



## **WORK-LIFE EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT PROGRAM AND RESOURCE AND REFERRAL OPTIONS**

### **Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions**

The Department of Personnel & Administration, Division of Human Resources (DPA/DHR) administers the State of Colorado's Work-Life Program. The state's total compensation statutory goal is to recruit and retain a qualified workforce to serve the citizens of Colorado. A work-life program is an essential component of an effective and successful total compensation program. An Executive Order issued on April 10, 1998, states it well; "The state recognizes that work-life issues must continue to be addressed in order to retain a quality workforce, to create a culture conducive to improved productivity, quality and customer service, and to compete for future workers."

The goal of the Work-Life Program is to support a productive and high performance-driven state workplace while assisting employees and managers with the balance between work and life responsibilities. Work-life options are not an employee right. This guidance will specifically address two innovative work-life options, the resource and referral options and the employee discount program, which offer employees additional benefits to state employment.

#### **EMPLOYEE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL OPTIONS**

The state recognizes that many personal and professional challenges face our workforce. In order to better assist employees in these difficult situations, the Work-Life Program offers resource and referral information. If an employee is dealing with personal or professional concerns that may require professional counseling, the [Colorado State Employee Assistance Program](#) is available to assist. For other issues such as dependent care (child and elder), financial planning (PERA and other planning), debt and credit counseling services, and college savings/investing, the Work-Life Program offers links to other government and non-profit organizations, which may be able to help. *The State of Colorado and Work-Life Program do not endorse any vendor and assume no obligation or responsibility for any arrangements made between the employee and the vendor.* For more information, see the Work-Life resource and referral website at [www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/WL/resource.htm](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/WL/resource.htm).

#### **EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT PROGRAM**

The employee discount program has been active for over 10 years. Beginning with childcare discounts, the program has grown to offer many different discounted products and services. One of the main goals of the employee discount program is to list, for state employees, appropriate discounts offered by various vendors. The Work-Life [Employee Discount Program Policy](#) is applied to determine whether an offer or vendor is appropriate.

Employee discount information located on the state Work-Life Program Web site lists available discounts from appropriate vendors, regardless of size, location, or the existence of an official business contract with the State of Colorado. All businesses are given the same opportunity to participate, by offering a discount on products or services to state employees. Generally, the Work-Life Program does not solicit vendor participation. All discount proposals originate from referrals by state employees or by direct contact from a vendor.

It is also important to note that the Work-Life Program simply provides a place for appropriate vendors to offer discounts to state employees. A brief initial screening is conducted by the Employee Discount Program Coordinator for all new discounts, which may include a visual check on the discount vendor Web site or discount information document, a Better Business Bureau search, and verification of the appropriateness of the vendor's products or services. The employee discount program Web site ([www.colorado.gov/dpa/discounts](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/discounts)) and any related announcements clearly caution that these discounts are not necessarily the best deal available. The Work-Life Program does not negotiate discounts; therefore, as an informed consumer, each employee should research and compare prices, levels of service, or any certification or licensing requirements before making any purchase or signing any agreement or contract. *The State of Colorado and Work-Life Program do not endorse any vendor and assume no obligation or responsibility for any arrangements made between the employee and the vendor.*

### **EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY**

Generally, all state employees, regardless of branch of government or status (permanent, full-time, part-time, temporary, retired, etc.) are eligible for these discounts (the vendor has the authority to decide if any exclusions apply); however, limitations on participation may exist for those specific employees *directly and significantly* involved in the procurement process (this typically refers to purchasing agents). Such employees should consult their purchasing director for guidance. Most state employees taking advantage of discounts offered by private vendors do not violate any rule, procedure, or code of ethics. Some vendors may require employment verification, which may consist of a pay stub or state identification, for eligibility determination.

### **DEPARTMENT ROLE**

These innovative options are intended to enhance the benefits of state employment and are generally extremely valuable to employees; however, each department may decide how and if it chooses to pass the information along to employees.

The Work-Life Program will send announcements of new or updated discount offers to each department HR office. At that point, each HR office has three options. HR can decide to forward the message (in some form) to its employees, HR can post the information where employees have access (an Intranet website, newsletter, etc.), or HR can choose to do nothing. Each is acceptable; however, because these discounts can be very valuable and popular with employees, it is recommended that employees be notified in some manner. At all times, the employee discount website contains the most current discount information and program policy. It is recommended that departments notify employees that the Web site exists and should be referenced for any questions relating to employee discounts. If a department has an Intranet (Web site for employees only), it is recommended to simply have a link to the Work-Life Program web page.

