



Special Announcements & Resources

InSync Newsletter: Quarter 1
January - March 2024

FSA Reminder: Use It, Don't Lose It

Do you have remaining funds in your Chard Snyder Health Care or Dependent Day Care Flexible Spending Accounts? Remember, for your Health Care FSA, you have until March 15, 2024, to incur additional expenses and claims against any unused balance (County offered/IRS approved "Grace Period," applicable to employees contributing in the final pay period of the contribution year, PP23-25).

Reimbursement claims for Health Care FSA and Dependent Day Care FSA expenses must be filed by April 15, 2024. Submitting claims is convenient through www.chard-snyder.com or by using the Chard Snyder mobile app for iOS and Android devices. For inquiries about your account, reach out to 800-982-7715. Representatives are available Monday-Friday from 8 am to 8 pm Eastern Time.



Changing Your Primary Care Physician with a County-Sponsored HMO Plan

At times, employees or their dependents may need to change their Primary Care Physician (PCP). However, making this change is not done through VCHRP, as PCP information is not transferred to the insurance plan after the initial enrollment. To request a PCP change, please follow these steps:



- **Ventura County HealthCare Plan (VCHCP):** VCHCP can typically accommodate a same-day PCP election change for your convenience. Reach out to them at 805-981-5050.
- **Blue Shield HMO Plans:** PCP change requests for Blue Shield HMO plans are effective based on the date the request is made. If you submit a change request between the 1st and 15th of a month, the change will be effective on the first day of the following month. Requests made between the 16th and the last day of a month will not be effective until the first day of the second month following the request.
 - **Blue Shield ACO Trio** – Contact Customer Care at (855) 747-5800.
 - **Blue Shield Access Plus** – Contact Customer Care at (855) 256-9404

Welcoming a New Family Member? Need to Add Them to Your Health Plans?

Ensure you don't overlook the deadline for adding dependents to your health plans. New family members are not automatically enrolled in an employee's insurance plans. To enroll, you must submit a Mid-Year Enrollment and Change request within 31 days. Qualifying events for such additions include a dependent's birth, adoption, adoption placement, marriage, or registration of Domestic Partnership. If you miss this 31-day window, your next opportunity to add your dependent will be during Open Enrollment in November 2024.



Contact your agency's HR representative(s) promptly, within 31 days (including the event date), to address any questions and to submit the required enrollment paperwork. Additional details can be found in Chapter 1 of the Benefits Plan Handbook.

[View the 2024 Benefits Handbook](#)

Complaint Resolution and Misconduct Hotline

The County of Ventura believes employees should be able to voice concerns about tough workplace issues like harassment, discrimination, or discourteous workplace behavior. When appropriate, employees are encouraged to first discuss concerns with their supervisors, then their agency/department HR Representatives. If resolution is still not reached, more information and online reporting are available on the [Complaint Resolution Webpage](#).



24-Hour Employee Misconduct Hotline - 1 (800) 684-6523

*Calls and online reporting can be anonymous so there is no fear of retaliation.
Human Resources is committed to compliance and your participation is essential.*



WELLthy Reward\$

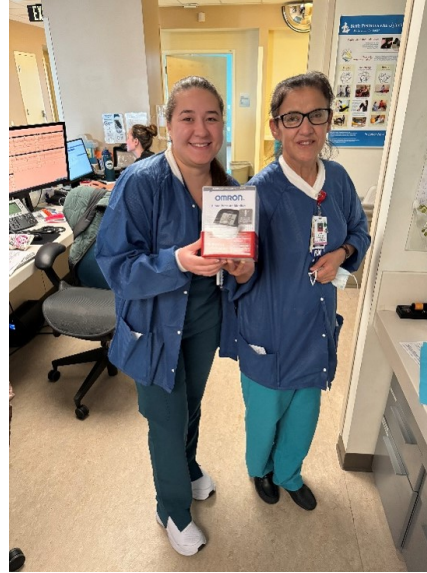
The 2024 WELLthy Reward\$ cash award program starts in January. Don't miss your chance to earn a cash award of \$100 to \$300 by participating in various healthy and fun activities! Employees who earn a cash award for the first time will also receive a one-time \$50 bonus added to their cash award.



Another WeGive Employee Impact

In 2023, the WeGive Golden Football Challenge promoted a culture of philanthropy across all

County departments, and helped raise donations that were invested back into our local healthcare system to support the most urgent needs of our County. Notably, one of the most impactful investments was the acquisition of blood pressure cuffs for obstetrics. This equipment helps monitor patients' blood pressure, an important part of preventing serious complications such as liver failure and seizures in women with pre-eclampsia, an illness that only occurs in women who are pregnant or recently postpartum. Through your collective generosity, we are enhancing patient care and fortifying the health of our community.



Deferred Compensation

2024 Retirement Contribution Limits

Retirement plan contribution limits are set annually by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). A plan contribution is the amount of money you set aside on a bi-weekly basis to your 401(k) and/or 457 plan(s). The contribution limit is the total amount that you can contribute each year. This limit is for employee contributions only and does not include employer matching contributions. For 2024, the IRS has increased the annual limit by \$500.00. The 2024 limits are provided below.

For more information on plan year limits and matching 401(k) contributions, please review the 2024 Plan Year Information brochure for [County employees](#) and [Court employees](#) found on the [Deferred Compensation website](#).

2024 Maximum Annual Deferral	401(k) Shared Savings Plan	Section 457 Plan
Under Age 50	\$23,000	\$23,000
Age 50+ Catch-Up • <i>At least age 50 or will turn age 50 in 2024</i>	\$30,500	\$30,500
Section 457 Plan Special Catch-Up • <i>You must have prior years of unused deferrals and meet certain age and service requirements.</i>		Up to \$46,000

Beneficiary Updates

Take care of the people who matter most.

More than half of employees have not identified a beneficiary for their retirement account.*

[Update your beneficiary today.](#)



Or scan to learn more.



* Fidelity analysis of 18.9M active plan participants with a balance as of 03/01/2023.

Fidelity Investments Institutional Operations Company LLC, 245 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02210.

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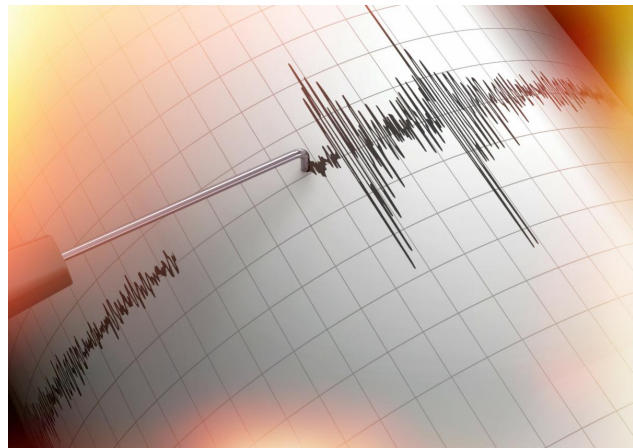


COUNTY of VENTURA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Risk Management

Driver Safety

Driving is one of the riskiest activities Ventura County employees encounter each day, whether they are driving on work-related or personal business. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), California drivers travel more vehicle miles than drivers in any other state in the U.S., and each year, California experiences an increase in the number of traffic-related fatalities. It is important for drivers to make responsible choices, adhere to traffic laws, monitor weather conditions, and remain alert and defensive behind the wheel.



When driving on County business,

- Remember that you are representing the County and must remain responsible and professional at all times.
- Before you operate a County vehicle, perform a brief visual inspection to identify any potential hazards or damage. Special attention should be paid to fuel level, tires, windows, lights, and windshield wipers. Any discrepancies should be reported to GSA prior to departure.
- Once inside the vehicle, adjust mirrors, seat position, and temperature controls. Confirm proof of insurance, registration, and Accident Reporting Kit are in the glovebox prior to departing.
- Do not use electronic devices while driving and eliminate unnecessary distractions such as eating or drinking.
- Keep in mind that any fines or fees related to citations or tickets received while operating a County vehicle are the responsibility of the driver, unless GSA Fleet Services determines that the

infraction involves deficient equipment or condition of the County-owned vehicle.

If you are involved in a collision in a County vehicle, it is important to remain calm and follow these steps:

- Confirm there are no injuries or immediate threats to life or property. If you or the other party need emergency attention, call 911 immediately. If emergency response is not needed, contact local law enforcement, and inform them you were involved in an accident in a County vehicle and are required to request a police report.
- When speaking to the other party, do not make assumptions regarding fault or causation. The other party can contact CEO Risk Management at (805) 654-3197 with any questions.
- Exchange identifying information with the other party and take photos from all angles of all vehicles involved. Ensure photos clearly capture all damage as well as any identifying features of the vehicle (license plate, manufacturer badge/logos, VIN number, etc.).
- Contact your supervisor to report the accident and be sure to submit all required accident report forms.

Contact your Agency Safety Officer or CEO Risk Control with any questions regarding operating a County vehicle. Additional information can be found in [Chapter III-1 of the Administrative Manual](#).

Wellness Program - VC-WELL

One & Two Million Step Marches

From January – August 2023, 1148 County employees successfully completed the Million Step March (MSM), a 28% increase from the previous year! These ambitious employees logged one million steps and 497 employees accumulated more than two million steps (2MSM), a 25% increase from the previous year. VC-WELL is again challenging employees to complete either the MSM or the 2MSM in 2024. Employees completing each challenge can earn up to 80 points toward their WELLthy Reward\$ total. Visit [WELLthy Reward\\$](#) for details, or to create a WELLtrek account.



Resolution Weight Challenge

In February 2023, 1260 employees completed the Resolution Weight Challenge, a 49% increase from the prior year! No matter if your New Year's Resolution weight goal is to lose, gain, or maintain your weight, this challenge is for you. Employees who complete the challenge will earn 20 points toward their 2024 WELLthy Reward\$ points total. Keep an eye out for the all-County email in January for details, or visit [WELLtrek](#) to log-in or create an account.

Health Club Discounts

Check out our discounts with various health clubs around Ventura County. Choose between our direct health club agreements, or with Active & Fit. Visit our website for more information and registration.





Coastal Housing Partnership provides an array of housing benefits for County of Ventura employees. They have helped more than 13,000 local employees achieve their dreams of home ownership.

Whether you are purchasing a home, seeking home buying education, refinancing a mortgage, or looking for a new rental, check out how they can help you reduce your costs. www.coastalhousing.org

Upcoming Webinar Dates

- ***From Renter to Homeowner***
 - Tuesday, February 6, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
 - Hoping to make that step from renter to homeowner? Attend this webinar for tips and guidance from a local lender and real estate agent on how to be prepared, what to expect and how to save money. Even if homeownership is several years away, the information you take away will help you establish a game plan for your path to homeownership.
 - [Register in advance for this webinar](#)
- ***Understanding Your Coastal Housing Partnership Benefits***
 - Tuesday, February 27, 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.
 - Join us for a 30-minute webinar to learn about housing benefits available to you through Coastal Housing Partnership. Benefits include savings when purchasing a home, refinancing a mortgage, or renting, and home buying education. County of Ventura employees are eligible for these benefits, regardless of income or length of employment. Benefits and resources are complimentary, all level of homebuyers are welcome.
 - [Register in advance for this webinar](#)
- ***Lender Panel – Navigating the Home Buying Process***
 - Tuesday, March 12, 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.
 - Hear from three local lenders about what's involved in obtaining a home loan and how the current real estate market has changed. Topics discussed will include how to improve your credit score, how much of a loan you can afford, and how to buy a home with less than a 20% down payment. Q & A time will be provided.
 - [Register in advance for this webinar](#)

For a schedule of these webinars and to register, visit: [Home Buying Webinars \(coastalhousing.org\)](http://Home Buying Webinars (coastalhousing.org))

Access to this benefit applies to County of Ventura employees.



COUNTY of VENTURA
Human Resources



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