

APERSpective

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Fall 2020

APERS Director's Update

As we move into fall, APERS can look back on a successful summer. We managed to transition to additional remote operations as needed while still ensuring that new enrollments into the system, new applications to retire, and current benefits were being handled in a timely manner. APERS planned and executed the transition in a fashion that was virtually undetectable for our membership. The biggest change was closing the offices to the public.

In addition to the Members Self-Service (MSS) portal, where many of the most common tasks of our membership can be handled online, APERS has put in place virtual retirement counseling and virtual retirement seminars as well. So even though our offices remain closed to the public, we feel confident we are meeting the needs of our membership during the pandemic.

*"Successfully meeting the **commitment** to our members and retirees requires us to constantly look toward the future."*

Now APERS has begun to focus on the upcoming year and the challenges we face. An area of interest is the upcoming legislative session and what we would like to see. During the fall of 2019, APERS staff participated in 11 statewide legislative town hall meetings attended by more than 2,000 individuals. The staff listened to the concerns, input, ideas, and suggestions from members and retirees regarding changes to benefits and contribution rates. This information was faithfully relayed to the APERS Board of Trustees (the Board) and incorporated into their discussions and analysis of the future of the system.

The Board has a statutory responsibility to ensure the system remains financially strong and healthy from generation to generation so that the system can meet its

commitment to providing monthly retirement benefits to its nearly 100,000 active and retired members. With the assistance of a professional investment consultant, the Board prudently manages and grows



Executive Director Duncan Baird

the investment assets of the system over time. With the assistance of a professional actuary, the Board works to make accurate assumptions and responsible preparations in order to meet future obligations. The Board has worked over the years to improve the System's financial status without changing member benefits with the understanding that change is inevitable and necessary.

Successfully meeting the commitment to our members and retirees requires us to constantly look toward the future, evaluate risks, and recommend measured changes when it's prudent. For this reason, the Board is proposing three legislative changes for the 2021 Legislative Session. These are briefly outlined in the table provided on page 3.

*"...we want to make modest adjustments to the plan to strengthen the system for the **benefit** of our members over the long term."*

Why is APERS proposing changes to the System? In a nutshell we want to make modest adjustments to the plan to strengthen the system for the benefit of our members over the long term. As of FY19, APERS is 79% funded with

(continued on page 3)

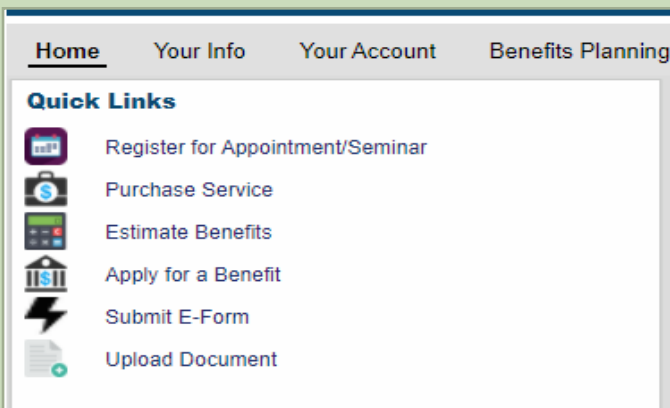
Using Members Self-Service (MSS) to Take Care of Business

At this time while APERS offices are closed to the public, the Members Self-Service (MSS) portal is especially useful. The most common tasks can be done quickly and simply.

The MSS portal is located on our website, www.apers.org. If you have not already registered as a user, we *strongly* recommend you do it now. Below are some of the most common tasks performed in MSS. If you have questions or need help with the portal, please give APERS a call or use the contact form online. We are always glad to help!

Common tasks *easily done* in the Members Self-Service (MSS) Portal

Many of the most frequently performed tasks are highlighted on the Home screen. This menu lets you register for webinars or counseling, purchase service, estimate benefits, file for retirement, and more.



You can also find your current and past years Annual Statements in your documents folder found on the Submit Forms/Documents tab.

The screenshot shows the 'Member Documents' page. It features an 'Upload Document' button and a 'Show:' dropdown menu set to 'Received & Sent'. Below is a table with columns for Archive/Unarchive, Name, Doc Received Date, Inserted Date, Type, and Description. The table lists four 'APERS Annual Statement U...' documents from 2017 to 2020.

Archive/Unarc...	Name	Doc Received Date	Inserted Date	Type	Description
Downl... Archive	APERS Annual Statement U...	08/22/2020	08/22/2020	Doc-Out	Fiscal Year 2020
Downl... Archive	APERS Annual Statement U...	08/03/2019	08/03/2019	Doc-Out	Fiscal Year 2019
Downl... Archive	APERS Annual Statement U...	08/14/2018	08/14/2018	Doc-Out	Fiscal Year 2018
Downl... Archive	APERS Annual Statement U...	10/24/2017	10/24/2017	Doc-Out	Fiscal Year 2017

Account "Inactive?" What to Do!

