

OPERS, Ohio Deferred Compensation Join Forces

We have exciting news: The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System and Ohio Deferred Compensation have officially joined under one administrative organization, following passage of the Ohio General Assembly's June budget bill.

The merger strengthens the foundation of retirement savings for Ohio's public employees — offering efficiency, fiduciary oversight and a commitment to serving our members' best interests.

What it means for you

- For Ohio DC members and participants, nothing about your accounts or investments is changing. Your balances, investment options and Plan expenses remain separate and secure.
- Ohio DC retains its own investment menu and outside managers.
- Communications regarding your Ohio DC account will continue to come from Ohio DC.
- Ohio DC contributions, rollovers and withdrawals will work as they always have.
- The service teams remain the same, and Ohio DC continues

to manage its own operations, including education, service and retirement planning for Ohio DC participants, while OPERS staff focuses on the Traditional Pension, Member-Directed and Combined Plans. **OPERS Member Services will not be able to access your Ohio DC account information.**

- The OPERS Board of Trustees will now oversee both OPERS and Ohio DC, and all staff, consultants and trustees will continue to act as fiduciaries — always working in your best interest.
- Ohio DC will be reported in OPERS' financial statements as an independent trust fund, similar to the Member-Directed and Health Care plans.

Why the merger happened

The combination builds on years of partnership between OPERS and Ohio DC. In 2023, OPERS began analyzing the feasibility of providing services to Ohio DC, and in February 2024

started offering strategic support services such as human resources, and information technology. Both boards voted in early 2025 to pursue legislation for the merger.

By joining together, we can reduce costs, share resources, and create efficiencies. That means more streamlined administration while keeping the services you rely on. This partnership will allow us to offer services, such as financial planning, aimed at helping OPERS members and Ohio DC participants to save for a secure retirement and maintain financial wellness. As we move forward together, our commitment remains the same: providing secure retirement benefits for our members, keeping costs low, and delivering the trusted service you expect from OPERS and Ohio DC.





Online account offers secure account access and applications

The OPERS online account is the way for our members and retirees to stay in touch with us, apply for retirement and other benefits, and keep their personal information up to date.

With the online account you can:

- ✓ View and update personal information, like your address, e-mail address, password and phone number.
- ✓ Select beneficiaries
- ✓ Use the benefit estimator (Traditional Pension Plan members)
- ✓ Contact OPERS via the online message center.
- ✓ Register for a counseling appointment or seminar

Also, through your online account you can:

- ✓ Apply to receive a retirement benefit (Traditional Pension Plan members when eligible)
- ✓ Apply for a refund of your account (if you have terminated your public employment)
- ✓ Apply for a disability benefit (Traditional Pension Plan members, beginning in late November 2025)



Our online applications will guide you through the application process and flag any incomplete information. Submitting a complete application reduces the time required to process your benefit or refund.

It's easy to sign up for your online account if you haven't already done so. Just click on the **Account Login** button on the OPERS home page and follow the prompts.

OPERS News

OPERS News is a quarterly newsletter providing news and information to members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. This publication allows us to communicate vital information concerning retirement benefits to our *Elected Board*

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:

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

Connect with us on social media



youtube.com/ohiopers1

facebook.com/ohiopers



linkedin.com/company/opers

twitter.com/ohiopers

OPERS Board of Trustees

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

Members

Russell Smith
Non-teaching College/
University Employees

Julie Albers

County Employees

Christopher Mabe

Board Chair
State Employees

Tim Steitz

Retirees

Stewart Smith

Vice Chair
Miscellaneous
Employees

Ken Thomas

Municipal Employees

Steve Toth

Retirees

Statutory Board Members

Kathleen Madden
Director,
Department of
Administrative Services

Appointed Board Members

James Kunk
Investment Expert,
Governor Appointee

Scott Richter

Investment Expert,
Treasurer of State
Appointee

Jay Hottinger

Investment Expert,
General Assembly
Appointee

Karen Carraher

Executive Director

Ninety Years of Retirement Security: The OPERS Story

For 90 years, the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System has built a record of strength, stability, and innovation. OPERS' success in providing secure retirement benefits for its members has helped generations of Ohioans retire with confidence.

