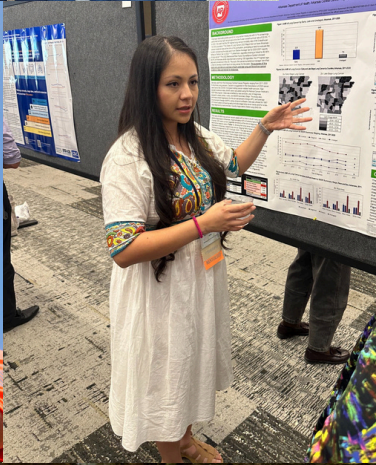


# ASEA NEWS

Official Newsletter of the  
Arkansas State Employees  
Association



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Remember  
that the  
ASEA  
Board of  
Directors  
and staff  
are  
working  
for you!

## President's Report

By Dona Bowry  
Board President



On August 17th I officially began my new term as ASEA President. I'm excited for all that is ahead for Arkansas's state employees. Open enrollment will be starting soon. Most of you should already be aware of the new insurance premiums for 2025 and be ready to make any changes you need to your current plan during that time. In the future months ASEA will be working to stay on top of any pay plan changes and fighting for what you deserve. We are also working to increase our current membership. Do you know someone who is not a member? Do you need information to give to others to become a member? Either call us or check out the ASEA website. Remember that the ASEA Board of Directors and staff are working for you!

## Director's Report

By John Bridges  
Executive Director



### Annual Business Meeting Results

Every year ASEA hosts a state-wide members-only meeting in August to discuss state employee issues and to approve a list of priorities for the next year. This year we focused on what our priorities should be going into the 2025 legislative session. We appreciate the lively conversation and input on important issues that affects all state employees. Below are the member and board member ideas that were submitted ahead of the meeting and the results of our discussion.

### Pay Plan

Most of our meeting, as you might expect, was spent discussing the possibility of a new pay plan to be presented during the 2025 legislative session. The plan is not ready for presentation. It is still being researched and re-built by the Office of Personal Management under the directive of the Governor.

After a very constructive discussion, we came up with two ideas that have been on our members' wish list for a long time. We put our ideas into writing and have since sent that letter to the decision makers at the Capitol as suggestions to incorporate into the pay plan proposal. We believe our ideas, along with increasing pay, will reduce turnover, attract quality candidates, and enliven the workforce.

You can read the letter in its entirety on the next page.



# Arkansas State Employees Association

1301 W. 7th St. | Little Rock, AR 72201 | www.aseaar.org | ph: 501-378-0187 | fax: 501-378-0113



September 10, 2024

Honorable Governor Sarah Sanders  
500 Woodlane Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

CC: The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chair, ALC - Personnel Committee  
CC: The Honorable Mark H. Berry, Co-Chair, ALC - Personnel Committee  
CC: The Honorable Jim Wooten, Co-Chair, JBC - Personnel Committee  
CC: Office of Personnel Management

Governor Sanders,

On behalf of the members of ASEA, we thank you for your leadership in addressing the need for a new pay plan for state employees. We know that under your directive, the Office of Personnel Management is hard at work to have it ready for the 2025 legislative session.

ASEA held its annual business meeting this past August. Our discussion generated some suggestions that we all agreed could help reduce the turnover rate and reward the loyalty of long-term state employees. On behalf of our members, we are offering the following for inclusion in the new package:

- **Leave Time Payout Upon Retirement:** Capping the payout of unused sick leave at \$7,500 and 240 hours of annual leave creates a scenario where employees nearing retirement start using excessive amounts of leave in order to not lose any earned time. We should be rewarding state employees who spend the majority of their career in the office working. One retiree stated that the cap was \$7,500 when he retired 22 years ago. We recommend gradually lifting these cap limits.
- **Career Service Recognition Payments:** 2025 will mark the five-year anniversary of the last time these payments were increased. Career Service Recognition payments directly reward employees for their continued leadership and dedication to the State of Arkansas. We recommend creating a new 5-9 year category, funding it at \$500, and raising the remaining categories by \$500 each. This will help retain employees in the onset of their careers and reward tenured employees.

