



Seasons
Greetings

Wishing you a joyous
holiday season and a
prosperous new year.

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Best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very exciting 2025!

President's Report

By Dona Bowry
Board President



Wow! The holiday season is here! This year there are so many reasons to be thankful. One reason is Governor Sanders’ announcement regarding a new pay plan. We are anxious to review the details once it is in writing. We are hoping the plan will include most of you.

Currently, we are looking at ways to grow our membership. We are asking each of you to spread the word. Encourage your co-workers to join us in improving our benefits. Their membership will help us do that. Please refer them to the ASEAAR.org website to join.

We wish you and yours a wonderful holiday and a VERY exciting 2025!

Director's Report

By John Bridges
Executive Director



Pay Plan Announcement

On November 12th Governor Sanders announced a redesign of the state employee pay plan set to be introduced for legislation in the upcoming 2025 session. She said it was being “stripped down to the studs” and that the current plan design is “broken and confusing.” ASEA was invited ahead of the press release to meet with members of her team and the Office of Personnel Management to hear about the proposed new performance concepts and initiatives.

The Governor’s meeting led off with a few of the recommendations from the consulting group, which a lot of you have been inquiring about. Notably, we have too many job titles --2,200. These will go down to 800.

Second, we have no career tracks. Put simply, the concept is to create policy so that an employee can see when they perform well, reach goals, and accomplish skill certifications they can move through the pay plan grid.

We could also see the creation of two additional pay tables--one for Law Enforcement and the other for Professionals--bringing the total to six.

The biggest finding of the consultant group, and of no surprise to ASEA, is that we have fallen behind in the current market labor rates. We have watched state agency secretaries time and time again appear in front of the Personnel committee stating they cannot fill positions and are losing team members. Another aspect of this pay plan proposal will bring salaries to labor rates and focusing on our state agency sectors struggling to retain or recruit employees:

- Correctional officers
- Family service workers
- Nurses
- State troopers



Pay Plan Announcement Continued

We had a chance to briefly look at the new proposed pay grids and grades but the assignments of those grades are still being worked out and remain classified. The cost of the proposed pay plan is around \$102 million and slightly larger than the last proposed plan.

The average salary increase is 9% for two-thirds of state employees. We are concerned about the other third. As of November 18, 2024, there was no official pay plan bill in writing for us to share or analyze. We were told that they are still making changes, and tweaks, and our guess is that we could see it by the end of year or early January. We will share as soon as it is available.

What is the Legislative Process?

The pay plan proposal will be introduced as a bill in the 2025 legislative session which starts January 27th (see page 4). It will most likely be assigned to either JBC-Personnel or State Agencies. If it moves out of committee it will then have to be approved in both the House and Senate chambers. If it passes out of both chambers, it then goes to the Governor to sign. Once it becomes a law it will go into effect the first of July 2025.

You can stay informed and involved during this process by signing up for email and text alerts at www.aseaar.org. Email help@aseaar.org to receive the Members Only code.

Part 2 Coming Soon

The second part of overhauling the current pay plan is to look at the rest of the Classification and Compensation Act. Part of the C and C Act includes the pay grids and pay grades and their assigned job titles. The other aspects of the C and C Act include pay differentials, performance pay language, career service payments, leave time, sick leave payout upon retirement, etc.

The letter we sent to the Governor and elected officials, page 5, falls in line with the second part of the plan overhaul. We are hoping to see these brought up as well in the 2025 session. It seems like a daunting task but we shall keep you informed on any movement.

What Legislators Are Saying

Senator Breanne Davis, Russellville - "I am excited and it will finally make us competitive with the private market. This will be great for our hard working state employees and those working over time in high burn out positions.

House Speaker-designate Brian Evans, Cabot - "Funding of the pay plan is a high priority." and "We are all much aligned and focused on the state pay plan the Governor is presenting." per Arkansas Democrat Gazette

Senator Mark Johnson, Little Rock - "I am anxious to hear input from state employees regarding the Governor's proposal. I appreciate the work that has gone into this process so far, and appreciate that there is an emphasis on equity with equivalent positions in the private sector."

