



Office of
General Services

Business
Services Center

Information Announcement

Flex Spending Open Enrollment Campaign October 5, 2015 – November 9, 2015

September 18, 2015

On behalf of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, we are pleased to announce the 2016 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.

Employee contributions for the FSA program are deducted biweekly from an employee's gross pay and deposited into the appropriate account. After eligible services have been received, the employee submits a claim for reimbursement.

Prior to enrolling in the FSA program, employees should carefully plan the amount that they wish to contribute. If employees contribute pre-tax dollars into the FSA program and then do not have enough eligible expenses during the plan year to equal the amount contributed, the balance remaining in the account when the plan year ends will be forfeited. Participants have until March 31 of the subsequent plan year to submit any eligible expenses incurred during the prior plan year. But remember -- if you plan properly, you are unlikely to forfeit any of your funds.

The open enrollment period for the 2016 plan year (January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016) begins October 5, 2015 and ends November 9, 2015. Participants who are currently enrolled in the program must re-enroll if they wish to continue their benefits in 2016.

To simplify the enrollment process for employees, paperless enrollment will continue again this year, making it easier for employees to apply online at www.flexspend.ny.gov or through the toll free telephone number 1 (800) 358-7202. The link to apply on-line will be available at www.flexspend.ny.gov when the open enrollment period begins on October 5, 2015.

Health Care Spending Account (HCSAccount)

For the 2016 plan year, employees may contribute up to \$2,550 through pre-tax payroll deductions to the HCSAccount for eligible health care expenses that are not covered by the employee's health insurance plan. Medically necessary medical, hospital, dental, vision, hearing and prescription drug expenses for employees and their families may be reimbursed by the HCSAccount.

Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount)

Employees may contribute up to \$5,000 per year per household to the DCAAccount for child care, elder care, or disabled dependent care expenses. Employee contributions under this program are made on a pre-tax basis and can be used to pay for care for employees' dependent children under the age of 13, handicapped children of any age, disabled spouses or other adult relatives needing care while the employee is working.

The DCAAccount Employer Contribution will continue in 2016 for the unions that participate in the program and have ratified contracts with the State. Executive branch state agency employees who are M/C or represented by CSEA, UUP, Council 82, or NYSCOPBA, are eligible for the DCAAccount Employer Contribution. The Employer Contribution may be available to state employees in other bargaining units for the 2016 plan year pending conclusion of negotiations and ratified contracts, but will not be applied retroactively to the beginning of the plan year. For Employer Contribution updates, please visit the NYS Flex Spending website at www.flexspend.ny.gov or call the toll free telephone number 1 (800) 358-7202.

New Employees

New state employees hired on or before October 4, 2015 must enroll during the open enrollment period if they wish to participate in the Flex Spending Account for 2016.

New state employees who are hired during the open enrollment period of October 5, 2015 to November 9, 2015 may elect to enroll in the HCSAccount, the DCAAccount, or both, by submitting an open enrollment application by midnight November 9, 2015.

New state employees who are unable to enroll by the November 9 deadline because they have not been assigned a NYS EMPLID may enroll for the 2016 plan year by submitting a 2016 change in status application within 60 days of their hire date. The 2016 change in status application system will be available starting November 10, 2015.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding the NYS Flex Spending Account program, please contact the BSC Benefits Administration Unit at (518) 457-4272 or BSCBenefitsAdmin@ogs.ny.gov.



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.



2016 Open Enrollment Period
October 5 - November 9, 2015

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 \$2,550 for the 2016 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, 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. 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 2016 enrollment is November 9, 2015 and is strictly enforced. Please be sure to enroll by November 9. If you are enrolled for the 2015 plan year, you must re-enroll to continue your benefits in 2016.

Health Care Spending Account

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

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

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

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 DCAAccount Employer Contribution will continue in 2016 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, UUP, Council 82, DC-37, GSEU, NYSCOPBA, or are employed by the Legislature are eligible for the DCAAccount Employer Contribution. Employees of Roswell Park Cancer Institute, NYS Energy Research and Development Authority, and the Environmental Facilities Corporation are also eligible for the Employer Contribution.

The Employer Contribution may be available to state employees in other bargaining units for the 2016 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 or call **1-800-358-7202**.

The 2016 Plan Year Employer Contribution Rates for Eligible Employees 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
GSEU Employees 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 to view program details online or to order the 2016 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.

Enrollment Deadline—November 9, 2015

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

FSA Hotline 1-800-358-7202

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 Benevolent Association, New York Police Investigators Association, Police Benevolent Association of New York State, Inc., and the Graduate Student Employees Union.