

State of Arkansas

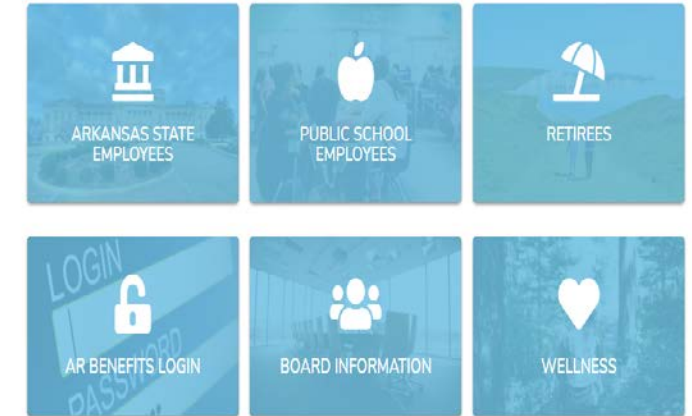
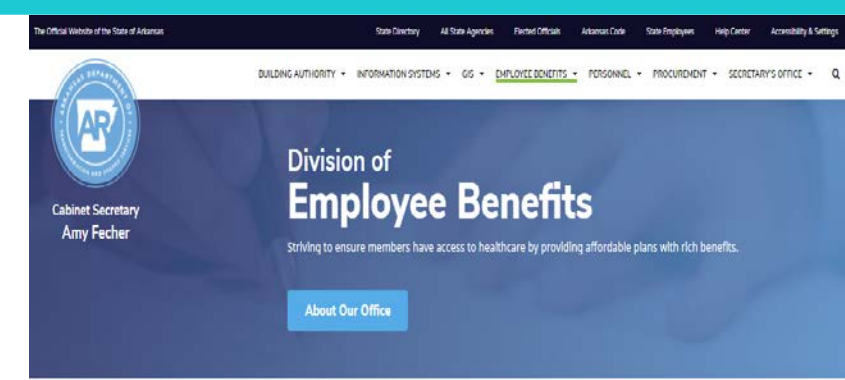
# Review of transform.ar.gov's Benefits Websites

Observations and Recommendations

September 15, 2021

# Background

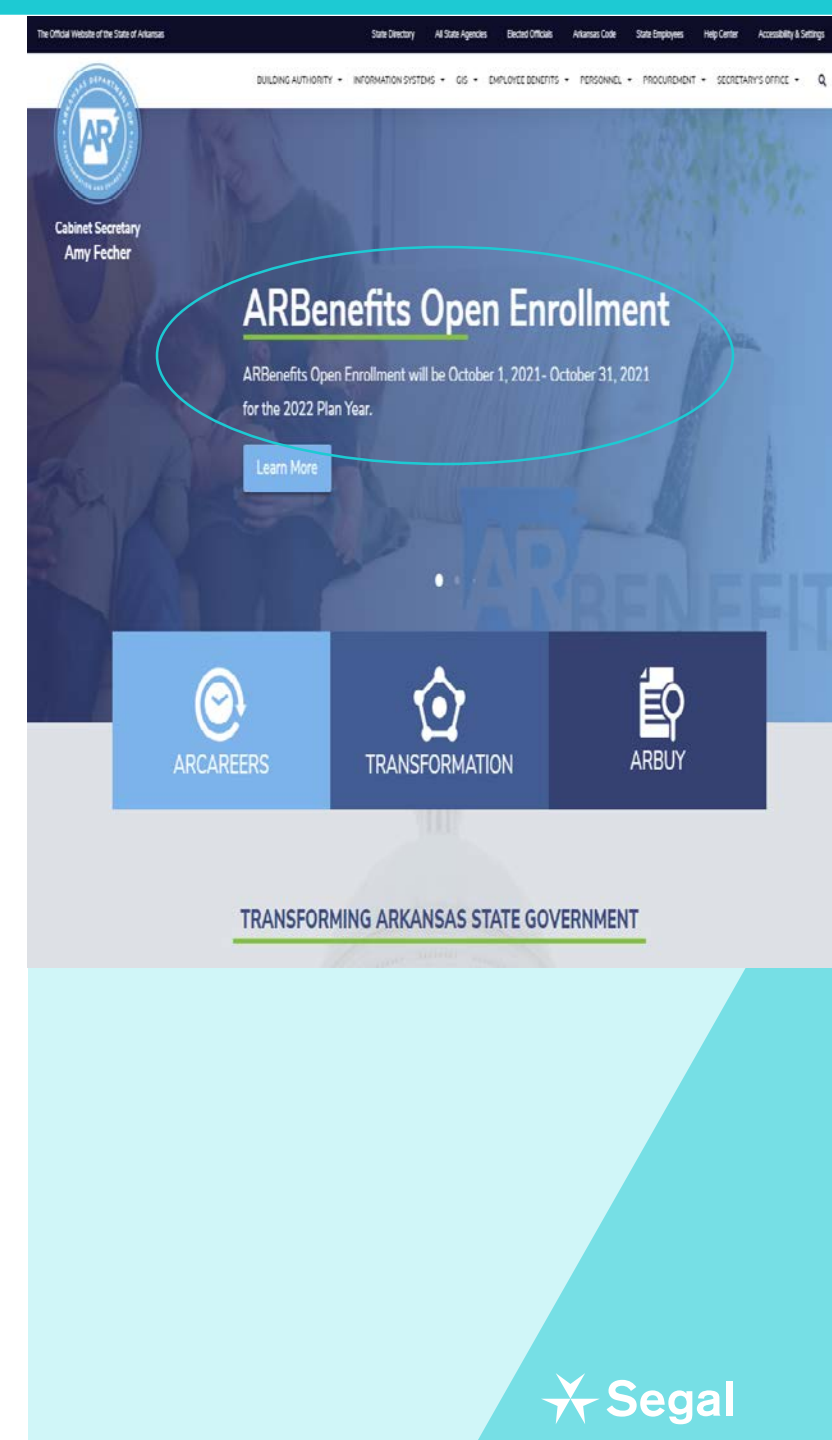
- **transform.ar.gov** has 2 similar benefits information website subsections:
  - State employees
  - Public School employees
- Segal took a brief look at the sites, analyzing them at a high level to help determine sites' value to current and prospective employees. We looked at:
  - Usability
  - Design
  - Content accessibility, hierarchy, and organization
  - Navigation
  - Naming and information linking conventions



