


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

Retirement *Today*

SPRING 2026



ERS
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 Retirement Today!

As we move into the spring season, it's a great time to review and update important information related to your retirement benefits—especially your beneficiary designations. Keeping your beneficiaries current is one of the most important steps you can take to ensure your benefits are distributed according to your wishes. Life changes such as marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, or the passing of a loved one can all impact your selections. We encourage you to take a few moments to review your information and make any necessary updates.

We also want to remind members of the importance of protecting your personal and financial information. Cybersecurity threats continue to evolve, and it's essential to remain vigilant. Be cautious of unsolicited calls, emails, or messages requesting sensitive information, and always verify that you are communicating with a trusted source. Taking a few simple precautions can go a long way in helping you avoid fraud and safeguard your retirement benefits.

April is Financial Literacy Month, making it the perfect time to assess your overall financial wellness and ensure you are saving adequately for retirement. ERS offers monthly financial education seminars designed to support you at every stage of your journey. Whether you are just beginning your career or preparing to retire, these sessions can help you better understand your options and make informed decisions. You can also schedule a one-on-one appointment with a retirement analyst for personalized guidance.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you. We remain committed to providing the tools, resources, and support you need to build a secure financial future.

Warm regards,
David A. Randall
Executive Director

BENEFIT PAYDATES 2026

January: 1/1/2026
February: 1/30/2026
March: 2/27/2026
April: 4/1/2026
May: 5/1/2026
June: 6/1/2026
July: 7/1/2026
August: 7/31/2026
September: 9/1/2026
October: 10/1/2026
November: 10/30/2026
December: 12/1/2026

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Protecting Your Information: The ABCs of Cybersecurity

In today's digital world, protecting your personal and financial information is more important than ever. As a member of the Employees' Retirement System (ERS), you may regularly share sensitive information such as your Social Security number, banking details, and retirement account information. Unfortunately, scammers and bad actors are increasingly targeting individuals—especially retirees—with attempts to access this information through fraud and deception.

The good news is that there are simple, effective steps you can take to protect yourself. Think of cybersecurity as part of your overall financial wellness. By staying alert and informed, you can reduce your risk and keep your information secure.

The ABCs of Prevention



A: Always Be Aware

Scammers often rely on urgency and fear to get you to act quickly. You may receive a phone call, email, or text message that appears to come from a trusted source—such as a government agency, financial institution, or even ERS.

Be cautious if someone:

- Asks for personal or financial information unexpectedly
- Pressures you to act immediately
- Requests payment or sensitive details over the phone, email, or text

If something doesn't feel right, take a step back. It's always okay to pause and verify before responding.

B: Be Careful with Your Information

Your personal information is valuable. Treat it with the same care you would give to cash or important documents.

- Never share your Social Security number, banking details, or passwords with someone you do not know or trust
- Avoid clicking on links or downloading attachments from unfamiliar emails or messages
- Use strong, unique passwords for your accounts and avoid reusing them across multiple sites

ERS will never ask you to provide sensitive information through unsolicited emails or text messages. When in doubt, contact us directly using verified contact information.

C: Confirm Before You Act

One of the best ways to protect yourself is to verify information before taking action.

If you receive a suspicious message:

- Do not click links or respond directly
- Look up the official phone number or website for the organization and contact them yourself
- Ask a trusted friend, family member, or advisor for a second opinion

Taking a few extra minutes to confirm can prevent costly mistakes.

Common Scams to Watch For

Scammers are constantly evolving their tactics, but some common schemes include:

The ABCs of Cybersecurity (Continued)

Phishing Emails or Texts: Messages that appear legitimate but are designed to trick you into clicking a link or sharing personal information

Impersonation Scams: Calls or messages from someone pretending to be from ERS, Social Security, or another trusted organization

Account Alerts or “Urgent” Requests: Messages claiming there is a problem with your account that requires immediate action

Remember: legitimate organizations will not pressure you to act immediately or ask for sensitive information in unsecured ways.

Simple Steps You Can Take Today

Protecting yourself doesn't have to be complicated. Start with these simple steps:

- Review your account statements regularly for any unfamiliar activity
- Keep your contact information up to date with ERS so we can reach you if needed
- Shred documents that contain personal or financial information before discarding them
- Enable security features, such as multi-factor authentication, when available

We're Here to Help

At ERS, your security is a priority. We are committed to protecting your information and providing resources to help you stay informed. If you ever receive a suspicious communication that appears to be from ERS—or if you are unsure about a request—please contact us directly.

Staying informed is your first line of defense. By following the ABCs of prevention and remaining vigilant, you can protect yourself and your retirement with confidence.

QUICK TIPS

PAUSE.



If a message feels urgent, slow down.

CHECK.



Verify who you're talking to before giving information.

PROTECT.



Never share your Social Security number, banking details, or passwords.

When in doubt—don't respond. **Scammers Count on You Acting Fast**

Legitimate organizations will never pressure you to:

- Share personal information immediately
- Send money or payment in unusual ways
- Click a link without explanation

Take your time. Verify first.

STOP. THINK. PROTECT.

Before you click, answer, or respond:

STOP – Is this message unexpected?

THINK – Does it feel urgent or suspicious?

PROTECT – Confirm before sharing anything

Not Sure? Contact Us.

If you receive a message about your benefits and something feels off: Call ERS at 443-984-9200 or email: contacters@bcers.org

Understanding the New Federal Tax Withholding Form (W-4P)

What Retired Members Need to Know

Beginning in 2026, the federal government is requiring all retirement systems to use an updated version of the Form W-4P: Withholding Certificate for Periodic Pension or Annuity Payments. This new form is more detailed than the previous version and is designed to help ensure that the correct amount of federal income tax is withheld from your pension payments.



