



479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601
800-618-1687

Teachers' Retirement System

RETIRED
MEMBER EDITION

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From the Executive Secretary Helping Those Who Help the World By Gary L. Harbin, CPA

If the Nobel Prize ever had a shoo in, it's the scientists behind the COVID-19 vaccines. These vials that are the product of their scientific method are giving the rest of us hope for a return to normal as the pandemic continues to grip the commonwealth and the world.

How does that relate to you as a current or retired Kentucky teacher? Behind every one of those scientists are teachers who inspired them – teachers just like you, just like we serve at Teachers' Retirement System.

See From the Executive Secretary, page 2

Names to Help Members Know Their Benefits

To make it easier for members and retirees to know the benefits they're entitled to based on their entry date into TRS, new names will be used for each account type.

While TRS traditionally has referred to these benefit tiers by the member's TRS entry date, the passage of the hybrid plan for new teachers who will join TRS on or after Jan. 1, 2022, has underscored the practicality of naming this and existing account types.

The use of these names does not change any benefits. It's merely a device to help members and retirees.

Account Type	Who's in it
TRS 1	Membership established before July 1, 2002
TRS 2	Membership established July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2008
TRS 3	Membership established July 1, 2008 to Dec. 31, 2021
TRS 4	Membership established on or after Jan. 1, 2022

General Assembly Approves New Plan for Teachers Starting in TRS in 2022

The recently concluded General Assembly session approved a new benefits tier for members who start in TRS Jan. 1, 2022, or later. The plan contained in House Bill 258 was sponsored by Rep. Ed Massey and was developed over the course of several months with the involvement of education groups that participate in TRS.

The new plan makes no changes for active or retired teachers. Also, health insurance contributions and access are unchanged. This includes the existing requirement of at least 15 years of service for anyone hired since July 1, 2008, to access TRS retiree health care.

Unlike prior TRS plans, the new plan – which will be identified as TRS 4 – isn't solely a defined benefit. TRS 4 is a hybrid plan that incorporates a defined benefit known as the foundational benefit and a supplemental benefit that is a defined contribution savings account.

Mandatory contributions are 9% of pay to the foundational and 2% to the supplemental by non-university members, who also will have the ability to make additional contributions on a voluntary basis to the supplemental benefit.

Employers will contribute 8% to the foundational and 2% to the supplemental, with the option of additional voluntary contributions to the supplemental.

TRS 4, like other TRS plans, will be a Social Security replacement benefit for non-university members. University members will continue to participate in Social Security, with contributions and TRS benefits in line with that retirement plan structure.

Other features include:

- TRS 4 participants will become eligible to retire at age 57.
- Benefits once earned by TRS 4 members are protected by an inviolable contract.
- Contributions to TRS 4 will be invested with funds of current tiers, benefiting all.
- TRS 4 is designed to have no unfunded liability, with risk controls available to the TRS Board of Trustees to maintain a funded status above 90% and no unfunded liability risk to state.

From the Executive Secretary, from page 1

So, thank you. Thank you to those of you who brought the world to your students in remote schools before the Internet made that easier. Thank you to those of you teaching now through that Internet and back in the classroom. Through teaching, TRS members and retirees help save lives. Thank you all for inspiring the scientists who are saving our lives now and the ones who will save our lives in the future.

We at TRS continually try to show our thanks to you by helping you prepare for retirement where you have reliable income and health care – even when it means, for now and for safety, that the help is provided in virtual settings. We remain here for you and thank you for the work you've done educating the scientists, doctors, health care professionals and first responders of today and tomorrow. TRS members and retirees save lives.

Educational Videos Available for Members, Retirees

Educational videos for members and retirees are posted on the videos page of the TRS website (<https://trs.ky.gov/home/seminars-workshops/videos/>).

Topics include Pathway registration, how the return-to-work salary limitations work and how to enroll in Medicare when turning 65. The full list is available at the link above.



New State Law to Remove Remarriage as Disqualifying Event for Certain Benefits

Remarriage occurring on or after June 29 no longer will be a disqualifying event for the monthly survivor payment or annuity payment for the surviving spouse of an active member. This is as the result of the passage of House Bill 87 in this year's General Assembly session.



For many years, state law has voided eligibility for these monthly payments if the surviving spouse remarried. The new law, which takes effect June 29, means payments will continue for spouses who remarry on or after the effective date.