In 1933, state workers proposed a plan to secure retirement income for Ohio's public servants. Their idea became law that year, creating the State Employees Retirement System—America's first statewide pension system to offer comprehensive benefits, including survivor, disability and service retirement. The system began collecting member contributions in 1935, accepted its first employer contribution in 1937, and issued its first pension check in 1938. That year, it became known as the Public Employees Retirement System.

As membership expanded to include local governments, libraries and park districts, OPERS introduced new benefits, improved eligibility and strengthened its funding. Investment income grew steadily, surpassing member and employer contributions in the early 1980s. Today, investment earnings fund about 75% of each member's pension. To protect retirees against inflation,

OPERS began offering cost-of-living adjustments in 1970 and achieved full funding for the first time in 1999. The system also led the way in retiree health care. In 1974 OPERS introduced health care coverage. Although health care coverage is not mandated, OPERS has continually adjusted this coverage to preserve access and manage costs. Major plan changes in 2012 and 2019 strengthened the health care fund, cutting unfunded liabilities by more than \$18 billion and ensuring continued support for future retirees.



Today, OPERS has \$120.8 billion in investment assets and a funded ratio of 83%. It serves a mature membership of more than 1.1 million in an era of longer lifespans, volatile financial markets, and rising costs. The system continues to evolve, modernizing its technology, refining operations, and strengthening fraud prevention. OPERS continues to balance efficiency with exceptional member service, always focused on long-term stability and the promise made to Ohio's public employees.

As OPERS marks its 90th anniversary, it stands as one of the nation's most respected and financially sound retirement systems. It's rooted in history, guided by prudence and driven by a commitment to secure the future of those who serve Ohio.

Invest in you! with Ohio Deferred Compensation

A supplemental retirement plan can complement your OPERS pension benefit. Most financial planners suggest that your retirement income be 75-90 percent of your working income.

On average your OPERS pension replaces 63 percent of your working income, depending on your age and years of service at retirement. While this can provide a significant amount of retirement income, additional retirement savings will help fill the retirement income gap you may need to retire comfortably.

Consider enrolling in Ohio DC to help you fill a retirement gap. Ohio DC investment options allow for diversification and high quality at a low cost for every investor's skill and comfort level. Participants in Ohio DC benefit from the size of the Program which allows them to offer institutional pricing for investments and lower administrative costs than other similar plans. Lower fees make a huge difference in your overall retirement asset growth and retention.

The earlier you begin saving for a long-term goal, such as retirement, the better off you will be. Even a five-year head start can result in significant account growth, thanks to compounding interest. It's never too early to begin investing in your future retirement!

Ohio Deferred Compensation, ohio457.org, 1-877-644-6457





Winter 2025/2026

OPERSNEWS

News and information for active members of the
Ohio Public Employees Retirement System.



If you no longer wish to receive a paper copy of your newsletter and would like to receive the electronic version, log into your OPERS online account and update your correspondence preferences to electronic.

Minimum earnable salary increases



OPERS members must earn at least \$770.77 to earn a full month of pension service credit in 2026.

Minimum earnable salary is the amount that members participating in the Traditional Pension and Combined Plans must earn each month to qualify for pension service credit, or service credit applicable to health care program eligibility. Your total service credit is a key component of the formula we'll use to determine your retirement benefit. The minimum earnable salary will continue to increase each year through 2029. The rate of increase from 2020 through 2025 was 1.75%, and the rate of increase has changed to 5% per year starting in 2026 and continuing through 2029.

In 2026, members must earn at least \$770.77 for a full month of pension-eligible service credit. If members earn less than that amount, their service is prorated so they earn partial service credit for that reporting period. To earn a full month of service credit applicable to health care program eligibility, members participating in the Traditional Pension and Combined Plans must earn a minimum of \$1,000 per reporting month, and partial service credit is not available for health care.