Senator Breanne Davis, Russellville - "I am excited that it will finally make us competitive with the private market. This will be great for our hard working state employees and especially those working overtime in high burn out positions."

See page
7 for
steps to
sign up
for email
and text
alerts
from
ASEA.



How To Communicate With Your Legislators

The first thing you need to do is find out who your State Senator and House Representatives are to get their contact information. This is easy. Visit the two websites listed below. Both have easy to find “Find My Senator” and “Find Your Representative” on their home screens. Type in your home address and you will find their name, email, and phone number. Save it for later.

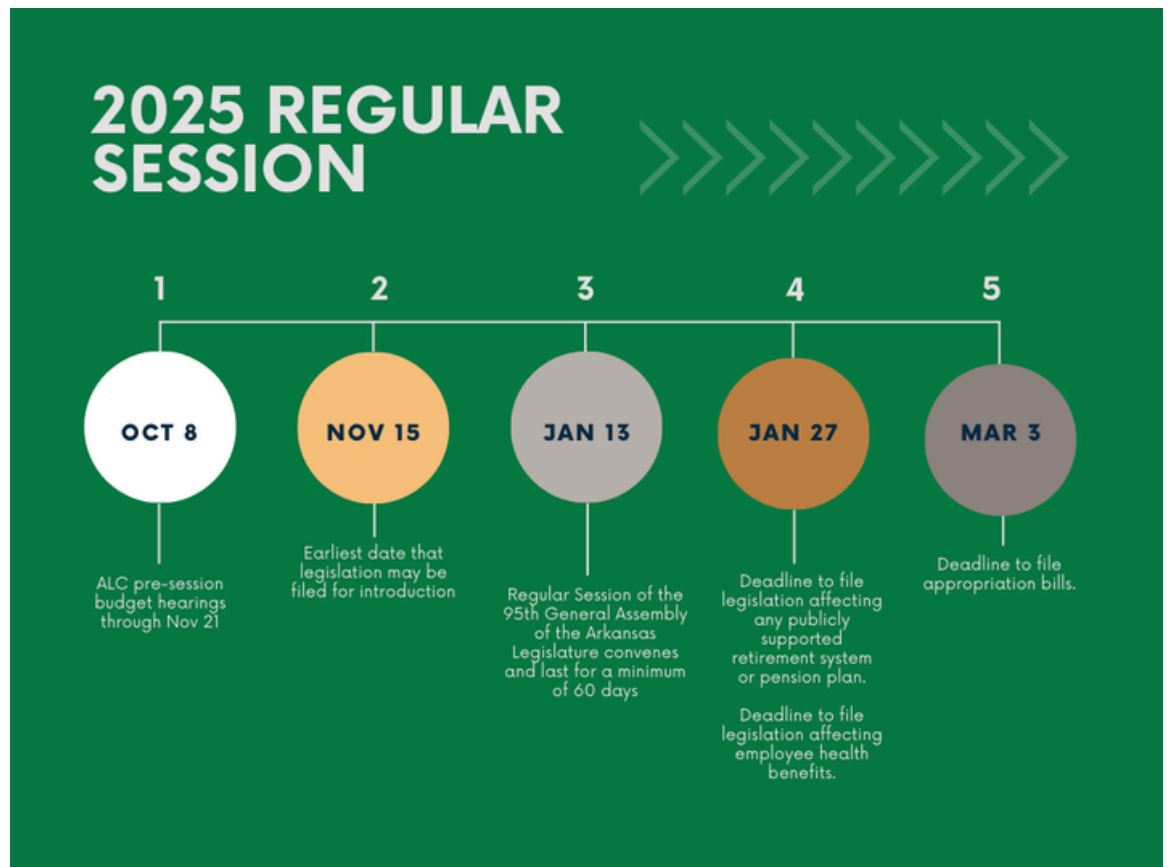
- www.senate.arkansas.gov
- www.arkansashouse.org

There could be a time either before the session starts or during that you will want to contact them to suggest changes to the pay plan bill or to send a message of encouragement to vote “yes” for passage.

