

your money, a magazine from WEA Member Benefits | Winter 2025

your\$TM



Financial literacy is for **EVERYONE**

Your students are becoming more financially literate—how about you?

your online access

A new, improved online portal to manage your retirement savings is coming soon

your insurance

Understand your roof insurance coverage

your kiosk

Show your family you care with life insurance
Review charitable giving options
Help your family save for their future





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- Time to check beneficiaries.
- Direct deposit is encouraged.
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- When it comes to investing, a lack of decision *is* a decision.

Let's get social!



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

DAVE KIJEK

We're here to help you keep learning



At Member Benefits, we know how important it is for you to understand your finances, as well as the difference that can make in your life. It's why we focus so much on financial educa-

tion. We want you to be able to make the best choices for your fiscal needs and goals because we care.

We commend the folks who helped pass the new financial literacy requirement into law for Wisconsin public school students, but we also want to acknowledge that it's never too late in life to become more financially knowledgeable.

With that in mind, we've put together an article on page 4 that covers the basics, with tools and resources to help you get started or move farther forward on your financial journey. Take a look—some of our tips may surprise you.

We are also excited to offer you an enhanced online experience in the very near future for managing your retirement accounts with us. We want to make the transition as smooth as possible. See page 6 for important information on the *yourMONEY* portal upgrade coming this spring.

One important piece of your financial health is home insurance. The insurance industry has been making changes in response to climate change and Member Benefits has as well. Keeping your

needs in mind, we provide clarity on some necessary changes coming up for our roof claim coverage on page 8.

Speaking of others' needs, we all know how important it is to show people how much we care. We offer some financial ways you can do just that, whether it's by helping to protect your family's finances after you're gone, giving them options to save for retirement through your relationship with us, or leaving a financial legacy to charitable causes that are important to you. You'll find those ideas and more in your kiosk on page 10.

At Member Benefits, we care about you and your financial future. Count on us for education and assistance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dave".

YOUR ACCOUNT

IMPORTANT

IRA and 403(b) NEWS

403(b) contribution limits have increased for 2025

The 2025 contribution limit for the 403(b) has been raised from \$23,000 to \$23,500, with the age 50 catch-up remaining at \$7,500 for a total of \$31,000. New in 2025 is the addition of an age 60-63 catch-up limit, which allows certain employees to increase the total elective contributions up to \$11,250—but the option must be allowed in your 403(b) plan.

The limit on annual contributions to an IRA remains the same at \$7,000, with the age 50 and over catch-up limit at \$1,000 for a total of \$8,000. Visit weabenefits.com/limits for more information.

Are your beneficiaries up to date?

The new year is a great reminder to check the beneficiaries for your 403(b) and/or IRA accounts with Member Benefits. Beneficiaries on your retirement account supersede your will, so make sure they're current as your life circumstances change. Please review beneficiaries when you receive your statement.

Consider direct deposit

We encourage you to sign up for direct deposit authorization for your withdrawals. Call us at 1-800-279-4030 for assistance in setting it up.

Understand difference in mutual fund operating expenses

Mutual funds report their operating costs, including management, administrative, and advertising fees, as a percentage of the fund's total assets. This percentage is called an expense ratio. The **gross expense ratio** is the cost before any applicable discounts or fee waivers. The **net expense ratio** is the cost you pay after all discounts and waivers are applied. Keeping investment costs low is a cornerstone of Member Benefits' programs. As a participant, you benefit from the power of group purchasing through access to mutual fund share class discounts that may not be available to you as a retail investor. Visit weabenefits.com/investments to review your expenses.

Please use your personal email

If you have an account with us, please use a personal email address instead of your school district email address. Some district's spam filters may block us, or you may change districts and miss important information. You can update your personal information in *yourMONEY* or by calling us at 1-800-279-4030.

