



## April 2026

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## 2026 ERAP Ceremony - April 1st

Join us today from **9:00 AM to 10:30 AM** at the **UWF Field House** to celebrate our Nautilus, Newcomer, Gabor, Community Service, Marion Viccars, and Employee of the Year award winners, and to recognize employees who have reached their milestone service awards, 5, 10, 15, 20 years and up.

University Work Force Staff who reach service award milestones this year may pick up their service awards from Human Resources beginning April 1st at **1:30 PM (ID required)**. Faculty will be recognized at the Fall Faculty Forum and may pick up their service awards in Human Resources after the Forum.

Please be advised that you will have until **April 30th, 2026, by 4:45 PM** to pick up your service award in-person from Human Resources. After this date, all service awards will be mailed via campus mail. **The University is not responsible for any loss or damage that may occur to service awards once they are sent through campus mail.**

Verification of Employment Requests

Free Grubhub+ Membership for UWF Employees

Healthier U and EAP Wellness Wednesday Partnership Continues!

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Webinars

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact the Assistant Director of Employee Relations, [Jack Kolodziejcki](#), at 850.474.2292.

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## Nine Month Faculty Pay Over 12 Months Option

Nine-month faculty have the option to have their pay deferred over 12 months. This option is voluntary. Information on the Nine Month Faculty Pay Over 12 Months option and how to enroll will be available on the [Human Resources web page](#) under News and Announcements beginning March 1, 2026. The enrollment dates for this year will be March 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026. Those who are enrolled and wish to discontinue must complete the termination form between March 1, 2026 and June 30, 2026. Enrollment and Termination forms must be sent to Human Resources, Bldg. 20 East and received by the close of business June 30, 2026.

If you have any questions contact [Tony Lindberg](#) at 850.474.2610 or [Pam Pettinato](#) at 850.474.3051.

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## Supporting Success from Day One: New 90-Day Check-In Program

Human Resources is proud to introduce our new **90-Day Check-In Program**, designed to strengthen the onboarding experience and support early employee success.

This initiative creates a dedicated opportunity for new hires to connect with our Assistant Director of Employee Relations at the three-month mark — reflecting on onboarding, discussing progress, addressing challenges, and aligning on goals moving forward.

The first 90 days are key to building engagement and long-term success. Through open communication and structured feedback, this program helps:

- Strengthen employee-supervisor relationships
- Clarify expectations and goals
- Support growth and development

The Assistant Director of Employee Relations will lead a guided check-in conversation and employees are encouraged to share their honest feedback and experiences.

This program reflects UWF's continued commitment to fostering a supportive and connected workplace from day one.

***Together, we're building a strong start for every Argonaut.***

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact the Assistant Director of Employee Relations, [Jack Kolodziejski](#), at 850.474.2292.

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## Important Update: Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) Notice Requirement

Human Resources would like to share an important update regarding the process for employees who are planning to enter the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP).

Effective immediately, employees who intend to enter DROP are required to notify Human Resources at least 60 days prior to their planned DROP entry date. This advance notice will allow our office sufficient time to complete the required paperwork and coordinate the necessary reporting through payroll.

Providing this notice in advance helps ensure that applications are processed accurately and submitted within the appropriate timelines. In the past, late submissions have occasionally resulted in administrative complications or discrepancies at the state level when processing DROP applications. This updated process is intended to minimize those issues and support a smoother transition for employees entering the program.

### What Employees Should Do

- Contact Human Resources at least 60 days before your intended DROP start date.
- Work with Human Resources to complete and submit the required paperwork.
- Allow adequate time for payroll coordination and submission to the Florida Retirement System.

If you are considering entering DROP or have questions about eligibility or the application process, please contact Human Resources for guidance. For assistance, please email [hr@uwf.edu](mailto:hr@uwf.edu).

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## Employee Tuition Waiver

The 2026 Summer Semester will soon begin. Faculty or Staff members wishing to use credits personally or to assign credits to dependents for this semester should submit their requests at least one week before the first day of classes per UWF policy. Additional information about the [Employee Tuition Fee Waiver](#) can be found on the HR website.

If you have any questions, please contact [Elsie Rivera](#) at 850.474.2921 or [Adrian Rowley](#) at 850.474.2604.

