



GUIDE FOR

# RETIRING MEMBERS



**pennsylvania**

STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Introduction</a>	01
<a href="#">Your Annual Statement</a>	02
<b>Retirement Basics</b>	
<a href="#">Pension Eligibility</a>	05
<a href="#">Key Players in Your Retirement</a>	07
<a href="#">Major Eligibility Milestones</a>	08
<a href="#">General Steps to Prepare for Retirement</a>	09
<a href="#">Retirement Planning Checklist</a>	11
<a href="#">Pension Counseling Preparation Checklist</a>	12
<a href="#">Basic Pension Calculation</a>	14
<b>Important Retirement Decisions</b>	
<a href="#">Can I Purchase Previous Service?</a>	19
<a href="#">When Am I Going to Retire?</a>	20
<a href="#">Can I Withdraw My Contributions?</a>	21
<a href="#">What Are My Monthly Payment Options?</a>	22
<a href="#">Are There Pension Limitations?</a>	25
<a href="#">Who Will I Name As My Beneficiary or Survivor?</a>	26
<a href="#">Do I Want Money Withheld for Federal Income Tax?</a>	28
<a href="#">What Are My Health Care Options in Retirement?</a>	29
<b>After You Retire</b>	
<a href="#">Returning to State Service from Retirement – Know the Consequences</a>	35
<a href="#">Keep Your Beneficiary List Up To Date</a>	37
<a href="#">SERS-Provided Services</a>	38
<b>Additional Information and Resources</b>	
<a href="#">Divorce and Domestic Relations/Support Orders</a>	41
<a href="#">Power of Attorney</a>	42
<a href="#">Taxes</a>	43
<a href="#">SERS Regional Offices</a>	44
<a href="#">Other Retirement-Related Contacts</a>	46



# INTRODUCTION

If you are eligible for monthly pension payments, this guide is for you.

When you leave state employment, whether to retire or work elsewhere, you have a number of decisions to make regarding your SERS pension. Researching and considering all of your options **before** you terminate employment will give you the most time to make those important decisions, many of which cannot be changed later.

After you work through the questions in this guide, you will meet with a SERS pension specialist to complete an application that documents all of your final answers to those important decisions. Simply leaving state employment or attaining SERS normal retirement age/date will not start the process – you must apply for your pension in order to receive it.

## Your Online SERS Account – A Helpful Tool for Retirement Planning



### SERS Online Member Services

With a member services account, you can view your SERS benefit information and if you are an active SERS member, you can estimate your future retirement benefit.

#### Create a New Account

We have joined with other state agencies to offer the Keystone ID, a single, secure way to access multiple commonwealth services, including SERS member services. To create a new Keystone ID, click on "New User" in the sign-in box to the right. (See: [New Keystone ID Step-By-Step Instructions](#))

#### Already have a Keystone ID?

Enter your existing Keystone ID and password in the box to the right and then you will be instructed to create a SERS-specific, 4-digit PIN.

#### Need Help With This Site?

If you have trouble signing in, please reset your password by clicking on "Forgot Password" in the sign-in box.

For other technical issues, please e-mail [ra-erhelpdesk@pa.gov](mailto:ra-erhelpdesk@pa.gov) or call SERS at 1.866.766.7740. Please provide your name, phone number, e-mail address, your active/retired status, and a description of the issue you are experiencing with this site.

#### Trying to login to your Deferred Compensation or Defined Contribution Plans?

Click [here](#) to login at Empower.

The screenshot shows the login interface for SERS Online Member Services. At the top, it says "SERS Online Member Services" and "PA pennsylvania KEystone ID". Below this, there are two main input sections: "Keystone ID" and "Password". Each section has a text input field with a small icon to its left. Below the Keystone ID field are links for "Forgot Keystone ID" and "Create Keystone ID". Below the Password field is a link for "Forgot Password". A blue "Login" button is located at the bottom right of the form area.

With a SERS [online member services account](#), you can view your personal pension information, from a summary of your pension benefit to an archive of your annual statements. In addition, you can calculate pension estimates using information from your SERS member record and other data that you can change based on different retirement dates and payment options.

After you retire, your online account continues as a helpful resource providing you with an archive of your annual statements and tax documents, and the ability to print your own personal pension verification letter, should you need to provide proof of your pension income.

As a result, it is important that you update your email address in your account to a non-commonwealth account. Once you retire, your "work" email will no longer be active, and you will have no way to reset your password without a **personal** email address on file.

# INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

## Your Annual Statement

Each year we prepare a benefit statement for you listing the service credit you earned, contributions you made, and the interest you earned on your contributions over the course of the prior year.

If you are eligible for monthly pension payments, your annual statement also includes estimates of your pension calculated to several different payment options.

Each March we save your statement in [your online SERS account](#) and mail you a copy.

Reviewing the benefit estimates on your most recent statement and working through this guide are your best first steps in retirement planning.



**DEFINED  
BENEFIT  
PLAN**

Traditional Pension

# **RETIREMENT BASICS**



## PENSION ELIGIBILITY

Generally, if you became a SERS member:

- **Before 1/1/2011**, you are eligible for monthly pension payments after working five years. This is commonly referred to as being “vested” in the pension system.

If you have already reached SERS retirement age, or the age at which you are eligible for a pension that is not reduced for early retirement, you are eligible for monthly pension payments after working three years.

SERS retirement age/date for you is 60 or 50, depending on your class of service, or any age with 35 years of service. Your SERS retirement age/date is listed on your annual member statement.

- **Between 1/1/2011 & 12/31/2018**, you are eligible for monthly pension payments after working 10 years. This is commonly referred to as being “vested” in the pension system.

If you have already reached SERS retirement age, or the age at which you are eligible for a pension that is not reduced for early retirement, you are eligible for monthly pension payments after working three years.

SERS retirement age/date for you is 65 or 55, depending on your class of service, or after 35 years of service when your age and years of service total at least 92. Your SERS retirement age/date is listed on your annual member statement.

- **On or after 1/1/2019**, you are eligible for monthly pension payments after working 10 years. This is commonly referred to as being “vested” in the pension system.

### Are You Unable to Perform The Duties of Your Current Position?

If you are physically or mentally unable to perform the duties of your current position, you may be eligible for a SERS disability retirement benefit. The disability retirement benefit is unreduced for early retirement and those qualifying are eligible for contribution rate (formerly known as majority state-paid) medical coverage through the Retired Employees Health Program (REHP) if they were enrolled in the Active Employees Health Program (AEHP) while employed.

To be considered for a SERS disability retirement benefit, you must apply **before** you terminate employment, have five years of credited service (not a requirement for PSP troopers and enforcement officers), and submit a [SERS Medical Report](#) completed by your doctor documenting your injury or illness. More information on this benefit is in [SERS' Disability Retirement Guide](#) available at [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov) and from your [pension specialist](#).

## PENSION ELIGIBILITY (CONTINUED)

If you have already reached SERS retirement age, or the age at which you are eligible for a pension that is not reduced for early retirement, you are eligible for monthly pension payments after working three years. SERS retirement age/date for you is 67<sup>1</sup>, or after 35 years of service when your age and years of service total at least 97. Your SERS retirement age/date is listed on your annual member statement.

If you leave state employment and **are eligible for monthly pension payments**, you have two choices:

- **You can apply for your pension now.**

If you haven't yet reached SERS retirement age/date, your benefit could be reduced for early retirement. The further you are from SERS retirement age/date, the greater the reduction. (See [Early Retirement Reduction](#), for more information.) If you choose to apply for your pension now, continue through this guide.

- **You can delay applying for your pension.**

Your contributions will remain in the SERS Fund and continue to accrue interest until you choose to apply for your pension. Your benefit will increase as you approach SERS retirement age/date. If you apply for your pension more than 90 days after your SERS retirement date, you are only eligible for payments calculated from the date of your application – the longer you wait, the fewer payments you receive.

### Were You Involuntarily Terminated From Your Job?

If you successfully challenge your termination and are reinstated to state employment after receiving retirement benefit payments, you will be required to return all of those payments.

