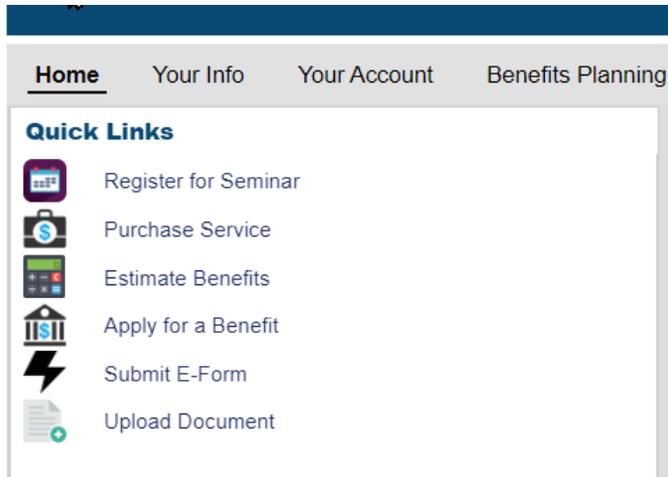


# APERSpective

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Winter 2023

## Explore the Member Self-Service Portal in 2023



Some of the things you can do from the MSS home page

A new year is upon us, and once again we have the opportunity to make new resolutions. If you haven't already created an account on the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal, we encourage you to resolve that 2023 is the year you do.

There are several things that can be done right from the home page. Do you want to know more about your retirement system and your retirement options? In the portal, you can easily sign up for one of our many online educational seminars. To learn more about our seminars, see the article on page three, "Retirement Education Online Options."

Are you curious about what your benefit would be if you retired in a few months, years, or even longer? Just use our online benefit estimator to try out different "what if" scenarios. It's a lot of fun and really gives you the information you need to properly plan for retirement.

There are many other things you can do on the MSS portal. We hope you will take a look this year!

## The Director's Corner

Happy New Year to you from APERS. While I am not one to make resolutions each year, I enjoy a fresh start and look forward to all the possibilities in 2023.

I have completed my first six months as executive director, and I am now focusing on preparing for the legislative session and working with the new Governor and General Assembly. While some may dread change, I find that it pushes me to stretch and grow, which I find refreshing. I always learn so much through the experience of change.

One of my goals this year is to expand APERS' education and outreach. I plan to personally get around the state and meet with members and retirees. If you have events in your area that would benefit from an APERS representative being present, please make us aware so we can try to participate.

I wish you all a year filled with blessings, joy, and opportunities for new and rewarding challenges!

— Amy Fecher  
APERS Executive Director

## Social Media Confidential

APERS shares content on Facebook and Twitter of importance and interest to our members. **Please note however that we do not use social media to assist members directly** due to the sensitive nature of your personal and financial data. Instead we offer members the Member Self-Service portal on our website at [www.apers.org](http://www.apers.org) for secure and confidential communications. For discussing general topics, though, we invite you to use our website's contact form – or just give us a call!

[facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS](https://www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS)  
[@ArkansasPERS](https://twitter.com/ArkansasPERS) (Twitter)

## Deferred Retirement Option Plan – Another Way to Save

If you have at least 28 years of actual service, and are considering retiring, you can participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP). (Service in a



reciprocal system can be counted toward the 28 actual years of service.)

In the DROP your retirement benefit is computed as if you retired on the date of DROP entry, and you may continue to work for a maximum of 10 years while a **percentage of your chosen benefit is deposited into an account that accrues interest**. Once you have been enrolled at least 12 months, you will receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on your DROP and retirement benefit on July 1 of each year.

This means that you can continue working and collecting your paycheck while a percentage of your retirement benefit will be placed into an account that will accrue interest.

Your DROP benefit will be computed based on the number of years of service you have accrued prior to enrolling in the DROP. If you have 28 years of service, the DROP benefit amount is 63% of your elected benefit. If you have more than 28 years of service upon entering the DROP, the contribution rate is 63% plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% for each month of service over 28 years of service, up to the maximum of 75% for 30 or more years of service.

