

# ASEA NEWS

Official Newsletter of the Arkansas State Employees Association



## President's Report

By Jeff Jackson – Board President

Fall is coming! After multiple days in June and July above 100 degrees, I am really looking forward to some cooler weather! Tonight, my high school will play their first football game in school history and Razorback Football is just days away! Despite the heat of summer, ASEA staff didn't let it slow them down. ASEA just held the Annual Business Meeting where you, the members, voices were heard and we were able to set new goals and objectives for ASEA during the spring Legislative Session. Keep reading this edition of ASEA News for all the details!

Like me, I'm sure you are feeling the pinch of the recent inflation. Fighting to ensure a new pay plan gets passed that meets the needs of our membership is ASEA's number one priority. At the Annual Business Meeting, we were encouraged to hear from Kay Barnhill, Office of Personnel Management, who provided an update on the currently proposed changes to the pay plan. While all the details have yet to be worked out, the framework that they are using for the changes looks very promising. Additionally, we have heard ideas from many of our members about ways the current pay plan could be improved and ASEA be lobbying in support of these ideas as the pay plan continues to develop.

In closing, I again want to thank you for your active membership in ASEA and encourage you to "tell a friend" about all the great things ASEA is doing to support our membership. A special "Thank You" goes out to the members who took time out of their weekend to join us for our Annual Business Meeting and I encourage you to continue to seek ways to be an active member. To paraphrase a quote I have used previously: "Individually, we can accomplish so little; Together, we can accomplish so much."

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## Annual Business Meeting Review

Once a year the ASEA board invites all members to join them (in-person or virtually) to discuss and prioritize our short- and long-term goals for the coming year. To lead off the meeting Director Kay Barnhill of The Office of Personnel Management, began the meeting by providing us with an overview of the draft pay plan that they have been working on to be presented in the upcoming legislation session (January 2023). Director Barnhill stressed that there will be a lot of factors that have to fall into place when you talk about a large price tag like adopting a new pay plan. First, we will have a new Governor in January and he/she will have to be willing to green light this project along with the state Representatives and Senators. That is where ASEA must go to work to gain support for passing a new pay plan.

### Top Priority

**Funding a New Pay Plan.** Members discussed and voted to make the passage of a new pay plan that creates new minimum and maximum levels and allows for tenure adjustments based on years of service our number one priority. Given that this could potentially cost \$41 million members voted to shorten our list of 2023 legislative goals to not appear to be overreaching.

### Pass

**Reducing FOI for State Employees.** With the rise of identity theft members feel that having their full name and salary on the internet gives predators a head-start in collecting information needed to commit fraud. Removing the full first name of an employee to the first letter would reduce the risk of identity theft.

**Adding Juneteenth as a State Employee Holiday.** With Juneteenth already recognized as a federal holiday, members are encouraging the state to adopt Juneteenth as a state employee holiday.

### Research Further

**Retiree Pension Cost of Living Adjustment Increase.** This was referred to ASEA' Retiree Benefits sub-committee for further discussion. Most members referred to the 2019 legislation that would change the current fixed 3% COLA to a floating COLA that follows the CPI index and could also be zero in certain economic bad times. This legislation was withdrawn after a lengthy period of advocacy and there is concern that bringing the COLA up again could ultimately have a negative impact.

**Unused Annual/Sick Leave Payout Cap Upon Retirement.** Members agreed that having unused annual and sick leave upon retirement means that you were an exemplary, dedicated employee of the state of Arkansas. The concern that needs research first before moving forward is to see if removing the cap altogether would have a negative impact on future merit raises and performance pay or would it be more prudent to increase the percentage of the cap gradually.

To lead off the meeting Director Kay Barnhill, of The Office of Personnel Management, began the meeting by providing us with an overview.



Presenter, Kay Barnhill, of The Office of Personnel Management



## Annual Business Meeting Review (continued)

### Do Not Pass

**Adding Good Friday as a State Employee Holiday.** See commentary below.

**Bereavement Leave.** Members had two concerns for both requests. First, with such a large cost of passing a potential new pay plan and with that being our top priority members to shorten our list of legislative goals for 2023. Lastly, many members stated they did not want to bring up adding multiple leave/holidays to the benefits package that it could potentially backfire and have a negative impact on the amount of state employee leave.

