



BUILDING INDUSTRY FUND

NEWSLETTER

August 2023

A Letter from the Boards of Trustees

Dear Participant:

We hope that you and your family are staying healthy and safe!

The Trustees of the Building Trades Benefit Funds are continually working to update and improve your benefits.

The following is a summary of recent changes made to the benefits available to you from the Benefit Funds.

Medical Coverage Related to COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a public health emergency was declared. As a result of this declaration, health plans were generally required to provide coverage for:

- COVID-19 diagnostic tests and related to services with no participant cost sharing, prior authorization or medical management;
- certain items, services, or immunizations intended to prevent or mitigate COVID-19 with no participant cost-sharing obligation; and
- a specified number of FDA-authorized over the counter at home COVID tests.

The details of these coverage terms, including applicable limitations, are described in various summaries of material modifications that have been provided to you.

This public health emergency ended effective May 11, 2023. As a result, the Fund is no longer required to provide coverage for these services. However, the Board of Trustees understands that COVID-19 is still a problem and therefore has determined that it is in the best interest of the Fund and its participants to continue this coverage for the remainder of 2023. Therefore, through December 31, 2023, the Fund will continue to provide coverage as it has during the COVID-19 public health emergency, except that coverage for over-the-counter COVID-19 tests will be limited to a maximum of four (4) tests (not test kits) per covered person per month. If the Fund makes any changes to these coverage terms for the 2024 plan year, we will notify you of those changes.

We hope this news provides comfort to you and your family as we navigate away from the COVID rules that we have grown accustomed to.



Telehealth Benefit

Using LiveHealth Online, you can have a private and secure video visit with a board-certified doctor 24/7 on your smartphone, tablet or computer with a webcam. It's a quick and easy way to get the care you need with no appointments or long wait times. When your own doctor isn't available, use LiveHealth Online if you have pinkeye, a cold, the flu, a fever, allergies, a sinus infection, or other common health condition. A doctor can assess your condition, provide a treatment plan, and even send a prescription to your pharmacy, if it's needed. As a member, when sending an email, please include your name, email address and a phone number where you can be reached.

1-888-LiveHealth (548-3432) or email help@livehealthonline.com

HOW TO GET STARTED

Rather than waiting to sign up when you're not feeling well, register today so you're ready for a visit when you need one.

To sign up, visit livehealthonline.com or download the free LiveHealth Online app to your mobile device.



NEXT, YOU:

1. Choose **Sign Up** to create your LiveHealth Online account. Then enter your name, email address, date of birth and create a secure password.
2. Read the **Terms of Use** and check the box to agree.
3. Choose your location in the drop-down box of states.
4. Enter your birth date and choose your gender.
5. For the question "Do you have insurance?", select **Yes**. Be sure to have your Empire member ID card handy to complete your insurance information. If you choose **No**, you can still enter your insurance information later.
6. For **Health Plan**, in the drop-down box, select **Empire**.
7. For **Subscriber ID**, enter your identification number, which is found on your Empire member ID card. Select **Yes** if you are the primary subscriber or **No** if you are not the primary subscriber.
8. Insert a service key if you have one. If you don't have a service key that's OK, this is optional and not required to register.
9. Select the green **Finish** button.

Health Management Program

JOIN NOW!

The Overture Health Care program is a **NO-COST** benefit for covered employees, spouses, and dependents 18 and over. The program is managed by Overture Health Care and is available for those who are diagnosed with the chronic conditions such as asthma, pre-diabetes, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Participants will be assigned to a personalized telephonic care coach who will assist in stabilizing conditions, improve disease state metrics, and reduce ER visits and hospitalizations. Consultations with your Care Coach are completely confidential and secure.

- Participating individuals who complete the program will receive a \$500 gift card and waived drug co-payments subject to the terms and conditions listed in the program requirements section.
- Care Coach, mobile and desktop login information, health risk assessments, biometrics and other related logistics will be coordinated by Overture Health Care.
- Participants may receive information about their program activities by email or text/chat/push notification via the Overture Health Care mobile app. Everything is completely confidential and in accordance with HIPAA laws and regulations.

