



## Automatic TRS Membership for Paraprofessionals

Under a New York State law enacted on October 29, 2021, City paraprofessionals in the following titles are automatically granted membership in TRS:

- Auxiliary Trainer
- Bilingual Professional Assistant
- Educational Assistant
- Educational Associate
- Teacher Aide

The new law (Chapter 525 of the Laws of 2021) applies to paraprofessionals hired on or after October 29, 2021, as well as about 3,000 individuals who are already working in one of the above titles.

Paraprofessionals in those titles as of the enactment date are now TRS members, with a membership date of October 29, 2021. These new members do not need to take any action. TRS will contact them by letter during December with additional information about their membership, including special online information sessions.

Before the new law was enacted, paraprofessionals had the option to become members of TRS. Those paraprofessionals who previously joined TRS proactively are not affected by the new law. Their membership continues—even if they are not in one of the titles above.

TRS welcomes all of our new members and encourages all to take full advantage of TRS membership!

**Note:** Under the new law, other paraprofessional titles (such as Family Aide/Assistant/Worker) are no longer eligible for TRS membership. Paraprofessionals in those titles—if they did not join TRS already—may be eligible for membership in another New York City retirement system. However, paraprofessionals in those titles who are already TRS members will retain their membership in TRS.

## Fall 2021

[Thinking of Leaving Your Job...? / 2](#)

[Boost Your Retirement Savings / 3](#)

[TDA Contribution Limit: Going Up / 3](#)

[Keep Your Browser Updated! / 4](#)

[Review Your 2021 Annual Benefits Statement / 4](#)

[News from Albany / 4](#)

[Access Your TRS Mail Online / 4](#)

[Semiannual Investment Results / 5](#)

[Make a Clue List / 6](#)

[Learn About Your TRS Benefits / 7](#)

[Publications / 8](#)

[Calendar / 8](#)

# Thinking of Leaving Your Job Before Retirement?

While leaving a job before retirement eligibility is common, it's important to know how a separation from service will impact your retirement accounts. Your TRS membership status and plan options mostly depend on whether you are vested. Tier VI members are generally required to have 10 years of service credit to be vested. Members in earlier tiers are generally vested after five years of service credit. (Note: UFT-represented members in Tier IV who joined TRS after December 10, 2009 also need 10 years of service credit to become vested.)

Taking a leave of absence does not affect your membership rights. However, if you resign or are terminated before you can retire, it's a different situation. Below is an overview of your options based on your vesting status.

Vested Members May...	
<b>KEEP →</b>	<p>Their TRS membership until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They are eligible and ready to retire</li> <li>○ They return to active service in a TRS-eligible position                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Account balances will continue to accrue interest/investment return.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Members may become <b>Transferred Contributors</b> if they obtain employment that allows membership with another New York City retirement system within 60 days of separation of service. In this case, members keep their membership with TRS instead of a new retirement system. Members must inform both systems of this decision.</p>
<b>TRANSFER →</b>	<p>Their membership to another retirement system — if they obtain a qualifying position in public employment within New York State.</p>
<b>WITHDRAW →</b>	<p>Their retirement funds, which will effectively end their TRS membership.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Tier IV members with 10 or more years of service do not have this option.</p>

Non-Vested Members May...	
<b>KEEP →</b>	<p>Their TRS membership for seven school years after their separation date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members may purchase additional service credit that enables them to become vested.</li> <li>○ TRS membership rights expire when members do not return to active service within this timeframe. Once membership expires, all TRS funds must be withdrawn.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Members may become <b>Transferred Contributors</b> if they obtain employment that allows membership with another New York City retirement system within 60 days of separation of service. In this case, members keep their membership with TRS instead of a new retirement system. Members must inform both systems of this decision.</p>
<b>TRANSFER →</b>	<p>Their membership to another retirement system — if they obtain a qualifying position in public employment within New York State before their membership expires.</p>
<b>WITHDRAW →</b>	<p>Their retirement funds, which will effectively end their TRS membership.</p>

Before you resign, contact TRS to discuss your specific retirement options. You may also want to discuss your options with a union representative or financial advisor.

# Boost Your Retirement Savings: Join TDA

Are you interested in reducing your tax burden, compounding your investment, and securing your retirement? You can do just that with TRS' Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) Program!