### Potential Legislation on our Radar

**Mileage Reimbursement.** Representative David Ray of Maumelle approached ASEA stating he is filing a bill for introduction in the 2023 session that would make the rate of mileage reimbursement pay equal to that of elected officials going forward. Of course, we applaud and endorse Representative Ray's efforts and will support him leading into and during the session to ensure safe passage of the bill.

**Maternity Leave.** Representative DeAnn Vaught of Horatio also reached out to ASEA to let us know she is interested in introducing legislation that will expand paid maternity leave. That is all the information we have to date, and we look forward to our future discussions.

Members agreed that having unused annual and sick leave upon retirement means that you were an exemplary, dedicated employee of the state of Arkansas.



### Do You Have Student Loans?

If so, you may be missing out on opportunities for loan forgiveness. This program is for those who work in public service or for a nonprofit. This forgiveness opportunity expires on October 31. We have seen educators and public employees shave years off their student loan payments. Others have their loans instantly forgiven. This is NOT a time to ignore your student loans.

Below is where to find a Digital Toolkit at [womensfoundation.org](https://womensfoundation.org) that will help you through the process.

URL: <https://womensfoundationarkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/PSLF-Digital-Toolkit.pdf>



ARKANSAS STATE EMPLOYEES  
BENEFIT ADVISORS

# Voluntary Benefits Open Enrollment



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

\*\* Most products have guarantee issue benefit levels available only during open enrollment \*\*

**If you are not able to meet with the Enroller when they are scheduled for your site and would like to set up a Zoom call, or have additional questions feel free to email or call:**

**service@ARSEBA.com**

**Sept. 1 - Oct. 31, 2022**

Phone: 501-224-5234

Fax: 501-663-1445

Contact your HR representative for specific times that one-on-one enrollments will be available at your agency.



For additional information please visit  
[www.arseba.com](http://www.arseba.com)



# Health Insurance Update

By Nicholas Poole, MPA, Director of Legislative Affairs

## Active Employee Insurance

Starting in 2023 the state will start the first phase of a five-year plan to increase the employer contribution rate from 65% to 80%. For most employees your 2023 rates will decrease which is a great news. The 2023 ASE rates are published in this newsletter.

## Retiree Insurance

After months of the legislators and The Segal group deliberating on possible solutions to address the state employees' health insurance plan's deficit, there is finally a solution. United Health won the bid to administer a Group Medicare Advantage (MAPD) plan for retirees that should greatly reduce the deficit. ASEA is encouraging all retirees to attend the second round of United Healthcare town hall meetings regarding the MAPD plan that are being held across the state of Arkansas so that you can ask questions and learn more information. The fall schedule is included in this issue.

The benefits of the MAPD plan will mirror existing benefits from the old plan but have additional benefits including vision, hearing and dental. The vision and dental coverage are for preventive care, so if you have and major vision and dental procedure the MAPD will not cover it. ASEA is encouraging all retirees to keep their current vision and dental coverage; the two plans will work together to provide the coverage of preventive and major dental and visions coverage. If you have any questions regarding you vision dental and coverage, please contact ARSEBA at 501-224-5234.

The MAPD plan has a lower monthly premium and \$0 copay for all medical benefits. MAPD also has a program if retirees would like for a Nurse Practitioner will come to the retirees' home to perform a check and review medication and answer questions. Please review the chart on page --- for more details on the differences between the plans.

If you want to be moved into the MAPD plan, you don't have to do anything; everyone will be auto-enrolled in the plan. If you wish to stay with your current plan you will have to opt-out of the plan. The official opt-out period is November 1-30, 2022. You will be able to find the opt-out form on the EBD website. If you have any problems accessing the opt-out form, please contact myself or John at (501)-378-0187.

(Continued)

For most employees your 2023 rates will decrease which is a great news. The 2023 ASE rates are published in this newsletter.



