



RETIREE FOCUS



School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
Serving the People Who Serve Our Schools®



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Payment Schedule

Your SERS payment is deposited into your bank account on the first business day of each month. If the first day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, it will be deposited on the previous business day.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
January	January 3, 2023
February	February 1, 2023
March	March 1, 2023
April	March 31, 2023
May	May 1, 2023
June	June 1, 2023

Due to tax laws, your January payment will be deposited on January 3, 2023, the first business day of the new year.

Payment Stubs

Your payment stub details your gross monthly allowance and deductions, and these amounts for year-to-date.

Beginning August 1, 2022, you started receiving your payment stub on a twice-a-year basis with your *Retiree Focus*, which comes to you once in January, and once in July. You also will receive a payment stub whenever there is a change in your benefit, including a change in your COLA, tax withholdings, or health care premiums. ■

2023 COLA Approved by Board

The Board recently approved a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase for eligible retirees and beneficiaries in 2023.

The COLA takes effect on the anniversary of your effective date of retirement. If you retired on or after April 1, 2018, you must wait until the fourth anniversary of your retirement allowance or benefit to be eligible to receive a COLA.

By statute, SERS' COLA is based on the year-to-year change in the Consumer Price Index (June 2021 to June 2022) for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W), with a floor of 0% and a cap of 2.5%. ■

1099-R Tax Form and Handout in Mail and Online



We are required by federal law to mail your 1099-R tax form by the end of January.

It provides the pension amounts you received for the year, the amount of taxes withheld, and other tax information.

With the form, you also receive an informational handout explaining how federal and Ohio income tax laws apply to your SERS pension payments.

Both the form and handout will be available online by the end of January through your Account Login.

For information about how to set up your Account Login, visit our website at www.ohsers.org, and look under “Retirees,” Informational Handouts, *Account Login: Step by Step*. ■

Federal Tax Changes in 2023



Every year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) updates the tax tables used to calculate the amount of federal tax withheld from your pension.

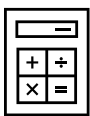
If the updated tables changed your pension payment, review your payment stub for a breakdown of your gross amount and deductions.

The IRS also updated the Form W-4P that retirees use to elect the amount of federal tax withholding.

To continue with your current withholdings, you do not need to complete a new form.

However, you will need to use the new form anytime you want to change the amount of federal tax withheld from your payment. ■

Tax Questions



Your SERS pension may be subject to federal and/or state taxes.

For advice on your specific tax questions, you should consult your own tax advisor, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), or state or local tax departments. **SERS cannot provide individual tax advice.**

For more information, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov. ■



Q: Why was there a change in my January payment?

A: If you noticed a change in your January payment, it may be due to:

Health Care Premiums

- Increases or decreases to premiums, including dental and vision.

Tax Withholding

- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) updated the income-tax withholding tables for 2023, reflecting changes in tax rates and tax brackets. These were effective on your January check.
- Depending on your tax bracket and number of allowances you designated, your monthly tax withholding payment may be more or less than previous months.

Cost-of-Living Adjustment

- The gross amount of your pension increased because you received a Cost-of-Living Adjustment, which is also called a COLA. ■

Q: Do I have to report my SERS COLA to Social Security?



A: If you are eligible to receive a COLA for your SERS service pension or disability allowance, and you also receive a Social Security benefit based on a spouse, ex-spouse, or deceased spouse's work record, you must notify Social Security in the month that you receive a COLA.

Failure to report your pension may result in your Social Security benefit being suspended, which also could result in your Medicare Part B coverage being terminated.

Depending on the type of Social Security benefit you receive, the reporting requirements are different.

Report your service retirement or disability benefit information to Social Security:

- Anytime you receive a letter from Social Security asking for information.
- As soon as possible if you are already receiving a SERS service or disability income.
- At the time you start to receive a SERS service or disability income.
- Every time you receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on your SERS service or disability income, but only if you also receive a Social Security benefit based on a spouse, ex-spouse, or deceased spouse.

If you received a partial lump-sum option payment (PLOP) at the time of retirement, report your unreduced pension amount to Social Security. ■

WHEN TO REPORT YOUR SERS PENSION TO SOCIAL SECURITY

RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY BASED ON:	YOUR WORK HISTORY	A SPOUSE'S WORK HISTORY
You start receiving your SERS pension	✓	✓
You receive an increase from SERS		✓
Social Security sends you a letter requesting income information	✓	✓

Your SERS Pension is a Valuable Commodity



Aside from the fact that you receive a pension from SERS, how much do you really know about the value your retirement system provides to you?

SERS is a defined benefit pension plan. It is a pooled retirement plan that provides you a monthly benefit for the rest of your life.

Additionally, as a defined benefit plan, SERS, not you, assumes the investment risk.

With a defined benefit plan, you received a specified payment amount in retirement. While working, you contributed 10% of your pay to help fund your retirement. Your employer contributed 14% to your pension.

Unlike a defined contribution plan such as a 401(k), your SERS pension provided you with access to survivor and disability benefits.

Last year, contributions from SERS' members and employers totaled nearly \$954 million.

That is money that SERS invests to fund pension payments, including yours.

Another key point that factors into the overall value of your pension is that SERS' mission is "to provide our membership with valuable lifetime pension benefit programs and services." Unlike a defined contribution pension or even a 401(k), SERS exists to serve you. We are here for you. ■



Health Care News



Insulin Costs Drop Under New Medicare Law

A new federal requirement caps a one-month supply of Part D-covered insulin at \$35. The cap applies to every Medicare member who takes insulin, even individuals who receive Medicare Extra Help.