These suggestions, along with the components that are already working, such as continuing to include pay differentials, a merit system, and allowing for seniority adjustments, are vital to a successful and equitable pay plan.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposals and are eager to learn more about the other innovative ideas you are developing. We look forward to working with you and all involved to reduce turnover, attract quality candidates, and energize the workforce.

Sincerely,

John Bridges  
Executive Director

## Board Officers

President - Dona Bowry  
Past President - Jeff Jackson  
Vice President - Holli Patrick  
Secretary - Chasity Lucas

## Board Members

### Northwest

Jordane Schwartz  
Laura Sherwood  
Brandy Watkins

### Northeast

Janice Griffin

### Southeast

Dorothy Henderson  
Greg Murray  
Toniesha Sargent

### Southwest

Alyssa Duggan  
Lisa Rhodes  
James Scott  
Celeste Sorrells

### Central

Heinz Braun  
Curt Carson  
Jennifer Siccardi  
Matthew Thomas

### At-Large

Brock Baker  
Charles Elliott  
Jessica Zimmerman

### Retiree At-Large

Judy Beatty  
Jerry Jones  
Mary McGehee  
Bob McQuade  
Clayton Rogers  
Gary Wallace





## Non-Pay Plan Resolutions

Resolutions are simply ideas submitted by members that they would like to see ASEA add to their legislative agenda. These are discussed openly and voted on by the board with a "do pass" or "do not pass." A "pass" vote makes the official legislative agenda. These are the resolutions submitted this year:

**Moving the Retirement Age to 65 to Match the State's MAPD Plan:** If we increased the retirement age from 62 ½ to 65, since people are living longer, then those employees would be immediately eligible for the less expensive MAPD plan offered by the state. This plan not only saves the retirees money, but it is also the least expensive for the state to operate. The pre-65 plan is very expensive for both the retiree and the state. **Board Recommendation: More research needed.**

**Juneteenth:** This is the second year that our members have requested that ASEA advocate for getting Juneteenth recognized as a state holiday.

ASEA's board recognizes the generous amount of paid holidays state employees receive and recognizes the importance of Juneteenth. The board has asked the Executive Director to review how other states have implemented a "floating" holiday that can be used for religious or cultural purposes. **Board Recommendation: Pass. Look for legislative support.**

**Volunteer Leave:** An employee would receive paid leave for performing community service. **Board Recommendation: Do not pass.**

**Expanding Weight Loss Drug Coverage:** Members are interested in having the new forms of weight loss drugs approved in the state's pharmacy plan. After discussions with the Director of the Employee Benefits Division (EBD) we have learned that the state of North Carolina recently added these types of drugs to their state plan. In one year, 29,000 employees got prescriptions costing the state almost two hundred and fifty million dollars. **Board Recommendation: Discuss the feasibility of a pilot program with EBD and the EBD Oversight Committee.**

**Retiree Expenses Reduction:** With retiree health insurance premiums rising in 2025 ASEA has been asked to look for opportunities in the 2025 legislative session and beyond to help offset this new expense. **Board Recommendation: Do pass.**





