



EMPLOYEE ADVISORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

The New Jersey Civil Service Commission's Employee Advisory Service (EAS) Newsletter contains useful articles and information for managing various well-being and work-life issues in order to create a healthier, happier, and more productive workplace. EAS is committed to improving the quality of life for all New Jersey Civil Service employees by encouraging a good work-life balance.



Upcoming Webinar:

How to Utilize Communication Skills to Maximize Career Success

About this webinar:

Many experts agree that good communication skills are vital to career success. This important session will discuss the core skills necessary to communicate effectively in both one on one and group settings, including emotional intelligence, listening respectfully, having collaborative conversations, and making memorable presentations

Date: April 20, 2022

Time: 10:00-11:00 AM

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How to Be More Engaged at Work

It's a great feeling to be engaged at work. You're energized, focused, and motivated. That can have ripple effects on the people around you: your work colleagues, family, and friends. Feeling disengaged, on the other hand, is disheartening and draining.

It's easy to blame forces outside yourself when you're feeling down about your work. It's true that your employer and manager have roles to play in building employee engagement. However, you have a critical role, too, and there are steps you can take to be more engaged at work.

Remind yourself why you're there.

Look at the big picture of your work—why you are there and how the work is valuable:

- Think back to your reasons for taking the job in the first place. Was it to learn new skills, help people, contribute to innovation, or maybe simply to provide for your family? Are those reasons still important to you? Might you set new goals for yourself?
- Connect with the larger significance of your work. How does your work contribute to something bigger that may not be easy for you to see? If you're not clear on how your work adds to the value your organization delivers, ask your manager. Ask how you might add even more value in your work.



Collaborate and build social connections.

A key element in engagement at work is your relationship with coworkers:

- Pay attention to which individuals make you feel worse and which make you feel positive. Cultivate friendships with energizing and uplifting coworkers and people with whom you can be yourself. That's a two-way street that will push you to be helpful, positive, and supportive. Friendships at work can be one of the biggest drivers of employee engagement.
- Think about which people and groups are doing well in your organization. Seek opportunities to work with them. If that's not possible, talk to them, observe them, and learn what they're doing that is bringing them success.
- Consider acting as a mentor to a new or less experienced coworker. You'll be helping the other person, adding value to the organization, and making your work feel more meaningful.



Speak up.

Ask for what you need. Don't wait and expect it to come to you:

- Talk with your manager about ways you could be more efficient or about low-value tasks that are getting in the way of more important (and satisfying) work.
- Ask what's expected of you. Seek feedback from your manager and coworkers on what you're doing well and where you might try to improve or redirect your efforts.
- Think about your strengths and how those might be applied to help your organization succeed. This will require both self-reflection and a big-picture understanding of your organization.

Take care of yourself.

If you're feeling exhausted and burned out by your work, it might be because you're not taking care of yourself:

- Take breaks. Five-minute stretch breaks and short walks are good for your body and can clear your mind. Meditation and mindfulness exercises can calm and refresh you. Time in nature can be soothing and invigorating. Vacations are important to reenergize you for renewed effort and creative thinking. Even one day off when you're feeling worn down can give you a boost.
- Attend to your health. Eat healthy foods, stay hydrated, engage in regular physical activity, and adopt healthy sleep habits. Wellbeing is a critical foundation for engagement.

Celebrate progress.

People tend to ruminate on setbacks and let successes slide past without noting them. Do the opposite:

- Every so often, maybe at the end of each day or each week, think back on your progress. That might be something you accomplished, a deadline met, a new skill learned, a step you took in improving yourself, a positive interaction with a customer or coworker, or any win—large or small—you may have had. Celebrate and feel good about that progress.
- Practice and show gratitude. Notice and compliment coworkers on their accomplishments. Thank them when their efforts help you and your team. Take time to feel grateful for what is good in your life—at work and outside of work.

Manage your reactions and your thinking.

You can't control how the people around you behave, but you can control how you react. You also have more control than you may realize over how you think about events at work:

- When your immediate reaction is defensive or angry, force yourself to pause and come up with a different, more productive response. What can you say or do to resolve the conflict or overcome the obstacle?
- Look for the positive side of any setback or change. Is there an opportunity to be found? Something you can learn and apply in the future? Try to be open and curious rather than negative or resistant. This is known as positive reframing.

Seek variety and new opportunities.

Look for ways to add variety and opportunities for growth:

- Try doing your tasks in different ways, both to find efficiencies and ways to make them more enjoyable and satisfying.
- Volunteer for projects that will give you a chance to work with new people and learn new skills. Extra work that adds variety and opportunity to your work life can be invigorating rather than tiring or overwhelming.
- Ask your manager if you can be trained in a new skill so that you can provide coverage for a coworker when they are out or so that you can help the team extend its capabilities.

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Make time for a personal passion.

Work is not the only place to seek engagement and satisfaction in life. Finding passion and energy outside of work can be just as important, and that can help improve your outlook in the workplace:

- Make time for a personal interest or passion. It might be a hobby or creative activity. It might be returning to a sport you love or learning a new way of cooking. Immersing yourself in an activity you enjoy can put you in a mental state called flow that takes your mind off worries and negative thoughts. Building new skills, making things, and reaching personal goals can all help enhance your self-esteem, confidence, and motivation.
- Volunteer. Get involved in your community as a volunteer or volunteer your skills for a cause you care about. Applying your talents and time to help others can give your life meaning and make you feel good about yourself—feelings that can help you take a positive approach at work.



