

Archived ERS Retirement Tips

August 2016 - Can I schedule an appointment with a Retirement System consultant?

Retirement consultations are available via the telephone or at locations throughout the state. To schedule an appointment, contact the Retirement System Call Center toll-free at (866) 805-0990. Appointments are needed for individual consultations at all sites. When visiting any of the Retirement offices, please bring photo identification and any recent Retirement System correspondence. If you require special accommodations, contact the Call Center at least two weeks in advance of your visit and a reasonable effort will be made to meet your needs. For more information on your pension benefits visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

April 2016 - Getting Service Credit for Past Military Service

Retirement and Social Security Law (RSSL) allows some veterans to obtain retirement service credit for their past military service. In most cases, adding military service to your retirement system membership would result in a permanent increase in your monthly pension benefit. For more information about getting credit for military service, including eligibility requirements and how to apply, visit the Military Service Credit section of the retirement system website. <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/military-service-credit.php>

For more information on your pension benefits call toll-free (866) 805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

April 2015 - Will I automatically start receiving my NYS pension check when I retire?

The Employee Retirement System (ERS) does not automatically start sending you pension payments when you become eligible for retirement – even if you are vested and off the payroll. You cannot receive your pension unless you file an Application for Service Retirement (RS6037). The application can be filed with ERS up to 90 days before your retirement date; however, it must be filed at least 30 days before your retirement date. Remember to have your application notarized. For more information on your pension benefits call 866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

August 2014 - You are 'vested' when you've earned enough service credit to qualify for a pension with the NYS Employees Retirement System. Members in Tiers 1 through 4 need five years of service credit to be vested; Tier 5 and 6 members must have ten years. If you leave public employment, you could be eligible for a vested benefit when you reach retirement age. You can learn more about the requirements for vested retirement benefits at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/vesting.php>. For more information on your pension benefits call 866-805-0990 or visit <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire>.

April 2014 - What is a Tier Reinstatement?

A tier reinstatement restores a membership from any of the eight New York public retirement systems that was previously terminated. With reinstatement, your service is re-credited, and your date of membership and tier restored, but your benefit may be different. Before reinstating to an earlier tier, make sure you review your options carefully. For more information on your pension benefits call 866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

November 2013 - Is there an online tool that can be used to calculate my pension benefit?

You can use the Benefit Projection Calculator on the Office of the State Comptroller's website to project what your approximate pension could be based on retirement date you choose. The calculator also projects benefit amounts under the various payment options available to you at retirement. Visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/projecting-your-pension.php to use the calculator. For more information call (866) 805-0990.

December 2012 - What is a COLA, cost-of-living adjustment?

A COLA payment is an adjustment based on the cost-of-living index that will permanently increase the retirement benefit you receive from the NYS Pension system. It is designed to address inflation as it occurs. Payments for COLA equal 50 percent of the cost-of-living index and could be as much as 3 percent, but no less than 1 percent of the first \$18,000 of your Single Life Allowance retirement benefit amount. Once COLA payments begin, they continue automatically and increase each September. To receive any COLA adjustment, you must be:

- Age 62 or older and retired for five or more years
- Age 55 or older and retired for ten or more years (mostly uniformed employees such as police officers, firefighters, corrections officers or those who retired under an incentive)
- Receiving a disability pension from the NYS Pension system for five or more years.

For more information on your pension benefits call 866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

September 2012 - Can I end my employment before retirement age and still be eligible to continue New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) coverage?

If your employment with the State ends before you reach retirement age and you vest (that is, secure rights to) your state pension, contact your agency Health Benefits Administrator (HBA) before your last day of work to see if you are eligible to continue health insurance coverage as a vestee. You must have 10 years of NYSHIP benefits-eligible service and be enrolled in NYSHIP either as an enrollee or dependent when you leave the payroll. For more information go to the Department of Civil Service website at www.cs.ny.gov or call 800-833-4344.

August 2012 - Did you have at least 50 candles on your last birthday cake?

If so, you may be eligible to request a Benefit Projection that will provide you with an estimate of your pension benefits based on a date of retirement of your choice - up to five years into the future. You can also request multiple Benefit Projections - that way you can compare how much your pension benefits would be based on different dates of retirement or using different beneficiaries. In most cases, your Benefit Projections will be mailed out to your home address the next business day. To request a Benefit Projection, call the Retirement System toll free at 866-805-0990 or visit <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire>.

May 2012 - If I work after retirement will it affect my pension retirement benefit?

If you work for a public employer after retiring, your pension benefit could be reduced or suspended. Read our publication, "Life Changes: What If I Work After Retirement?" (VO1648), before returning to work in public service at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vo1648.htm>

For more information on your pension benefits, call 866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

April 2011 - Getting Service Credit for Past Military Service

Retirement and Social Security Law (RSSL) allows some veterans to obtain retirement service credit for their past military service. In most cases, adding military service to your retirement system membership would result in a permanent increase in your monthly pension benefit. For more information about getting credit for military service, including eligibility requirements and how to apply, visit the Military Service Credit section of retirement system website.

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/members/military-service-credit.htm#section243>

For more information on your pension benefits call (toll-free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire>.

December 2010 - Will my NYS pension be subject to NYS tax?

Your NYS pension is not subject to NYS tax. But, if you are planning to move to another state after you retire, check with that state's tax department to see if your pension is taxable there. You can also visit the Retired Public Employees Association's website at www.rpea.org. There you will find a complete list of states that tax and do not tax your New York State pension. For more information on your pension benefits call 866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

August 2010 - Can I review my personal retirement system information?

