Teachers Retirement System of Georgia
www.TRSGA.com

TRS RETIREMENT REPORT

A BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER
FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS
Fall 2014

Fiscal Year 2014 in Review

Jeffrey L. Ezell,
Executive Director

As the calendar year draws to an end and we reflect back on 2014, providing excellent customer service throughout TRS continued to be our focus.

To engage and keep our newer members informed, we implemented a fully-revised New Member presentation, which includes a section on general concepts of personal financial literacy. We individually counseled over 7,000 members and retirees at the TRS office and around the State. Through our 311 outreach events, including meetings, benefit fairs, and workshops, we reached over 28,000 members and retirees. We also enhanced the disability retiree review process to include disability retirees who have returned to work, ensuring these retirees are in compliance with Georgia law.

To keep our pension administration systems and your data secure, we continually test our systems both internally and externally to ensure their integrity and safety. Over the course of the year our system has blocked multiple hacker probes and hacker attacks on the network infrastructure. We are happy to report that no security risks have been identified. We added Positive Pay, a fraud detection tool, to TRS operating and expense accounts to further combat fraudulent checks.

Each year we also strive to stay up-to-date with our technology. FY 2014 was no exception. We developed a content management system for our website and implemented improvements in employer reporting to streamline and improve performance when processing employer files, resulting in significant improvements to processing time.

We also saw many services rendered by our members on the web during FY 2014. We had 5,637 applications for retirement submitted online, 40,533

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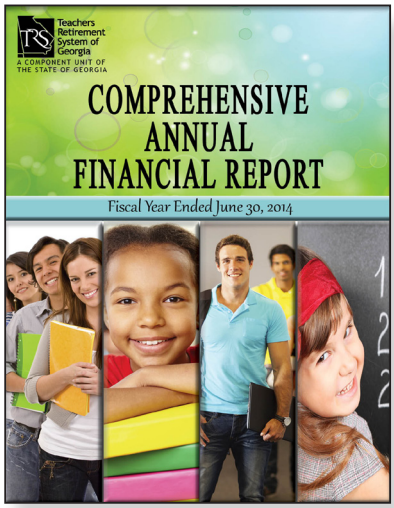
2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Our 2014 annual report will be ready to view at the end of December on our website under Publications.



Member Statements Available Now

Please login to your online account and review your member statement, which contains your account balance, demographic information, and various benefit estimate projections are available for you to view and/or print.

Please review your statement. If you find anything incorrect or you have any questions please contact TRS immediately.

INSIDE

P2 Fiscal Year 2014 in Review, cont.
P2 Improved New Member Workshop
P3 Retirement Application Deadlines
P3 Pre-Retirement Seminar Dates
P4 How to Apply Online for Retirement
P5 How the State Legislature Works
P5 Contribution Rates

Fiscal Year 2014 in Review, cont.

member statements downloaded, and 34,882 benefit estimates created, just to name a few.

Looking to the future, the 2015 Georgia General Assembly will convene on January 12, 2015. Retirement legislation that has a fiscal impact can only be introduced during the 1st year of a two-year session and can only be acted on during the 2nd year. The earliest effective date of any fiscal retirement bill introduced during the 2015 session would be July 1, 2016. We encourage you to visit our website frequently during the legislative session for accurate, up-to-date information as it relates to retirement legislation. A detailed description of the unique process retirement legislation must follow is also available on our website.

Thank your for your continued support and partnership with TRS. We are always working towards providing you with the best customer service available. From myself and the staff at TRS, we would like to wish you a happy holiday season! ⌘

A NUMBERS RECAP

- **108,100**
  Retirees & Beneficiaries
- **$3.8 Billion**
  Paid to Retirees & Beneficiaries
- **$66.5 Billion**
  in TRS Assets
- **90%**
  Of Our Retirees Reside in Georgia

Improved New Member Workshop

TRS has updated its New Member Workshop, for members who have up to 10 years of TRS service, to educate our newest members about their TRS benefit and other important information regarding planning for retirement.

We realize that many members just beginning a career don't think about or plan for retirement. At TRS, we believe that it's never too early to start planning for your future.

If you are interested in a New Member Workshop in your area, ask your school administrators to contact Carlos Marshall at 404-352-6508.

Summer 2015 Retirement Application Deadlines

Due to the high volume of new retirements in the spring, submitting applications early will help ensure new retirees receive their first benefit check in the month they retire. Please keep the following dates in mind as we advance towards summer:

- ***June 1st*** retirees must complete and submit applications and paperwork to TRS by **March 31, 2015** if they would like to receive their first benefit check in June.
- ***July 1st*** retirees must complete and submit applications and paperwork to TRS by **April 30, 2015** if they would like to receive their first benefit check in July.

Applications received after these dates will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. We do our best to accommodate everyone, but applications/forms received in our office by the deadlines listed ensure a timely retirement benefit payment. The retirement application is not complete until all of the following forms have been received by TRS:

- Application for Service Retirement
- Identification for members and beneficiaries
- State and Federal Tax Withholding forms
- Affidavit of Residency (must be notarized)
- Retirement Certification Report (TRS-8) completed by your employer

If a member has any service credit for which he or she is eligible to purchase, it must be purchased PRIOR TO RETIREMENT.