SERS' plan participants already pay lower co-pays for preferred brand-name insulin. Since 2012, the maximum co-pay for preferred brand name insulin has been capped at \$25 for a retail 34-day supply of insulin and \$60 for a 90-day mail order supply.

Non-preferred insulins for Medicare members will drop to \$35 for a 34-day supply at retail and \$90 for a 90-day mail order supply.

This change to the non-preferred copay only applies to the SERS Medicare Part D Plan.

Adjustment to VSP Vision Premium Effective 2023 Plan Year

There has been an adjustment to the VSP Vision premium for a benefit recipient plus one dependent. This premium is being adjusted downward by one cent to \$12.34 from \$12.35.

Enrolled in a Non-Medicare SERS Plan? You Will Receive a 1095-B Tax Form

Each year, SERS reports to the IRS that our plan provided non-Medicare plan enrollees with the minimum essential coverage as required by the Affordable Care Act.

Health care plans also send enrollees a tax form to confirm coverage. The forms are mailed after the end of the year.

Where the form comes from and which tax form you receive vary:

- SERS mails the 1095-B to Aetna Choice POS II plan enrollees.
- AultCare mails the 1095-B to AultCare PPO plan enrollees.
- SERS Marketplace Wraparound Plan enrollees will receive a 1095-A form from their Marketplace plan.

Taxpayers DO NOT have to send the 1095-B form to the IRS when filing their tax returns.

Enrollees with Medicare A or B do not receive this form because Medicare coverage meets the Affordable Care Act's coverage requirements. ■

It's Not Too Late to Get Your Flu Shot



If you think it's too late to get your seasonal flu shot, think again. According to the Centers for Disease Control, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, although significant activity can last as late as May.

Since the start of the COVID pandemic, the timing and duration of flu activity has been less predictable.

Anyone can get the flu, and problems related to flu can happen at any age, but some people are at a higher risk of developing complications.

Flu and pneumonia vaccines and administration are covered in full under SERS' health care plans. What ID you show at the pharmacy to get these vaccines depends on your plan and Medicare status.

- Aetna Medicare Plan (PPO) enrollees = your Aetna ID card
- Aetna Choice POS II and Aetna Traditional Choice enrollees = your Express Scripts ID card
- AultCare PPO enrollees = your AultCare ID card



All Aboard for Adventure and Fun



A train ticket for the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad is a treat for the young and those young at heart; but, the nonprofit would be stuck at the station without its dedicated group of volunteers.

Rhonda Black, a retired switchboard operator/secretary at Akron Public Schools, is one of those volunteers.

A few years ago, she read a newspaper article about the railroad’s North Pole Adventure-themed rides needing volunteers. After attending a meeting, Black became an elf, “and I actually danced,” she said.

Today, she continues to dance to her passengers’ delight.

Black is well known among her fellow volunteers for her kind and fun-loving nature.

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad is a tourist excursion railway and nonprofit organization operating in partnership with Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Northeast Ohio.

“We’re a big family,” said Black, who is usually on the train from Wednesday through Sunday.

She has always been active in her community. After she retired, she decided it was time for new challenges and interests. The scenic railroad fit that need and more.

“Find something to do,” she advises her fellow retirees, “don’t just lay around. If you lay around, you get old.” ■



WEP and GPO Repeal Stalled

As the congressional session closed at the end of 2022, efforts to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) fell short. Despite having more than 300 cosponsors, a full repeal of WEP and GPO, H.R. 82, did not get a vote on the House floor.

Alternative efforts to reform the WEP formula to make it more fair also appeared to be stalled.

Ways and Means committee chairman Richard Neal (D-MA) and ranking member

Kevin Brady (R-TX) both had similar bills that would create a substitute formula for WEP and provide monthly payments to retirees impacted by the WEP, but compromise was not reached between the two.

Legislative proposals will need to be reintroduced in 2023.

SERS will continue to educate members of Congress about how WEP and GPO impact its retirees as well as keep SERS’ members informed of any new developments. ■

Retiree Focus Newsletter in the Mail Two Times a Year: January and July

Beginning August 1, 2022, you started receiving your *Retiree Focus* newsletter twice a year. Previously, you had been receiving it four times a year.

Your next *Retiree Focus* will arrive in July by regular postal mail. Check your mailbox.

Electronic Retiree eFocus Newsletter by Email Two Times a Year: April and October

In October, you also started receiving the new electronic *Retiree eFocus* through your email.


Your next *Retiree eFocus* will arrive in April. Check your email.

Keep up with all the SERS news by sending us your email address so you can receive the *Retiree eFocus*. If we do not have your email address, you will not receive the electronic *Retiree eFocus* in April and October; you only will receive the *Retiree Focus* in January and July.

Send us your email address by using the Updated Information Form below and mailing it to us at 300 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio 43215.

The *Retiree Focus* newsletters are printed on paper and delivered to your mailbox in January and July. The *Retiree eFocus* newsletters are electronic and delivered by email in April and October. Past issues of both the *Retiree Focus* and *eFocus* are available on our website at www.ohsers.org.

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY SCHEDULE

January		<i>Retiree Focus</i>
April		<i>Retiree eFocus</i>
July		<i>Retiree Focus</i>
October		<i>Retiree eFocus</i>

Send Us Your Updated Information Form:

UPDATED INFORMATION FORM

NAME:

LAST FOUR DIGITS OF SSN:

(AREA CODE) HOME PHONE NUMBER

() -

(AREA CODE) CELL PHONE NUMBER

() -

EMAIL ADDRESS:

SIGNATURE:
(DO NOT PRINT)

DATE:



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