

Northwestern | HUMAN RESOURCES

Employee Matters

July 2026

Benefits Spotlight

Your Benefits Explained

Welcome to *Your Benefits Explained*, a monthly series where our benefits experts take a deeper dive into common questions—and share insights to help you make the most of your benefits. This month we are covering [Benefit Change Requests after a Qualifying Life Event](#) and what you need to know to update your coverage.



A Qualifying Life Event is a change in your situation — such as getting married, having a baby, or losing health coverage — that makes you eligible for a Special Enrollment Period, allowing you to enroll in health insurance, or certain other benefits, outside the yearly Open Enrollment Period.

Health & Welfare Benefits Summary Plan Description (SPD) Handbook Now Available

The Health & Welfare SPD for plan year 2026 has been updated. This [Health & Welfare Benefits Summary Plan Description Handbook](#) replaces all prior versions and serves as your primary resource for understanding the plan's features, eligibility rules, benefits, and administrative procedures. If you have questions or would like to request a printed copy, please contact askHR@northwestern.edu or 847-491-4700.

Explore Fertility Benefits and Resources

Fertility Solutions is a voluntary program through UnitedHealthcare where you receive guidance around benefits and resources as you explore options for expanding your family. The program includes:

- Calls with a fertility nurse.
- Search for in-network providers or Fertility Centers of Excellence.
- 24/7 online learning.

[See the UHC flyer](#) and contact UHC at 866-774-4626 to learn more.



Benefits Events & Webinars

View upcoming events on the Human Resources [Upcoming Events webpage](#).

Tomorrow! Learn Estate Planning Basics

Join the Benefits team and [LegalEASE](#) on **July 21 at noon** for a one-hour [webinar on Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning](#). Learn about key estate planning documents and strategies to help protect your family and ensure your wishes are carried out.

Understanding Your HDHP& HSA Plan

The Benefits team and Inspira will co-host a one-hour webinar on **July 23 at noon** on how High Deductible Health Plans (HDHPs) and Health Savings Accounts (HSA) work. During the session you'll learn about plan eligibility, how to use your HSA contributions, and how to invest your HSA contributions. [Register for the webinar](#).

Planning for Parenthood: Benefits, Leave, and Caregiving Resources

Register for a one-hour [Staff Parental Leave 101 session](#) on **July 28 at noon**. This webinar is designed for staff members who will be new parents or are in the planning stages. You'll learn about FMLA eligibility, filing your claim for parental, birth and adoption parental leave, and Dependent Care FSA coverage. The session will also include an overview of caregiving benefits including resources for childcare, tuition and caregiving programs.

Tuition Benefit Overview for You and Your Dependents

Have you been thinking about using your Northwestern tuition benefit for yourself or your dependents? Join the Benefits team on **August 18 at noon** to learn more about your tuition benefit eligibility, explore your options, and get your questions answered. [Save your seat](#).

Preparing for Retirement: Medicare Advantage 65+ Overview

The Benefits team invites you to attend a virtual information session on **August 25 at noon**. During the session, a UnitedHealthcare representative will provide an overview of the Medicare Advantage Plan, and the Benefits team will discuss [Via Benefits](#) and the Pre-65 Retiree plans. For more information, visit the Retiree Benefits website for details. [Register for the webinar](#).

Caregiving

Need Back-Up Care? We've Got You Covered

Northwestern offers up to **10 days** of subsidized back-up care for staff and faculty through Care.com, providing in-home and in-center care. For more information and to get started [visit the website](#).



Caregiving & Well-being Webinars

Register for a Care Talks webinar or view previous recordings through your [Care.com membership account](#). Webinars all take place at noon (CDT), upcoming topics are listed below.

- July 22: Guiding teens through relationship challenges with confidence
- July 28: The gut brain connection
- August 6: Embracing a life of happiness
- August 11: School success for kids with disabilities
- August 12: Financial wellness and moving forward
- August 19: Helping older loved ones make the right choice
- August 25: The benefits of nutrition and proactive health
- August 26: Back-to-school success strategies for every age

Well-being

[Learn about Northwestern's Employee Assistance Program](#)



Northwestern will be offering a virtual EAP overview presentation on **July 23 at noon**. [Register for the webinar](#) to learn about resources for staff, faculty, and their household members, including free confidential counseling, free financial and legal consultations, text coaching and more.

Attend Mental Health First Aid Training in August

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches participants how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults. The MHFA virtual workshop will take place on **August 25 & 26** (over two half days from 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.). Please note there is a 2-hour pre-work assignment prior to attending the workshop. Participants who successfully complete the MHFA training will become a certified Mental Health First Aider. [Register for the workshop](#).

Learn & Grow

Apply: Navigating Cultures in the Global Workplace Workshop

Offered by the [Office of the Vice President for International Relations](#), this interactive virtual workshop series provides tools for greater self-awareness and practical knowledge to increase intercultural sensitivity and effective communication in the workplace.



This workshop series is offered at no cost to benefits-eligible staff members with 6 months of service to the University. [Learn more and apply](#).

Engagement



Cool off at the Ice Cream Social

Join the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC) for an ice cream social on **July 22 from 12:00 –2:00 p.m.** on the Evanston campus. Enjoy the outdoors, meet other staff members and enjoy an ice cream treat. [Reserve your seat](#).

Attend the Annual Community Movie Night

Northwestern Athletics and Recreation in partnership with the Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations is hosting a free showing of *The Goat* on **July 28** as part of their annual [Community Movie Night](#). Parking is free on campus after 4:00 p.m.; gates open at 5:45 p.m. [RSVP is encouraged](#).

Build Your Bridges on the Chicago Campus

Mark your calendars for the next [NU Bridges](#) on **August 12 from 10:00–11:30 a.m.** Take a coffee break, connect with new colleagues and learn about the Office of the Ombudsperson. [Share the flyer](#) with your colleagues. [RSVP is encouraged](#) but not required.

Give the Gift of Music this Fall

The [Northwestern Music Academy](#) at the Bienen School of Music is now accepting enrollments for fall 2026 classes including violin, viola, cello, and adult piano. [Learn more and register.](#)

Congrats to Northwestern's 2026 Bike Commuter Challenge Champions

Led by captain Elizabeth Adamczyk, Northwestern's team of 80 riders earned the highest total of any participating organization across all categories in Chicago's annual [Bike Commuter Challenge competition](#). Congrats to everyone who participated and helped support [Northwestern's commitment to sustainability](#)!

Manager's Tip

Manager Meetup: Building Stronger Relationships at Work

Join Human Resources' Talent Development team on **August 6 from 1:30–4:30 p.m.** on the Evanston campus. You asked and we listened. Due to strong interest, this is the first of a more comprehensive session which delves into leading teams. [Register for the session.](#)



You can learn more about Northwestern's [Manager Foundations: Level 1 curriculum](#) and register for upcoming Manager Meetup sessions in [myHR Learn](#).

Inside HR



We want to celebrate **Charisse Burton**, our Business Process Analyst, for 25 years of dedication to the University! Thank you to Charisse and our long-standing Northwestern colleagues who were recognized last month at the annual [Length of Service Staff Recognition Reception](#).

The *Employee Matters* newsletter will be taking its annual summer break during the month of August, but it will be back in September! To read past issues of the newsletter [visit our Newsletter webpage](#).

The mission of **Human Resources** is to promote an innovative and inclusive workplace where all individuals thrive and collaborate to advance our Northwestern directions.

Northwestern University





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