Information current as of 02/01/25, see weabenefits.com for updates. This magazine is for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute individualized investment, legal, financial, or tax advice. Certain recommendations or guidelines may not be appropriate for everyone. Consult your personal advisor or attorney for advice specific to your unique circumstances before taking action. WEA Member Benefits does not offer tax advice.

The Trustee Custodian for the WEA Member Benefits IRA accounts is Newport Trust Company. To be eligible for this program, you must meet the IRS eligibility requirements for contributing to an IRA. Certain state residency requirements may apply.

The 403(b) retirement program is offered by the WEA TSA Trust. TSA and IRA program registered representatives are licensed through WEA Investment Services, Inc., member FINRA. If you choose to invest in the 403(b) or IRA programs, fees will apply.

*Interest is compounded daily to produce a yield net of Empower's administrative fee of 0.60%. Empower Annuity Insurance Company (EAIC) is compensated in connection with this product by deducting an amount for investment expenses and risk from the investment experience of certain assets held in EAIC's general account. For more information, go to weabenefits.com/empower.

Guaranteed
Stable
Investment

4.00%

Credited Rate of Return

403(b) and IRA 2025

Good news on the Guaranteed Stable Investment

Member Benefits is very pleased to announce that the 2025 Guaranteed Stable Investment credited rate of return for both the WEA TSA Trust and WEA Member Benefits IRA programs is 4.00%*. More information on the fund can be found at weabenefits.com/empower.

Create or change IRA contributions online

Before April 4, when you log in to your IRA retirement account through *yourMONEY*, you have the option of starting or changing your contributions in the portal.

Choose between a one-time or a recurring contribution. It's simple and straightforward to do, and you can modify or cancel your contribution choices at any time.

Learn more with a quick video on our website or call us with any questions at 1-800-279-4030.



**IRA contributions
how-to video**
weabenefits.com/howto

Note: Between April 4 and April 14, online IRA contributions will be temporarily unavailable. After April 14, the steps to submit a one-time or recurring contributions will change. See page 6 for more on our upcoming portal upgrade.

YOUR FINANCES



Financial literacy is for EVERYONE

In our Fall 2024 issue, we highlighted Wisconsin educator Kerri Herrild and her work in helping pass a law requiring high school students in our state to take a financial literacy course. (Read the article at weabenefits.com/yours.)

We applaud the decision and know it will make a positive difference in many young people's lives. But we also want to acknowledge something just as important—that financial literacy isn't just for the young.

At Member Benefits, we hear members talk about how they wish they knew more when they were younger. But the good news is that there's always something new to learn. It's never too late to become more financially knowledgeable, no matter what your age.

With that in mind, we've put together some helpful financial tips and resources. We hope it will make it easier to get you started on your financial journey...or to continue on your path of learning.

So now that your students are set to become more financially literate in the coming years—how about you?

Budgeting

Building a budget calls for an investment of time up front and requires you to face the good and the bad of your financial situation. But the pay off and benefits are long lasting.

Writing a budget helps you set up and achieve goals by:

- Establishing priorities.
- Giving you permission to spend.
- Helping you save money for long- and short-term needs.
- Preparing you for financial emergencies.

Use our budget worksheet and financial calculators as a guide, and/or schedule a financial planning consultation to help you get started.

- » weabenefits.com/budget
- » weabenefits.com/calc
- » weabenefits.com/financial-coaching

Managing debt

Spending more than you earn on a consistent basis can build debt quickly. Having a budget can help you prevent the problems that come with that.

Being in debt has a BIG impact on financial wellness by affecting your credit score, paying higher interest rates, making it harder to get a loan, etc., as well as taking a toll on your mental and physical health.

If you're carrying too much debt, devise a plan to pay off the highest interest debt first. Paying off your outstanding bills has many benefits—it improves your credit score, reduces stress, and increases your financial security. If you need some help, contact one of our financial advisors. And use our online debt calculators as a resource.

- » weabenefits.com/financial-coaching
- » weabenefits.com/calc

Saving

The phrase “pay yourself first” can be a powerful savings strategy. It means you pay into your own savings and investments before anything else.