If you are not eligible for monthly pension payments, you can request a refund of the contributions you made toward your SERS pension by calling 1.800.633.5461. If you do nothing, your contributions will remain in the SERS Fund and they will stop earning interest 90 days after your employment ends.

If you are considering retirement due to health issues, discuss the SERS disability retirement benefit with your pension specialist **before** you terminate employment.

Contact your pension specialist for disability retirement estimates and counseling.

<sup>1</sup>If you were hired into a law enforcement or security position, your normal retirement age/date is 55 when your age and years of service equal at least 92.

## KEY PLAYERS IN YOUR RETIREMENT

As you prepare for retirement, please be aware that different aspects of your retirement planning are addressed by you, your agency's Human Resources Office, and your SERS pension specialist.

### Your responsibilities:

- Staying knowledgeable about your SERS pension benefit by regularly reviewing key resources including our website, [your online SERS account](#) and annual statements, [plan handbook](#), the [SERS News](#) published twice a year, and various [fact sheets](#).
- Contacting your [pension specialist](#) in advance of your retirement.
- Giving your employer written notice of your retirement, in accordance with its policies.
- Seeking professional financial and/or tax advice.
- Keeping your home address up-to-date with your employer. Employers submit address information to us each time they transfer payroll data.
- Reporting any name changes to your employer and the Social Security Administration.
- Being prepared for your retirement counseling appointment with your pension specialist. For instance, as you work through this guide, write down questions and collect required documents, such as birthdate documentation.

### Your employer's responsibilities:

- Processing leave payouts. Leave payouts are eligible for deferral into the commonwealth's [Deferred Compensation Plan](#) (DCP), within current [IRS annual deferral and catch-up limits](#).
- Processing your final pay transaction. Your pension cannot be processed until your final pay transaction is complete. This can be delayed if you have a debt to your employer, for example, overdrawn leave.

### SERS' responsibilities:

- Providing you pension estimates.
- Providing you one-on-one pension counseling.
- Discussing your pension application so that you have an opportunity to ask questions before signing and filing your application with your [SERS pension specialist](#).
- Discussing purchasing prior service, if you are eligible.
- Counseling you about the [Retired Employees Health Program](#) (REHP), if applicable.

# MAJOR ELIGIBILITY MILESTONES

## Based on Years of Credited Service

### 3 Years

Eligible for an unreduced pension **if** you have reached your SERS retirement age/date. (Age 67, 65, 60, 55, or 50, depending on your class of service.)

If you became a SERS member before 1/1/2011, you will be eligible for monthly pension payments that may be reduced for early retirement, or you may delay receiving monthly payments. If you die before retiring, a death benefit will be paid to your named beneficiaries.

### 5 Years

Eligible to apply for a SERS disability retirement benefit, **if** you are physically or mentally unable to perform the duties of your current position. Those who qualify for a disability retirement benefit are eligible for contribution rate medical benefits in the Retired Employees Health Program (REHP) if enrolled in the Active Employees Health Program (AEHP) while employed.

### 10 Years

If you became a SERS member after 1/1/2011, you will be eligible for monthly pension payments that may be reduced for early retirement, or you may delay receiving monthly payments. If you die before retiring, a death benefit will be paid to your named beneficiaries.

### 20 Years

Eligible for contribution rate medical benefits in the Retired Employees Health Program\* **if** you are enrolled in the Active Employees Health Program and you retire after reaching your SERS retirement age/date. (Age 67, 65, 60, 55, or 50, depending on your class of service.)

### 25 Years

Eligible, regardless of age, for contribution rate medical benefits in the Retired Employees Health Program\* **if** you are enrolled in the Active Employee Health Program.

### 35 Years

Eligible for an unreduced pension **if**:

- You entered SERS membership prior to 1/1/2011.
- You entered SERS membership between 1/1/2011 & 12/31/2018, **and** your age and years of service total at least 92.
- You entered SERS membership on or after 1/1/2019, **and** your age and years of service total at least 97.

### 41 Years

Eligible for a long-service supplement of up to 2% for each full year of service over 40 years. (Up to five years for a maximum increase of 10%.)

\* REHP benefits are collectively bargained and are subject to change.

# GENERAL STEPS TO PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT

## Pension Estimates

You can calculate pension estimates based on any future retirement date and various payment options, using our online calculator. The calculator pulls your pension information from your SERS member record. You will need to [sign into your online SERS account](#) to calculate estimates.

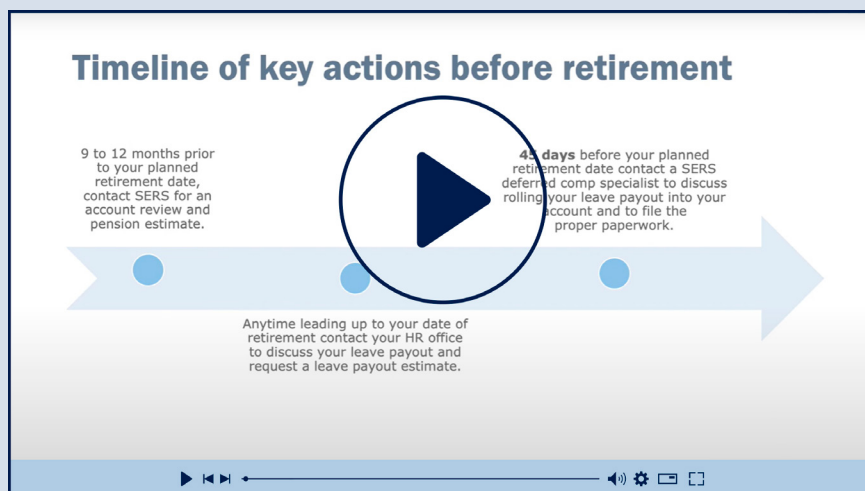
If you have previous service that may be purchased toward your SERS pension, contact your pension specialist to discuss your options.

## Prior to your counseling appointment

- Review your pension estimate thoroughly.
- Consider all of your pension payment, health insurance, and tax withholding options.
- After reviewing this guide, prepare a list of questions.
- Gather necessary [birthdate documentation](#) to provide to your [plan specialist](#). Note: If you will be selecting a [pension payment option](#) that provides a monthly payment to a survivor after your death (Option 2, 3, or Special Option 4 with a survivor feature) you also will need to provide the Social Security number and birthdate documentation for your named survivor.

You are encouraged to invite your spouse or anyone you wish to join your pension counseling meeting whether in person, by phone, or by video call.

Watch a short video about the timeline of pension-related activities during the year leading up to your planned retirement date.



## GENERAL STEPS TO PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT (CONTINUED)

### Acceptable Birthdate Documentation

See [birthdate documentation](#) in the [Pension Counseling Preparation Checklist](#) later in this guide.

### Employer Notification

Once you sign your pension application, SERS will send a notification letter to your employer. While we send notification to your employer, it is your responsibility to give your employer written notice of your retirement in accordance with your employer's policies.

### Do You Have Overdrawn Leave or Other Debts?

Contact your HR Office to see if you have overdrawn leave or any other debt to your employer, and work to satisfy those debts **before** you terminate employment.

Overdrawn leave, unreturned equipment or uniforms, or other debts to your employer will significantly delay payments from your SERS pension. In addition, the commonwealth can claim the contributions you made toward your SERS pension and the interest earned on those contributions to satisfy any debt you have when you leave state employment.

### Direct Deposit Forms

Pension payments are made by direct deposit. If you work for an agency under the Governor's jurisdiction and you are paid by direct deposit, you can easily direct your pension payments to the same account. Your pension specialist will provide you with a form that is preprinted with the direct deposit instructions currently on file in the SAP/IES payroll system. Please review that form for accuracy.

If you do not have direct deposit established within the SAP/IES payroll system, or you want to change your direct deposit instructions, your pension specialist will provide you with a [direct deposit form](#) to complete and return to SERS. In this case, your withdrawal (if any), minus any rollover, and your first two monthly pension payments will be paper checks mailed to your home address.

## RETIREMENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

<p>2 years before retiring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create an <a href="#">online SERS account</a>, using a personal email address. This will give you access to the pension estimate tool and annual statements before you retire, and the pension verification tool and other services for retirees after you retire.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you have service that may be purchased toward your SERS pension, contact your pension specialist to discuss. (See <a href="#">Purchasing Service fact sheet</a> for more information.)</li> </ul>
<p>1 year before retiring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact your <a href="#">pension specialist</a> to request a formal pension estimate and to discuss your options. SERS will provide up to two staff-prepared estimates within a 12-month period. You can; however, use the pension estimate tool in your online SERS account to calculate estimates based on as many different retirement dates and pension payment options as you wish.</li> </ul>
<p>At least 6 months before retiring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review your estimate thoroughly and contact your <a href="#">pension specialist</a> with any questions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work through the questions in this guide, review your pension estimates and make a list of questions. You may wish to consult an accountant, lawyer, or financial advisor.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you will be withdrawing your contributions and interest in a lump sum at retirement and rolling the taxable portion into a qualified plan, like the <a href="#">Deferred Compensation Plan</a>, your SERS pension specialist will provide you with a rollover form.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> While it is important to schedule your appointment well in advance of your retirement, it is our practice to meet with you and finalize your pension application approximately 45 days prior to your last day of employment.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact your HR Office to see if you have overdrawn leave or other debt to your employer and work to satisfy that debt <b>before</b> you terminate employment.</li> </ul>

# PENSION COUNSELING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

**List of questions**

If you have any questions about information in this guide, discuss them with your pension specialist **before** completing your pension application. Feel free to invite your spouse, financial planner, or other trusted person to your appointment. Appointments can be in person, by phone, or done over a video call.

**Birthdate documentation**

In order to process your pension application, we need proof of your birthdate. A birth certificate/birth registration form, baptismal record, or a signed, unexpired passport, Real ID issued by any state or US territory (Guam, Puerto Rico, etc.) or Global Entry Card is preferred.

If you do not have one of those documents, we may also accept a combination of **any two of the following** documents:

- Valid driver's license
- Valid state-issued, non-driver photo identification card
- Selective Service record
- Armed Forces discharge
- School record
- Life insurance policy
- Naturalization record
- Alien registration record
- Social Security record issued by the Social Security Administration
- Marriage record
- Federal Census record
- Physician's or midwife's record of birth
- Bible or other family record

If you plan to select a payment option that provides a monthly payment to someone after your death (payment option 2, 3, or Special Option 4 with a survivor feature) you will also need to provide birthdate documentation and the Social Security number for your named survivor.

## PENSION COUNSELING PREPARATION CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

**Federal income tax information**

Be prepared to complete an [IRS W4-P form](#) indicating your income tax withholding instructions so that we know how much money, if any, you want withheld from your pension payments for federal income tax purposes.

**Direct deposit form**

Pension payments are made by direct deposit.

If you work for an agency under the Governor's jurisdiction, your pension specialist will provide you with a direct deposit form preprinted with your current direct deposit instructions.

If you do not work for an agency under the Governor's jurisdiction, you can complete a [direct deposit form](#), available at [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov), from your pension specialist, or you can request a form by calling 1.800.633.5461. You will need to provide the completed direct deposit form during your pension application signing appointment. You can attach a voided check to part II of the form instead of having your bank complete this section.

**Dependent information**

If you will be enrolling in the Retired Employees Health Program (REHP) medical coverage and including dependents on your coverage, you will need the list of dependents, their addresses, birthdates, Social Security numbers, and information on other health insurance coverage you or they may have. (See [What Are My Health Care Options in Retirement?](#) section for more information.)

If you are adding dependents who were not listed on your active employee health coverage, you will also need appropriate documentation of their birthdate and Social Security number.

If you or any of your dependents are covered by Medicare, you will need to provide copies of your/their Medicare card to your pension specialist as part of your pension application.

**Rollover form**

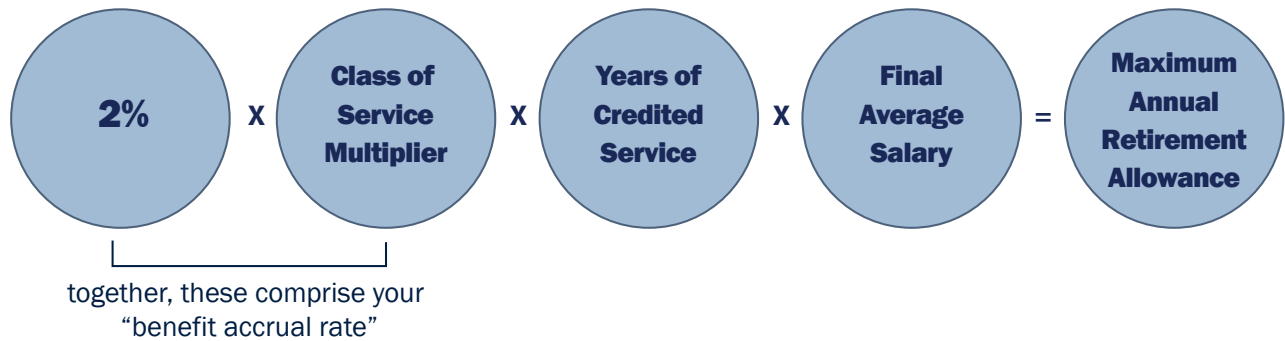
If you are planning to roll any payments into an IRA or other qualified plan, contact your pension specialist to request a [rollover form](#), by calling 1.800.633.5461, and provide the completed form to your pension specialist as part of your pension application.

## BASIC PENSION CALCULATION

As a member of SERS, you belong to a defined benefit pension plan. That means the amount of your pension is defined by a calculation that considers your years of service, salary, age, and job or class of service in the pension system.

After you meet certain vesting criteria, you are eligible to receive monthly pension payments for as long as you live.

The basic pension calculation is:



### Class of Service Multiplier

Your class of service is determined largely by when you first entered SERS membership and the work that you do. In most cases, your class of service will be determined by when you were first hired as a state employee. If you leave state service and later return, it is very important that you let your HR Office know about your prior employment.

Your class of service multiplier x 2% equals your **benefit accrual rate**. The benefit accrual rate is 2.5% for Classes AA and A-4; 2% for classes A and A-3; 1.25% for class A-5; and 1% for class A-6.

Your class of service is listed on your annual member statement. Sign into your [SERS online account](#) to view your statement.

### Years of Credited Service

You are credited with one year of service when you work 1,650 hours or more in a calendar year. If you work fewer than 1,650 hours, you are credited with a fraction of a year equal to the number of hours you worked divided by 1,650.

Your total service credit is listed on your annual member statement. Sign into your [SERS online account](#) to view your statement.

## BASIC PENSION CALCULATION (CONTINUED)

### Final Average Salary

Your final average salary is based on a calculation that is dependent on your class of service in the pension system:

- If you are a member of the A, AA, A-3 or A-4 classes, your final average salary is the highest amount you earned during any three non-overlapping periods of four consecutive calendar quarters. In most cases, it is the average of your last three years' salary, but not always.
- If you are a member of the A-5 or A-6 classes, your final average salary is the highest average compensation received during five calendar years.

Your estimated final average salary is listed on your annual member statement. Sign into your [SERS online account](#) to view your statement.

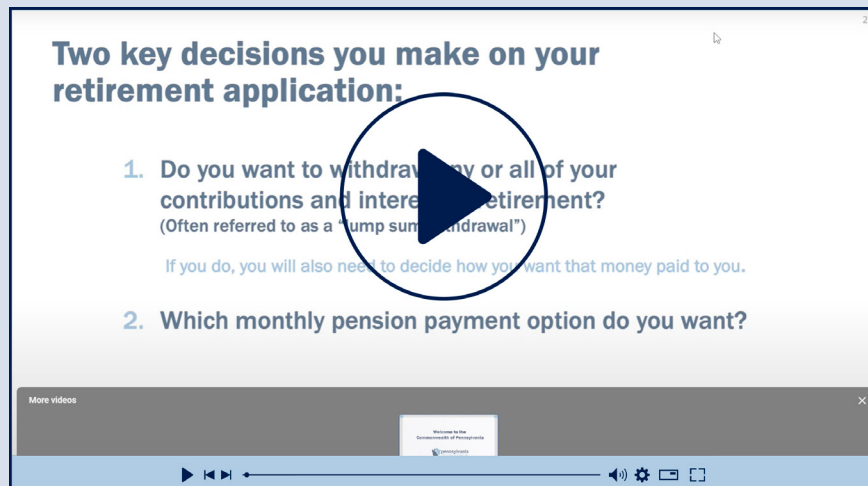
### Early Retirement Reduction

Once you are vested in the pension system, you can retire prior to your SERS retirement age; however, your pension will be reduced for early retirement. The earlier you retire, the greater the reduction. Your SERS retirement age is listed on your annual member statement.