You can stay in the DROP, saving up a percentage of your retirement benefit, for up to 10 years. You can exit the DROP at any time before that; however, you must exit after 10 years. Upon exiting the DROP you can take distribution of the money stored in your DROP account in any of the following ways:

- A lump-sum payment
- A 25-year annuity if you enrolled in DROP on or after January 1, 2018 or a lifetime annuity if you enrolled in DROP before January 1, 2018
- A rollover to an employer-sponsored retirement plan
- A rollover to an IRA

You can combine these methods however you choose. For example, you could take half of your DROP balance

## DROP offers a way to save a percentage of your future benefits while you work.

as a lump-sum payment and roll the other half into an IRA or qualified retirement plan. It's up to you. You may want to meet with a retirement counselor to help determine which method or combination of methods works best for you.

APERS also offers webinars on entering the DROP and exiting the DROP, which provide in-depth information on the DROP and answer many of the questions you may have. See the article on retirement education for more information about webinar sessions on the DROP.

Keeping our members informed  
all the time at

[www.apers.org](http://www.apers.org)

Home of the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal

 [www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS](https://www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS)

 [@ArkansasPERS](https://twitter.com/ArkansasPERS)

# Retirement Education Online Options

APERS offers a variety of retirement webinars for our members via the Zoom platform. The schedule is listed on our website – [www.apers.org/education](http://www.apers.org/education) – along with instructions for connecting with Zoom. You can register through the Member Self-Service (MSS) portal or by contacting our Call Center. Below is an overview of the webinars currently available.

## New Member Seminar

If you're a new member of APERS, you may have a lot of questions about the system, how it works, and what you can expect from APERS over the course of your career. Common questions include how members qualify for retirement, how much their benefit will be, and when they can retire. This webinar is designed to be an introduction to APERS as well as a general explanation of how the system works.

## Retirement: How Do You Get There?

This presentation is intended for members who may or may not have started planning for retirement. It is designed to help you prepare financially for the future. It will provide useful tools, ask important questions, and help you decide whether to do your own retirement planning or work with financial professionals.

**Register through the MSS portal or our Call Center can assist you.**

**(501) 682-7800 or (800) 682-7377**

## Road to Retirement Seminar

The Retirement Seminar is for any APERS member who is vested for benefits and wants to know more about the retirement system and understand what benefits and options are available for retirement. You will receive information about reciprocity, service credit purchases, the benefit formula, and retirement eligibility.

## Retirement Readiness Workshop

The Retirement Workshop is for any APERS member who is within one year of retirement and has questions about the retirement process. Workshop attendees will receive a personalized benefit estimate during this session.

## DROP Entry Workshop

The DROP Entry Workshop is for any APERS member who has interest in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) and will have at least 27 years actual



service at the time of the session (you need 28 years of actual service to enter the DROP). You will receive information about DROP eligibility, annuity options, and beneficiaries. We also provide each registered attendee with an estimate and information about the opportunity of Partial Annuity Withdrawal (PAW).

## DROP Exit Workshop

The DROP Exit Workshop is for any APERS member who is currently in the DROP and has questions about the exit process. Attendees should be within one year of exiting the DROP. Each registered attendee will receive an updated DROP projection and information about distribution options.

**[www.apers.org/education](http://www.apers.org/education)**

## Understand Your Retirement

APERS is here to assist members in all areas of pre- and post-retirement education, but ultimately each member is responsible for making their own retirement choices.

Included with your membership is access to APERS' educational seminars and our trained, experienced counselors who can explain important aspects of the system and answer any questions about your retirement options.

You should plan ahead and continue learning about retirement options throughout your career. Look over our seminar topics and attend one or more sessions that fit your needs. To help avoid any unforeseen last-minute issues, we recommend you make an appointment for a final meeting with a counselor (online or in person) six months to a year before your anticipated retirement date. A clear understanding is a great benefit to all!



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 Understand Your Retirement

## RETIREMENT AND DROP FILING DATES

Retirement Date	Earliest Filing Date	Latest Filing Date
April 1, 2023	January 3, 2023	March 2, 2023
May 1, 2023	January 31, 2023	April 3, 2023
June 1, 2023	March 3, 2023	May 2, 2023
July 1, 2023	April 3, 2023	June 1, 2023
August 1, 2023	May 3, 2023	July 3, 2023
September 1, 2023	June 5, 2023	August 2, 2023

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