There are three types of savings goals you may want to achieve, which will change depending on your age. For example:

- Short-term (0-5 years): Emergency fund, vacations, start a family.

- Intermediate term (5-10 years): New car, new home/condo, college fund.
- Long-term (10 years or more): Retirement savings (IRA, 403(b), etc.).

An emergency fund is critical—there will always be surprise financial situations that pop up in daily life. Start with a goal of saving at least three months worth of expenses in your emergency fund. Six months is even better if you can do it. Consider setting up a recurring transaction to place money in your emergency fund each month. If you need to, take it slow and just save \$20 per paycheck, increasing as you are able.

Saving for retirement earlier than later gives you a huge advantage by utilizing the power of compound earnings over time. Setting up automatic contributions into your retirement account using payroll deduction or electronic funds transfer can make saving easier to do.

You'll also want to save enough for a potentially long retirement—it's easy to forget the fact that we are living longer, often into our 80s and 90s. Depending on when you retire, you could be looking at 30+ years outside of the workforce.

Investing

Though many people think of them as the same thing, saving and investing are different.

- Saving money has a **shorter-term** horizon and a low risk of losing value, but generally has lower returns over time. It commonly utilizes savings accounts, CDs, or money market accounts to save and preserve assets.
- Investing has a **longer-term** horizon and comes with risk, including loss of principal, but also has the potential for higher returns—though they are never guaranteed. It is a strategy used to save for long-term goals, such as retirement or saving for college, and utilizes stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and ETFs.

The idea of investing can be intimidating for some people. However, being a good saver is far more important than being a skilled or knowledgeable investor. Simply getting started is key. In fact,

waiting to invest can make a significant negative impact on how much you're able to save over time.

Investing can help grow your wealth by potentially:

- Providing you with retirement savings.
- Helping you get out of a financial predicament.
- Becoming an additional source of income.

Before you start investing:

- It's important to balance the potential gains with the risk involved.
- You'll want to be in a good financial position to invest, such as having manageable debt and an adequate emergency fund, so you can ride the ups and downs of the market without having to withdraw from your investments.
- The earlier you start to invest, the better due to compound interest. But it is never too late to start investing.

» weabenefits.com/strategy

Protecting

Many people don't think about insurance as a way to conserve money. But if you don't have the right coverage, you put yourself at financial risk.

For example, umbrella (personal liability) insurance is an often misunderstood coverage because many people assume their basic insurance policy offers them adequate protection. However, you may be surprised at the situations in which you may need umbrella insurance—your dog bites a neighbor, someone slips on your sidewalk, or your teen throws a party while you're gone and one of the guests gets an Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) on the way home. An umbrella policy provides extra protection for you as well as other members of your family.

In general, we suggest you consider three principles to help find the right insurance coverage for your needs:

1. Buy the right amount of protection for your situation.

Investing terms to know

Pretax vs. Roth (after-tax)

Traditional (pretax) retirement savings accounts allow you to defer the taxes on your contributions and at the same time reduce your taxable income. The earnings grow tax-deferred but both the earnings and initial investment will be taxed when withdrawn.

Roth accounts allow for after-tax contributions. You pay taxes now in exchange for tax-free treatment of earnings on qualified withdrawals.

Diversification

Having different types of investments in your portfolio helps manage risk. Historically, it also yields higher returns as the positive performance of some investments offset the negative performance of others.

Asset allocation

This is how you divide your money among stocks, bonds, and short-term reserves. The aim is to control risk by allocating your portfolio according to your time horizon and tolerance for fluctuations in value.

Risk

Before you consider any investment, you need to understand risk and determine your personal risk tolerance. Lower-risk investments have averaged modest long-term historical returns. Higher-risk investments, such as large company, small company, and foreign stocks, have averaged higher returns historically, but with more fluctuation in value.