Another proven method of communicating with your legislators during the General Assembly is having a hand-written message left on their chamber desk. Think about it. Some legislators receive hundreds of emails every day and they get behind in their correspondence. The activity at the Capitol is fast paced and can become very hectic. The tried-and-true method of calling the Senate and House chambers and asking for a page to write down a note and place it on their chamber desk is a quick way to let a legislator know how their constituent wants them to vote. As ASEA helps keep you informed of the progress of the pay plan bill we will let you know when the bill is coming up for a vote and let you know which method of contact will be most appropriate. Here are the in-session phone numbers for both chambers -

- Senate (501) 682-2902
- House (501) 682-6211

Learn more about contacting your elected officials so you'll be ready to reach out during the legislative session.



Arkansas State Employees Association

1301 W. 7th St. | Little Rock, AR 72201 | www.aseaar.org | ph: 501-378-0187 | fax: 501-378-0113



September 10, 2024

Honorable Governor Sarah Sanders
500 Woodlane Street
Little Rock, AR 72201

CC: The Honorable Breanne Davis, Co-Chair, ALC - Personnel Committee
CC: The Honorable Mark H. Berry, Co-Chair, ALC - Personnel Committee
CC: The Honorable Jim Wooten, Co-Chair, JBC - Personnel Committee
CC: Office of Personnel Management

Governor Sanders,

On behalf of the members of ASEA, we thank you for your leadership in addressing the need for a new pay plan for state employees. We know that under your directive, the Office of Personnel Management is hard at work to have it ready for the 2025 legislative session.

ASEA held its annual business meeting this past August. Our discussion generated some suggestions that we all agreed could help reduce the turnover rate and reward the loyalty of long-term state employees. On behalf of our members, we are offering the following for inclusion in the new package:

- **Leave Time Payout Upon Retirement:** Capping the payout of unused sick leave at \$7,500 and 240 hours of annual leave creates a scenario where employees nearing retirement start using excessive amounts of leave in order to not lose any earned time. We should be rewarding state employees who spend the majority of their career in the office working. One retiree stated that the cap was \$7,500 when he retired 22 years ago. We recommend gradually lifting these cap limits.
- **Career Service Recognition Payments:** 2025 will mark the five-year anniversary of the last time these payments were increased. Career Service Recognition payments directly reward employees for their continued leadership and dedication to the State of Arkansas. We recommend creating a new 5-9 year category, funding it at \$500, and raising the remaining categories by \$500 each. This will help retain employees in the onset of their careers and reward tenured employees.

These suggestions, along with the components that are already working, such as continuing to include pay differentials, a merit system, and allowing for seniority adjustments, are vital to a successful and equitable pay plan.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposals and are eager to learn more about the other innovative ideas you are developing. We look forward to working with you and all involved to reduce turnover, attract quality candidates, and energize the workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Bridges
Executive Director

Board Officers

President - Dona Bowry
Past President - Jeff Jackson
Vice President - Holli Patrick
Secretary - Chasity Lucas

Board Members

Northwest

Jordane Schwartz
Laura Sherwood
Brandy Watkins

Northeast

Janice Griffin

Southeast

Dorothy Henderson
Greg Murray
Toniesha Sargent

Southwest

Alyssa Duggan
Lisa Rhodes
James Scott
Celeste Sorrells

Central

Heinz Braun
Curt Carson
Jennifer Siccardi
Matthew Thomas

At-Large

Brock Baker
Charles Elliott
Jessica Zimmerman

Retiree At-Large

Judy Beatty
Jerry Jones
Mary McGehee
Bob McQuade
Clayton Rogers
Gary Wallace



Announcements

Benevolent Fund Update Reminder

As you are getting your end-of-the-year affairs in order, it's a great time to name or update your beneficiaries for the ASEA Benevolent Fund.

