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Springfield, IL 62794-9255  
217-785-7444

# The Informer



The newsletter for annuitants of the State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois

 [srs.illinois.gov](http://srs.illinois.gov)

JANUARY 2018



Keep your Member Services contact information up to date to receive the latest news, announcements or deadlines by email, letter or call.

## Your benefit statement

Enclosed with this Informer is your current benefit statement. This statement contains detailed information about your SERS benefits.

You may change your beneficiaries at any time by completing and filing Form 101 (Death Benefit Beneficiary Designation) with SERS.

Remember, your group life insurance beneficiaries are separate from your SERS beneficiaries. The Minnesota Life Insurance Company, a Securian Company, maintains your life insurance beneficiary information. To update your life insurance beneficiaries, contact the Springfield branch at 888-202-5525. Their office hours are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

*If you have questions about your statement, call us at 217-785-7444.*

## How do other states tax your pension?

Many annuitants move to warmer states or to places where their families live. Illinois does not tax retirement or survivor benefits, but each state has differing tax laws regarding retirement income. Visit [retirementliving.com](http://retirementliving.com) or check with the specific state's department of revenue for more information.

### States that do not tax Illinois pensions

Alabama	Nevada
Alaska	South Dakota
Florida	Texas
Hawaii	Washington
Massachusetts	Wyoming

### States exempting pension income entirely for qualified individuals

Illinois	Pennsylvania
Mississippi	

### States that only impose income tax on pension dividends and interest (5% flat rate in both states; not applicable to IRAs)

New Hampshire	Tennessee
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### States that exempt or provide a credit for a portion of pension income

Arkansas	Montana
Colorado	New Jersey
Delaware	New Mexico
D.C.	New York
Georgia	North Carolina
Idaho	Ohio
Iowa	Oklahoma
Kentucky	Oregon
Louisiana	South Carolina
Maine	Utah
Maryland	Virginia
Michigan	West Virginia
Missouri	Wisconsin

### States where pension income is taxed

Arizona	Minnesota
California	Nebraska
Connecticut	North Dakota
Indiana	Rhode Island
Kansas	Vermont

**New tax rates for 2018 have been released this month and will go into effect on your February 2018 benefit check.**



### 1099-R

In January, the Office of the Comptroller mailed IRS Form 1099-Rs for 2017 SERS benefit payments to all annuitants and survivors. These payments must be reported on IRS Form 1040 under the Income section (Pensions and annuities).

### W2GI+

If you carry non-IRS dependent(s) on your state health/dental insurance, you should receive a Form W2GI+ from the Comptroller's office. Under federal tax law, the premium paid by the state must be added to your annual gross income if a covered dependent does not qualify as your tax dependent because it is subject to federal income tax.

The Form W2GI+ is also issued for all annuitants who carry a group term life insurance policy of \$50,000 or more through the state. Form W2GI+ information is reported on IRS Form 1040 under the Other Taxes section.

### Federal income tax withholding

Due to the recent federal tax reform, new federal tax tables will be implemented in February. If your federal tax withholding is based on the tax tables, your February benefit check will likely be subject to less tax withholding, therefore your February check will be higher than your January check.

We recommend you securely view your monthly check stubs through the SRS Member Services website at [memberservices.srs.illinois.gov](http://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov) to see the details of your deductions and history of transactions.

If you need to change the amount of your federal tax withholding, you can submit a new W-4P to SERS at any time. The W-4P is available at [srs.illinois.gov](http://srs.illinois.gov), under the Forms link. *Note – SERS is unable to withhold state tax for any state other than Illinois.*

You should contact a qualified tax advisor or an IRS representative at 800-829-1040 with questions about your taxes, including withholdings.

## Do you feel protected against cyber crimes?

Whether you're a person who adopts technology easily, or you're a new(er) user, we can all benefit from brushing up on our knowledge of how to protect ourselves from online scams, cyber attacks and more. Home Instead Senior Care's *Protect Seniors Online* is a great resource to help with those topics and more. Don't let the name fool you; internet users of all ages could benefit from this information.

Visit [protectseniorsonline.com/resources](http://protectseniorsonline.com/resources) to find more information, including a quiz to see how likely you are to spot a scam.

## SERS is getting a new look

As we modernize our operations, we are updating our look and logo. Our new logo (seen in the header) will be implemented in stages and we will have all materials rebranded with our new look and logo by the end of 2018.