## Benefit from two sources of retirement income:

1. Your guaranteed pension—from the Qualified Pension Plan, plus:
2. A supplemental account—the TDA.

Who wouldn't want more sources of income? It's the reason why nearly 100,000 TRS members have chosen to participate in TDA, our defined-contribution plan.

## Say Yes to Lower Taxes

With TDA, you contribute a percentage of each paycheck to your retirement account. TDA contributions aren't taxed until you receive them as income. So even if you invest a small percentage of your pay, you'll reduce your taxable income while you save! And the savings add up: By the time most TDA participants retire, they have an average account balance of over \$200,000!

## Enroll Now—or Increase your Contribution

The sooner you start investing in the TDA, the greater your potential income will be during retirement. As your contributions add up, interest and investment returns can compound in your account. Consider enrolling—and putting your paycheck to work.

If you already participate in the TDA Program, that's great! Consider increasing your TDA contribution rate when:

- Your pension contributions stop or decrease
- Your salary increases
- Doing so will lower your tax bracket

## Learn More About Your Choices

As a TDA participant, you can choose how much to contribute and how to invest your funds. Visit our website and take these next steps:

- **Go to the Publications section:** Read our [TDA Program Summary](#) and [Fund Profiles](#) booklets.
- **Go to the Resources section:** Use the [TDA Calculator](#). See how to reach a savings goal for the year, or how contributions will affect your take-home pay.
- **Also in the Resources section:** Sign up for the 90-minute online session, *Introduction to the TDA Program* (under [Educational Programs](#)).

Then, when you're ready to enroll in the TDA, we have a tutorial video that can help you through that secure online process.

Do yourself a favor—learn more about TDA, and start investing in your future!



## TDA Contribution Limit: Going Up

In 2022, the general limit on contributions to the TDA Program will be \$20,500, a \$1,000 increase from 2021. You may qualify to contribute even more in 2022 under two scenarios:

- *Age 50+:* additional “catch-up” contributions up to \$6,500
- *15+ years of qualifying City employment:* additional “catch-up” contributions up to \$3,000 (if you have contributed \$5,000 or less per year to TDA and have not exceeded the \$15,000 lifetime cap for this provision)

To make your maximum contribution in 2022, choose the “Full-Year, Full-Contribution Rate” when electing a TDA contribution rate on our website.

# Keep Your Browser Updated!

Using TRS' website is the best way to manage your TRS account and to obtain membership information. But, if you are using an outdated browser to visit TRS, some features of the site might not work as intended. Even worse, your username, password, and other information you enter may be more vulnerable to hackers. Keeping your browser current will help safeguard you on TRS' site.

And newer browsers also improve your device's overall security, speed, and compatibility, by:

- Fixing security holes in your browser
- Generally performing faster
- Correctly displaying websites that use new technology
- Containing new features and extensions

The browsers at right are supported on TRS' website. Whichever browser you prefer, please make sure you keep the latest version downloaded on all your devices!



Safari



Chrome



Edge



Firefox

# Review Your 2021 Annual Benefits Statement

Have you checked your Annual Benefits Statement (ABS) for 2021? TRS sent you an email in October when the statement became available for secure viewing on our website.

The ABS summarizes your Total Service Credit and account information, reports on your eligibility for benefits, and lists your designated beneficiaries as of June 30. New in this year's ABS: If you had a deficit in pension contributions as of June 30, the total deficit amount is displayed.

To view your annual statements, please log in to the secure section of our website and choose Statements. Because the ABS is one of the most important documents that TRS provides, you may want to print a copy—or save a copy to your home computer or other device.

**Note:** New members who joined TRS this school year will not have an ABS until next fall.



# News from Albany

- Earlier this year, the Governor enacted a law that closes TRS' TDA Beneficiary (TDAB) program to new participants—but does not affect existing TDAB accounts in any way. We first reported on this legislation in our Spring 2021 issue.
- Limitations on retiree earnings were reinstated for certain TRS retirees who work in public employment in New York State. The limits had previously been suspended by State executive orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see our [Fall 2021 Benefits Report](#) newsletter for details on this and other news for retirees.

# Access Your TRS Mail Online

Delays in mail delivery have been common throughout the pandemic. Keep in mind that you can access your recent TRS correspondence in the secure section of our website! Simply log in with your username and password, then click on **Documents**. You'll see a listing of the letters that TRS recently mailed to you.

TRS emails you when new correspondence is delivered to your virtual mailbox. Make sure we have your current email address on file. Also note: Account statements are shown separately, and some individualized letters cannot be displayed.



