



# HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

HAPPY ★ NEW ★ YEAR

January 2024

*Thank you to everyone who sent season's greetings to HR for the holidays. We greatly appreciate you appreciating us! Happy new year!*

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION GUIDE

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has you covered for help with your new year's resolutions with their New Year's Resolution Guide, which includes the following topics:

- Making and Keeping Resolutions
- I Resolve to Eat Better
- I Resolve to Exercise More
- I Resolve to Get My Finances in Order
- I Resolve to Stop Smoking
- I Resolve to Stop Drinking
- I Resole to Work on My Relationship
- I Resolve to Get My House in Order
- I Resolve to Focus on Work Issues
- I Resolve to Learn or Do Something New

To access the guide, login in to the [EAP website](#) and search, "New Year's Resolution Guide." Login information available on page 4 of this newsletter under Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Other resources available include:

- Download a [Resilience App](#) for free.
- Boost your mental wellness and enhance your physical health by reclaiming social connections. Join a campus group, find a community group, and learn about the benefits of connection [here](#).
- Take advantage of convenient, free, or discounted ways to exercise. Click [here](#) to learn about health groups on campus such as Dance for the Health of It and Yoga Flow in the Gallery. Join the [Payne Center](#).
- Put learning on your to-do list. Join [OLLI](#) to learn about art, cooking, history, photography, and more. Consider getting a degree from USM using our [tuition waiver](#) benefit.
- Boost your career with our new Performance Management Program for Staff. If your supervisor has not already initiated this with you, ask them about it. Learn more [here](#).
- Want to learn more about the processes at USM to help you perform your job? Check out [New Leader Orientation](#) (available to all employees) with presentations on topics such as budgets, procurement, travel, payroll, HR and much more!
- More health information is attached to this month's email from our partners at Active Health.

## **DO GA'S HAVE TO MAKE UP TIME MISSED FROM WORK DURING HOLIDAYS DUE TO UNIVERSITY CLOSURES?**

No. Graduate Assistants paid monthly are not required to make up time when the University is closed for holidays, or any emergency closure declared by the President. Graduate Assistants should observe holidays the same as Faculty and Staff. Graduate Assistants are paid a monthly stipend, not hour-for-hour work performed. They do not owe for time missed during holidays.

## **SPLIT FUNDING AND DEPARTMENT ID**

When a PAF is submitted for an employee that is split funded, the budget string with the largest percentage is entered into SOARHR as the Department ID. If two funding sources are evenly split 50/50, the first budget string entered on the PAF becomes the employee's home Department ID. Please keep this information in mind as you process PAFs with split funding.

## **SUMMER 2024 GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAPERWORK**

Full Summer Semester – PAF effective dates May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - PAF due to the Graduate School.

## **2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR GRADUATE ASSISTANT PAPERWORK**

Full Academic Year – PAF Effective dates August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 - PAF due to the Graduate School.

## **TRANSITIONING FROM 12-MO to 9-MO REMINDER**

Administrators returning to faculty and transitioning from a 12-month to a 9-month position should be prepared to enter a “without pay” status during the transition time of July and August. Additionally, any personal leave accrued will be frozen and not available for use at any time unless resuming a 12-month position. For those enrolled in PERS, the unused leave will be credited to PERS when employment with USM ends. For those enrolled in ORP, unused personal leave has no value. If you would like more information about the transition and how your time may be impacted, please contact Kelly James Penot, HR Manager at [kelly.jamespenot@usm.edu](mailto:kelly.jamespenot@usm.edu).

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FALL CLASS OF 2023**

If you have an employee who completed a degree this fall, please submit a PAF so that they may receive their education enhancement. An official transcript must accompany the submission of the PAF. Information on Education Enhancements can be found in 5.9 of the [EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK](#).

If you have student workers or graduate assistants who graduated in the Fall of 2023 and are leaving employment with the University, be sure to submit a Termination Electronic PAF.


Remember, benefit-eligible employees are eligible for tuition waivers, which are available in the [forms](#) section of the HR website (both dependent and employee waivers). Tuition waivers should be submitted to Rachelle Irvin, Assistant Benefits Manager, at [rachelle.irvin@usm.edu](mailto:rachelle.irvin@usm.edu).

