

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

Retirement *Today*

SPRING 2024



EMPLOYEES'
RETIREMENT
SYSTEM
of the CITY OF BALTIMORE

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Active Members, Retirees, and Beneficiaries,

Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter! The changing of the seasons also marks a significant milestone for me as it commemorates five years in my role as Executive Director of ERS. It has been a privilege to lead our system through various changes and initiatives aimed at enhancing the financial well-being of our members, and I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity.

The spring season also coincides with tax season. Make sure you know about and understand the recent increase in pension exclusion. Read more in this newsletter about how to take advantage of this opportunity to possibly retain more of your hard-earned retirement income. I urge all active and retired members to explore the resources available to you through our system. Our Deferred Compensation Plan (457B) is designed to help you increase your retirement income and security. Details on this plan and how to schedule an appointment with an advisor can be found in this newsletter.

Additionally, I encourage you to utilize our Member Self-Service (MSS) portal. While we're always here to assist you, the portal offers convenient access to valuable information and features tailored to your needs. Take the time to familiarize yourself with its functionalities to make the most out of your membership.

On the governance front, I'm pleased to announce changes to our board. We welcomed Sharon Lockley as our new retired member trustee in January, bringing valuable insights and experience to our leadership team. Furthermore, I extend my congratulations to Quinton Herbert and Veobia Akilo, who were elected as new active member trustees. They will fill the positions vacated by Deborah Moore-Carter and Dorothy Bryant, both of whom have contributed immensely to our system over the years. I express my heartfelt gratitude to them both and to Deborah Moore-Carter for her exemplary leadership as board chair.

As we continue to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of our members, I remain committed to serving you and ensuring your financial well-being. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Warm regards,
David A. Randall
Executive Director

BENEFIT PAYDATES 2024

April: 04/01/24
May: 05/01/24
June: 05/31/24
July: 07/01/24
August: 08/01/24
September: 08/30/24
October: 10/01/24
November: 11/01/24
December: 11/29/24

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

TAX INFO.....	3
DEFERRED COMP.....	4
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT.....	5
TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT.....	6

MAXIMIZING YOUR RETIREMENT BENEFITS: UNDERSTANDING MARYLAND'S PENSION EXCLUSION

This tax season, it's essential to ensure you're equipped with the knowledge to make the most out of your retirement income. For residents of Maryland aged 65 and above, or those who are totally disabled (or have a disabled spouse), there's good news on the tax front. Recent changes to Maryland tax laws have expanded the pension exclusion, potentially putting more money back into the pockets of retirees.

Maryland's pension exclusion allows eligible individuals to subtract a portion of their taxable pension and retirement annuity income from their federal adjusted gross income. For the calendar year 2022, the maximum pension exclusion stood at \$34,300. However, this figure has been increased to \$36,200 for the calendar year 2023.



To qualify for the pension exclusion, certain criteria must be met:

1. ****Age or Disability:**** You must be 65 or older, or totally disabled, or have a spouse who is totally disabled, on the last day of the tax year.
2. ****Income Source:**** The income you wish to exclude must be derived from an "employee retirement system." This includes various pension plans such as defined benefit and defined contribution pension plans, 401(a) plans, 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, and 457(b) plans. It's important to note that certain retirement accounts, such as traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs, SEP plans, Keogh Plans, or ineligible deferred compensation plans, do not qualify for the exclusion.

Applying for the pension exclusion involves completing the Pension Exclusion Computation Worksheet (13A) as outlined in Instruction 13 of the Maryland resident tax booklet. This worksheet helps calculate the amount eligible for exclusion based on your specific circumstances. Remember to report all benefits received under the Social Security Act and/or Railroad Retirement Act on the designated line of the worksheet.

Once you've determined the eligible amount for exclusion, transfer it to line 10a of Form 502, and proceed to complete the remainder of your tax return accordingly.

By taking advantage of Maryland's pension exclusion, retirees can effectively lower their taxable income, potentially reducing their overall tax liability. Don't overlook the benefits available to you through Maryland's pension exclusion. Maximize your retirement benefits and ensure you're making informed decisions to safeguard your financial well-being.



ROB GILL, CRPC®



DENTON SMITH

MEET WITH
A
SPECIALIST!

Secure your financial future with the **Deferred Compensation Plan**

The City's 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan
is a benefit available to employees that allows
you to save more for retirement!

- Pre-tax and/or Roth options available
- Minimum of \$10 per pay
- Annual maximum of \$23,000; \$30,500 if age 50 or over
- Voluntary- start, stop, increase, decrease at any time
- Place all or a portion of your leave payout into the Deferred Compensation Plan when you separate service could help you defer FEDERAL and STATE taxes

TO LEARN MORE, SCAN
THE QR CODE OR CALL:
443-984-2389.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID RANDALL CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS WITH BCERS!