For questions regarding your benefits or to speak with member services, please contact 501-682-9656 or email [AskEBD@dfa.arkansas.gov](mailto:AskEBD@dfa.arkansas.gov).

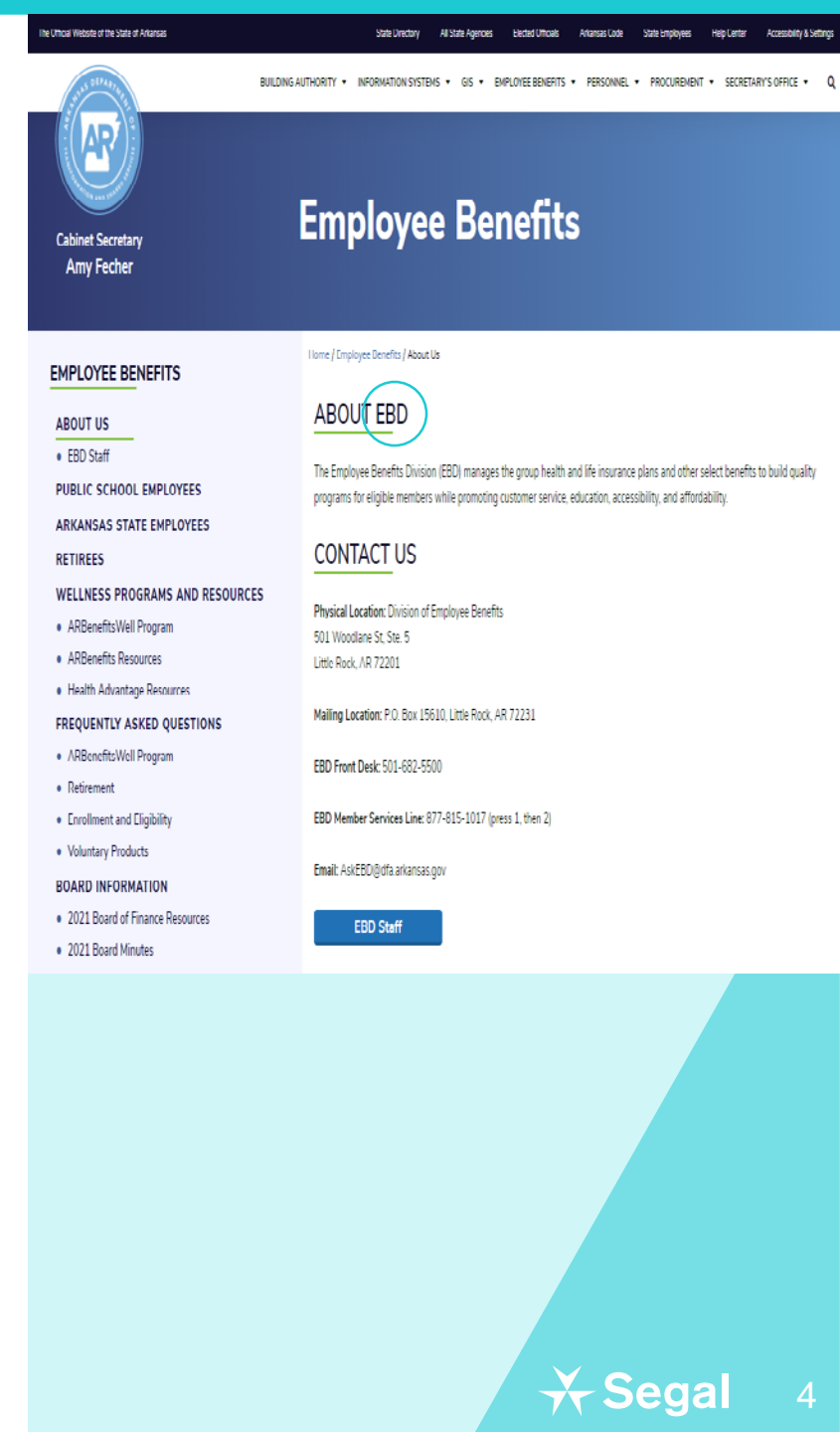
# Observations/ Recommendations

- Employee Benefits home page doesn't incorporate current best-practice information presentation
  - **Example:** Rotating banner (that is, changing text appearing on top of image) hides promotional content
    - Users may not see all three content promotions
  - **Best practice:** Use “tiles” to highlight content promotion
- “Call-to-action” buttons don't go directly to featured information
  - **Example:** For annual enrollment call-to-action “learn more” button, button goes to benefits landing page, not directly to enrollment content
  - **Best practice:** Button should go directly to enrollment content so users don't need to search for it on benefits landing page



