



RETIREE FOCUS



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



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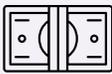
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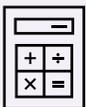
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Board Approves Maximum COLA for 2022



At its September meeting, the Retirement Board approved a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase for eligible retirees and beneficiaries in 2022.

Under current law, the COLA is calculated using your base pension amount and the Consumer Price Index, and can range between 0%-2.5%. The Board has the authority to adjust the percentage to maintain the financial stability of the fund.

Benefit recipients whose benefit effective date is on or after April 1, 2018, must wait until the fourth anniversary of their allowance or benefit to receive a COLA. ■



Q: If I receive a Social Security benefit and a SERS pension, do I have to report my pension amount to Social Security?

A: Yes. 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's work record.

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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	✓	✓

If you are unsure about when or what amount to report to Social Security, contact SERS toll-free at 800-878-5853, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. ■

Keep Your Contact Information Current



Make sure SERS has your current address and valid phone number on file, and that your answering machine or phone's voice mail is set up to receive messages.

If you move and do not notify SERS, your benefits can be suspended.

You can update your address by calling us at 800-878-5853, or by using the My Profile section of the Account Login on our website at www.ohsers.org. ■

The Season for Grifters: Watch Out for Holiday Scams



According to the American Association of Retired Persons, scammers trap holiday shoppers with fake websites, emails, and social media campaigns that pretend to be legitimate brands.

These “spoofing” websites and posts trick consumers into spending money for non-existent products.

They also are a means for collecting credit card numbers and other personal data that fraudsters use to commit identity theft. Links or attachments via “coupon offers” or “order confirmations” found on these websites or in emails often contain malware, which includes an array of harmful computer programs hackers use to gain access to your personal information.

Telltale signs of fraudulent emails or shopping websites include spelling errors or shoddy grammar.

Other hallmarks of holiday fraud include:

- **Delivery Scams:** Scammers send out phishing emails disguised as UPS, FedEx, or U.S. Postal Service notifications of incoming or missed deliveries, and the emails contain links leading to phony sign-in pages asking for personal information, or to sites infested with malware.
- **Travel Scams:** Spoof booking sites and email offers of travel deals.
- **Letter from Santa Scams:** Some custom letters from Santa are really scammers looking to steal personal information. ■

Coming Your Way: 1099-R Form



We are required by federal law to mail your 1099-R tax form by the end of January. Along with your form, you will receive a handout explaining how federal and Ohio income tax laws apply to your SERS pension payments. Both the form and handout also will be available through the Member Self Service Portal using your Account Login. ■



Health Care News



Medicare Announces 2022 Premium Increase



Medicare has announced the standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$170.10 in 2022, an increase of \$21.60 from \$148.50 in 2021.

The increase is based on spending trends driven by COVID-19 and prior congressional action that limited the 2021 monthly premium increase during the pandemic. It also reflects the need to maintain a contingency reserve for unanticipated health care spending increases, particularly certain drug costs.

Most Americans' Part B premium is

automatically deducted from their monthly Social Security benefit. If you pay using Social Security's Easy Pay program, your payment will be automatically adjusted.

However, if you pay your premium from your checking or savings account using an online banking service, you will need to adjust your payment amount to \$170.10 before the January payment.

If you have questions, please call Social Security, which handles Medicare's billing, at 1-800-772-1213. ■

Board Approves Medicare Part B Health Care Rule



The Retirement Board recently amended the SERS health care eligibility rule to require that once individuals are eligible for Medicare, they must be enrolled in Medicare Part B.

This means:

- They must enroll in Medicare Part B during their Initial Enrollment Period (or during a Special Enrollment Period following the loss of employer coverage); and
- They must maintain their Part B coverage going forward.

An individual who fails to maintain coverage must reenroll during the first available General Enrollment Period.

SERS will be contacting health care participants who must enroll in Medicare Part B during the next Medicare General Enrollment Period, which will be January – March, 2022.

Individuals who failed to enroll in Medicare Part B during their initial/special enrollment period or lost Medicare Part B coverage before January 1, 2019, will not lose eligibility for SERS' health care coverage. ■

SERS' Aetna Medicare Advantage Plan Mailing New ID Cards



Members enrolled in the SERS Aetna Medicare Plan (PPO) will receive new Aetna ID cards that are effective January 1, 2022. The numbers on these cards are changing, which means you will have a new member ID and plan number. Make sure you use your new card, and share it with your providers. If a doctor files a claim under your old numbers, your claim will be rejected.

Your new card:

- Will be mailed in a purple envelope and arrive by December 31, 2021.
- Contains a new 24-hour-nurse phone line, which is: 1-855-493-7019.
- Has the new SERS Medicare Advantage website address, SERS.AetnaMedicare.com, added to its backside. ■

Payment Schedule

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

Exception: January Payment

Due to tax laws, your January payment will not be deposited early. Instead, it will be deposited on the first business day of the new year.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE	
December	December 1, 2021
January	January 3, 2022
February	February 1, 2022
March	March 1, 2022
April	April 1, 2022

Payment Stubs

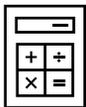
You receive a payment stub every quarter with your *Retiree Focus* newsletter. Your payment stub details your gross monthly allowance and deductions, and these amounts for year-to-date. You also receive a payment stub whenever there is a change in your benefit., including a COLA. Your next payment stub will arrive with your *Retiree Focus* in March. It also will be available through the Member Self Service Portal using your Account Login. ■

Attend a Board Meeting through Zoom



In order to provide greater access and transparency to SERS' membership and stakeholders, SERS broadcasts its Retirement Board meetings live via Zoom. The Board meets every month, except in January and August, on the third Thursday and Friday, if necessary. The login information to attend a meeting virtually through Zoom is posted on the SERS website at www.ohsers.org prior to each meeting. ■

Coming Soon: Updated Tax Tables



The updated tax tables from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are scheduled to be released soon.

They will change federal tax withholding amounts.

Because the tax tables have not been released yet, SERS is unable to tell you if the updates will change your tax withholding amount. If your pension amount does change based upon the updated tax tables, you will receive a payment stub detailing your gross amount and deductions.

If you have questions, please contact your tax advisor or the IRS. ■



Featured on this issue's cover is Vevia Enix of Tipp City.

Enix was a Huber Heights City Schools employee who worked in the Nutrition Services Department for 28 years.

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