

The LASERS Vision

Confidence in our service,
assuring financial security
for your future

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2018 REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP OF RETIREMENT BILLS

Almost two dozen retirement bills were introduced in the 2018 Regular Legislative Session that would have impacted LASERS if passed. However, only nine measures passed after the regular session closed more than two weeks earlier than originally scheduled:

- **Act 45 (HB 34)** by Rep. Pearson requires a state or statewide retirement system with investments in international markets to allocate a portion of their investments to a terror-free fund, removing the requirement that the fund must be indexed.
- **Act 59 (HB 874)** by Rep. Henry provides a supplemental appropriation of \$3,676,833 to LASERS to be applied to the Initial Unfunded Accrued Liability (IUAL).
- **Act 113 (HB 38)** by Rep. Hollis provides for the formula for the distribution of COLAs in instances where the legislature or the system does not specify the terms of the COLA. COLAs for LASERS members are provided for by law; therefore this formula will not apply to LASERS system-generated COLAs.
- **Act 215 (SB 10)** by Sen. Peacock adds firefighters in the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to the Hazardous Duty Plan.
- **Act 224 (SB 3)** by Sen. Peacock provides for a 100 percent survivor benefit for members in hazardous duty positions who are killed in the line of duty by an intentional act of violence.
- **Act 225 (SB 17)** by Sen. Peacock updates certain provisions related to the purchase of military service to comply with federal law, including the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- **Act 397 (SB 4)** by Sen. Peacock provides relative to the employment of actuaries and prohibits an actuary from performing duties that require the exercise of supervision or discretionary control over the administration or management of a retirement system.
- **Act 399 (SB 13)** by Sen. Peacock provides that the chair and vice chair of the Public Retirement Systems' Actuarial Committee (PRSAC) shall rotate between the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his designee, and the President of the Senate, or his designee, biennially. It also places PRSAC in the Legislature rather than the Department of Treasury.
- **Act 595 (HB 37)** by Rep. T. Brown and Sen. Walsworth provides for a disability benefit equal to 100 percent of the final average compensation for members of the Hazardous Duty, Corrections Primary, Corrections Secondary, Wildlife and Harbor Police plans who are totally and permanently disabled in the line of duty by an intentional act of violence.

For information about the remaining retirement legislation relevant to LASERS that did not move through the process, please visit the LASERS website.



Medicare: *It's Complicated*

submitted by the Office of Group Benefits

Active employees approaching retirement and retirees insured through the Office of Group Benefits (OGB) should learn about their Medicare options. In this article, we will provide an overview of what Medicare is, how to apply for it, and available options provided through OGB. **The following is intended to serve as a guide only. Each person should consult his or her local Social Security Office for more detailed information.**

As you or your spouse near the age of 65, you will be inundated with marketing material relative to Medicare options. **Always consult with OGB to insure that the option you are considering will not negatively impact your OGB health insurance.**

What is Medicare?

Medicare is the federal health insurance program, administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), for people who are retired and 65 or older, people under 65 with certain disabilities, and people with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). Medicare provides basic coverage as follows:



- **Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance)** – Part A helps to cover inpatient care in hospitals, care in a skilled nursing facility, hospice care, and some home health care.
- **Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance)** – Part B helps to cover certain doctors' services, outpatient care, medical supplies, and preventive services.
- **Medicare Part C (Medicare Advantage Plans)** – A Medicare Advantage plan includes **both** Part A and Part B. Most Medicare Advantage Plans offer prescription drug coverage. OGB sponsors several Medicare Advantage Plan options for members. **If you enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan not sponsored by OGB, you will lose OGB coverage and you cannot reenroll in OGB coverage.**
- **Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage)** – Part D helps to cover the cost of prescription drugs.

Your OGB plan is your Medicare Part D plan. You should not enroll in a Part D plan that is not offered through OGB. If you do, your OGB health coverage will be terminated.