### No Automatic COLAs

It is important to keep in mind that the [Retirement Code](#) does not provide for automatic COLAs or cost of living adjustments. As a result, you should plan that your pension payments will never increase in retirement.

Watch a short video about two key decisions you will make at retirement.





**DEFINED  
BENEFIT  
PLAN**

Traditional Pension

**IMPORTANT  
RETIREMENT  
DECISIONS**



## CAN I PURCHASE PREVIOUS SERVICE?

Have you ever served in the military or been on active duty with the National Guard? Were you a member of SERS in the past, but you left state service before you were eligible for a pension so you withdrew your contributions? Have you ever worked for a Pennsylvania public university or community college or an out-of-state public educational institution?

If you have, you may be able to purchase that service as “credited service” toward your SERS pension.

One factor in the [formula used to determine the amount of your pension](#) is “years of credited service.” The more years of credited service you have, the greater your maximum annual pension. Service credit is also used to determine when you become eligible for monthly payments and other benefits, like a SERS disability retirement benefit.

The Retirement Code allows active SERS members (currently employed by a [SERS-participating employer](#)) to purchase several types of service toward their SERS pension. When you [purchase service](#), you pay the contributions owed for that service to be credited toward your SERS pension.

You can pay for your service purchase in one lump sum, partial lump sum with payroll deductions, payroll deductions over one to six years, or through a debt to your total pension benefit.

Discuss your work history with your [pension specialist](#) to determine if your prior service can be purchased toward your SERS pension. If so, you can request an invoice for that service and your pension specialist can provide you with pension estimates calculated with and without purchasing the service and payment options so that you can determine if purchasing the service will benefit you.

If you purchased service from another retirement system toward your SERS pension, you will be asked to certify that you are not eligible to receive retirement benefits from that other system.

### Payments

Monthly pension payments are payable on the last business day of each month.

## WHEN AM I GOING TO RETIRE?

Review your financial needs and discuss your situation with your accountant, lawyer, and/or financial advisor.

It typically takes approximately 10 weeks after your last day of employment to receive your first monthly pension payment. Depending on your employer's pay schedule, you may receive "after-the-fact" pay two weeks after you terminate your employment. As a result, you should plan ahead to go eight weeks between your after-the-fact pay and your first pension payment.

Consider the timing of your retirement. Retiring at the:

- **End of a year** could cause your leave payouts and your lump sum withdrawal (if applicable) to occur early in the next year, providing some income tax advantage. Receiving pension money in the same year that you have a full year of wages could push you into a higher tax bracket. Keep in mind that very often, these payments can be rolled over into the commonwealth's [Deferred Compensation Plan](#) (DCP) or other qualified plan.
- **End of a quarter** could increase your final average salary and, as a result, your maximum annual pension amount.
- **End of a pay period** will streamline the payment process.

### Would it be better for me to defer pension payments?

If you haven't reached SERS retirement age/date for your current class of service, your benefit could be reduced for early retirement. The further you are from SERS retirement age/date, the greater the reduction.

In this case, you have the right to delay your application for your pension. If you do, you will not earn service credits, unless you return to work for an employer that offers the SERS benefit; however, your benefit will increase as you approach SERS retirement age – age 67, 65, 60, 55, or 50 depending on your class of service. Your pension specialist will provide you with a pension estimate calculated with the early retirement reduction and as if you delay your application until your SERS retirement age.

If you choose to delay your application, you must submit it by the date federal tax law requires you to take a minimum amount or "minimum distribution."

Birthdate	Required Beginning Age
Before 7/1/1949	70½
7/1/1949 - 12/31/1950	72
1/1/1951 - 12/31/1959	73
On or after 1/1/1960	75

## **CAN I WITHDRAW MY CONTRIBUTIONS?**

In most cases, you have the option to withdraw all or a portion of the contributions you made toward your SERS pension and the interest you've earned on those contributions in a lump sum when you retire. If you choose a withdrawal, your monthly pension payments will be reduced.

You may choose to withdraw your contributions in one lump sum or in up to four installment payments, which will earn 4% interest annually, until paid. Your contributions may include previously taxed and tax-deferred money, while all interest earned on your contributions is taxable.

If you have non-taxable money to withdraw, you may take that in one lump sum at the same time you receive your first pension payment. You may want to consult a tax advisor to see if receiving installments will result in a lower federal income tax liability.

If you retire at the end of a calendar year, your withdrawal will be paid in the next calendar year, which may reduce your tax burden. According to federal tax law, 20% of the taxable portion of your withdrawal must be withheld for federal income tax.

If you retire before the year in which you turn 55, (exceptions may apply, contact your qualified tax advisor) the taxable portion of your withdrawal, including any future installment payments no matter when you actually receive them, will also be subject to an additional 10% federal excise tax penalty unless you roll the money into a traditional IRA or other qualified plan, like your deferred comp account.

If you are a member of the [Hybrid Plan](#), another part of your retirement benefit comes from the assets in [your investment account](#) administered by Empower. If you need help with your investment account, contact Empower at 1.866.737.7457.

### **Tax Deferring Rollovers**

If you roll your withdrawal into a traditional IRA or other qualified plan, like your deferred comp account, you may delay paying federal income taxes on the money until you withdraw it from that qualified plan. That may be at a time when your tax liability is lower. Contact a tax advisor or financial planner to discuss the different tax consequences.

### **Age 73 or Older?**

If you are at least age 73 in the year you retire and you choose to withdraw any of your contributions and interest at retirement, federal tax law requires that you take a minimum amount or "minimum distribution" at retirement. The minimum distribution is calculated according to IRS tax tables and is not eligible for rollover to a qualified plan. Talk to your pension specialist about your required minimum distribution if you roll your contributions into a qualified plan.

## WHAT ARE MY MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTIONS?

Once you are eligible for monthly pension payments – often referred to as being “vested” in the system – you are entitled to receive a monthly pension payment for as long as you live.

While each payment option provides you with a monthly benefit for life, one provides the highest monthly payment, one ensures that the full amount to which you are entitled over your expected lifetime is paid to you and/or your beneficiaries, and others provide monthly payments to someone else for his or her lifetime after your death.

Each option provides a different death benefit. In some cases, the death benefit will be reduced with each monthly payment you receive, which could result in no benefit remaining after your death.

The monthly payment you receive and the death benefit payable under a particular option will be calculated based on your age. If you choose an option that provides a monthly payment to someone after your death – a “survivor option” (Option 2, 3, or Special Option 4 with a survivor feature) – the amount you and your designated survivor will receive will be based on both your and your designated survivor’s age.

With few exceptions, you can not change your payment option after your retirement date.

You have the option to withdraw your contributions and interest at retirement in addition to receiving monthly pension payments for life. If you withdraw your contributions and interest, your monthly payments will be reduced.

When you retire, you must select one of the following monthly payment plans.

### Maximum Single Life Annuity Option (MSLA)

This provides the highest monthly payment for as long as you live. Payments stop when you die. Your estate (or next of kin) will be paid the portion of your monthly pension for the number of days that you were alive during the month in which you die. If you do not withdraw your contributions and interest at retirement, the balance of that amount – minus any payments that were made to you – will be paid to your beneficiaries.

If you choose this option, you cannot change it later for any reason.



