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

The Spring 2025 Skills for Success program is underway. To date, **744** unique members have applied for a total of **1,767** seats in one or more classes. From February to May, a total of **69** courses and webinars are available in **10** categories.

Applied Skilled Trades Program

96 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).

Adult Education Basics

English for Speakers of Other Languages 1 in CSEA Capital Region 4 and *Math Refresher 2* (online) began in February with a total of **32** learners – both courses end in early April.

Labor-Management Services

Labor-Management Services (LMS) staff facilitated a one-hour webinar, *The Fundamentals of Labor-Management Committees* in January with **52** participants.

The LMS team presented a customized Labor-Management Committee training to SUNY Geneseo in March.

The LMS team presented a workshop at the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions' 52nd Annual National Conference in March at Hunter College. The presentation was *The Fundamentals of Labor-Management Committees in Higher Education*.

ONLINE LEARNING

4 one-year Online Learning Certificate Programs and **2** six-month Online Learning Certificate Programs for 2025 were announced.



ONE-YEAR ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

47 employees participating in the *Customer Service*.

131 employees participating in the *Microsoft Word Basics*.

126 employees participating in the *Successful Business Writing*.

106 employees participating in *The Organized Office Worker*.

SIX-MONTH ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

133 employees participating in *Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving*.

128 employees participating in *Microsoft Collaboration Tools*.

Tuition Benefits

3,173 employees have applied for **7,780** benefits since the 2024 - 2025 Tuition Benefits Program, which began on April 1, 2024. So far, **4,370** benefits have been paid, totaling **\$3,951,543**.

718 employees are participating in the following targeted tuition programs: Commercial Driver's License (185), ESOL (1), HVAC (13), Information Technology (73), Legal Assistant Trainee (3), RN/LPN (421), and Welding (22).

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

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

- 288 Quality of Work Life grants have been approved for 17 NYS agencies and 22 CSEA locals, totaling \$549,478.
- 4 Safety and Health grants have been approved for \$104,250.
- 2 Labor-Management Workforce Development grants have been approved for \$1,944.



SAFETY AND HEALTH

The NYS & CSEA Safety and Health Planning Committee met on January 10 and February 20 to discuss areas of mutual concern.

The NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health (Article 15) Committee met on January 22 to discuss areas of mutual concern.

ADVISEMENT SERVICES

Advisors responded to 3,356 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 14 NYS agencies/facilities and CSEA events.



Field associates made 1,073 phone, text, and email contacts with NYS managers and CSEA leaders statewide regarding Partnership programs and services.



They also held 89 meetings with CSEA leaders and NYS managers across the State to provide an overview of Partnership programs and services.



WORK-LIFE SERVICES

NYS Network Child Care Centers

The Centers continue to experience staffing shortages, this 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. According to the information provided by the child care centers in the 2024 Network Child Care Center survey, the licensing capacity of all of the centers was **3,101** and the enrollment was **2,233**.

In addition, 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.

Health and Safety and Professional Development Grants

The NYS Network Child Care Centers are eligible to participate in the 2024-2025 Grants. During this quarter, staff reviewed grant reimbursement applications and documents submitted by the Centers who were approved for reimbursement. Of the **29** Centers participating in the Network, **23** centers applied for grants, totaling approximately **\$252,000**. In addition, staff have been traveling to NYS Network Child Care Centers to conduct grant audit site visits as well as provide technical assistance as needed.

Directions: Pre-Retirement Planning Webinar Sessions

DIRECTIONS: Pre-Retirement Webinars, which are offered to executive branch employees who are at least 50 years old and eligible to retire within five years are offered every month. During this quarter, webinars were held in January, February, and March. Four 90-minute webinars were held. They included the Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) and Pension webinars on Tuesdays, and Social Security and NYS Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP) webinars on Wednesdays. There are **105** liaisons at State agencies who assist with promoting the webinars to employees.

Webinar Attendance:

January: **885** employees
February: **1,013** employees
March: **1,080** employees



Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Utilization

There were **7,105** first contacts by employees and family members during this quarter. In addition, the EAP main office received **126** calls from employees requesting assistance and **57** website requests for assistance. The increase in first contacts this quarter is related to the employees impacted by the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision strike.

The most frequently reported issues were related to workplace/job performance, mental health, stress, health benefits, and finances.

EAP Critical Incident Response

EAP coordinators responded to, and assisted with, **32** critical incidents.

Certified Employee Assistance Professionals (CEAP)

The CEAP certification is a nationally recognized professional credential in the employee assistance field. **3** coordinators and **1** staff member earned their CEAP this quarter. A total of **20** coordinators and **12** staff currently have earned the CEAP credential.