How do you apply for Medicare?

It is suggested that you and/or your covered spouse visit the nearest Social Security Administration office **90 days before your 65th birthday** to find out if you are eligible for Medicare. If you are eligible for **premium-free Medicare Part A**, you **must also** enroll in Medicare Part B to comply with OGB rules. Once you are enrolled in Medicare, OGB must be provided with a copy of your Medicare card. If the Social Security Administration (SSA) determines that you are not eligible to enroll in the Medicare A (premium-free), OGB will need a letter from SSA on that determination.

You can enroll for both Medicare Parts A and B any time in the 3 months before your 65th birthday month, during the month of your 65th birthday, or in the 3 months after your 65th birthday. We encourage you to apply before your birthday to avoid a coverage gap.

These are the basic rules:

- You (or your spouse, if he or she is covered by your OGB plan) must enroll in Medicare, if eligible, to continue receiving secondary benefits from your OGB health plan if:
 - You are retired and have no other group health plan coverage through present (active) employment; and
 - You turned 65 on or after July 1, 2005; and
 - You are eligible for Medicare individually or as a dependent of your current or previous spouse.
- You do not have to enroll in Medicare to continue your OGB coverage if:
 - You are not retired; or
 - You turned 65 before July 1, 2005; or
 - You are not eligible for premium free Medicare Part A.

Following these rules will allow you to have continuous health care coverage. Medicare will become your primary provider and OGB will be secondary.

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What are my Medicare options through OGB when Medicare is primary?

Once you are enrolled in Medicare Parts A & B, your plan options increase. In addition to Medicare and your secondary OGB coverage, you will have the option to choose from several **Medicare Advantage** options offered by OGB, most of which have low monthly premiums.

The Medicare Advantage options currently available through OGB are as follows:

- **Via Benefits** - Towers Watson's Via Benefits is an Individual Medicare Market Exchange that offers a variety of medical, prescription drug, and dental plans. These plans also include a health reimbursement arrangement (HRA), paid by your former employer, with the member receiving \$200 per month for retiree only coverage and \$300 per month for retiree and spousal coverage. The HRA funds can be used to reimburse qualifying medical expenses, even Medicare Part B monthly premiums.

- **Peoples Health Medicare Advantage** - The Peoples Health Medicare Advantage plan offers extra benefits like vision and dental coverage, free health club membership, and prescription drug coverage.

- **Vantage Health Plan Medicare Advantage** - Vantage Health Plan offers three Medicare Advantage plan options to OGB members: Vantage Premium HMO-POS, Vantage Standard HMO-POS, and Vantage Basic HMO-POS. One benefit to Vantage's Medicare Advantage plan is that a network of providers is already contracted with the plan throughout Louisiana.

You can learn more about the Medicare Advantage options available to you by visiting the OGB website at <http://info.groupbenefits.org/health-plans/>.

If you have any questions concerning Medicare and the options available through OGB, please call 1-800-272-8451 and select option 5.

Louisiana State Civil Service Launches Rebranding Project

submitted by Louisiana State Civil Service

State Civil Service's rebranding efforts over the last several months have included a new logo, website redesign, and social media campaign. One of our agency values is innovation, which states, "We embrace the discovery of what is possible and shape opportunities that enable action, even if it involves risk and failure." With that in mind, we recognized the opportunity to task our own team with updating our logo and redesigning our website. In addition,



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we expanded our social media reach to continue providing clear communication between state government and the public, while also focusing on more positive aspects of its workforce, by creating content that is both relevant and easy to understand.

"The expansion into social media platforms will help us reach a broader audience and will allow us the opportunity to showcase the positive impacts our state employees bring to our communities," said State Civil Service Director Byron P. Decoteau, Jr. "We believe it is incumbent to bring forward the positive faces and stories that occur behind the scenes in state government."