Get the Most Out of Savings: Smart Savings Tips for 2022

So often, people are bombarded with messages regarding finances, such as, “Save 20 percent of your income,” “Make sure you have a minimum of \$1,000 in your emergency fund,” “You should save and invest!”

The list goes on and on, from financial gurus to your neighbors’ advice; sometimes misinformation never ends.

Everyone has an opinion on how to maximize your savings, but which is the right way?

Just as there are multiple routes to a destination, there are many acceptable ways to save money. The difference really comes down to the circumstances of the individual. A single individual making \$100,000 a year and living with roommates will have a starkly different savings strategy than a couple making the same amount of money but with a mortgage, student loans, and children. Bearing that in mind, this article will look at three steps that will help you save more in 2022.



Check your expenses.

Every structure needs a foundation. To make sure you are financially sound, a budget is needed. A budget helps you to clearly see how much money is flowing in and out of your household. Many people are surprised at the amount of money that goes to miscellaneous spending. Having a detailed budget—one that accounts for more than just food, housing, utilities, and gas—will allow you to better manage your money, address debt, and reach different financial goals (e.g. saving).

Select a specific goal.

Saving is great, but if you aren’t saving with a goal in mind, chances are it will be hard to put something aside regularly. There are a number of goals that fall within the saving realm.

Some may include:

- Emergency funds.
- Short-term goals of less than two years (e.g. vacation, paying off a small debt).
- Long-term goals of two to 15 years (e.g. college, buying large-ticket items in cash).

Whatever your goal may be, it is important to break goals down into smaller goals to keep your momentum. An example may be saving to buy a car with cash. Your ultimate goal is to save \$10,000, but you will aim to save \$850 a month.

You get paid bi-weekly, so you will then put away \$425 each paycheck for the next 12 months.





PAY YOURSELF FIRST:

Pay your future self first.

You work hard for your money. Because you work hard, of course you deserve to treat yourself. Treating yourself is fine as long as you aren't stealing from your future self.

Most of what you buy today won't do anything for you in the future. Paying yourself first is easy if you use automation. Every time you get money direct deposited, have your account send a predetermined amount over to your savings account. You won't miss it.

Lastly, it is recommended that you look into putting your money in a high-yield savings account. The standard savings account will give you a return of 0.01 to 0.09 percent. Most high-yield savings accounts are hovering around 0.50 percent interest. Since your money will be sitting in your savings account for a while, why not give it an opportunity to make you a little more?

These three steps seem so simple, but, when applied to everyday finances, you will see the difference. Taking stock of your finances, setting reachable goals, and paying yourself first will have you on the way to saving more than you thought you could.

You will have less debt, you will no longer be blindsided by car repair expenses, and your future self will thank you.



HUSTLE

WORK HARD WITH
CONSISTENCY AND
DETERMINATION
TO EARN THE LIFE
YOU DESERVE.

GRIND

PUSH THROUGH
THE MUNDANE
TASKS NECESSARY
TO ACHIEVE
YOUR GOAL.

EXECUTE

PUT IN THE
WORK AND
LET YOUR
RESULTS DO
THE TALKING.

National Alcohol Screening Day

April 7, 2022

Deciding to Quit Drinking

Many people with drinking problems cannot tell when their drinking is out of control. You likely have a drinking problem when your body depends on alcohol to function and your drinking is causing problems with your health, social life, family, or job. Recognizing that you have a drinking problem is the first step toward being alcohol-free.

Talk with your health care provider about your drinking. Your health care provider can help you find the best treatment.

Are you ready to change?

You may have tried to stop drinking many times in the past and feel you have no control over it. Or you may be thinking about stopping, but you're not sure if you're ready to start.

Change takes place in stages over time. The first stage is being ready to change. Important stages that follow include:

- Thinking about the pros and cons of stopping drinking.
- Making small changes and figuring out how to deal with the hard parts, such as what to do when you're in a situation where you would normally drink.
- Stopping drinking.
- Living an alcohol-free life.

Many people go back and forth through the stages of change several times before the change really lasts. Plan ahead for what you will do if you slip up, and try not to be discouraged.

Lifestyle Changes That Can Help

Here are some tips to help you control your drinking:

- Stay away from people you normally drink with or places where you would drink.
- Plan activities you enjoy that do not involve drinking.
- Keep alcohol out of your home.
- Follow your plan to handle your urges to drink. Remind yourself why you decided to quit.
- Talk with someone you trust when you have the urge to drink.
- Create a polite but firm way of refusing a drink when you are offered one.

Getting Help From Others

After talking about your drinking with your health care provider or an alcohol counselor, you will likely be referred to an alcohol support group or recovery program. These programs:

- Teach people about alcohol abuse and its effects.
- Offer counseling and support about how to stay away from alcohol.
- Provide a space where you can talk with others who have drinking problems.

You can also seek help and support from:

- Trusted family members and friends who do not drink.
- Your place of work, which may have a program (like EAS), that can help employees with personal issues such as alcohol use.
- Support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): <http://www.aa.org/>

Alcohol Withdrawal

You may be at risk for symptoms of alcohol withdrawal if you stop drinking suddenly. If you are at risk, you will likely need to be under medical care while you stop drinking. Discuss this with your health care provider.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced”

-James Baldwin



Connect with EAS!



Support - Empowerment - Growth
Employee Advisory Service

How Can We Help You?

Toll free number:
1-866-327-9133

Email:
EAS_Help@csc.nj.gov

Website:
www.csc.nj.gov/csc/employees/programs/advisory/eas.html

24 hours a day 7 days a week
(Emergency Mental Health Services)