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## Monthly Benefit Highlight - Leave - Benefits That Work For You!

The University of West Florida (UWF) values our employees and believes in creating a healthy work-life balance. That is why full-time employees in University Work Force and 12-month Faculty positions start accruing annual leave right from day one at an impressive rate of 7 hours per pay period!

Your accrued annual leave is yours to use as you wish (with supervisor's approval, of course). It may be payable upon separation or retirement from UWF at your current hourly wage at the time of separation up to a maximum payout of 352 hours.

But that is not all! Full-time University Work Force and Faculty also accrue sick leave, starting at 4 hours per pay period. As you build years of service at UWF, the accrual rate increases and there is no maximum sick leave balance. After 10 years of service, up to 480 hours of your sick leave can be converted into pay, at your current hourly rate, at 1/4 of your total balance (maximum 1,920 hours) upon separation or retirement from UWF.

UWF in-unit Faculty and in-unit Law Enforcement Officers/Corporals should refer to their Collective Bargaining Agreements in place for proper guidance.

For more details on leave policies and how accruals work, please reach out to [Human Resources](#) at 850.474.2694.

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## Workers' Compensation

[Workers' Compensation](#) benefits are available to any employee of UWF (full-time, part-time, faculty, staff, OPS, student employees, and volunteers of record). Workers' Compensation does not cover personal medical issues, but covers injuries that occur in the course and scope of work.

All work-related injuries/illnesses should be reported immediately. If an employee mentions to their supervisor that they have hurt themselves while performing work, the supervisor should advise that employee to complete a [Report of Injury](#) form and submit it to [Human Resources](#) as soon as possible after the injury. Failure to report an injury/illness may result in employee's forfeiture of rights available from workers' compensation.

The purpose of Workers' Compensation is to ensure lost wages and medical benefits to injured workers. In UWF's case, the state has contracted with AmeriSys to provide medical benefits and the Department of Risk Management administers lost wages.

Visit <https://uwf.edu/offices/human-resources/policies-regulations-and-compliance/workers-compensation/> for more information or contact [April Harvey](#) with questions.

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## People First Correspondence and Direct Payments

In order to provide the best service, Human Resources must be informed of any action an employee takes with People First. The Human Resources Benefits Team works to reconcile premium discrepancies through payroll adjustments, and knowledge of payments made outside of payroll is essential to proper updates being made. Employees are asked to send information in writing any time changes in enrollment are made or payments are sent to People First in an effort to avoid potential interruptions in coverage.

If you have any questions, please contact [Elsie Rivera](#) at 850.474.2921 or [Adrian Rowley](#) at 850.474.2604.

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## April is National Alcohol Awareness Month

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers of alcohol misuse on health and society. UWF maintains a drug and alcohol-free workplace to keep faculty, staff, students, and visitors safe.

Please review UWF's Standards of Conduct policy and other important information below:

(2)(b)2. **g. Use or Abuse of Alcohol or Reporting to Work under the Influence of Alcohol -**

reporting to work under influence of alcohol or use of alcohol on the job. Note: An employee reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or who uses alcohol on the job shall be sent home, placed on leave without pay, and appropriately disciplined.

[UWF's Standards of Conduct](#)

[UWF's Drug Free Workplace/Drug-Free Schools Policy Statement](#)

Struggling with drug or alcohol use or abuse? Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), [Resources for Living](#), has resources to help. **Username:** UWF **Password:** UWF

If you participate with a UWF medical plan, your plan may offer additional resources. Contact your insurance membership benefits department for more information.

If you have any questions, please contact the Assistant Director of Employee Relations, [Jack Kolodziejcki](#), at 850.474.2292.

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## FRS Pension Plan Member Annual Statements (MAS)

Florida Retirement System (FRS) Pension Plan and Hybrid Plan members receive a new Member Annual Statement (MAS) each year in their birth month. These statements include information such as whether or not the member is vested, the total service credit earned, and estimated benefit amounts depending on retirement date.

Members with a valid email address on file will be notified when their MAS is available on FRS Online. The MAS will continue to be available on the member's [FRS Online](#) account throughout the year. If a member's FRS Online account is not yet established and there is an email address on file, an email including a temporary 60 day access code to view their MAS will be provided while the member establishes their FRS Online account. The MAS is only available to pension plan and hybrid plan members who are actively working in an FRS retirement eligible position. DROP participants will not receive the MAS.

