

news¬es

for new retirees

LASERS

Louisiana State Employees'
Retirement System

Welcome!

The Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System (LASERS) has received your retirement application and will review your records to determine if additional information is needed from you or from your employer. We will calculate a **preliminary benefit** for you until your application can be finalized.

Once LASERS receives all required documents, your first retirement payment should be issued approximately **30 to 45 days** from the effective date of your retirement, and will include the estimated benefit payment due to you from the effective date of your retirement until the date paid.

Your **second payment** may reflect a different amount since it will include only one full month of your preliminary benefit. That benefit payment will continue until we receive all required information.

Once all **final earnings** have been received from your agency and your application is finalized, your next payment will be based on a final benefit calculation (including any retroactive difference in the preliminary and final calculations). In most cases, we are able to **finalize your benefit within 120-150 days** from the effective date of your retirement. If you chose to receive your **unused, accumulated leave** in a lump sum, it will be deposited in your bank account at that time.

Questions for LASERS? Many may be answered using the information available on our website at www.lasersonline.org.

LASERS representatives are also available to answer your questions Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at 800.256.3000 (toll-free) or 225.922.0600 (Baton Rouge).

Helpful Links

- **LASERS:** www.lasersonline.org

- **RSEA:** rseala.org

RSEA advocates for retired and active state employees' pension and healthcare benefits. Consider joining today!



Your Retirement Benefit Payment

Your first benefit payment will be **mailed to your home address** while we pre-notify your financial institution of an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). It will be delivered to the U.S. Post Office on the last business day of the month. We do not have the ability to track or retrieve your benefit payment from the postal service once it is mailed. The following month, your funds should be **automatically deposited by EFT** into your account. The funds are guaranteed to be there on the first business day of the month. Keep in mind if the first of the month falls on a weekend or a Federal Reserve holiday, funds may not be available until the following business day. That determination is made by your financial institution.

You will receive an EFT direct deposit statement resembling a check stub after the EFT is established, whenever there is a change in your retirement benefit, and at the end of each year. *You will not receive a direct deposit statement each month.*

- **Office of Group Benefits:** info.groupbenefits.org

- **Social Security Information:** www.ssa.gov

- **Self-Directed Plan (EMPOWER™):**
www.louisianadcp.com

Changes in Payment to Retiree or Beneficiary

Your monthly retirement benefits will be paid throughout your lifetime; however, these benefits will cease upon your death. Any monthly retirement benefit payment delivered after your death must be returned to LASERS. Your designated beneficiary may have certain benefit entitlements. Your beneficiary must contact LASERS to apply for benefits after your death.

In the event of the death of your designated beneficiary, you may select a new beneficiary provided you retired under the provisions of the Regular Maximum Retirement Plan or the Option 1 Retirement Plan. These options provide a lump sum payment to your beneficiary of any remaining contributions in your account upon your death.

If you selected any of the other retirement options, your benefit will revert to the Maximum Retirement Option upon the death of your beneficiary since a new beneficiary cannot be named. You must provide a copy of the deceased beneficiary's death certificate. This request must be made in writing, and the change of your benefit to the Maximum amount will be calculated based on the date of death of your beneficiary.

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Eligibility

A cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, is possible when the LASERS Employee Experience Account, funded by excess revenues generated by the LASERS investments program, contains sufficient monies to fund an increase. The fund accumulates investment gains, above the assumed percent actuarial return, after the excess returns exceed an amount based on the size of the System's assets, starting at \$100 million. When there are sufficient funds in the Experience Account, the LASERS Board of Trustees may recommend to the Legislature that a COLA be approved.

To be eligible for a COLA, you must have reached the age of 60 as of June 30 of the year that a COLA is authorized by the legislature. In addition, you must have been retired effective June 30 of the previous year. Your beneficiary may be eligible for a COLA after your death if you would have turned 60 as of June 30 of the year the COLA is authorized, and if you or your beneficiary, or both combined, have received benefits since June 30 of the previous year.

Forms, Address Changes, Tax Deduction Changes, Direct Deposit Changes

You should keep your address current with LASERS to ensure that you receive all retirement related information. After you retire, you can update this information by downloading the necessary forms from the LASERS website at www.lasersonline.org/members/member-forms. Many public libraries and educational institutions allow public

access to online resources if you do not have Internet access at home. We can also mail you the appropriate form(s) for changes you wish to update.

