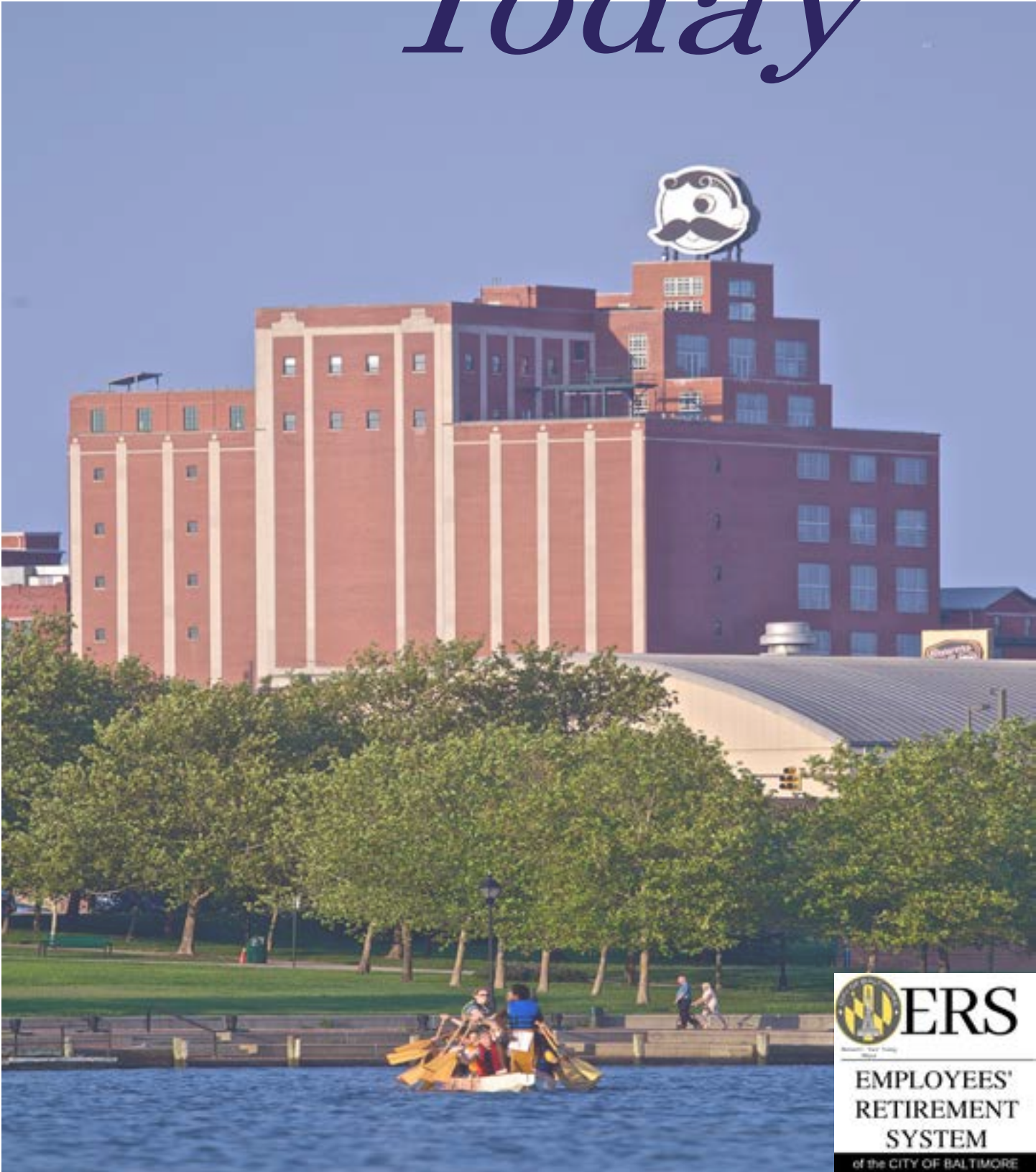


News for Active & Retired Members of the Baltimore City Employees' Retirement System

Retirement *Today*

FALL 2019



ERS
EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT
SYSTEM
of the CITY OF BALTIMORE

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Active Members,
Retirees & Beneficiaries,

Welcome to the first edition of the Baltimore City Employees' and Elected Officials' revamped newsletter, *Retirement Today*. As we continue to

build upon and improve our services, we also want to ensure that we are using the best methods to keep our members informed. *Retirement Today* will be published twice a year, with issues in September and March, in order to provide you with up-to-date, valuable information about your retirement and our agency.

