



Education Team Seeks Member Input

Throughout your career you will be faced with a number of personal financial challenges and important retirement decisions. As your partner in this journey, we want to provide the information you need to make the best decisions for your future.

To learn more about how we can help, the OPERS Education team is partnering with public employers in Ohio. OPERS sent all employers a member survey to share with their employees. This is your opportunity to tell us how we can better serve you throughout your career.

What topics would you like us to cover in our seminars? Do you want to know more about personal finance or OPERS benefits? We will use your feedback to tailor our educational offerings to meet your needs.

If you have yet to receive the survey from your employer, you can visit www.opers.org and complete it online. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to hearing from you. We will continue to update you on new educational opportunities as they become available.



Legislative Update:

OPERS supports legislation to simplify survivor benefit eligibility, reduce wait times

The Ohio General Assembly is considering legislation that includes a number of provisions OPERS sought to improve the retirement system for our members.

House Bill 520 contains changes to simplify survivor benefit eligibility as well as reduce wait time for refunds. The OPERS-related changes in HB 520 are common sense improvements for OPERS and its members. We urge the Ohio General Assembly to pass this helpful legislation by the end of the year.

In Congress we are tracking federal legislation including HR 4822, the Public Employee Pension Transparency Act or PEPTA. PEPTA is an anti-defined benefit bill meant to discredit public retirement systems by subjecting them to new federal reporting requirements based on unrealistically low investment return and discount rate assumptions. We expressed our concerns about PEPTA to members of the Ohio congressional delegation and urged them to oppose any efforts to attach the PEPTA language to any legislation under consideration.

The Safe Annuities for Employees Retirement Act would create a new type of retirement plan, cast as a replacement for the existing defined benefit plans used by many state and local governments. We have been in contact with the sponsor's office and have posed many questions, such as whether the prescribed level of contributions is sufficient, or whether the SAFE act program would include necessary benefits such as disability coverage. However, those and other questions remain unanswered.

To learn more about House Bill 520, PEPTA or SAFE, as well as other state and federal legislation, visit the Government Relations page under the About OPERS tab at www.opers.org.

OPERS News

OPERS News is a quarterly newsletter providing news and information to active members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. This publication allows us to communicate vital information concerning retirement benefits to our active members and also educate them on the services we provide.

This newsletter is written in plain language for use by members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. It is not intended as a substitute for federal or state law, nor will its interpretation prevail should a conflict arise between it and the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Administrative Code or Internal Revenue Code. If you have questions about this material, please contact our office or seek legal advice from your attorney.

Contact information:

www.opers.org
1-800-222-7377
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
newsfeedback@opers.org

Connect with us on social media



[youtube.com/ohiopers1](https://www.youtube.com/ohiopers1)

[facebook.com/ohiopers](https://www.facebook.com/ohiopers)



[linkedin.com/company/opers](https://www.linkedin.com/company/opers)

twitter.com/ohiopers

OPERS Board of Trustees

For more information on the OPERS Board of Trustees, visit www.opers.org.

Elected Board Members

Charles Latsa
State College and
University Employees

Sean Loftus
County Employees

Christopher Mabe
State Employees

John W. Maurer
Retired Members

Cynthia Sledz
Chair
Miscellaneous Employees

Ken Thomas
Vice Chair
Municipal Employees

Steve Toth
Retired Members

Statutory Board Member

Robert Blair
Director, Department of
Administrative Services

Appointed Board Members

Vacant
Investment Expert, Governor
Appointee

Robert Smith
Investment Expert, Treasurer
of State Appointee

James R. Tilling
Investment Expert, General
Assembly Appointee

Karen Carraher
Executive Director



Staying on Track for Retirement

You spent a long time creating an investment plan to increase your likelihood for a successful retirement. Because your money is invested in real world markets, there will naturally be some change and flux over time. Some of your goals will shift as you approach them too, giving you another reason to monitor and adjust your finances as time goes on. Make sure all your planning and dreaming counts for something, by staying on top of your finances as you move into retirement.

Take the first step

As a first step, you can create a personal balance sheet. You can make a simple one by adding up your assets and subtracting your liabilities to determine your net worth. When you're preparing it, separate your investments into stocks, bonds and cash -- understanding your personal asset allocation will help you organize your finances and monitor them

better. It's crucial to update your balance sheet every year to keep tabs on the performance of your investments, see if your financial strategy is on track and make adjustments as necessary.

Measure your results

Determining whether your net worth has increased from year to year is easy. But when you're measuring your results, you'll need to go a step further to determine how well you're doing relative to the market. Your portfolio requires routine monitoring, which can be time consuming. You may want to think about

consulting a personal financial adviser to help as you

take stock of your investments relative to the performance of the market. That knowledge and experience can make the task that much easier.

What's next

If you're happy with your financial state

of affairs, just keep on trucking and remember to monitor your investments on a regular basis. If you feel something could be better, you'll naturally want to do something to try and improve it. This could include choosing different funds to invest in, changing your asset allocation to better meet your current needs and goals, or inviting your financial advisor to take a more active role in assisting you.

Doing it for life

Taking stock of where you are financially is much more than simply looking at the performance of your investments. It's a holistic view of your spending and saving habits, debt management, tax planning, gifting and more -- all within the ever-changing context of the world's financial markets. Although it's not exactly easy to do, if you can make a lifelong habit of it, you could reap the rewards in the end.

For more information and additional articles from Voya, visit www.voya.com/planning-advice/saving-retirement.