Fees

The impact of fees over time on your IRA or 403(b) account can significantly reduce your nest egg. Pay attention to all of the costs, including plan fees and mutual fund expense ratios. Not all providers or funds charge the same fees or advisor management costs.

» weabenefits.com/risk

» weabenefits.com/fees

Neither diversification nor asset allocation ensure a profit or guarantee against a loss.

YOUR ONLINE ACCESS

100%
of goal

\$191,623
Vested Balance

Pre-Tax

\$150.00

\$1.00

RE CONTRIBUTION RATE

EXCITING NEWS!

yourMONEY™ portal upgrade

We are excited to announce an approaching upgrade to *yourMONEY*, which will enhance your experience in managing your retirement account. This upgrade reflects our commitment to providing you with a secure, user-friendly, and efficient platform to help you achieve your retirement goals.

What is *yourMONEY*?

If you have a 403(b) or IRA account with Member Benefits, you can opt in to *yourMONEY*. It is an online portal that gives you easy online access to, and management of, your retirement accounts from your laptop or smartphone.

What's new?

Enhanced online access

An improved, intuitive online interface with more tools to monitor and manage your account.

Streamlined processes

Faster, more efficient transactions and the ability to see the status of your transaction request and receive email or text updates as your request is processed.

Updated mobile app

An enhanced mobile app so you can monitor and manage your account anywhere, any time. The enhanced mobile app will be available in the summer of 2025.

Key dates

April 7

- ✓ Monthly distributions will process early.
- ✓ Last day to request a distribution or loan.

April 9

- ✓ Last day to request investment election and deferral changes.
- ✓ Last day contributions and distributions process.

April 10

- ✓ Last day to request fund exchanges and rebalances.
- ✓ Quiet period begins; *yourMONEY* access temporarily unavailable.

April 14-15

- ✓ *yourMONEY* access reestablished.
- ✓ eMoney users need to relink their retirement accounts in their eMoney portal.

IMPORTANT! Who to contact, distribution change, and more

We are here for you! For assistance logging in, or for questions about the *yourMONEY* portal upgrade, contact our Member Service team: **1-800-279-4030**

You will need to create a new username and password when you log into your new online retirement account.

April distributions will process early on April 7 instead of April 10.

The 2025 Quarter 1 statement will be delivered later than normal.

Watch for a letter about the *yourMONEY* upgrade and visit weabenefits.com/yourmoney-upgrade for updates.

Question and answers

How do I access my *yourMONEY* portal after the upgrade?

Access the new *yourMONEY* portal at weabenefitsretirement.com/login/participant.

I have multiple Member Benefits retirement accounts. Will I be able to access all my retirement accounts in one portal following the upgrade?

As of April 14, all of your Member Benefits retirement accounts will be accessible in the new *yourMONEY* portal. You will receive separate communications regarding the upgrade timeline for your other Member Benefits accounts.

Can I use the same username and password in the new *yourMONEY* portal?

You will use your current username and password in the old *yourMONEY* portal until April 10.

As of that date, you will be prompted to create a new username and password, new security questions, and set up new multi-factor authentication credentials for the new portal. You will likely be able to reuse your current username and password when walking through the login process for the first time.

For step-by-step instructions, visit the *yourMONEY* portal upgrade resource web-page at weabenefits.com/yourmoney-upgrade. You may also call our Member Service team at 1-800-279-4030 during business hours for assistance.

Who should I call to help me log into the upgraded *yourMONEY* portal following the upgrade?

If you encounter difficulties, our Member Service Representatives can help you log in. Call 1-800-279-4030 during business hours for assistance.

Will I be able to access the automated telephone voice response line?

Access to the automated telephone voice response line will be available following the upgrade.

Will I be able to access my retirement accounts during the April upgrade?

You will have limited access to your retirement account(s) during the April 11-14 weekend. You may experience a very brief period of limited connectivity as we finish the upgrade process for all other plans.

When will I be able to access the mobile application?

The mobile application will be ready sometime during the summer. Watch for more information to come!

