

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE NYSUT MEMBER BENEFITS TRUST CHAIRPERSON



MEMBER
BENEFITS



Working to Benefit You

This report highlights the major occurrences that took place in Member Benefits in 2023; it also offers updates on many of the endorsed programs, benefits, and services that are available to NYSUT members. The index below allows you to quickly find the information you are seeking in this report.

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INTRODUCTION

It's my pleasure to present the 2024 Annual Report of NYSUT Member Benefits! It's hard to believe that it has been more than 40 years since the then-NYSUT Benefits Trust was created for the purpose of offering quality insurance and benefit programs to NYSUT members.

Since that time, NYSUT Member Benefits has grown to include the Member Benefits Corporation and Catastrophe Major Medical Insurance Trust – allowing us to significantly increase the program offerings available to members. We endorse a variety of programs to help meet the needs of the NYSUT membership, along with providing substantial discount opportunities to help maximize savings.

Member Benefits has employed the strength of a membership that is 700,000 strong to negotiate additional savings opportunities with many of our endorsed providers. NYSUT members can save up to an additional 20% when purchasing our endorsed programs through payroll or pension deduction.

Participation in our endorsed benefits offers the added protection of having a trusted advocate available to members. Our staff take great satisfaction in stepping in to assist members with any questions, concerns, or issues that may arise.

I encourage members to learn more about all that is available through Member Benefits – including a number of benefits provided free of charge – by exploring **memberbenefits.nysut.org** or calling **800-626-8101**.

On our website, you will also find several helpful and recently redesigned publications that detail the benefits available to NYSUT members, including our *Quick Guide*, *Benefits Available*, *Retiree Member Benefits Guide*, and *Group Plans & Services Portfolio*.

From all of us at Member Benefits, thank you for your continued support and allowing us the opportunity to serve you.



J. Philippe Abraham
Chairperson, NYSUT Member Benefits Trust
NYSUT Secretary-Treasurer

PROGRAM UPDATES & VALUE-ADDED BENEFITS:

UNIVERSAL LIFE INSURANCE WITH CONVALESCENT CARE BENEFIT

The **Universal Life/LifeEvents® Insurance** program with Convalescent Care Benefit (plus YourCare360® Care Planning Services) offers added financial protection for NYSUT members and/or their spouses/certified domestic partners along with access to long-term care resources.

Launched in May 2023, this program combines convalescent care benefits that can be used to help pay for long-term care services at any age (up to **4%** of the universal life death benefit per month for up to **25** months); a life insurance benefit to provide financial security for your family in the event that a family member passes; and caregiving tools provided by YourCare360® that offer guidance to manage long-term care needs.

In-service members up to age **70** can enroll for up to \$300,000 of life insurance with a Convalescent Care benefit by answering some medical questions. In-service members can also purchase coverage for their qualifying spouse/certified domestic partner along with their children and grandchildren.

For one year after their retirement date, retiree members up to age **70** may elect coverage up to **\$100,000** by answering some medical questions.

MEMBER BENEFITS DISCOUNTS & DEALS

Member Benefits understands the importance of supporting local businesses and local communities. Our **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program offers over **18,000** local deals at a variety of New York State locations. Members can also request to have their favorite merchant join the network by creating or logging in to their MB Discounts & Deals account and then clicking on “Recommend a Retailer” at the bottom left of the page.

NYSUT members can save up to **50%** at **300,000** locations, including restaurant dine-in or take-out, groceries and food delivery, meal subscription services, flowers and gift baskets, clothing and shoes, oil changes and vehicle maintenance, sporting events, hotels and flights, car rentals, theme parks, movie tickets, ski rentals, and much more. In addition, members can save at more than **850,000** popular hotels and resorts worldwide.

Over **30,000** members have registered for the MB Discounts & Deals program to date – generating coupons and print-on-demand offers equating to **\$2.6 million** in money saved along with an additional **\$160,000** saved in travel and ticketing purchases through January 2024.

For exclusive access to savings, create your MB Discounts & Deals account with a preferred email address, a password, and your seven-digit NYSUT ID number at **mbdeals.enjoymydeals.com**. Your NYSUT ID number can be found on your NYSUT Membership Card. If you do not know your NYSUT ID number, please contact NYSUT Membership Support Services at **800-342-9810**. There is no cost for members to participate in this program.

LEGAL SERVICE PLAN (VOLUNTARY & GROUP)

With our **Legal Service Plan** provided by the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C., participants receive unlimited toll-free legal advice; a simple will, health care proxy, living will, and power of attorney; and guaranteed maximum fees for many legal matters.

