



Benefit Statement Enclosed

Enclosed is your Annual GARS Benefit Statement which contains detailed information about your benefit payment, deductions, health and life insurance amounts. As we have previously notified you, the State Comptroller's Office is no longer mailing the Benefit Earnings Statement to you each time your net benefit changes. We hope your Annual Benefit Statement provides you with information regarding your GARS benefits normally contained in the Comptroller's statement.

GARS encourages you to access the new SRS Member Services website to gain access to your personal membership data. An electronic version of this annual statement will be maintained for your future reference on this website. Instructions on how to register for this website are on the reverse side on this newsletter. If you have questions about your statement, contact GARS at 217-782-8500.

Retiree News

Pension Reform Litigation



On November 21, 2014, the Circuit Court ruled that the pension reform law was unconstitutional and void in its entirety. The State swiftly filed an appeal directly to the Supreme Court who decided to start the pension reform case briefing schedule in January, with oral arguments set to begin in March. The plaintiffs had argued against an expedited timetable.

Insurance Refunds

Retirees and survivors who are entitled to a refund of their state-subsidized health insurance premiums should see the refund in June under

a refund schedule recently approved by the court.

A total of \$63 million in premiums was collected from about 90,000 retirees and survivors. The court will decide this spring how much should be awarded to the attorneys for their work. The fees will be deducted from the premium money being refunded, and the amount of refunds will be reduced accordingly.

Annuitants received a special "Notice" advising them of their right to opt-out of the class action lawsuit. The special notice included telephone numbers for annuitants to call if they have questions about the notice.

Tax Information

1099-R

In January, the Office of the Comptroller mailed IRS Form 1099R for 2014 GARS benefit payments to all annuitants. These payments must be reported on IRS Form 1040 under "Pensions and Annuities."

W2GI+

The Comptroller also mailed IRS Form W2-GI+ to GARS annuitants who carry non-IRS dependent(s) (i.e., civil union or domestic partners) on their state health insurance, and for all annuitants who carry over \$50,000 in group term life insurance through the state.

Under federal tax law, if a domestic/civil union partner does not qualify as your tax dependent, the premium paid by the State must be added to your annual gross income and be subject to federal income tax.

Receiving Information

If you would like to receive phone calls, text messages or email announcements from GARS about the latest news and upcoming deadlines, visit our website at www.srs.illinois.gov, click on General Assembly Retirement System; click on "SRS Needs Your Contact Information." Complete the form and return it to us electronically.



The SRS Member Services website provides members with secure interactive access to their membership data. There are several steps for your first visit.

To sign up for an Illinois Public Id (if you do not have one):

1. From your Internet browser enter <https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov> or access our Member Services website link from www.srs.illinois.gov.
2. Click the **Sign Up** button and complete the new Account form and click **Register**.
3. Enter your "First Name" and "Last Name".
4. Enter your "Email Address" and again in "Confirm Email Address".
5. Enter your chosen "Password" (be sure to review link for the State of Illinois password requirements).
6. "Confirm Password" by reentering your chosen password.
7. A confirmation email will be sent to your email to complete the signup process. You only need to create this Illinois Public ID once. Now you are ready to sign in!



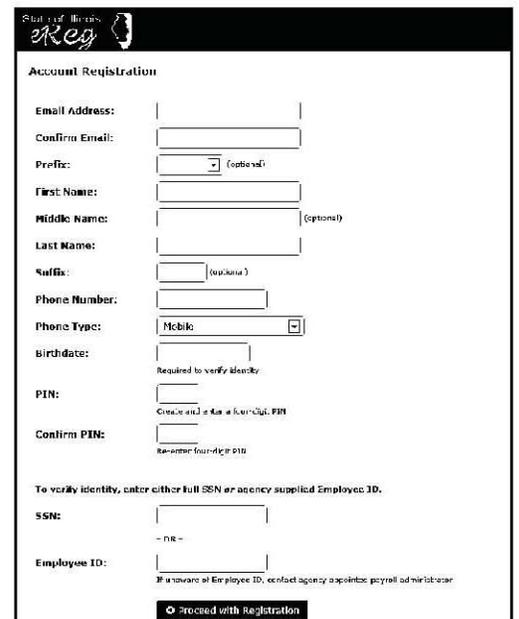
To sign in after you have an Illinois Public Id:

1. From Internet browser enter <https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov/>
2. Under Sign In section, enter your Username and Password and then click the **Sign In** button.



To complete one-time ERegistration on first visit:

1. If it's your first time visiting the website, you will complete a one-time "State of Illinois ERegistration".
2. Enter your "Email Address" and again in "Confirm Email".
3. Enter your name "First", "Middle", "Last" and Suffix if applicable.
4. Enter your Phone Number and type (mobile, home or work).
5. Enter your "Birthdate" as mm/dd/yyyy (example: 01/01/1960).
6. Enter a four-digit Personal Identification Number as your "PIN". This protects your privacy and prevents unauthorized access to your account.
7. Re-enter your "PIN" to confirm it.
8. Enter your "Social Security Number" or "Employee ID". Your employee id is on your most recent member statement or you may contact SRS about it.
9. Click on the **Proceed with Registration** button.
10. Review the registration entry for accuracy. To finalize the registration, again click the **Proceed with Registration** button.



After registration, you will be redirected to the SRS Member Services website.

On future visits, you will sign in once and be directed to the website automatically.