Remember that as an ASEA member, your beneficiaries can receive assistance in the event of your death, but only if your membership is current and your information is up to date.

You can learn more about the benevolence program and add or update your beneficiaries on the ASEA website, www.aseaar.org, or by calling ASEA Member Services at 501-378-0187.

"Mug Shots Wanted"

ASEA Membership Referral Program

For every 8 members you recruit to join ASEA, you can receive your own Yeti tumbler!

GET STARTED TODAY

Refer your colleagues to www.aseaar.org and ask them to put your name in the "recruited by" box. We'll track your progress and notify you when you qualify.

All active and retiree members are eligible to participate in the referral program.



Jennifer Siccardi

ASEA SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Coming in January 2025

The application period for the **2025 ASEA Scholarships** will be January 1 through January 31, 2025.

Eligibility criteria, application guidelines and the application form are on the ASEA website, www.aseaar.org.

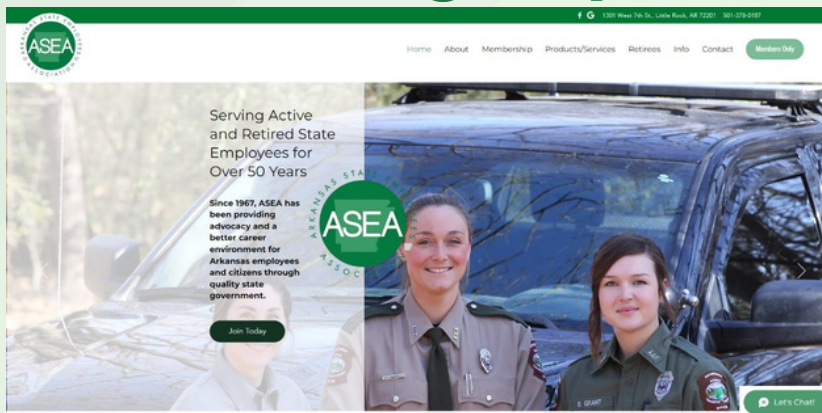
Applications will only be accepted online during January 2025.

Why is This Important?

ASEA is your advocate. We need to be able to communicate important information as quickly as possible, especially during the legislative session.

The most effective way to do this is via text message or email. For you to receive this information, you have to subscribe via the ASEA website.

How Do I Sign Up?



- Visit www.aseaar.org
- Click the "Members Only" button to access the "Members Only" Dashboard
- Select "Connect with Us" to sign up for text alerts and/or email news

Need Assistance?

- Need the member passcode?
- Not sure if you are already subscribed?
- Subscribed, but do not receive email from ASEA?

Email

HELP@aseaar.org
for assistance

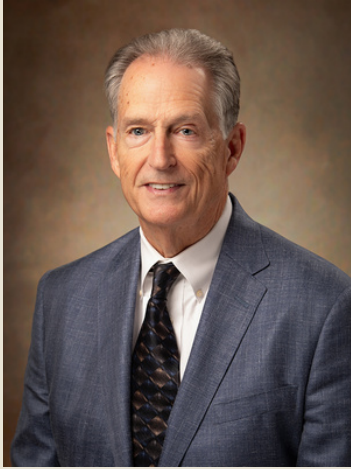
PLEASE NOTE: If you subscribe to receive either email alerts OR an email newsletter, you will automatically receive both. You can ensure correct delivery by making sure that you have added ASEA to your email contacts list.



Board News

Welcome Back

ASEA BOARD MEMBER



Loy Bailey

Mr. Bailey previously served as ASEA Board President from 2017-2020. He will now represent the Northwest region.

Welcome Back

ASEA BOARD MEMBER



Jacqueline Caradine

Mrs. Caradine, a DHS County Administrator, will serve as an at-large representative after moving from Faulkner to Pulaski County.

