

APERSpective

RETIRED MEMBERS

Winter 2023

Explore the Member Self-Service Portal in 2023

Some of the tasks members can perform in the MSS portal

A new year is upon us, and once again we have the opportunity to make new resolutions. If you haven't already created an account on the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal, we encourage you to resolve that 2023 is the year you do.

There are several things that can be done right from the home page. Want to change your address because you moved? It can be done quickly and simply online. Need to change where your direct deposit goes? This too is easily and quickly accomplished in the portal.

The MSS portal also offers secure messaging so that members and our counselors can exchange emails that might contain confidential information without risk of exposure to bad actors. The portal employs layers of protection to safeguard your information while we communicate.

There are many other things you can do in the MSS portal. We hope you will take a look this year!

The Director's Corner

Happy New Year to you from APERS. While I am not one to make resolutions each year, I enjoy a fresh start and look forward to all the possibilities in 2023.

I have completed my first six months as executive director, and I am now focusing on preparing for the legislative session and working with the new Governor and General Assembly.

While some may dread change, I find that it pushes me to stretch and grow, which I find refreshing. I always learn so much through the experience of change.

One of my goals this year is to expand APERS' education and outreach. I plan to personally get around the state and meet with members and retirees. If you have events in your area that would benefit from an APERS representative being present, please make us aware so we can try to participate.

I wish you all a year filled with blessings, joy, and opportunities for new and rewarding challenges!

– Amy Fecher
APERS Executive Director

Keeping Our Retired Members Informed

www.apers.org

Home to the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal

 www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS

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1099-R Tax Forms Coming

Your IRS 1099-R forms are coming soon. APERS will mail these by the January 31 deadline to anyone who received benefit payments in 2022.

They will be mailed to your address on file, so make sure your address is up to date.

We have also loaded these documents onto the MSS portal. If you have not received your 1099-R or you need a duplicate, you can retrieve it from our Member Self Service (MSS) portal, or you can call us at 501-682-7800 (or 800-682-7377) to request another one in the mail.

W-4P Tax Withholding Form Modified

The monthly annuity payments that we provide to retirees are subject to federal income tax. When members apply for retirement, they complete a form to indicate their tax withholdings from their annuity payments.

The IRS recently redesigned *Form W-4P, Withholding Certificate for Periodic Pension or Annuity Payments*, and we are required to begin providing this new form on January 1, 2023.

You are not required to take any action and your existing tax elections will remain the same.

If your tax situation changes in the years to come and you wish to adjust your withholding, you can contact us to request the new form, or you can use the online form available on our Member Self-Service (MSS) portal.

For more information on federal tax withholding, see the IRS's *Pub. 505, Tax Withholding and Estimate Tax* or consult a tax professional.

Why Has My Retirement Check Amount Changed?

There are several reasons why the amount of a retired member's monthly annuity payment might change. These include a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) every July 1 and the yearly revision of federal and state tax withholding tables.

However, this January those retired state employees who are enrolled in the state-sponsored Medicare Advantage plan may have noticed an increase in their monthly annuity payments. **The retirement annuity has not changed;** however the deduction for health care benefits from Medicare Advantage has reduced the premiums deducted from your annuity for 2023.

The state's Employee Benefits Division (EBD) administers a Medicare Advantage plan for retired state employees (*county and municipal workers are not eligible*). This supplemental plan is only available to retired state employees who are enrolled in Medicare A & B and



who transition directly from EBD's ARBenefits Health Advantage health insurance to the Medicare Advantage plan with no break in coverage. As a convenience to our members and EBD, a sister agency, APERS withholds the premiums for this healthcare plan from our retired members' annuity payments.

For more information on this Medicare Advantage plan, please consult EBD directly. While APERS deducts the premium from your annuity, we do not control the terms of the insurance, the amount of premiums, or the coverage. Unfortunately, we cannot answer questions about insurance of any kind. You can reach EBD at (501) 682-5500 or toll free at 1 (800) 815-1017. However, we are always happy to answer questions about your annuity and other retirement benefits.



Online Security and Inactive APERS Accounts

In March 2017, APERS made the single biggest change in the way we operate since the agency was created 60 years earlier. We opened the Member Self Service Portal (MSS) to our employers and members. By logging into MSS through our website at www.apers.org, you can access your account online to view information and perform many tasks that formerly required assistance from our staff.



Before you can access MSS, you must first establish a username and password. Instructions for doing this are posted on the FAQ page of our website.

Sometimes when you are unable to login, it could be a security precaution.

For your protection, APERS has adopted a security policy that most banks and similar services follow.

While we developed MSS to give you a more convenient way to manage your business with APERS, we always balance this convenience with security. We realize the information on MSS is highly sensitive and personal, so we make every effort to safeguard your information with higher security policies.

For your protection, APERS has adopted a security policy comparable to what most banks and similar services use. If a member account has no activity for 12 months, we lock the account until we hear from you.

So, if you encounter an issue when you try to login, just reach out to us. You can contact us by phone or through the contact form on our website to request that we reactivate your account.



Need to Talk to APERS?

If you have a question, but would prefer to post a message than call, please note that unfortunately ***APERS does not converse with members individually on social media platforms.*** Those platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) are great for getting information out to our members, but they aren't safe for discussions of your personal or financial data.

If you want to post a message as opposed to calling us, we invite you to use the secure **Member Self-Service (MSS)** portal on our website at www.apers.org. It's the safest way and very convenient.

<https://www.apers.org/contact>

Update Your Contact Information through the MSS Portal or by Phone



APERS doesn't often make a habit of reaching out to our members for information, but occasionally, we must contact you. Reasons we may contact you include informing you on important benefit updates, providing you with new information, or to make you aware of new tax forms.

For us to make sure everything is going smoothly with your retirement benefits, we need to have current contact information for you, which includes your address, telephone number, and email address when possible. ***The next time you move or change your telephone number, please remember to inform us.***

You can update your contact information at any time in the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal, or you can contact a Call Center representative at (800) 682-7377 to provide your updated contact information.

Visit us online at www.apers.org

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DIRECT DEPOSIT DATES



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Executive Director

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