Members who only occasionally access their MSS accounts may find themselves locked out with their accounts "inactive." Although frustrating, this is a necessary security measure. You must log into your account at least once every 12 months, or it will automatically become locked.

Your APERS account contains critical personal information like how much you earn, how long you work, birth date, marital status, and maybe even your direct deposit accounts if you are receiving payments. We want to make sure that you and only you (and we) have access to this information.

As a result, we follow the same very strict security protocols you will find at places like banks. So if you find yourself locked out, just give us a call. We'll get you going again in no time.

A Closer Look: Your APERS ID

As part of the verification process the system will ask for your APERS ID. "Where can I find my APERS ID?" is often the next natural question. Your APERS ID can be found on your **Annual Statement** that went out in late September. It appears on the front page in the Personal Information box.



If you don't have your APERS ID handy, you can call APERS directly and we will be glad to assist you. •

New Users: Find a handy step-by-step guide to creating an account in the Members Self-Service portal on our website at www.apers.org/myguides

APERS Director's Update

(continued from page 1)

a \$2.39B Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability (UAAL). By making modest changes to the plan now, we have an opportunity to make significant progress in improving our funded ratio and reducing our unfunded liabilities over time. This would improve the financial condition of

the system and reduce the risks to the system as we go forward. While the final language is still being developed for the legislative changes listed below, it is our intention to continue discussing the proposed changes through social media and our website. We will continue to update our members and the general public as more specific language is crafted.

Proposed Legislative Changes for 2021

Benefit Provision	Description of Proposal	Group Affected
Member Contributions	Increase from 5% to 7% — 0.25% per year for 8 years.	All active members
Final Average Compensation	Increase from 3 to 5 years — The current 3-year FAC of all members would be computed and then frozen with the ultimate FAC being the greater of the frozen 3-year FAC and the ultimate 5-year FAC.	All active members
COLA	Provide a COLA based on the Lower of 3% or Consumer Price index (CPI).	New hires only



APERS Virtual Retirement Education

These are trying times to say the least. Everyone must adapt to new ways of doing things, with fewer personal interactions to take care of business. While these challenges take some effort and getting used to, the importance of making informed decisions about your retirement plans has not changed. Receiving clear, thorough, accurate information from APERS retirement counselors might be more important than ever for soon-to-be retirees.

The good news: APERS is ready. We have been helping our members electronically for years already, with tools like an

expansive website, a powerful and secure Members Self-Service portal online, and active social media sites.

New for 2020, APERS is offering webinars to small groups, featuring the same information that was provided at our seminars. See the **Retirement Education** page on the APERS website for webinar topics, the calendar, and registration information.

Also new this year, APERS counselors are video conferencing one-on-one with members by smartphone, computer, and tablet. If you feel you need a personal retirement counseling session via Zoom, please call us or use the contact form on our website.

APERS keeps you informed!

Tune in to the most up-to-date information from APERS at our webpage

<https://www.apers.org>

or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



www.facebook.com/Arkansas.PERS/



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



APERS Annual Member Statements

In late September, APERS mailed an **Annual Member Statement** to every member who earned service during fiscal 2020 (July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020).

It is very important that you review this statement carefully and let us know if you see any errors, as it contains data we will eventually use to calculate your pension when you retire.

If you haven't received a statement by October 15, you can request a duplicate. You can also download your current and past statements from the Members Self-Service portal at www.apers.org (see the MSS article on page 2).

IN THIS ISSUE: APERS Director's Update | Members Self-Service Portal | Virtual Retirement Education | Member Statements | Filing Dates

Visit us online at www.apers.org

RETIREMENT AND DROP FILING DATES

Retirement Date	Earliest Filing Date	Latest Filing Date
November 1, 2020	August 3, 2020	October 2, 2020
December 1, 2020	September 2, 2020	November 2, 2020
January 1, 2021	October 5, 2020	December 2, 2020
February 1, 2021	November 3, 2020	January 4, 2021
March 1, 2021	December 1, 2020	February 1, 2021
April 1, 2021	January 4, 2021	March 2, 2021
May 1, 2021	February 1, 2021	April 1, 2021

APERS NEWS Volume 17, Issue 4

APERSpective is published by Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System for APERS members and retirees.

APERS EXECUTIVE STAFF

Duncan Baird
Executive Director

APERS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ms. Candace Franks, Chair
Mr. Larry Walther, Vice Chair
The Honorable David Hudson
Mr. Gary Carnahan
Mr. Daryl Bassett
The Honorable Joe Hurst
The Honorable Andrea Lea
The Honorable Dennis Milligan
Mr. Dale Douthit