The information in the MAS is designed to assist members in retirement planning. Further planning resources are available with the MyFRS Financial Guidance Program, which offers free access to experienced and unbiased financial planners. This benefit may be accessed by calling toll free 866.446.9377 and selecting option 1.

If you need further assistance, please contact [Elsie Rivera](#) at 850.474.2921, [Tony Lindberg](#) at 850.474.2610, or [Adrian Rowley](#) at 850.474.2604.

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## Process and Requirements for Volunteers

If an office or department will utilize a volunteer, the department must initiate and submit a [Volunteer Agreement](#) prior to allowing the volunteer to begin any volunteer duties. Volunteer Agreements must be initiated by a Department Contact or the volunteer's Supervisor. Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age or have parental consent to serve in a volunteer capacity and must review and agree to adhere to the [UWF Drug Free Workplace Policy](#) and the [Detection, Reporting and Investigating Fraud and Misconduct policy](#). Some volunteers require a background screening, depending on the area, program, or population they will encounter during the course and scope of volunteer service and cannot begin volunteering until the department has been notified by Human Resources that the background is complete. Please review the Information on [VECHS Level 2 Screenings](#) for more information.

**Responsibilities for Supervising Volunteers**

- Initiate and submit a [Volunteer Agreement](#) prior to allowing the volunteer to begin any volunteer duties.
- Require the volunteer to review and agree to adhere to the [UWF Drug Free Workplace Policy](#) and the [Detection, Reporting and Investigating Fraud and Misconduct](#).
- Record the number of hours, location and duties of volunteers.
- Advise volunteers that they are entitled to workers' compensation and state liability protection under the same conditions as UWF employees.
- Inform volunteers that they must perform volunteer services in a professional manner and in accordance with the policies and procedures of UWF.
- Provide direction and guidance to the volunteer as appropriate.

The responsible UWF faculty/staff supervisor should communicate to the volunteer the expectations for attendance, performance of activities, and compliance with UWF policies and applicable laws and provide instruction/training as necessary to ensure the individual has the knowledge and skills needed to perform their designated volunteer activities.

#### **Volunteer Considerations and Limitations**

- A UWF employee may not volunteer to perform services for the university that are identical or similar to their duties as an employee.
- A recently separated/former UWF employee may not volunteer to perform services for the university that are identical or similar to their duties as an employee.
- Individuals may not volunteer when they are a potential new hire awaiting completion of pre-employment or new hire essential documents.
- For international students, there are specific restrictions regarding volunteer service, email [hr@uwf.edu](mailto:hr@uwf.edu) regarding these situations/circumstances.
- A person is only considered a volunteer if their services were rendered of their own free will, without pressure or coercion.
- Volunteers may not be used as a replacement of an employee position.
- Any individual who appears on the Florida Sexual Offenders and Predators Registry, Florida Department of Corrections Offender Network, National Sexual Predator Registry, or Online Wanted Persons Search shall not serve in a volunteer capacity for UWF or affiliated organizations.
- All volunteers must be at least 14 years of age.
- Volunteers may be released at any time, for any reason, and without prior notice.

For questions regarding volunteers, contact [Human Resources](#) at 850.474.2694.

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## **Guest Speakers Help Employees Manage Money Matters**

During April and May, experts in various financial fields will provide an abundance of valuable information and answer questions, from the most basic to advanced. These sessions are free for faculty, staff, and their spouses. Visit the [Professional Development Learning Library](#) for more information and to sign up.

- Friday, 04/03 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - Income Tax Planning: Smart Planning for Your Taxes - Diane Spearin
- Friday, 04/10 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - Planning for Retirement with the FRS - Diane Spearin
- Friday, 04/17 - 10:00am-12:00pm - Social Security and Your Retirement - Diane Spearin
- Friday, 04/17 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - Social Security and Your Retirement - Diane Spearin
- Friday, 04/24 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - A Different Kind of Savings 457 and Roth 457 Deferred Comp - Sandra Pitts
- Friday, 05/01 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - Medicare Made Easy - Pamela Giles
- Friday, 05/08 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - Protecting Your Family's Future: Estate Planning - Mark Fisher
- Friday, 05/15 - 1:30pm-3:30pm - Nearing Retirement in the FRS - Martin Lusk

All sessions will be held both in the HR Training Room in Building 20 West - Room 156A and virtually via Zoom for employees that request to attend that way.