There are approximately **5,000** participants in our voluntary Legal Service Plan along with **154** groups in our Group Legal Service Plans (representing **129,000** participants).

FARMERS INSURANCE CHOICE

The **Farmers Insurance Choice** platform offered by Farmers GroupSelect allows NYSUT members to choose from multiple major insurance carriers, with competitive prices and savings for stand-alone or bundled auto and home policies.

Special group rates, coverages, discounts, and payroll/pension deduction options offered through this program are available to those who qualify for policies written only by Farmers GroupSelect (not other carriers on the *Farmers Insurance Choice platform*).

There are over **51,100** policies in force through Farmers GroupSelect, representing **\$81 million** in annual premium.

Value-Added Benefit: Members who purchase auto, home, or renter’s policies from Farmers GroupSelect receive access to identity protection services through Farmers’ service provider CyberScout at no additional cost.

TERM LIFE & LEVEL TERM LIFE INSURANCE PLANS

Life insurance is crucial income that allows loved ones to pay a variety of expenses upon the death of an insured person. Our **Term Life and Level Term Life Insurance Plans** provide up to **\$1 million** in benefits – with premium rates that have been decreased by **10%** for current and new plan participants. Based on the financial health of these plans, Member Benefits was able to successfully advocate for a rate reduction for the benefit of current and new plan participants.

There are approximately **60,890** certificates in force in the Term Life Plan, representing almost **\$23.2 million** in annual premium. The Level Term Life Plan has over **5,200** certificates in force, representing a total annual premium of **\$2.6 million**.

Value-Added Benefit: NYSUT members enrolled in our Term Life or Level Term Life programs have access to will preparation and estate resolution services provided at no additional cost.

DISABILITY INSURANCE PLAN

Disability insurance provides valuable income replacement benefits to help meet living expenses if you are unable to work due to a covered illness or injury. Our **Disability Insurance Plan** pays up to **60%** of your gross monthly earnings (maximum **\$5,000** per month) – with premium rates that have been decreased by **10%** for current and new plan participants. Based on the financial health of this plan, Member Benefits was able to successfully advocate for a rate reduction for the benefit of current and new plan participants.

While many members may have short-term protection in the form of sick leave accruals or negotiated sick leave banks, long-term protection (five-year or long-term plans) is much less common.

There are more than **3,000** certificates in force in the Disability Plan, representing **\$1.7 million** in annual premium.

CATASTROPHE MAJOR MEDICAL INSURANCE PLAN

The **Catastrophe Major Medical (CMM) Insurance Plan** offers supplemental coverage that a NYSUT member and their eligible family members may need by providing benefits for eligible expenses that their basic plan does not cover (once the out-of-pocket deductible has been satisfied).

This plan provides benefits for home health care/long-term facility care and includes a critical illness benefit (as of January 1, 2023) that pays a one-time **\$1,000** lump sum in the event that a covered participant is diagnosed with a critical illness.

During fall 2023 (September 8 through October 13), the Trustees of the CMM Insurance Trust provided an open enrollment opportunity for the Plan – with an effective date of January 1, 2024. In-service members had the opportunity to enroll themselves and any eligible dependents; current participants also had the opportunity to enroll any eligible dependents not already enrolled.

The open enrollment period brought in **3,499** total enrollments, composed of **3,079** new enrollments and **420** participants who added dependents to existing coverage. The CMM Plan added a total of **7,125** new covered lives.

There are more than **52,000** participants in our Voluntary and Group CMM Plans, which paid out over **\$21 million** in benefits during calendar year 2023.

PET INSURANCE

The pet insurance program from Nationwide can help NYSUT members with managing the cost of veterinary care, from annual preventive care to accidents and illnesses. Policyholders can visit any veterinarian in the world with no pre-approval necessary, and are reimbursed for eligible treatments, surgeries, lab fees, X-rays, and more.

In fall 2023, Nationwide announced that its popular My Pet Protection **70%** and **50%** policies were once again available to NYSUT members (with or without the option of a wellness component).

There are currently more than **1,650** total participants and over **2,000** policies in force, representing almost **\$2 million** in total premium.

PURCHASING POWER

The **Purchasing Power Member Shopping Program** offers eligible NYSUT members the ability to purchase brand-name products and pay for them over a 12-month period through payroll deduction or Automated Clearing House (ACH) withdrawals.

