

# PSERS Active Member Newsletter

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**Attention Active-Certified Members and Participants:** The Public School Employees' Retirement System's (PSERS) Board of Trustees will conduct a Regular Election and a Special Election this fall for two active-certified seats to serve on PSERS Board. The Regular Election is for a three-year term on the Board from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025. The Special Election is for a two-year term on the Board from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024. This seat is currently held by Ms. Susan Lemmo, who retired as an active educator in July 2022. The Special Election is to complete her term on the Board. If there is a contested election, candidate biographies will be included on the PSERS website at [psers.pa.gov](https://psers.pa.gov) and in the ballot which you will receive by mail this fall. Check the PSERS website at [psers.pa.gov](https://psers.pa.gov) for updates on the Board elections.

## Introducing PSERS' New Executive Director

On June 17, 2022, the PSERS Board of Trustees named Terrill (Terri) J. Sanchez as the Executive Director of the System.

Ms. Sanchez is the first woman to hold this position since the System was created in 1917. Ms. Sanchez will report directly to the Board, and she will oversee a staff of over 365 employees.

"I am extremely honored and grateful to the Board for giving me the opportunity to lead this organization and be part of its leadership history," Ms. Sanchez said. "Times are changing. I am excited to work with the stellar staff and Board at PSERS to take the System in a forward direction."

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(Introducing PSERS' New Executive Director...continued)

Ms. Sanchez most recently served in an emergency return to service capacity as Interim Executive Director at PSERS while a search was conducted for a new Executive Director. Prior to returning to PSERS, Ms. Sanchez served as the Executive Director of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, State Employees' Retirement System (SERS). At SERS, Ms. Sanchez was actively involved in implementing sweeping pension legislation as well as shepherding board governance, independent legal counsel, and investment-related initiatives, including work related to the Public Pension Management and Asset Investment Review Commission. Ms. Sanchez also spearheaded SERS development of a 3-year Strategic Business Plan, developed collaboratively with the Board and staff and facilitated by an outside consultant, and implemented regular progress reporting.

Prior to joining SERS, Ms. Sanchez served as the Deputy Executive Director of PSERS. During Ms. Sanchez's 26-year tenure here, she championed several significant strategic

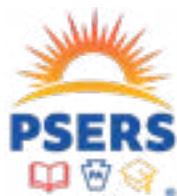
initiatives resulting in more efficient and effective administration and operation of the system, and enhanced services for its members.

During her time at PSERS, she also managed the agency's facilities, human resources, procurement, policy and procedures, data and records management and technology activities to support, secure and optimize agency operations. She also held the position of PSERS' Chief Technology Officer and was the Project Manager for one of PSERS most significant agency initiatives, which was to replace its benefit-related computer systems and update the related business processes.



PSERS Executive Director Terrill (Terri) J. Sanchez

*"I will do my part to ensure the organization remains focused on its mission and promise to provide retirement benefits for its 500,000 members. PSERS is on a path to a very bright future, and I am happy to do my part to lead us there. PSERS members remain our number one priority, and we are committed to providing them the support and resources they will need throughout their career and journey through retirement."*



With PSERS, you're on your way!

## Are You Receiving Your Emails from PSERS?

Members with a Member Self-Service (MSS) account are automatically enrolled in paperless delivery, which means that they will receive most communications from PSERS electronically. Members with paperless delivery are sent an email notifying them when a document is generated and available on the “My Documents” page in their MSS account.

If you have paperless delivery, ensure that you receive important updates from PSERS by:

- Keeping your email up to date through your MSS account
- Checking your Spam folder
- Adding the following email addresses to your contacts:
  - [RA-PSERS\\_Alert@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PSERS_Alert@pa.gov)
  - [RA-PSV3\\_Email@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PSV3_Email@pa.gov)
  - [RA-PSERSNEWS@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PSERSNEWS@pa.gov)

You can opt in or out of paperless delivery anytime through the Profile page in your MSS account.

**Need help?** Visit [psers.pa.gov](http://psers.pa.gov) for instructions on adding email addresses to your contacts.

### How to Spot a Phishing Email

So, what is “phishing”? It usually involves some type of “bait” but not the kind you would use to catch a real fish. No, this bait is used to try and trick you in some way for the scammer’s benefit. The phishing email includes a request to click on a link, open an attachment, or provide sensitive information such as your user ID and password. Some of these emails are well crafted and designed to look legitimate. Here are some ways to identify phishing emails so you can avoid getting “hooked.”

