



# MSRB



## *Active Member eNews Bulletin*

### *WINTER 2023*

#### **Welcome to the Inaugural MSRB Active Member eNews Bulletin!**

On behalf of the Massachusetts State Retirement Board (MSRB), we are pleased to present the new quarterly "***Active Member eNews Bulletin.***"

This quarterly eNews Bulletin will enable the MSRB to stay in touch with you regularly to keep you up-to-date on the latest Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS) pension news. We hope that you find it informative and helpful.

If you are an active or inactive MSERS member and want to subscribe to the quarterly ***Active Member eNews Bulletin***, email us at [MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us](mailto:MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us).

**Note:** Please include your full name and either your MSRB ID number, employee ID number, or date of birth, and request that we add your email address to our distribution list.

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#### **MSRB Video: What is Your MSRB ID Number?**

The Massachusetts State Retirement Board (MSRB) automatically assigns you

#### **Notice of 2023-24 Retirement Board Election**

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws c.10, §18 and c.32, and plan rules, the State Retirement Board ("Board") is conducting a regularly scheduled election for one of the two elected positions to its five-member Board. The elected member will serve for a three-year term without compensation beginning in April 2024.

Nomination forms and Election Rules are available through the Board's website at [www.mass.gov/retirement](http://www.mass.gov/retirement). **Completed original nomination forms must be received by mail at the Board's Boston office, located at One Winter Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA, 02108, by 5:00 p.m., Thursday, December 28, 2023. PLEASE NOTE: The Board's offices are closed to the public.**

Notice to nominees who qualify as candidates will be issued on or about Friday, January 5, 2024.

After the qualification of any eligible candidates, official ballots will be issued on or about Monday, February 5, 2024, by standard mail. Votes must be received, or ballots must be postmarked before midnight on Friday, March 15, 2024, to the Board's designated agent.

You may request a complete set of the

a unique retirement account number when you first join the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS). It is separate from your Employee ID. You can provide your MSRB ID Number instead of your Social Security Number in all correspondence with the Retirement Board. Whenever possible, staff will use your MSRB ID Number for security purposes.

You can find your MSRB ID Number at the top-right of every letter you receive from the MSRB. For more information, you can watch our [What is Your MSRB ID Number? Video here](#).

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## **Do You Want to Learn More About Your MSERS Pension Benefit? Join us For a SMART Retirement & Beyond Virtual Webinar, Hosted Monthly!**

The Massachusetts State Retirement Board hosts SMART Retirement & Beyond Virtual Webinars held exclusively for Massachusetts State Employees. State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg, the Massachusetts State Retirement Board, and the Massachusetts Deferred Compensation SMART Plan sponsor them.

These webinars are very beneficial as members begin their careers with the state or a year away from retirement. Eligible members learn about the features and latest updates on their pension benefits, the benefits of investing in the Massachusetts Deferred Compensation SMART Plan, and, in some cases, an overview of Social Security benefits for which they may be eligible.

[Click here to view our webinar schedule and register!](#)

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Board's Election Rules from the Board's offices or obtain them through the [Board's website](#). If you have any questions, please email the Board's Election Officer Paula Daddona, Director of Member Experience, Communications, and Operations, at [pdaddona@tre.state.ma.us](mailto:pdaddona@tre.state.ma.us).

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## **Monthly Coffee or Tea with MSRB Facebook Live Streaming**

Join MSRB Staff on the first Wednesday of every month\* for our Facebook Live show. "Monthly Coffee or Tea with MSRB" is your chance to ask general pension questions to State Retirement Board staff.

Although we cover a wide range of topics, please note we cannot answer any specific questions regarding personal information. Safeguarding your personal information is our priority.

You can also email your questions to [MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us](mailto:MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us). Previously recorded live shows can be viewed on our [YouTube Channel](#). We hope you'll join us!

\*Schedule subject to change. Check our Facebook page for updates.

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## **MSRB Video: Designating Primary vs. Contingent Beneficiaries Explained**

All active employees in the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS) can designate beneficiaries. When choosing or updating your beneficiaries with the [Beneficiary Change Form](#), it's important to know the difference between "Primary" and "Contingent" beneficiaries. The

## An Important Note About MSRB Forms

Anyone submitting a form to the MSRB should download it directly from the [All Forms page on our website](#) to ensure it is the most up-to-date version. All current MSRB forms are posted on this page.

Recent form updates posted on our website include the Superannuation Retirement Application, Judicial Retirement Application, and Refund/Rollover Request Form. Please make sure to use the correct form to guarantee that all necessary information is received to avoid delays in processing.

