



MARYLAND  
STATE RETIREMENT  
and PENSION SYSTEM



## Your pension offers credit for military service

### THE STATE OF MARYLAND

is grateful for those who serve in our nation's military. That's why state law offers additional retirement credit for members of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System (SRPS) who serve.

#### Receive credit for duty before and during membership

Members may claim up to a maximum of five years of credit for active military duty preceding SRPS enrollment. An applicant must have accrued at least 10 years of SRPS membership to apply.

Retirement credit also is available for members who served or performed active duty training in the U.S. National Guard or Armed Forces Reserves.

Members who are called to active military duty or active/inactive duty training during SRPS membership also may apply.

To be eligible, a member may not receive credit for the military service under any other pension system. This restriction includes military pensions.

See *Military*, page 4

## Avoid phones, forms, frustration with the mySRPS secure website

NEARLY 130,000 active and retired teachers, government employees, correctional officers and police save time and trouble managing their retirement account using **mySRPS**, the Maryland State Retirement Agency's secure website. So why are you still sitting on hold? With **mySRPS** you can:

- View account information and print benefit statements
- Print an asset verification letter for a landlord or lender

- View and update beneficiaries
- Find out when you can retire and generate benefit estimates
- Calculate benefits for military service or unused sick leave
- Check your home address in Retirement Agency files

See **mySRPS**, page 2

## Survivors have another year to file for COVID-19 death benefit

THE FINAL DATE to apply for special death benefits for members who died from COVID-19 has been extended one year to June 30, 2023.

The Maryland General Assembly enacted legislation in 2021 clarifying that special death benefits may be paid to the families (a surviving spouse or eligible children, only) of members who died from COVID-19. The original filing deadline was June 30, 2022.

The benefit is payable only for members of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System who

### The benefit may be payable to families of members who:

1. Contracted the virus at work and
2. Die of COVID-19 between March 5, 2020, and June 30, 2023.



Apply by June 30, 2023.

die between March 5, 2020, and June 30, 2023, from COVID-19 after contracting the virus at work.

See *COVID*, page 4

# Don't take an unpaid leave of absence without securing your future pension

**AT SOME POINT** in your career, you may need to take an unpaid leave of absence. Because your pension is based in part on your hours worked, taking a leave of absence may affect your benefit at retirement. To preserve your future benefit, consider the following rules governing leaves of absence.

## Only certain reasons qualify

The Maryland State Retirement Agency recognizes leaves of absence for the following reasons only:

- Personal illness
- Birth or legal adoption of a child
- Temporary assignment with another governmental employer
- Study

If your employer approves your leave of absence for one of these reasons, you may qualify to purchase retirement service credit for the period of leave.

## Purchasing service credit after your leave

You must pay member contributions missed during an approved leave, plus interest, to receive service credit for the period of your absence from work. File a *Request to Purchase Previous Service* (Form 26) to start the transaction. Forms are available online at [sra.maryland.gov](http://sra.maryland.gov).

You may purchase the time you were on leave at any time during employment or, if you separate from employment, within 60 days after your leave of absence expires.

Only the types of leave listed here qualify. If you take an unpaid leave of absence for reasons other than those listed, your active membership ceases during the leave and your accrued service credit will be affected.

## You must apply before your leave of absence begins

It's extremely important that you properly file with the Retirement Agency before beginning a qualifying leave of absence. Proper filing ensures that if you die while on leave, your pre-re-

tirement death benefits remain in effect. Proper filing also makes you eligible to purchase the leave period later if you wish to add to your service credit.

Before your leave of absence begins, file a *Qualified Leave of Absence Request OR Notification of Military Service Entry* (Form 46) with the Retirement Agency. Your employer must certify to the Retirement Agency that the leave has been approved for one of the reasons listed here.

## mySRPS, from page 1

Signing up for **mySRPS** is easy. Visit [sra.maryland.gov](http://sra.maryland.gov) and, in the top right of the homepage, click on **mySRPS Login**. Click **Register** and follow the instructions to receive your registration code and packet by mail.

Once registered, you'll be able to obtain benefit estimates based on different retirement dates, beneficiary choices and salaries. You also can generate separate estimates for all the payment options

that will be available to you at retirement.

Curious to see when you can retire and how much your benefit will be? Need a reminder what beneficiaries you named when you were first enrolled? Want to print your benefit statement that you stashed away for safekeeping but now can't find? Sign up for **mySRPS** today!

## Retiring soon?

**IF YOU'RE WITHIN** one to three years of retirement, it's time to start checking off the steps to achieve that goal. Don't know where to begin? Make the process easier with the *Retirement Checklist*. Follow the simple instructions provided in this handy pamphlet and soon you'll be saying, "Good-bye tension, hello pension!"

Click **here** to access a printable copy of the *Retirement Checklist*. Retirement Agency pamphlets also are available from your employer.