This is our new logo.



You might also see the following logo if we send a publication to State Employees' Retirement System members, Judges' Retirement System members and General Assembly Retirement System members at the same time. These are the three retirement systems that make up the State Retirement Systems.



# Did you know?

Over 22,000 retirees have registered for the Member Services website.



## Moved recently? Update your address.

Updating your address is easy. Fill out the Member Change of Address/Member Information Form 501 and mail it to us or email it to [sers@srs.illinois.gov](mailto:sers@srs.illinois.gov).

You can find Form 501 on our website under the Forms link or on the Member Services website.

## Do you have a qualifying survivor?

If you did not have an eligible survivor when you retired you probably received a survivor contribution refund. If you did receive this refund, a survivor benefit is not payable upon your death, even if you are married at the time of your death. The Death or Survivor Benefits section of the enclosed Statement of Account provides information on the amount of survivor benefits payable in the event of your death, or **lets you know that you took the survivor contribution refund.**

If you received the survivor contribution refund at retirement you may repay this refund in order to establish survivor benefits for your eligible survivor. This repayment option is only available to retirees. A survivor does not have the option to repay this refund after the death of the retiree. If you received the survivor contribution refund and would like to repay in order to reestablish a survivor benefit, please call us at 217-785-6979 for details.

## Text message updates available soon

In an effort to better communicate with our members, we are implementing a cell phone texting system. If you have a cell phone number on file with us, we will send you text messages with important messages. We plan on piloting the system in January/February '18 with a full implementation in the Spring of '18. We will provide an "opt-out" for those who don't want to receive texts.

## Visit us online

Did you know you could access a copy of all publications on our website? This includes the newsletters, handbooks and brochures. You can also find helpful information regarding your insurance, any news about upcoming legislation, survivor benefit information and much more. Check us out at [srs.illinois.gov](http://srs.illinois.gov).

## Senior discounts

Many restaurants, grocery stores, retail stores and travel companies offer senior discounts of which you may not be aware. Are you taking full advantage of the savings available to you?

Some of the places specify that you must be a certain age to qualify while others are benefits for AARP members. Some discounts are only available on specific days of the week. Be sure to double check any that are listed on the following website to be sure the establishment will honor the discount prior to arriving.

Check [seniorcitizendiscountlist.org](http://seniorcitizendiscountlist.org) and click on your state for a full list of places you can save.

**Be smart about your retirement information. Come to the source.**

**Visit [srs.illinois.gov](http://srs.illinois.gov) for more information.**

**Check out our Member Services website**  
[memberservices.srs.illinois.gov](http://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov)



## I want register to attend the Myths & Realities of Retirement workshop:

on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Location

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Zip

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number Date of birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last 4 numbers of SSN **OR** Member ID

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email address

Bringing a guest?  Yes  No

***Send this completed registration form only if you're registering for a workshop (and you haven't already done so online).***

State Employees' Retirement System  
2101 South Veterans Parkway  
P.O. Box 19255  
Springfield, IL 62794-9255

## 2018 Myths & Realities of Retirement Workshop

To register, visit ***srs.illinois.gov*** and follow the instructions. After you register, you will receive confirmation and email reminders.

If you don't have access to a computer, you can complete and return the registration form to us or call our office to register. After you're registered, we will send a reminder letter two weeks prior to the respective workshop.

*The MRR is a free, one-day workshop examining various issues affecting retirees.*

Feb. 6	Springfield	July 10	Springfield
Mar. 6	Springfield	July 24	Galesburg
Mar. 13	Bloomington	Aug. 7	Effingham
Mar. 20	Carol Stream	Aug. 8	Kankakee
Mar. 27	Orland Park	Aug. 14	Mt. Vernon
Apr. 3	Marion	Aug. 14	Schaumburg
Apr. 17	Collinsville	Aug. 22	Dixon
Apr. 24	Springfield	Sept. 11	Springfield
May 8	Chicago	Oct. 2	Quincy
May 22	Springfield	Oct. 16	Collinsville
June 12	Springfield	Oct. 23	Utica
June 19	E. Peoria	Nov. 13	Springfield
June 19	Rockford	Dec. 4	Chicago
June 26	Springfield	Dec. 11	Joliet