# 2023 Health Insurance Rates



## ARKANSAS STATE ACTIVE EMPLOYEES MONTHLY PREMIUMS

2023 Plan Year Rates - Effective January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

Premium	Base Monthly Premium	State & Plan Contribution	Total Monthly Employee Cost	Per-Payroll Deduction (24 payroll)
<b>Premium</b>				
Employee Only	\$547.78	\$375.78	\$172.00	\$86.00
Employee & Spouse	\$1,369.45	\$675.23	\$494.22	\$247.11
Employee & Child(ren)	\$1,040.78	\$731.04	\$309.74	\$154.87
Employee & Family	\$1,862.45	\$1,231.93	\$630.52	\$315.26
<b>Classic</b>				
Employee Only	\$476.23	\$377.53	\$98.70	\$49.35
Employee & Spouse	\$1,190.58	\$870.34	\$320.24	\$160.12
Employee & Child(ren)	\$904.84	\$724.66	\$180.18	\$90.09
Employee & Family	\$1,619.18	\$1,218.92	\$400.26	\$200.13
<b>Basic</b>				
Employee Only	\$420.32	\$420.32	\$0.00	\$0.00
Employee & Spouse	\$1,050.80	\$870.58	\$180.22	\$90.11
Employee & Child(ren)	\$798.60	\$722.24	\$76.36	\$38.18
Employee & Family	\$1,429.08	\$1,214.48	\$214.60	\$107.30

The Basic plan meets the minimum essential coverage required under A.C.A.

State Contribution is funded by legislation

Plan Contribution is funded by ASE Trust Fund as Claims Reserve Allocation



## ARKANSAS STATE MEDICARE RETIREES MONTHLY PREMIUMS (Medical & Pharmacy)

2023 Plan Year Rates - Effective January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

Medicare Eligible	Base Monthly Premium	State & Plan Contribution	Total Monthly Retiree Cost
Retiree Only	\$483.05	\$271.20	\$211.85
Retiree & Non-Medicare Spouse	\$1,469.06	\$748.60	\$720.46
Retiree & Child(ren)	\$850.06	\$369.23	\$480.83
Retiree & Non-Medicare Spouse & Child(ren)	\$1,836.07	\$865.44	\$970.63
Retiree & Medicare Primary Spouse	\$966.10	\$458.58	\$507.52
Retiree & Medicare Primary Spouse & Child(ren)	\$1,333.11	\$556.58	\$776.53

State Contribution is funded by legislation

Plan Contribution is funded by ASE Trust Fund as Claims Reserve Allocation



## ARKANSAS STATE NON-MEDICARE RETIREES MONTHLY PREMIUMS

2023 Plan Year Rates - Effective January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

Premium	Base Monthly Premium	State & Plan Contribution	Monthly Retiree Cost
Retiree Only	\$986.00	\$663.92	\$322.08
Retiree & Non-Medicare Spouse	\$1,972.01	\$1,141.21	\$830.80
Retiree & Child(ren)	\$1,353.01	\$761.67	\$591.34
Retiree & Non-Medicare Spouse & Child(ren)	\$2,339.02	\$1,257.96	\$1,081.06
Retiree & Medicare Primary Spouse	\$1,469.05	\$850.88	\$618.17
Retiree & Medicare Primary Spouse & Child(ren)	\$1,836.06	\$948.76	\$887.30
Retiree & MAPD Primary Spouse	\$1,151.31	\$812.67	\$338.64
Retiree & MAPD Primary Spouse & Child(ren)	\$1,518.32	\$910.40	\$607.92
<b>Classic</b>			
Retiree Only	\$857.21	\$622.62	\$234.59
Retiree & Spouse	\$1,714.43	\$1,077.16	\$637.27
Retiree & Child(ren)	\$1,176.28	\$724.60	\$451.68
Retiree & Family	\$2,033.50	\$1,198.15	\$835.35
<b>Basic</b>			
Retiree Only	\$756.57	\$591.23	\$165.34
Retiree & Spouse	\$1,513.14	\$1,031.11	\$482.03
Retiree & Child(ren)	\$1,038.18	\$698.23	\$339.95
Retiree & Family	\$1,794.75	\$1,157.11	\$637.64

The Basic plan meets the minimum essential coverage required under A.C.A.

