



MSRB



Retiree eNews Bulletin

AUGUST 2022

2022 Board Election

The nomination period for the 2022 Board election closes on September 12, 2022. 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 a three-year term without compensation beginning January 2023.

Nomination forms, Election Rules, and updates are available on the Board's website at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/2022-retirement-board-election>.

Increase for Supplemental Dependent Allowances

As we previously reported, a 5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) was approved and included in July's benefit payments for eligible retirees of the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS). Along with this COLA, there was also an increase for supplemental dependent allowances for either accidental disability retirees or accidental death survivors.

Any retirement system which has accepted the supplemental dependent allowance for either accidental disability retirees or accidental death survivors will

Did You Know?

Receiving paper bank statements could be costing you! Some banks charge your account when they have to mail your monthly statement. Talk to your bank about switching to online statements. (And, if needed, you can print your online statements at home).

Contacting the MSRB

If you have questions regarding the Benefit Verification process, or need to make a change of address, direct deposit, or change your Option B beneficiary, you can send an email to MSRBBenefitPayment@tre.state.ma.us or call (617) 367-9333 ext. 858.

If you need to report a member or beneficiary's death, please email survivorbenefits@tre.state.ma.us or dial extension 851.

2022 BVF Update

The first round of retiree Benefit Verification Forms (BVF) were mailed mid-June and were due back to the Board by July 21, 2022.

It is acceptable to return the BVF after

pay an additional \$1,060.80 for each eligible child as defined in [Massachusetts General Law c.32 §7\(2\)\(a\)\(iii\)](#) or [c.32 §9\(2\)\(d\)](#).

[Click here to read a recent memorandum from the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission \(PERAC\) for more information.](#)

FDA Approves Cheaper, Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids

[On August 16](#), the Food and Drug Administration officially approved a ruling that would help with access to hearing aids for millions of Americans. The ruling allows access to affordable, over-the-counter hearing aids without requiring an intermediary test.

[According to an article by AARP](#), about a third of people ages 65 to 74 and half of those over age 75 have hearing loss. They also reported that around 80% of people who would benefit from hearing aids don't wear them, mainly due to the price tag. Hearing aids are often not covered by private health insurance or Medicare, costing upwards of \$4,000.

Another reason, as suggested by the executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Barbara Kelley, is that individuals "don't have access to an audiologist or don't know how to get into the system."

AARP reports that the over-the-counter hearing aids will not be for everyone and are specifically for those with "mild to moderate hearing loss." The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders put together a [list of examples of mild to moderate hearing loss](#):

- Muffled voices or sounds;
- Difficulty hearing when in a group or noisy area or if you can't see who is

July 21, without impacting a member's benefit payment. We expect to have mailed a second BVF next month to all benefit recipients who were not able to return the first BVF.

Please note: You will not be required to submit a form if you retired or started receiving a pension benefit this year (2022).

Check the [Board's website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) pages for the latest updates.

What Happens If a Retiree Receives a Retroactive Salary Increase, Post-Retirement?

If a retiree receives a retroactive salary increase after they have retired that covers a period when they were actively employed, the retiree's former department or agency will make the payment to the retiree of retroactive earnings owed. The department should deduct the appropriate retirement contribution from the pensionable earnings.

If the increase affects the salary average used to calculate a retirement benefit for a retiree, a benefit adjustment will be processed. Upon receipt of the retirement contribution, it would post to the retiree's retirement account. The Retirement Board would then send a letter to the department or agency requesting the updated salary.

Once the information is received by the Retirement Board, and as soon as administratively feasible, a review of the information would occur to confirm the accuracy of the data provided. Thereafter, an adjustment will be processed. Once the adjustment is processed, a letter will be mailed to the retiree with the updated information. Any retroactive retirement payment will be

talking;

- Frequently asking for someone to repeat themselves or talk louder;
- The need to turn up the volume on a TV, radio, or music is higher than what other people may prefer.

For more information, you can review this [article by AARP](#) or the [press release by the FDA](#).

If you have any questions about your health insurance coverage, please contact the Group Insurance Commission (GIC): <https://www.mass.gov/forms/contact-the-gic>.

Accessing Your Military Records During COVID-19

To slow the spread of COVID-19, the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) reduced its services for processing records requests. With this change, Veterans may experience delays in accessing their records.

For Massachusetts Veterans, The Military Records Branch keeps a database of some DD214s and other military records that Veterans Agents, funeral homes, or government agencies can access. To contact The Military Records Branch, please call (508) 422-1993 or email: military.records@mass.gov. Veterans can download the **Request for Military Records Form** online by [clicking here](#), or by mailing a written request for the form to Military Records Branch, 50 Maple Street, Milford, MA 01757.

To access military records before 1940, Veterans can contact the Massachusetts Archives by phone at (617) 727-2816 or via email at archives@sec.state.ma.us.

[Click here to visit The Military Records Branch's website.](#)

made from the effective date of retirement.

Please note the Retirement Board regularly receives an extremely large number of retros as we service many departments covered by collective bargaining agreements. We must rely on departments to respond and provide accurate data on hundreds of employees. As each adjustment must be reviewed individually, we ask for your continued patience and cooperation.

Last Chance to Take the Summer 2022 Financial Wellness Pledge!

The Office of Economic Empowerment's Summer 2022 Financial Wellness Pledge is closing on Friday, September 2nd! Massachusetts state employees and retirees who take the pledge will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$25 Dunkin' gift card. [Click here to take the pledge!](#)

After taking the pledge, head over to Enrich to create your free Financial Wellness account. Here, you'll have access to resources, articles, tools, and other information about a variety of financial topics. [Click here to sign up](#) for your free account!

Have you, or are you, planning to move? If so, be sure to notify the Board of your address change! Retirees who already have summer and winter addresses on file with the Board can call us to request the address update. Otherwise, you'll need to notify the Board in writing. You can download our Change of Address form [here!](#)

Is there something you would like us to communicate in an upcoming **Retiree**

Contact us:

Boston Office:

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

Springfield Office:

436 Dwight Street, #109A
Springfield, MA 01103

Tel: 617-367-7770

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

Past issues of our newsletter publications
can be found on our [website](#).

Quick links: Visit our website:

www.mass.gov/retirement

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www.facebook.com/mass.state.retirement

Follow us on Twitter @MassStateRet:

<https://twitter.com/massstateret>

eNews Bulletin? If so, let us know!

Email your request or comments to
MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Did you receive this **Retiree eNews Bulletin** as a forwarded email from a friend? If you are an MSERS retiree and would like to receive your own monthly **Retiree eNews Bulletin**, send your email address to us at MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us.

Note: Please include your full name and either your MSRB I.D. or the last four digits of your Social Security Number, and request that we add it to our distribution list.