

APERSpective

ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Comparing Your APERS Plan to a 401(k)

While both are retirement plans, a 401(k) and your APERS retirement work very differently.

A **401(k)** is a **defined-contribution plan**. You decide if you want to participate, how much to contribute, and how to invest your money. Your employer may or may not match part of your contribution. When you retire, you use the money in your account, made up of your contributions and any investment earnings. But once that account is gone, the income stops. How long it lasts depends on market performance and how much you withdraw.

Your **APERS retirement is a defined benefit plan**. That means once you're vested (after 5 years, except for General Assembly members) and reach retirement age, you'll receive a guaranteed monthly benefit for life, no matter how long you live or what happens in the markets. The amount will be based on the benefit formula, which includes final average compensation, multiplier, and total service credit.

Participation in APERS is mandatory, and you don't have to make investment decisions—that's our job. APERS uses professional money managers to invest the system's funds, and everything is overseen by our Board of Trustees to help keep the plan strong for the future.

Bottom line: A 401(k) puts the responsibility on you. With APERS, we manage the investments, and you receive a steady, reliable benefit for life.

Director's Update

As we head into fall, I want to share key legislative updates that may impact APERS members and retirees.

Act 112 – Protecting the System

Providing false information to a state retirement system is now a felony, strengthening protections for all members.

Act 364 – Survivor Benefit Flexibility

Dependent children of deceased members can now receive benefits up to age 23, regardless of college enrollment, allowing more educational and training options.

Act 286 – Reciprocal Service Credit

Service at a state university or UAMS under plans like TIAA now counts toward APERS credit, even if not vested, helping more members qualify for retirement. You must not have any outstanding loans or withdrawals from your account.

Act 589 – Board Expansion

Two new seats, the Secretary of Shared Administrative Services and the State Banking and Securities Commissioner, bring the APERS Board to 15 members, enhancing oversight and expertise.

APERS remains committed to protecting benefits and supporting policies that serve our members and retirees.

Amy Fecher
Executive Director

Keep Your Information Current

Even if you no longer work for an APERS-participating employer, it's important to keep your address, phone number, and email up to date. This protects your account, keeps your benefits on track, and ensures we can reach you when needed. Keeping your contact details current is one of the easiest ways to protect your account and avoid communication interruptions.

Address or Name Changes

For security, we can't make changes over the phone. To update your address or name:

- Visit apers.org → Forms → Name or Address Change Form, or
- Call (501) 682-7800 and we'll mail you the form.

If you're changing your name, you'll also need to send the documents listed on the form. All forms must be signed in front of a notary before returning.

Phone or Email Updates in myAPERS

Updating your phone number or email is quick online:

- Log in to myAPERS and click "Your Info."
- Select Change to update your contact details.

If you no longer have access to your email or phone on file, call us and we'll help you.

What Happens When You Take a Refund?

Contributory members who are no longer employed by an APERS-participating employer can request a refund of their employee contributions. However, this decision should not be made lightly, as there are consequences to consider. If you choose to take a refund, consider the following:

- **You will lose your contributory service.** This means that you will not be able to use this service to qualify for a monthly benefit when you reach retirement age.
- **You may be responsible for taxes.** If you receive your refund as a deposit paid directly to you, your refund is reported as taxable income. We are required to withhold a minimum of 20% for federal tax and 5% for state tax, but you may choose to withhold a higher amount if desired. Also, if you are not at least age 59.5, you may be subject to an additional 10% penalty when you file your taxes.

For additional information about refunds, visit our website at <https://apers.org/members/refund-of-contributions/>.

For Active Members

Unlike a 401(k), your APERS defined benefit plan provides a lifetime monthly retirement benefit based on years of service, not market performance.



For Retirees

Nearly \$4.9 billion was lost to scams targeting Americans age 60+ in 2024, prompting APERS to enhance myAPERS account security with multi-factor authentication.

myAPERS: The Fastest Way to Manage Your Retirement Info

Need to send us documents or check your account? myAPERS is the quickest and easiest way to do it!

You can log in anytime—day or night—even when our office is closed. It's available 24/7, so you're always in control of your retirement info.

Haven't signed up yet?

- Go to apers.org and click "Sign up for myAPERS" on the homepage.
- You'll need to enter some personal info and your APERS ID to get started.

You can find your APERS ID on letters we've sent you, like your annual statement.

Can't find it? Just call us at (501) 682-7800 and we'll help you out!

Extra Security for Your myAPERS Account

To help keep your retirement safe, myAPERS now uses Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). This means you'll enter a code sent to your phone or email when logging in—an easy way to protect your account.

Why? Scams targeting older Americans are rising. In 2024, people 60+ reported losing nearly \$4.9 billion to fraud. Many scams pretend to be tech support, government agencies, or even family members, and often pressure you to act fast or give personal info.

Stay safe:

- Be cautious with messages from unknown senders, don't click on suspicious links, and always take your time before responding.
- APERS will never make random calls asking for your personal information. We may contact you only to verify bank account details or investigate unusual account activity. If you are unsure, hang up and call us back at our main number.

If you or someone you know may be a victim of fraud, report it at www.ic3.gov or call 833-372-8311.



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Upcoming Retirement and DROP Filing Dates:

Retirement Date	Earliest Filing	Latest Filing
December 1, 2025	September 2, 2025	November 3, 2025
January 1, 2026	October 3, 2025	December 2, 2025
February 1, 2026	November 3, 2025	January 2, 2026
March 1, 2026	December 1, 2025	January 30, 2026
April 1, 2026	January 2, 2026	March 2, 2026
May 1, 2026	February 2, 2026	April 1, 2026
June 1, 2026	March 3, 2026	May 4, 2026

Retirees: Direct Deposit Dates

- Monday, November 3, 2025
 - Monday, December 1, 2025
 - Friday, January 2, 2026
 - Monday, February 2, 2026
 - Monday, March 2, 2026
 - Wednesday, April 1, 2026
 - Friday, May 1, 2026
 - Monday, June 1, 2026
 - Wednesday, July 1, 2026
 - Monday, August 3, 2026
 - Tuesday, September 1, 2026
 - Thursday, October 1, 2026
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