## What's Next

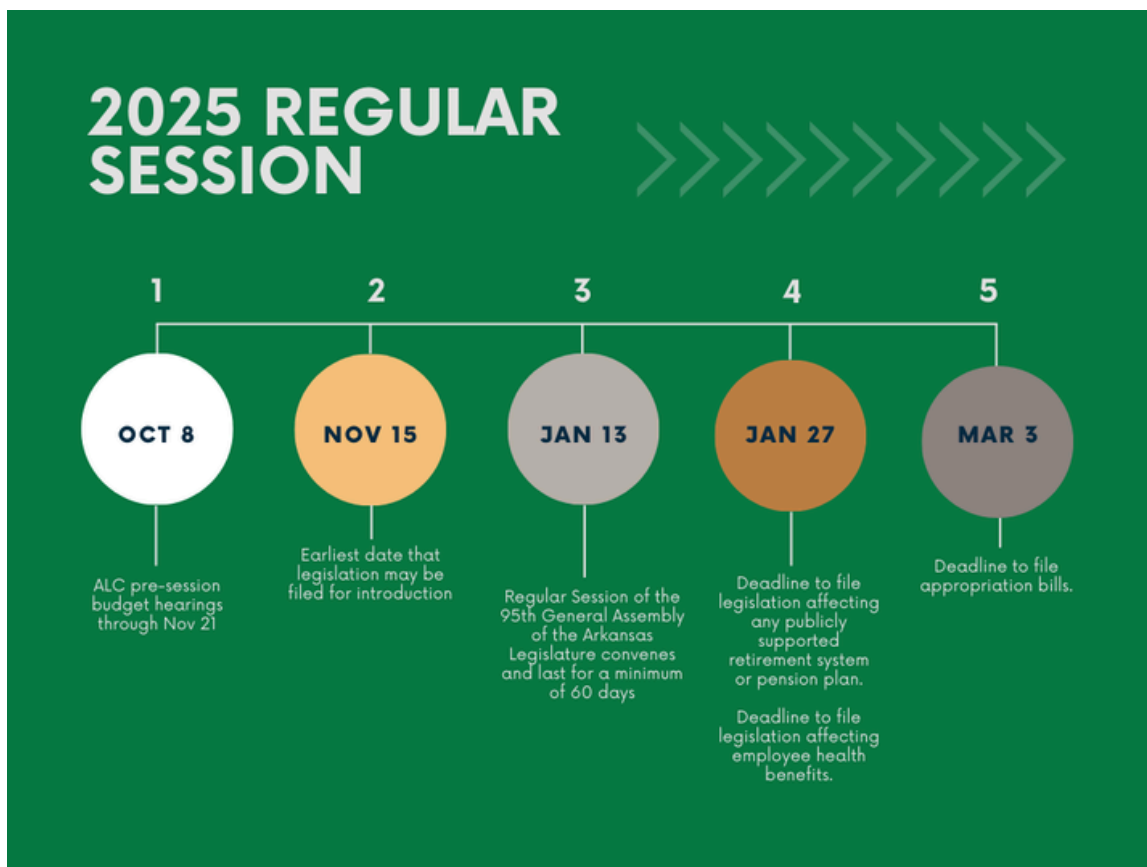
We have prepared a timeline for you of the important dates leading into the January 2025 legislative session. As you can see pre-session budget hearings will happen in October and November. Since a new pay plan will be a major part of the proposed budget we should have our first public discussion of the proposed price tag in the Arkansas Legislative Council meeting.

The next important date is November 15th which is the pre-filing period. We might see the pay plan bill filed during this period, and we will be watching. ASEA tracks every bill filed looking for anything related to state employees and retirees and share with our members. You need to make sure you are signed-up for our text and or email alerts as we will share with you any proposed legislation that affects state employees and retirees, provide you with analysis, and keep you updated as they move through the legislative process.

The next issue of the ASEA News, we are thinking early December, will get into the details of how a bill moves through the legislative process and how to easily find and contact your legislators. I am sure you know that it is election season, and we will have to wait until after the election to see which legislators are going to represent you in 2025.

We think that with something as important as a new pay plan on the horizon it would be very smart of us as a group to be prepared ahead of the session with our communication plan in place. Be looking out for that winter issue of ASEA News and get yourself signed up for our State Employee News blog alerts! Thank you for being a member of ASEA - John Bridges

We have prepared a timeline for you of the important dates leading into the January 2025 legislative session.







