



New York State Employee Assistance Program **Benefits of the NYS Peer Employee Assistance Program**

NYS EAP is based on a peer assistance model. In a peer assistance model, selected employees are specially trained to deliver EAP services to their coworkers. In NYS EAP, the EAP labor-management committee in each agency selects an EAP coordinator who is trained to provide assistance to employees in the agency and to be a resource for the agency. NYS EAP staff oversees administration of the program.

The NYS peer assistance program offers a number of benefits including the following:

1. **NYS EAP is a joint labor-management program.** EAP is funded through the collective bargaining agreements between the State of New York and its unions (CSEA, PEF, UUP, Council 82, NYSCOPBA, DC-37, and GSEU) and both management and the unions are strong supporters of EAP. This collaboration between labor and management and the neutrality of the program contribute to the widespread acceptance of the program and results in a healthier and more productive workforce.
2. **NYS EAP has a strong presence in the workplace.** EAP is an on-site program that has been part of the New York State workplace since 1983. EAP is highly visible and EAP coordinators are well known in their agencies. Employees see their coordinators at work and get to know them through lunchtime seminars, new employee orientations, “meet and greets” and other events that take place in the workplace. They are comfortable seeking assistance from someone they know and trust.
3. **NYS EAP offices are conveniently located within the worksite.** EAP coordinators are available to meet with employees at the worksite. Because they are in the workplace, coordinators may also have informal consultations with employees that might not otherwise take place. Supervisors can often walk down the hall for a consultation on how to handle a difficult employee or a complex workplace issue. Coordinators are available to provide on-site supervisory training and orientations and they can respond to a crisis quickly.
4. **NYS EAP serves only New York State employees.** EAP coordinators and staff understand what it is like to live and work in New York State. They focus solely on providing services that best meet the unique needs of state employees and their families. EAP develops extensive resource and referral networks, produces educational materials, and customizes workshops to specifically serve state employees.

5. **NYS EAP staff and coordinators are employees of New York State.** EAP staff and coordinators understand the nature of public service and what it means to be a public employee. They understand the unique culture, politics, and policies of the State. They have a good knowledge of the formal and informal systems and the resources within NYS government. They are aware of workplace trends and issues and can make recommendations to improve the workplace. Moreover, EAP staff is invested in the organization and its future.
6. **NYS EAP helps employees address a broad range of issues and concerns.** EAP is not just for alcohol and drug problems. EAP coordinators provide information, assessment, and referral for a variety of issues such as mental health, gambling, grief and loss, stress, domestic violence, relationship, financial, legal, child care, and elder care concerns. They are knowledgeable about health insurance benefits and other employee benefits and provide information on wellness programs. EAP services are available twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.
7. **NYS EAP has in depth knowledge of local community resources.** EAP coordinators frequently live and work in the same geographic area as providers so they are able to establish and maintain good working relationships with them. Providers are often willing to be flexible with schedules based on these relationships. Coordinators can meet with providers in person to interview and screen them and to educate them about the New York State workforce. In addition, coordinators have first hand experience with the state's health benefit plans and other benefits.
8. **NYS EAP adheres to a strict ethical code.** NYS EAP's primary goal is to serve state employees. All EAP coordinators are required to comply with the *Ethical Code of Conduct for EAP Coordinators* to ensure EAP services are provided in a confidential and neutral manner and that EAP staff avoids all conflicts of interest.
9. **NYS EAP provides regular professional development training for EAP coordinators to ensure they are able to provide effective EAP services.** EAP coordinators attend monthly training designed to enhance and improve their helping skills. New coordinators receive special training in the core competencies. Training is provided by subject experts, local resource providers, and EAP staff.
10. **NYS EAP provides training for supervisors.** EAP training for supervisors provides guidance on how to intervene with a troubled employee and make a referral to EAP. A successful intervention not only helps the employee, but it can improve employee morale and retention in the department.

11. **NYS EAP provides consultation to supervisors on workplace issues.** Managers often consult with EAP about difficult situations involving employees. EAP coordinators are available for telephone or in-person consultation about employee referrals or departmental issues and are readily available for emergency appointments. Departments may request that EAP provide workshops to address workplace issues, enhance morale, or promote positive stress management techniques.
12. **NYS EAP facilitates employee leave and return-to-work meetings.** At the request of an employee, an EAP coordinator may interface with management and labor representatives to assist employees in getting help for mental health, drug, alcohol, or other problems. When treatment is complete, they may facilitate a return-to-work meeting to help the employee return to the workplace with the least amount of stress for the employee, the employee's coworkers, and the workplace. They may also assist an employee with arranging for follow-up or aftercare services.
13. **NYS EAP provides assistance to employees referred to EAP as part of the disciplinary process or a settlement agreement.** EAP coordinators meet with employees who are referred to EAP as part of the disciplinary process to assess the employee's situation and offer referrals to help resolve the problem that led to the discipline.
14. **NYS EAP provides organizational consultation and assists with the development of workplace policies related to EAP's area of expertise.** EAP provides consultation on organizational initiatives and policy development such as workplace violence prevention, domestic violence, or crisis response. EAP assists agencies in promoting wellness and in the development of wellness programs for employees. Agencies often call upon EAP to help employees deal with the impact of events such as layoffs and natural disasters.
15. **NYS EAP collaborates with other state agencies to share resources and increase awareness of services.** EAP staff and coordinators develop positive working relationships with other state agencies, such as Office for Aging, Department of Health, and Civil Service, and collaborate with them on training, wellness, and other initiatives. EAP is one of six Work-Life Services benefit programs and works closely with the other programs to ensure employees are aware of their benefits and can access them easily.
16. **NYS EAP provides on-site support following critical incidents.** In the event of a critical incident, EAP coordinators are available to provide immediate assistance with coordinating crisis response services, including needs assessments, referrals to resources, individual assessment and referral services, monitoring of the situation, individual grief sessions, and training. They are also available to assist

agencies with policy and resource development. Coordinators maintain a comprehensive resource file and can assist an agency in arranging for professional crisis services to be brought in if needed.

17. NYS EAP facilitates the establishment of on-site support groups for employees.

EAP coordinators are often asked to assist in establishing support groups for employees, such as a caregivers support group. Meetings are usually held at the workplace during lunchtime for the convenience of employees. They include problem solving, sharing resources, learning coping skills and developing a network of support.

18. NYS EAP provides grants to agency EAP committees. NYS EAP offers grants up to \$1,000 to agency EAP committees to encourage health and wellness and to promote EAP.