Introducing

Jo Ann Smith-Lee

ASEA Board Applicant

Position: At-Large
Employment: DHS County Administrator
Years of Service: 21
ASEA Membership: 18

Why do you want to serve on the board?

I want to be a voice for my peers and ensure that we are represented and treated fairly.

What do you think ASEA does well?

They fight hard for state employees and keep us informed.

What state employee issue(s) concern you most?

Employee retention

Board Information



Board Members

Northwest

Jordane Schwartz (2026)
Laura Sherwood (2025)
Brandy Watkins (2025)
Loy Bailey (2026)

Northeast

Janice Griffin (2026)

Southeast

Dorothy Henderson (2025)
Greg Murray (2025)
Toniesha Sargent (2026)

Southwest

Alyssa Dugan (2026)
Lisa Rhodes (2025)
James Scott (2025)
Celeste Sorrells (2025)

Central

Heinz Braun (2026)
Curt Carson (2025)
Jennifer Siccardi (2026)
Matthew Thomas (2025)

At-Large

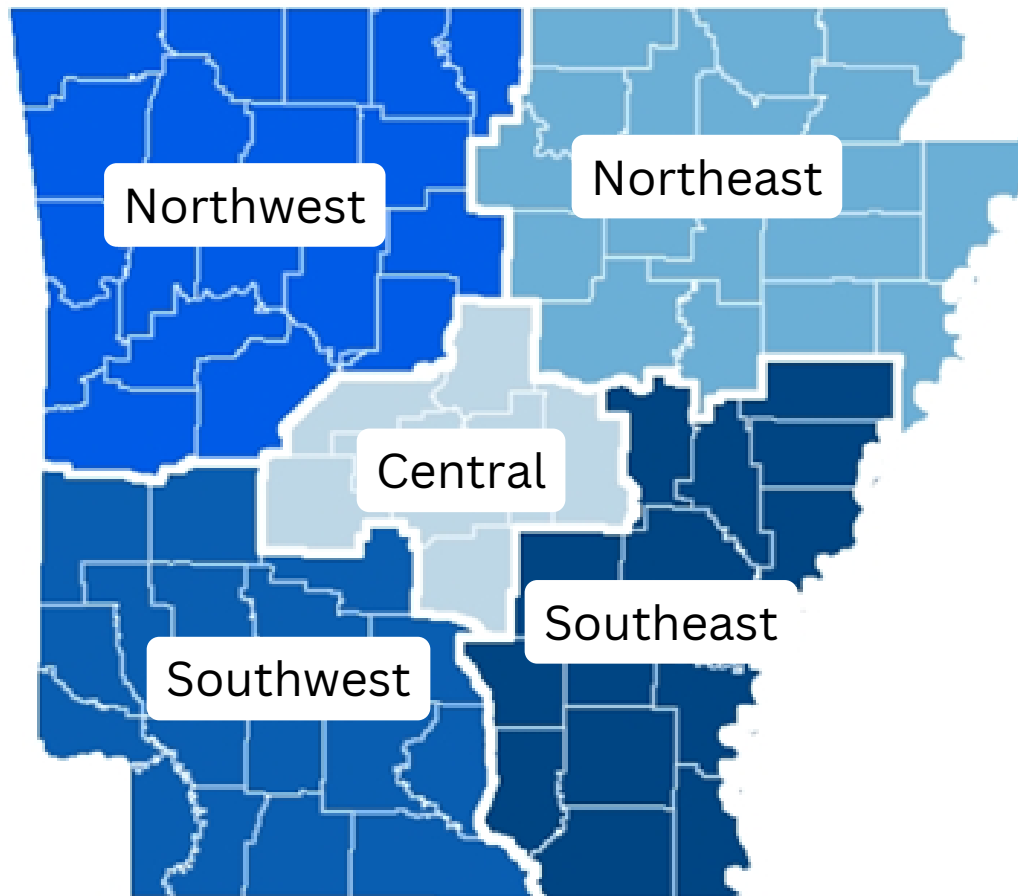
Brock Baker (2025)
Charles Elliott (2026)
Jessica Zimmerman (2026)
Jacqueline Caradine (2026)

