

HR CONNECT

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

QUARTER 01 YEAR 2024

Newsletter Highlights

AN EXCLUSIVE EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SOLUTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

VALENTINE'S DAY FOR NEWTON SENIORS

HR TIPS - HEAR FROM THE PROS!

ACT FAST: IMPORTANT BENEFIT DEADLINES YOU NEED TO KNOW

Your feedback is important to us. For questions, comments and concerns, please share your thoughts anonymously [using this form](#).

Introducing Our New Citywide Quarterly Employee Newsletter

Welcome Team Newton! Your Human Resources team is thrilled to launch our first-ever citywide quarterly employee newsletter.

This platform aims to connect us all as employees so we can celebrate achievements, share important news, and keep you informed. In each edition, you can expect to see updates on what's happening throughout the City, spotlights on outstanding colleagues, career development tips, information regarding employees benefits and wellness resources, and much more.

We want you to be a part of this exciting journey and encourage you to interact with our newsletter – share your stories, ideas, and feedback as you navigate the year ahead.

Stay tuned for upcoming editions of this newsletter, which will be distributed quarterly. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to our HR team with any questions or suggestions for future content.

Here's to another year of collaboration, growth, and shared success. Let the journey begin!

Sincerely, *Rae* *Kelly* *Jeanne*
Francoise *Caroline* *Mary*
Michael *MPO* *Michelle M.*

Your City HR Team

STAY IN THE LOOP!

If you have a city email address, you will always have access to this newsletter and receive it regularly. Do you want to receive this newsletter to another email address as well? If so, please subscribe to our Constant Contact list and be the first to know about exciting updates, City news, and exclusive content. Scan the QR code or use [this link](#) to subscribe today.



Follow 'City of Newton, MA' on LinkedIn to stay updated on the latest news, events, and exciting happenings within our **#TeamNewtonMA** network. By joining our LinkedIn community, you'll gain access to the latest job openings, professional development opportunities, and other engaging content. Let's build a stronger network together – click 'Follow' on our LinkedIn page and be part of our online team.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

PUBLIC SAFETY CHAMPIONS PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

Highlighting the public service employees who keep our community safe is incredibly important as we begin the new year. We'd like to take a moment to spotlight the Newton Police Department and Newton Fire Department who both are worthy of recognition for the work they do in keeping our community safe. Our Police Officers, Dispatchers and Firefighters are always trained and ready to spring into action and are worthy of this quarter's spotlight. We are also welcoming new members to our valued public safety team with new academy graduates coming this year!

The police department currently has 6 new police recruits in the academy that started on January 8th; with an estimated graduation date of June 17th.

Our most recent group of new Firefighters (pictured below) graduated from the academy on January 22nd. The new graduates were assigned to their first fire trucks on January 28th.

The continuous growth within these two departments will ensure the safety of our city. Thank you for all the courageous hard work!

We are also working to expand our dispatch team. We welcome you to spread the word about the great opportunities available to join our team as an Emergency Telecommunications Dispatcher by sharing [this link](#) to our recruitment page.



Jan 19 2024 Newton Fire Academy Graduates

CONGRATULATIONS JOSE!

Jose Ramirez, Senior Building Custodian in City Hall, retired after nearly 16 years of service. Right before Jose retired on January 22, 2024, he met with our HR Department Support Division staff for an employee spotlight interview. Jose, we wish you all the best in your well-earned retirement!

● **How long have you been employed by the City?**

About 16 years.

● **What position do you hold and in what department?**

Senior Building Custodian for Public Buildings. Currently working in City Hall, but I have worked in other City buildings also.

● **What are you looking forward to most in your retirement?**

Going back home to El Salvador – where I can enjoy warmer weather!
(Jose was interviewed on January 16, 2024, as it was snowing outside.)

● **What is a favorite memory of yours while working for the City?**

Working with an old colleague, Linda Plaut. Linda trusted my knowledge and ability to do my job. Linda was excellent and I enjoyed working with her.

● **Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

I appreciated the opportunity to work at City Hall and to give back to the city.

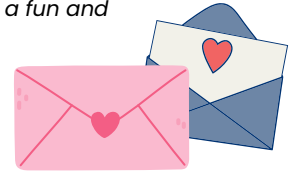




SAVE THE DATES IN JANUARY - MARCH

- Black History Month (February month long)
- Heart Health Month (February, month long)
- Lunar New Year, February 10th
- Valentine's Day, February 14th
- President's Day, February 19th
- Employee Appreciation Day, March 1st
- International Women's Day, March 8th

Each quarter, we will feature an event for City employees to work on a project together with the goal of enjoying a fun and rewarding activity.



SPREAD THE LOVE: A VALENTINE'S DAY CARD PROJECT FOR SENIORS

Please join us in our Valentine's Day card project this year to make an impact on seniors in our community. We've partnered with the Senior Services Department to deliver 50 handmade Valentine's Day cards for seniors this season.

When: Monday, February 12, 2024 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm in City Hall Room 204

We'll provide the supplies; you'll bring your creativity and enthusiasm for making something for someone else.

Decorate your cards in the room or pick up supplies to take home if your schedule doesn't allow. We just ask that all completed Valentines Day cards be returned to the Human Resources office by 12 noon on February 13, 2024.

Questions? Email cwilson@newtonma.gov or call (617)796-1260.

RECIPE CORNER

"Rae's Apple Pie Minis"



Ingredients

- 1 box (14.1 oz) refrigerated Pillsbury™ Mini Pie Crusts (14 Count), softened as directed on box
- 1 can (21 oz) fruit apple pie filling, coarsely chopped
- Whipped topping or vanilla ice cream, if desired

Directions:

- Heat oven to 425°F (400°F for dark or nonstick pan). Remove crusts from pouches; slowly and gently unroll on work surface. Separate into 14 crusts; discard scraps.
- Fit crusts into 14 ungreased regular-size muffin cups, pressing firmly against sides and bottoms. Spoon about 2 tablespoons pie filling into each crust-lined cup.
- Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until edges are deep golden brown and filling is bubbly. (If baking in batches, refrigerate remaining cups until baking.) Cool in pan 10 minutes.
- Use offset spatula or spoon to gently remove pies from cups; top with whipped topping or ice cream. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Have a favorite recipe? Share it with your colleagues and be featured in our next newsletter!

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE IDEAS!

ESS IS COMING SOON

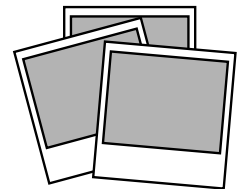
Employee Self-Service, known as "ESS" is coming soon to our workforce.

Soon, you'll have a convenient and user-friendly platform at your fingertips, allowing you to access and manage your HR-related tasks effortlessly.

Stay tuned for more details on this exciting new tool coming soon.

QUARTERLY BANNER SUBMISSION

We want to feature YOU! Submit your best shots of natural scenery, historical landmarks, and community beacons that represent different areas in Newton. You will get photo credit if your image is selected for our newsletter banner.



Submit your photo via email to rgoodine@newtonma.gov

Are you a Newton resident over 60 or have a family member who is one? Check out [this link](#) to the Newton Senior Services Department who is running a survey to identify the long term needs of Newton residents ages 60+ as they prepare for NewCal.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Flu season is still here and maintaining good hygiene practices is crucial.

Did you know that your Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance coverage through the City includes all vaccines recommended and approved by the FDA?

The flu vaccine is especially important to those members who are at high risk of developing complications should they get the flu. Healthcare professionals recommend that everyone over the age of six months get a flu shot.

There is no cost for the flu vaccination for insured members, and no prescription is needed. Remember, COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may be administered on the same day and at the same visit.

To learn more about the different types of vaccines for the 2023–2024 season, visit the CDC website by clicking 'Read More'.

[READ MORE](#)

FLEXIBLE SPENDING DEADLINE

Attention Team Newton! Don't forget to maximize the benefits of your Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs). As we transition into the new year, this is a friendly reminder that **the grace period for spending down your 2023 FSA funds is March 15, 2024.**

Take advantage to this opportunity to invest in your well-being. Consider using your remaining funds for eligible health expenses, such as medical appointments, prescriptions, and wellness products.

Take charge of your health and finances as we start the year strong.

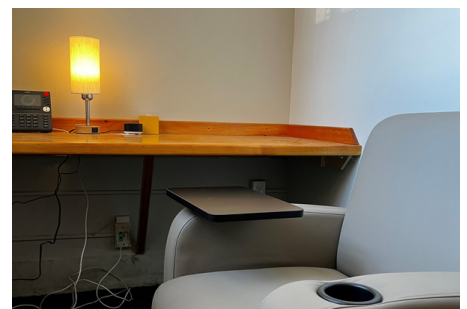
Did you know that major retailers like Amazon, CVS, and Walgreens offer a wide range of eligible health and wellness products through your FSA? For more details on eligible expenses, check your FSA guidelines or reach out to our HR team. Here's to a healthier and wealthier you in 2024!

[READ MORE](#)

Inside Newton City Hall's New Employee Wellness Room

We have some exciting news and are thrilled to announce the grand opening of our brand-new Employee Wellness Room located inside of Newton City Hall. This private space is designed to promote health and well-being, offering a comfortable space for lactating parents, and health-focused activities.

We invite you to join us for an Open House on Wednesday, March 31, 2024 to explore the space firsthand. More details to come. For now, check out the stunning photos capturing the layout of the space.



OUR COMMITMENT TO WELLNESS

We are committed to fostering a workplace that prioritizes the health and well-being of all our employees. This year we are excited to introduce a new wellness initiative and program which will include:

- Health Improvement Programs
- Health Workshops
- Wellness Seminars
- And more!

Participate in our upcoming wellness survey and make your voice heard. Your input matters, and the feedback we receive will help us shape the future of wellness initiatives that align with your needs.

Keep an eye out for our Wellness Survey by email or contact us in HR for more information.



Q1 Wellness Event

In honor of Heart Health Month this February, join us for an empowering virtual webinar hosted by our partners at Blue Cross Blue Shield to gain expert tips on nurturing a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Virtual Webinar: "Solutions for Heart Health"

Date: February 28, 2024

Time: 2pm EST.

Use this link to join: <https://bit.ly/3UIXuXP>

FITNESS REIMBURSEMENT

Don't forget about your 2023 Fitness and Weight Loss Reimbursement through BCBS – covered members have **until March 31st** to submit for the previous calendar year.

- Weight Loss Program Reimbursement: \$150 weight loss reimbursement per calendar year for fees paid to qualified programs focused on eating, physical habits and lifestyle counseling (in-person, phone, online). This includes any combination of fees incurred by all enrolled members.
- Members can submit for reimbursement online at bluecrossma.org if they have a registered account for a seamless process or can complete and mail in a reimbursement form.

[Fitness Reimbursement Form](#)

[Weight loss Reimbursement Form](#)

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

The City of Newton provides all City of Newton Staff with access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services through CMG Associates.

Services Include:

- ICONNECTYOU for Instant Support
- Monthly Webinars
- Assessment & Referral
- Work/Life Wellness Web-Based Services
- Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Abuse
- Violence Prevention
- Financial & Legal Consultation Services
- Substance Abuse Professional Services (DOT)

City of Newton employees may reach CMG Associates to speak with a clinician 24/7 by calling 833-549-3277.

To learn more please visit the CMG Associates official website: [Employee Assistance Program - CMG Associates](#)

EAP Password: **Newton**

HR TEAM

SAFETY TIPS FROM KELLY BROWN



Each quarter we will share safety tips that are geared to the season, the work that we do, the injuries that we tend to see in that season, and we will also highlight OSHA monthly safety days, and observances.

Walk like a Penguin- A Winter Safety Hack

Slip and falls are the leading cause of injury to the elderly and are also a leading cause of workplace injuries in the U.S.

Did you know that approximately 25 percent of slip and falls tend to be snow-related Winter-related. Slips, trips and falls cause countless injuries and result in lost work, increased insurance costs and just a whole lot of pain.

In the first quarter of 2023, 33 employees were injured at work. Of these injuries, 3 were due to snow and ice. We think that one injured employee is too many, and have a solution for you. The penguin shuffle is the not-so-secret weapon against slips and falls.

Want to know how to master it? Take a quick peek at [this video](#) showcasing the art of walking like a penguin.

Remember if you do fall, please report it to our Workers Compensation Manager at 617-796-1266 and think RICE thoughts.

Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, and call the doctor.

MPO'S MANAGEMENT MINUTE

Supporting your team's New Year's Resolutions

The second Friday in January is known as National Quitter's Day. This day doesn't mark the day someone might decide to quit eating sugar in the new year, or perhaps quit smoking, but instead it marks the day that most Americans actually quit their New Year's resolutions.

There are many reasons why people decide to quit their resolutions or find themselves not making them the priority they hoped as they rang in the New Year on December 31st.

With some research showing that only 10% of those who pick a New Year's resolution, actually keep to them, what can you do as a manager to help your staff achieve their goal?

Starting off a new calendar year offers a great opportunity for you to set goals and support the overall wellbeing of your team. Taking stock of how your team is doing on a "people level" is a constant process but why not capitalize on the start of the 2024 year and find ways to support both the professional and personal goals of your staff.

A new survey from Forbes Health found the top three resolutions for 2024 were improving personal fitness, improving personal finances and focusing on mental health. There are positive impacts both personally and professionally when we focus on our physical and mental health and our personal finances. As a member of **#TeamNewtonMA** there are many resources available to you and your staff to commit to those New Year's resolutions (or re-commit if you recently participated in National Quitter's Day!). As a manager, you can benefit from these resources and your team members can benefit when you share that knowledge and make space available to your staff to do the same. Encourage your staff to reach out to the HR team for information on available resources, be flexible with allowing them access to these resources and make your staff's personal and professional wellbeing an important part of your day to day management philosophy.

Happy New Year!