You will need to update your login information

During the upgrade process, access to your retirement account will be temporarily limited and some services will be unavailable. **When logging in for the first time following the upgrade, you will need to set up a new username, password, and multi-factor authentication.**



Early adopter plans

See if your district is included

We are upgrading the *yourMONEY* portal in two phases. If you have a 403(b) retirement account with one of the district plans listed below, your *yourMONEY* portal will be upgraded in March. Other accounts will be upgraded in April.

- School District of Nekoosa
- School District of Hartford Jt. 1
- Sturgeon Bay Schools
- Swallow School District
- The School District of Wisconsin Dells

Key dates—early adopter school district 403(b) accounts ONLY

When the market closes (generally 3 p.m. Central Time) on March 13, 2025, the upgrade will begin. As a result, *yourMONEY* access will be temporarily limited with a quiet period of up to five calendar days.

March 11

- ✓ Last day to request a distribution or loan.

March 12

- ✓ Last day to request investment election and deferral changes.
- ✓ Last day contributions and distributions process.

March 13

- ✓ Last day to request fund exchanges and rebalances.
- ✓ Quiet period begins; *yourMONEY* access temporarily unavailable.

March 16

- ✓ *yourMONEY* access reestablished.
- ✓ eMoney users need to relink their retirement accounts in their eMoney portal.

Visit weabenefits.com/yourmoney-upgrade-early for updates.

YOUR INSURANCE

Understand your roof coverage

Insurance industry adjustments to climate change mean homeowners should update their budget plans for roof replacement

Climate change is making a significant impact on our society. The changes in weather patterns, including more frequent and severe storms, have greatly impacted insureds and the insurance industry. These storms can create massive amounts of damage to homes, with roof replacements driving a large portion of the loss.

As the industry tries to contain costs and keep premiums affordable, roof coverage has begun to shift from Replacement Cost (RC) coverage, which upgrades a damaged roof with a brand new one of similar quality, to Actual Cash Value (ACV) coverage for roofing claims.

ACV coverage depreciates roof claim payments based on the age and ma-

terials of the roof relative to its life expectancy. At its most basic, it is a calculation of replacement cost minus depreciation. Insurance companies typically offer a defined depreciation schedule that states the percentage of coverage based on age and type of roofing material.

Roofs have a typical life expectancy of 25-30 years. With ACV coverage, the insurance company is responsible for covering the remaining life left in the damaged roof, and the homeowner covers the cost of upgrading their older roof to a new one.

After careful consideration, Member Benefits has decided that in order to keep premiums affordable and in line with the marketplace, we need to shift

We're confident that our depreciation schedule and deductible options are some of the more generous and customer-friendly offerings in the marketplace today. We hope this article helps you understand your roof coverage and what it will mean for you at the time of a claim. Please call us with any questions or concerns at 1-800-279-4030.

It's important for homeowners to:

- ✓ Understand your insurance coverage.
- ✓ Budget ahead for roof replacement.
- ✓ Consider stronger roof types when replacing your roof, such as impact resistant shingles, metal roofs, etc.

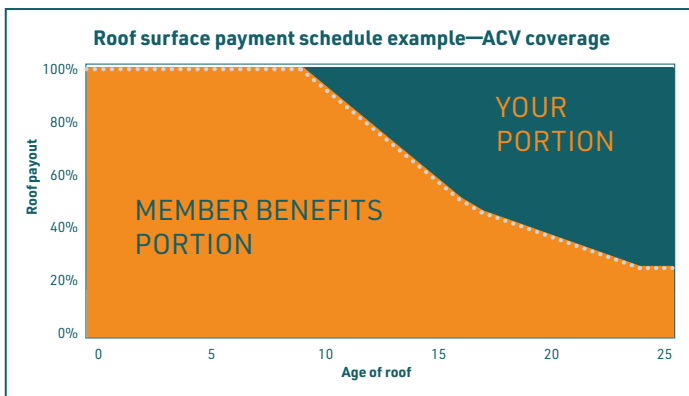


Chart is for illustrative purposes only based on a composition shingle roof. Property and casualty insurance programs are underwritten by WEA Property & Casualty Insurance Company. The terms and conditions of your coverage are exclusively controlled by your written policy. Please refer to your policy for details. Certain policy exclusions and limitations may apply.

to ACV coverage for roof claims. If you have a home insurance policy with us, watch for more details in your next renewal. It will include a separate deductible for wind and hail claims and a loss settlement schedule for roofs based on their age and material.