To highlight those faces, State Civil Service began the Employee Spotlight Series to display state employees from across all agencies and the excellent things they accomplish. State employees from any agency are encouraged to send nominations to jenny.creighton@la.gov.

In the midst of these changes, we created a video that shows how a Louisiana citizen encounters numerous services provided by multiple state agencies and how those services enrich our lives daily. The video's title, "Every Day for Every Citizen," became the key phrase surrounding this project - emphasizing that Louisiana state employees really do work hard every day for every citizen. Visit our website, civilservice.louisiana.gov, to see the video and links to our social media sites.



LASERS: Get the Numbers

Watch the Latest LASERS Benefits Louisiana Video

LASERS Trustees and staff share annual numbers to let you know the positive impact we are having on the state. Check out the video to see which legislator and retiree graciously participated.

Investment performance summaries are updated monthly. Find out how we are doing on our website.

- ▶ View our investments actual asset allocation and target allocation by clicking the **Investments tab**, then [Asset Allocation](#).
- ▶ View our investments performance by clicking on the **Investments tab**, then [Performance](#).

Faces of LASERS Member Profile: Courtney Fruge



Courtney Fruge, an Administrative Assistant 4 with Louisiana State University at Eunice (LSUE), is a self-described hometown girl with a commitment to state service. Her familial roots run deep within the Eunice community where she was born and raised.

Fruge is a relatively new state employee with under four years of service at LSUE. However, in a short amount of time, she has impressed many colleagues with her dedication and exemplary work ethic. Patricia Gaspard, a Human Resources Analyst at LSUE, says, "Her professionalism and work ethic are unmatched. She is very knowledgeable about her department and about how the campus runs in general; and because of this knowledge, she is able to provide service to all of the employees at LSUE."

Fruge is responsible for performing administrative duties for the Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, Arlene Tucker. While her duties include greeting visitors, handling phone calls, and scheduling meetings, she is also the university key master and maintains the vehicle fleet records. Fruge also manages travel reimbursements and adherence to guidelines, takes care of the payroll for classified employees, and assists with managing the university budget. She is president of the LSUE Staff Senate and coordinates events such as the spring semester bash and Christmas activities, as well as fundraisers for staff members.

According to Tucker, "Courtney is a very conscientious, selfless employee who goes that 'extra step' to help a student or fellow employee. She maintains a positive, caring attitude and has a pleasing demeanor. She exhibits pride in her work and has an outstanding work ethic. I am very fortunate to have her as my Administrative Assistant."

Fruge attributes the development of her work ethic to both parents because her "goal was to make them proud." A major accomplishment for her was to be the first in the family to get a college degree. Fruge earned an Associate's Degree in Applied Science in Management from LSU-Eunice and a Bachelor's in Business Administration from LSU-Alexandria.

After 21 years in the workforce, Fruge shared that the reality of being a state worker is that it is harder than many people in the private sector understand. She advises, "Young people coming into state service should give it a chance. There are many jobs that can benefit future generations, and it's not always about the money. The biggest thing is to be happy with what you do."

A large part of happiness for Fruge involves her husband, two children, and extended family in the Eunice area. They spend time together camping, fishing, and hunting. As for this hometown girl's future, Fruge said, "I plan to be at LSUE, but maybe in a different capacity or position. I'm not done growing."

Visit the Face of LASERS section of the website, www.lasersonline.org, to read more about your fellow state employees.

The RED Team: Who are they? What do they do?

The Retirement Education Department (RED team) is a subgroup of the LASERS Member Services division who take retirement education on the road. You may have seen members of RED if you have attended a LASERS workshop. The RED team consists of Janet Harris, Wendy Demouy, and Carlos Jones.

RED travels to various cities across the state to conduct Individual Counseling sessions (approximately 35 a year). At these sessions, RED consults and provides estimates to members who are within 18 months of retirement eligibility.

