

**MWA RALLY**  
**Benefits Report**  
**March 2019**

The Benefit committee is always looking for new benefits that will appeal to NASCOE members but it isn't easy. We have tried to maintain the Sam's Club discount in the form of a \$10 gift card but it has been a struggle. We have looked into discount opportunities with CostCo, Hulu, Netflix and Amazon but have not had much success.

Working Advantage is a group discount that is being utilized by some members and offers some pretty nice discounts and a variety of events. Discounts are available for local movie theaters, theme parks, and hotels as well as Broadway shows and other top end entertainment so I encourage everyone to take advantage of this member benefit.

The government shutdown presented the agency and employees with significant challenges that many were not prepared for. There was a significant lack of information given to employees as to when they would be paid, filing for unemployment benefits, and how our insurance premiums and coverage would work during the shutdown. State Benefits chairs were asked to consider putting together information regarding unemployment benefits. These benefits vary significantly from state to state so this is a task that would be up to each state to address. This isn't necessarily a benefit but could be a service that the association is providing its members. This is something that will ease the stress for our members.

Unfortunately, government shutdowns are occurring more often and employees need to be prepared for these events. It became very obvious during the shutdown that a lot of our employees live paycheck to paycheck. It's a challenge for many employees to make ends meet and when they miss a paycheck for any reason, it puts them in a financial bind. It was suggested that we look into the availability of Financial Counseling. We have always received training on financial planning for retirement but what about meeting the day to day challenges so we can be ready for retirement. I asked Penny McCall of Dillard's if they had anything and she followed up with Teresa and they do have a Life Style Planning Workshop. If State's would be interested in having this type of training they can contact Dillard's Financial Services. Financial Counseling is also available through the Employee Assistance Program.

Sincerely,

Jon Williams