

# The Benefits Advantage

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

Providing employee benefits tools and resources for the State of Georgia

December 2022

## Flexible Benefits Reports for Benefits Coordinators Following Open Enrollment

BY MONICA LAWS-SMITH

Open Enrollment has ended, and now it's time to prepare for the new plan year. The Flexible Benefits Annual Reports will be your destination for successful planning!

The **FLX Annual Benefit Deduction Report** contains a list of all employees' deductions for the upcoming plan year. This report is located on the GaBreeze employer website for manual and hybrid entities and in PeopleSoft for automated entities.

Employers/entities are required to impute income on the value of employer-provided group term life coverage, as well as spouse and/or dependent coverage. The **FLX Annual and Inactive Imputed Income Reports** allow entities to take action on this information.

- **The Annual Imputed Income Report** is available approximately one week after Open Enrollment closes and should be used to update employee taxable income in the payroll system for the new plan year.
- **The Annual Inactive Imputed Income Report** is generated annually in early December and should be used to update employees' taxable income into the payroll system from when they were on a leave of absence during the year.

### Tracking Employee Changes During the Plan Year?

Have you ever wondered how to track your employees' Flexible Benefits status changes during the plan year? Or how to confirm the stop or start date of deductions and the amounts?

Well, there are three reports that can be used to track this data:

- **The FLX Benefit Deduction Report** is generated weekly and only contains deductions that have been adjusted since the prior report.
- **The FLX Imputed Income Report** is generated weekly with the monthly imputed income and should be used to identify weekly changes from the prior weeks' file. This report recognizes any changes that need to be made to the monthly imputed income



amount in your entity's payroll system.

- **The FLX PS Retroactive Deduction Report** is generated weekly to assist in identifying refunds or recoupments of premiums. This report includes those employees who have a start and/or stop date in a different month from the initial month the deduction is sent.

**Note:** This report is only available to SAO TeamWorks HCM entities, DeKalb County Public Schools and Clayton County Public Schools. Hybrid agencies are excluded from this report.

For more information concerning IRS regulations on Group-Term Life Insurance, click here: <https://www.irs.gov/government-entities/federal-state-local-governments/group-term-life-insurance>.

If you have any questions regarding the Flexible Benefits Reports, please contact the Flexible Benefits team at [hra.flexbenefits@doas.ga.gov](mailto:hra.flexbenefits@doas.ga.gov).



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Upcoming

## Georgia United Foundation Scholarships for 2023-2024

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY GEORGIA UNITED CREDIT UNION



Paying for higher education can stretch any family's budget. Still, state employees who are Georgia United Credit Union members can take advantage of the Georgia United Foundation's annual scholarships program to help ease the financial burden. For almost 30 years, Georgia United Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Georgia United, has offered annual high school scholarships to the credit union's members and their children or grandchildren planning to attend college or technical school. To be eligible, an applicant must be a current high school senior on track to graduate and enter an accredited college or technical school in the 2023-2024 academic year. Also, applicants – or their parents or grandparents – must have an active Georgia United Savings Account in good standing for the last six months. To apply, students must create and submit a 1-minute video in which they answer the question: "Georgia United and Georgia United Foundation were founded on the principles of supporting the community through education. How are you going to use your education to help your community?"

Entries will be accepted from December 15, 2022, through January 31, 2023.

Recipients will be announced in March 2023.

More details and online application materials will be available soon at: [gucufoundation.org/scholarships](https://gucufoundation.org/scholarships).



## Depression Around the Holidays

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY KEPRO



As the holidays approach and another year comes to an end, a period of reflection often occurs. Reflecting can provide an opportunity to celebrate the exciting and happy events of the year. Or it can cause feelings of self-doubt and regret as we may over focus on the many challenges faced or the things not accomplished throughout the year. These feelings and thoughts can lead to depression which is common around the holidays.