# Announcements

## Thank You

FOR YOUR SERVICE



Jeff Jackson

Mr. Jackson just completed his second term serving as the ASEA President. We want to thank him for his leadership.

## Welcome

NEW BOARD MEMBER



Jessica Zimmerman

Mrs. Zimmerman is employed by the Department of Human Services as the Faulkner County Administrator. She will serve as an at-large member.

Missing out on important information from ASEA?

Have new contact information?

Need member discount codes?

**HELP@**  
**aseaar.org**



## ASEA SCHOLARSHIP FUND



**Coming in**  
**January**  
**2025**



# Board Information



## Board Members

Northwest  
Jordane Schwartz  
Laura Sherwood  
Brandy Watkins

Northeast  
Janice Griffin

Southeast  
Dorothy Henderson  
Greg Murray  
Toniesha Sargent

Southwest  
Alyssa Dugan  
Lisa Rhodes  
James Scott  
Celeste Sorrells

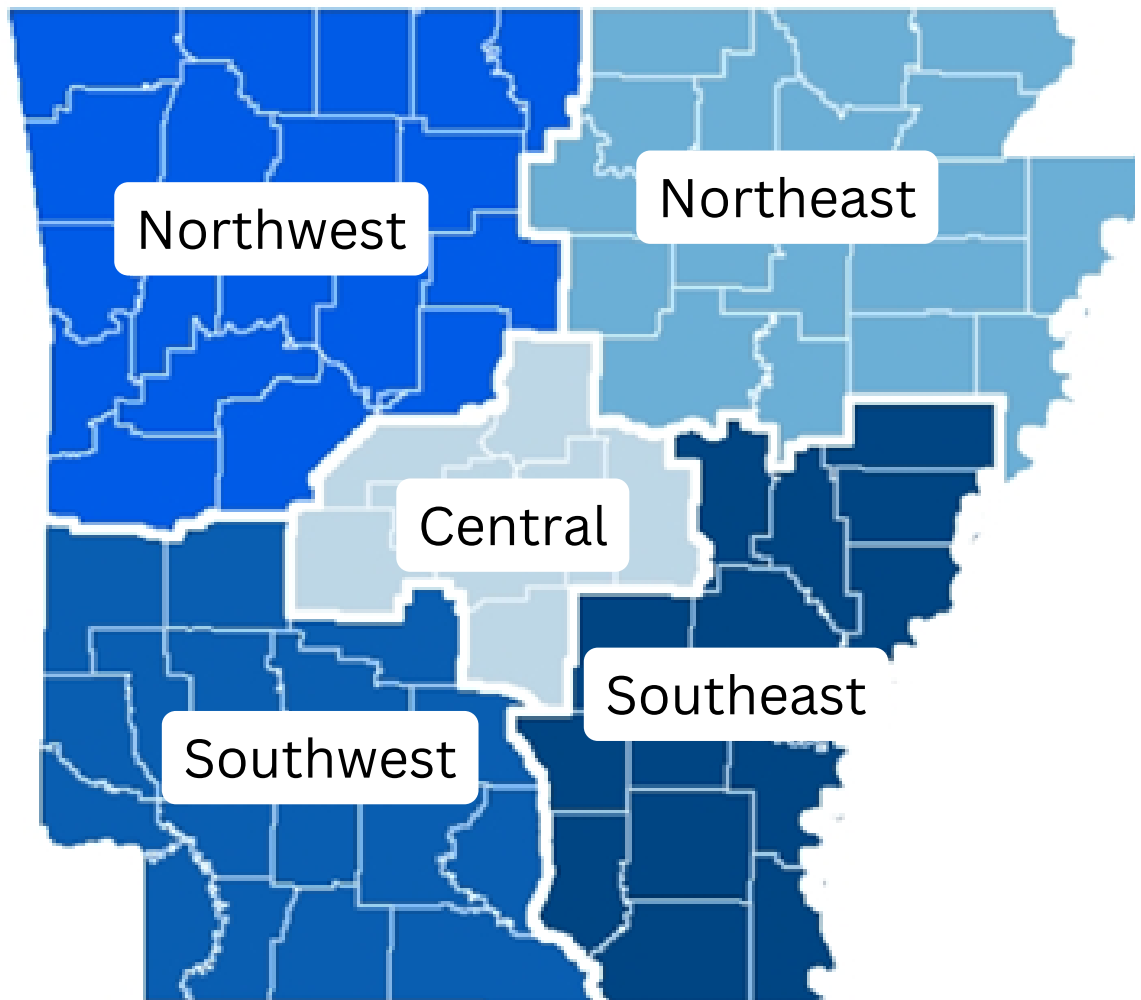
Central  
Heinz Braun  
Curt Carson  
Jennifer Siccardi  
Matthew Thomas