Wellness

There were **3** statewide wellness webinars related to WellNYS Daily To-Do topics with a total of **1,233** participants. Topics were *Commit to Your Health in 2025*, *One Week at a Time*, *Unlocking Success with Tracking Behaviors*, *Innovative Approaches to Healthy Eating*, and *Finding Success with Personal Finances*.

3 webinars were delivered to **120** employees at the Office of the Attorney General through their diversity and inclusion staff to educate employees on wellness.

WORK-LIFE SERVICES continued . . .

There are **100** WellNYS Ambassadors from **23** different agencies who promoted the WellNYS Everyday program to employees in their agencies and contributed to monthly virtual meetings.

The WellNYS Everyday program provides two different email subscriptions, the WellNYS Daily To-Do and It's Move Time. As of the end of March, there are **3,433** subscribers.

Outreach

EAP reached over **500** employees during this quarter by hosting in-person events such as meet and greets, union activities, wellness events, and benefit fairs.

Over **1,000** employees viewed the *EAP Training for Supervisors* on the Statewide Learning Management System, YouTube, or by attending a wellness webinar.

Employee Assistance Program Coordinator Training

Professional development continued throughout the quarter with opportunities to participate in learning activities. EAP training is designed to equip EAP coordinators with the skills necessary to support employees in managing work and personal challenges, thereby enhancing their overall well-being and productivity. The training sessions aimed to familiarize EAP coordinators and EAP committees with the resources available and how to effectively utilize them. There were **45** sessions with **942** participants.

Training included:

- *Workplace Diversity, Inclusion, and Sensitivity*
- *Raising Mental Health Awareness and Reducing Stigma at Work*
- *Navigating Trauma Effectively*
- *NYS Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Training for EAP Coordinator*
- *Employee Benefits Management Training*
- *Carelon Behavioral Health Training, Regional Rep Committee/Supervisor Orientation*
- *New Coordinator Institute.*

Multi-Agency Programs

The Capital Area Multi-agency (CAMA) coordinators have had numerous in-person meet and greets and virtual brown bag presentations. NYS Homes and Community Renewal has officially joined CAMA and has been active in promoting EAP services.

The Binghamton Multi-agency committee continues to meet monthly. Coordinators and committee members are working to host events, including a resource fair in Endicott. The NYS Department of Transportation coordinators hosted meet and greet tabling at their Spring safety meetings, and presented a brief EAP overview.

The Utica Multi-agency EAP coordinator continues to have many client contacts. They hosted two tabling events in the Utica State Office Building. The EAP committee chairperson has resigned, and they are working to fill the vacancy.

The Syracuse Multi-agency will have a new coordinator from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation begin in August. The EAP committee hosted a Chili Cook-off contest that was attended by approximately 80 employees. The committee staffed a table with informational materials.

Watertown Multi-agency continues to recruit for a second coordinator. The primary coordinator received many client contacts this quarter due to overflow phone calls from employees from the Department of Corrections and Community Services with strike-related issues.

The Buffalo Multi-agency held a meet and greet at NYS Insurance Fund and distributed several promotional items.

The Rochester Multi-agency coordinator continues to have regular client contacts and held several tabling events with new grant items being distributed among agencies.

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:

Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program

Established under the statewide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave Program seeks to promote diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity in SUNY's workforce. The Program enhances employment opportunities for employees who are preparing for continuing appointment (academic employees) or permanent appointment (professional employees) by providing salary for a replacement while the employee is on leave. The Committee will meet in April to review applications for the Fall 2025.

- 17 applications were received and will be reviewed in April.

Individual Development Award (IDA) Program

The IDA Program, which is established under the statewide Professional Development Committee, 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 including those 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.

During this quarter, IDA applications which were submitted by the Campus Professional Development Committees were reviewed and approved by NYS/UUP JLMC staff:

- 13 campuses submitted applications for review
- 735 applications were reviewed
- \$542,028 was awarded

Dr. Herbert N Wright Memorial Safety and Health Training Award Program

An application was submitted for funding for job related training, under the Dr. Herbert N Wright Memorial Safety and Health Training Award Program. The committee reviewed and awarded the applicant

\$3,304.20 to attend *Guidelines for Laboratory Design: Health and Safety Considerations* Training in Boston, Massachusetts.

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 State University of New York (SUNY).

- 91 applications were received and are being reviewed for reimbursement.
- 60 applications were reimbursed, totaling \$51,774.

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

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

- 120 applications were received and are being reviewed.

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.

- 46 Empire KnowledgeBank (EKB) eLearning licenses were activated during this quarter.

Ongoing projects include:

- Continuing to focus on strategies to promote labor-management programs to campus staff and employees.
- Meeting with statewide labor-management committees to discuss and review programs and revise guidelines as needed.