# Near or far, the Retirement Agency brings planning resources to your region or home

**THE MARYLAND STATE** Retirement Agency welcomes members to visit our Baltimore headquarters for retirement counseling. However, we know Charm City is a long drive for members living in Oakland, Orville or Ocean City. That's why we offer retirement seminars at locations across Maryland as well as online webinars and videos.

## Seminar registration

Full-day retirement planning seminars are a great way to plan for your well-deserved retirement. Seminars include presentations on

a variety of topics including your future benefits from the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, retirement savings, estate and financial planning, Social Security benefits and other important considerations. To register for a seminar, please click the appropriate link.

- If you work for any unit of Maryland State government, click here: **State Employee Pre-Retirement Seminar**.
- If you work for a county board of education, county government, or town, click here: **County/Municipal Pre-Retirement Seminar**.

## Webinars and videos

For member who prefer to plan from the comfort of home, the Retirement Agency also offers one-hour webinars (online seminars) and short pre-retirement videos.

Pre-retirement webinars provide a general overview of your retirement plan, including retirement eligibility and future benefits. Webinars for specific retirement systems are scheduled throughout the year. Click **here** for current webinars.

Informational videos also are available on a variety of subjects. To watch videos hosted on YouTube, click **here**.

## Make forms less formidable with online resources

**NEARLY EVERY FORM** used to perform transactions with the Maryland State Retirement Agency is available online. Whether you want to transfer service, apply for military credit, or file for retirement, all the needed forms can be printed at work or home by visiting [sra.maryland.gov/member-forms](http://sra.maryland.gov/member-forms).

## Stay current

Retirement Agency forms are updated regularly to incorporate the latest changes to state law and agency procedures. That's why it's important to always use up-to-date forms. You easily can confirm the form provided by your employer is current by comparing it the corresponding form on the Retirement

Agency website, which is updated regularly with the latest version of every form.

## Notarize properly

Some Retirement Agency forms require notarization. Improperly notarized forms delay processing and must be resubmitted by the member. The winter edition of *The Mentor* included a full-page feature with step-by-step instructions for proper notarization. Review that newsletter edition **here** and avoid notary errors.

## Skip the forms altogether

Some transactions no longer require paper forms. Register for the Retirement Agency's secure website **mySRPS** and many processes can



Learn more about seals native to Maryland at [dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov).

be performed paper free! See *Avoid phones, forms, frustration with the mySRPS secure website* on page 1 for details.

# Gov. Hogan appoints two trustees; election slated

**AN INVESTMENT ENTREPRENEUR AND A COUNTY FINANCE OFFICIAL** are the two newest members of the Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System. Michael J. Howard and Robert F. Sandlass, Jr., were appointed to the Board in June by Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.

The 15-member Board of Trustees is responsible for administering the Maryland State Retirement Agency, managing the System's \$69.3 billion investment fund and paying billions of dollars each year to retirees, beneficiaries and withdrawing employees.

Trustee Howard is the founder of MJH Group, a private investment and management consulting firm.

He previously worked with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in the Division of Corporation Finance performing compliance reviews of firms ranging from small companies to Fortune 500 corporations.

A Certified Public Accountant, Trustee Howard holds a bachelor of science degree from Morgan State University.

Trustee Sandlass has served as Harford County Treasurer since 2014. In addition to his duties as the county's chief financial officer, he also chairs the Boards of Trustees for the county's Sheriff Office Pension Plan for correctional officers, Length of Service Award Program for volunteer firefighters and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) for retiree health care.

Mr. Sandlass' prior experience includes serving as Budget Bureau Chief and the Supervisor of Fiscal and Policy Analysis for the local governments of Carroll and Baltimore Counties, respectively. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Hampden-Sydney College and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Baltimore.

## Trustee election slated

Members and retirees of the Employees' and Teachers' Systems will choose representatives to the Board of Trustees in an election slated for May through June 2023.

Five elected members sit on the Board: one retired and one actively-employed member of the Employees' Systems, one retired and one actively-employed member of the Teachers' Systems, and one retired or active State Trooper.

Next spring's election will be for a retired employee and a retired teacher. However, both active and retired employees and teachers may vote. A Trustee election to select actively-employed representatives for the Employees' and Teachers' Systems is scheduled for 2025.

For more information on the System's Board of Trustees, go to [sra.maryland.gov/board-trustees](https://sra.maryland.gov/board-trustees).

## Military, from page 1

All the details are explained in *Guide to Military Service*, a handy pamphlet available online at [sra.maryland.gov](https://sra.maryland.gov). Click [here](#) to read the pamphlet.

## How to apply

To file for military credit, either preceding or interrupting membership, complete a *Claim of Retirement Credit for Military Service* (Form 43). Specific documentation from the military verifying your service is required.

## COVID, from page 1

A special death benefit is a monetary award and is typically greater than a standard death benefit.

To be eligible, documentation must be submitted to the Retirement Agency showing:

- the member contracted COVID-19 within 14 days after reporting to work and
- COVID-19 was the cause of death or contributed to the cause of death.

Contact the Maryland State Retirement Agency for more information.

*The Mentor* is published by the Maryland State Retirement Agency  
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