- Poor grammar, spelling mistakes and/or unusual characters. Most, if not all, corporations use some method of spell check before a message is sent. Look at the example below. If you notice spelling errors (Noitication), it’s probably a phishing email. Also, some of the words have strange characters, such as the first “e” and “i” in SharëPointFile in the example below.

<b>From:</b>
<b>Sent:</b> Monday, March 19, 2018 5:46 PM
<b>To:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> FW: SharëPointFile Noitication

- A sense of urgency that demands you act immediately before your account is closed or you are threatened with legal proceedings. The attacker wants you to hurry in hope that you will make a mistake.
- A message with a generic greeting, such as “Dear Customer,” “Dear User,” or “Account Owner.”
- Something that is too good to be true, like winning the lottery even though you didn’t enter a drawing.
- The email appears to come from a reputable source, such as a company, but has a Reply-To address going to someone’s personal email account.
- You receive an email from a friend, but the wording or tone does not sound like them. Best action is to call them directly to confirm that they sent it.

Common sense is your best defense. If an email appears suspicious or odd, it may be a phishing attack.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

PSERS will NEVER call you or send you emails asking for:

- Your password.
- Your private personally identifiable information (e.g., social security number or birth date) unless you have started a conversation with PSERS and have not provided enough information for us to verify your identity.
- Text you except for authentication as part of your MSS login process for your PSERS account.

**Refer to “How to Spot a Phishing Email” for tips on how to avoid phishing emails and keep your information secure.**

**Don’t take the bait! Stay cyber secure!**

## PSERS Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule

**January 13, 2022**

**March 10-11, 2022**

**June 16-17, 2022**

**August 4-5, 2022**

**October 20-21, 2022**

**December 15-16, 2022**

PSERS 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 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](mailto:tidanner@pa.gov).

PSERS is proud to be an equal opportunity employer supporting workforce diversity.

## Free In-Person Educational Programs Return in the Fall

PSERS in-person Foundations for Your Future (FFYF) education programs are back! Open to any school employee at any time in their career, these programs help you better understand your PSERS retirement benefits and plan for your future. Regardless of the position you hold with your employer or how close you are to retirement, we recommend that you attend this free program at least once prior to retirement. FFYF programs are held around the Commonwealth and provide members with the opportunity to meet and interact with a PSERS retirement representative.

FFYF programs cover topics that will help you better understand your retirement by answering questions such as:

- What are my benefits through PSERS?
- When can I retire?
- How is my pension calculated?
- What do all the numbers on my retirement estimate mean?
- What are the retirement milestones?
- What are purchases of service?
- How do I apply to purchase service?

The schedule for FFYF programs and a copy of the FFYF presentation can be found on the PSERS website by selecting *Leaving Employment>Foundations for Your Future*.

A recording of the FFYF presentation is also available on the same webpage.

In the event of inclement weather, a program may be cancelled or rescheduled if the facility where it is to be held has closed or dismissed early.

Please check the PSERS website to verify that the date and/or location of the meeting you wish to attend has not changed due to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. Registration is not required, and you are free to bring guests.

*Please note, FFYF programs do not include information for Class T-G, Class T-H, or Class DC members at this time.*

## Coming Soon: Your 2022 Statement of Account

Your annual Statement of Account as of June 30, 2022, will be sent to you soon! Members with a Member Self-Service (MSS) account and who have paperless delivery will receive an email when their Statement of Account is available.

Please review your statement and verify that the information is accurate. Your statement provides information that assists you in planning for your retirement, such as:

- Address and demographic information (e.g., date of birth).
- Nominated beneficiaries. If you have not nominated beneficiaries, you may do so on the MSS Portal or by submitting the *Nomination of Beneficiaries* (PSRS-187) form.
- Wages, service credits and eligibility points earned during the school year.
- Total service credits earned.
- Estimated Retirement Date based on superannuation (retirement without early retirement reductions).
- Estimated Final Average Salary based on the data reported by your employer(s).
- Estimates for retirement options if you are eligible and were to retire at the end of the school year for which the statement was generated.

### Generate Your Own Retirement Estimates

You can generate your own retirement estimates using the calculator in your MSS account or on the PSERS website [psers.pa.gov](http://psers.pa.gov). By using the estimate calculator in your MSS account, the most recent information reported by your employer is automatically entered in the relevant fields.

## Follow PSERS on Social Media

Follow PSERS on social media for retirement information, educational videos and fact sheets, PSERS investment highlights, and more! PSERS is on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube (PA Public School Employees' Retirement System)!