This newsletter is one note in a season of change for BCERS. After 22 years of service with the Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System, I am honored to have been named Executive Director of BCERS and RSP by the Boards of Trustees in March 2019. One goal that I have as a part of my leadership is to develop an increased focus on unifying the different segments within our system, the Employees' Retirement System, Elected Officials Retirement System, Retirement Savings Plan, and Deferred Compensation plan, under one umbrella. We believe this will help simplify processes for our members and provide a better understanding of each plan. On the next page, you will find an article about the system umbrella to understand the role of each part of our agency and what that means for you—our active members and retirees.

Among the additional features and information in this issue of *Retirement Today*, I want to call special attention to the Deferred Compensation Plan, something that all active employees with the City of Baltimore can take advantage of to increase retirement savings. With many people living longer and costs related to living after retirement continuing to rise, planning and saving to retire successfully is not just an option; it is a necessity. Read more about the Deferred Compensation Plan on (p.4) and how you can enroll and benefit.

As part of our aim to keep you informed, we are now also posting the latest BCERS news on social media. If you have not already done so, please follow us on Facebook @bmoreretirement to stay current on all things related to our system. In addition, we will launch a redesigned, user-friendly website in the very near future. Look out for it at www.bcercs.org.

Please read on to learn more. I hope that you find the information here beneficial and informative.

Warmest Regards,

David A. Randall

UPCOMING EVENTS

Retirement Education Seminar (RES)-
October 8, 2019; January 14, 2020; February, 11, 2020

Retirement Ready Seminar (RRS)-
September 18, 2019; October 16, 2019;
January 15, 2020; February 19, 2020

National Retirement Security Week-
October 21-25 (p. 7)

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Under the BCERS Umbrella

The Employees' Retirement System was established in 1926 to provide retirement benefits for employees of the City of Baltimore. Nearly 100 years after its beginnings, ERS has changed, moved and expanded, but continues to serve the City of Baltimore's employees and elected officials with the same mission it had nearly a century ago.



Today, the system is comprised of a four-part umbrella: the Employees' Retirement System, the Retirement Savings Plan, the Deferred Compensation Plan and the Elected Officials' Retirement System.

Employees' Retirement System (ERS): The Employees' Retirement System is a defined benefit plan that uses preset formulas to determine your pension benefits.

Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) 401 (a): The mandatory retirement plan for most City of Baltimore (civilian) and certain Baltimore City Public School employees newly hired or rehired on or after July 1, 2014.

Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP): The City of Baltimore's supplemental, voluntary retirement plan that enables all benefits-eligible City and Baltimore City Public Schools employees to accumulate additional retirement savings.

Elected Officials' Retirement System (EOS): A single employer defined benefit local government retirement plan covering the Baltimore City Mayor, the Comptroller, and the President and members of the City Council.

ERS TRUSTEE ELECTION NOTICE

An election will be held for one retired member trustee and two active employee representatives trustees on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 for a term of office beginning January 1, 2020. To become a candidate, a member must obtain an official Petition for Candidacy at the Retirement Systems' Office. Petitions are available through Friday, October 4. Please visit bcers.org and click on the announcements on the homepage for additional dates and information.

Get Retirement Ready with Deferred Compensation

Most employees work for decades to be able to retire from the rat race and begin enjoying and using their time as their own. Yet while retirement remains an important milestone to look forward to, the cost of retirement comes with some sobering statistics:

75% increase in the cost of healthcare for a retired couple since 2002.

80% of current annual income will need to be replaced by retirees to live comfortably.

70% chance that an American turning 65 today will need longterm care service in his or her lifetime.

