



Alt text: An image of snow on evergreen tree branches, with some blue sky visible behind.

Benefits Newsletter Winter 2022

Hello from the Human Resources Benefits team, and welcome to Issue #2 of the HR quarterly Benefits Newsletter!

This edition of the HR Benefits Newsletter includes information about:

1. Spotlight on Accommodations: How can I get help if I am struggling at my job due to a disability or medical condition?
2. Useful Life/Wage Insurance Terms (video)
3. The upcoming vendor shift from Optum Financial/CYC to TASC for 2023 Flex Spending
4. Cost of Living Adjustments in 2023

1. Spotlight on Accommodations: How can I get help if I am struggling at my job due to a disability or medical condition?

Tory Larson, Occupational Accommodations Specialist

Federal, state law, and City of Madison's APM 3-5 prohibits discrimination based on disability in all aspects of the employment relationship including hiring, firing, and terms and conditions of employment. The ADA requires employers to enter into an interactive process when employees or applicants with disabilities request an accommodation(s). The City of Madison has a long-standing policy and a designated position designed to assist employees and supervisors with this process.

You may be asking yourself – what is an accommodation, and what is this interactive process?

- An **accommodation** is an adjustment or modification that assists employees with a disability to perform essential job tasks.
- The **interactive process** is a conversation between all parties – the employee, supervisor, and Occupational Accommodations Specialist – that assists with determining the appropriate accommodations.

If you need accommodation assistance due to a disability and/or medical condition, you can reach out directly to the Occupational Accommodations Specialist. We will discuss what obstacles you are encountering while working and will discuss together potential accommodations that may assist you.

Some common accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- limiting repetitive motions
- schedule adjustments
- providing materials in alternate formats
- assistive technology
- creating a distraction free environment
- moving to a different job
- certification testing assistance
- modifying equipment or devices

Sometimes employees just want to meet to discuss their situation confidentially without officially requesting accommodations – and that is okay! I am here to hear your concerns, help problem solve, and to facilitate the interactive accommodation process when you are ready.

If you decide to request specific accommodations, my role helps facilitate discussions with your supervisor. I also analyze the job tasks, demands, and work unit structure in order to determine what accommodations are appropriate. It is important to note accommodations cannot create an undue hardship, cause a safety threat, or fundamentally change the nature of the position. The interactive process is confidential and only involves individual(s) supervising you. When communicating with your supervisor, I never share specific information about your disability/medical condition. Instead, my conversation focuses on what limitations you are experiencing and what accommodations would benefit you in the workplace. Your supervisor is also not allowed to share this information with you coworkers without your permission.

Throughout the interactive process, I will keep you updated on the progress and discuss any additional considerations with the end result of accommodations being determined and communicated. If needs change or additional accommodations are needed, I am available to assist you.

If you have additional questions about this process or are in need of an accommodation, please reach out to Tory Larson at vlarson@cityofmadison.com or 267-1156.

2. Understanding Your Life & Wage Insurance

Have you ever wondered about the difference between Basic Life Insurance and Supplemental Life Insurance, or about what Dependent Life Coverage really is? What about the difference between Short and Long Term Disability Insurance?

Like many of your colleagues, you may have elected to enroll in Life and/or Wage Insurance when you started employment with the City – and may still have lingering questions about what those insurances entail, and how they might benefit you. To answer some of those questions, the Benefits team invites you to review “Understanding Your Life & Wage Insurance,” a video which is available to watch here:

<https://view.knowledgevision.com/presentation/8953593479774857b8134be8918857aa>

If you are not enrolled in Life and/or Wage Insurance and would like more information – including information about enrollment, qualifying events, or the underwriting process – please reach out to us at benefits@cityofmadison.com or (608) 266-4615.

3. 2023 Flex Spending – Reminder of new vendor

As we announced in the inaugural edition of the Benefits Newsletter this fall, the City of Madison will be returning to TASC (Total Administrative Services Corporation) as our vendor for Flexible Spending and Dependent Care (FSA/DCAP) effective January 1st, 2023. TASC will be handling both new 2023 elections and any funds rolled over from 2022 during the grace period. This means that employees who currently have FSA/DCAP funds available through ConnectYourCare/Optum Financial will be transitioned to TASC beginning in January. If this applies to you, you will be provided with a new Flex Spending card and access to upload documentation via the TASC portal.

You may have noticed that in the Optum/CYC portal, the end date for 2022 FSA/DCAP is listed as 12/31/2022. This is because TASC will be handling the grace period for 2022 – so you will still have until 3/15/2023 to incur expenses against any carried-over 2022 funds, and until 4/30/2023 to submit claims for those expenses.

For instructions on how to make claims before the vendor change, please refer to <https://www.connectyourcare.com/>.

Grace Periods

2021 Plan Year Grace Period and Runout Period Extension: The grace period and claims runout period for the 2021 Flexible Spending Account plan year have been extended through 12/31/2022 and 01/15/2023, respectively. This means that employees who still have unused 2021 FSA/DCAP funds may incur expenses against those 2021 funds through 12/31/2022 and also have until 01/15/2023 to submit claims for eligible expenses incurred through 12/31/2022.

2022 Plan Year Grace Period and Runout Period Extension: The grace period and claims runout period for the 2022 Flexible Spending Account plan year have been extended through 3/15/2023 and 04/30/2023, respectively. This means that employees who still have unused 2022 FSA/DCAP funds may incur expenses against those 2022 funds through 3/15/2023 and also have until 04/30/2023 to submit claims for eligible expenses incurred through 3/15/2023.

4. Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) in 2023

Finally, we are glad to share that the budget passed by Council for 2023 contains wage increases for all employees next year. All groups will receive approximately a 2% wage

increase in payroll period 2 of next year, and some groups will receive additional wage increases in payroll period 16 and payroll period 24. Please see the [Raises Summary](#) for more information on these wage increases, and watch your paychecks for changes!

Please also note that in February of 2023, all permanent employees will also receive an additional \$1,000 one-time payment (prorated for permanent part-time employees) that is provided out of the City's wage and life insurance premium stabilization fund. For more information, be sure to check out the City's full budget document upon release.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to HR if you have any questions!



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