**HIGHEST MONTHLY  
PAYMENT OPTION**



**THESE PAYMENTS STOP  
WHEN YOU DIE**



**YOUR ESTATE WILL BE PAID  
FOR THE PORTION OF THE  
MONTH IN WHICH YOU DIED**



**YOUR BENEFICIARIES WILL  
RECEIVE THE BALANCE OF  
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS,  
IF APPLICABLE**

## WHAT ARE MY MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTIONS? (CONTINUED)

### Option 1

This provides you with a smaller monthly payment for as long as you live. Payments stop when you die. If the sum of all payments SERS makes to you is less than the initial value of your SERS pension at the time you retired, then the difference – or “remaining present value” – will be paid to your beneficiaries.

If the sum of all payments totals more than the initial value of your SERS pension at the time you retired, then your estate (or next of kin) will be paid the portion of your monthly pension for the number of days that you were alive during the month in which you die.

If you choose this option, you cannot change it later for any reason.



**SMALLER MONTHLY  
PAYMENT THAN MSLA**



**THESE PAYMENTS STOP  
WHEN YOU DIE**



**YOUR BENEFICIARIES WILL  
RECEIVE THE BALANCE OF YOUR  
“REMAINING PRESENT VALUE,”  
IF APPLICABLE**



**SIMILIAR TO A BANK  
ACCOUNT - YOU START  
WITH AN AMOUNT WHICH IS  
REDUCED BY EACH PAYMENT**

---

### Option 2

This provides you with a monthly payment for as long as you live and after your death, your “designated survivor” will receive the same amount that you were receiving each month for as long as he or she lives.



**100% OF YOUR PENSION  
PAYMENTS CONTINUE  
FOR YOUR DESIGNATED  
SURVIVOR AFTER YOU DIE**

If you select this option, your monthly payment will be smaller because we calculate the amount that would be necessary to pay specified payments for both of your expected lifetimes, taking into account both of your ages at the time of your retirement.

If you choose this option, you cannot change it later unless your survivor dies, or you marry or divorce. We must receive an option change application and required documentation within seven years of the most recent “qualifying event” (e.g. marriage, divorce, death). See [Who will I name as my beneficiary or survivor?](#) for more information.

## WHAT ARE MY MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTIONS? (CONTINUED)

### Option 3

This provides you with a monthly payment for as long as you live and after your death, your “designated survivor” will receive one-half of the monthly payment you had been receiving for as long as he or she lives.



**YOUR DESIGNATED SURVIVOR WILL RECEIVE 50% OF YOUR MONTHLY PENSION AFTER YOU DIE**

If you select this option, your monthly payment will be smaller because we calculate the amount that would be necessary to pay specified payments for both of your expected lifetimes, taking into account both of your ages at the time of your retirement.

If you choose this option, you cannot change it later unless your survivor dies, or you marry or divorce. We must receive an option change application and required documentation within seven years of the most recent “qualifying event” (e.g. marriage, divorce, death). See [Who will I name as my beneficiary or survivor?](#) for more information.

---

### Special Option 4

This provides you with an option to craft your own payment plan, provided that it is certified to be actuarially equivalent to your maximum single life annuity and is approved by SERS prior to your retirement. If you are interested in this option, you are strongly encouraged to contact SERS a minimum of six months prior to your desired retirement date.

This option is commonly used to provide a survivor benefit that is different from 100% or 50% of your monthly pension amount.



**CRAFT YOUR OWN PLAN AS LONG AS IT'S ACTUARIALLY CERTIFIED**



**CONTACT SERS 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR RETIREMENT DATE**



**YOUR SURVIVOR BENEFIT CAN BE DIFFERENT THAN THE 100% OR 50% OPTIONS**

## ARE THERE PENSION LIMITATIONS?

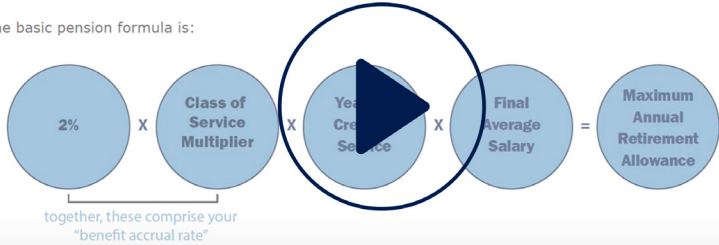
- The [Retirement Code](#) Section 5702(c) limits the amount you may receive in annual pension payments to no more than the highest compensation you received during any 12-month period as an active employee.
- The [Internal Revenue Code](#) Section 415(b) limits the amount you may receive in annual pension payments to the lesser of two amounts, which are adjusted yearly for inflation:
  - A specific dollar limit, \$290,000 for 2026, for retirees receiving benefits between ages 62 and 65
  - 100% of your average compensation for your highest three consecutive years.

This limit became effective with passage of commonwealth Act 2001-9; however, through creation of the Benefits Completion Plan, your total benefit will not be less than you would have received prior to passage of that legislation.

Watch a short video to learn when you qualify for a pension that is not reduced for early retirement and how your monthly pension payment will be calculated.

**How your pension benefit is calculated:**

The basic pension formula is:



2% X Class of Service Multiplier X Yearly Creditable Service X Final Average Salary = Maximum Annual Retirement Allowance

together, these comprise your "benefit accrual rate"

**Early Retirement Reduction**  
Once you are "vested" or qualify for a benefit you can retire prior to your SERS normal retirement age; however, your pension will be reduced for early retirement. The earlier you retire, the greater the reduction.



## WHO WILL I NAME AS MY BENEFICIARY OR SURVIVOR?

### **Beneficiaries** (MSLA, Option 1 & 4 with a death benefit feature)

If you choose the [MSLA](#), [Option 1](#), or [Special Option 4](#) with a survivor feature, it is important that you designate one or more beneficiaries to receive any remaining benefit after your death by listing them on your pension application. This beneficiary nomination will become effective on your retirement date.

It is also important to keep your beneficiary designation up-to-date, especially after a change in your life such as the birth or adoption of a child, marriage, divorce, or death of a spouse. In the absence of a beneficiary nomination form, the remaining benefit will be paid to your estate where it will likely be subject to estate taxes.

If you currently do not have a beneficiary form on file with SERS or your current form does not reflect your wishes, then you should update it. You can download a [Beneficiary Nomination Form](#) from SERS' website, [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov).

Whether your pre-divorce designation of your spouse as a beneficiary would be effective under the Pennsylvania Probate, Estates and Fiduciaries Code will depend on the date of your designation and your state of residency at the time of death. If you designate your spouse as a beneficiary and later divorce, you should file a new form (if allowed per approved [Domestic Relations Order](#)).

If you choose the MSLA option and withdraw all of your contributions and interest at retirement, your beneficiary designation is temporary. After SERS issues your first monthly pension payment and your withdrawal, this beneficiary nomination is no longer valid because no death benefit remains to be paid. SERS will pay your estate a portion of your monthly pension for the number of days you were alive in the month that you die.

You also have the option to designate contingent beneficiaries to receive any remaining death benefit if, at the time of your death, all of your principal beneficiaries are deceased.

### **Guardian**

If you name a beneficiary or survivor under the age of 18, you must also list his or her guardian, including the guardian's name and address on your pension application.

### **Beneficiary Forms are Plan Specific**

If you contribute to more than one SERS retirement plan, you need to file a separate beneficiary form instructing how the assets from each plan are to be distributed after your death. Without a beneficiary form on file for each individual plan, the assets from that plan may go to your estate and result in estate taxes.

## WHO WILL I NAME AS MY BENEFICIARY OR SURVIVOR? (CONTINUED)

**Survivor** ([Option 2](#), [3](#), and [Special Option 4](#) with a survivor feature)

If you choose a payment option that provides a monthly benefit to someone after your death – Option 2, 3, or Special Option 4 with a survivor feature – you will list that person (your survivor) on your pension application, including his or her full name, gender, address, birthdate, Social Security number, and relationship to you. You must also submit [birthdate documentation](#) for your designated survivor.

### Change of Option/Designated Survivor

You can change your designated survivor in **only very limited circumstances**. To be eligible, you must make your request **within seven years** of one of the following qualifying events:

- **Your designated survivor dies**

In this case, no death benefit will be payable from your pension. You may choose a new payment option. If you choose to again provide monthly payments to someone else after your death, your pension will be recalculated taking into account your age and your new designated survivor's age at that time. That will result in a reduction to your monthly pension.

