Office of Employee Relations
and Labor-Management Committees

QUARTERLY UPDATE

Quarter 1 | January - March 2026

NEW YORK STATE | 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.

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:

HEALTH CARE SPENDING ACCOUNT
18,264
State employees enrolled

ADOPTION ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT
11
State employees enrolled

DEPENDENT CARE ADVANTAGE ACCOUNT
10,139
State employees enrolled

NYS-RIDE

As of March 31, 4,852 employees participated in NYS-Ride transit and 671 participated in parking. With NYS-Ride, the State realized a 12-month annualized savings of $70,766 (the net of FICA savings minus lost tax revenue), and employees saved an average of $610 per year. Total Administrative Services Corporation (TASC) has been selected as the NYS-Ride program administrator for the 2027 plan year. The new NYS-Ride will launch in Quarter 4.

Health Insurance Program Highlights

The Empire Plan - LiveHealth Online
From January 1 to October 31, 2025 there were 3,447 registrations and 9,494 visits.

The Empire Plan - Mental Health and Substance Use Program
Rula and Wellnite, 2 online mental health services provider groups, were added to Carelon's network.

Carelon's virtual platform, Talkspace continues to be a resource for many members, with over 460 new registrations for virtual therapy, and over 300 new registrations for psychiatry.

Medical / Surgical Network updates
71 total providers contracted into the network including ambulatory surgery centers, orthopedic surgeons, home health care agencies, neuro-psychologists, and a children's specialty hospital.

Dental Program
Two Jet Dental mobile dental clinics were organized for Cattaraugus County and the Utica region in January and March, respectively.

Data refers to January - March 2026 unless otherwise noted.

WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Public Service Workshop Programs
83 workshops delivered to 1,250 participants.

Statewide Training Initiatives
Training Directors' Roundtable
Webinars were held in January and March providing the training community with professional development, updates, and discussions on Statewide training initiatives.

A three-day *Instructional Design Certificate Program* was held in March. The training was in-person with 25 participants.

Professional Development Committee
The Committee, which is on a six-week meeting schedule, met in February and March.

Mandatory Training Courses
The 2026 mandatory training program was launched to NYS executive branch agencies. Training must be completed by December 31, 2026.

Leadership Development Programs
Excelsior Service Fellowship Program
Cohort 11 had one professional development session in February with 39 attendees. Cohort 12 had two of their bi-monthly sessions in January, which had 59 attendees, and in March, which had 58 attendees.

PEF Leadership Development Program for PEF-represented Employees
Two virtual graduations took place in January and February. 40 participants graduated from each session.

New York Leadership Institute for M/C Employees
The final session and graduation took place in March with 45 participants graduating.

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

NYSCOPBA Education and Training Program
13 applications from 7 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $11,196.

NYSCOPBA Quality of Work-Life Program
37 applications approved for a total amount of $144,399 during the quarter.

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

PBANYS Education and Training Program
12 applications from 9 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $16,731.

PBANYS Quality of Work-Life Program
There were 21 grants approved for a total amount of $26,867 during the quarter.

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

PEF College Tuition Reimbursement Program
1,272 applications from 640 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $1,730,869. Of these applications, 129 were reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced CTR Program at an amount of $210,396.

PEF Workshop and Seminar Reimbursement Program
473 applications from 384 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $40,209. Of these applications, one was reimbursed under the Nurses' Enhanced WSR Program at an amount of $350.

PEF Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program
100 applications from 98 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $33,728.

PEF Certification and License Renewal Fee Reimbursement (CLRFR) Pilot Program
251 applications from 250 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $48,959.

Management/Confidential (M/C) Reimbursement Program
M/C Tuition Reimbursement Program
152 applications from 104 applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $166,719.

M/C Certification and Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program
5 applications from five applicants were approved for a total expenditure of $1,250.

NYS & CSEA PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING (Partnership)

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

The Partnership launched its first winter term in January to meet the need for additional training between the fall and spring Skills for Success semesters. The winter term offered three advanced computer skills courses and served 86 employees.

The Spring 2026 Skills for Success program began in February. There are 90 classes in 10 different topic areas being offered. To date, 881 unique members have applied for a total of 1,695 seats in one or more classes.

Two six-month Online Learning Certificate Programs - *Microsoft Excel Basics* and *Building Conflict Resolution* ended in March. Two six-month Online Learning Certificate Programs - *Basics of Supervision* and *Microsoft Excel 365 Intermediate* launched in March.