Are you with another company and not sure you understand your coverage? Schedule a free phone consultation and we would be happy to review it with you.



weabenefits.com/consults

| continued from page 5

2. Buy more liability protection rather than less.
3. Choose the highest deductible amount that you can comfortably afford.

While many companies offer auto, home, and umbrella insurance, ours is the only one created exclusively for public school employees like you. Set up a consultation and we'll review your coverage so you can compare.

And if you have any recreational vehicles or classic cars, make sure they're covered, too. We can help with that.

- » weabenefits.com/consults
- » weabenefits.com/insurance

Credit score

As we mentioned earlier, debt can negatively affect your credit score. FICO (Fair Isaac Corporation) credit scores are used by financial institutions and credit card companies to determine whether you can get a loan and at what interest rate. It uses information from a consumer's credit report to indicate the ability to repay amounts borrowed.

Information in your credit report is used in various ways. For example, credit card companies may give you a more favorable interest rate and a larger line of credit with a higher score. Potential lenders, landlords, insurance companies, and even some employers use your credit score to help make decisions about you. Companies use different sets of factors related to your score to make their decisions, so it's safe to say that the higher your score, the better.

Employee benefits


According to the Employee Benefit Research Institute, only about 55% of workers say they understand their workplace financial benefits well. Taking advantage of all the benefits offered to you at work can help you boost your wealth as well as your job satisfaction. For example, if your district offers a match in their 403(b), take it—it's free money.


If you're not clear on the workplace


weabenefits.com


Preventing financial fraud

Protecting your wealth is just as important as building your wealth. Be vigilant of financial scams to help prevent any loss of your nest egg. Here are a few common ones.

 **Phishing** is a scam in which a person uses fake emails, texts, and/or phone calls to try to get you to share valuable information such as your Social Security number, account numbers, or usernames and passwords. Once they have this information, they may steal your money, your identity, or both.

 A **charity scam** is when a thief poses as a real charity or makes up the name of a charity that sounds real to get money from you. These scams often increase during the holiday season as well as after natural disasters and emergencies (such as the Los Angeles fires).

 **Impostor scammers** try to convince you to send money or share account details by pretending to be someone you know or trust, like a government employee or family member.

 One you may not have heard of is **SIM swapping**. As more mobile phones phase out their physical SIM cards in favor of digital eSIMs, a potential security hole has opened up. If someone is able to gather enough of your personal information, they may be able to convince your provider that they're you. They then transfer your eSIM to their device, creating a gateway via your phone to your financial, social media, email, and other accounts—leaving you to clean up the mess. Setting up two-factor authentication and using a password manager are a couple of ways to help prevent this type of fraud. Learn more at finra.org/investors/insights/sim-swapping-risks.

If you've been scammed, start by reporting the incident to identitytheft.gov, filing a report with your local police department, and calling the companies where you know fraud occurred. Get more information at identitytheft.gov.

benefits available to you, contact your human resources department or district office. Make sure you know about any post-employment benefits that may be offered as well.

Tax benefits

Another way to safeguard your wealth is by taking all the tax credits and deductions you are qualified for each year. Common ones to watch for may be based on your income, on paying for higher education, or on putting money into a retirement or health savings account. As an educator, you may be eligible to deduct expenses for classroom materials. Be sure to consult your tax advisor to know what you qualify for.

