



# Information Announcement

---

## Flex Spending Open Enrollment Campaign October 2, 2017 – November 6, 2017

### September 20, 2017

On behalf of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER), we are pleased to announce the 2018 enrollment campaign for the New York State Flex Spending Account (FSA) program. The FSA program allows State employees to make pre-tax payroll contributions that can be used to pay for eligible health care or dependent care expenses. The FSA program includes two important benefits for employees: the Health Care Spending Account (HCSAccount) and the Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount). Employees may choose to enroll in either or both accounts. More than 20,000 state employees are already taking advantage of these benefits in 2017, and it is expected that interest in this program will continue to grow.

#### **Health Care Spending Account (HCSAccount)**

At present, the annual contribution that an employee may make to the HCSAccount is \$2,600 for the 2018 plan year. The maximum contribution may be subject to change annually since it is indexed to inflation. Contributions are made through pre-tax payroll deductions and may be used for eligible health care expenses that are not covered by a health insurance plan.

#### **Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount)**

State employees may contribute up to \$5,000 per year per household in a DCAAccount for elder care, disabled dependent care, or child care expenses. Employees' contributions are deducted biweekly from their gross pay and deposited into the appropriate account. After eligible services, have been received, the employee submits a claim form for reimbursement.

#### **Important Changes for 2018**

The DCAAccount Employer Contribution will continue in 2018 plan year for unions that participate in the program and have ratified contracts with the State. At present, Executive Branch state agency employees who are M/C, or represented by CSEA, PEF or GSEU, or employed by the Legislature are eligible for the DCAAccount Employer Contribution.

The Employer Contribution may be available to state employees in other bargaining units for the 2018 plan year pending conclusion of negotiations and ratified contracts, but will not be applied retroactively to the beginning of the plan year. Based on salary, the Employer Contribution will provide up to \$800 for eligible employees who enroll in the DCAAccount. For Employer Contribution updates please visit the FSA website at [www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov) or call 1-800-358-7202.

## **Enrollment Information**

The open enrollment period for the 2018 plan year (January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018) begins **October 2, 2017** and ends **November 6, 2017**. **Participants who are currently enrolled in the program must re-enroll if they wish to continue their benefits in 2018.** Employees may obtain enrollment information or request an enrollment book online at [www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov), or may call the FSA hotline at (800) 358-7202.

To simplify the enrollment process for employees, paperless enrollment will continue again this year, making it easier for employees to apply online. Employees with internet access will complete a simple online application. When they submit the application, they will receive an immediate e-mail notification that their application has been received and will be processed. Employees without Internet access, or those who prefer not to use online enrollment, may call (800) 358-7202, then select option 1, and a customer service representative will take the application information. Once their application has been processed, employees will receive written confirmation that their enrollment has been accepted, regardless of whether they enroll online or by phone.

## **New Employees**

New state employees hired on or before October 1, 2017 must enroll during the open enrollment period if they wish to participate in the Flex Spending Account for 2018.

New state employees who are hired during the open enrollment period of October 2, 2017 to November 6, 2017 may elect to enroll in the HCSAccount, the DCAAccount, or both, by submitting an open enrollment application by midnight November 6, 2017.

New state employees who are unable to enroll by the November 6, 2017 deadline because they have not been assigned a NYS EMPLID may enroll for the 2018 plan year by submitting a 2018 change in status application within 60 days of their hire date. The 2018 change in status application system will be available starting November 7, 2017.

## **Questions**

If you have any questions regarding the NYS Flex Spending Account Program, please call the FSA hotline at (800) 358-7202, or if you need further help, please feel free to contact the BSC Benefits Administration Unit at [BSCBenefitsAdmin@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:BSCBenefitsAdmin@ogs.ny.gov), or call (518) 457-4272.



# Flex Spending Account

**One Program  
Two Benefits**

**Dependent Care Advantage Account  
Health Care Spending Account**



Save on your out-of-pocket health care expenses when you enroll in the Health Care Spending Account and on your child or dependent care expenses when you

enroll in the Dependent Care Advantage Account.



# **2018 Open Enrollment Period**

## **October 2 - November 6, 2017**

# What is the FSA?

The **Flex Spending Account (FSA)** is a state employee benefit that saves you money by allowing you to pay for certain expenses with pre-tax dollars. Under this program, you can choose either or both benefits:

The **Health Care Spending Account (HCSAccount)** currently lets you set aside any amount from \$100 up to \$2,600 for the 2018 tax year to pay for health care expenses that are not reimbursed by your health insurance or other benefit plan. However, only medically necessary medical, hospital, dental, vision, hearing, and prescription drug expenses for you, your spouse, and your eligible dependents can be reimbursed by your HCSAccount. The maximum contribution may be subject to change annually since it is indexed to inflation.

The **Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount)** allows your family to set aside up to \$5,000 in pre-tax salary for eligible custodial child care, elder care, or disabled dependent care expenses that are necessary for you and your spouse, if you are married, to work.

## Who's eligible to enroll in the HCSAccount and DCAAccount?

Both benefits are open to New York State employees of Executive Branch state agencies, the Legislature, and the Unified Court System. Employees of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, NYS Energy Research and Development Authority, New York Liquidation Bureau, and Environmental Facilities Corporation are also eligible to participate. However, employees who wish to enroll in the **HCSAccount** also must:

- be either permanently employed or expect to be employed for the entire calendar year in which they plan to enroll in the HCSAccount (employees who work on a semester or school year basis are also eligible)
- be annual-salaried
- work at least half-time
- meet the eligibility criteria for enrollment in the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) and
- if an Executive Branch employee, be either M/C or represented by CSEA, PEF, UUP, NYSCOPBA, Council 82, PBANYS, DC-37, PBA, or NYSPIA.