State Contribution is funded by legislation

Plan Contribution is funded by ASE Trust Fund as Claims Reserve Allocation



## ARKANSAS STATE MEDICARE RETIREES MONTHLY PREMIUMS (Medical & Pharmacy)

2023 Plan Year Rates - Effective January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

Medicare Eligible	Base Monthly Premium	State & Plan Contribution	Total Monthly Retiree Cost
MAPD Retiree Only (Subscriber Only) MAPD Med Subs	\$165.31	\$148.78	\$16.53
MAPD Retiree & Non-Medicare Spouse MAPD -MCR S	\$1,151.32	\$626.01	\$525.31
MAPD Retiree & Child(ren)	\$532.32	\$246.46	\$285.86
MAPD Retiree & Non-Medicare Spouse & Child(ren)	\$1,518.33	\$742.76	\$775.57
MAPD Retiree & MAPD Primary Spouse	\$330.62	\$297.56	\$33.06
MAPD Retiree & MAPD Primary Spouse & Child(ren)	\$697.63	\$395.20	\$302.43

State Contribution is funded by legislation

Plan Contribution is funded by ASE Trust Fund as Claims Reserve Allocation



# United Healthcare Fall Town Hall Meeting Schedule

Reserve your spot today and we'll show you how to do more with benefits like:

- Nationwide coverage
- Eyewear allowance
- Medical & prescription drug coverage
- Free\* gym membership
- Dental
- And more

## In person

**Monday, September 19**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Pine Bluff Convention Center  
 1 Convention Center Dr.  
 Pine Bluff, AR 71601

**Monday, September 19**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Heroncrest - Event Center  
 1579 E Lake Rd.  
 Elm Springs, AR 72762

**Tuesday, September 20**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Pine Bluff Convention Center  
 1 Convention Center Dr.  
 Pine Bluff, AR 71601

**Tuesday, September 20**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Heroncrest - Event Center  
 1579 E Lake Rd.  
 Elm Springs, AR 72762

**Wednesday, September 21**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Benton Event Center  
 17322 I-30 North  
 Benton, AR 72019

**Wednesday, September 21**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Fort Smith Convention Center  
 55 S 7th St.  
 (Park on 44 S 9th St between  
 Courtyard by Marriott &  
 Convention Center )  
 Fort Smith, AR 72901

**Thursday, September 22**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Delta Hotel by Marriott  
 Little Rock West  
 201 S Shackleford Rd.  
 Little Rock, AR 72211

**Thursday, September 22**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 DoubleTree Suites by  
 Hilton Bentonville  
 301 SE Walton Blvd.  
 Bentonville, AR 72712

**Friday, September 23**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 The Venue at Oakdale  
 901 Kellogg Acres Rd.  
 North Little Rock, AR 72120

**Friday, September 23**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Embassy Suites Northwest  
 Arkansas Hotel, Spa &  
 Convention Center  
 3303 S Pinnacle Hills Pkwy.  
 Rogers, AR 72758

**Monday, September 26**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Veterans Park Event Center  
 508 N Lincoln St.  
 Cabot, AR 72023

*(Meeting schedule continued)*

## Reserve Your Spot

### Reserve your spot today

Call UnitedHealthcare at **1-844-488-3955**, TTY 711, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. local time, Monday–Friday.

Mention RSVP code **SARF22** when speaking with Customer Service.

### Visit the Virtual Education Center

Find details online about the benefits, programs and services available to you.

- Learn how your ARBenefits Group Medicare Advantage (PPO) plan works
- Learn about UnitedHealthcare® HouseCalls visits
- View fliers, brochures and videos
- Get more out of your plan



[uhcvirtualretiree.com/ARBenefits](https://uhcvirtualretiree.com/ARBenefits)



## In person

**Monday, September 26**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Paragould Community Center  
 3404 Linwood Dr.  
 Paragould, AR 72450

**Tuesday, September 27**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Benton Event Center  
 17322 I-30 North  
 Benton, AR 72019

**Tuesday, September 27**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Paragould Community Center  
 3404 Linwood Dr.  
 Paragould, AR 72450

**Wednesday, September 28**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Embassy Suites by  
 Hilton Little Rock  
 11301 Financial Centre Pkwy.  
 Little Rock, AR 72211

**Wednesday, September 28**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 The Glass Factory  
 313 W Huntington Ave.  
 Jonesboro, AR 72401