Applied Skilled Trades Program

The 2026-2028 Applied Skilled Trades Program is underway. Participants are completing the Technical Math Course. Programs are running in the following regions: Long Island/Metropolitan Region - Electrician; Long Island/Metropolitan Region - Carpenter; Capital Region - Plumber and Steamfitter; Capital Region - Electrician; Capital Region - Carpenter; Central Region - Electrician; and Central Region - Carpenter.

Labor-Management Services

Labor-Management Services (LMS) staff conducted a pre-training needs assessment for the SUNY Brockport management team in October.

Staff presented a customized Labor-Management Committee (LMC) training to SUNY Geneseo in January.

During this quarter staff conducted:

- Two-day, in-person LMC Process training with the combined committees of Buffalo Psychiatric and Western NY Children's Psychiatric at the Buffalo Psychiatric facility in February.
- Pre-training needs assessment for the Broome Residency Department of Transportation LMC in February.
- Pre-training needs assessment for SUNY Plattsburgh's LMC in March.

Staff attended SUNY Brockport's LMC meeting virtually in March and provided input. This is step number six in the LMS continuum (LMC meeting with feedback).

Staff met with LMC Co-chairs from Buffalo Psychiatric Center's LMC in March to discuss further training and provide conflict resolution resources following LMC training in February.

ONLINE LEARNING

Approximately 1,362 employees from 169 agencies and facilities are participating in the Partnership's Online Learning program for 2026. During this quarter employees are participating in:

ONE-YEAR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

116 employees are participating in *Microsoft Word Basics Online*.

83 employees are participating in *Customer Service Online Learning*.

88 employees are participating in *Successful Business Writing*.

103 employees are participating in *The Organized Office Worker*.

SIX-MONTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

351 employees completed *Microsoft Excel Basics*.

266 employees completed *Building Conflict Resolution*.

231 employees are participating in *Basics of Supervision*.

288 employees are participating in *Microsoft Excel Intermediate.*

Data refers to January - March 2026 unless otherwise noted.

NYS & CSEA PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PARTNERSHIP)

Tuition Benefits

3,480 employees have applied for 8,835 benefits for the 2025-2026 Tuition Benefits Program, which began on April 1, 2025. So far, 5,981 benefits have been paid, totaling $7,854,817.40.

455 employees are participating in the following targeted tuition programs: Commercial Driver's License (116), HVAC (25), RN/LPN (305), and Welding (9).

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

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

- 420 Quality of Work Life Grants have been approved for 21 NYS agencies and 98 CSEA locals, totaling $829,307.
- 7 Safety and Health Grants have been approved for $152,390.
- 3 Labor-Management Workforce Development Grants have been approved for $3,039.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

The NYS & CSEA Safety and Health Planning Committee met in January, February, and March to discuss workplace safety topics and plan for the statewide meeting.

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

The NYS & CSEA Safety and Health Planning Committee met in December to discuss workplace safety topics and plan for the statewide meeting.

ADVISEMENT SERVICES

Advisors responded to 3,319 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 29 NYS agencies/facilities and CSEA events.

Field associates made 1,043 phone, text, and email contacts with NYS managers and CSEA leaders statewide regarding Partnership programs and services. They also held 96 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

During this quarter, staff have reviewed grant reimbursement applications and supplementary documents submitted by the centers for the Network Child Care Centers 2025-2026 Health and Safety and Professional Development Grants. Of the 29 centers participating in the Network, 23 applied for grants, totaling approximately $316,300 in awards. In addition, staff have been traveling to Network Child Care Centers to conduct grant audit site visits and provide technical assistance as needed. In addition, Work-Life Services (WLS) has reinstated the Playground Grant, and four centers were awarded up to $20,000 each for playground improvements.

Directions: Pre-Retirement Planning Webinar Sessions

Webinars are offered monthly to executive branch employees aged 50 and older who are eligible to retire within five years. During this quarter, webinars were held on January, February and March. Each session included four 90-minute webinars covering the Deferred Compensation Plan, NYS Pension Program, Social Security, and NYS Health Insurance Program. Webinars are promoted with the assistance of 105 liaisons at NYS agencies.

Webinar Attendance:
January: 391 employees
February: 577 employees
March: 634 employees

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Utilization

During this quarter, there were 5,767 first contacts from employees and family members. Additionally, the EAP main office received 131 calls and 61 website requests for assistance.

The most frequently reported issues involved workplace/job performance, mental health, stress, bereavement/grief, and health benefit information.