Casual, seasonal, hourly, per diem, fee-basis, and session employees, as well as retirees, are **not eligible** to enroll in the HCSAccount. Employees of the SUNY Research Foundation and Health Research, Inc. are **not eligible** to enroll in either the HCSAccount or DCAAccount.

### **Apply online with our easy paperless application process**

It is easy to enroll in the Flex Spending Account. Just submit your application for enrollment in either or both benefits online at [www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov). If you do not have access to the Internet, apply by telephone at **1-800-358-7202**. You will need your NYS EMPLID number, which is located on your paystub, to complete your application.

**The deadline for 2018 enrollment is November 6, 2017 and is strictly enforced. Please be sure to enroll by November 6. If you are enrolled for the 2017 plan year, you must re-enroll to continue your benefits in 2018.**

## Health Care Spending Account

### Some Eligible Expenses

Breast pumps • Chiropractic care • Contact lenses • Copayments • Crutches • Deductibles • Dental care • Dental implants • Dentures • Diagnostic tests • Eyeglasses • Hearing aids • Infertility services • Lab fees • Laser eye surgery • Orthodontia • Over-the-counter drugs (must be prescribed by a doctor) • Physical therapy • Psychiatric services • Surgery • Travel expenses • Wheelchairs

### Some Ineligible Expenses

Cosmetic procedures • Dance lessons • Electrolysis • Exercise classes • Exercise equipment • Hair transplants • Health club membership fees • Herbal remedies • Holistic medicines • Homeopathic remedies • Insurance premiums • Marriage counseling • Meal replacements • Non-medically necessary treatment • Pilates • Teeth whitening/bonding • Tennis and sports lessons • Yoga

## Dependent Care Advantage Account

### Some Eligible Expenses

Adult daycare • Au pair • Babysitter • Before/after-school programs • Child care center • Family daycare provider • Home aide • Nursery school • School-age holiday care • Summer day camp • Sports day camp

### Some Ineligible Expenses

Activity fees, t-shirts, books • Care for individuals who do not live with you • Child support • College tuition • Deposits or registration fees • Diaper service • Enriched programming • Insurance fees • Meals • Medical expenses • Overnight camp • Residential nursing home • Supplies • Transportation fees • Tuition (kindergarten and up)

## Employer Contribution

The DCA Account Employer Contribution will continue in 2018 for unions that participate in the program and have ratified contracts with the State. At present, Executive Branch state agency employees who are M/C, or represented by CSEA, PEF or GSEU, or employed by the Legislature are eligible for the DCA Account Employer Contribution. Employees of Roswell Park Cancer Institute who are M/C or represented by CSEA or PEF are also eligible for the Employer Contribution, as well as employees of ERDA and EFC.

The Employer Contribution may be available to state employees in other bargaining units for the 2018 plan year pending conclusion of negotiations and ratified contracts, but will not be applied retroactively to the beginning of the plan year. Based on salary, the Employer Contribution will provide up to \$800 for eligible employees who enroll in the DCA Account. For Employer Contribution updates please visit the FSA website: [www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov) or call **1-800-358-7202**.

### The 2018 Plan Year Employer Contribution Rates are:

If Your Salary Is...	The Employer Contribution Is...
Under \$30,000	\$800
\$30,001 - \$40,000	\$700
\$40,001 - \$50,000	\$600

\$50,001 - \$60,000	\$500
\$60,001 - \$70,000	\$400
Over \$70,000	\$300
GSEUEmployees only (regardless of salary)	\$600

## What's the catch? Use it or lose it!

The key is to estimate your expenses carefully. According to IRS Regulations, if you overestimate your costs you will lose any money that remains in your account at the end of the calendar year.

## I want to save money on my health care or dependent care expenses and I think this program can help me. Where can I get more information?

Visit the Flex Spending Account website at [www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov) to view program details online or to order the 2018 Flex Spending Account enrollment book. You can also call the FSA Hotline at **1-800-358-7202** for more information, where customer service representatives are ready to assist you. Or, you can email us at [fsa@goer.ny.gov](mailto:fsa@goer.ny.gov).

## Enrollment Deadline—November 6, 2017

### Fast, easy paperless enrollment

#### The Flex Spending Account is free and easy to use

- Simple, Paperless Application Process
- Online Access to Your Account
- Toll-Free FSA Hotline
- Online Tax Calculators
- 24-Hour Interactive Voice Response Service
- Toll-Free Fax Line for Claims
- Secure Online Claims Submission
- Direct Deposit Option
- No Fees

[www.flexspend.ny.gov](http://www.flexspend.ny.gov)

**FSA Hotline 1-800-358-7202**

[fsa@goer.ny.gov](mailto:fsa@goer.ny.gov)

#### New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

The Flex Spending Account is sponsored by the Work-Life Services Advisory Board and the Joint Labor-Management Committees on Health Benefits, the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, the Civil Service Employees Association, Public Employees Federation, United University Professions, NYS Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association, Inc., Council 82, District Council 37, Police