## Preparing for Tax Season

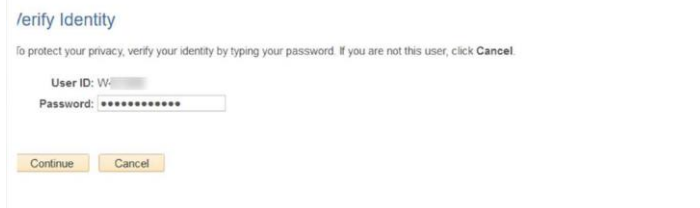
### **FORM 1095-C ELECTRONIC CONSENT**

You can now sign up for the electronic 1095-C form (a form used for tax filings regarding your benefits). Please use this to SoarHR [link](#) and the path below to complete the process.

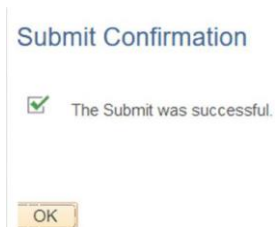
Navigate to Self Service > Benefits > 1095-C consent.



The system will then prompt you to enter your password verification.



After verification, the system displays confirmation of the submission and triggers an email confirmation of the change.



### **PREPARING FOR W-2s**

To consent to get your W-2 electronically:

- Use this [Link](#) to access SOARHR.
- Navigate to Self Service>USM HR/Payroll Self Service>W-2/W-2c Consent Link.

If you previously consented to receive the W-2 form electronically, you do not have to consent again this year. If you do not consent, you will have to wait for your W-2 to arrive in the mail. If you have questions, please refer them via e-mail to [Payroll@usm.edu](mailto:Payroll@usm.edu).

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Now is a good time to make sure that your proper mailing address is in SOAR. [Change of Address Forms](#) are located on the University Human Resources Website.

## UPCOMING HR TRAINING

### **Top 10 Supervisor Mistakes**

**Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> @ 10a (1 hr)**

*Audience: Supervisors/managers*

Summary: A review of common mistakes that leaders make in the supervision of people.

RSVP: Email [Miranda.Newman@usm.edu](mailto:Miranda.Newman@usm.edu) to receive the Teams link to the training.

### **GA Hiring Paperwork**

**Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30p (1 hr)**

*Audience: Anyone involved with processing GA hiring paperwork.*

Summary: The office of University Human Resources and the Graduate School will be holding a virtual GA hiring paperwork training session

RSVP: Email [Kelly.jamespenot@usm.edu](mailto:Kelly.jamespenot@usm.edu) to receive the Teams link to the training.

### **Recruitment & Retention Best Practices** Monday, January 29 @ 3p (1 hr)

*Audience: Supervisors/Managers*

Summary: Understand the research on what today's employee is looking for out of a job, and how you as a manager can directly impact recruitment and retention of top talent.

RSVP: Email [krystyna.varnado@usm.edu](mailto:krystyna.varnado@usm.edu) for a link to the Teams training

### **Cornerstone Overview**

**Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> @ 10a (1 hr)**

*Audience: Anyone who accesses Cornerstone as part of the hiring process.*

Summary: Overview of the Cornerstone applicant tracking system. Please review the resources and training on the [HR Website](#) prior to the session.

RSVP: Email [Kourtney.Stokey@usm.edu](mailto:Kourtney.Stokey@usm.edu) to receive the link to the training.

In addition to the above, HR has posted our full [training library](#) on our website with a complete list of all available training that can be requested through your HR Partner on-demand.

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

A reminder that all benefit-eligible employees have access to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). To register online, go to [GuidanceResources.com](http://GuidanceResources.com) or the app [GuidanceNow](#), and use the Organization Web ID COM589. When it asks for your company name, enter UNIVE (a box should pop up with USM for you to select). In addition to web resources, membership also comes with telephonic access to talk to a counselor, financial advisor, or legal advisor: 800-272-7255.

Click [here](#) to view a short video about the EAP.

This month's features include:

[Video - Resilience in Stressful Times](#)

[Coping with a Traumatic Event](#)

[Making Your New Year's Resolutions Count](#)

[Eat Right Toolkit](#)

[Emotional Eating](#)

[Mindfulness and Relaxation Toolkit](#)

[How Your EAP Can Help: Preventing Burnout](#)

[How Your EAP Can Help: Easing Anxiety](#)

[Video - What to Expect When Reaching Out](#)

## 2023 Brags- What were the major HR achievements last year?

**Electronic PAFs** are finally a reality! Our Business Analysts have been working so hard with HR to make this happen, and Phase 1 rolled out in November, which consisted of the actions Termination and Leave of Absence. Those actions must now be submitted through SoarHR. Training has been assigned to supervisors in Canvas, where training guides are also available; however, if you did not receive access, contact [hr@usm.edu](mailto:hr@usm.edu) to request to be assigned training in Canvas. All other actions will continue to use the paper PAF while we work through our phases. More to come!