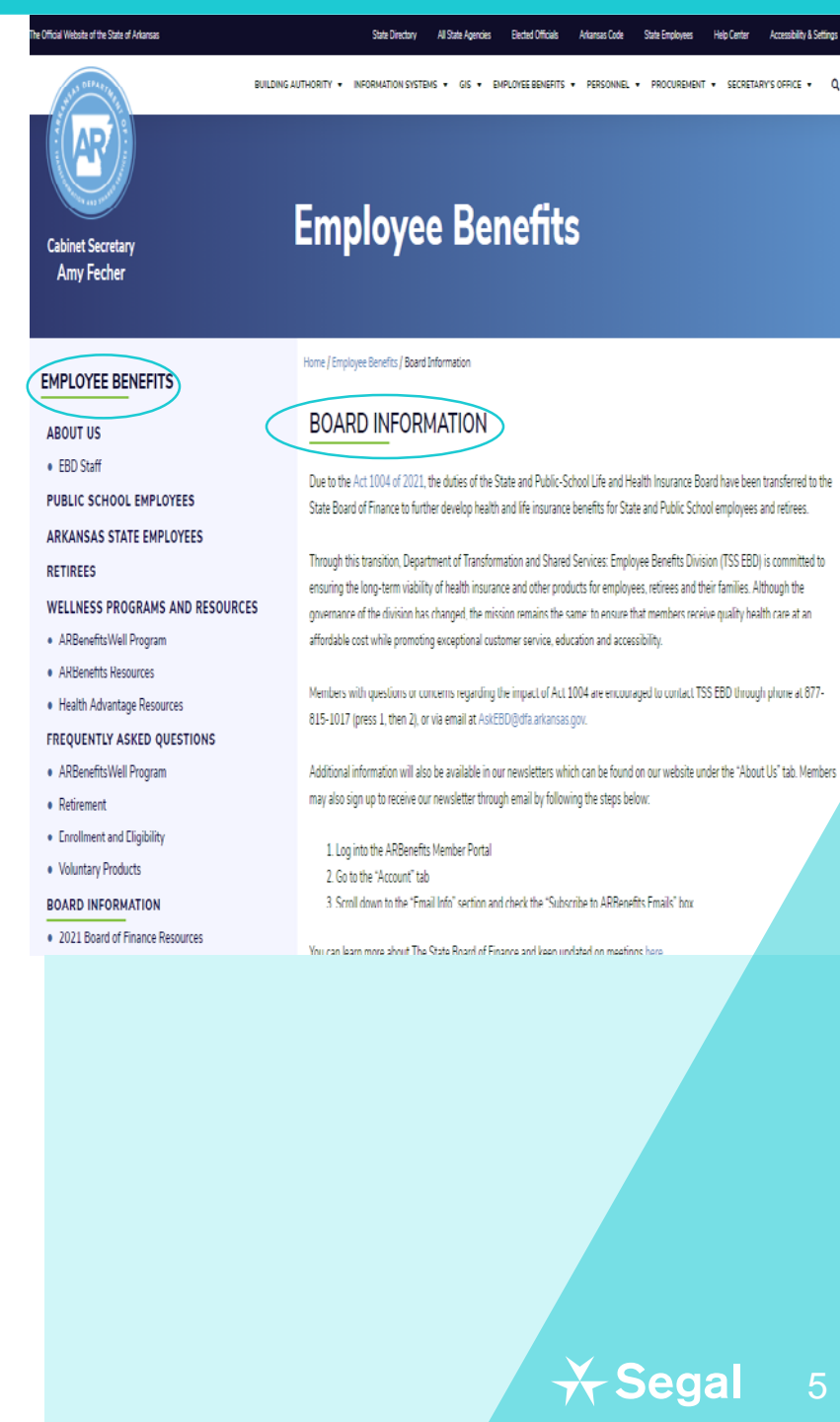
# Observations/ Recommendations *cont'd*

- Acronyms appear as unfamiliar / unknown information
  - **Example:** In About Us section: “EBD Staff,” “ASE Rates,” and “PSE Rates”
  - **Best practice:** Spell out all acronyms, using them **only** if they are common and universally understood
- Content is organized from a benefits administrator or benefits program point of view
  - **Example:** On employee benefits landing page and left navigation pane, primary call to action is to read “About Our Office” and “About Us”
  - **Best practice:** Organize content from a user’s point of view



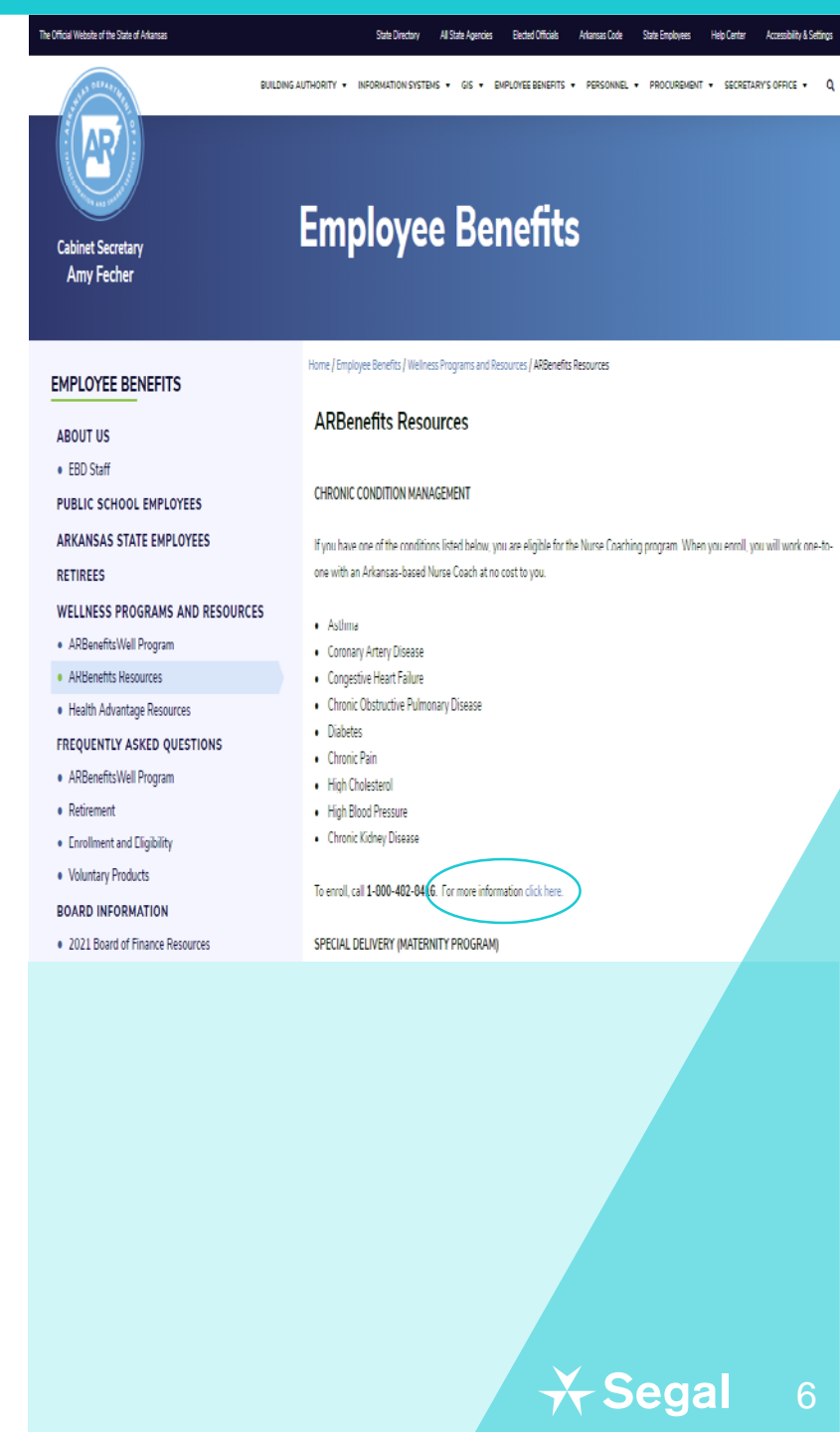
# Observations/ Recommendations *cont'd*

- Some design elements distract from content
  - **Example:** For “Employee Benefits” in left navigation pane and “Board Information” in main body, heading text underline in green is only a partial—rather than a full—underline
  - **Best practice:** Design elements should properly anchor page text and appear seamless with text
- Benefits information is trapped in PDFs, making it difficult for users to find what they’re looking for
  - **Example:** Enrollment guides posted as PDFs aren’t as helpful for mobile users or users who need better accessibility