- **You divorce**

Whether your pre-divorce designation of your spouse as your survivor would be effective under the Pennsylvania Probate, Estates and Fiduciaries Code will depend on the date of your designation and your state of residency at the time you die. In this case, contact SERS for more information.

- **You marry**

### Temporary Contingent Beneficiary

([Options 2](#), [3](#), and [Special Option 4](#) with a survivor feature)

If you choose a payment option that provides a monthly benefit to someone after your death – Option 2, 3, or Special Option 4 with a survivor feature – you have the option to name a temporary contingent beneficiary that will be effective from your retirement date until SERS issues your first monthly pension payment.

## DO I WANT MONEY WITHHELD FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX?

Generally, all payments from SERS are subject to federal income tax; however, payments are exempt from Pennsylvania state and local income taxes. If you move out of Pennsylvania, your payments may be subject to state and local taxes.

If you want money withheld from your monthly payments for federal income tax, you will complete an [IRS W-4P withholding form](#).

You can change your income tax withholding information at any time by filing a completed IRS W-4P federal income tax withholding form with SERS.

### Important Deferred Compensation Deadlines

Leave payouts are eligible for contribution into the commonwealth's [Deferred Compensation Plan](#) (DCP), within current IRS annual [deferral and catch-up limits](#). Doing so may allow you to defer federal taxes on the money. (See our [Leave Payout Contribution](#) handout for more information.)

If you want to deposit your leave payout into deferred comp, contact your HR Office for your leave payout amount or use the leave payout calculator available on the [Office of Administration – Human Resources website](#) for a leave payout estimate. You must also contact Empower at 866.737.7457 to complete additional required paperwork.

#### NOTES:

1. You must retire with the qualifying years of service and/or age to be eligible for a leave payout. See the Office of Administration's Employee Resource Center, [Planning for Retirement](#) for leave payout eligibility, rates, and other information.
2. If you are vested and choose to delay your application for your pension, you will not be eligible for a leave payout.

Deferred comp participants must submit a signed *Sick and Annual Leave Deduction Agreement* form to the plan administrator at least 45 days before your last day on the job.

If you are not a deferred comp participant, you must first enroll in the plan, which will require additional processing time.

## WHAT ARE MY HEALTH CARE OPTIONS IN RETIREMENT?

In most cases, your active employee health coverage will end at midnight on your last day of employment. Your SERS retirement benefit does not include, and SERS does not offer, a retiree health care program. While different employers handle retiree health benefits in different ways, agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction and a few other employers offer the Retired Employees Health Program (REHP), run by the Governor's Office of Administration.

If you work for an employer outside the Governor's jurisdiction, contact your HR Office for information about your health care options.

If you are enrolled or eligible to enroll in the Active Employees Health Program (AEHP), administered by the [Pennsylvania Employees Benefit Trust Fund](#) (PEBTF), you may be eligible to enroll in REHP when you retire.

REHP eligibility is based on your years of service and age at retirement. Premiums are subject to collective bargaining. The commonwealth retains the right to modify the benefits provided under REHP at any time, regardless of your retirement date.

REHP does not include dental, vision, or hearing aid coverage. If you participated in the PEBTF's active employee coverage, those additional benefits will terminate at midnight on your last day of employment.

Because eligibility is based on your years of service and age at retirement, your [pension specialist](#) can help you by:

- Researching your service record to see if you qualify for REHP coverage
- Verifying the amount of your premium at the time you retire, which is subject to change during retirement, due to collective bargaining
- Enrolling you in REHP as part of the pension application process, if appropriate
- Enrolling and/or changing dependents assigned to your coverage
- Withholding money from your pension payments for premiums

## WHAT ARE MY HEALTH CARE OPTIONS IN RETIREMENT? (CONTINUED)

### REHP Eligibility

Most SERS members are eligible for contribution rate (formerly known as majority state-paid) coverage if they:

- Retire after reaching [SERS retirement age](#) with 20 or more years of service.
- Retire at any age with 25 or more years of service.
- Receive a [SERS disability retirement benefit](#).

SERS will deduct your member share in equal amounts from your monthly pension payments. The amount is based on your [final average salary](#), or your final annual gross base salary at retirement, depending on your bargaining unit and date of retirement, which is **subject to change, due to collective bargaining**.

If you are not eligible for contribution rate (formerly majority state-paid) coverage, the state may pay \$5 toward your premium.

### Medicare & REHP

If you are enrolled or eligible to enroll in the Active Employees Health Program, administered by the PEBTF and you are planning to enroll in REHP and are 65 years old or older, contact the Social Security Administration three months prior to your retirement to enroll in [Medicare](#).

REHP will not pay for any claims that are eligible for payment under Medicare, so it is important that you and your eligible dependents are enrolled in both Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (medical insurance) on the first day of the month in which you retire.

### Dependent Coverage Loss

REHP coverage is limited to retirees and their dependents. As a result, your REHP-enrolled dependents might not qualify for coverage:

- After your death.
- In the case of a dependent spouse, after your divorce.
- In the case of dependent children, after they reach the maximum age limit.

## **WHAT ARE MY HEALTH CARE OPTIONS IN RETIREMENT? (CONTINUED)**

### **COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights**

In certain instances when coverage ends, you and your eligible dependents have the right to a temporary extension known as "COBRA" coverage. The premium costs for this coverage are different and coverage could continue for up to three years, depending on the qualifying event.

### **Your Right to Defer REHP Coverage**

If you qualify for REHP coverage, you have the option to defer enrollment.

### **REHP Resources:**

- For general questions about REHP, refer to the REHP Benefits Handbook for Retirees or contact the Governor's Office of Administration at [ra-REHP@pa.gov](mailto:ra-REHP@pa.gov)
- For questions about insurance provider options, claims, or a copy of the REHP Benefits Handbook for Retirees, see [www.PEBTF.org](http://www.PEBTF.org) or call 1.800.522.7279.



**DEFINED  
BENEFIT  
PLAN**

Traditional Pension

**AFTER YOU RETIRE**



## **AFTER YOU RETIRE**

After you have signed and submitted your pension application, SERS will send a letter to your employer. You are responsible for submitting a letter of resignation to your employer in accordance with its policies.

Here are a few things you should be aware of as you enter retirement.

### **Returning to State Service from Retirement – Know the Consequences**

Generally, if you retire and then return to work for a [SERS-participating employer](#), your monthly pension payments stop.

If you choose health insurance coverage through the REHP (see [What Are My Health Care Options in Retirement?](#) section for more information), your health insurance coverage also will stop.

The same is true if you choose to leave retirement and later work for a public school district in Pennsylvania – as a member of [PSERS](#) – and you choose to combine your SERS and PSERS service for one monthly payment by electing “multiple service.”

If you have been asked to return to service by a SERS-participating employer, we recommend you contact your [pension specialist](#) **prior to** accepting the position.

The amount of your pension when you retire again will depend largely on your age at that time, how long you work and how much you earn after your return to work.

## **AFTER YOU RETIRE (CONTINUED)**

### **Return from Involuntary Termination**

If you appeal your termination and it is reversed, you must return any member contributions you withdrew and any pension payments you received from SERS between your termination and reinstatement dates. If you receive a back-pay award, the amount you need to return to SERS will be deducted from your award. If you do not receive a back-pay award, or it is not large enough to cover the amount you need to return, SERS will send you an invoice. You may pay SERS in a lump sum or in payroll deductions over time.

### **Limited Exceptions**

You may return to work for a [SERS-participating employer](#) while continuing to receive your pension payments in three cases. You will not, however, accrue additional service credit or increase your monthly pension during your work as:

- **An emergency rehire** – If an emergency increases an employer’s workload causing serious impairment of service to the public, you may return to work for up to 95 days per calendar year as long as you have been retired for at least a year or have reached a certain age. Employers under the Governor’s jurisdiction must obtain the Governor’s approval for your return.
- **A salaried member of an independent board or commission** – If you have reached SERS retirement age and have been retired for at least six months, are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate, and you will earn less than \$35,000 annually, you may return to work. If you are under SERS retirement age, you can return only after you have been retired for at least a year.
- **An independent contractor**

## **KEEP YOUR BENEFICIARY LIST UP TO DATE** (MSLA or Option 1)

If you choose the [MSLA](#) or [Option 1](#) monthly payment option, it is important to keep your beneficiary designation up-to-date, especially after a change in your life such as the birth or adoption of a child, marriage, divorce, or death of a spouse.

