



MSRB



Retiree eNews Bulletin

OCTOBER 2021

Post Retirement Work Update: Annual Limit Hours Increased to 1,200

The Massachusetts Senate, on September 30, 2021, joined the House of Representatives by unanimously overriding Governor Baker's previous veto of the proposed legislative increase in post-retirement work hours. As a result, the new annual limit for retirees is 1,200 and was made effective retroactive to July 1, 2021. The legislation did not impact the annual dollar limits or disability retiree reporting requirements.

(By way of background, the Legislature, as part of the FY 2022 state budget, had approved increasing the annual hours limit from 960 to 1,200, which the Governor vetoed. However, the House and the Senate overrode the veto.)

According to a memo issued by the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) on October 22, 2021, with the passage of Chapter 76 of the Acts of 2021, a Chapter 32 retiree may work up to 1,200 hours in the public sector in a calendar year. [Click here to read the full PERAC MEMO 29/2021.](#)

From January 1 to June 15, 2021, retirees working in the public sector were exempt from earnings restrictions due to legislation.

WEP Update: Treasurer Goldberg Urges Favorable Action on H.R. 2337, the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act

On behalf of the retired and active members of the more than 104 public retirement systems in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Treasurer Goldberg wrote to the Congressional Subcommittee on Social Security on H.R. 2337, the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act, to urge their favorable action.

If approved, the legislation would provide significant financial relief, nationally, to current and future public retirees impacted by the federal Windfall Elimination Provision ("WEP").

[Click here to view Treasurer Goldberg's entire letter.](#)

Persian Gulf War Bonus

The Veterans Bonus Division within the Office of the State Treasurer now provides a one-time bonus to Veterans of the Persian Gulf War. The bonus was previously offered by the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services, so

Generally, retirees are limited to 1,200 hours of service and/or an earnings limit based on the difference between the retiree's public pension benefit and the current salary of the position from which they retired. Retirees can earn an additional \$15,000 once they have been retired for a year.

"We're happy for those retirees who have been provided with limited additional flexibility to maintain pace with the current cost of living, and also for those public employers who can utilize another means to help meet their short-term resource needs" stated Nick Favorito, Executive Director.

Retirees are responsible for tracking their hours and/or earnings limits. Current guidelines for working and receiving a public retirement benefit are available on the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) website:

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/working-receiving-a-public-retirement-benefit>.

Social Security Announces 5.9% Benefit Increase for 2022

According to a recent press release, the [Social Security Administration announced](#) Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 5.9 percent in 2022.

The 5.9 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2022. Increased payments to approximately 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2021. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price

Veterans may have already received their payment.

Veterans are eligible to receive the bonus if they performed active service for a period of 30 days or more from August 2, 1990 to April 11, 1991, and were discharged under honorable conditions. They must have lived in Massachusetts prior to their service. Family members of deceased service members who died during active service in support of the Persian Gulf War can also apply for this bonus.

A single payment of \$500 will be granted to active service Veterans involved in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. A \$300 bonus will be offered to Veterans called to active service in support of those operations in an area other than the Persian Gulf. To inquire about the Persian Gulf War Bonus, please visit

<https://www.mass.gov/forms/veterans-bonus-inquiry>.

Treasurer Goldberg Receives Harlan Boyles/Edward T. Alter Distinguished Service Award

The National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) announced that Massachusetts State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg was honored with the Harlan Boyles/Edward T. Alter Distinguished Service Award.

The Boyles/Alter Distinguished Service Award is presented to a dedicated and committed public servant whose outstanding career in government has provided a respected voice for NAST at all levels of state government.

Throughout her year-long term as NAST President Treasurer Goldberg successfully led the association's efforts to support sound fiscal policies and

Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

Need a Standardized Social Security Benefit Verification Letter? Get It Online!

The Benefit Verification letter, sometimes called a "budget letter," a "benefits letter," a "proof of income letter," or a "proof of award letter," serves as proof of your retirement, disability, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or Medicare benefits. You may use your letter for loans, housing assistance, mortgage, and for other income verification purposes. You can also use it to prove that you don't receive benefits, have applied for benefits, or that you have never received Social Security benefits or SSI.

For more information, visit <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/proof-of-benefits.html> or call their toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 or visit your local Social Security office. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call their toll-free TTY number, 1-800-325-0778, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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

Contact us:

programs throughout the country. She advocated for increased federal aid for states and localities hurt by the pandemic, legislation to rebuild our country's infrastructure, increase access to financial literacy programs, enhance returning unclaimed property to its rightful owners, and helped advance affordable retirement and ABLE savings accounts.

USPS is Changing Its Delivery Times for First Class Mail

Starting on October 1, the US Postal Service began changing its first-class mail delivery times. The postal service's current three-day delivery standard for first-class mail delivered anywhere in the U.S. will drop to five days. You should expect that letters and other mail could take up to five days to reach their destinations and vice versa. The USPS has indicated that it will continue to have a two-day delivery standard for single-piece first-class mail traveling within a local area.

[Tips for consumers provided by usps.com](#) include mailing your letters and greeting cards with the Postal Service early so the Postal Service can ensure it reaches its final destination on time, and make sure to give your long-distance mail some extra time to travel with USPS.

If you would like to contact one of the MSRB teams, please visit mass.gov/retirement for a listing of specific email addresses.

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.

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. If you call our office outside of these hours, you will be prompted to leave a message. Board staff will return your call as soon as possible, and thanks you for your patience.

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

Quick links: Visit our website:

www.mass.gov/retirement

Like us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/mass.state.retirement

Follow us on Twitter @MassStateRet:

<https://twitter.com/massstateret>

Otherwise, you'll need to notify the Board in writing. You can download our Change of Address form [here!](#)

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.