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Powering Great Workplaces®



2026 Lifestyle Spending Account Eligible Expenses Guide

Benchmark insights, category examples, and evolving approaches from modern LSA programs

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Flexible Benefits Continue to Evolve

As organizations continue personalizing employee benefits, Lifestyle Spending Accounts have become one of the most adaptable ways to support different needs, life stages, and workforce preferences.

From fitness memberships and mindfulness apps to caregiving support and financial wellness, eligible expense categories continue expanding as organizations rethink what meaningful employee support looks like.



Espresa Benchmark Insights Show That:

- Programs with **broader category flexibility** tend to see stronger participation
- Employees consistently engage with wellbeing, family, and lifestyle-related expenses
- Many employers are prioritizing flexibility without additional complexity

This Guide Highlights:

- Common LSA eligible expense categories
- Popular employee purchases
- Examples of evolving wallet structures
- Participation and engagement insights
- Policy considerations and exclusions

6–8

Categories

Programs with 6–8 categories show the strongest participation and spend efficiency.

218

Unique Plans

Across all Espresa clients, 218 customized plans serve distinct employee needs.



Eligible Expenses Are Becoming More Personalized

Many organizations are moving away from narrow wellness stipends and toward broader, more flexible eligible expense categories that support employees across different life stages and interests.

Most Programs Include A Mix Of:

- Wellbeing & Fitness
- Emotional Wellness
- Family Support
- Financial Wellness
- Learning & Development
- Lifestyle & Leisure

Espresa Benchmark Insights Show:

- The average LSA program includes **7 categories**
- **84%** of organizations offer broad wellness wallets
- **Carry-forward options increased 42%** year-over-year

What Organizations Are Prioritizing

- Flexibility without complexity
- Broader employee choice
- Easier program administration
- Category structures that evolve over time
- Global consistency with local relevance

Download LSA Benchmark Report

Explore how Espresa's LSA programs have elevated the employee experience in recent years.

Wellbeing & Fitness Continue Leading LSA Engagement

Wellbeing and fitness remain the most utilized LSA categories, representing **33% of total employee spend** across Espresa programs.

Common Eligible Expenses

- Gym Memberships
- Fitness Classes
- Yoga and Pilates
- Wearable Fitness Devices
- Home Fitness Equipment
- Nutrition Programs
- Mindfulness Apps
- Massage Therapy
- Wellness Retreats
- Outdoor Recreation
- Hobby-Related Wellness Activities

Popular Employee Purchases

Employees continue engaging with benefits that support everyday wellbeing and flexibility.

Most common purchases include:

- Fitness Apps
- Smart Watches
- Meditation Apps
- Nutrition Programs
- Fitness Apparel
- Hobby-Related Classes
- Park Passes

The Health Convergence

Many organizations are broadening wellness eligibility to support:



Physical Wellness



Emotional Wellbeing & Stress or Recovery Management



Lifestyle Flexibility



Preventive Wellbeing Habits

Flexible Benefits Are Expanding Beyond Traditional Wellness

Employees increasingly use LSAs for benefits that support caregiving responsibilities, financial wellbeing, and everyday life. Expenses they typically already have that employers can now support with a devoted LSA wallet. **Common examples include:**

Family Support	Financial Wellness	Lifestyle & Leisure
Childcare	Financial Coaching	Pet Care
Eldercare	Budgeting Tools	Commuter Support
Lactation Support	Retirement Planning	Music Lessons
Doula Services	Debt Management Support	Hobby Classes
Tutoring Support	Tax Preparation	Camping Equipment
Meal Delivery	Student Loan Support	Park Memberships
Family Support Apps	Identity Protection Software	Community Engagement

2026 LSA Benchmark Insights



18%

Family & caregiving represents 18% of employee spend across Espresa programs.



5 Claims

5 claims/year, reflecting continued engagement across multiple categories and everyday purchases.



