



FSSA UPDATE

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Governor announces new state employee polices

First round of changes went into effect March 7

After months of study and listening to feedback from agency leaders and employees from across state government, Governor Eric Holcomb announced first set of state employee work policy changes. The first round of changes, listed below, went into effect March 7. An overview of the policy changes can be found on the State Personnel Department's [NextLevel State Work site](#).

- Flexible work arrangements allow state agencies more flexibility in employee schedules and permit up to 15 hours per week of remote work for employees whose work may be performed outside of state facilities.
- Education reimbursement, allowing full-time employees to be reimbursed for up to \$5,250 annually for the cost of an advanced degree, state licensure, approved course, GED or certificate.
- Referral bonuses ranging from \$100 to \$500, rewarding current employees who recruit talented people to public service with the state.
- Whole employee policy, which allows state agencies greater flexibility to conduct employee engagement, wellness, learning and development-related activities.
- Community service leave, increasing the number of paid time off hours full-time employees may spend annually performing charitable service to 15 hours annually for full-time employees and 7.5 hours annually for part-time employees.
- New employee leave time, granting up to 22.5 hours of personal leave to use in the first six months of employment.
- Re-employing retired state employees, creating a special classification for retired state employees to return to state employment, which enhances the knowledge and experience in state agencies.
- Bridge to retirement program, which allows agencies to hire a new employee to begin training with an employee who has set a retirement date, to foster a smooth transition.

Phase 2 will begin in May, with the establishment of the Governor's Public Service Achievement awards and a standardized spot bonus program to reward staff for exceptional service. There are also plans to survey employees about barriers to employment they face due to child or other dependent care.

By summer, the State Personnel Department will have results and recommendations from the ongoing comprehensive compensation study. That information will help SPD further determine how to adjust compensation for the next biennium budget.

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On My Way Pre-K applications for the 2022–2023 school year now available

The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning is now accepting applications from families statewide who may be eligible for grants for their children to receive free, high-quality, pre-Kindergarten education through the On My Way Pre-K program for the 2022–2023 school year. Information about the program and the link to apply can be found at onmywayprek.org.

“We are always happy to enroll new students in On My Way Pre-K, but this year is especially exciting since we recently released [results of a Purdue University long-term study](#) showing that children who attend On My Way Pre-K are better prepared for school and that the benefits continue well into elementary school,” said Nicole Norvell, director of FSSA’s Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning. “We are eager to enroll a new group of young Hoosiers to benefit from the great early start this program provides for their learning.”

For the 2022–2023 school year, a child is eligible for an On My Way Pre-K voucher if they will be 4 years old by Aug. 1, 2022, and plan to start kindergarten in the 2023–2024 school year. An eligible child must live in a household with an income below [127% of the federal poverty level](#) and have parents or guardians who are working, going to school, attending job training or searching for employment.

A limited number of vouchers is available for children who will be 4 years old by Aug. 1, 2022, live in a household with an income up to [185% of the federal poverty level](#) and have:

- ▶ A parent/guardian who is working, attending job training or an educational program, looking for employment; or
- ▶ A parent/guardian who receives Social Security disability insurance or supplemental security income benefits.

An easy-to-use, online application called “[Early Ed Connect](#)” serves as the application for both On My Way Pre-K and child care assistance provided in Indiana via the federal child care development fund, or “CCDF.” Early Ed Connect offers the benefits of easier attachment of documents and notification of successful submission. A Spanish version is also available as well as support for any technical issues.

On My Way Pre-K awards grants to 4-year-old children from low-income families so that they may have access to a high-quality pre-K program the year before they begin kindergarten. Families who receive a grant may use the grant at any approved On My Way Pre-K program throughout the state.

Once the family has met eligibility requirements and has been awarded a grant for their child, they may choose from any of the approved On My Way Pre-K programs. Families can search approved providers at www.Childcarefinder.in.gov.