With the monthly benefit paid by the Social Security Administration averaging \$1,200, it is increasingly difficult for retirees to rely on Social Security and even pension income alone. The good news? Saving properly for retirement can help bridge the gap between a fixed income and the finances needed for retirees to live comfortably. That's where the Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) 457 (b) comes in.

DCP is a tax-advantaged long-term investment plan managed by Nationwide and created specifically for public employees.

DCP FEATURES

Pre-Tax and/or Roth Options

Choose to make your contributions as a pre-tax savings or Roth, which means contributions have already been taxed before they enter the account.

Optional/Voluntary

All benefits-eligible City and Baltimore City Public Schools employees have the option of participating in the plan.

\$10 Minimum Per Pay

Of course, the more you can contribute, the more you will save, but you are only required to contribute \$10 per pay to participate and begin using DCP to build your savings.

Additional Match for Non-Hybrid Members

The City will match Non-Hybrid Member contributions up to 1%.

Start, Stop, Increase or Decrease at Any Time

Want to contribute a little more, a little less, or stop all together? The DCP is flexible enough for you to use as your financial situation allows.

Want to learn more? Stop in or make an appointment to meet with a retirement specialist to learn more about how the Deferred Compensation Plan can benefit you.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM
Deferred Compensation Plan

Have questions about how to be Retirement Ready?
Our Retirement Specialists are here to help!

Schedule an appointment to meet with a Retirement Specialist to make sure you are contributing to Deferred Compensation and on the right track toward retirement.

Meet with Heather Gayle
(443) 707-0129

Meet with Bryant Mayes
(443) 907-8858

**7 E. Redwood Street,
11th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

To schedule an appointment online, visit
<http://retirewithbmore.myretirementappt.com>

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: MEET NICHELLE LASHLEY



Planning, directing and coordinating all of the activities and operations of ERS' retirement benefits division is no easy feat, but Nichelle Lashley, ERS Retirement Benefits Manager, is more than up to the demands of the job. Nichelle joined the City of Baltimore and ERS 14 years ago, and has been energetically serving the City's retirees ever since.

Prior to ERS, Nichelle worked as a Retirement Plan Specialist with T. Rowe Price Associates and as a Teller Coordinator with Bank of America.

"My favorite thing about working for BCERS is the culture of collaboration amongst the staff and leadership, and that we have an enjoyable work atmosphere," says Nichelle.

"Nichelle is fierce, strong and sensitive," says Benefits Supervisor Adrian Brown. "She's a good listener and very empathetic. We can go to her about anything and her door, heart and mind are always open. She helps create a

work environment that is both professional and comfortable and always encourages you to do your best."

In her spare time, Nichelle loves travel and event planning.

SCAM ALERT: AN SSA ADVISORY

With many recent high-profile cases in the news about of personal data being compromised, how can you help keep your information safe? Please read the following letter from the Social Security Administration on ways to keep you and your loved ones from becoming victims of identity fraud.

Scams have become an unfortunate part of our society. You probably know someone who has gotten a call from a Social Security impersonator.

We at Social Security are serious about protecting the information entrusted to us. In the past year, we've posted a series of blogs about how our beneficiaries can protect their information from scammers and what to do when they receive a "spoof" call.

Additionally, we are teaming up with other government agencies to develop educational tools that would help our citizens spot these schemes and avoid becoming victims.

Recently, we worked with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the Federal Trade Commission to create a new fraud prevention placemat to help you avoid Social Security scams. You can order free copies of the placemat to use at dining venues, or to share with friends and family. The placemat is in English on one side and Spanish on the other side.

You can help us protect the people you serve. These are some things to remember:

- Talk about it! Social Security scams haven't been as common until recently. Share the message with others to make them aware of this type of scam.
- Government employees will not threaten to take away benefits or ask for money or personal information to protect your Social Security card or benefits.
- Report Social Security scams to the SSA Office of Inspector General Fraud Hotline at (800) 269-0271 or oig.ssa.gov/report and to the Federal Trade Commission at [//FTC.gov/complaint](http://FTC.gov/complaint).