# Semiannual Investment Results: 6/30/2021

## TRS Passport Funds

TRS' Passport Funds are available to all Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) Program participants and members in Tiers I and II for a portion of their funds in the Qualified Pension Plan (QPP).

For more recent investment results, please visit our website. For more details about the Passport Funds, please review our annual *Fund Profiles* booklet.

### Annualized Investment Returns

	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year
Fixed Return Fund (TDA/UFT)*	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%
Fixed Return Fund (All Others)*	8.25%	8.25%	8.25%	8.25%
Diversified Equity Fund	43.01%	16.20%	15.74%	12.53%
Balanced Fund**	12.09%	7.13%	N/A	N/A
International Equity Fund	37.54%	10.97%	12.10	7.05%
Sustainable Equity Fund	39.55%	21.20%	18.95%	14.13%
U.S. Equity Index Fund***	47.11%	N/A	N/A	N/A
International Equity Index Fund***	36.53%	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Returns for the Fixed Return Fund are set by New York State Law. Currently, members affiliated with the United Federation of Teachers are credited with 7% annually on TDA investments in the Fund. Other members' TDA investments in the Fund, and any member's QPP investments in the Fund, are currently credited with 8.25% annually. Historical rates are published on our website. For retirees and annuitants who have Fixed Return Fund investments, the guaranteed return is factored into their monthly payments. Funds that members allocate to the Fixed Return Fund are invested with the Pension Fund.

\*\*5- and 10-year investment returns are not available for the Balanced Fund, which began on 1/1/2018.

\*\*\*3-, 5-, and 10-year investment returns are not available for the U.S. Equity Index and International Equity Index funds, which began on 1/1/2020. The 1-year returns shown above represent the actual returns of the U.S. Equity Index Fund and the International Equity Index Fund. Any difference between the returns of the U.S. Equity Index Fund and the International Equity Index Fund and that of their underlying mutual funds is due to the timing of cash flows.

### Five-Year Performance vs. Benchmarks

#### Diversified Equity Fund:



#### Balanced Fund<sup>1</sup>:



#### International Equity Fund:



#### Sustainable Equity Fund:



<sup>1</sup> As of 1/1/2018, the Bond Fund became the Balanced Fund, so no 5-year comparison is available. A 3-year comparison is shown above.

### TRS Plans

TRS offers two plans to members.

All members participate in the Qualified Pension Plan (QPP), a defined-benefit plan that is funded by employer contributions and member contributions. TRS also administers a Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) Program, a supplemental defined-contribution plan. The TDA Program is funded by member contributions.

**QPP Total Investments**  
**\$80.12 Billion\***

**TDA Total Investments**  
**\$43.02 Billion\***

\* As of 6/30/21 (unaudited)

# Don't Feel Clueless – Make a Clue List

Our world is more virtual than ever! Everything seems to require a password. We know we should NEVER write them down, but the question becomes... how can we remember all those passwords?

One solution is to create a Clue List – a password reminder. Like your password, your Clue List should never be shared. Here's how it works:

For every online account you have, you need a unique password. While the passwords should differ, try to follow the same pattern when you create each one: Use upper- and lowercase letters, a number, and at least one special character, creating a password that is at least eight characters long.

**Common special characters:** ! @ \$ % & \* +

Your password should be something only you would know and easy to remember with a clue. Let's go through a few examples:

1. **CLUE:** My favorite month, favorite number, !  
**Actual password:** October5!

The clue lists each element of your actual password without giving it away. There are upper- and lower-case letters, a number, and a special character.

2. **CLUE:** My favorite state, favorite number, &&  
**Actual password:** Maine5&&

For this example, two special characters are used to bring the password to eight characters.

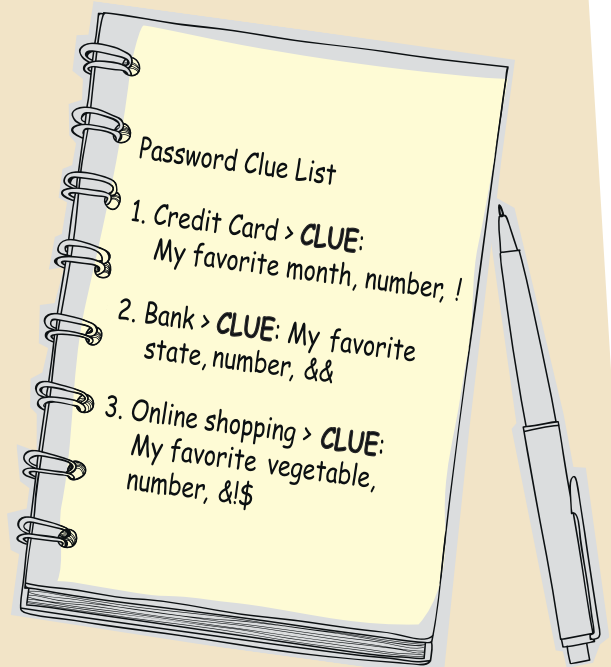
3. **CLUE:** My favorite vegetable, favorite number, &!\$  
**Actual password:** Kale5&!\$

Three different special characters are used this time.

**Tip:** Write down your Clue List, snap a picture of it, and keep a hardcopy in a safe place.

Your clues just need to help jog your memory without making it easy for others to figure out.

**Note:** Experts say that the highest-security passwords are random and complex. However, if you want to stick with passwords you remember, this strategy may help you. TRS is sharing this strategy for informational purposes only and is not making a recommendation.



# Learn about Your TRS Benefits at a Free Online Class

TRS offers educational programs throughout the year on many aspects of TRS membership. Whether you are brand-new to TRS, in the middle of your career, or close to retirement, we have something for you!

During the pandemic, we have been conducting all classes virtually, through Zoom. Advance registration is required for all sessions. Visit our [Educational Programs](#) page for class descriptions, schedules, and registration links.

Below is a sampling of what we're offering in the weeks ahead. Updates are posted regularly on our website and our [Facebook](#) page. We look forward to seeing you in class!

## Upcoming Programs for January and February 2022

### Thursday, January 6

Death Benefits Before and After Retirement  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Monday, January 10

Getting Ready for Retirement – Tier IV Part 1  
3:00 pm to 5:30 pm

### Tuesday, January 11

Getting Ready for Retirement – Tier IV Part 2  
3:00 pm to 5:30 pm

### Thursday, January 13

Understanding the Age 55 Retirement Program  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Tuesday, January 18

Final Average Salary for Tier III/IV  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Thursday, January 20

Final Average Salary for Tier VI  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Monday, January 24

Retirement Payment Options for Tiers III/IV/VI  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Tuesday, January 25

After-Retirement Earnings  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Thursday, January 27

TDA Options at Retirement  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Monday, January 31

Getting Ready for Retirement – Tier IV Part 1  
3:00 pm to 5:30 pm

### Tuesday, February 1

Getting Ready for Retirement – Tier IV Part 2  
3:00 pm to 5:30 pm

### Thursday, February 3

Understanding the Age 55 Retirement Program  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Monday, February 7

Retirement Payment Options for Tiers III/IV/VI  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Tuesday, February 8

What is Service Buyback?  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Thursday, February 10

Death Benefits Before and After Retirement  
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### Tuesday, February 22

Understanding the Age 55 Retirement Program  
9:30 am to 11:30 am

### Wednesday, February 23

Getting Ready for Retirement – Tier IV Part 1  
9:30 am to 12:00 pm

### Thursday, February 24

Getting Ready for Retirement – Tier IV Part 2  
9:30 am to 12:00 pm



Teachers' Retirement System of the City of New York  
Public Information Office  
55 Water Street, New York, NY 10041

## IN-SERVICE NEWS

Volume XXVII, Number 1

### TEACHERS' RETIREMENT BOARD

Debra Penny, Chairperson  
John Adler  
Thomas Brown  
Natalie Green Giles  
David Kazansky  
Lindsey Oates  
Scott M. Stringer

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Patricia Reilly



## Publications

The following TRS publications have recently been updated and are available on our website:

• [Fund Profiles](#)

• [Benefits in Brief \(Tier VI\)](#)

## Calendar

**January 1, 2022:** Effective date of investment election changes received by December 1, 2021.

**January 2022:** Expected distribution of 1099 forms for any distributions made from members' TRS accounts in 2021.

**February 2022:** Posting of Quarterly Account Statements for the fourth quarter of 2021.

**April 1, 2022:** Effective date of investment election changes received by March 1, 2022.

TRS offices will be closed in observance of official New York City holidays on these dates: **December 24, December 31, 2021; January 17, and February 21, 2022.** The office will also close at 1:00 p.m. on December 23.

Stay informed between issues of *In-Service News*. Follow TRS on social media.

