



## NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### Human Resources

The HR Newsbrief is back! With the addition of our new staff member, Deirdre Smith, you'll be seeing the HR Newsbrief on a more regular basis. Here's Deirdre's first edition.

New HR staff member. We are pleased to welcome Deirdre Smith to the HR Office. [Learn more about Deirdre](#) and her primary areas of responsibility.

Wellness plan eligibility requirements. Confirm your enrollment in a wellness program by November 20, 2014 to continue to qualify for the 2015-16 Wellness Health Plan. Click here for [more information](#).

Use it or Lose It. Check your vacation leave balances now and make plans to take your leave to avoid losing it on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Do you need some help with the calculations? Click here to access the [leave balancing spreadsheet](#).

W-2's. Tax time will be here before you know it. If you moved this year, and elected to have the W-2 mailed to you, now is a good time to check your mailing address in the Employee Work Center. You will have earlier access to your W-2 if you elect to receive it electronically. Click here for [more on these two topics](#).

Inclement weather. You wouldn't think that less than an inch of snow could create such havoc. Any of you with driving teenagers can feel my pain. Before Old Man Winter really hits, you'll want to review NDE's [Inclement Weather Policy](#).

Retirement Savings. The Deferred Compensation program allows additional tax sheltered paycheck deductions to help you save for retirement. While your contributions are unmatched by NDE (unlike the "regular" retirement contribution), it's a good way to increase your nest egg. Click here to learn more about increased [contribution limits for calendar year 2015](#).

State Government Leadership Program. Registration is now open for the winter session of this new program. Pam Tagart, of the Data, Research and Evaluation Team participated in the first session and spoke highly of the experience. Find out [more about it here](#).

## Welcome to NDE Human Resources



**Deirdre Smith**

We are pleased to welcome Deirdre Smith to the HR Department. Deirdre is a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University and began her career as a Personnel Manager for Target. This year, she celebrated 16 years of service with the State of Nebraska. Deirdre started her state service with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and in 2001 moved to the Governor's Policy Research Office where she was responsible for Human Resources, Benefits, Accounting, and Inventory functions among other duties.

Deirdre's primary areas of responsibility for NDE HR include:

- Agency-wide training and the Learning component of the [Employee Development Center](#);
- Job safety and wellness;
- Employee communications, including coordination of the HR web pages on [InsideNDE](#);
- Agency philanthropic activities (e.g., Charitable Giving Campaign, Food Drive, Holiday Giving Project);
- Employee recognition; and
- General technical assistance to supervisors and employees.

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## Wellness Plan Eligibility Requirements

- Please review the [attached information](#) relating to the requirements and the respective deadlines for the Wellness Health Plan. IF you would like the opportunity to select the Wellness Health Plan in the next open enrollment cycle (Effective July 1, 2015) you must complete all of the required qualifications.
- Reminders: Don't wait to the last minute to log your data and check on your status. Each employee and their spouse should log into the [Wellness Options website](#) and review their information.
- For questions, please contact Health Fitness(WellnessOptions) @ 1-866-956-4285

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## Use It or Lose It

- End-Of-The-Year leave balancing is around the corner. Please check your leave balances and touch base with your supervisor regarding the approval and scheduling of your leave. Up to 280 hours of an employee's vacation leave may be carried over from one calendar year to the next. Accumulated vacation time in excess of 280 hours will be forfeited as of December 31 of each calendar year.
- You may utilize the [leave balancing spreadsheet](#) to aide you in calculating your use or loose status.
- For questions, please see your supervisor and/or NDE Human Resources 402-471-5026.

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## W-2's

- If you have elected to have your W-2 mailed to you, now is the time to check your mailing address in the [Employee Work Center \(WorkDay\)](#) and make any necessary changes.
- If you would like to elect to receive your W-2 electronically, please follow these [instructions](#).
- If you have already elected to view and print your W-2's electronically, no action is required.

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## Inclement Weather

- As typical Nebraska Fall/Winter weather approaches, please review the attached [NDE Agency Inclement Weather Policy](#) as a refresher.

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## Deferred Compensation

- Effective January 1, 2015, the maximum limits for contributions to the Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) has changed to \$18,000. The 50+ catch up limit has changed to \$6,000. This means that employees who are over the age of 49 may contribute up to \$24,000 to their Deferred Compensation Plan in 2015. Please utilize the [DCP Change Form](#) located on the [NPERS](#) website to make any necessary adjustments. If you have questions, please contact [NPERS](#) at 1-800-245-5712 or 402-471-2053.

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## State Government Leadership Program

- DAS State Personnel - Training and Development Team has announced that registration is now open for the [Nebraska State Government Leadership Program](#). Dates are intentionally not yet included for the in-person sessions as they try to work around participants calendars. However, the orientation session is scheduled for January 22, 2015.
- The cost is \$1499. This fee is all-inclusive; there are never additional charges for books, supplies, etc.
- Pam Tagart, of the Data, Research and Evaluation Team participated in the first session of the State Government Leadership Certificate Program. She spoke highly of the experience. Tagart liked being able to interact with employees from other state agencies to share issues and ideas for resolution. She said there were a variety of speakers, and the group was very diverse in terms of age and experience, which made things even more interesting. "I liked the comradery and 'network' we built along the way," Tagart said. "I am glad the Leadership Certificate Program has been made available to enhance our skills. The classes have been well worth my time."
- If you have any questions, please contact Renae Prieto @ State Personnel 402-471-4113.
- You may register at any time in the [Employee Development Center](#) at [www.link.nebraska.gov](http://www.link.nebraska.gov)

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