NEW HEALTH BENEFITS ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Effective April 25, 2019, the City of Baltimore's current online Health Benefits Enrollment System known as ADP BOSS is no longer available to employees and retirees to view and make health benefits elections. The City of Baltimore has moved to a new ADP platform called ADP Benefits Marketplace. However, retirees/beneficiaries will not have direct access to the new ADP Health Benefits Enrollment System. As an alternative, retirees/beneficiaries will be required to make health benefit elections and changes by using a Baltimore City Retiree Health Benefits Enrollment Form.



In the future, when a retiree experiences a Qualified Life Event, they must request a Baltimore City Retiree Health Benefits Enrollment Form from the Office of Employee Benefits within 60 days of the qualified life event. Upon the notification of a qualified life event, a Baltimore City Retiree Health Benefits Enrollment Form will be mailed to the home address or sent to their email address if provided. The retiree will be required to complete and return the enrollment form along with required documentation that supports the qualified life event to DHR-Office of Employee Benefits, 7 E. Redwood Street, 20th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202 within 60 days of the qualified life event.

During the upcoming Open Enrollment period, retirees will be mailed a Baltimore City Retiree Health Benefits Enrollment Form and enrollment instructions. **Open enrollment will take place in late October/early November.** Look out for your packet in October.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Office of Employee Benefits between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM at 410-396-5830 and select option 2 (City Retirees) or 3 (BCPSS Retirees) and then option 1 to speak to an Employee Benefits Specialist.

ONLINE MEMBER SELF SERVICE (MSS)

The MSS web portal service allows you to access your retirement information and process your retirement estimates online. Here's how:

1. From your computer, enter <http://www.pensiontechnologygroup.com/bcers>
2. Select the **"Self Register"** option (Located near the top of the screen).
3. Enter the requested information and click **"Locate Information"**.
4. This will take you to the **"Account Setup"** screen, where you will need to setup your account.
5. After that, click **"Save Account Information"**.
6. This will take you to the **"Home Screen"** where you will be able to:
 - a) Review your pension data and other personal information
 - b) Run a retirement estimate



Questions? Please contact the ERS office at 443-984-3200 or via email at bas-mss@bcers.org.

NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY WEEK

National Retirement Security Week (NRSW) takes place this year from October 21-25. This week is designed to help members learn more about saving for a secure retirement by investing in an employer-sponsored defined contribution plan. Throughout the week, workshops and events will be held to provide you with the tools and retirement savings information you need for success.

Date & Time	Location	Topic
Tuesday October 22, 10am	War Memorial	Social Security *F&P*
Thursday October 24, 9am	War Memorial	Social Security
Thursday October 24, 1pm	War Memorial	Social Security

Additional workshops to be announced.

BENEFIT PAYDATES 2019-2020

October: 10/01/19
 November: 11/01/19
 December: 11/29/19
 January: 01/01/20
 February: 01/31/20
 March: 02/28/20
 April: 04/01/20
 May: 05/01/20
 June: 06/01/20
 July: 07/01/20
 August: 07/31/20
 September: 09/01/20
 October: 10/01/20
 November: 10/30/20
 December: 12/01/20

The City of Baltimore Health and Wellness Program is hosting its Fall Fair on September 20, 2019 from 10AM – 3PM at the War Memorial – 101 N. Gay St. Baltimore, MD 21202

Additional Wellness Programming

Stop spending money on smoking! Get rewarded to quit instead. Free 12 Week Nicotine Cessation Class for city employees and retirees starts September 4th 2019. Get gift cards and prizes to attend and quit.

Call 410-396-9895 or email bnicotinefree@baltimorecity.gov for more information.

Interested in learning how to eat healthfully, to lose weight, and prevent/manage diseases like Type 2 Diabetes and Hypertension? Karen K Fiorenza, MPH, RDN, CHES is the City of Baltimore's Nutritionist. She is available for free one on one nutrition consultations for all City employees and retirees.

To schedule a free nutrition consultation or for nutrition related questions or concerns, please email: nutritionist@baltimorecity.gov



**EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT
SYSTEM**



@bmoreretirement

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David A. Randall

Executive Director

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BCPS CEO Designee

*Serves on both the ERS and RSP boards.