Recognizing and acknowledging the potential symptoms of depression is an important first step in feeling better. Common signs include:

- Fatigue
- Eating more or less
- Inability to concentrate
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Lack of interest in activities that you used to enjoy

Identifying these changes in your moods and feelings takes self-awareness. Note how you generally live. Do you often get together with friends, take a hike or go to the gym? If suddenly you find yourself not doing many of the things you once enjoyed, it might be a sign that you are struggling.

### Create a plan for your holiday

If you know that you might be prone to feeling down during this holiday season, try to be proactive with creating a plan. Setting goals gives you something to focus on and preoccupy your mind. Dedicate a portion of your time to volunteering or catching up with old friends. Make plans early in the season so you have commitments on your calendar.

### Make new traditions

Is this your first holiday away from your family? If so, change your focus from longing for the past to embracing the present. Create new traditions. Whatever you do, take ownership and control of how you will spend your holidays.



### Finding Solutions

When you realize that a depressed mood is creeping in, act sooner rather than later. Depressive symptoms tend to increase in intensity—as do their impact on your mood, activity level, and motivation. Waiting until later to take proactive action may mean that you have less energy and motivation to tackle the weight of your emotions.

### Be kind to yourself

The holiday season reminds people to be nice and generous to others, but it is also important to be kind to yourself. Remember that variations in your mood often occur and feeling better may take time. Allow yourself to experience your emotions and make no apologies for them. You are capable. You can survive the holiday season!

### Utilize your resources

Your SOG Kepro Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a great resource to help you navigate through a difficult time. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it is always staffed by a live counselor who will assist you in getting resources and referrals to counseling, legal and financial questions, caring for family members, and daily living services. The EAP is free, confidential, and available to employees, their dependents up to the age of 26, and household members.

### Employee Assistance Program

**AVAILABLE 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK**  
Toll-Free Phone: 1.833.276.0988  
EAP website: [www.EAPhelplink.com](http://www.EAPhelplink.com)  
Company Code: Georgia

## 2023 Dental PPO Benefits

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY CIGNA AND LENEQUA MORRIS

The Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) – Human Resources Administration (HRA) awarded the contract to Cigna to administer the dental preferred provider organization (PPO) plan options effective January 1, 2023. The PPO dental plans were brushed up for Plan Year 2023.

### 2023 Dental PPO Enhancements

A new option, Select Mid, was added, dental implant coverage is available under the Select Mid and Select Plus plan options, Select Plan annual maximum was increased to \$750, the orthodontia lifetime maximum will start over, and premiums decreased on the Select and Select Plus Plan options.

The 2023 Dental PPO plan options are:

- Select
- Select Mid
- Select Plus

### Locating Network Dental Providers

It is easy to locate Cigna PPO general dentists and/or specialists.

To locate a network dentist:

- Register at myCigna.com to search for a dentist
  - Log in to myCigna.com. Click on "Find Care and Cost" at the top of the page.
  - Enter your search criteria and click "Search"
  - Or, under "Popular Searches," click a dentist by category
- Call Cigna's customer service at 888-764-0099
- Use the myCigna App

Call your dentist's office and ask if they participate in the Cigna Dental PPO (DPPO) network. If your dentist does not participate in Cigna's network, you can nominate your dentist by completing and submitting the provider recruitment form located under "Forms" on myCigna.com.

**Note:** It is recommended to always confirm your dentist network status prior to having treatment. There are out-of-network benefits with the PPO plan options.

### 2023 Cigna Dental PPO and Dental HMO Tools and Resources

Get the most out of your Cigna dental plan by setting up a myCigna.com account and downloading the myCigna Mobile App. An overview of the myCigna.com features is available in short videos at the links below:

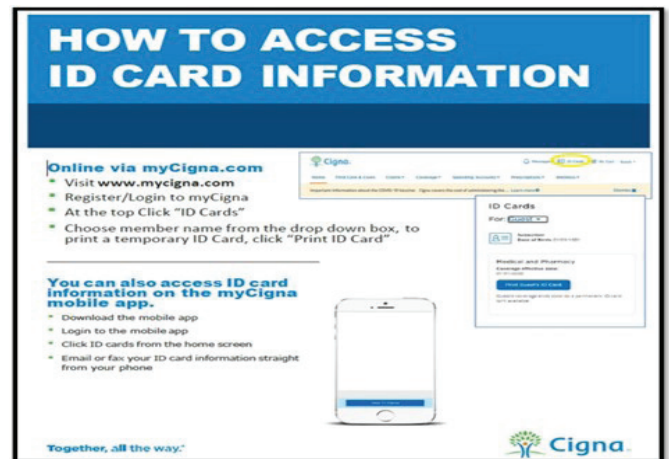
[myCigna – DHMO Features](#)

[myCigna – DPPO Features](#)

### myCigna Mobile App

Use the mobile app to:

- Access your ID card from your smartphone, including the ability to share it via text or e-mail with your dentist.
- Find dentists in your area and review the dentist Brighter Score with Professional History, Patient Experience reviews, Languages Spoken, and Affordability.
- Estimate the cost of your dental visit by utilizing the dental treatment cost estimator.



Still need additional information regarding the Dental plan options? Visit Cigna's vendor booth at <https://team.georgia.gov/plan-year-2023-flexible-benefits-vendors/>.

### 2023 Dental and Vision ID Cards

Participants enrolled in the dental and vision plan options will be receiving new ID cards. Your dental and vision providers may ask for these cards during your next office visits.



## Meet Marcie Akins

On September 1, 2022, the Flexible Benefits Team gained a new team member in Marcie Akins, Benefits Specialist. She brings nine years of experience in HR, as well as 18 years of experience in the medical field, performing various duties. We asked Marcie a few questions to get to know her!

**Q1:** Hi, Marcie! Welcome to HRA. Can you tell me about your time/experience before joining us?

**A1:** Before joining HRA I worked at a Community Service Board for 2 years as an HR Generalist and performed a variety of functions in the HR Department. Prior to the CSB, I worked at a Nursing Home as the Human Resources/Payroll Manager for 7 years.

**Q2:** What inspired you to pursue HR?

**A2:** HR is about people; I love working with and helping people.

**Q3:** What is your favorite thing about working in HR/Flexible Benefits?

**A3:** Everything! My coworkers, the work, and the work environment. EVERYTHING!

**Q4:** Do you have a motto that you live by or incorporate into your work?

**A4:** Stay Positive, Work Hard, & Make It Happen!



**Q5:** Finally, when you are not working, what do you like to do for fun?

**A5:** I enjoy watching movies especially life-time movies, going out to dinner with friends, going to the beach, and spending time with my 15-year-old son, Alex.



**Al Howell**, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Al has extensive HR management experience at the state, county, and municipal government levels. He led support services in the areas of human resources and administrative operations. He previously served as the Director of Administrative Services with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Al is currently responsible for leading enterprise human resource functions, including talent management, HR policy and compliance, compensation, and benefits. Al's vision for HRA is to become a proactive agent of change by offering strategically focused services which will help our clients meet the demands of the modern workforce. Al holds a BS in Political Science from Georgia Southern University and an MPA from Georgia Southern University. He is a Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach. Al enjoys family time and jogging.

**Carla Gracen**, DIRECTOR OF COMPENSATION & BENEFITS



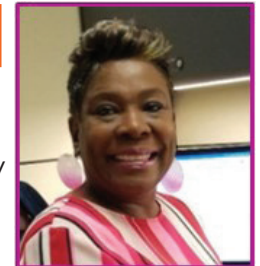
Carla joined HRA in April 2018. She enjoys providing value to State of Georgia entities and employees through various projects, including the enhanced Benefits portal and streamlining processes with digital transformation. Previously, she managed outsourced HCM products and HR, Benefits, Payroll, and Accounting departments. Carla's career and personal travels took her to 48 states. She enjoys conducting industry presentations on various HCM topics. Carla holds an MEd – HRD from Colorado State University and an SHRM – SCP certification. Her hobbies include reading and fiber art.