Purchasing Power offers the benefits of no credit check and no hidden fees; members will know in advance how much will be deducted per pay period or from their bank account (ACH) if they are not eligible to use payroll deduction. While Purchasing Power is not

a discount program, it can help eligible members save time and money over traditional financing options like high-interest credit cards or rent-to-own stores.

Since the endorsement of this program in 2017, over **20,000** orders have been placed by NYSUT members for a total of **\$12 million** in sales. Over **2,800** orders were placed in 2023, representing **\$1.78 million** in sales.

STUDENT LOAN & GENERAL DEBT

Student loan and general debt issues continue to be major concerns for many Americans. Our endorsed **Cambridge Credit Counseling** program can help NYSUT members and their families to better understand debt consolidation and student loan repayment options. Members can receive a free, no-obligation consultation with a Cambridge certified counselor.

Member Benefits has also partnered with Cambridge to provide NYSUT's Student Loan Debt Webinars. Since 2018, approximately **8,000** members have attended these no-cost workshops presented by a Cambridge certified counselor.

In addition, over **1,000** workshop members utilized the **Cambridge Student Debt Solutions Portal** for a detailed report about repayment programs available to them – provided by Member Benefits at no cost.

Members can also schedule a time to speak with a Cambridge counselor directly; more than **3,800** members have already been counseled by a Cambridge counselor, including **355** members for the Cambridge debt management program. Cambridge estimates that the average NYSUT member has saved roughly **\$31,500** in interest through this program for a total of approximately **\$11 million** saved.

SYNCHRONY BANK

Synchrony Bank offers NYSUT members competitive interest rates on certificates of deposit, money market, and savings accounts. Members need to use code "**Synchrony40**" to access these rates when using the Synchrony Bank website (via the Member Benefits website) or contacting Synchrony on the phone at **800-901-2965**.

There are over **7,340** total member accounts (money market, CDs, and high-yield savings accounts) in this program, representing **\$402 million** in deposits.

MID-ISLAND MORTGAGE

The **UnionDirect Mortgage Discount Program** presented by Mid-Island Mortgage can help NYSUT members looking to purchase a home, lower their existing mortgage payment, or plan a home improvement project. Members can save up to **\$2,700** in lender fees and closing costs with special purchase and refinancing mortgage discounts.

Mid-Island Mortgage has executed a total of **376** loans for members since being endorsed by Member Benefits in 2019 (including **58** loans in 2023), representing a total volume of more than **\$117 million**.

FINANCIAL LEARNING CENTER

Powered by Kiplinger's Personal Finance, our **Financial Learning Center** offers numerous articles about financial topics such as dealing with debt, insurance, retirement, finances, and more. Updated with new articles monthly, this online resource can help members with achieving their personal financial goals.

FREE MEMBER BENEFITS

Member Benefits is proud to offer a number of programs and services to NYSUT members free of charge. Learn more about the free benefits below by visiting nysut.cc/freememberbenefits.

FREE: PREMIUM CALM SUBSCRIPTION

Member Benefits is pleased to offer the premium **Calm** subscription as a free benefit for all NYSUT in-service and retiree members. The premium Calm subscription provides members with unlimited access to the full library of content at **calm.com** and in the Calm app, which can be utilized via a desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile device (iOS or Android).



Members can add up to five dependents (*age 16 or older*) to receive their own premium Calm subscription. Explore guided meditations and specialized music playlists to help with stress and focus, mindful movement video and audio, relaxing sleep stories, nature scenes and sounds, specific content tailored for children, masterclasses led by experts, and more.

“One of the things I started after becoming a Trustee of the Member Benefits Trust is to have a Member Benefits moment and push out the various benefits available to the 445 members of my local. My members were the most excited to hear about the premium Calm service available free to NYSUT members. I can easily see a tool such as the Calm app being used in small group settings in schools.” – **Amber Chandler, Trustee of the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust and President of the Frontier Central Teachers Association**

“There is no downside to participating in the Calm benefit as it is zero cost to members. It’s a tool that can be used in every piece of your life from falling asleep to helping with your children to daily affirmations to growing yourself both personally and professionally. Thank you for this proactive approach to increasing mental health support for our staff, faculty, and students.” – **Brittany Dein, LMSW, member of the West Babylon Teachers Association**

Visit the Calm program page in the **Free Member Benefits** section of our website to read Amber and Brittany’s full testimonials and learn how you can access the premium Calm service at no cost.