Approved pre-K programs may be located in a public or private school, licensed child care center, licensed home or registered ministry as long as that program meets the quality requirements and is registered as an On My Way Pre-K provider. Families may choose from a program that is full-day or part-day, as well as from programs that end with the school year or continue through the summer. Families who need help finding an approved pre-K program can also call 800-299-1627 for assistance from an early learning referral specialist.

Reintroducing the Office of Healthy Opportunities and agency equity initiatives

What is the Office of Healthy Opportunities?

OHO was created in 2018 to work with communities served by FSSA to:

1. **Identify individuals' social risk factors that affect their health and wellbeing**
2. **Address those risk factors through programs, services and policy design**

We work with external partners and our program staff to address the non-health related-needs of those we serve.

Part of that goal involves ensuring stability of and support for our staff to effectively serve our constituents.

This means working with FSSA staff to understand and address their needs, especially for members of communities who may not feel heard.

Our work is being implemented by three advisory workgroups and five teams. These groups consist of FSSA staff from various divisions and levels of the agency who have dedicated some of their time to develop and guide our programming.

Thanks to their work, we hope to offer some of the current initiatives throughout this calendar year:

- Efforts to improve employee experiences
- Creating and piloting listening sessions for FSSA staff
- Creating and piloting employees resource groups for professional development and peer support networks
- Developing a reporting system for adverse employee experiences
- Efforts to improve constituent experiences
- Monthly educational campaigns for staff to understand different populations they serve
- Evaluation and assessment of internal data to understand the needs of individuals receiving services from FSSA
- Understanding community outreach efforts and activities across divisions
- Mapping agency programs for gaps in services

You can reach out to at healthyopportunities@FSSA.in.gov for more information or feedback or to join a team.

You can also stay in touch with OHO and our projects by requesting access to our [SharePoint page: FSSA Office of Healthy Opportunities](#). This page also has a list of individuals who participate on our workgroups and teams, so you can ask someone who works in your office about their experience with us.

Be on the lookout for more updates from our team!





WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND FSSA!!

Megan Lisch was excited to be at FSSA Day on March 2 with The Data Mine at Purdue University, talking about data science, WISE and opportunities to engage students in human services and government work.



Dr. Dan Rusyniak took some time out of his day to stop by and show his support for our Statehouse Day Blood Drive.



Jeff Wedding and Katrina Norris represented FSSA at the Mental Health America of Indiana "Hoosier Idol" event.



Logansport State Hospital staff members dedicated their Saturday morning in support of the United Way of Cass County's annual Pins For Kids bowling tournament. Proceeds benefited the UW's Reading Railroad initiative.



We are super-proud of our DDRS director Kim Opsahl for being recognized by Easter Seals Arc with the Outstanding Advocate for People with Disabilities Award at their Legislator Appreciation Luncheon at the Statehouse.



March is Social Workers Appreciation Month. NDI staff L to R: Shante Harris, Keniyah Patterson, Erin Smiley, Chelsea Hardin, Cassandra Strong, Allison Robertson, Shanelle Justice.

Inaugural Data Champion Award winners



To recognize FSSA staff that are dedicated to the use of data in service of their fellow Hoosiers, the Office of the Secretary, in collaboration with the chief data officer and the Data and Analytics Team, has established the Data Champion Award.

The Data Champion Award is given to an individual FSSA staff member or team that have demonstrated excellence in service to Hoosiers through one of four data-driven accomplishments.

Innovating with data: An individual who effectively used data in a new or innovative way to address an identified problem or to improve an FSSA program. Awarded to **Scott Munoz**, information security manager, MIS and IT director at the NeuroDiagnostic Institute.

Application of data-driven decision: An individual who demonstrates how the application of real-world data

impacted the course of a project or program. Awarded to **Elizabeth Peyton**, innovation and clinical practice director, Division of Aging.

Developing data-driven skills: An individual who made significant progress in learning and implementing a new data tool or process or who took the initiative to help other FSSA staff improve their data skills or processes. Awarded to **Wendy Harrold**, DMHA deputy director.