Expense Growth

Organizations are expanding support for: caregiving, postpartum, family-forming, specialty support.

Programs Continue Expanding Beyond Wellness

Lifestyle Spending Accounts are increasingly supporting employee growth, learning, and professional development alongside traditional wellbeing categories.

Flexible wallet structures continue evolving. And lifestyle benefits are expanding beyond traditional fitness stipends.

84%

of organizations offer broad wellness wallets

Common Learning & Development Expenses



- Professional Certifications
- Educational Courses
- Conference Registration
- Executive Coaching



- Career Coaching
- Books and Learning Materials
- Language Learning Subscriptions
- Leadership Training

Typical Wallet Structures

Broad Lifestyle Wallets
Flexible funding across multiple unique categories.

Examples include:
- Physical Wellness
- Emotional Wellness
- Financial Wellness

Targeted Wallets
Focused support for specific employee needs or initiatives.

Examples include:
- Family-Forming Support
- Learning Stipends
- Specialty Wellbeing Support

Layered Approaches
Broad wallets paired with supplemental targeted support.

Examples include:
- Wellbeing + Learning
- Broad LSA + Caregiver Support
- Flexible Wellness + Family-Forming



Clear Policies Create Better Employee Experiences

As eligible expense categories continue expanding, organizations are balancing flexibility with clear program guardrails and consistent communication.

Clear Policies

Commonly Excluded Expenses

Many organizations exclude expenses that are difficult to verify, duplicate existing benefits, or fall outside intended wellbeing categories.

- Cash equivalents
- Duplicate medical reimbursements
- Luxury purchases
- Non-verifiable expenses
- Restricted products

Policies help create consistency and reduce reimbursement confusion.

Common Policy Priorities

As programs expand, employers are increasingly prioritizing flexibility alongside clear employee guidance.

- Broader category flexibility
- Simpler employee experiences
- Easier reimbursement processes
- Transparent eligibility rules
- Simpler, more centralized benefit experiences

Clear communication often supports stronger participation and employee satisfaction.

Transparent eligibility guidelines can help reduce reimbursement confusion while improving employee trust and participation.

Participation Is Influenced by Design, Flexibility, and Access

As LSA programs evolve, organizations continue focusing on creating simpler, more flexible employee experiences that encourage ongoing engagement.

The Solutions Organizations Need

- Broader category access
- Simpler reimbursement experiences
- Marketplace access
- Flexible funding cadence
- Integrated employee experiences

Common Participation Trends

- Broader category flexibility
- Simpler navigation
- Predictable funding structures
- Easier reimbursement experiences
- Flexibility within clear guardrails

2026 LSA Benchmark Insights



20%

Broad wallets outperform narrow programs in participation by roughly 20% on average



13%

Marketplace-enabled programs see 13% higher engagement than programs without



24%

Integrated experiences, like, LSAs combined with R&R, increase participation by ~24%

Download LSA Benchmark & Trends Report

Customizable Benefits Continue to Become More Personalized

Lifestyle Spending Accounts continue evolving from simple stipends into more flexible, personalized benefit experiences that support employees across different needs, interests, and life stages.

As organizations continue refining eligible expense strategies, common themes continue emerging:

- Broader flexibility
- Simpler employee experiences
- Evolving category structures
- Stronger personalization
- Clearer governance

As employee expectations continue evolving, eligible expense design remains one of the clearest ways organizations can create more flexible, personalized, and adaptable benefit experiences.

Looking Ahead

Many employers continue revisiting eligible expense strategies as workforce needs, wellbeing priorities, and employee expectations evolve.

The most effective programs are increasingly balancing:

- Employee choice
- Flexibility
- Accessibility
- Thoughtful guardrails
- Long-term sustainability

Espresa works with organizations to help simplify and scale flexible lifestyle benefits through configurable LSA programs, wellbeing experiences, and employee engagement solutions.

See the Espresa Platform in Action →
Start Building your LSA Strategy