**Thursday, September 29**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Embassy Suites  
 by Hilton Little Rock  
 11301 Financial Centre Pkwy.  
 Little Rock, AR 72211

**Thursday, September 29**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 The Glass Factory  
 313 W Huntington Ave.  
 Jonesboro, AR 72401

**Friday, September 30**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m.**  
 The Barn at Richwoods  
 1974 Hasley Rd.  
 Arkadelphia, AR 71923

**Friday, September 30**  
**3 p.m.–5 p.m.**  
 Malvern Country Club  
 473 Clubhouse Ln.  
 Malvern, AR 72104

**Friday, September 30**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m.**  
 Holiday Inn Blytheville  
 1121 E Main St.  
 Blytheville, AR 72315

**Friday, September 30**  
**3 p.m.–5 p.m.**  
 Eugene Woods Civic Center  
 212 W Polk Ave.  
 West Memphis, AR 72301

**Monday, October 3**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 The Wedding Barn & Event  
 Center  
 317 Little Red Mountain Rd.  
 Pangburn, AR 72121

**Monday, October 3**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m.**  
 Baxter County Fairgrounds  
 1507 Fairgrounds Dr.  
 Mountain Home, AR 72653

**Monday, October 3**  
**3 p.m.–5 p.m.**  
 James Ranch Event Center  
 51 James Ranch Rd.  
 Pocahontas, AR 72455

**Tuesday, October 4**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Herschel Hall  
 116 S Broadview St.  
 Greenbrier, AR 72058

**Tuesday, October 4**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Independence Hall Building at  
 University of Arkansas  
 Community College  
 2005 White Dr.  
 Batesville, AR 72501

**Wednesday, October 5**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Herschel Hall  
 116 S Broadview St.  
 Greenbrier, AR 72058

**Wednesday, October 5**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 East AR Community College  
 Fine Arts Center  
 1700 New Castle Rd.  
 Forrest City, AR 72335

**Thursday, October 6**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Chittum Venue at Forest Lakes  
 305 Forest Lakes Blvd.  
 Hot Springs, AR 71913

**Thursday, October 6**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 East AR Community College  
 Fine Arts Center  
 1700 New Castle Rd.  
 Forrest City, AR 72335

**Friday, October 7**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.**  
 Chittum Venue at Forest Lakes  
 305 Forest Lakes Blvd.  
 Hot Springs, AR 71913

**Friday, October 7**  
**9 a.m.–11 a.m.**  
 Brinkley Convention Center  
 1501 Weatherby Dr.  
 Brinkley, AR 72021

*(Meeting schedule continued)*







## In person

### Monday, October 10

9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Dumas Community Center  
18 Belmont St.  
Dumas, AR 71639

### Monday, October 10

1 p.m.–3 p.m., 3:30 p.m.–5 p.m.

First United Methodist Church  
317 S Main St.  
Monticello, AR 71655

### Tuesday, October 11

9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Fordyce Civic Center  
300 Highway 79/167 Bypass  
Fordyce, AR 71742

### Tuesday, October 11

3 p.m.–5 p.m.

The Events Center at  
Fairview Park  
2740 Mt Holly Rd. SW  
Camden, AR 71701

### Tuesday, October 11

9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Meadow on the Mountain  
3940 St Joe Rd.  
Atkins, AR 72823

### Wednesday, October 12

9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

El Dorado Conference Center  
311 S West Ave.  
El Dorado, AR 71730

### Wednesday, October 12

9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Meadow on the Mountain  
3940 St Joe Rd.  
Atkins, AR 72823

### Thursday, October 13

9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Crossties Event Venue  
324 E Broad St.  
Texarkana, AR 71854

### Thursday, October 13

3 p.m.–5 p.m.

Hempstead Hall  
2500 South Main St.  
Hope, AR 71801

### Thursday, October 13

9 a.m.–11 a.m.

First Baptist Church  
211 First Baptist Rd.  
Clinton, AR 72031

### Friday, October 14

9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Occasions  
1405 S 4th St  
Nashville, AR 71852

### Friday, October 14

3 p.m.–5 p.m.