Borrow smart

It can be tricky, but one key to building financial security is to borrow only what

you need. You are likely to need a loan to purchase a house or car, or to pay for college education, for example. But ask yourself questions first: Just how expensive of a house do you need? Do you really need a premium packaged car? The less you borrow, the more you have to spend on other financial goals, material goods, and life experiences.

Get support

The foundation underlying Member Benefits' offerings of products and services is one of financial education. It underscores everything we do. So please turn to us with your questions, learn from our resources, and consider our program options. We are here to help every member become financially secure.

- » weabenefits.com/learning-center
- » weabenefits.com/financial-planning

YOUR KIOSK

Life insurance is for those you love

Life insurance is easy to understand. It's there to help your family financially. But there is also an emotional value to life insurance—one that can be an act of love.

For example, life insurance may help your family stay in the home where so many memories were made, helping to preserve those memories and providing stability for the important people in your life. It may also help your family reach life goals they are hoping to fulfill, such as a college degree, clearing out debt, or making retirement a reality.

It's a simple answer to a very difficult question: *How will my loved ones manage financially if something were to happen to me?*

Showing your love by protecting your assets for your family can be more affordable—and easier—than you might think. Member Benefits has partnered with Ladder, a life insurance company that offers term life insurance nationwide. That means our members and their families may be eligible for a life insurance policy no matter where they live in the United States.

Ladder is completely digital. There are no doctors, no needles, and no paperwork when you apply for \$3 million in coverage or less. With Ladder, you can:

- Apply online in as little as 5 minutes.
- Enjoy the flexibility of decreasing your coverage or applying for more when you need it.
- Log on anytime to add beneficiaries, change your policy details, or even cancel coverage.
- Get started today and receive a no-obligation price estimate.

Regardless of the level of insurance you choose, Ladder can help you minimize the costs that may keep your family from focusing on getting through a tough time. See it as helping to create a financial legacy plan for your family—with love.

Learn more: weabenefits.com/lifeinsurance

The life insurance program is offered and administered by Associates of Clifton Park. Life insurance products are underwritten by multiple life insurance carriers.



Saving for the future is a family affair

Does your teen have a job? Do you have a family member who works on the side? How about family who live outside of Wisconsin and want to build up their retirement nest egg? Great news—you can help them out!



If your teen has earned income, it's never too early to get them started on their retirement savings with a WEA Member Benefits IRA. A Roth IRA can potentially offer them years of tax-free earnings.

If you, your spouse, or child work or own a small business, a Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) IRA might be an option. A SEP provides retirement benefits for small business owners and their employees with little to no administrative costs. There are contribution limits—call us to discuss your options.

A Spousal IRA can provide retirement savings for a non-working spouse with no or very little income as long as the married couple files a joint income tax return and has eligible compensation to cover the contribution amount.

And if you have family who live in one of the states that offer our IRA program and they meet eligibility guidelines, they may also enjoy the benefits of saving with a WEA Member Benefits IRA. Visit weabenefits.com/ira to see which states are eligible.

Calling all student artists!

Get ready to let your creativity shine! Our 10th annual student art contest invites Wisconsin public school students in grades K-12 to share their vision of joy with this year's theme, *Happiness is...* Whether happiness means a favorite place, a treasured experience, or a special person, we want to see what it looks like through your eyes and imagination.

Our contest will run April 1, 2025 - May 2, 2025.

Check out weabenefits.com/studentartcontest for more information.



Ask WEA Financial Advisors about...

Planned giving

I like to make individual donations to charities that are important to me, but I'd also like to make even more of a lasting impact. What are some of my options?

"Planning a major donation for charitable giving can have many benefits, both for the receiver as well as the giver," says Clancy Cramer, Financial Planner at Member Benefits. "The good news is that you have a number of options to help make a long-lasting difference to the causes you care about." Here are a few to consider.

Charitable Remainder Trusts (CRTs)

A CRT is a tax-exempt irrevocable trust designed to reduce the taxable income of individuals. It dispenses income to one or more noncharitable beneficiaries for a specified period, then donates the remainder to one or more charitable beneficiaries.