Also, to ensure compliance with the law, TRS annually has required surviving spouses to sign an affidavit certifying that they had not remarried and remained eligible for the benefit. Because of the change in the law, TRS is sending a final Spouse Affidavit to Retain Survivor Benefits to certify eligibility for the period prior to June 29, 2021. The form will be discontinued once the period prior to the effective date has been certified.

Remarriage continues to make a surviving spouse ineligible for TRS retiree health insurance.

How to Reach TRS During COVID-19 Pandemic

The TRS office in Frankfort remains closed to visitors. How long that will continue is uncertain because of rapidly occurring developments. The best way to stay abreast of any changes is through TRS's feeds on Twitter and Facebook and the website, including its coronavirus update page: <https://trs.ky.gov/news/coronavirus-response-updates/>.

Regardless of when the office fully reopens, TRS will continue to use video counseling and other electronic forms of communication, including bulk emails. Continue to call TRS at 800-618-1687, email at info@trs.ky.gov and check the website.



Return-To-Work Agreements Before Retirement Between Members, Employers Not Allowed; Reemployment Certification Required Before Returning to Work Within a Year

A Reemployment Certification must be on file before returning to work with a TRS employer for anyone retired for less than a year. This form certifies that no agreement for you to return to work was made before you retired. The form is signed by you and your new employer and must be on file with TRS prior to your return to work. The certification form can be found on the TRS website under Forms for Retired Members at <https://trs.ky.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Reemployment-Certification-for-Bona-Fide-Retirement.pdf>.

Also, the required break in service is mandatory even if the new job with the TRS employer is not a TRS position. The breaks in service and the reemployment certification form are required for all TRS retirees returning to work with a TRS employer, including university members.

Following these rules is required so that contributions to TRS can continue to be tax-deferred and to protect your retirement benefits. Detailed information is on the TRS website at: <https://trs.ky.gov/retired-members/returning-to-work/>.



New Contact Information?

Keeping your contact information current ensures that you receive important communications from the Teachers' Retirement System, such as annual statements, newsletters, trustee election ballots, payment stubs, tax forms and retiree health insurance updates.

Besides your physical address, keep email addresses and telephone numbers up to date. TRS is starting to use email address more often to keep in touch with members. Make sure your primary email address is the one that can be used by TRS. If you do not want your email to be used, let TRS know.

Even if you change your address with the school district where you work (or worked), the school district doesn't report that change to TRS. So, TRS needs to be notified of the change independently by members and retirees.

TRS offers multiple ways to update personal information, including online using Pathway at <https://mss.trs.ky.gov>. Also, members and retirees may mail or fax a signed letter to TRS with your name and TRS ID and the new information. Finally, a downloadable form also is available from the website.

The fax is 502-848-8599, and the mailing address is: 479 Versailles Rd. Frankfort, KY 40601.



Pathway: <https://mss.trs.ky.gov>



info@trs.ky.gov



800-618-1687

Website: <https://trs.ky.gov>

Watch Your Email Inbox for TRS Information



For years, TRS has sent communications to members and retirees in their mailboxes. Now, TRS also is using email inboxes as well. TRS is using donotreply@trs.ky.gov as the sender.

Of course, you can contact TRS anytime – the email for that is info@trs.ky.gov and the phone number is 800-618-1687.

If your emails are not updated, this might be another reason to do so. TRS offers multiple ways to update personal information, including by changing it online using Pathway (<https://mss.trs.ky.gov>). Also, members and retirees may mail or fax a signed letter to TRS with your name and TRS ID and the new information. Finally, a downloadable form also is available from the website. The mailing address is 479 Versailles Rd., Frankfort, KY 40601.

Register for Pathway

Pathway (<https://mss.trs.ky.gov>) is TRS's website for members to see account information through a secure, online website. If you haven't registered, you should. A how-to video is available at <https://trs.ky.gov/home/seminars-workshops/videos/#pregis>.

Pathway allows members to update personal information, view any benefit estimate that a TRS counselor has created for you, create benefit estimates, apply for retirement and view annual statements.

Pathway allows retirees to complete Turning 65 and qualifying event insurance applications and print 1099-R duplicate forms.

Pathway also allows active members and retirees to register for seminars and webinars and vote in Board of Trustees elections.



Turning 65 Soon?

Let TRS help you with a walkthrough on the features of the TRS Medicare Eligible Health Plan (MEHP).

