



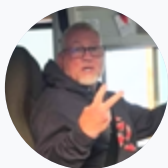
RETIREE eFOCUS

SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO

April 2025

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Retiree Profile
Still Rolling Along

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 | |
|------------------|---------------|
| April | April 1, 2025 |
| May | May 1, 2025 |
| June | May 30, 2025 |
| July | July 1, 2025 |

Payment Stubs

You receive a payment stub in the mail twice a year 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 your COLA, tax withholdings, or health care premiums.

You will receive your next payment stub with the July issue of *Retiree Focus*. ■

WEP and GPO Repeal Update: Fairness Act Passed



After many years, and lots of advocacy by SERS members and other interested organizations, Congress passed H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act at the end of 2024.

The legislation repealed two provisions from the Social Security Amendments of 1983, the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which reduced Social Security benefits for workers and spouses if they were covered by a public employer pension that did not withhold Social Security taxes.

As a result of the new law, Social Security benefits are projected to increase for millions of public

employees and beneficiaries, and many organizations representing public employees saw this as a huge win for public service workers.

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(WEP and GPO Repeal Update continued from page 1.)

Implementation of the law poses some challenges for the Social Security Administration (SSA), as the law did not provide money to implement the law, and it requires the SSA to adjust benefits for more than 3 million people.

According to the SSA's new webpage on the legislation, since the law's effective date is retroactive to January 2024, the SSA must adjust people's past benefits, as well as their future benefits.

The WEP and GPO will still apply to benefits paid through December 2023. Benefits payable for January 2024 and later will be calculated without those provisions.

The SSA also reminded workers that not every teacher, firefighter, police officer, or public worker in Ohio will be affected. Only those receiving a pension based on work not covered by Social Security may see benefit increases.

Unlike Ohio public workers, most other states' public employees – about 72% – work in Social Security-covered employment and pay Social Security taxes, so they are not affected by the WEP or GPO. This means they are not going to receive a benefit increase due to the law.

The good news is that as of the end of February, SSA began to pay retroactive benefits and will increase monthly benefit payments going forward to people whose benefits were affected by the WEP and GPO.

According to the SSA, if a beneficiary is due retroactive benefits as a result of the Social Security Fairness Act, they will receive a one-time retroactive payment, deposited into the bank account SSA has on file, by the end of March. This retroactive payment will cover the increase in their benefit amount back to January 2024, the month when WEP and GPO no longer apply.

Social Security benefits are paid one month behind. Most affected beneficiaries will begin receiving their new monthly benefit amount in April 2025 for their March 2025 benefit.

Anyone whose monthly benefit is adjusted, or who will get a retroactive payment, will receive a mailed notice from Social Security explaining the benefit change or retroactive payment.

It is possible a Social Security beneficiary may receive two mailed notices, the first when WEP or GPO is removed from their record, and a second when their monthly benefit amount is adjusted for their new monthly payment amount. They may receive the retroactive payment before receiving the mailed notice.

For the many complex cases that cannot be processed automatically, additional time will be required to manually update the records and pay both retroactive benefits and the new benefits amount.

SSA urges beneficiaries to wait until April to inquire about the status of their retroactive payment, since these payments will process incrementally throughout March.

Beneficiaries should also wait until after receiving their April payment before contacting SSA to ask about their monthly benefit amount because the new amount will not be reflected until April for their March payment.

Passage of the Social Security Fairness Act will have no impact on your SERS benefits at retirement.

For more information, contact your local SSA office, visit the SSA website at www.ssa.gov, telephone the SSA toll-free at 800-772-1213, or consult with your own tax advisor for specific tax questions.

SERS cannot answer Social Security questions. ■

SERS' Financials Available



SERS' 2024 *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report* (ACFR) and *Summary Annual Financial Report* (SAFR) are now available.

The ACFR presents SERS' financial health, investment performance, and accomplishments of the last fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). It provides detailed financial statements, statistical information, and in-depth explanations of the numbers. The SAFR offers a general overview, summarizing the financial information in the ACFR.

Both can be found on the Financial Reports page of our website at www.ohsers.org. ■



HEALTH CARE NEWS

Take Steps to Better Health with a Walk



Walk with a Doc is a nonprofit started in 2005 by Dr. David Sabgir, a cardiologist in Columbus.

It was started as an opportunity to meet neighbors, spend time in nature, and receive free health education in a relaxed setting.

Walk with a Doc communities offer free, health care provider-led walking groups throughout the year. No advanced sign-up is required. Walks begin with a brief discussion on a current health topic, and then the participants enjoy a healthy walk and conversation.

To search for Walk with a Doc locations by Zip code, go to <https://walkwithadoc.org/join-a-walk/locations/>. ■



Think Savings: Participate in America Saves Week

A SERS pension gives you a foundation for retirement, but more than one source of income is necessary for security. Think about enhancing your SERS pension with other forms of savings. Every little bit helps.

While you can't control the future, you can control the amount you save. America Saves Week can help. Start small and think big with America Saves.

America Saves Week, April 7-11, is a national campaign sponsored by the nonprofit Consumer Federation of America. It encourages people to take control of their financial future, no matter where they are on their financial journey.

Make a commitment to yourself to save money by taking the America Saves pledge.

Through the support of thousands of participating organizations, America Saves Week offers events, tools, tips, and resources that allow individuals to do a financial check-in to get a clear picture of their finances.

This year's theme is, "Saving for Your Past, Present, and Future." Daily themes include: "Saving for the Unexpected," "Saving for Major Milestones," "Paying Down Debt is Saving," and "Saving at Any Age."

For more information, visit the website at americasaves.org. ■

Escape a Scam

Question Authority, Be Skeptical, Trust Your Instincts



Scammers often target older adults because they are trusting, have financial resources, and frequently lack technological skills.

Beat them at their own game.

Question Authority

To escape being the victim of a scam, question authority.

Do not trust just anybody, including those claiming to be your electric or gas company, the IRS, Social Security Administration, or even your bank. Scammers take advantage of the fact that most

people do not question authority figures. Scammers like to pretend they are the electric or gas company, threatening to cut off your services unless you pay what you owe them; the IRS or Social Security Administration, saying you owe taxes or fees, and threatening criminal charges; or the bank, telling you there is a problem with your account and requesting money transfers or account details.

Do not do it. Instead, contact those entities to find out if they did indeed contact you. Check to confirm.

Be Skeptical

Do not trust phone calls, pop-ups on your computer, or emails offering tech support.

Scammers like to masquerade as tech support representatives from recognizable companies, such as Apple or Microsoft. They claim your computer has been infected by a virus and then trick you into granting them remote access, clicking on email links, or paying for software to compromise your information.

Trust Your Instincts

Watch out for home repair scams.

Older adults are more likely to own homes and be at home during the day. Scammers knock on doors or make phone calls to offer home repair services. They also like to sell home improvements, such as energy-efficient upgrades or solar panels, that could save you money over time. After accepting an initial deposit, however, the scammer disappears.

Remember, trust your instincts. If something does not feel right, stop before you act. ■



Q: I lost my 1099-R Form. How do I get another one?

A: You can get your 1099-R with an online account. If you do not have an Account Login, set one up today by going to our website at www.ohsers.org, clicking the Account Login button, clicking “Register Now,” and following the prompts. You also can call us toll-free at 800-878-5853 to have a reprint of your 1099-R mailed to you. ■



RETIREE PROFILE



Still Rolling Along

David Sleutz knows no moss grows on a rolling stone, as his wheels have been rolling along for 40 years.

For 31 years, he drove a school bus for West Holmes Local Schools.

“My father was the principal at West Holmes, and he got me interested when they needed drivers, not knowing I would fall in love with driving and interacting with the students and parents,” he said.

After he spent three more years as bus supervisor at West Holmes, he retired.

With no wheels rolling under his feet anymore, something happened.

“I missed the students so much,” he said, and he decided to go back to work and start driving a bus for Southeast Local Schools in Waynedale.

After four decades of going strong, he stepped off his bus.

Now that he has some spare time, his wheels are still rolling. He bikes 100 miles a week on a road bike and tries to visit as many rails to trail bike paths as possible.

In fact, he recently completed the Great Allegheny Passage trail. ■



Remember Your School Days?

Do you have good memories from your school days in the SERS workforce? Have any photos of yourself on the job? Share them with your fellow SERS retirees by sending us a photo, and a few lines about what you did and where you worked, and we will feature you in an upcoming issue.

Email your photo and information to us at ltroiano@ohsers.org, or mail them to SERS, Attention: Laura Troiano, 300 E. Broad St., Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio, 43215. ■



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