A telephonic care coach will help each enrolled member achieve a healthier lifestyle by better understanding their condition, helping each member lower the risk of health-related complications, assuring that they know the importance of staying adherent to their medication therapy, improving their quality of life and customizing goals for each participant. The goal is to keep members compliant with the treatment program prescribed by their

physician so the member can improve health, feel good and enjoy a more active and happy life.

ABOUT OVERTURE HEALTH CARE

Overture Health Care is an organization that specializes in providing chronic disease management and wellness programs for employers. They will be administering the program on behalf of Building Trades Welfare Fund.

Overture Health Care's methodology and processes have proven, through published studies, to improve the health of employees and reduce their costs. This program helps the Fund avoid the need to increase contributions drastically or reduce coverage to keep up with health care inflation.

If you are interested in enrolling contact Overture Health Care at **800-997-0856** or by email at

member.services@overturehealthcare.net

Detailed step by step information about the program is outlined in your Population Health Management benefit package.



Defined-Benefit vs. Defined-Contribution Plans Explained

As the names imply, a defined-benefit plan (DB), also commonly known as a traditional pension plan, provides a specified payment amount in retirement. A defined-contribution plan (DC) allows employees to contribute and invest in funds and other securities over time to save for retirement. These key differences determine which party, the employer or employee, bears the investment risks.

In DB plans, participants receive benefits in retirement based on a formula that typically uses either (1) a combination of the worker's length of service, an accrual rate, and the average of a certain number of final years' salary or (2) a flat-dollar amount and the number of months or years the worker participated in the plan. The benefit is usually paid as a monthly benefit in retirement for the life of the participant and spouse, if married. Some DB plans allow participants to take the benefit as a lump-sum dollar amount at retirement.

In DC plans, workers are provided individual accounts funded by their own contributions, contributions from their employers, or both. **DC plans do not provide a guaranteed income.** The funds in the account experience investment gains and losses, and the contributions and earnings (if any) are used as a source of income in retirement. Examples of private-sector DC plans include profit-sharing plans, money purchase plans, 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, and Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs).

In 1975, private-sector DB plans had a total of 27.2 million active participants, and private-sector DC plans had 11.2 million active participants. Participant counts may be slightly higher than the number of individuals with DB and DC plans because an individual is counted more than once if he or she participated in more than one plan. In 2019, private-sector DB plans had 12.6 million active participants, and private-sector DC plans had 85.5 million active participants.

Although DB plans are much less common than DC plans today, the Building Trades Benefit Funds offers both to its members!

Your DB Pension Plan's accrued benefit is payable in full if you retire on or after your normal retirement date.

3. Your normal retirement date is the later of age 60 (Did you know that most of the industry is to age 65 for retirement?) or January 1st following the 5th anniversary of your original participation in the Plan. (You become a participant on the date your employer is required to make its first contribution to the Fund on your behalf.)

You may retire at 60, however, your Benefit will be increased by ½% (up to 63%) for each month that your Normal Retirement Date precedes your Pension Starting Date, provided that such actuarial increase shall stop accruing no later than the month following the month during which the Participant attains age 70 ½.

Additionally, any future increases to the pension benefit will be retroactive for active participants!

This article contains a summary of some important plan features and is not meant to supersede the official plan document.

Changing Employers

As you may know, the Building Trades Welfare Benefit Fund (Welfare Fund), Building Trades Annuity Benefit Fund (Annuity Fund), Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund (Education Fund) and the Electrician's Retirement Fund (Electrician's Fund) (collectively referred to as the "Funds") are "multiemployer plans." This means that you can generally move from one contributing employer to another contributing employer and retain your benefits with the Funds (subject to the rules described in each Fund's plan document). For example, suppose you currently work for Contributing Employer A, your project ends, and you are laid off. The next week, you are hired by Contributing Employer B. Since both these contractors are contributing employers to the Funds, health coverage for you and your eligible dependents will continue without interruption, you will continue to accrue pension credit and will not incur a break-in-service if you are not vested in a pension, contributions will continue to be credited to your annuity account balance and you will continue education/training benefits.