### **Personal Use of State Resources**

Employee discounts and resource and referral information are part of the State's total compensation package. Employees who visit the Employee Discount Program Web site and receive and review emails sent from the Employee Discount Program while on state time, using state equipment, are not misusing state owned property. As these discounts are a benefit offered to state employees, it is appropriate for employees to view and research information offered on the Employee Discount

Program Web site and informational emails. Once an employee decides to contact a vendor or make a purchase over the phone, in person, or online, that becomes an activity that must be done on the employee's own time and may not be done using state resources or during work time.

### **When Vendors Contact Departments**

Often times, vendors offer free informational seminars or on-site product demonstrations on a variety of topics and products or services. The Work-Life Program refers vendors to contact department HR offices if requesting access for seminars or on-site visits. The Work-Life Program will never give permission on behalf of any department granting access for an on-site visit or seminar, the decision rests solely with the individual department.

There are typically two reasons vendors are referred to contact individual department HR offices. One is from vendors participating in the employee discount program. Often times the vendor will desire to market the product and discount directly to employees and wish to inquire as to the need or possibility of disseminating marketing materials. It is at the discretion of each individual department whether any information is accepted or disseminated (most, if not all, of the same information is listed on the Work-Life website). The second reason vendors may contact departmental HR offices is for free informational seminars. These vendors may or may not be offering state employees a discount through the employee discount program. Once again, it is at the discretion of the individual department whether any vendors are allowed to present informational seminars to their employees.

Be sure to check rules and procedures or any departmental policy before allowing a private vendor access to state property. In some instances it may be allowed and in other instances, not allowed. Work-Life discount vendors are not allowed to solicit or contact state employees directly at work areas without prior approval by the employee and department. Employee information is never supplied to any vendor, per Work-Life Program policy.

Each department should develop an internal policy regarding these informational seminars or on-site displays, which addresses issues such as whether or not vendors will be allowed to conduct these seminars on state property, how often seminars will be allowed, and what topics are allowed. If needed, consult the State Work-Life Program Coordinator for assistance with establishing this departmental policy.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*Q – I know there was a discount for a particular vendor a few months back, but now I cannot find the information on the website. How do I get the discount?*

**A –** The website contains all current Work-Life employee discounts. If a particular vendor or discount is not listed, it has expired or been removed. Some discount offers are for a limited time, and generally no contracts exist between the vendor and the State of Colorado or the Work-Life Program, so a discount offer may be discontinued at any time.

*Q – Can I suggest a discount?*

**A –** The Work-Life Employee Discount Program not only welcomes suggestions, ideas, and referrals, but also relies upon them. Remember, the Work-Life Program does not actively contact or solicit discount offers, so the addition of new and exciting discounts relies heavily on employee

referrals. For best results, an employee should refer a specific business to the employee discount program website and not general types of discounts. For example, referring a specific dry cleaning vendor is better than submitting a comment that dry cleaning discounts should be added. It is preferred that all vendors are referred directly to the Work-Life Employee Discount Program website ([www.colorado.gov/dpa/discounts](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/discounts)), where an online application may be submitted.

**Q** – *Why are no discounts available to me, or in my area?*

**A** – Generally, all Work-Life discounts are available to all employees, regardless of branch of government or geographical location (in some instances the vendor may have exclusions to a discount offer). However, it is understood that certain discounts may not offer the same real value to all employees. For example, a discount for a health club located only in the Denver area may not provide a real advantage to employees in other areas of the state. It is recommended that employees refer any specific discount information for any vendor, in any part of the state, to the Work-Life Program. No vendor will be turned away because of location or size.

**Q** – *The price a discount vendor quoted me was more than or equal to regular customers who are not eligible for a discount. I thought I was supposed to save money?*

**A** – The Work-Life Program does not guarantee or negotiate discounts. Employees should always research and compare prices and level of service before making any purchase. Remember, the State of Colorado and Work-Life Program do not endorse any of the discount vendors and assume no responsibility for any purchases or contracts between the vendor and employee. Also, be sure that the discount vendor is aware that you are a State of Colorado employee and eligible for a discount. If the Work-Life website shows a specific price or discount, let the vendor know. If an employee is being denied a discount that is listed on the Work-Life website (for example, the vendor is asking for an account number and nothing is listed on the website), you may contact the Work-Life Program Coordinator for assistance. Finally, if in fact the discount is no discount at all, please notify the Work-Life Program Coordinator. Vendors that are not offering a real discount may be removed from the employee discount program.

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Website: [www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/WL/resource.htm](http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/dhr/WL/resource.htm)

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