Charitable Lead Trusts (CLTs)

CLTs provide payments to a charity for a set number of years, and once the term ends, the remaining assets go to the donor's heirs. This may help minimize estate taxes.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)

People over 70½ can make tax-free charitable donations directly from their IRAs. These can count toward required minimum distributions for those 73 and older. QCDs are tax-free as long as they are paid directly to the charity and you retain a receipt of the donation.

Bequests and wills

Leaving a portion of your estate to charity through a will or living trust is a common way to make a lasting impact. You can designate a specific amount or percentage of your estate to go to a cause you care about.

"It's a good idea to research charities to ensure their contributions are being used wisely. Charity Navigator is one example," adds Clancy. "To help make the most of giving financially, be sure you understand the tax advantages of charitable donations. The financial advisors at Member Benefits can help you learn more and go over donation plan options. Contact us for an appointment, we're happy to provide more information."

 weabenefits.com/fps  1-800-279-4030  weafa@weabenefits.com

One way to make a lasting impact

As a public school employee, you have many causes you care about. If you're looking for ideas on what you might like to support, consider WEA Member Benefits Foundation. The Foundation has been creating pathways to student mental health services by helping districts expand partnerships with community mental health agencies and offering emergency funding.

Your monetary support can help us reach more students in need. The Foundation is proud to support Wisconsin's K-12 students and educators, and we appreciate your consideration. Please take a minute and visit weafoundation.org to learn more.



FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

*Update from the experts at
WEA Financial Advisors*

Whether through inertia or anxiety, investors who put off important investment decisions are, in reality, still making a decision. A lack of action is played out often invisibly, with potential negative consequences to a person's future financial security. Here are just a couple of ways this can impact your finances.

1. One of the worst passive decisions may be the failure to enroll in your district's 403(b) plan—and fund it. Not only would you miss out on a way to save for retirement, but you may also forfeit any potential employer-matching contributions.
2. If you put off regularly reviewing your investment choices, over time you can end up with a collection of investments that may have no connection to your investment objectives. By not periodically reviewing what you own, you are making a default decision to own investments that may be inappropriate for your goals and needs.

Whatever your situation, your retirement investments require careful attention and can benefit from deliberate, thoughtful decision making.

If you have questions about your 403(b) or need to review your investment allocations, our financial advisors can help. Contact us at 1-800-279-4030 or weafa@weabenefits.com. Your retired self will be grateful that you invested the time in making active decisions today.

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Source: FMG.

Did you know?

We have a variety of free eBooks, including our newest, *A Love Letter to My Family*, to help you prepare your loved ones for after you're gone.

weabenefits.com/ebooks

WE LOVE OUR TEACHERS & STAFF!



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We believe that public school employees deserve the very best for themselves and their families. That's why we offer:

- ♥ **Exclusive discounts** for public school employees.
- ♥ **Affordable insurance plans** for home, auto, life, and more.
- ♥ **Retirement savings and financial planning programs** designed to help you build a **secure future**.
- ♥ **Consultants who make you a priority**—no commissions, just **trusted guidance**.

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The 403(b) retirement program is offered by the WEA TSA Trust. TSA and IRA program registered representatives are licensed and securities offered through WEA Investment Services, Inc., member FINRA. The Trustee Custodian for the WEA Member Benefits IRA accounts is Newport Trust Company. To be eligible for this program, you must meet the IRS eligibility requirements for contributing to an IRA. Restrictions may apply. Certain state residency required. All financial advisory services are offered through WEA Financial Advisors, Inc., an SEC registered investment advisor. Property and casualty insurance programs are underwritten by WEA Property & Casualty Insurance Company. The terms and conditions of your coverage are exclusively controlled by your written policy. Please refer to your policy for details. Certain policy exclusions and limitations may apply. The life insurance program is offered and administered by Associates of Clifton Park. Life insurance products are underwritten by multiple life insurance carriers.