RED also hosts various educational workshops for members based on certain career milestones. Early Career presentations are geared toward members in their first few years of LASERS membership. The team helps newer members understand their retirement system and what they can do now to provide for their future. A Pre-Retirement Education Program (PREP) is for members at any stage of membership. The program offers expanded resources for all areas of retirement, including detailed information on the types of retirement. RED also conducts a Retiree Workshop twice a year for our retired members, which includes updates on LASERS, health insurance, and several local agencies who offer services to the public. In 2017, RED hosted over 80 seminars and workshops.



Left to Right: Wendy Demouy, Carlos Jones, Janet Harris

As part of LASERS new Retirement Readiness initiative, RED met with members at the Retirement Readiness Fair encouraging them to prepare for all areas of retirement. The next Fair will be in North Louisiana in the fall.

RED also conducts CPTP courses for human resources personnel to help them further understand LASERS processes and procedures. They also provide agency specific presentations for specialty plans, as requested by a LASERS employer agency.

As you can see, the RED team maintains a busy schedule educating our members across the state on the System and their retirement. If you see a member of the team at one of your upcoming appointments or workshops, please let them know how much their efforts are appreciated!

The Board MEMO

Beverly Hodges
2018 Board Chair



I am honored to once again serve as LASERS Board Chair, having previously held this position in 2013. My focus is to ensure the continued growth of plan assets and the stability of the System as we look to the future. It is my pleasure to report that LASERS has been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in financial Reporting for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017. This is the 21st consecutive year the System has been recognized with this prestigious award, and it shows the hard work and dedication of the LASERS staff.

Our active and retired members should be aware that RSEA has a new Administrative Director, Jimmy Anthony. Jimmy retired from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) in 2016 after serving as the Assistant

Secretary for the Office of Wildlife. He was with LDWF for 40 years.

For those interested in attending RSEA's 10th Annual Conference scheduled for September 11-12 at the Paragon Casino & Resort in Marksville, visit www.rseala.org/conference-and-expo for registration details. The theme of this year's conference is "The Future is Now – Retirement Living 2018." The LASERS Staff will provide a System update at the conference along with OGB, AMBA, and others. RSEA will share important information relevant to state employees and retirees, and many fun activities are on the agenda.

Visit the RSEA website for membership information and learn more about the benefits of joining the organization.



10th Annual Conference

September 11–12, 2018 | The Future is Now—Retirement Living 2018

Sessions Include:

- › LASERS/OGB Benefits Update
- › AMBA Representative
- › Keynote Speaker: "Pete" Reardon, Humorist and Educational Entertainer

Activities Include:

- › Bingo
- › AARP Driving Program
- › Breakfast and Lunch
- › Door Prizes



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Lodging Rates (plus taxes/fees):

- \$99.00 North & South Towers
- \$119.00 Atrium

For Reservations Call:

- (800) 642-7777 — Ask for the 2018 RSEA Convention Group Rate— RSES12G
- To receive this special rate you must reserve your room by: 8/21/18

Registration Fees:

- RSEA Member—\$40
- Non-Member and Guests—\$50

Webinar Registration Still Open for Retiree Workshop on July 25

The LASERS Retirement Education Department (RED) will host a webinar workshop for retirees on Wednesday, July 25, 2018, from 9:00 a.m. until Noon. The workshop is only available online as registration is full for attendance at LASERS.

Presenters include members of the LASERS Executive and Education teams, Office of Group Benefits, and the Office of Financial Institutions.

To register for the workshop, please go to www.lasersonline.org/retirees/retiree-workshop, and click on the "Retirees" box. While on the Retirees page, click on "Retiree Workshop Registration." The workshop page has instructions for how to register for the webinar.

Online participants will see PowerPoint presentations and be able to hear each presenter through their computer.

Webinar attendees cannot actually see the presenters. It is recommended that webinar attendees have strong Internet connection and computer speakers to avoid any connection and audio issues.

If you have any questions about registering, please contact LASERS. We look forward to having you join us for the Retiree Workshop on Wednesday, July 25!