Mena Mountain Resort  
2817 Highway 71-N  
Mena, AR 71953

### Friday, October 14

9 a.m.–11 a.m.

Heber Springs  
Community Center  
201 Bobbie Jean Ln.  
Heber Springs, AR 72543

### Monday, October 17

9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Blue Stone Event Center  
906 E Main St.  
Mountain View, AR 72560

### Tuesday, October 18

9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Signature Bank  
Community Room  
303 N Main St.  
Harrison, AR 72601

### Wednesday, October 19

9 a.m.–11 a.m., 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

Fort Smith Convention Center  
55 S 7th St.  
(Park on 44 S 9th St between  
Courtyard by Marriott &  
Convention Center )  
Fort Smith, AR 72901



## Online

### Tuesday, October 25

2 p.m.–4 p.m. CT

Event number: 2691 649 9658  
Event password: **Welcome@23**

### Wednesday, October 26

10 a.m.–12 p.m. CT

Event number: 2693 223 8259  
Event password: **Welcome@23**



## By phone

### Monday, October 24

10 a.m.–12 p.m. CT

To connect to audio, dial: **844-291-4185**  
Then enter access code: **8536278**

### Thursday, October 27

2 p.m.–4 p.m. CT

To connect to audio, dial: **844-291-4185**  
Then enter access code: **8536278**

### To join the Online Meeting:

- 1 Go to [webex.com](https://webex.com).
- 2 At the top right of the page, select and click the “**Join a meeting**” button.
- 3 Enter the Event number into the Meeting Information field.
- 4 Enter your name, email address and the Event password.
- 5 Click the “**Join Now**” button to join the meeting. Note: The audio/sound for this meeting will play on your device. Be sure the speaker volume on your device is turned up.

# Meetings & Events



Over 80 attendees participated in a Q&A with EBD Director Jake Bleed, APERS Education Specialist Jacobia Bates, and a representative from United Healthcare.



L to R - Stormy Smith, Dr. Jerry Jones, Shelby McCook, Herb Scott, Gary Wallace, and Mary McGehee prepare questions for presentation on the new retiree plan offering.



Executive Director John Bridges speaking with retirees after one of the recent United Healthcare meetings.



Over 7,000 retirees attended the town hall meetings across the state!

## ASEA Member Referral Program

Receive a YETI for every six new members you refer!

Who wants a free Yeti tumbler? For every six members you recruit to join ASEA, we will let you pick out your own color and ship it to your office! You can use the traditional yellow paper enrollment forms, or sign them up super-fast via our website. Just don't forget to submit a yellow form with the new member's name and your name on the "referred by" section. To request additional yellow cards please contact Sharon at [sbuckholts@aseaar.org](mailto:sbuckholts@aseaar.org).

### HOW TO QUALIFY

Go to [www.aseaar.org](http://www.aseaar.org) to start signing up new members. We will keep track of your progress and notify you when you qualify. All active and retiree members qualify for recruiting.



Jessica Childress

# Announcements

## Scholarship Applications

The John F Motes scholarship fund will be accepting applications during the month of January of 2023. The scholarships can be used for the summer or fall term, whichever is applicable to the awardee. Scholarships may be used at Arkansas based higher education institutions, vocational schools, and for professional accreditations. Please visit [www.aseaar.org](http://www.aseaar.org) for detailed instructions and for the submission process.

## Voluntary Insurance Products Enrollment Period

Be on the lookout for ARSEBA enrollers in your area during the months of September and October. This is the time to add or make changes to your dental, vision, accidental, cancer, critical illness, identity theft, short - and - long term disability, and life insurance. If an ARSEBA enroller is not scheduled in your area you can call 501-224-5234 to request a meeting or to have a private consultation.

## By-Law Change

Article IV - Board of Directors / Section 1

Add:

*e) One Ex - Officio non-voting board member selected by the Executive Director and approved by a majority vote of the ASEA board. The Ex- Officio member shall attend board meetings at the request of the Executive Director.*

## New Resolution Submission Process

Coming soon to our website is a form page for members to submit resolutions (a firm decision to do or not do something) that they would like ASEA to include in their legislative agenda. These suggestions will then be sent to ASEA's legislative sub-committee of the full board. This committee will review each submission and make either a do-pass, hold - requires further study, or do not pass recommendation with rationale behind their assessment.