  - **Best practice:** Include HTML (web-specific) text that’s descriptive and provides links to details



# Observations/ Recommendations *cont'd*

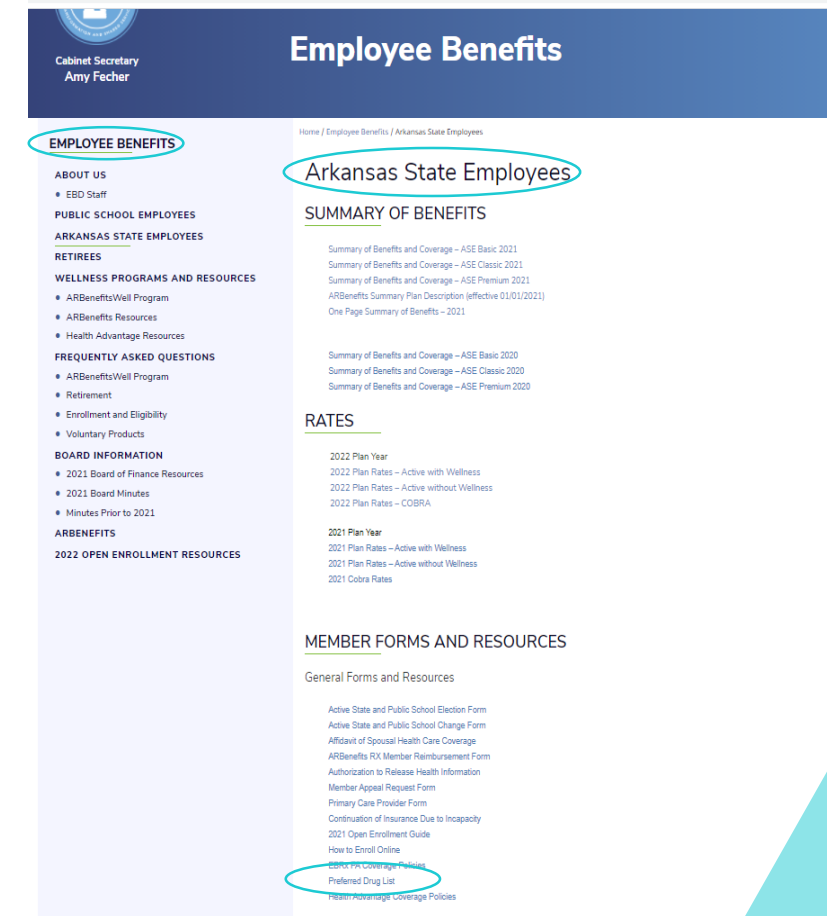
- Links don't describe where user will go or help them know what information they will find
  - **Example:** Use of “click here” under Benefits Resources doesn't allow screen readers (for sight-impaired) or users who scan for links
  - **Best practice:** Have link names describe where user will go, what information user will learn, or action user can take