**Leneequa Morris**, SR. BENEFITS MANAGER



Leneequa stepped into her Benefits Manager assignment with Human Resources Administration on May 1, 2018. She has been a State of Georgia employee for 21 years, and before joining HRA, she held the role of Benefits Manager at the Department of Community Health State Health Benefit Plan. Leneequa loves assisting and educating employees about their flexible benefits. When not at work, Leneequa loves relaxing at home, and watching good movies on LMN and Netflix.

**Barbara Heard**, BENEFITS ANALYST



Following retirement, Barbara rejoined DOAS as a part-time Benefits Analyst in July 2018. She began her career over 32 years ago with the Secretary of State's office, serving in various HR professional positions. In 2012, Barbara joined HRA as the Flexible Benefits Education and Marketing Manager, resolving employee, retiree, and employer issues. Barbara enthusiastically works with people, and her professional motto is, "Remember that the person in front of you is a human who requires resources." In her spare time, Barbara enjoys spending time with her family, working at her church, traveling, and shopping. She loves collecting angels and has been tagged as a "Paparazzi" due to her love for snapping photographs.

**Monica Laws-Smith**, BENEFITS SPECIALIST



Monica has over 20 years of client service and support experience. In December 2019, she joined the HRA Flexible Benefits team as a Benefits Specialist 2. Before joining HRA, Monica was a Contact Center Team Lead and Senior Analyst providing subject matter expert support to HRA team members, state agencies, and employees on various applications, procedures, and system-related issues. Monica is a Louisiana native and one of the New Orleans Saints' biggest fans; she also enjoys cooking gumbo for friends and family, eating crawfish, and spending time with her kids! Monica lives by the motto, "Keep Going and Never Give Up!"

**SON TRUONG**, BENEFITS SPECIALIST

Son joined the HRA team in 2017 as a Benefits Specialist. Son's previous HR experience includes Recruiter, HR Generalist, HR Business Partner, and ER Specialist. Son says one of the highlights of the Flexible Benefits team's year is Open Enrollment and that he's diligent about being prepared and positioned to meet the needs of the State of Georgia employee population. What excites him about HRA is the leadership team's focused direction on improving HRA operations and the support provided to the broader HR community. Son is a certified scuba diver, and his favorite meals include seafood and a variety of Southern-fried foods. He's also a lover of animals (except snakes).



**MARCIE AKINS**, BENEFITS SPECIALIST

Marcie Akins joined the HRA team on September 1, 2022, as a Benefits Specialist 2. Marcie's previous experience prior to joining HRA include working as an HR Generalist, Human Resources Clerk, & Payroll Manager. Marcie has 9 years of HR experience and has also worked in the medical field, performing a variety of duties for 18 years. Marcie loves spending time with her son and her two dogs, going out to dinner with friends, going to the beach, and watching movies, especially Lifetime. Marcie's favorite quote is, "Work hard, stay positive, and make it happen."



# BENEFITS

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Upcoming HR Community Meetings

February 21, 2023  
May 9, 2023  
August 15, 2023  
November 7, 2023

### Upcoming Employee Benefit Plan Council & State Personnel Board Meetings

March 14, 2023  
June 20, 2023  
August 8, 2023  
November 14, 2023

## CONTACT US

Interested in learning more about the Flexible Benefits Program?  
Contact Carla Gracen, Director of Compensation and Benefits, at [Carla.Gracen@doas.ga.gov](mailto:Carla.Gracen@doas.ga.gov) or  
Leneequa Morris, Benefits Manager, at [Leneequa.Morris@doas.ga.gov](mailto:Leneequa.Morris@doas.ga.gov).  
We look forward to providing you with information about our Flexible Benefits Program.



### HRA GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

<http://team.ga.gov/my-benefits/>  
<http://doas.ga.gov/human-resources-administration>  
[hra.flexbenefits@doas.ga.gov](mailto:hra.flexbenefits@doas.ga.gov)

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If you are interested in being added to the Benefits Advantage and/or the Horizons Newsletter mailing list, please email [newsletter.hra@doas.ga.gov](mailto:newsletter.hra@doas.ga.gov) with your request.