All submissions will be presented during our annual meeting for a discussion and vote (that includes both the board and members) to add the submissions to our legislative agenda.

Keep in mind that as issues and opportunities arise, we will react as needed to the situation.

Go to [www.aseaar.org](http://www.aseaar.org) - "Membership" drop down - Select "Resolution Submission Form"

## Save These Numbers!

EBD Member Care: 877-815-1017

United Healthcare Arkansas Retiree Plan Member Care: 844-488-3593

Our new website contains exclusive MEMBERS ONLY offers, news & legislative updates and more. Don't miss out! Contact Sharon Buckholts today to unlock your members-only portal on [ASEAAR.ORG](http://ASEAAR.ORG).

501-378-0187  
[sbuckholts@aseaar.org](mailto:sbuckholts@aseaar.org)



# ASEA Board Applications

The following members have applied for vacant positions on the ASEA board. Per ASEA by-laws a member must be a member for at least one year. By-laws also state that we publish the applications in the ASEA News. You are encouraged to email [jbridges@aseaar.org](mailto:jbridges@aseaar.org) to voice your show of support for the applicant. These applications will be presented to the full board for a majority vote and then sworn in by ASEA President Jeff Jackson.

## ASEA Board of Directors Application

Please answer the following questions in separate paragraphs within the body of an email to [jbridges@aseaar.org](mailto:jbridges@aseaar.org).

### All Applicants:

- Full Name: CELESTE SPIERS-SORRELLS
- Position you're applying for (district number, retiree, or at-large) DISTRICT 7
- Agency: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
- Job Title: COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
- Years of service to the state: 28
- Years of ASEA membership 28

### New Board Applicants:

Why do you want to serve on the board?

I want to represent the employees in my district and provide information to them regarding current ASEA initiatives. I would like to listen to their concerns, share them with the organization, and hopefully find resolutions.

What do you think ASEA does well?

ASEA is an awesome resource for new and tenured State employees. They do a phenomenal job of working with legislators to ensure pay, benefit, and other employee concerns are addressed.

Where do you think ASEA could improve?

Local outreach initiatives/meetings were held pre-COVID. I think local meetings help keep individuals in the loop and make the employees feel heard. Possibly have large multi-district semi-annual meetings.

What state employee issues concern you most?

Constant employee turnover is the issue that concerns me the most. It is imperative to recruit and retain quality staff in order to serve or clients well.

### Re-Applying to the Board:

How long have you served on the board? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe some issues or projects that the board faced that you are most proud of?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your goals for the future as a returning board member? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have questions or concerns? Email our Executive Director, John Bridges: [jbridges@aseaar.org](mailto:jbridges@aseaar.org)

# ASEA Board Applications

## ASEA Board of Directors Application

**Full Name:** Janie Elizabeth Raschke

**Position Apply for:** Member of ASEA Board. Active employee. I am applying for the Saline County open position. Will research and find the district number.

**Agency:** Department of Human Services, OFA, CAFR Little Rock Central Office.

**Job Title:** Accountant

**Years of service to the State:** 32

**Years of ASEA membership:** 20

### **New Board Applicants:**

**Why do you want to serve on the board?** I have been at DHS, worked in 3 divisions, for over 20 years. I know a lot of people, work with all the division in one way or the other and I am always the “go to person” when someone wants to sound off and share problems, issues, etc. even if it is just to talk about what bothers them. I have been a Budget Analyst, a Case Manager Admin., a CFO and now an Accountant. I could bring a lot of current issues for discussion, and voice opinions of those I am aware of. I am right in the middle of the action of DHS.

**What do you think ASEA does well?** Serves the people, brings a lot of detail and information for discussion. Works as the people’s voice between Legislators, the Governor, represents the body of all state employees.

**What do you think ASEA could improve?** Better communication with working employees. Not enough is known about ASEA. Even though we, some of us, have paid dues for years, has never received an invitation, I did not know there was a Facebook site, some do not even have an account on Facebook, no idea that was really going on, heard rumors about different things ASEA was doing (gossip) **no one really knew**. We invited others, after Francine Lloyd received an email and invited me to come with her, and even though they paid the dues, they had no clue except that thought the fee was “expected” but knew nothing about the board. Communication is the priority in making improvements.