Federal and State statutes require verification of lawful presence in the United States when applying for public retirement benefits. Therefore, TRS must require that every member applying for either service or disability retirement complete a **notarized** Affidavit of Residency form.

All applications for retirement should be submitted ONLINE. No paper applications are accepted. ⌘

Pre-Retirement Seminars at the TRS Office

TRS will be hosting pre-retirement seminars in our Atlanta office on:

- Monday, December 22nd at 10 am and 2 pm
- Tuesday, December 23rd at 10 am and 2 pm

We encourage members within 5 years of retirement to attend a pre-retirement seminar prior to scheduling a one-on-one counseling session. You may register online via your TRS account at www.trsga.com.

APPLYING FOR RETIREMENT

In an effort to provide you with the most expedient method of applying for retirement, retiring members now apply for retirement online.

Please remember that TRS is no longer accepting paper applications. Our online process is quick, easy and more efficient.

To apply, simply login to your account and click "Apply for Retirement." You will then be prompted to provide information specific to your retirement. When the process is complete, a summary sheet is provided for your records. There are links to other forms not covered in the online process, as well as "Tips" to help make the process as easy and user-friendly as possible. So you are prepared, please note the following items needed to complete the retirement application process.

Items and Information Needed to Complete Your Application:

- **Your Information**: name, address, daytime phone number, SSN, date of birth, copy of official ID (driver's license, passport, birth certificate, immigration papers, or a state issued ID).

- **Your Primary and Secondary Beneficiary's Information**: name, address, SSN, date of birth, copy of official ID (see list above).

- **Direct Deposit Information:** checking or savings account and routing numbers.

- **Benefit Estimate**: you may use this as a reference to help you choose your monthly retirement benefit option and your PLOP payment (if applicable).

- **PLOP Rollover** (if applicable): name, address, and phone number for rollover institution, type of rollover plan, and your rollover account number.

- **Tax Withholding Amounts**: federal and state for monthly benefit payment, and PLOP if taking a lump-sum cash distribution.

- **Your Alien Number Issued by the Department of Homeland Security or Other Federal Immigration Agency** (if applicable)

If you are unable to complete and submit your application, you may log back in to your account and continue at a later date. Please note that your online application will only remain active for 45 days. After 45 days, your application is void and you must begin the process again. Once the application is completed, the member must print and sign a summary sheet and send to TRS. ⌘

How Retirement Legislation Becomes Law

The 2015 Georgia General Assembly will convene on January 12, 2015, and is the first year of the two-year (2015-2016) biennium session. Retirement bills that have a fiscal (monetary) impact can only be introduced during the first year of a two-year session and can only be acted on during the second year. Therefore, the earliest effective date for a fiscal bill introduced during the 2015 session will be July 1, 2016.

The Georgia Constitution contains several provisions relating to retirement legislation which require retirement bills to be treated differently from other legislation. In Georgia, each bill having a fiscal impact on a public retirement system such as TRS must be funded in the year it is enacted. TRS members and employers contribute monthly to the retirement fund to pay for the member's retirement benefits. This "pay as you work" system ensures that future benefits are prepaid and do not depend on future appropriations. Thus, any bill that increases the liability of TRS must be funded "up front". This ensures the fiscal stability of the retirement system.

All retirement bills are sent to the State Auditor for a certificate stating whether the bill is a fiscal or a non-fiscal bill. The State Auditor's certification must be attached to the bill at the time it is introduced. If no certificate is attached when a bill is introduced, it may not be considered.

Non-fiscal bills are treated the same as any other legislation, except that such bills must be introduced in the first twenty days of either legislative session. However, a fiscal bill follows a more complex procedure.

The requirement to fund fiscal retirement bills concurrently with their enactments necessitates an actuarial study to determine the cost of the proposed legislation. The House and Senate Retirement Committees meet during the summer to determine which fiscal bills will be studied and which bills will "die in committee".

A copy of the actuarial study is attached to the bill and must travel with the bill throughout the remainder of the legislative process. After the actuarial study is completed, the bill may be amended only if the amendment reduces the cost of the bill. Any substitute or amendment must be accompanied by certificate from the State Auditors certifying whether the substitute or amendment changed the cost reflected in the actuarial study and, if so, a new actuarial study is required.

During the second year of the biennieum session, the respective committees meet again to consider the bills, this time with knowledge of the cost of each bill. From that point, movement of the legislation through the committees and full legislative bodies is similar to other bills, except for the limitation on substitution or amendment.

Finally, after a fiscal retirement bill is enacted, a specific provision must be made in the Appropriations Act for funding the legislation. If no funding provision has been made, the bill is automatically repealed.

To learn more about the Georgia General Assembly, please visit their website at www.legis.ga.gov. For updates on TRS legislation, please visit www.TRSGA.com. ⌘

FY 2016 Employee & Employer Contribution Rates

In its annual meeting held May 28, 2014, the Board of Trustees adopted the employee and employer contribution rates for FY 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). Effective July 1, 2015, the contribution rates will be:

- Employee Rate: 6.00% (6.00% for FY 2015)
- Employer Rate: 14.27% (13.15% for FY 2015)