

PSERS Retired Member Newsletter

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A publication of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Public School Employees' Retirement System

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Publication #9463

Message from the Executive Director

With a mix of pleasure and sweet melancholy, I announced on February 21, 2025, that I would retire effective Friday, June 27, 2025. Although I love working in service to you, our members, it is time for me to bring my extensive 39-year tenure with the Commonwealth, which includes nearly 30 years with PSERS, to a close.

As sad as I am to be leaving, I am 100 times happier to know I now get to spend lots of quality time with my grandson, giving him what I hope will be the first of many "best summers of his life."

I first came to PSERS in 1987, just a few years after entering the Commonwealth's workforce as a Computer Science Management Trainee. My first introduction to Commonwealth service took place even earlier, as a Government Service Intern in 1983. I never imagined the many challenges and amazing opportunities ahead of me, nor the blessings I would receive. Part of my Commonwealth journey did include service at a few other agencies, but I found myself returning to PSERS more than once. Richer in experience and grateful to continue.

My passion to serve and my affection for this organization brought me out of my brief retirement as SERS Executive Director to return to PSERS, first in an emergency capacity in January 2022 and then in a permanent capacity five months later. My return to service was the best career decision I could have made, and ultimately, I will have spent almost 30 years with this wonderful organization. I have many to thank for that. I have always had a strong desire to "make things happen" and to leave a position or organization better than I had found it. I hope that is how I leave PSERS for the next phase of my life, for my successor, and for you. What you do matters, and I am so fortunate to be able to have been of service to you.

It has been my absolute honor and privilege to return to this fine organization, which I care deeply about, and to conclude my many years of Commonwealth service working alongside PSERS' employees, the Board, and PSERS' 500,000+ members.

PSERS Board of Trustees Meetings

Board Meeting Schedule:

January 10, 2025
March 20-21, 2025
June 12-13, 2025
August 21-22, 2025
October 23-24, 2025
December 11-12, 2025

Visit PSERS' website for the detailed schedule of Board and Committee meetings.

Board meetings are held in Harrisburg at PSERS, located at 5 N 5th Street.

In addition to Board meetings, Committee meetings are held throughout the year. All PSERS Board meetings are live streamed and open to the public.

For exact meeting times or if you would like to attend and require an accommodation to participate, please contact Tivia Danner, PSERS Executive Office at tidanner@pa.gov.

Message from the Executive Director...continued

In the months ahead, I intend to continue to give my best, leading this agency and assisting the Board as they seek to fill this incredible position, and championing the important initiatives that are underway. Your retirement system is strong and well-prepared to continue its 108 years of existence far into the future as a partner with you in the fulfillment of a secure retirement. Thank you, and all the best to you,



Sincerely,



Terrill (Terri) J. Sanchez
PSERS' Executive Director

PSERS Retiree Board Member Election

The PSERS Board of Trustees will conduct a retiree board member election this year. The retiree will serve a three-year term on the Board beginning January 1, 2026.

Members desiring to run for election for the retiree seat must:

- Be a retired member of the System or a Class DC participant receiving distributions.
- Submit an affidavit and nominating petition with 125 or more valid signatures from among the PSERS retired members and Class DC participants receiving distributions.
- Submit a completed biographical form.

Members may request to receive a nomination packet and more information on the duties and responsibilities of Board members starting April 15, 2025. Interested members may write or email to:

PSERS Election Coordinator
PSERS Executive Office
5 North 5th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
RA-PSELECCOORDINATOR@pa.gov

Your completed affidavit, nominating petition, and biographical form must be received by PSERS' Election Coordinator by June 6, 2025, using the contact information above.

PSERS' Board of Trustees Updates

Active Certified Board Member Election Result

At its March 21, 2025, public meeting, the Board of Trustees welcomed Jason Moore, an economics and AP U.S. history teacher at Valley Jr-Sr High School in the New Kensington-Arnold School District in Westmoreland County. Moore ran unopposed in a special election to fill a PSERS Board vacancy due to the departure of Trustee Jason Davis. Moore represents active certified members and will serve the remaining nine months of Davis' term and a three-year term beginning in January 2026.