Source: www.voya.com

Remember to monitor your investments on a regular basis



New to OPERS? **Here are 5 Terms You Should Know**

1. Defined Benefit

A defined benefit pension plan provides a lifetime, fixed retirement benefit. At OPERS, it is based on a formula that includes years of service credit and final average salary. The OPERS Traditional Pension Plan is a defined benefit plan. You can't outlive your defined benefit pension and it will not go down, even if the markets decline.

2. Defined Contribution

A defined contribution plan is a retirement plan in which the member directs how contributions are invested, similar to a 401(k). The OPERS Member-Directed Plan is a defined contribution plan. The OPERS Combined Plan is a hybrid plan with both defined benefit and defined contribution components.

3. Earnable Salary

Earnable salary includes amounts such as salary, wages and other earnings paid to an employee as a member of OPERS.

4. FAS

Final average salary, or FAS, is the average of your five highest years of earnable salary. It is one of the factors used to determine your monthly retirement benefit.

5. Service Credit

Service credit is the number of years and months you have either earned through contributing service or that you have purchased.

Get it Straight from the Horse's Mouth!

OPERS supports more than 1 million members and retirees, so chances are you have friends or neighbors who also are contributing to or receiving an OPERS retirement benefit. While it's great to share what you know and love about OPERS with fellow members, it's best if you get your OPERS news and information straight from the horse's mouth.

Everyone's career path and retirement needs are different. To get the right information tailored to your unique situation, call our Member Services Center, schedule an in-person counseling session or visit our website. You can even send a secure message to a Member Services representative through your OPERS online account. Our counselors and Member Service representatives

are trained experts and can answer questions on a number of topics.

Planning to retire soon? Schedule a counseling session. Want to know how much it costs to purchase additional service credit? Call us! Interested in learning more about investment returns? Visit www.opers.org to view the 2015 Popular Annual Financial Report.

You also can find us on social media including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Don't forget to check out our blog, *PERspective*. Visit the www.opers.org home page for direct links to all OPERS social media outlets.

We also encourage you to take advantage of one of our many educational opportunities including webinars, online recorded presentations and educational videos. To view a recorded presentation or to register for a webinar, visit the Educational Opportunities page of www.opers.org.



You can send secure messages to a Member Services representative through your OPERS online account.

Get the Latest Facts about OPERS

The OPERS 2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, or CAFR, is now available at www.opers.org. The CAFR contains detailed information about OPERS' financial operations and includes investment facts, actuarial tables and statistical information. To simplify the material for our members and stakeholders, OPERS also publishes the **Popular Annual Financial Report**, or PAFR. The PAFR is a summary of the CAFR and highlights key financial, investment and funding information. This year we've revamped the PAFR making it even easier for you to get the important facts about OPERS. You can view the newly redesigned PAFR under the Financial tab on the www.opers.org home page.

OPERS launched a number of key initiatives in 2015 including implementation of the OPERS Medicare Connector, health care solutions for re-employed retirees and an extensive review of the Member-Directed and Combined plans. We also have remained financially strong. OPERS meets the 30-year funding window required by law, and we continue to monitor and adapt to market conditions. The Dec. 31, 2015 valuation shows a funded status of 85 percent, with the unfunded liability expected to be funded within 19 years – 11 years ahead of the statutory requirement.

A complete discussion of OPERS' investment returns, activities, asset allocation strategy, and policies governing those activities can be found in the Investment section of the 2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which is available online at www.opers.org.



Did you know?



In 2015, OPERS served more than 1,060,000 active and inactive members, including 205,601 retirees and beneficiaries.

The system works with approximately 3,700 public employers.



OPERS has an asset base of \$87.3 billion.

OPERS is the largest public pension system in Ohio and the 11th largest in the nation.





Fifty-seven percent of OPERS
retirees are women.

Study Shows Women Benefit from Having a Defined Benefit Plan

Women who participate in defined benefit pension plans have higher incomes in retirement and lower poverty rates than those who don't, a study states.

In "[Shortchanged in Retirement: The Continuing Challenges to Women's Financial Future](#)," the National Institute on Retirement Security found that women working in the health care, education and public administration fields are likely to be better off in retirement than women working elsewhere. That's because those fields are more likely to offer employees access to DB plans.

The study also found that the typical retirement income for women age 65 and older is 25 percent lower than that of men. As men and women age, men's income advantage widens to 44 percent by age 80 and older, the study found.

Other key findings:

- Women were 80 percent more likely than men to be impoverished at age 65 and older, while women aged 75 to 79 were three times more likely to fall below the poverty level as compared to their male counterparts.
- Labor force participation among women aged 55 to 64 climbed from 53 percent in 2000, to 59 percent in 2015, with a peak of 61 percent in 2010.
- While women were somewhat more likely than men to work for employers that offered retirement plans in 2012, there is a gap in eligibility that limits women's participation in these plans.
- Even though the median household incomes of individuals aged 65 and older has increased, women have 26 percent less income than men.
- Women who work in the health care, education and public administration fields, where DB pension plans are more prevalent, have higher incomes in retirement and lower rates of poverty than in other industries.



Ohio Public Employees Retirement System
277 East Town Street Columbus, OH 43215-4642

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBUS OH
PERMIT NO 177

Second quarter 2016

OPERSNEWS

News and information for active members in the
OPERS Combined Plan.



We Want to Hear from You!

OPERS is partnering with public employers in Ohio to learn how we can better educate you throughout your career so you can be prepared to make important personal finance and retirement decisions.

Share your thoughts with us by completing a brief survey. This is your opportunity to tell us how we can better serve you and help you plan for your future.

Check out page 1 to learn more!