Written requests must:

- be signed by you, and
- include your Social Security number for proper identification.

You will have to submit LASERS *Form 04-05: Authorization for Direct Deposit*, if you change your account number or banking institution.

Insurance

We do not have access to your insurance records. If you have questions regarding your insurance coverage, you should contact your employing agency. In the event that you cannot obtain the necessary information from your agency, you may contact the Office of Group Benefits (OGB), P.O. Box 66678, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896. The toll-free number is 800.272.8451, or call the Baton Rouge Customer Service number at 225.925.6625. LASERS will continue to make the deduction for your premium in accordance with information received from the insurance office.

Taxes

Your monthly retirement benefit is subject to federal income taxes. You should have received a W-4P form from your agency for you to control the amount of federal income taxes deducted from your retirement check. We will withhold taxes as if you are married, and claiming three deductions, if you do not submit a W-4P form. We do not withhold for state income tax since your retirement benefits are exempt from Louisiana state income tax.

We strongly recommend that you seek professional tax or financial advice for information applicable to your specific situation.



LOUISIANA SENIOR HEALTH
INFORMATION PROGRAM

Have Questions Regarding Medicare?

Counselors with the Louisiana Department of Insurance Senior Health Information Program (SHIP) can assist you with:

- Medicare eligibility
- Preventive services
- Medicare cost-savings programs

Visit www.lidi.la.gov/SHIP or call 1.800.259.5300.

Returning to Work for a LASERS Member Agency

If you are retired and wish to return to work with a LASERS member agency, you must select one of three options described below when you are rehired. The option selection is irrevocable for the duration of your re-employment. You and your agency must notify LASERS immediately in writing when:

- you are hired as a re-employed retiree;
- you select the option for re-employment purposes;
- you know the estimated duration of your employment; and
- you know the date of your termination of employment.

You must complete *Form 10-02: Re-employment of Retiree*, including your choice for a re-employment option, and mail it to LASERS. If the form is not submitted within 45 days, you will be treated as selecting Option 3, and both you and the employing agency shall be responsible for retirement contributions from date of employment to date of termination.

Re-employed Retiree Options

Option 1:

You may elect to limit earnings in any fiscal year to 50 percent of your annual retirement benefit for such fiscal year. **You should not select this option if your estimated earnings for the fiscal year will exceed your earnings limit.** If your actual earnings exceed the limit, then your future retirement benefits will be reduced by the amount that your earnings exceeded the limit and you will be required to reimburse LASERS for the earnings that exceed the limit. When computing your earnings limitation, an adjustment is made based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the preceding year. You are responsible for monitoring the earnings limitation.

Option 2:

You may regain membership in LASERS by repaying all retirement benefits received plus interest at the actuarial rate. This option allows you to restore prior service credit and return to active member status as if you had not retired. If you participated in DROP, IBO, or took early retirement, you cannot elect this option. The 20 year at any age actuarially reduced retirement is not an early retirement.

Option 3:

You may suspend your retirement benefits effective the date of your re-employment and again become a contributing member of LASERS based on your current employment. Employee and employer contributions must be paid under this option and there is no limit on earnings. Upon subsequent retirement, your retirement benefit will be resumed.

There are certain limited exceptions when the options do not apply. Also, it is possible for you to earn a supplemental benefit for your period of re-employment.

Please see the *Member's Guide to Retirement* chapter on Re-employed Retirees for more information.

If you work outside of state government or in a position not eligible for LASERS, there will be no impact on your retirement benefits.

Disability Retiree Information

If you are a disabled retiree, you can go back to work for a six-month trial period. During this time, your benefit will be suspended. If you terminate state service prior to the six-month period, your disability benefit will be reinstated from the date of your termination. If you continue working for six months or longer, your disability benefit will be terminated.

Alternatively, you may return to work and terminate your disability retirement benefits. You will once again become a contributing member of LASERS and the service credit you accrued prior to your disability retirement will be restored.



Mail: P.O. Box 44213, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4213
Location: 8401 United Plaza Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70809
Phone: (local) 225.922.0600 • (toll-free) 800.256.3000
Fax: 225.935.2856 • **Web:** www.lasersonline.org
Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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*The staff, management, and
Trustees of LASERS extend their*

*best wishes to you
on your retirement!*