 @PA\_PSERS

 @PennPSERS

### PSERS

5 N 5th Street  
Harrisburg PA 17101-1905

Toll-Free: 1.888.773.7748

Local Calls: 717.787.8540

FAX: 717.772.3860

Website Address:  
[psers.pa.gov](http://psers.pa.gov)

Email Address:  
[ContactPSERS@pa.gov](mailto:ContactPSERS@pa.gov)

# Understanding Pension Maximization

"Pension maximization" is a term used by financial advisors and insurance agents. It is a strategy where a person takes a higher monthly pension and purchases a life insurance policy in lieu of taking a reduced monthly pension to guarantee a benefit for their survivor.

To fully understand pension maximization of your PSERS benefit, it is important to understand your annuity options. PSERS offers Single Life Annuities, which provide a benefit based on a single lifetime (yours), and Joint and Survivor Annuities, which provide a benefit based on two lifetimes (yours and your designated survivor's).

The following are the different PSERS monthly payment options of the Single Life Annuity:

- **Maximum Single Life Annuity:** This provides the maximum monthly benefit amount available. If at the time of your death, you have not received an amount equal to your contributions and interest, then the balance is paid to your beneficiary(ies).
- **Option 1:** Your monthly benefit is reduced and a "Present Value" is assigned to your account. If at the time of your death, you have not received in monthly benefits an amount equal to your account's Present Value, the balance is paid to your beneficiary(ies).
- **Option 2 or 3 (Joint Survivor Option):** Your monthly benefit is reduced based on your age and the age of your survivor annuitant at retirement. At the time of your death, Option 2 provides 100% while Option 3 provides 50% of your monthly benefit to your survivor annuitant throughout his or her lifetime.

All members have the option of withdrawing their contributions and interest when retiring. This will reduce their monthly benefit. How much your benefit is reduced depends on your membership class. If you are within 12 months of your potential date of retirement, you should request a PSERS staff-prepared retirement estimate to see how withdrawal of your contributions and interest may impact your monthly benefit.

## Example

Rita Retiree can choose to receive a monthly benefit of \$2,000 by electing Maximum Single Life Annuity, or Rita can choose Option 2 and receive \$1,800 (\$200 less than the Maximum option) per month. If Rita chooses Option 2 and names her husband as a Joint and Survivor, upon Rita's death, PSERS will provide to Rita's husband for the rest of his life the same monthly benefit payment of \$1,800 that Rita was receiving at the time of her death. If Rita chooses the Maximum Single Life Annuity, Rita may be able to use all or part of the \$200 difference to purchase a life insurance policy on herself and name her husband as the beneficiary. The proceeds of the insurance are available for her husband if Rita dies first.

# What's Your Game Plan for Retiree Health Benefits?

Many retired PSERS members join the Health Options Program (HOP) when they turn 65. However, if that milestone is missed, there are other opportunities to join when you experience a Qualifying Event. Below is a listing of all the opportunities under which an annuitant may join:

- You retire or involuntarily lose health care coverage under your school employer's health plan. Coverage under your school employer's health plan includes any COBRA continuation coverage you may elect under that school employer's plan.
- You involuntarily lose health care coverage under a non-school employer's health plan (which includes any COBRA continuation coverage you may elect under that non-school employer's health plan).
- There is a change in your family status (including divorce, the death of a spouse, addition of a dependent through birth, adoption or marriage, or a dependent loses eligibility).
- You reach age 65 or become eligible for Medicare.
- You become eligible for Premium Assistance due to a change in legislation.
- Your current plan terminates, or you move out of your current plan's service area.

## The Option Selection Period

Currently, enrolled annuitants are going through the Option Selection Period. It's their annual opportunity to review health care coverage and make changes for the coming year, if needed. The Option Selection Period will run from early October through mid-November.

Depending on individual circumstances, Qualifying Events may apply independently to you, your spouse, and/or your dependents. For example, if your spouse turns age 65 and becomes eligible for Medicare, they can choose to enroll in the Health Options Program, whether or not you also enroll.

If you have questions about Qualifying Events or would like to learn more about the Health Options Program, you are invited to attend an online Information Session. The fall webinars will be held in October and November. The schedule and registration links are posted to the Information Sessions page (under About the Health Options Program) on [HOPbenefits.com](http://HOPbenefits.com). Or you can call the HOP Administration Unit at 1.800.773.7725 to register. Recorded webinars are available if you are unable to attend a live session.



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**5 N 5th Street**  
**Harrisburg PA 17101-1905**

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Important Information from the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania