

Common Retirement Questions



This brochure provides answers to many common questions that members have concerning retirement processing, disbursement of retirement allowance payments, tax withholding, and other deductions.

RETIREMENT PROCESSING

When should I file my Service Retirement Application?

You may file your Service Retirement Application no sooner than 90 days before your effective date of retirement. Please note that TRS must receive your application no later than one day before your effective date of retirement.

May I make any changes to my Service Retirement Application after I file it?

You may change any of the information you included on your Service Retirement Application up to one day before your effective retirement date (or payability date, if you retired under deferred payability). However, you may change the payment option that you elected for your retirement allowance up to 30 days after your payability date.

May I file for an excess withdrawal when I retire? (Tiers I/II only)

You may request an excess withdrawal in conjunction with your retirement, regardless of when you made your last excess withdrawal. However, you must file your "Excess Withdrawal Application" (code RW74) before your effective date of retirement.

When will I receive my final excess withdrawal? (Tiers I/II only)

In most cases, a member's final excess withdrawal is processed in conjunction with the member's first retirement allowance payment.

When will I receive an explanation of my retirement allowance?

You should receive a Benefits Letter (a comprehensive statement of your retirement benefits) approximately one week before receiving your first retirement allowance payment.

What should I do if I disagree with information in my Benefits Letter?

If you disagree with any information in your Benefits Letter, or if your retirement allowance payments do not reflect the information in your Benefits Letter, you may file a "Benefits Letter Inquiry Form" (code RC1), along with a copy of the applicable page of your Benefits Letter. Please circle or underline the information that you believe needs to be corrected, explain the discrepancy, and include all supporting documentation. You may also contact TRS' Member Services Center.

DISBURSEMENT OF RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS

When and how will my retirement allowance payments be distributed?

Retirement allowance payments are issued on a monthly basis. TRS offers you the opportunity to receive your payments via Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). Alternatively, you may receive paper checks for your benefit payments; checks are mailed before the final business day of each month and are dated the last day of the month.

Retiring TRS members who are NOT currently paid on the City of New York payroll through direct deposit MUST file either an “EFT Election at Retirement Form” (code BK66) or an “Opt Out of EFT at Retirement Form” (code BK67) in order to receive their advance and/or regular retirement allowance payments. Failure to file one of these forms would result in a delay in the payment of benefits.

Please note that the “EFT Election at Retirement Form” and the “Opt Out of EFT at Retirement Form” are not available on our website. Members who are retiring should contact our Member Services Center.

What is EFT?

Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) is a payment system that enables TRS members' (or their beneficiaries') monthly benefit payments to be electronically transferred directly into a checking or savings bank account.

How can I initiate EFT at retirement?

If you are currently paid on the City of New York Payroll through direct deposit: You will be automatically enrolled to receive your monthly benefit payments (including advance payments) via EFT. You do not need to do anything; these payments will be automatically deposited to your account via EFT.

If you are currently paid on the City of New York payroll through direct deposit, but want your monthly benefit payments (including advance payments) to be deposited via EFT to a different account: You may request this by filing an “EFT Election at Retirement Form.”

If you are not currently paid on the City of New York payroll through direct deposit, but want your monthly benefit payments (including advance payments) deposited via EFT: You may request this by filing an “EFT Election at Retirement Form.”

If you do not want your monthly benefit payments paid via EFT: You may request this by filing an “Opt Out of EFT at Retirement Form.” (You may subsequently initiate EFT at any time by filing an “EFT Authorization Form” (code BK58) with TRS.)

For more details about EFT at retirement, please see the *Electronic Fund Transfer* brochure.

When will I receive my first retirement allowance payment?

It generally takes three to five months to finalize the processing of a retirement application. You will receive your first retirement allowance payment after the processing is complete. To provide you with retirement income as quickly as possible, TRS issues advance payments of your retirement allowance beginning with the payroll one to two months following your effective retirement date. However, if your regular retirement allowance is available at that time, you would receive only your regular retirement allowance instead. For more information about advance payments, please see the *Advance Payments* brochure.

Will I receive my first retirement allowance payment earlier if I submit my application earlier?

TRS processes retirement applications according to retirement date, not the date of submission to TRS. Filing your application well in advance of your effective date of retirement allows us more time to resolve any issues, but it does not guarantee that you will receive your first payment earlier.

Is my first retirement allowance payment retroactive?

Yes. Your first regular retirement allowance payment will contain the amount you are due from the date of retirement, minus the total amount of any advance payments you have received, plus interest at the annual rate of 5%.

If I elect to receive my retirement allowance payments by check, what should I do if my check is late, lost, or stolen?

If you have not received your check by the tenth business day of the following month, you must file an "Affidavit for Missing Check (and Authorization to Stop Payment)" (code BK2) as soon as possible. If you lose your check after you have received it, you must file an "Affidavit for Check Lost After Receipt (and Authorization to Stop Payment)" (code BK3). Upon receiving your correctly completed form, TRS will place a stop payment on the missing or lost check and issue you a duplicate check in approximately two weeks. If you receive or find the original check in the meantime, do not attempt to deposit it or cash it. Instead, please contact TRS' Member Services Center. If you experience difficulties receiving your checks, you may wish to consider receiving your payments through EFT (see page 2).

Can I view a record of my monthly payments online?

You may view an online record of these payments by accessing our website. You will initially be able to view payment details dating back to April 2007. Eventually, you will be able to view up to three years of payment history if you are paid via EFT; if you are paid by check, you will be able to view up to 12 months of your payment history.

Payments will be available for viewing approximately one week after the pay date.

How do I notify TRS of an address change?

You may use our website to change your address on file with TRS. Alternatively, you may file a "Member's Change of Address Form" (code DM13).

DEDUCTIONS AND WITHHOLDING TAXES

How do I make a federal tax withholding election for my retirement allowance payments?

You may make a federal tax withholding election for your retirement allowance payments online by accessing our website. Alternatively, you may file a "Withholding Certificate for Pension or Annuity Payments" (W-4P) with TRS. Your withholding election would generally take effect approximately two to six weeks after TRS receives your online W-4P filing, or approximately two months after TRS receives your paper form. Unless you elect otherwise, withholding is applied to your retirement allowance payments (and any advance payments) at the rate for a married person with three dependents. Please note that, if you have a permanent residence outside of the United States, IRS regulations prohibit you from electing to have no federal tax withheld from your retirement benefits.

Are state and local taxes withheld from my retirement allowance payments?

Your retirement allowance is exempt from New York State and New York City income taxes. However, if you live outside New York, your retirement allowance may be taxed by the state or city in which you live. Check with your financial advisor or your state tax department.

Will I receive other tax information?

TRS reports distributions made to individuals on IRS forms 1099-R and 1099-INT. These forms, which are mailed at the end of each January, will report any distributions made from your TRS account(s) during the previous year. For more information, please see the *1099 Forms* brochure.

What should I do if I have a question about deductions from my retirement allowance payments?

- Inquiries regarding health insurance coverage should be addressed to the New York City Health Benefits Program at 22 Cortlandt Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10007.
Telephone: (212) 513-0470

- Inquiries regarding union-sponsored health insurance through the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Supplementary Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) should be addressed to UFT Headquarters/SHIP, 52 Broadway, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10004.
Telephone: (212) 228-9060
- Inquiries regarding union-sponsored health insurance through the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators (CSA) Welfare Fund should be addressed to the CSA Welfare Fund, 40 Rector Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10006.
Telephone: (212) 962-6061
- Inquiries regarding union-sponsored health insurance through the Professional Staff Congress (PSC)-City University of New York (CUNY) Welfare Fund should be addressed to PSC-CUNY Welfare Fund, 61 Broadway, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10006.
Telephone: (212) 354-5230
- Inquiries regarding UFT membership dues or Committee on Political Education (COPE) deductions should be directed to UFT Headquarters, Retired Teachers' Chapter, 52 Broadway, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10004.
Telephone: (212) 780-0127
- Inquiries regarding life insurance and other benefits provided by NYSUT should be addressed to New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Member Benefits, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110.
Telephone: (518) 213-6000
(800) 342-9810

For your convenience, TRS forms and publications are available on our website.
If you require additional assistance, please contact our Member Services Center at 1 (888) 8-NYC-TRS.

*This publication should not be solely relied upon, as it is based on currently available information that is subject to change.
In all cases, the specific provisions of the governing laws, rules, and regulations prevail.*



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