However, if you start working for an electrical contractor that is not a contributing employer to the Funds:

- Health coverage under the Welfare Fund for you and your dependents will terminate immediately, unless you elect to continue your coverage temporarily under COBRA on a self-pay basis;
- No additional amounts will be credited to your account balance with the Annuity Fund;
- You will no longer be able to take any courses with the Education Fund; and
- You will no longer earn pension credit or vesting service under the Electrician's Fund. Importantly, if you are not vested at the time you begin working for a non-contributing employer, you may lose all the pension credit you previously earned. Please review the "Break-in-Service" rules in the Electrician's Fund's summary plan description for information about when a non-vested participant loses previously earned pension credit and vesting service.

Therefore, it is very important for you to know whether a contractor is a contributing employer before you accept a job offer. Please call the fund's administrative manager, Dickinson Group, if you have any questions as to whether a contractor is a contributing employer, even if you believe it is a contributing employer, since circumstances may change at any time.

We Are Union! Let Us Play in PLAs!

By Steve Malito, Esq.

There have been a lot of questions about project labor agreements (PLAs) lately. So, why don't we like them? Actually, we don't have a problem with PLAs. Our issue is that PLAs are often misleading. They are supposed to be "union friendly," but they regularly exclude unions like Local 363 from them. That means that, on some occasions, contractors that employ Local 363 members have been shut out of public work bids.

Shutting out legitimate unions from PLAs hurts union workers, contractors, New York taxpayers and the state. It hurts the state and taxpayers because if we have less contractors bidding on projects, it almost always means that projects will cost more and take longer. Excluding contractors from PLAs because their union is not part of them hurts the solvency of long standing, legitimate businesses throughout New York. In the specific case of Local 363 shops, it also hurts many minority owned businesses. Finally, the union worker is the most impacted. Not being part of PLAs means no work. No work means your company may go out of business and you will lose your job, benefits, and stability.

New York is very often self-described by our leaders as a 'labor state.' Let's make sure that means ALL labor. We are union! Let us play in PLAs!

Building Trades Education Fund

Graduation

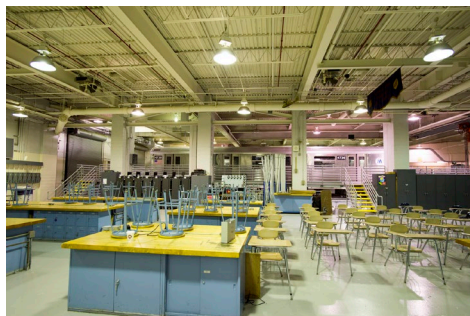
Congratulations to our graduates!

On June 2, 2023, the Building Trades Education Fund hosted its graduation event. Apprentices who completed the program graduated to M1 Mechanic. M1 and M2 Mechanics are also honored as they move on to their next progression. Graduates received certificates and class rings. Notable parties attended the event such as contractors, Fund professionals, politicians, and NYSDOL representatives.



Training Program

Enrollment for next school year is set to start by July 1st. All trainees who completed their individual requirements will receive an upgrade on July 1st, 2023. The Building Trades Education Fund offers safety courses to participants to compliment related instruction. All apprentices will be engaged in First Aid/CPR, OSHA 30, Confined Space, Lock Out / Tag Out, Asbestos Lead and Silica Awareness, NYCDOB 4 Hour Scaffold, NYCDOB 8 Hour Fall Prevention, NYCDOB 2 Hour Drug & Alcohol Awareness training courses. All fund participants are eligible to receive their SST cards directly from the Building Trades Education Fund at no cost. M1M2 courses for the school year are Blueprint Reading, Code Refresher, Grounding & Bonding, Fire Alarm, Motor Control I, Motor Control II, Pipe Bending and Service Entrance. **All M Mechanics and Journeyman are encouraged and eligible to participate voluntarily.**