This Turning 65 webinar is geared for retired teachers, or spouses, approaching their 65th birthday in 2021. Registration is required at <https://trs.ky.gov/active-members/seminars-workshops/> or by calling 800-618-1687 for registration assistance.

Upcoming Turning 65 webinars: July 7, Aug. 4, Sept. 1, Oct. 6, Nov. 3 and Dec. 1.



Watch Out for Phishing Scams

TRS is aware of “phishing” attempts from non-TRS email accounts and wants members to be suspicious of any email purporting to be from TRS that is not from an email ending in trs.ky.gov or from an authorized TRS service provider.

“Phishing” occurs when a scammer sends an email or text, sometimes falsely using the name of a trusted person or organization, trying to get you to reply or click a link. If you click it, the scammer, for example, sends viruses and other malware into your computer. Scammers design these messages to appear to be real and often suggest the message is urgent and requires action now or something bad will happen. They sometimes paste official logos into the email. They also will type one address in the body of an email with the link going to another address.

TRS does not use email or text to request any payment or your confidential information to be provided in a response to that email or text.

To avoid being caught by “phishing” you can:



- By phone or by creating a new email message, contact the person or organization who supposedly sent you the email without replying or forwarding to the suspicious email.
- Look to see that an email address ends in trs.ky.gov. or is from an authorized TRS service provider.
- Find out more about the link by scrolling over it without tapping it.
- Report the email as spam.
- If it's a text, block the phone number.
- Think twice about responding to emails or texts demanding “immediate action.”

Updated Disabilities Earnings Limitations

The Board of Trustees authorized increases last year in the disability earnings limitation as a result of inflation.

Effective July 1, 2020, the disability earning limitation increased to \$42,360.
Effective Jan. 1, 2021, it increased to \$42,740.

Be Aware of Minimum Distribution Requirements

Federal tax law requires some inactive TRS members to start withdrawing from their account, whether by retirement or refund. These rules are called minimum distribution requirements.

Any TRS member age 70½ as of Dec. 31, 2019, with an accumulated balance who no longer is working for a TRS employer is required by federal law to begin taking minimum distributions from their retirement accounts. That's true regardless of whether it's a return-to-work account.

Any TRS member who no longer is working for a TRS employer and who was 70½ on or after Jan. 1, 2020, must take minimum distributions starting at age 72.

Minimum distributions can be done in one of two ways.

If vested with at least five years of service, someone required to take a minimum distribution must file a retirement application

and begin receiving an annuity.

Someone required to take a distribution who doesn't have five years of service must file an application for a refund of his or her account.

Failure to make a timely withdrawal of retirement account contributions may result in federal tax penalties.

If you have met your required minimum distribution age and are no longer contributing to your account, contact TRS immediately for the forms to apply for one of the options to avoid substantial federal tax penalties.

Federal tax law also requires the beneficiary of an active or retired member to begin receiving benefits or a refund soon after a member's death (if applicable when benefits or a refund from the account are payable). Beneficiaries should contact TRS soon after the member's death to begin receiving benefits or take a refund in order to avoid any applicable penalties.

Reminder: Upon the Death of an Active or Retired Teacher

Eligible spouses have 30 days from the member's death to elect or decline health insurance coverage through the Teachers' Retirement System. Be careful making that decision because it is permanent. Once coverage is declined or waived, no qualifying event will allow the surviving spouse to re-enroll. Also, any surviving spouse who enrolls in TRS insurance loses eligibility upon remarriage.

KRS Name Change to KPPA Unrelated to Teachers


Recently, a new state law resulted in the Kentucky Retirement Systems (KRS) taking on the new name of Kentucky Public Pensions Authority (KPPA). The KPPA includes plans for state police and state and county employees. This change has nothing to do with the Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Kentucky (TRS), which is the plan for teachers and other education professionals.

Retiree Annual Statements Sent

TRS recently sent new retiree annual statements. Similar to the annual statements that active members have received for decades, the new retiree statement is an account summary for retirees.

The statement summarizes personal information on file with TRS and how to update that; annuity benefits received, federal and state withholding and how to change withholding; retiree health insurance; beneficiary information; annuity automatic deposit information; and payment dates.

The information on the statement is a summary of your account. It does not change any benefits or benefit structure – it’s a reference tool. Do not return the annual statement with changes; changes are made using the appropriate form or in Pathway (<https://mss.trs.ky.gov>).



Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Kentucky
479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601-3800

This statement was prepared especially for:

STATEMENT OF RETIREE BENEFIT ACCOUNT

[This is an important financial document for your information, but it is not a tax record. For taxes, use the IRS Form 1099-R, which TRS mails at the end of each January. Account information is subject to correction by TRS upon discovery of any error or any conflict with state or federal law. Review all information on this statement and contact TRS regarding errors or other concerns.]

Personal Information			
Your personal information can be updated directly through Pathway (https://mss.trs.ky.gov) or by printing the form from Pathway or the TRS website (https://trs.ky.gov) and mailing the completed form to TRS at the address shown above. It is important to keep your contact information on file with TRS updated.			
TRS ID	Date of birth	Phone	Email

Retirement Account Summary			
Service retirees are guaranteed a lifetime annuity with a 1.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) each July. For retirement option descriptions, see the TRS website https://trs.ky.gov/active-members/retirement-planning/options/			
Benefit type	Retirement date	Retirement option	Gross monthly annuity

2020 Benefits Paid By TRS			2020 Annuity Deductions			
Annuity payments	Insurance premiums	Total	Insurance premiums	Federal tax	Kentucky tax	Other deductions

Through December 2020, TRS has paid you a cumulative lifetime annuity benefit of \$

Account information is subject to correction upon discovery of any error or conflict with state or federal laws.

Employed and Participating in TRS Insurance?

Retirees and their spouses who are active in the workforce must drop health insurance coverage through the Teachers' Retirement System if they are eligible for health insurance through their job. If insurance is available through the employer, TRS insurance must be waived regardless of whether the person is in the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) or the Medicare Eligible Health Plan (MEHP).

Additionally, once a retiree or spouse leaves a postretirement job or loses eligibility for the active insurance that came with that job, contact TRS to enroll in its coverage within the qualifying event period (usually 30 days) and provide the required documentation.

KEHP

Complete the LivingWell Promise

It's time again to complete the LivingWell Promise for those insured through the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP). Complete a health assessment or biometric screening by July 1 to earn premium discounts of up to \$480 (\$40 per month) in 2022.



New this year, the KEHP has partnered with WebMD Health Services to improve your LivingWell experience. That means using a new well-being portal powered by WebMD One. To register and access your online account, visit KEHPLivingWell.com. (No information from the old system is carried over, so everyone will need to register.)

If you need help with your online account or to request a paper health assessment, contact WebMD Health Services' customer service at 866-746-1316.

Spouses only complete the LivingWell Promise if they are cross-referenced. Dependents are not eligible for the LivingWell program.

KEHP

Tips if You are Soon to Be Eligible for Medicare

If you are about to become eligible for Medicare and will be moving from the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) to TRS's Medicare Eligible Health Plan (MEHP), you may need to use benefits that won't transfer to the MEHP.

Spend all your remaining StayWell/WebMD rewards points before your KEHP coverage terminates.

If you have a Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) use any remaining Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) funds before moving to the MEHP.



MEHP

MEHP Reminders

If you are enrolled in the TRS Medicare Eligible Health Plan (MEHP) you cannot enroll in another Medicare Advantage plan or another Medicare Part D prescription drug plan without it terminating your TRS MEHP coverage.

If you have other coverage through a spouse or other retirement – even if you have not used that coverage – and that plan changes to a Med-

icare Advantage plan and/or a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, that will terminate your TRS MEHP coverage.

Also, be cautious when enrolling in supplemental benefits, such as dental or vision coverage, since these benefits could be associated with another plan that could jeopardize your MEHP coverage.

Teachers' Retirement System
of the State of Kentucky
479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601-3800



Upcoming Electronic Deposit (EFT) Dates

TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF THE STATE OF KENTUCKY
Remaining 2021 Check Mailing/Direct Deposit Schedule

June 28	July 29	Sept. 28	Nov. 24	<i>Jan. 28, 2022</i>
	Aug. 27	Oct. 28	Dec. 28	

Questions: 800-618-1687 | Monday – Friday | 8 – 5 P.M. ET | <https://trs.ky.gov>

PATHWAY  <https://mss.trs.ky.gov>  [KyTeachersRS](#)  facebook.com/KyTeachersRS

Remember always to keep your address current at TRS or call 800-618-1687 with any questions. Go to [“Forms for Retired Members”](#) to obtain the EFT direct deposit form to make changes to your bank or checking account related to your direct deposit.