JUST FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

Register for a PREP Workshop

Whether you are a new LASERS member or approaching retirement, a Pre-Retirement Education Program (PREP) workshop can provide you with essential information and tools to help you plan for one of the most important days of your life. Go to www.lasersonline.org and click on Register for a Workshop link on the homepage.

2018 PREP Schedule

Seminars are held from 8:30 a.m. to Noon

DATES	LOCATION
August 9	Shreveport LSU Shreveport University Center
August 16	Monroe Louisiana Delta Community College Conference Center
August 29 September 27 November 15	Baton Rouge Louisiana State Police Training Academy
August 30	Thibodaux Nicholls State University
September 13	Lafayette University of Louisiana at Lafayette
September 20	Lake Charles SOWELA Technical Community College
October 23	Baton Rouge LASERS
November 8	Hammond Southeastern Louisiana University, University Center

How Do You Picture Your Life at Retirement?



Imagine your future self. How do you picture your life at age 40? Age 50? When you are retired? What are you doing now to prepare for a financially secure retirement? In LASERS new video, you will travel with Jenny as she meets her future self and answers these questions.

Check out the new video at <https://lasersonline.org/actives/millennials-investing/>.

JUST FOR RETIREE MEMBERS

Upcoming Benefit Payments

September benefit payments are scheduled to be paid on the first of the month. Since September 1 falls on a Saturday, receipt of your funds can be affected by whether you receive a check or direct deposit and your financial institution's rules when the first falls on a weekend or holiday.

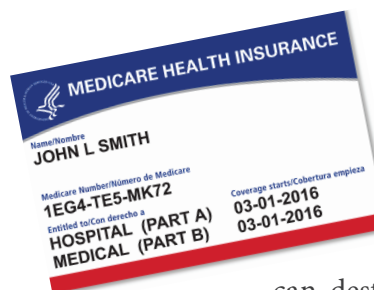
Direct Deposits are guaranteed to be in your bank or credit union on the first day of the month. When the first falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, funds may not be available until the following business day. In these cases, please contact your financial institution directly for information on when your funds will be made available to you. That decision is made by your financial institution, not LASERS. If you have not received your direct deposit by the first business day of the month, please contact LASERS in Baton Rouge at 225.922.0600 or toll-free at 800.256.3000.



The Governor's Office of Homeland Security has many resources available for preparing for hurricane season. We encourage you to take time to check out their website and Get a Game Plan.

LASERS has a Business Continuity Plan in place to support the preparation and management of a disaster. A part of the plan includes offsite data storage and recovery in the event of a disaster. This safeguard provides assurance that our retirees will continue to receive their monthly benefit payment, a top priority for LASERS. Direct deposit is the best way to make sure your payment arrives timely. Form, 04-05, *Authorization for Direct Deposit*, is available on the LASERS website at www.lasersonline.org/forms/.

Look for New Medicare Cards in the Mail



Medicare will start sending new cards with new numbers to Louisiana beneficiaries soon. Sign up to receive an email when your card is on its way at www.Medicare.gov/NewCard.

Once you receive it, you can destroy your old card and start using the new card right away. If you have questions, contact the Senior Health Insurance Information Program at 1-800-259-5300 or visit www.lldi.la.gov/SHIIP. If you participate in the Office of Group benefits health insurance plan, give them a copy.



From the Desk of
Cindy Rougeou
LASERS Executive Director

Are You Retirement Ready?

Last fall I attended a conference with colleagues from around the country and in the course of our discussions, one important topic emerged that has led to improved and enhanced services for our members, **Retirement Readiness**. Our Public Information and Member Services Divisions evaluated our current educational resources, conducted extensive research on what other retirement systems were doing to prepare members beyond the financial component, and took steps to implement changes and create new opportunities in our outreach efforts for retirement readiness.



Can you say with confidence that you are retirement ready?