NYSUT Associate Members and NYSUT Student Members are not eligible to utilize this free benefit at this time.

FREE: PEER SUPPORT LINE

Created through a partnership between NYSUT Social Services, NYSUT Member Benefits, and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, the **Peer Support Line** is available at no cost to all NYSUT members and their families.



This confidential helpline – staffed by trained in-service and retired individuals who understand the unique personal and professional challenges of NYSUT members – can provide answers, resources, and empathetic support.

The Peer Support Line can assist with utilizing **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** benefits, along with finding information and referrals for professional assistance within an individual’s community.

This service can also help with finding mental health services or support groups, locating **Medicare/Medicaid** resources, managing work-related stress, providing support to new members, sourcing elder care or caregiving services, and accessing services for individuals with disabilities.

Peer Support Line materials are available for your local, including posters, flyers, business cards, and info cards. NYSUT Social Services will provide up to **50 free** copies of each info card and/or business card, and **25** copies of each poster; the flyer is available for download. Visit nysut.org/peersupportorders if you would like to place an order for your local.

FREE: LEGAL ASSISTANCE PLAN

The **Legal Assistance Plan** is available at no cost to NYSUT members in a non-full dues category or split dues category. Provided by the law firm of **Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C.**, this plan provides eligible members with free telephone access to attorneys as well as preparation of certain key legal documents.

This plan also covers the spouse/domestic partner who is living with the member (except in divorce/separation matters); unmarried dependent children under age **19** (or under age **25** if they are wholly dependent on the member and are enrolled as full-time students); and dependent parents.

Plan features include **unlimited** telephone advice with an attorney to discuss personal legal matters; and up to four legal documents (simple will, power of attorney, health care proxy, and living will) every three years for the member and/or their spouse/domestic partner.

Eligible NYSUT members are **automatically** eligible to participate and there is no enrollment process.

FREE: ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE

All NYSUT members (both in-service and retiree) are automatically provided with a \$5,000 **Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D)** insurance benefit through Chubb Group Insurance Companies; previously, the coverage amount was **\$1,500** per member. The Trustees of the Member Benefits Trust were able to successfully advocate for this coverage increase in an effort to provide greater assistance to members and their families when it is needed most.

Through this benefit, all members also receive free travel assistance services from **AXA Assistance** that focus on offering travel coordination services. This coverage is provided and administered by the **Member Benefits Trust**.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GROUP PLANS IN PLACE

There are currently **800** group plans in place providing valuable coverage or services to more than **240,000** total participants. In addition, **31** new group plans have been added since January 1, 2023.

PARTICIPATION IN BENEFITS

Over **295,000** individuals participate in one or more of our endorsed voluntary or group benefit programs. Of that total, more than **82,200** NYSUT members utilize payroll or pension deduction to purchase these programs – representing almost **\$103 million** in annual premium.

There are currently **834** NYSUT locals with access to payroll deduction for the purchase of our endorsed programs along with all pension systems for retirees; **88%** of the NYSUT membership are eligible to participate in payroll or pension deduction.

MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

Member Benefits staff work closely with NYSUT local leaders to present information about our voluntary and group programs at meetings, workshops, and conferences around the state. They are available to meet with your local either virtually or in-person.

Our Benefits Coordinators are Derek Clement: derek.clement@nysut.org, covering Capital District, Plattsburgh, Potsdam & Watertown; Jackie Davis: jacqueline.davis@nysut.org, covering Jamestown, Rochester & Western New York; Laura Grimm: laura.grimm@nysut.org, covering Elmira, Mid-Hudson & Vestal; Michelle Kennedy: michelle.kennedy@nysut.org, covering Nassau, New York City, Suffolk & Tarrytown; and Maura Przybylek: maura.przybylek@nysut.org, covering Syracuse & Utica.

These individuals attended or presented at approximately **170** meetings, workshops, and conferences across the state during the past year – with these events held both **in-person** and **virtually**. You are encouraged to contact the Benefits Coordinator serving your region to discuss the many voluntary and group benefit programs available to the members of your local.

SERVING NYSUT MEMBERS

Member Benefits includes a staff of **24** individuals who take pride in providing high-quality service to members – answering approximately **38,160** phone calls and responding to almost **1,400** emails during **2023**.

I encourage all NYSUT members to learn more about our endorsed benefits and services by exploring memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling **800-626-8101**.

24 individuals • 700,000 members • 38,160 phone calls • 1,400 emails



NYSUT Member Benefits

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