# Observations/ Recommendations *cont'd*

- Some content is buried, making it challenging for users to find
  - **Example:** List of preferred drugs is 4 levels down—Employee Benefits > Arkansas State Employees > Member Forms and Resources > Preferred Drug List
  - **Best practice:** Have a higher-level section for prescription drug information and include Preferred Drug List there
- Naming can be confusing
  - **Example:** “Employee Benefits” vs. “AR Benefits”—is there a difference? If so, what is the difference?
  - **Best practice:** Use consistent and descriptive terminology to help avoid confusing users



# Observations/ Recommendations *cont'd*

- Site is not optimized for mobile viewing / use
  - **Example:** The left side bar navigation takes up too much space on a mobile device (see smartphone image, at right)
  - **Best practice:** Mobile viewing / use should be just as easy and engaging as viewing / use on laptop or desktop computer
- Search feature scans entire transform.ar.gov site, yielding results that are too broad to be useful
  - **Example:** Search “medical plan” and results include “State Panelists Endorse \$3.7M in Requests” to “Delegation Orders” to “Technology Legislation”
  - **Best practice:** Configure search engine to return results specific only to employee benefits





# Observations/ Recommendations *cont'd*

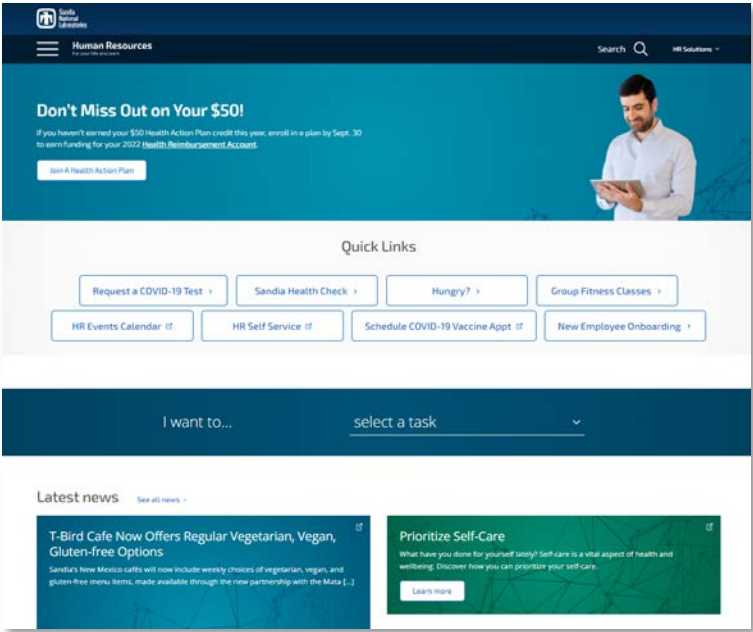
- Primary navigation should separate topics more clearly and be more intuitive and easy to follow
  - **Example:** Top-level navigation includes “About Us,” “Public School Employees,” “Arkansas State Employees,” and “Retirees” as groups / audiences, but also “Wellness” and “ARBenefits,” etc.
  - **Best practice:** User first selects user type, then topic area
- **Overall:** Site is reference-based and primarily a repository for documents
  - **Best practice:** Site should help promote and market the value of employees’ benefits, educate employees with easy-to-find information presented using a modern and attractive visual approach, and engage employees with their benefits plans and programs