SERS must pay any remaining benefit according to the most recently filed [Beneficiary Nomination Form](#). The form is available on our website, [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov) or by calling 1.800.633.5461.

In the absence of a beneficiary nomination form, the remaining benefit will be paid to your estate where it will likely be subject to estate taxes.

Whether your pre-divorce designation of your spouse as a beneficiary would be effective under the Pennsylvania Probate, Estates, and Fiduciaries Code will depend on the date of your designation and your state of residency at the time of death. If you designate your spouse as a beneficiary and later divorce, you should file a new form.

### **Beneficiary Forms are Plan Specific**

If you contribute to more than one SERS retirement plan, you need to [file a separate beneficiary form](#) instructing how the assets from each plan are to be distributed after your death. Without a beneficiary form on file for each individual plan, the assets from that plan may go to your estate and result in estate taxes.

### **Notes for your Beneficiary or Survivor** (for After Your Death)

Contact SERS at 1.800.633.5461 or [ra-sersretc@pa.gov](mailto:ra-sersretc@pa.gov) to notify us of the death of a SERS member.

We'll need the following information about the deceased SERS member:

- Name
- SSN
- Date of death
- Home address (if retired)
- PA County where the deceased member worked (if actively employed by the commonwealth)

By law we must receive a certified death certificate listing the cause and manner of death before paying any death benefit. See the [Report a Death](#) link in the footer of the SERS website for more information.

## SERS-PROVIDED SERVICES

- Provide [beneficiary forms](#), [direct deposit forms](#), [federal income tax withholding forms](#), and [change of address forms](#) upon request; and provide information and assistance to complete the forms. These forms are available on our website, [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov).
- Provide you with an annual [Personal Statement of Pension Payments](#) detailing the payment option you selected at retirement, the gross pension payments you received, and the amount you instructed SERS to withhold for taxes, if any, that year.
- Provide proof of your monthly pension income, often referred to as “pension verification.” Note: You can produce your own pension verification by signing into your [online SERS account](#).
- Process dependent changes on your [Retired Employees Health Program](#) (REHP) coverage and answer questions about the amount withheld from your pension for premiums. If you have questions about your coverage or claims, contact the administrator of that benefit, the PEBTF, at 1.800.522.7279.
- Investigate and, if necessary, issue stop payments on pension payments not received ten working days after they are issued.
- Provide resource speakers for groups or associations.
- Provide counseling to your beneficiary or survivor regarding death benefits, with a signed [authorization to release information form](#).
- Help you through the process of changing your monthly payment option if you selected a [survivor option](#) and your survivor predeceases you, you divorce, or marry after you submit your pension application. Request must be made within seven years of the qualifying event.

**DEFINED  
BENEFIT  
PLAN**

*Traditional Pension*

# **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**



## **DIVORCE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS/SUPPORT ORDERS**

A court may issue an official order requiring payment from your SERS pension for spousal and child support or for equitable distribution of marital assets.

The portion of a SERS pension earned during marriage is marital property. A SERS-approved Domestic Relations Order (DRO) will specify how much of your pension (a portion or all) we are to pay to an alternate payee for the equitable distribution of marital assets. It will also specify in what form these payments are to be made. Keep in mind that processing a domestic relations order could add months to processing your benefits.

Court-ordered payments will stop if you return to work for an [employer that offers SERS retirement plans](#), you [forfeit your pension](#), or you are receiving a temporary [SERS disability benefit](#) and your disability benefit is discontinued.

### **Support Orders**

The court's order must include your name, Social Security number, amount of attachment, Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System case number (when support is for a minor), judge's signature, and the date.

The court must send the order to:  
SERS-Membership Services Division  
30 North 3rd Street, Suite 150  
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1716  
Fax: 717.237.0393

After SERS receives the order, we will send payments directly to the Pennsylvania State Collection and Disbursement Unit, which then forwards the payments to the appropriate county Domestic Relations Office or Family Court Division, or to the address stated on the support order.

A support order cannot exceed 50% of your monthly pension, unless support payments are more than 12 weeks past due at the time the order is filed by the court.

The cost to administer a support order is 2% of the attachment, which is deducted from the balance of your pension.

## **DIVORCE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS/SUPPORT ORDERS (CONTINUED)**

### **Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (DRO)**

Download the [Domestic Relations Order \(sample\)](#) from [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov) as a resource for you and your attorney to use in drafting your DRO. All DROs must be approved by SERS for compliance with the [Retirement Code](#) before they become effective. Your attorney is encouraged to send a draft of your DRO to SERS-Chief Counsel's Office for review before filing with the court:

SERS-Chief Counsel's Office  
30 North 3rd Street, Suite 150  
Harrisburg PA 17101-1716  
Fax: 717.787.5751  
Email: [ra-er-cco-admins@pa.gov](mailto:ra-er-cco-admins@pa.gov)

Requirements contained in federal pension statutes such as the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and the Retirement Equity Act of 1984 regarding qualified domestic relations orders (QDROs) and spousal consent do not apply to governmental pension plans like SERS.

Unlike ERISA plans, this means that in the absence of an appropriate court order, you may take any action with regard to your SERS pension without providing notice to or obtaining consent from any person, including your spouse.

## **POWER OF ATTORNEY**

If you have appointed someone to act on your behalf as your agent under a Power of Attorney (POA), you should submit the POA for approval by SERS. A POA can be an invaluable document in the event that you become incapacitated and are unable to make decisions related to your pension. A [sample POA form specifically written for SERS pensions](#) is available on our website, [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov) or by calling 1.800.633.5461.

# TAXES

In general, SERS pension payments are subject to federal income tax but exempt from Pennsylvania state and local income tax for Pennsylvania residents. If you live outside of Pennsylvania, you'll need to be aware of the state and local income tax rules where you live.

## We Send You A Tax Form Each January

Each January we will send you at least one 1099-R tax form listing the total amount you received and other tax information that you will use to file your federal income tax return. You can reprint 1099-Rs in your [SERS Online Members Services account](#).

You could receive more than one [1099-R Tax Form](#) from us in any one tax year if you retired that year and chose to withdraw any of your contributions and interest in a lump sum, you received a payment from your own SERS pension and also received a survivor or beneficiary payment from a deceased SERS member's pension, or you turned 59½ during that tax year.

PAYER'S name, street address, city or town, province or state, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code <b>COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM</b> 30 NORTH THIRD STREET, SUITE 150 HARRISBURG, PA 17101-1716		1 Gross distribution \$5,299.74	OMB No. 1545-0119 <b>2025</b> Form 1099-R	Distributions From Pensions, Annuities, Retirement or Profit-Sharing Plans, IRAs, Insurance Contracts, etc.
		2a Taxable amount \$5,289.20		
PAYER'S Federal ID number 23-1732438	RECIPIENT'S ID number XXX-XX-6789	2b Taxable amount not determined <input type="checkbox"/>	Total distribution <input type="checkbox"/>	COPY B Report this income on your federal tax return. If this form shows federal income tax withheld in box 4, attach this copy to your return.
RECIPIENT'S name, street address, city or town, province or state, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code 1123456 JOHN Q MEMBER C/O JANE MEMBER		4 Federal income tax withheld \$501.23	5 Employee contributions \$10.54	
		7 Dist. code(s) 7	9a Your total dist. % %	This information is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service.
		9b Total employee contributions \$343.11		

Form 1099-R

Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service

## You Tell Us How Much To Withhold

If you would like us to withhold money from your monthly pension payments for federal income tax, let us know. You can authorize SERS to start, stop, or change the amount by completing an [IRS W-4P withholding form](#).