If a form requires information from your employer, it is your responsibility to pass the form to them before submitting it to our office. Forms not in good order delay processing. It is helpful for you to identify the employer's payroll, human resources or other designee who may need to participate in the process and/or provide your complete salary information.

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## Veterans HERO Act Recently Filed

Recently, the Office of Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll announced the filing of legislation to modernize services, increase benefits, and promote inclusivity for Massachusetts veterans. This legislation, known as **An Act Honoring, Empowering and Recognizing Our Servicemembers and Veterans (HERO Act)**, looks to expand various resources for Massachusetts veterans.

The legislation aims to increase access to behavioral health treatment, increase benefits for disabled veterans, bolster support for businesses that hire veterans, update the existing definition of a veteran, expand the scope of the Veterans

primary beneficiary is the person or entity with the first claim to your benefits.

Members can choose multiple primary beneficiaries. Contingent beneficiaries are those who are "next-in-line" to inherit the benefit. They would only receive the benefit if the primary beneficiary(ies) were deceased. Members can choose multiple contingent beneficiaries.

It's important to remember that the totals of all proportions for your primary and contingent beneficiary(ies) MUST equal 100% each. Recently, the Massachusetts State Retirement Board published a video that covers the difference between primary and contingent beneficiaries and provides examples. [Click here to watch this video.](#)

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## Option D for Active Members

Option D is a member survivor allowance that provides a lifetime benefit for the member's beneficiary if the member passes away while employed for the Commonwealth. A member can nominate an Option D beneficiary the day they start working. Active employees can complete a form naming ONE beneficiary: spouse, unmarried former spouse, child, parent, or sibling. An eligible spouse has the first-right option to accept the benefit or waive their rights to it.

If upon the active member's death, there is no surviving spouse or minor child and no Option D form on record, then either a lump sum refund of the account will be provided to the beneficiary on record, or a lump sum payment will be made to the estate if there is no beneficiary on record. The Option D designation form becomes void upon retiring as you will choose either Option A, B, or C when you retire.

**Note:** the form must be witnessed by someone other than your Option D beneficiary designated on the completed

Equality Review Board, codify medical and dental benefits, and develop a pilot program for LGBTQ+ couples denied IVF reimbursement by the Veterans Health Administration.

The HERO Act encompasses 17 spending, policy initiatives, tax credits, and statute changes organized into three categories. These categories are **Benefit Expansion, Commitment to Inclusivity and Greater Representation, and Modernization of Veterans Services.**

**The Benefit Expansion proposes enhancing access to the Active-Duty Buyback program:** If approved, it would lengthen the timeframe for veterans in public service to participate in the Active-Duty Service Buyback program and allow retroactive participation for veterans who missed the buyback opportunity. This program would enable veterans to purchase up to four years of active-duty service time toward their state retirement.

[Click here to read the full press release.](#)

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**All MSRB Board publications can be found on our [website](#).**

**Quick links:** Visit our website: [mass.gov/retirement](https://mass.gov/retirement)

**Like us on Facebook:** [facebook.com/mass.state.retirement](https://facebook.com/mass.state.retirement)

**Follow us on X @MassStateRet:** [x.com/massstateret](https://x.com/massstateret)

## Contact us:

**Boston Office:**  
Downtown Crossing  
One Winter Street, 8th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

**Springfield Office:**  
436 Dwight Street, #109A  
Springfield, MA 01103

form. [Click here for more "Option D" information.](#)

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## Creating a "Peace of Mind Binder"

Sometimes called a "Family Emergency Binder," a "Peace of Mind Binder" is a potentially helpful tool to keep in a secure place if something unexpected happens to you. While it may not be as formal as establishing a will, you may want to collect the necessary documentation, personal identification, insurance information, financial documents, and valuable contacts in one place for someone to access in the event you were to pass away suddenly, or another emergency were to occur.

Some things that you may want to consider putting in a "Peace of Mind Binder" are passwords and access codes to accounts that you would wish your family or loved ones to be able to get into, life and health insurance information, banking and financial information, or necessary documentation like passports, birth certificates, or social security cards.

Many templates and resources are available online, including on Amazon or Etsy. "Tidy Mo," a lifestyle blogger, put together this article with some ideas for an "Emergency Binder" and offers a free template to base yours on potentially. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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Is there something you would like us to communicate in an upcoming quarterly **Active Member eNews Bulletin**? If so, let us know!

Email your request or comments to [MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us](mailto:MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us).

We look forward to hearing from you!

Tel: 617-367-7770

**Note: MSRB phones are answered Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except on state holidays.**

**Drop-off hours at both offices are Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., except on state holidays.**

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***Board staff wishes everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and a Happy New Year!***

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