



MSRB

Retiree eNews Bulletin

September 2020 eNews

Second Mailing of Benefit Verification Forms Scheduled

For those retirees who have not yet returned their Benefit Verification Forms (BVF's) a second mailing is expected to go out in early October. To date, over 45,000 BVF's have been received, reviewed and approved by the MSRB. Acknowledgment postcards will continue to be mailed on an ongoing basis to most members who have submitted a valid BVF. **Please allow additional time to receive your acknowledgement postcard.**

Board staff will continue to process BVF's as they are received. Thank you to all those who have returned their form!

If you have not yet sent in your BVF, it's not too late.

Please note that your pension payments will not be delayed or withheld during the verification process without prior notification. Board staff will make every effort to contact members before withholding anyone's pension payment.

If you would like to speak with a staff member about your Benefit Verification Form, please call our office anytime at (617) 367-9333 ext. 858.

Did You Know?

The **2021 Pension Payment Calendar** is now available for download and viewing!

Click [here](#) to view and download a copy to print and file with your important documents.

FY2021 COLA Status

There have not been any recent developments related to a retiree COLA, which is typically included in the Commonwealth's fiscal year state budget.

Treasurer Goldberg has submitted a letter to the Governor on behalf of the Retirement Board and all state and teacher retirees advocating for the inclusion of a COLA in the FY'21 Commonwealth budget.

The Board will continue to monitor any legislative budget activity. If and when there are any updates, Board staff will communicate via the MSRB website, Facebook and email.

Mass. PRIM collaborates with MIT Sloan on New Initiative to Improve Measurement of Sustainable Investing Project

Economic Empowerment Trust Fund Awarded \$100,000 Grant to Launch Public Employee Financial Wellness Program

The Economic Empowerment Trust Fund, chaired by State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg, has been awarded a \$100,000 grant to establish its financial wellness programs for state employees and retirees in Massachusetts.

Funded by the Wells Fargo Foundation, this one-year grant is structured as a collaboration between the Center for State and Local Government Excellence (SLGE), The International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR), the National Association of State Treasurers' Foundation (NASTF) and Wells Fargo.

During the one-year initiative, the Office of Economic Empowerment will work with state human resource offices and the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS) to host financial wellness educational experiences.

"Our office has a commitment to ensuring that the people of Massachusetts have access to the skills they need to feel more confident in their financial decisions," said Treasurer Goldberg.

The Economic Empowerment Trust Fund and the Office of Economic Empowerment educate and provide resources and opportunities for people of all ages to empower themselves to make informed financial decisions throughout their lives. For more information, please visit the [Office of Economic Empowerment's website](#).

Safeguarding Personal Information

The Massachusetts Pension Reserves Investment Management Board (Mass. PRIM) formally began a collaborative project to improve the measurement of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) data in the investment and financial sector.

The collaboration with MIT's Sloan School of Management -- called the Aggregate Confusion Project - aims to build on research by scholars at MIT Sloan's Sustainability Initiative to improve the quality of ESG measurement. Pension funds have a unique vantage point on the challenges of integrating ESG into the investment process, and the importance of solving the measurement problem.

Mass. PRIM will help inform research questions and methodology for the MIT research team and be a testing ground for innovative approaches.

[View the entire press release here.](#)

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) Status Update

The Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act H.R. 4540 is currently before the Subcommittee on Social Security, and there has been no action.

[The \(Massachusetts\) Retired State, County and Municipal Employees Association \(A.K.A. Mass Retirees\)](#) together with the Texas Retired Teachers Association, created the Public Retirees Alliance – a national organization with the aim of passing Social Security WEP and GPO reform. They are focused on improving the lives of all public retirees – starting with the passage of H.R.4540. Let's #DoSomething and pass WEP reform! Join us and learn more at www.PublicRetirees.org.

"We are working closely with House

We want to remind our retirees that the State Retirement Board ("MSRB") attempts to protect your personally identifiable information in several ways. This type of information includes your name, address, Social Security number, birth date, and any banking information.

For example, the MSRB assigns a dedicated ID number to each retirement system member, which is used in all correspondence we issue. Additionally, the MSRB uses security measures to ensure that information provided by you is not lost, misused, or altered in any way.

It is also very important to be mindful of what you post online in your e-mails and social media to avoid dangerous scams, identity theft, and fraud. Here are a few tips from the AARP on what to never reveal publicly online.

- Personal information, including your Social Security number, birthday, place of birth, and even your phone number,
- Full front pictures of yourself as a con artist can recreate a photo ID and use it in identity theft,
- Be careful about posting things you may want to delete in the future. Nothing you post is ever truly gone even after you delete it. Think twice about sharing pictures or making comments.

Massachusetts Fall Activities

With the Fall season ahead, now would be a great time to explore and learn more about fun things to do in Massachusetts, such as apple picking, which is in full swing!

Check out the [Visit MA](#) website for some nearby fun fall ideas!

Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal to find a path forward for WEP reform in 2020. It is important that a bill not just pass the House, but also the US Senate. The most likely scenario would be to attach H.R.4540 to an appropriations bill or another 'must pass' piece of federal legislation. Roughly 75,000 Massachusetts residents are harmed by WEP and nearly 2 million across the country. This is an important problem to solve," said Mass Retirees CEO Shawn Duhamel.

Learn more here about H.R. 4540 and find out what you can do to help:
<https://www.publicretirees.org/2019/11/hr-4540-windfall-elimination-reform/>.

Have you, or are you, planning to move to a warmer climate for the winter?



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](#)!

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

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

Please e-mail your requests and comments to

MSRBCommunications@tre.state.ma.us

We look forward to hearing from you!

Quick links: Visit our website:

www.mass.gov/retirement

Like us on Facebook:

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Follow us on Twitter @MassStateRet:

<https://twitter.com/massstateret>

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.

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