At-Large  
Brock Baker  
Charles Elliott  
Jessica Zimmerman

Retiree At-Large  
Judy Beatty  
Jerry Jones  
Mary McGehee  
Bob McQuade  
Clayton Rogers  
Gary Wallace

## Board Officers

President Dona Bowry  
Vice President Holli Patrick  
Secretary Chasity Lucas  
Past President Jeff Jackson





# ARKANSAS STATE EMPLOYEES

## WE ARE OFFERING A UNIQUE SOLUTION FOR LONG-TERM CARE

ARSEBA



ARKANSAS STATE EMPLOYEES  
BENEFIT ADVISORS



PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH A SHORT INFORMATIONAL VIDEO  
THAT WILL OUTLINE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS UNIQUE SOLUTION



### Guaranteed Employee Coverage

That means NO MEDICAL QUESTIONS! Guaranteed employee coverage of up to \$200,000 for life insurance and up to \$400,000 for Chronic Condition Benefit used for long-term care.



### Permanent and Portable

This policy belongs to you and you can take it with you into retirement, or to another job. This is a permanent policy and the premiums will remain level.



### Guaranteed Family Coverage

Spousal coverage guaranteed up to \$50,000. Children and grandchildren can be covered up to \$20,000.\*



### Cash Benefits Paid to You

If you are not able to perform 2 activities of daily living for longer than 90-days, you can receive up to the guaranteed issue amount of \$8,000 per month for up to 50 months.



### Pays You Cash

Pays you, or whomever you see fit to take care of you. Be it a family member, registered care taker, or an assisted living facility.



### Builds Cash Value

Guaranteed minimum interest rate of 2%. Currently 4.75%.



**ARKANSAS STATE EMPLOYEES  
BENEFIT ADVISORS**

1301 WEST 7TH STREET  
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201  
TOLL FREE: (888) 224-5233

PHONE: (501) 224-5234

FAX: (501) 663-1445

EMAIL: [SERVICE@ARSEBA.COM](mailto:SERVICE@ARSEBA.COM)

\*Spouse coverage up to \$50,000 if you are actively at work, or provide caregiving to children or family.

# ASEA Retiree News



## 2025 Health Insurance

The Open Enrollment period for retirees is November 1-30. During this period you will be able to change AR Benefits plans if you choose.

Non-Medicare eligible retirees may choose between the Basic, Classic or Premium plans. Medicare Eligible retirees may choose between the Health Advantage Primary Plan or the UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) Plan.

For more information, visit [www.arbenefits.org](http://www.arbenefits.org). For questions or assistance, contact the Employee Benefits Division at 877-815-1017 or [ask.ebd@arkansas.gov](mailto:ask.ebd@arkansas.gov).

**You only need to contact AR Benefits if you want to make a change to your plan.**

## UnitedHealthcare Informational Meetings Fall 2025

UnitedHealthcare will be hosting informational meetings virtually and in person around the state.