At LASERS, our mission is to provide retirement security for our members, but retirement planning is not only about financial readiness. Two other components, healthy living and happiness/engagement, are critical to provide balance

in those years after retirement. LASERS new **Retirement Readiness** initiative integrates all three pieces of the retirement puzzle to help you prepare.

A few of our enhancements and additions to outreach include:

- A new **Retirement Readiness** brand, *Putting the Pieces Together*, which is found on LASERS communications to help you identify specific planning tools.

- A new streamlined page on our website dedicated to **Retirement Readiness**, which houses all publications and video resources in one place. Check it out at www.lasersonline.org/retirement-readiness/.

“Our mission is to provide retirement security for our members”

- A new **Retirement Readiness Planner** that includes valuable topics such as submitting your retirement application, service credit purchases, Social Security and Medicare information, a countdown to retirement checklist and much more.
- New **Retirement Readiness Fairs** where LASERS and other partners such as Empower Retirement and the Office of Group Benefits provide information and answer your retirement questions. Look for an announcement soon about the next scheduled workshop in North Louisiana.



With almost 40,000 active members, we plan to expand the **Retirement Readiness** initiative and develop additional resources. Your participation will prepare you to be retirement ready!

Employee of the 1st Quarter, 2018: Ebony Oliver



To say that Ebony Oliver exceeds the expectations of an ideal employee would be an understatement. Since Ebony started at LASERS a little over two years ago, she has been a shining light; always smiling and offering exemplary customer service to our members and other LASERS staff.

Ebony is a go-getter. She is always willing to learn new things and help others with any task. She works well with all LASERS divisions and brings insight and a positive attitude to each assignment.

In addition to her timely and accurate processing of refunds and DROP withdrawals, she has cross-trained on every process in her area. Ebony has also worked closely with the Optimus (LASERS new imaging system) project group, offering suggestions, and is the Fiscal trainer for Optimus.

She never seems to have a bad day and has brought a joyous, infectious spirit to the Fiscal division. Ebony has become an invaluable asset to Fiscal and LASERS as a whole. We are extremely lucky to have her working with us.

Congratulations, Ebony!



Louisiana State Employees'
Retirement System

P.O. Box 44213 | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4213



Stay Connected
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BEAM ME UP LASERS Answers Your Questions



Question: Due to a recent medical diagnosis, I am considering applying for Disability Retirement. How will that affect my health insurance premiums?

Answer: LASERS members who are approved for a non line-of-duty disability retirement and who have participated in an Office of Group Benefits (OGB) health insurance plan for 10 years are eligible for a 75 percent employer premium subsidy, the same rate that would apply if they had 20 years of state service. LASERS notifies OGB of disability retirements so that this rate can be applied. Check with your Human Resources Office for more details.

Are you a LASERS Brainiac?

Familiar with these terms?

SDP (Self-Directed Plan) – LASERS established a Self-Directed Plan (SDP) which is a 401(a) retirement plan. While some have the option to participate, others are required to participate in this plan. Once the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) accumulation period ends, or a retiree selects an Initial Benefit Option (IBO) at the time of retirement, 100 percent of the participant's DROP or IBO balance is transferred to the SDP administered by a third-party provider. For more information, read the *Member's Guide to Retirement* chapter, DROP/IBO Account Withdrawals and the Self-Directed Plan.

IBO (Initial Benefit Option) – The Initial Benefit Option is an optional retirement plan that allows the member to receive a lump sum equivalent of up to 36 months of his or her maximum monthly retirement benefit. Members that select an IBO may choose any retirement option other than Option 1. For more information, watch the *Initial Benefit Option Plan* video or read the IBO Chapter in the *Member's Guide to Retirement*.

Empower Retirement – The third-party provider that administers of the Self-Directed Plan (SDP) for DROP and IBO accounts. For more information, visit Empower's website at www.louisianadcp.com.



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