In 2019, David A. Randall became Executive Director of BCERS after 22 years of service with the Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System. March 2024 marked five years since David stepped into the role, and the positive effects of his leadership are seen and felt throughout the system.

In his first newsletter message as Executive Director, David stated that one of his goals was 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.” Achieving this goal has been one of David's many successes. Bringing the systems together has created unity both internally and externally, creating more seamless internal operations that allow staff to better serve our members, retirees, and beneficiaries.

Deputy Director Nichelle Lashley described David's commitment to BCERS, saying, “At a time of uncertainty, David came in bringing calm to the chaos. He offered reassurance, assessed the talent of the team, initiated key personnel changes, and provided strong leadership with a solid vision for the future of the Retirement Systems. Over the last five years, he has continued that same path. Under David's direction, we successfully navigated the pandemic, ensuring no disruption of service to our members, partnered in the WorkDay conversion, made significant investments in our IT infrastructure, recommended legislative updates, and increased the assets of the Trust. He leads with integrity, transparency, and a spirit of teamwork in which we all feel valued and appreciated.”

From the entire team: Thank you, David! We are incredibly grateful for your leadership, and congratulations on an outstanding five years!



ERS Trustee Sharon Lockley Sworn In

In January, ERS Trustee Sharon Lockley was sworn in by Mayor Brandon Scott at City Hall. Ms. Lockley is retired from the Department of Audits at the Baltimore City Comptroller's office. She was elected to the board by the retired membership and will serve a four-year term.



UPCOMING SEMINARS

APRIL

9

**NEW EMPLOYEE
ENROLLMENT SEMINAR
9 AM - 11 AM**

APRIL

10

**SOCIAL SECURITY
9 AM - 11 AM**

APRIL

16

**CLASS C
UNDERSTANDING RETIREMENT
9 AM - 12 PM**

APRIL

17

**RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN-
KNOW YOUR PLAN
9 AM - 11 AM**

visit www.bcercs.org for more

RUN RETIREMENT ESTIMATES AND MORE IN THE MSS PORTAL

Don't miss out on the features available through the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal!

Did you know that you can access your retirement information and process your retirement estimates online through the MSS? You can also submit documents through the MSS portal, offering a more secure method to updating your information.

To access the portal:

1. Visit our website at bcers.org and scroll to **Self-Service Login** under the **Member Services** tab.
 2. Select the **Self Register** option (Located near the top of the screen).
 3. Enter the requested information and click **Locate Information**.
 4. Set up your account on the following **Account Setup** screen.
 5. Click **Save Account Information**.
 6. This will take you to the **Home Screen** where you can review pension date and other personal information, run a retirement estimate, and upload documents under the Docs tab.
-



Did you know that you can receive the BCERS newsletter and Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) electronically? Go green and cut down on the amount of paper in your household by choosing to receive your newsletter and PAFR via email.

To opt out of paper mailings for the newsletter and financial report:

1. Visit www.bcers.org and click on the Publications tab.
2. Scroll to the very bottom of the Publications page to find the "Opt Out of Print Mailings" form.
3. Fill out and submit the form.

The "Opt Out" form only applies to the newsletter and PAFR publications. You will continue to receive statements and any other BCERS print publications by mail.



ERS

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM



@bmoreretirement

CITY OF BALTIMORE

Employees' Retirement Systems

7 East Redwood Street, 11th, 12th & 13th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

PRESORT MKTG
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
CITY OF BALTIMORE
PERMIT NO. 992

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 443-984-3200

Fax: 410-528-8428

Website: www.bcercs.org

Email: newsletter@bcercs.org

ADMINISTRATION

David A. Randall

Executive Director

Nichelle Lashley

Deputy Executive Director

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Employees' Retirement System

Deborah F. Moore-Carter*

Chair of the Board
City of Baltimore Labor Commis-
sioner
Elected by Active Members

Bill Henry*

City of Baltimore Comptroller
Ex-officio Member

Yoanna Moises*

Deputy Director of Finance

Patricia Roberts

Retired
Appointed by Mayor

Dorothy L. Bryant*

Phlebotomist
City of Baltimore Health Department
Elected by Active Members

Helen Holton

Retired
Appointed by Mayor/
Baltimore City Council

Sharon Lockley

Retired
Elected by Retired Members

Hon. Zakia Mahasa

Appointed by Mayor

Retirement Savings Plan

Dorothy L. Bryant

Acting President
AFCSME Local 44

Antoinette Ryan-Johnson

President
City Union of Baltimore

Tom Skinner

2nd Vice President

Baltimore Fire Officers Association

Congetta A. Bosse

Payroll Director
BCPS CEO Designee

Sandi Jacobs

Executive Director of Strategic
Research
BCPS CEO Designee

Quinton Herbert, J.D.

Human Resources Director and
Chief Human Capital Officer

Jamar Brown

Partner, Rosenberg Martin Green-
berg Law Firm

*Serves on both boards.