To see a complete calendar of the meetings and venues, visit [www.arbenefits.org](http://www.arbenefits.org)

### ASE 2025 Rates – Pre-65 Retirees

*Continue 5 Year Transition Plan*

	2024 Subscribers	2024 Employee Contribution	2025 Employee Contribution	Employee Contribution Change (\$)	Employee Contribution Change (%)	Employer Subsidy
<b>Premium</b>						
Retiree Only	1,295	\$331.06	\$337.86	\$6.80	2.1%	\$690.74
Retiree + NME Spouse	184	\$861.76	\$886.76	\$25.00	2.9%	\$1,170.43
Retiree + Child(ren)	83	\$607.24	\$619.20	\$11.96	2.0%	\$792.26
Retiree + NME Spouse + Child(ren)	33	\$1,093.86	\$1,100.16	\$6.30	0.6%	\$1,339.89
Retiree + ME Spouse	46	\$666.34	\$697.60	\$31.26	4.7%	\$881.97
Retiree + ME Spouse + Child(ren)	3	\$942.52	\$978.64	\$36.12	3.8%	\$983.79
Retiree + MAPD Spouse	73	\$348.38	\$355.18	\$6.80	2.0%	\$848.73
Retiree + MAPD Spouse + Child(ren)	4	\$624.56	\$636.30	\$11.74	1.9%	\$950.47
<b>Classic</b>						
Retiree Only	79	\$226.48	\$217.46	-\$9.02	-4.0%	\$676.77
Retiree + NME Spouse	16	\$638.68	\$636.52	-\$2.16	-0.3%	\$1,151.94
Retiree + Child(ren)	2	\$449.04	\$444.04	-\$5.00	-1.1%	\$783.05
Retiree + NME Spouse + Child(ren)	4	\$817.14	\$795.20	-\$21.94	-2.7%	\$1,326.12
<b>Basic</b>						
Retiree Only	63	\$144.08	\$122.90	-\$21.18	-14.7%	\$666.35
Retiree + NME Spouse	10	\$461.34	\$438.96	-\$22.38	-4.9%	\$1,139.54
Retiree + Child(ren)	1	\$323.46	\$305.84	-\$17.62	-5.4%	\$777.19
Retiree + NME Spouse + Child(ren)	2	\$596.64	\$554.02	-\$42.62	-7.1%	\$1,318.26

### ASE 2025 Rates – Post-65 Retirees

*Continue 5 Year Transition Plan*

	2024 Subscribers	2024 Employee Contribution	2025 Employee Contribution	Employee Contribution Change (\$)	Employee Contribution Change (%)	Employer Subsidy
<b>Primary (EBD Plan)</b>						
Retiree Only	3,158	\$233.04	\$256.34	\$23.30	10.0%	\$294.63
Retiree + NME Spouse	75	\$792.50	\$805.68	\$13.18	1.7%	\$773.88
Retiree + Child(ren)	18	\$528.92	\$537.78	\$8.86	1.7%	\$396.05
Retiree + NME Spouse + Child(ren)	6	\$1,035.22	\$1,019.04	-\$16.18	-1.6%	\$943.38
Retiree + ME Spouse	1,011	\$558.28	\$614.11	\$55.83	10.0%	\$487.83
Retiree + ME Spouse + Child(ren)	15	\$854.18	\$896.54	\$42.36	5.0%	\$588.26
<b>MAPD</b>						
Retiree Only	5,397	\$17.03	\$17.72	\$0.69	4.1%	\$157.59
Retiree + NME Spouse	137	\$548.02	\$565.88	\$17.86	3.3%	\$638.02
Retiree + Child(ren)	30	\$293.52	\$298.16	\$4.64	1.6%	\$260.01
Retiree + NME Spouse + Child(ren)	7	\$780.14	\$779.22	-\$0.92	-0.1%	\$807.54
Retiree + ME Spouse	1,555	\$34.06	\$35.44	\$1.38	4.1%	\$315.18
Retiree + ME Spouse + Child(ren)	14	\$310.84	\$315.42	\$4.58	1.5%	\$418.06

## ASEA REPRESENTS RETIREEES.

We monitor and advocate to protect retirees' most important assets: Health Insurance & Retirement Pension

Are you a retired state employee? Join ASEA today for as little as \$24 a year.