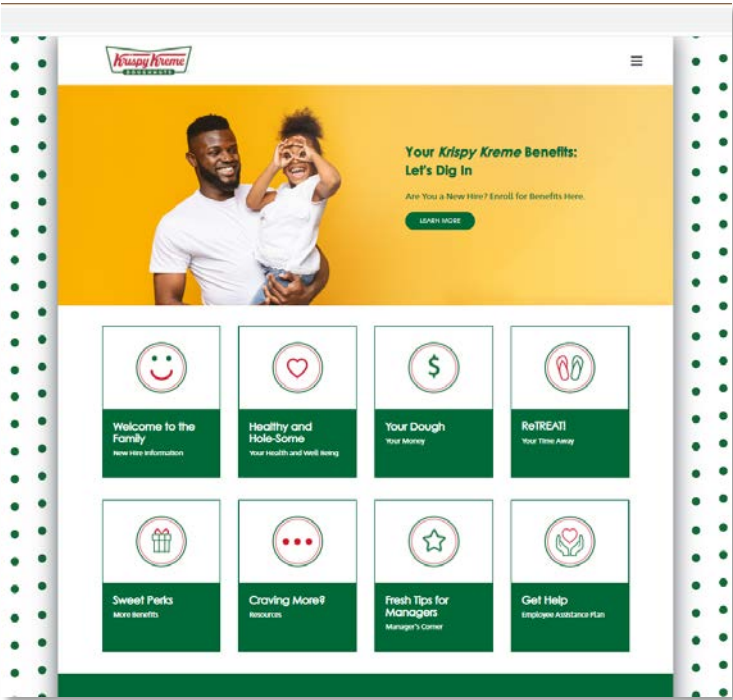
# In Summary: Benefits Site Best Practices

- Host site outside the firewall for easy access anytime, anywhere, by employees, dependents, and prospective employees
- Integrate with intranet (if applicable)
- Optimize for mobile viewing / use
- Curate one centralized resource as a starting point for employee questions
- Organize content around employees' goals and priorities (not HR / Benefits organization silos)
- Promote as the go-to source for all benefits information
- Keep content and design fresh by updating consistently
- Review and act on site analytics regularly

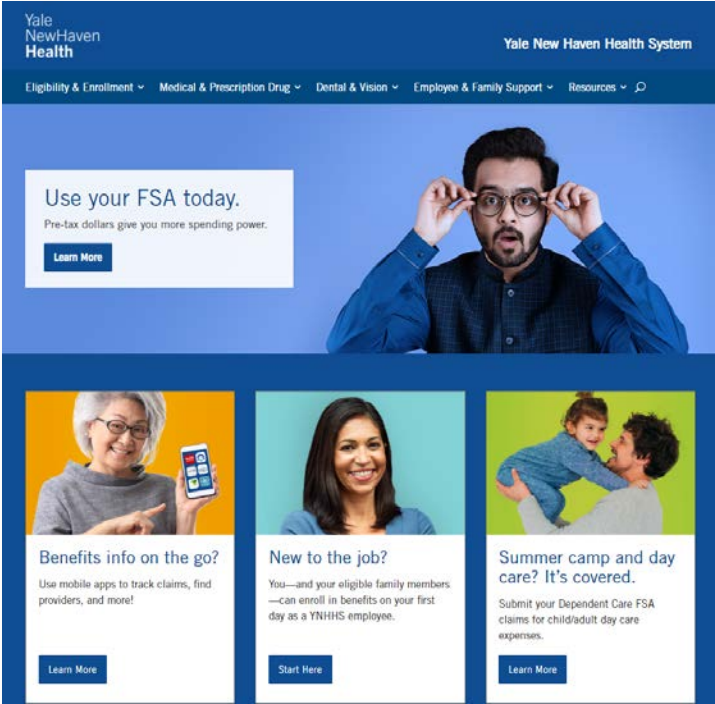
# Sample Client Sites



[hr.sandia.gov/](https://hr.sandia.gov/)



[kkbenefits.com/](https://kkbenefits.com/)



[ynhhsbenefitsconnection.org/ynhhs/](https://ynhhsbenefitsconnection.org/ynhhs/)



# Thank You!

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