

## **Information for PSERS Members Regarding PSERS Operations Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) has received many questions about the stay at home order's impact on PSERS ability to continue to serve its members. Rest assured, PSERS is open for business and staff are working diligently to serve members. Although physical offices and call center are closed, much of PSERS operations are back to business as usual with staff working remotely from home to communicate. Please see the below Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for answers to questions you may have.

**1. Does PSERS anticipate any delays in serving its members due to the pandemic?**

PSERS does not anticipate delays in providing services to our members for most processes. PSERS is focused on processes essential to the core mission of providing benefits to our members. Monthly benefit payments will continue to be paid each month to our retirees without interruption. There may be times, however, as we adjust to our new work environment, that some requested transactions take longer than others. Requests for retirement benefits, death benefits, and most other transactions are expected to be processed within our published [time frames](#). That being said, the processing of Refunds for terminated members may take longer than the published time frame of three to four months from receipt of all necessary information by PSERS.

**2. How can I contact PSERS?**

The call center is not currently operational, but staff are responding promptly to thousands of emails and letters that are received every week. Completed forms and documents can still be faxed (1.717.772.3860) or mailed (5 N. 5th St., Harrisburg, PA 17101) to PSERS. At this time, large group educational sessions continue to be cancelled. PSERS has transitioned its small, in-person group Retirement Exit Counseling sessions for members who are retiring to online sessions. These online counseling sessions will be conducted through the month of May.

**3. How can I get a PSERS form?**

All forms, except refund and disability applications, are available in a member's PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) account or on the PSERS website. To acquire a refund or disability application you will need to email or write to PSERS. As a reminder, you can also conduct many transactions for yourself in your [Member Self-Service \(MSS\)](#) account without needing to complete and submit a form to PSERS.

**4. I'm on a disability retirement and am scheduled for a renewal of my disability pension. How am I affected?**

All disability renewal reviews for 2020 will be deferred until 2021. PSERS recognizes that due to the COVID-19 pandemic you may be unable to get the necessary paperwork from your physician by the deadline for your renewal. As a result, PSERS has decided to defer the review of 2020 renewal applications until 2021. Additional information is provided in a notice mailed to disability annuitants. If you did not receive a notice and believe you should have, please email or write to PSERS.

**5. I'm on a disability retirement. Do I still have to file my Annual Earnings Statement?**

Yes, you must still complete and submit the Annual Earnings Statement for calendar year 2019. The deadline to file the statement has not been extended.

**6. Can I take a loan from the retirement funds I have with PSERS?**

No, neither the Defined Benefit nor Defined Contribution retirement plans within PSERS allow for loans. Under the law, we cannot allow you to receive any contributions and interest from your account without terminating all Pennsylvania public school employment. Additionally, your funds in PSERS may not be attached, assigned, or used for collateral and are excluded from the bankruptcy estate under section 541(c)(2) of the Bankruptcy Code.

**7. Have there been any changes in the process of retiring from PSERS during this pandemic?**

PSERS is still processing paperwork it receives per our normal process. At this time, PSERS is not meeting with members in person and the call center is currently closed. PSERS, however, is responding to emails and written correspondence. All forms except refund and disability applications are available in a member's PSERS Member Self-Service (MSS) account or on the PSERS website. Members considering retirement within the next 12 months should still request a PSERS staff-prepared estimate and attend a Retirement Exit Counseling session. PSERS' in-person Retirement Exit Counseling sessions have been cancelled due to facility closures, but these sessions will now be conducted online through the month May.

Large group educational sessions (Foundations for Your Future Seminars) are temporarily cancelled in the interest of reducing possible exposure, but members may view the presentation slides and overview on the PSERS website at [FFYF Presentation](#).

**8. If I am retiring at the end of the school year, what will my date of retirement be?**

Your last day of employment will be the last day you would normally work in the school year. If a school does extend its school year, then your last day of employment for the school year will reflect that extension.

**9. I have a meeting scheduled with a PSERS representative. I know that many of the Retirement Exit Counseling sessions that PSERS conducts as part of the retirement process are conducted in public facilities. With many facilities being closed, what should I do to receive counseling?**

If you are planning to retire soon, you should contact PSERS by email using our [PSERS online contact form](#) to schedule a PSERS counseling session or to check on the status of a session that you are attending. At this time, the sessions scheduled for April and May will be held through online webinars.

**10. Many of the Retirement Exit Counseling sessions that PSERS conducts as a part of the retirement process are conducted in schools. With schools being closed, what should employees be told?**

Employees should contact PSERS using our [PSERS online contact form](#) to scheduling a PSERS counseling session or to check on the status of a session that they are attending. At this time, the sessions scheduled for April will be held through online webinars. The Retirement Exit Counseling Sessions scheduled for May may be conducted online or in-person. Additional information will be posted.