### **What state employee issues concern you most?**

1. Social hiring. Overlooking the quality of people you have for raises and promotions and hires your best bud, or another’s director’s spouse to be overpaid, trained by current staff and that staff receives NOTHING for it.
2. Overpaid upper-level management. No way does some of the folks I have observed desire such incredible pay and so little work. Again – someone’s best bud.
3. Ignoring the official hiring package. This does not exist for some upper-level management.
4. Maxed out on grade issue. I was an 8, for 11 years, went to CFO as a 9, brought back as an accountant and now I am maxed out with the same wage for several years now. Yes, and get a lump sum payment at the end of the year, but inflation is going up steady, but not my salary. There are several of us in DHS. I know it is under discussion. I was at the meeting Saturday, but nothing is set in stone.
5. Bereavement Pay. No one considered in the discussion that if you have a sick family member, sometimes, as in my case, I had no sick or annual leave after working to help my mother and my brother and I took leave without pay at a time like that! I had two children (adopted 4 – 2 left at home) and that was a bad time for me. So, in making choices, presenting ideas – there may be some not even brought up.

In closing I provide you with this information:

I was:

PTO President at Bauxite Elementary School

Board of Directors at the Humane Society (a few years ago)

House of Delegates Member at UAMS for 12 years.

# Mileage Draft Bill

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

1 State of Arkansas  
2 93rd General Assembly  
3 Third Extraordinary Session, 2021  
4

## A Bill

DRAFT MLD/MLD  
HOUSE BILL

5 By: Representative Ray  
6

### For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING TRAVEL  
9 REIMBURSEMENT WHILE ON OFFICIAL STATE BUSINESS; AND  
10 FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
11

### Subtitle

12 TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING TRAVEL  
13 REIMBURSEMENT WHILE ON OFFICIAL STATE  
14 BUSINESS.  
15  
16  
17

18  
19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
20

21 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 19-4-903(b)(2)(A) and (B), concerning  
22 standard reimbursements and special authorizations by the Chief Fiscal  
23 Officer of the State, are amended to read as follows:

24 (2)(A) Unless otherwise provided by law, reimbursement for the  
25 use of privately owned motor vehicles while traveling on official business  
26 for the state shall ~~not exceed the~~ be equal to the allowable rate of the  
27 Internal Revenue Service per mile for business use of privately owned motor  
28 vehicles as of January 1, 2023.

29 (B) A state agency director ~~may~~ shall not authorize  
30 reimbursement for travel expenses for meals, lodging, and private automobile  
31 or airplane usage at amounts less than that established under the authority  
32 of this section.  
33  
34  
35  
36

DRAFT

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# Arkansas Financial Education Commission



## Pilot Programs for State Employees

**The State Treasurer's office has two pilot programs available just for state employees. Please take advantage of these unique opportunities.**

### **FREE FINANCIAL EDUCATION WEBINARS**

The Arkansas Financial Education Commission and the Central Arkansas Library System have partnered to offer a free virtual financial education series. The goal of the series is to help take the fear out of finances, especially for those who have been putting off educating themselves about saving and budgeting. Upcoming topics include Retirement Planning, Staying Cyber Secure and Housing Affordability. You can also watch previous webinars on Budgeting & Planning, Avoiding Debt Traps with Educational Expenses and Managing Medical Expenses.

Visit [www.arfinancialied.org](http://www.arfinancialied.org) and click on the "Projects" tab to register for this free series or to watch past webinars!

### **PERSONALIZED FINANCIAL WELLNESS TOOLS**

The Arkansas Financial Education Commission is pleased to announce a new online personal financial wellness platform in partnership with the National Association of State Treasurers. The free program, called "AR Finance AR Future," is personalized for each user based on his or her answers to a few simple questions about their financial interests.

The AR Finance AR Future program offers easy-to-follow online courses that are tailored to your specific financial needs. Topics include basic budgeting, achieving savings goals, retirement planning and more.

Visit the "Projects" tab at [www.arfinancialied.org](http://www.arfinancialied.org) to learn more.