The Employee Retirement System Online is a helpful tool that allows you to view your own Retirement System information – such as your contribution balance and beneficiary designations - securely on our website. To sign up for this service go to: www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/portal.htm. For more information on your pension benefits call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

April 2010 - What is the Advance Pension Retirement Check?

The Employee Retirement System (ERS) cannot get certain information, such as your employer's certification of your unused vacation and sick leave credits, until after your effective date of retirement as most employers are on a lag payroll. Because of this delay, coupled with the number of members retiring, retirees receive advance checks (partial payments) until ERS is able to finalize your benefit calculation. The maximum monthly advance is \$9,999. Advance checks are mailed to your home each month beginning approximately 30 days after the first monthly benefit is due. For example, if you retire any time during the month of April, your first advance check would be mailed the first business day in June. For more information on your pension benefits call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

December 2009 - Will I automatically start receiving my NYS pension check when I retire?

The Employee Retirement System (ERS) does not automatically start sending you pension payments when you become eligible for retirement - even if you are vested and off the payroll. You cannot receive your pension unless you file an Application for Service Retirement (RS6037). The application can be filed with ERS up to 90 days before your retirement date; however, it must be filed at least 15 days before your retirement date. Remember to have your application notarized. For more information on your pension benefits call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

August 2009 - When planning my retirement, do I need proof of my birth date?

The Retirement System must have proof of your birth date before any benefits can be paid. In most cases, a photocopy of the document is acceptable, but if you send us the original, we will return it to you. If you do not have a birth certificate, we will also accept one of the following documents:

1. Baptismal Certificate
2. Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD-214)
3. Passport
4. Naturalization Papers

The National Center for Health Statistics' website contains information for each state on where to write for vital records such as your birth certificate and the cost. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>
For more information on your pension benefits call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

April 2009 - Are you divorced and do you have a Domestic Relations Order (DRO)?

If you are divorced and agreed to or were ordered by the court to have a portion of your pension benefits paid to your ex-spouse, make sure the Office of the State Comptroller has a valid Domestic Relations Order (DRO) on file. You will also want to review the terms of the DRO. In some cases, the court may have ordered you to select an option to protect your ex-spouse. If you are in the process of divorcing, you should know that the New York State Court of Appeals has determined that your retirement benefits constitute marital property and are subject to the equitable distribution provisions of the Domestic Relations Law. Equitable distribution is the fair division of marital assets between spouses after the marriage has ended. The most commonly used equitable distribution formula provides your former spouse with one-half of your pension that was earned while you were married. For more information call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

December 2008 - Are you retiring before age 62?

Members of the NYS employee retirement system in Tiers 2, 3, & 4 in the regular retirement plan can retire as early as age 55. However, if you plan on retiring before 62, but have less than 30 years of service credit, your pension benefit will be reduced. The reduction is a percentage based on your age at retirement. If you have 30 years of service credit, your benefit will not be reduced. For more information on how early retirement can affect your benefit, refer to your plan booklet at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/index.htm#ersmembers> For more information call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit: www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

August 2008 - Is my NYS retirement pension subject to federal income tax?

After you retire, your monthly pension benefit payments are not subject to NYS taxes, but are subject to federal income tax. When you file for retirement, be sure to send a W-4P form to the NYS Retirement System so they know how much to withhold for federal taxes. If you need help deciding on your withholdings, consult with your tax advisor. You may use the tax calculator at: <http://nysosc9.osc.state.ny.us/product/wthtxclc.nsf/TaxCalcInput?OpenForm>

For a W-4P form: http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/form_w-4p.pdf

For more information call (toll free) 1-866-805-0990 or visit: www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

January 2008 - Is retirement just around the corner for you?

When you are at least 15 days and not more than 90 days from retirement, submit your retirement application (RS6037 form), along with your proof of date of birth (in most cases a photocopy is acceptable).

Mail them to: NYS Retirement System, 110 State St., Albany, NY 12244-0001. For additional information

call (toll free) 1--866-805-0990 or go to: www.osc.state.ny.us/retire. Do you need a retirement application form? Go to: http://worklife.state.ny.us/preretirement/selfhelpguide/application-for-service-retirement_rs6037.html For additional information on proof of birth: <http://worklife.state.ny.us/preretirement/selfhelpguide/ch9.html>

October 2007 - Are you 12 -18 months away from retiring?

If so, it is time to request a formal estimate of your approximate monthly pension for State service. You will need to complete a Request for Estimate form (RS6030), which can be downloaded at: <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/0.forms/rs6030.pdf> or call the Employee's Retirement System office at (toll free) 1-866-805-0990.

August 2007 - Do you have any previous public employment and/or military service?

If so, you may be eligible for additional retirement service credit. For more information, please refer to chapter 9 of the Self-Help Guide on the NYS Work-Life Services web site at: www.worklife.state.ny.us/preretirement/selfhelpguide/index.html. To apply for retirement credit for previous service, complete form RS 5042 which is available from any Employee Retirement System (ERS) office. Call ERS toll free at 1-866-805-0990 or visit the ERS web site at: www.osc.state.ny.us/retire.

May 2007 - When determining the best retirement date for you, consider choosing a date that's near the end of the month. That way, your first pension check will come with a minimum wait time.