J Test

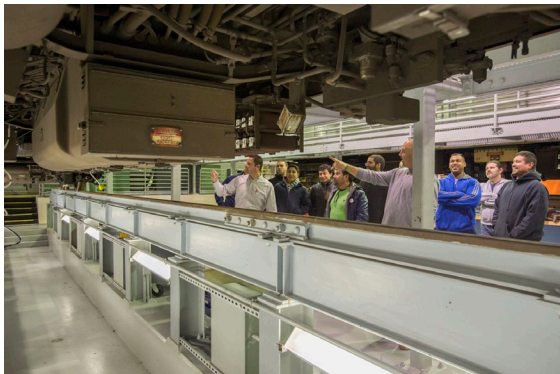
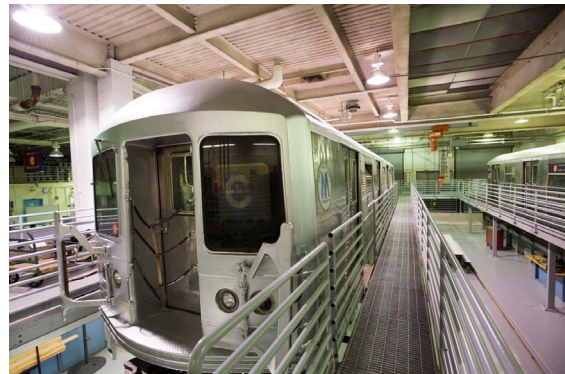
Building Trades Education Fund will host the Journeyman Examination beginning June 26, 2023. All M Mechanics are eligible to sign up for the exam. Notices will be going out in June. Those who pass will receive an upgrade to Journeyman classification.

Veterans

All veterans who participate in the Post 911 GI Bill are eligible to participate in the Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund apprenticeship program with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Apprentices are compensated for their on-the-job training hours during their participation in our program. **We encourage all veterans to inquire and are proud to be able to provide great training experience for those who served our country.**

Making an Impact!

Member Testimonial: *“The Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund helped me obtain my Master Electrician’s License in NYC. I spent thousands of dollars, passed the exam, and applied for my license. At the last step in the process, NYCDOB denied my application for failing to show sufficient work experience. The Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund (Paul Iaccarino) helped me break through to NYCDOB and have them reconsider my experiences as an electrician. The Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund provides a NYSED approved apprenticeship program that is identical to registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) with NYSDOL. By completing the apprenticeship program offered by the Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund, I was able to qualify as a graduate of an accredited apprenticeship program. With the help of the Education Fund, I became approved for my Master Electrician’s License in NYC! It was a dream come true and I am so grateful for the support of the Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund! The apprenticeship program provided by the Education Fund is credible and significant. Building Trades Education Fund made a positive impact on my life that will stay with me forever.”*



Contact Information

Building Industry Electrical Contractors Association – *Association inquiries and questions.*

1150 Portion Road Suite 19
Holtsville NY, 11742
Phone: 631-567-7603
Fax: 631-589-7166
E-Mail: bif363e@gmail.com
Website: BIECA.net

Building Trades Benefit Funds – *Member benefits inquiries and questions.*

585 Stewart Avenue Suite 330
Garden City, NY 11530
Phone: 877-347-7225
Fax: 516-740-5410
E-Mail: btsupport@dickinsongrp.com
Websites:
Welfare - btwelfarefund.org
Electricians Retirement - electretirementfund.org
Annuity - btannuityfund.org

Building Trades Educational Benefit Fund – *Member education and training inquiries and questions.*

607 Sunrise Highway 2nd Floor
Bellmore, NY 11710
Phone: 516-487-7830
Fax: 516-441-5855
E-Mail: office@bteducationfund.org
Website: bteducationfund.org