Retiree At-Large

Judy Beatty (2026)
Jerry Jones (2025)
Mary McGehee (2025)
Bob McQuade (2025)
Clayton Rogers (2025)
Gary Wallace (2025)

Board Officers

President Dona Bowry(2026)
Vice President Holli Patrick(2026)
Secretary Chasity Lucas(2026)
Past President Jeff Jackson(2026)





SAVE UP TO 15% OFF TICKETS

Only available at silverdollarcity.com/save

Use Promo Code: **25653**



ASEA Retiree News



2025 Health Insurance

The fall issue of this newsletter included the health insurance rates originally approved for 2025. After the newsletter was printed and mailed, UnitedHealthcare requested an increase to their approved rates due to a Federal recalculation. Note: The approved rates for the Health Advantage plan did not change. We apologize for the confusion. The correct 2025 retiree rates for both plans are listed below.

MEDICARE ELIGIBLE	BASE MONTHLY PREMIUM	STATE & PLAN CONTRIBUTION	TOTAL MONTHLY RETIREE COST
MAPD RETIREE ONLY	\$220.31	\$198.28	\$22.03
MAPD RETIREE & NON-MEDICARE SPOUSE	\$1,248.90	\$678.71	\$570.19
MAPD RETIREE & CHILD(REN)	\$603.17	\$300.70	\$302.47
MAPD RETIREE & MAPD CHILD	\$440.62	\$396.56	\$44.06
MAPD RETIREE & NON-MEDICARE SPOUSE & CHILD(REN)	\$1,631.76	\$848.23	\$783.53
MAPD RETIREE & NON-MEDICARE SPOUSE & MAPD CHILD	\$1,469.21	\$876.99	\$592.22
MAPD RETIREE & MAPD SPOUSE	\$440.62	\$396.56	\$44.06
MAPD RETIREE & MAPD SPOUSE & CHILD(REN)	\$823.48	\$499.44	\$324.04
MAPD RETIREE & MAPD SPOUSE & MAPD CHILD	\$660.93	\$594.84	\$66.09

ARKANSAS STATE MEDICARE PRIMARY RETIREE MONTHLY PREMIUMS

RATES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025 - DECEMBER 31, 2025

MEDICARE ELIGIBLE	BASE MONTHLY PREMIUM	STATE & PLAN CONTRIBUTION	TOTAL MONTHLY RETIREE COST
RETIREE ONLY	\$550.97	\$294.63	\$256.34
RETIREE & NON-MEDICARE SPOUSE	\$1,579.56	\$773.88	\$805.68
RETIREE & CHILD(REN)	\$933.83	\$396.05	\$537.78
RETIREE & NON-MEDICARE SPOUSE & CHILD(REN)	\$1,962.42	\$943.38	\$1,019.04
RETIREE & MEDICARE PRIMARY SPOUSE	\$1,101.94	\$487.83	\$614.11
RETIREE & MEDICARE PRIMARY SPOUSE & CHILD(REN)	\$1,484.80	\$588.26	\$896.54

ASEA Scholarship

Did you know that grandchildren of ASEA Retiree members are eligible to apply for an ASEA scholarship for up to \$1,000? Let them know that during the month of January they can apply online at www.aseaar.org.

ASEA REPRESENTS RETIREES.

We monitor and advocate to protect retirees' most important assets: Health Insurance & Retirement Pension

Are you a retired state employee? Join ASEA today for as little as \$24 a year.

WWW.ASEAR.ORG

501.378.0187



Arkansas State
Employees Association
1301 W. 7th St.
Little Rock, AR 72201

501.378.0187

 Connect with Us!



aseaar.org