EAP Critical Incident Response

EAP coordinators responded to, and assisted with, 29 critical incidents.

Certified Employee Assistance Professionals (CEAP)

The CEAP certification is a nationally recognized professional credential in the employee assistance field. Currently, 23 coordinators and 12 staff members have earned the CEAP credential. One coordinator earned their CEAP this quarter.

EAP Grants

The NYS EAP 2025-2026 grant cycle began July 1 and ended December 31, 2025. Over $182,000 was spent on 116 grant applications and 27 agencies.

Wellness

6 Statewide wellness webinars related to WellNYS Daily To-Do topics with a total of 1,769 participants. Topics covered were *Start 2026 Focused on You, Fit Happens, What Awaits You Outside in NYS in the Winter, Matters of the Heart, What is a GLP-1 Medication and Does the NYSHIP Plan Pay For It?, Protein! In All It's Glory.*

As of this quarter, there are 4,076 subscribers to the WellNYS Daily To-Do and It's Move Time emails.

Outreach

EAP reached 20,025 employees through in-person events, including meet-and-greets, union activities, wellness events, and benefit fairs.

Employee Assistance Program Coordinator Training

Below is a summary of the EAP training programs offered during this quarter. There were 319 sessions with 3,901 participants.

Training included:

- Opioids/Substance Use Disorder in the Workplace
- Psychological First Aid
- Gender-Based Violence in the Workplace

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WORK-LIFE SERVICES continued . . .

- Creating and Maintaining Committee Bylaws
- Leadership Mod. 1 – Support and Supervision
- Leadership Mod. 2 – Promoting Your EAP
- Networking and Resource Development
- Ethics in NYS EAP Coordinator Practice
- NYS Office for the Aging Programs and Services
- Opioids/Substance Use Disorder in the Workplace
- Wellness as an EAP Marketing Tool
- Interviewing and Assessment Skills
- Critical Incident Response
- Introduction to Worksite WellNYS Everyday

New Coordinator Institute

Participant evaluations averaged 4.9 out of 5, reflecting exceptional instructional quality, strong curriculum design, and a highly engaged learning environment. This score underscores the program's reputation for excellence and its ability to prepare EAP coordinators for immediate success in their roles.

EAP Coordinators' Training Report

EAP coordinators conducted 319 training sessions at their respective agencies, reaching 3,901 participants, including employees, union members, and supervisors. This level of activity highlights the important role coordinators play in promoting employee well-being, strengthening workplace culture, and ensuring access to EAP resources throughout the State.

Multi-Agency Programs

Capital Area Multi-agency (CAMA) coordinators hosted a meet and greet at the Department of State and workshops at the Office of Addiction Services and Support. In addition, the coordinators held a wellness reset program for the Department of Motor Vehicles and drafted the 2025 annual report to be shared with the oversight committee at the next meeting.

Binghamton's Multi-agency EAP committee did not meet. No programs were offered, but coordinators still see employees requesting EAP services.

The Utica Multi-agency coordinator continues to have regular contacts and hosted a tabling event to promote EAP. The current coordinator will be stepping down and transitioning to cover their agency.

The Syracuse Multi-agency held two successful promotional events: a chili cook-off and a blood drive in conjunction with the American Red Cross.

The Watertown Multi-agency held a well-attended ice-skating event that promoted wellness. They recruited a new coordinator and plan several meet-and-greet events to introduce them.

The Buffalo Multi-agency coordinator continues to offer orientation sessions to new staff members. They held several EAP meet and greet events and hosted in-person retirement seminars, as well as planning health fairs for numerous offices.

The Rochester Multi-agency committee met and continues to try to establish a representative within each larger agency. The employee contacts are consistent with last quarter. However, outreach efforts remain low due to limited release time to contact agencies.

NEW YORK STATE/UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

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). During an employee's leave, their campus provides their full-salary, and labor-management funds assist with providing funds for salary for a replacement while the employee is on leave or the duration of their leave. The Committee met in March to review applications.

- 32 applications were received.
- 16 applications were approved, totaling $185,985.

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 and are being reviewed for funding.

Certification, Licensure Exam Fee Reimbursement Program (CLEFR)

Applications are being reviewed 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 SUNY.

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

Applications are being reviewed to reimburse employees for the Certification and Licensure Reimbursement Program-Renewals (CLRP-Renewals) for 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.

Other NYS/UUP JLMC Projects and Activities:

- Program guidelines were reviewed and revised by staff.
- Staff continued to focus on strategies to promote labor-management programs to campus staff and employees.