



State Employees' Retirement System

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SERS *The* - O - GRAM

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

 [srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov)

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Keep your Member Services contact information up to date to receive the latest news and announcements from SERS.

SERS operations update

The State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) is adapting to deliver the service you expect during the difficult times created by the pandemic. While the SRS building remains closed and all seminars and workshops for the remainder of 2020 have been canceled, most other services are available, including member counseling by phone. If you would like to schedule a counseling appointment by phone, please email us at sers@srs.illinois.gov or call 217-785-7444.

Please note that the best way to submit documents to SERS is to email them to the system at sers@srs.illinois.gov. You will receive confirmation of receipt of the document, and we can begin processing your claim more quickly.

Accelerated Pension Benefit Payment (APBP) for retiring Tier 1 members

This voluntary program for Tier 1 members who retire before June 1, 2024, allows members to elect a reduced and delayed automatic annual increase (AAI) in exchange for a lump-sum payment at retirement. At retirement, members can elect to forfeit the 3% compounded AAI and instead receive 1.5% non-compounded AAs, beginning the January 1 following the first anniversary of retirement or the member's 67th birthday, whichever is later. Survivors of members who choose this option will receive the reduced 1.5% non-compounded AAs. The election to participate cannot be changed after retirement.

Members who forfeit the Tier 1 AAs receive a lump-sum payment equal to 70% of the difference in the value of the 3% compounded AAI and the value of the 1.5% non-compounded AAI. This current value is calculated by SERS and will be based on current actuarial assumptions and the relevant member information. These payments must be transferred to a qualified retirement plan authorized by the IRS.

You can find the APBP Fact Sheet on the member services website, and if you are eligible to retire before June 1, 2024, you can estimate your APBP amount by going to memberservices.srs.illinois.gov and select the COLA buyout tab.

Does SERS have your email address

SERS sends out information to members via the primary email address on file in the [member services](https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov) website, under the "Demographics Tab".

Your benefit statement

Beginning this year, your SERS annual statement is available only on the member services website at memberservices.srs.illinois.gov.

Your annual statement provides detailed information about your SERS benefits as of June 30, 2020, and lists your current beneficiaries.

NCPERS open enrollment through Nov. 30, 2020

The State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) offers a voluntary life insurance plan to its members through the [National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems](https://www.ncpers.org) (NCPERS). Coverage is guaranteed with no medical questions asked. It provides important financial protection for you and your family with a premium of only \$16 per month.

SERS is offering an open enrollment period for the voluntary group life insurance coverage to our actively working members. **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the enrollment period is earlier this year and you can enroll anytime now through November 30, 2020.**

There is no guarantee that another enrollment period will be offered in the future, and you can only enroll while actively working.

You can access an enrollment/beneficiary form by going to ncpers.memberbenefits.com/srs

SERS disability benefits

If you become disabled and are unable to perform the duties of your position, you may qualify for SERS disability benefits. SERS provides occupational and nonoccupational disability benefits to partially replace your income while you are disabled, and you continue to earn SERS service credit during the period of disability. **You must apply with SERS in order to qualify for these benefits.**

Please refer to the SERS website at srs.illinois.gov for application instructions. You may also contact your Retirement Coordinator or SERS at 217-785-7444 for additional assistance in applying for disability benefits. Information regarding your benefit eligibility and estimated amount of your SERS disability benefits can be found in your June 30, 2020 benefit statement.

Member Services Website

1. From an Internet browser, access: memberservices.srs.illinois.gov. The "State of Illinois Public Account Portal" will appear on the screen.
2. Click on "Create a New Account". The "Create a New Account" portal webpage will appear on the screen.
3. Input your "First Name".
4. Input your "Last Name".
5. Input your "Email Address" (business or personal email is accepted).
6. Confirm "Email Address".
7. Input/create your "Username" in accordance with the criteria below.
8. Input/create a password in accordance with the State of Illinois Password Complexity Requirements listed below.
9. Input "Password".
10. Confirm "Password".
11. Click on the "Register" button.

Username Criteria

- Must be between 6 and 20 characters in length
- May contain letters, numbers and periods
- Should not start or end with a period

Password Criteria

(Ensure caps lock is deactivated. Passwords are case sensitive).

- Minimum password length is 8 characters.
- Password may not contain your Public Login Account, First Name, or Last Name.
- Password cannot have been previously used.
- Password must contain characters from three of the following categories:
 - English UPPERCASE characters (e.g., A through Z)
 - English lowercase characters (e.g., a through z)
 - Base 10 numbers (e.g., 0 through 9)
 - Non-alphabetic characters (e.g., !, @, #, \$, &)

Tips to Create a Strong Password

- Do not use obvious passwords, like "password", "qwerty", "123456", or "password1".
- Do not use personal information, like a spouse or child's name.
- Do not write your passwords down, and do not leave them on a sticky note on your computer monitor. Doing so removes all security the password attempts to create.
- Spell words with character substitutions, such as "l!lin0i\$" instead of "Illinois".
- The longer that the password is, the harder it will be to guess or crack.
- Do not type your passwords while using public Wi-Fi. Doing so can put your data at risk for nearby hackers.
- Use phrases to your advantage. For example, instead of using "The Early Bird Gets the Worm", you can use "tebgtw". You will always associate your password with the phrase, and someone looking to crack your password will have a difficult time trying to guess your password. For added difficulty, you can integrate character substitutions into the phrase, turning "tebgtw" into "t3b6tw".
- Change your passwords regularly.
- Do not use the same password for every account.

Unanswered questions?

Visit srs.illinois.gov for more information.