**WWW.ASEAR.ORG**

**501.378.0187**





Ask your HR or Supervisor when  
ARSEBA is visiting your agency or  
book a virtual meeting!  
[www.arseba.com](http://www.arseba.com)  
or  
501-224-5234

## Arkansas State Employees! Open Enrollment is Here! Do Not Miss Your Chance To Make Changes To Your Supplemental Insurance Benefits

- Accident Insurance
- Cancer Insurance
- Critical Illness
- Dental Insurance
- Short Term Disability
- Hospital Indemnity
- Life Insurance
- Long Term Disability
- Vision Insurance
- Identity Theft
- Legal Services



**\*Open Enrollment is  
September 3rd through  
October 31st\***



**ARKANSAS STATE EMPLOYEES  
BENEFIT ADVISORS**



## ASE 2025 Rates – Actives

*Continue 5 Year Transition Plan*

	2024 Subscribers	2024 Employee Contribution	2025 Employee Contribution	Employee Contribution Change (\$)	Employee Contribution Change (%)	Employer Subsidy
<b>Premium</b>						
Employee Only	11,162	\$162.14	\$151.80	-\$10.34	-6.4%	\$419.64
Employee + Spouse	1,529	\$474.24	\$452.48	-\$21.76	-4.6%	\$976.13
Employee + Child(ren)	4,080	\$311.02	\$310.56	-\$0.46	-0.1%	\$775.18
Family	1,437	\$613.76	\$594.32	-\$19.44	-3.2%	\$1,348.57
<b>Classic</b>						
Employee Only	1,644	\$85.52	\$72.42	-\$13.10	-15.3%	\$424.38
Employee + Spouse	197	\$289.64	\$258.68	-\$30.96	-10.7%	\$983.32
Employee + Child(ren)	523	\$172.72	\$164.62	-\$8.10	-4.7%	\$779.29
Family	276	\$367.46	\$333.98	-\$33.48	-9.1%	\$1,355.13
<b>Basic</b>						
Employee Only	1,868	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.0%	\$438.47
Employee + Spouse	144	\$142.34	\$105.20	-\$37.14	-26.1%	\$990.98
Employee + Child(ren)	267	\$62.72	\$49.28	-\$13.44	-21.4%	\$783.82
Family	166	\$170.70	\$127.64	-\$43.06	-25.2%	\$1,363.17

# NEED to KNOW



## Important Contact Information

Employee Benefits Division  
[www.arbenefits.org](http://www.arbenefits.org)  
1.877.815.1017  
[ask.EBD@arkansas.gov](mailto:ask.EBD@arkansas.gov)

Health Advantage  
501.378.2364

UnitedHealthcare  
<https://retiree.uhc.com/arbenefits>  
1.844.488.3953

Voluntary Benefits  
[www.arseba.com](http://www.arseba.com)

## State Health Insurance Open Enrollment

Active State Employees - October 1-31  
Retirees - November 1-30



How to Stay  
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Informed...  
*faster*



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Alerts!**



## How Can I Sign Up?

Visit [www.aseaar.org](http://www.aseaar.org).  
Click the "Members Only" button.  
Use your passcode to access the  
Members Only Dashboard.  
To request a passcode, email  
[HELP@aseaar.org](mailto:HELP@aseaar.org).

You will still receive your ASEA  
News, but sometimes you need  
the news a little faster!







Arkansas State  
Employees Association  
1301 W. 7th St.  
Little Rock, AR 72201

501.378.0187

 Connect with Us!



[aseaar.org](http://aseaar.org)