Board Re-Elects Chair and Vice Chair for 2025

At its January 10, 2025, meeting, PSERS' Board voted to re-elect Richard Vague and Susan C. Lemmo as chair and vice chair, respectively.

The chair and vice chair lead the 15-member PSERS Board, and their terms are for one year.

Vague, a Philadelphia resident, is Governor Josh Shapiro's board appointee. From 2020 until 2022, he served on the PSERS board in his previous capacity as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Banking & Securities (DOBS) as a member of the Wolf Administration.

Lemmo, a Clearfield resident, is in her first 3-year term representing annuitants and class DC participants. Prior to retiring from a 32-year career as an art teacher in the Curwensville Area School District, Lemmo served three terms (2014 to 2022) on the PSERS Board, representing active certified members and participants. During that time, she earned the Certified Public Pension Trustee accreditation from the Pennsylvania Association of Public Employee Retirement Systems.

"We thank our fellow trustees for the continued faith they have shown in our leadership," Vague and Lemmo said in a joint statement. "As trustees, we have each been entrusted with the fiduciary interests of more than half a million PSERS members, and we know the entire board remains focused on ensuring that the fund is effectively and prudently managed on their behalf."

During the meeting, DOBS Secretary Wendy Spicher was elected as vice chair of the Investment Committee, the Board's only standing committee in which all trustees are members. Pennsylvania Treasurer Stacy Garrity previously held the committee's vice chair position and recently assumed the chair position to fill a board vacancy in accordance with board Bylaws.



Visit our website to stay up to date on upcoming board meetings and to see who is on the PSERS Board of Trustees, view the meeting schedule, and view minutes and resolutions from previous meetings.

Premium Assistance Lowers the Monthly Cost of Retiree Health Benefits

Premium Assistance Eligibility

To be eligible for premium assistance, a retiree must have an out-of-pocket premium expense from their former school employer's health plan or the PSERS-sponsored Health Options Program and meet one of the following criteria:

- 24.5 eligibility points (for Class DC members, Medicare eligibility with at least 24.5 eligibility points and receipt of all or part of their vested DC account), or
- For all classes of membership except Class DC, 15 eligibility points if employment is terminated on or after attaining superannuation age and retirement occurs after superannuation age, or
- For Class DC, 15 eligibility points if employment is terminated on or after reaching age 67 and receipt of all or part of their vested DC account; or
- Be receiving a disability annuity from PSERS.

PSERS members who enroll in the PSERS Health Options Program or another Commonwealth public school employer or district health plan may be entitled to a special financial incentive that is not available with a commercial program such as AARP or Blue Cross Blue Shield. That special incentive is called Premium Assistance.

How it works

If you are eligible for Premium Assistance and enroll in either a Medicare Supplement plan or a Medicare Advantage plan through the PSERS Health Options Program or another Commonwealth public school employer or district health plan, PSERS will pay up to \$100 per month toward your monthly premium. Over the course of your lifetime, on average, you could save up to \$24,000.

Premium Assistance is added to your monthly retirement benefit as nontaxable income. If you are covered under your school employer's health plan and receiving Premium Assistance, you must notify PSERS if your coverage terminates. Receipt of Premium Assistance when you are not enrolled in an approved plan may result in an overpayment. If you are no longer eligible or enrolled in your school employer's health plan, you must enroll in the Health Options Program to maintain your Premium Assistance.

When you can enroll in PSERS Health Options Program

As a reminder, PSERS retirees can enroll in the Health Options Program when they turn age 65, or experience a Qualifying Event, like losing health-care coverage under a school employer's health plan. A full list of Qualifying Events is posted on our website at [HOPbenefits.com](https://www.hopbenefits.com) > Eligibility and Enrolling > Eligibility.