Building a culture of data: An individual who motivated other team members to rally behind FSSA's data-driven decision-making initiative or who took initiative to improve usability or accessibility of FSSA data throughout the agency. Awarded to **Leslie Huckleberry**, FSSA general counsel.

Congratulations to the inaugural Data Champion Award winners!



Scott Munoz



Elizabeth Peyton



Wendy Harrold



Leslie Huckleberry

The timesheets, they are a-changin'

PeopleSoft will be updated in May

The state of Indiana is updating the current version of PeopleSoft to a newer, easier version for all state employees. Please take a few minutes to explore all the benefits and enhancements the new system brings, and how you will be impacted, using the links below.

Training will start in March and the new system launches in May. Watch your inbox for more updates and reach out to the [FSSA Payroll and Human Resource](#) team with questions or email newpayrollhr@iot.in.gov.

PeopleSoft update resources:

- [PeopleSoft 9.2 Enhancements audio](#)
- [PeopleSoft 9.2 Modernization FAQ](#)
- [PeopleSoft 9.2 Digital flyer](#)

Rachel Johnson-Yates nominated as 2022 Indy's Best & Brightest finalist

DMHA deputy director Rachel Johnson-Yates, MA, LMHC, LAC has been nominated as a 2022 Indy's Best & Brightest finalist. Indy's Best And Brightest was created by [Junior Achievement of Central Indiana](#) to recognize up-and-coming talent and the next generation of leaders in our community.

Finalists serve as excellent role models to Junior Achievement students and youth in their community and are judged on professional accomplishments and leadership qualities. The event honors 100 of central Indiana's most outstanding young professionals in 10 different industries.



FIVE QUESTIONS



Name: Kelly C. Mitchell

Title: Director of the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Education: Bachelor's of science social sciences, professional in human resources and MBA

Career Highlights: My professional life has been focused on supporting individuals with disabilities. I started as a direct support professional, and for the past 18 years, I had the privilege of serving southwestern Indiana as SEO/president of SIRS. Throughout, I've been actively engaged in initiatives that support inclusive communities and improved quality of life. In June 2021, I was honored to receive the Sagamore of the Wabash from Governor Eric Holcomb.

1 What attracted you to a career here at FSSA?

Honestly, the quality of leadership and the vision and values of this administration. Improving the quality of life for Hoosiers, particularly Hoosiers with disabilities, has been a lifelong passion. I've attempted to make a difference at a local level throughout my career, and when this opportunity presented, it didn't long to realize the possibilities of working with the FSSA team to make an impact on a larger scale.

2 What gives you a sense of accomplishment professionally?

When someone is living the life they dreamed and you know that your services, your policies, your team had a part in supporting that outcome, that's pure gold! There is absolutely nothing better.

3 What do you want FSSA workers to know about the work you're doing?

Within DDRS, our focus is empowering and supporting individuals with disabilities to achieve their good life. The division houses four bureaus focused on early intervention, vocational services, community living and quality improvement. We are driven by the core belief that all people have the right to live, love, work, learn, play and pursue their dreams.

4 What is the best advice you can offer, based on your years of experience?

I will offer two simple pieces of wisdom: first, "You have two ears and one mouth, use them proportionately;" and the other is to start with your "why," the purpose of your action. Getting caught up in the tasks, the services or the product (the what) can keep us from achieving our desired outcome. Focus on the why and actively engage and listen to both internal and external stakeholders to be successful.

5 What about your background might your co-workers find surprising?

I love to sing and perform. Since childhood, I've always been drawn to music. I played the saxophone, and you could always find me performing in theatrical productions or singing at events in my youth. I dreamed of being a recording artist. In early adulthood, I regularly performing at weddings and made guest appearances with my brothers' band Touch of Grey and brother-in-law's multiple bands. I do a mean Patsy Cline and Grace Slick's (Jefferson Airplane) "White Rabbit." I still catch a piece of that childhood dream by performing occasionally; and you might find me at a karaoke night if the moment is right!