What Is Changing?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has redesigned the W-4P form to better align with current tax laws and provide more accurate withholding based on your individual financial situation.

As a result:

- ERS will no longer be able to accept the previous W-4P form.
- A new 2026 W-4P form will be required for certain members.
- ERS has created a coversheet to accompany the form and collect important contact and identification information.

Who Does This Apply To?

The new W-4P form and ERS coversheet will be required for:

- New retirees
- New beneficiaries (such as those receiving benefits after the death of a member)
- Current retirees or beneficiaries making changes to their federal tax withholding

These requirements will go into effect with the **June 1, 2026** payroll cycle.

If you are a current retiree and do not wish to make any changes, you do not need to take action at this time.

What Do I Need to Do?

If you are required to complete the new form, you will need to:

- Complete the 2026 Federal W-4P Withholding Certificate and the ERS coversheet.
- Submit both forms to ERS by mail, email, or fax.
- Maryland residents who are new retirees or beneficiaries will also need to complete the Maryland State Tax Withholding Certificate.

Important Things to Keep in Mind

Updates to your withholding may take at least 30 days to take effect.

Your current withholding will remain in place until a new form is submitted and processed.

If no valid form is on file when required, withholding may default to a standard rate.

Do I Need Help Completing the Form?

ERS staff can help explain the process, but we encourage you to consult a:

- Tax advisor
- Financial advisor
- Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Or the IRS directly for tax-specific guidance

We're Here to Support You

We understand that changes to tax forms can feel complicated, but this update is designed to give you greater control and accuracy when it comes to your retirement income.

If you have questions about whether you need to complete a new form or how to submit it, please contact ERS:

- 443-984-3200
- contacters@bcers.org



EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEMS



2026 SEMINARS

CLASS C UNDERSTANDING RETIREMENT

Class C Understanding Retirement Seminars are for employees hired prior to July 1, 2014. Topics include:

- Retirement eligibility requirements
- Disability and death benefits
- Military and transfer time
- Beneficiary designation
- Health benefits in retirement
- 457b Deferred Compensation Plan

Dates: Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 17, **Apr 21 (in-person)**, May 19, Jun 16, **Jul 21 (in-person)**, Aug 18, Sept 15, **Oct 20 (in-person)**, Nov 17, Dec 15

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLAN- KNOW YOUR PLAN

Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) Seminars are for employees hired on or after July 1, 2014. Topics include:

- Overview of the Hybrid/Non-Hybrid plans including benefits for each plan
- Retirement eligibility requirements
- Military and transfer time
- Beneficiary designation
- 457b Deferred Compensation Plan

Dates: Jan 21, Apr 15, **Jul 15 (in-person)**, Oct 21

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

NEW EMPLOYEE ENROLLMENT SEMINAR

New Employee Enrollment Seminars (NEES) are for new employees who need to elect a retirement plan prior to the end of the 150-day mandatory plan selection period. Topics include:

- 401(a) Hybrid plan
- 401(a) Non-Hybrid plan
- 457b Deferred Compensation Plan
- Enrollment process
- Deadline requirements

Dates: Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 10, **Apr 14 (in-person)**, May 12, Jun 9, **Jul 14 (in-person)**, Aug 11, Sept 8, **Oct 13 (in-person)**, Nov 10, Dec 8

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Join an expert presenter from the Nationwide Retirement Institute for an in-depth presentation around Social Security. Learn the part Social Security plays in your overall retirement picture and get your questions answered.

Dates: Feb 19, May 21, **Aug 20 (in-person)**, Nov 19

Time: 9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.

Seminars are virtual unless otherwise noted. In-Person seminars are held at 7 E. Redwood St., 11th Floor. Call 443-984-3200 or visit retirewithbmore.myretirementappt.com to register

*The Office of the Labor Commissioner is authorizing permission leave for employees to attend a seminar. Any employee who wishes to attend a seminar must submit a request to the immediate supervisor at least two weeks in advance. The request may be denied for operational reasons.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: MEET DELORES WALKER



Delores Walker joined the Employees' Retirement System (ERS) in 2024 as an Accountant II, bringing with her a strong background in accounting and a longstanding connection to the City of Baltimore. Prior to joining ERS, Delores worked for the City of Baltimore followed by a job with American Pool, where she supported operations across multiple locations throughout the United States.

In her role at ERS, Delores is part of the Accounting team, where she contributes to key financial processes, including work related to the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). She values the collaborative culture at ERS and takes pride in being part of a team that works together to get the job done efficiently and effectively. Delores describes her experience at ERS as “smooth sailing,” highlighting both the supportive work environment and the strong sense of teamwork among colleagues.

“Mrs. Delores is a valued member of the Accounting Department, bringing a wealth of experience that enhances overall performance,” shared Michelle Taylor, Accounting Supervisor. “Her depth of knowledge, attention to detail, and commitment to efficiency have strengthened and streamlined processes. Her bubbly personality and sense of humor bring positive energy to the workplace, fostering a supportive and engaging environment. She is always eager to assist others and consistently seeks ways to improve workflow by leveraging systems and efficiencies, making her a key contributor to the team’s success.”

Outside of work, Delores is deeply family-oriented and enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren. With five children and a growing number of grandkids, she cherishes every moment—including frequent sleepovers and family gatherings. She also enjoys building strong connections outside of the workplace, participating in a monthly “girls’ club” with coworkers and regular outings with couples, creating a sense of community both inside and outside of ERS.

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.bcercs.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.





BCERS

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM



@bmoreretirement

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ADMINISTRATION

David A. Randall

Executive Director

Nichelle Lashley

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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City of Baltimore Comptroller

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*Serves on both boards.