2023 was finally the year we rolled out the official **Performance Management Program for Staff**. This new program replaces any previous performance evaluations departments have used, and this new program is required to be in place no later than June 2024. An information session, toolkit and other forms & resources are available on the [HR website](#). All supervisors have been assigned training in Canvas, which is required to be completed. If supervisors need assistance with the program, please reach out to Miranda Brumfield, HR Partner, at 6-5314 or [Miranda.newman@usm.edu](mailto:Miranda.newman@usm.edu).

We heard you that our website was difficult to navigate, so we did a complete **website redesign** last year. New look, easier navigation, and much more content. If you have not already, browse through our [website](#) because you may be surprised at some of the information out there- new onboarding checklists, a compensation page, a new wellness & safety page full of resources, the new leader orientation modules, *Why USM?* for applicants, and more!

Throughout the year, we always lookout for opportunities for **process improvement** and continued streamlining of processes, which included:

- A [job description](#) audit for minimum qualifications consistency across departments,
- A job code audit and update to ensure our [Affirmative Action Plan](#) data is accurate and now includes faculty data by discipline,
- New policies and processes for employment law changes enacted throughout the year, such as the Pregnant Worker Fairness Act, now [Employee Handbook 7.5.4](#),
- A mental health feature to this year's benefits fair (it's on our [website](#) if you missed it!),
- Represented USM at 8 career fairs mostly targeting AAP goal areas,
- Represented HR on important USM committees, such as the Strategic Planning Committee and Thrive USM (formerly the mental health taskforce).

Even with all of this going on, daily operations still must go on:

- Processed 12,159 PAFs (over 200 electronic PAFs already!)
- Posted over 600 jobs in Cornerstone
- Ran 1,653 background checks
- Responded to 618 requests for employment verification
- Presented over 70 training sessions on HR topics
- Implemented or updated 11 policies in the Employee Handbook
- Processed over 600 tuition waivers

And have we mentioned lately how Forbes named us a Best Place to Work? #6 in Mississippi, #2 in Education! We like mentioning that! 😊 Click [here](#) to access logos for your website & signature.



# 2024 HR Plans- What's on deck for this year?

**EPAF Phase II:** The continued rollout of the electronic PAF will be a top priority for us. Phase II includes the action Hiring. As we have more information as to how this will work and the timing, we will let you know. And, of course, we will continue to work with our advisory groups to make sure department needs are taken into consideration, and more training will be offered as we are ready.

**Leadership development:** HR takes supporting leaders very seriously as we believe good leaders are essential to the creation of an awesome culture with high morale and engagement. Every year we identify needs so that we can develop programs, tools, resources, processes, and training to help support managers. This will continue in 2024 as we also look at moving more training onto online platforms and formalize leadership training programs.

**Onboarding:** Last year we began a foundation for [onboarding](#) by creating comprehensive checklists for new hires and departments to encompass as many needs of a new hire as possible. There's still more work to be done. HR will be working with an advisory group to figure out what that next layer looks like, so more to come on this.

**More electronic forms & processes:** In addition to the PAF, we want to move as many forms and processes online as possible. Will be a continued work in progress as we prioritize our needs.

**Continued website development:** Now that we have our new website built, we want to continue adding content that will be helpful and informative for you. We especially are interested in building out the "Applicant" section for more recruitment friendly content for why USM should be the employer of choice. Once again, more to come on this, and we are always open to suggestions.

We will keep you updated on these and any other initiatives throughout the year as we have information, so be sure to check your HR newsletter monthly to stay up to date with the latest. Remember, HR newsletters are kept on the [HR website](#) for a year, so you can always access prior issues.

## CONGRATULATIONS KELLY JAMES PENOT



*Congratulations to Kelly James Penot, HR Manager, who received her MBA from USM in December. We are so proud of her hard work and dedication!*

***If you have questions about any of the information contained in this HR Update, Please contact our main line at 6-4050 or your HR Partner for more information. SMTTT!***