The image shows two forms: the IRS Form W-4P (Withholding Certificate for Periodic Pension or Annuity Payments) and the SERS W-4P SERS INSTRUCTIONS FORM. The SERS form includes sections for General Information, SERS pension payments and subject to federal income tax, and SERS annuity payments. It provides detailed instructions on how to complete the form and how SERS will use the information to withhold federal income tax from pension payments.

## SERS REGIONAL OFFICES

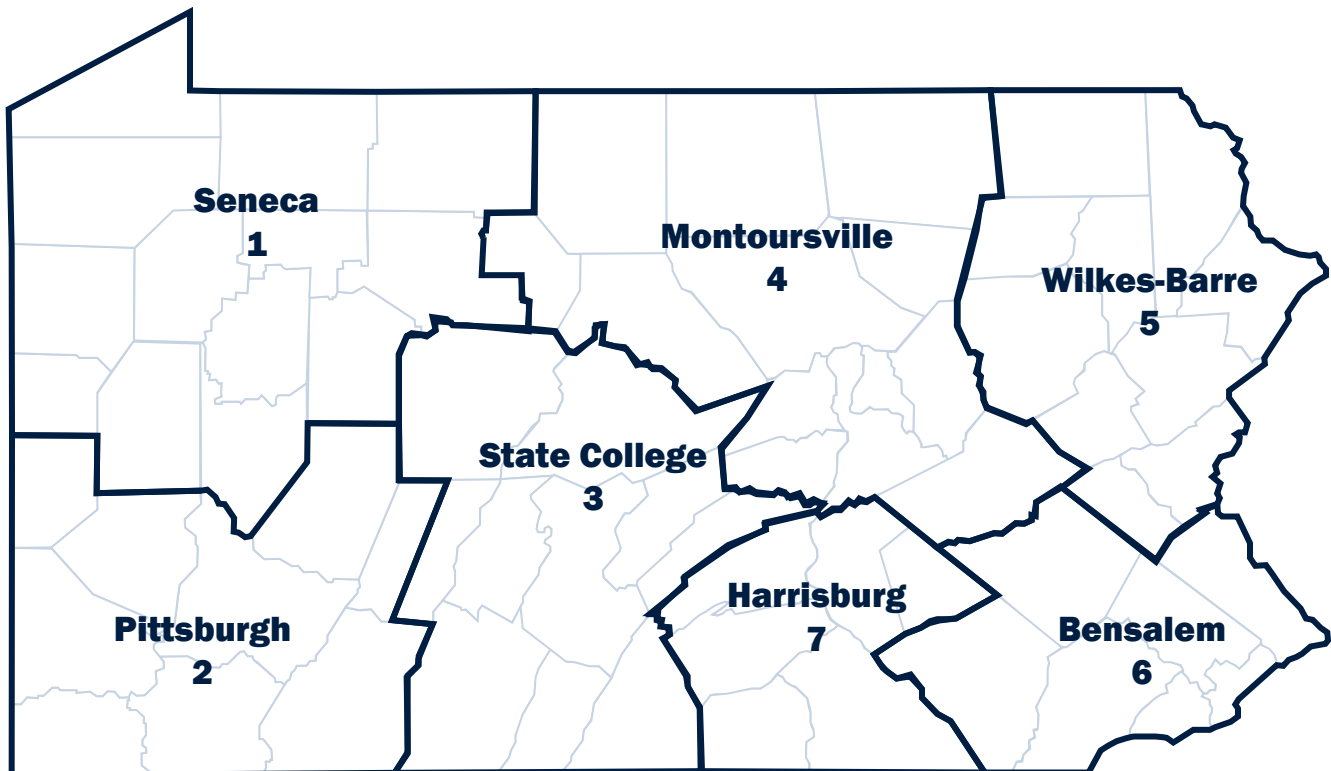
SERS has seven regional offices throughout the commonwealth, assisting members with their retirement-related needs. Our offices serve active members based on their work locations and retirees based on their home addresses. Offices are ADA accessible and are open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding state holidays.

All SERS pension counseling matters are confidential. If you contact your [pension specialist](#), please provide your contact information on all communications.

If you don't live in Pennsylvania and are a retiree or vestee, please call 1.800.633.5461.

### Protect Your Personal Information

Please do not email sensitive personal or financial information, including your Social Security number. SERS will only send you general information through email.



## **SERS REGIONAL OFFICES (CONTINUED)**

### **Region 1: Seneca**

3224 State Route 257 | Duawl Professional Plaza  
P.O. Box 1561 | Seneca, PA 16346  
Ph: 814.677.0741

#### **Counties Served:**

Armstrong, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk,  
Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean,  
Mercer, Venango, Warren

### **Region 2: Pittsburgh**

Foster Plaza 6 | Suite 320  
681 Andersen Drive | Pittsburgh, PA 15220  
Ph: 412.770.1148

#### **Counties Served:**

Allegheny, Beaver, Cambria (Western),  
Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset,  
Washington, Westmoreland

### **Region 3: State College**

1019 Ghaner Road, Suite 203  
Port Matilda, PA 16870  
Ph: 814.863.6505

#### **Counties Served:**

Bedford, Blair, Cambria (Eastern), Centre,  
Clearfield, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon,  
Juniata, Mifflin

**[www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov)**  
**1.800.633.5461**

### **Region 4: Montoursville**

93 Pierce Lane  
Montoursville, PA 17754  
Ph: 570.368.5680

#### **Counties Served:**

Bradford, Cameron, Clinton, Columbia,  
Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter,  
Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, Union

### **Region 5: Wilkes-Barre**

15 Public Square | Suite 410  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701  
Ph: 570.829.0632

#### **Counties Served:**

Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne,  
Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Susquehanna,  
Wayne, Wyoming

### **Region 6: Bensalem**

Two Greenwood Square | Suite 420  
3331 Street Road | Bensalem, PA 19020  
Ph: 215.244.6592

#### **Counties Served:**

Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster,  
Montgomery, Philadelphia

### **Region 7: Harrisburg**

30 North 3rd Street | Suite 319  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
Ph: 717.783.9065

#### **Counties Served:**

Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon,  
Perry, York

# OTHER RETIREMENT-RELATED CONTACTS

## Empower

1.866.737.7457 | [www.sers.pa.gov](http://www.sers.pa.gov)



### Defined Contribution Plan



### Deferred Compensation Plan

#### **Pennsylvania Employees Benefit Trust Fund (PEBTF)**

[www.pebtf.org](http://www.pebtf.org)

150 South 43rd Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17111-5700  
717.561.4750 or 1.800.522.7279

#### **Pennsylvania Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS)**

[www.psers.pa.gov](http://www.psers.pa.gov)

5 North 5th Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1905  
1.888.773.7748

#### **Pennsylvania State Employees Credit Union (PSECU)**

[www.psecu.com](http://www.psecu.com)

PO Box 67013  
Harrisburg, PA 17106-7013  
Member Service Line: 1.800.237.7328  
Self Service Telephone: 1.800.435.6500

#### **Social Security Administration/ Medicare**

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

1.800.772.1213

#### **MetLife**

[www.metlife.com](http://www.metlife.com)

1.855.972.5433

#### **National Personnel Records Center**

(Military service records)

[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

1 Archives Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63138  
1.866.272.6272

#### **Pennsylvania Association of Retired State Employees (PARSE)**

[www.parseofpa.org](http://www.parseofpa.org)

5000 Ritter Road, Suite 105  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
1.888.809.7429  
717.731.9522

For information on dental and vision benefits, call 1.800.382.1352

#### **HR Service Center\***

Monday-Friday 7AM-5PM EST

[www.pa.gov/agencies/hrmoa](http://www.pa.gov/agencies/hrmoa)

1.866.377.2672

\*Employees not under the Governor's jurisdiction should contact their local HR Office for assistance.

#### **Bureau of Commonwealth Payroll Operations (BCPO)**

1.717.772.5340



**1.800.633.5461** | [www.SERS.pa.gov](http://www.SERS.pa.gov)

Pennsylvania State Employees' Retirement System | 30 North 3rd Street, Suite 150 | Harrisburg PA 17101



03-2026