If you have any questions, please contact [Elsie Rivera](#) at 850.474.2921 or [Tony Lindberg](#) at 850.474.2610.

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## Benefits Mobile App: myBenefitsFlorida

A new tool has been introduced by the State that is designed to help employees see and use their benefits more efficiently. A mobile app called myBenefitsFlorida is the new official app of State Group Insurance members. The app may be found on the App Store or Google Play for use on Apple and Android devices.

One of the main features currently active in the app is the ability to chat with representatives regarding our Shared Savings Plan options. Users can also access their health insurance cards and coverage information very quickly and easily this way. It is possible that additional activities will be possible in the app at some point in the future. More detailed information may be found on the [Mobile App](#) page of the MyBenefits website and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page published by the Department of Management Services.

If you have any questions, please contact [Adrian Rowley](#) at 850.474.2604, [Elsie Rivera](#) at 850.474.2921, or [Tony Lindberg](#) at 850.474.2610.

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## Verification of Employment Requests

All verification of employment requests should be directed to Human Resources at [hr@uwf.edu](mailto:hr@uwf.edu). Our office will review the request and respond accordingly. Please note that HR only verifies dates of employment, job titles and salary information.

If you require a letter of employment verification, please complete the Verification of Employment Authorization Release form found on our website at [Human Resources Forms](#). This form must be completed in its entirety and have an authentic, non-computer typed signature to be processed. A secure digital signature such as DocuSign or AdobeSign, is acceptable.

Please contact the [Employment Team](#) for assistance at 850.474.2694 with questions regarding verifications of employment.

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## Free Grubhub+ Membership for UWF Employees

As a valued faculty or staff member at the University of West Florida, you have access to a complimentary Grubhub+ membership. This benefit allows employees to enjoy convenient food ordering both on and off campus while saving on delivery and service fees.

With your complimentary Grubhub+ membership, you'll receive:

- \$0 delivery fees on eligible orders
- Lower service fees compared to standard accounts
- 5% back on pickup orders
- Priority Delivery options at a reduced cost
- Exclusive offers and promotions available to Grubhub+ members
- Access to participating on-campus and local restaurants

This benefit makes it easier to grab lunch between meetings, order dinner after a long day, or take advantage of convenient pickup options around campus.

### How to Get Started:

Eligible UWF employees can activate their free membership by creating or linking a Grubhub account using their university email address.

To view step-by-step registration instructions, eligibility details, and troubleshooting tips, please visit the following link: [Grubhub+ Registration Details](#)

If you experience any issues during registration or have questions about eligibility, please refer to the troubleshooting section in the guide or contact Kyle Schroeder [850.474.2431](tel:850.474.2431).

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## Healthier U and EAP Wellness Wednesday Partnership Continues!

We are excited to announce the continuation of the Healthier U and EAP Wellness Wednesday partnership for fall and spring semesters 25-26. Working with our EAP, we identified workplace wellness hot topics for our faculty and staff. Pack a lunch or schedule a team lunch-and-learn. This year our lineup includes:

**Getting Unstuck - Breaking Old Habits - April 15**  
**Break the Excuse Cycle - May 13**

For a detailed description or to register, visit the [PageUp Learning Library](#) or Calendar today! Links to the online classes will be sent to all of the registered attendees as soon as they are received from the outside facilitators.

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## EAP Resources for Living Webinars – Click [here](#) to register for a webinar.

- 4/7 @ 2pm [Improving productivity](#)
- 4/14 @ 2pm [Don't wait for Monday: Get motivated now](#)
- 4/23 @ 2pm [Unplug to recharge](#)
- 4/28 @ 2pm [Build energy and focus](#)

Our Aetna Resources for Living EAP is available for you and your family. Explore the [website](#) for related resources. You will be glad you did! ('Company log in/Register' then Username= UWF, Password = UWF).

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