Medicare Star Rating for the Health Options Program

Each year, Medicare evaluates prescription drug plans (PDP) and awards a star rating to each plan based on performance. Ratings range from 1 to 5 stars, with 5 being the highest score. For the second year in a row, the Health Options Program's prescription drug plan received a 4.5-star rating for 2025, indicating that the program is highly rated in comparison to other PDPs nationwide. PSERS was one of 8 PDPs to receive 4.5 stars or higher, while the average Star Rating for the 41 PDP programs measured was 3.06. PSERS Health Options Program's PDP has earned a 4.5 rating or higher for overall service and quality every year since 2019.

If you would like to learn more about the Health Options Program, visit the virtual benefits fair at discoverHOPbenefits.com for all helpful resources, including videos and decision support tools.

Wondering how much Federal Taxes to Withhold?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides a Tax Withholding Estimator at irs.gov to estimate the federal income tax that should be withheld from your monthly benefit.

What you need:

- Paystubs for all jobs or benefit checks, including spouse
- Other income info (side jobs, self-employment, investments, etc.)
- Most recent tax return

Want to change your tax withholding?

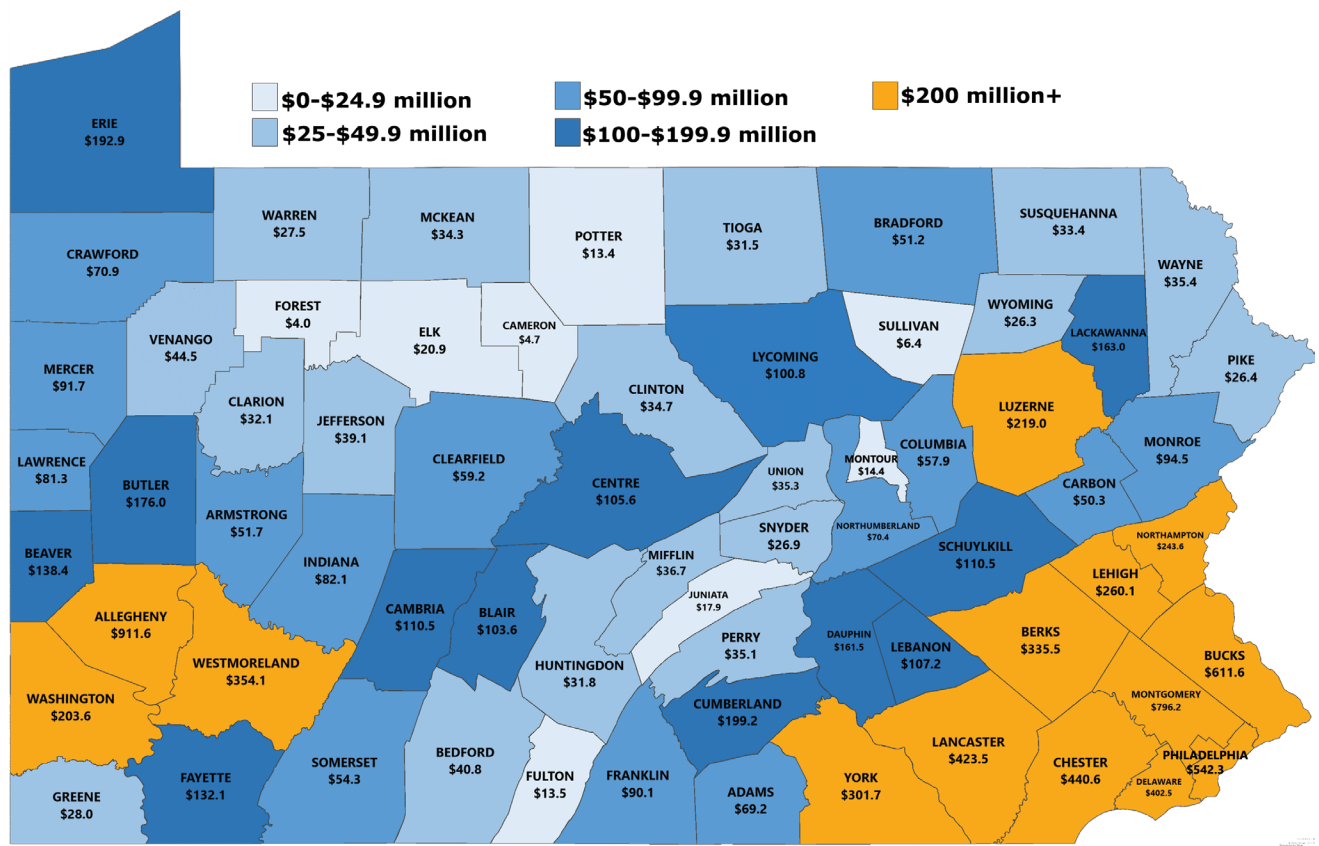
There are three methods available to change your federal tax withholding:

- Change your federal withholding amount through the Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal on the PSERS website.
- Submit a *W-4P Federal Tax Withholding Certificate for Annuity Payments* (PSRS-996) to PSERS. This form is available on the PSERS website under "Forms" or by contacting PSERS.
- Submit an IRS *Form W-4P* to PSERS.

\$6.8 Billion Paid to PA Retirees in Fiscal Year 2023-24

Each year, PSERS pays out billions in pension benefits to retired members who reside in the Commonwealth. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, PSERS pension benefits to retirees totaled approximately \$7.6 billion, on a cash basis. Of this amount, nearly 90%, or \$6.8 billion, went directly to retired members residing in the Commonwealth. According to a January 2025 *Pensionomics* report by the National Institute on Retirement Security, the \$6.8 billion paid to PSERS retirees in Fiscal Year 2023-24 resulted in an economic impact of \$9.5 billion throughout the Commonwealth.

Estimated Economic Impact of PSERS Pension Disbursements in PA FY 2023-24
\$6.8 Billion in Benefits = \$9.5 Billion Positive Economic Impact



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Keep Your Contact Information Updated

It is important to keep your personal information at PSERS up to date. You can conveniently update your information with PSERS online through your MSS account.



Mailing Address

It is essential for PSERS to have a valid mailing address on file for you even if you have paperless delivery through the MSS Portal. We need to make sure that our communication will reach you if PSERS needs to contact you via mail. To change your address without an MSS account, submit your address change to PSERS in writing. Be sure to include your signature, your PSERS ID or last four digits of your social security number, and the effective date of the change.



Email Address

If you have paperless delivery, you must keep your email address current with PSERS to ensure that you will continue to receive time-sensitive documents and correspondence from PSERS.

Tip: PSERS strongly recommends you use a personal email address instead of an employer-provided email address to avoid problems accessing your MSS account or PSERS contacting you if you change employers or retire.



Phone Number

It is also important to keep your phone number current with PSERS. Not only is your phone number used as a part of the authentication process for logging into your MSS account, but it is needed for PSERS staff to contact you, if necessary.

Don't have an MSS Account? Register today!

You only need the following to get started:

- PSERS ID
- Social security number
- Date of birth
- A valid email address

Need Your PSERS ID? If you do not have your PSERS ID, you can connect with PSERS at 1.888.773.7748 to have your ID mailed to you.

Protect Your Information

Pay close attention when PSERS notifies you of changes to your account. PSERS will notify you when there is a change made to your account (e.g., change of address, phone number, email address, direct deposit information, beneficiary information, username). If you did not make a change, contact PSERS immediately.

PSERS
5 N 5th Street
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905

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**Important Information from the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Public School Employees' Retirement System**



Website
pa.gov/PSERS

Register for PSERS' Member Self-Service (MSS) Portal to access your retirement account online, anytime!



Call or Fax

Toll-Free: 1.888.773.7748

Local Calls: 717.787.8540

FAX: 717.772.3860



**Send us a Secure Message
through your MSS Account!**

Don't have an MSS Account?
Complete the Contact Form on our
website.

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