

Welcome

*Welcome to*  
Maine Public Employees  
Retirement System

*A Guide for*  
*New Members*



August 2010

maine **PERS**  
Public Employees  
Retirement System

[mainepers.org](http://mainepers.org)



## *Welcome!*

Whether you are beginning your career in public service, or worked previously for an employer covered under the retirement system, we welcome your membership and look forward to serving your benefit needs.

Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS) administers the following benefits to eligible employees:

- Retirement Plans
- Group Life Insurance
- Disability Retirement

This brochure gives an overview of your retirement, group life insurance, and disability retirement programs. For more detailed information about the benefit provisions described in this brochure, please refer to your plan specific booklets, available online at [www.mainebers.org](http://www.mainebers.org) (See Publications). You may also contact MainePERS directly.

## Who We Are

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Since 1942, Maine Public Employees Retirement System (MainePERS) has helped public employees prepare for retirement. The System's 53,000 contributing members include teachers, state, county, and municipal employees, legislators, judges, and those who work for other public entities. In addition to our active members, more than 35,000 public sector retirees and their beneficiaries receive monthly benefits from the System. We also offer a group life insurance program to more than 45,000 participants statewide.

The System's Board of Trustees is responsible for the operation of the System. The eight member board includes members, retirees, and other experts in retirement, investment, and finance. The Board contracts with national actuarial and investment experts who assist the Board to manage the System's more than \$9 billion in assets.

## Contact MainePERS

### Phone

Main: 207-512-3100  
Toll-Free: 1-800-451-9800  
TTY: 207-512-3102

### Fax

207-512-3101

### Mail

Maine Public Employees  
Retirement System  
46 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0046

### Website

[www.maineopers.org](http://www.maineopers.org)

### Building Location

Located at 96 Sewall Street  
in Augusta, Maine,  
it is the large blue tile and glass  
building on the corner of  
Capital and Sewall Streets.

### Business Hours

8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Monday - Friday

### Retirement Services

State Employee, Legislative  
or Judicial Members  
(207) 512-3158

### Teacher Members

(207) 512-3158

### Participating Local District (PLD) Members

(207) 512-3158

### Employer Services

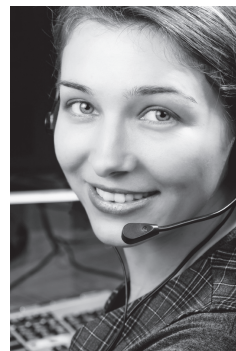
(207) 512-3200

### Survivor Services

(207) 512-3244

### Disability

(207) 512-3170



Please provide your full name on all faxes and letters.

## Highlights of Your MainePERS Benefits

### Retirement

#### Defined Benefit Plan



A Defined Benefit (DB) pension plan guarantees you an income after you retire, based on your years of service, level of compensation, and your age at retirement. As a member, you contribute a percentage of your earnings to MainePERS, and these contributions earn interest at a rate set by the MainePERS Board of Trustees. The amount you contribute depends on your membership plan.

#### *Key Advantages of Your Defined Benefit Plan*

- Your age, three highest years of salary, length of service, and a multiplier (for example, 2% for each year of service) determine your benefit. Your benefit isn't affected by the ups and downs of investment returns.
- When you retire you may choose one of many options offering a lifetime benefit.
- Early Vesting - You are vested after only five years of service. Being vested means that you have earned enough creditable service to allow you to receive a monthly benefit upon retirement at the normal retirement age under your plan. Being vested protects your pension coverage even if you decide to leave your MainePERS-covered position.
- Death Benefits - As a member, benefits are available to your survivors if you die before retirement.
- Sound Investment Policies - The System's assets are managed, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, by investment professionals experienced in advising large financial institutions.



Recognizing that sound financial planning includes additional retirement savings, we offer Participating Local District and Teacher\* members both

a defined contribution and deferred compensation plan. These plans offer members a way to supplement their income during retirement by making tax-deferred contributions into appropriately diversified mutual funds. The contributions and earnings in these plans determine the benefit available at retirement.

When saving for retirement, the most important success factors are how much you save, and how early you start saving. The MaineSTART defined contribution program takes the guesswork out of investing.

\* Requires PLD employer participation in MainePERS.

### *The Advantages of Pre-Tax Savings – Getting Uncle Sam on Your Side!*

	<b>Taxable Savings Account</b>	<b>MaineSTART Retirement Plan Account</b>
Annual Income	\$40,000	\$40,000
Plan Contribution (pre-tax savings)	\$0	\$4,000
Federal Income Tax	\$6,810	\$5,810
Maine Income Tax	\$2,167	\$1,835
Other Deductions (Social Security/Medicare)	\$3,061	\$3,061
After-tax Investment	\$4,000	\$0
<b>Take-home Pay</b>	<b>\$23,962</b>	<b>\$25,294</b>



**FOR MORE INFO**

For additional information on the MaineSTART program, visit [www.mainestart.org](http://www.mainestart.org) or contact MainePERS at 207-512-3176; toll-free 1-800-451-9800.

## Group Life Insurance

The MainePERS Group Life Insurance program is available to all State and teacher members, and to eligible PLD employees whose employers participate in the program.

### Enrollment and Premium Payment

You enroll by completing the Group Life Insurance Application. If you are paying the premium, your employer will withhold it from your pay and forward to MainePERS. If you apply for group life coverage within the first 31 days of becoming eligible, you may select coverage for yourself and your dependents without having to show evidence of insurability.


### Coverage Levels

You may choose basic and supplemental coverage on yourself, and dependent coverage for your eligible dependents. Basic coverage is equal to your annual gross compensation rounded up to the next one thousand dollars. Supplemental coverage is available at one, two or three times your basic coverage. Basic insurance also includes Accidental Death and Dismemberment coverage. Dependent coverage allows you to choose up to \$10,000 of coverage on your spouse and up to \$5,000 on each child depending on their age and marital status.

### Beneficiary(ies)

You may change your life insurance beneficiary as often as you wish by filing a written request with MainePERS. Designation of Beneficiary forms are available from your payroll personnel, the Forms section of our website, or by calling MainePERS. In order for a change of beneficiary form to be valid, it must be received at MainePERS, or postmarked, prior to your date of death.

#### **FOR MORE INFO**



For additional information on the Group Life Insurance program, visit [www.mainebers.org](http://www.mainebers.org) (See *Benefits and FAQ* sections). Inquiries may be directed to MainePERS Survivor Services Unit (207) 512-3100, toll-free 1-800-451-9800 or TTY at (207) 512-3102.

## Disability

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One of the benefits available to you as a member of MainePERS is the disability retirement program. Eligible members with a long-term disability receive an income benefit and continue to accrue creditable service until they are able to return to employment.

### Who is Eligible

Members must show that they have a permanent mental or physical incapacity that makes it impossible for them to perform the duties of their employment position, or another position of comparable stature and compensation offered to them by the employer. In addition, MainePERS looks to see whether there are modifications that would allow the applicant to perform the duties of the employment position. A list of eligibility requirements is available in the Disability section of our website.



#### **FOR MORE INFO**

For additional information on the Disability program, visit **www.maineopers.org** (See *Benefits and FAQ sections*). Direct inquiries to MainePERS Disability Unit at (207) 512-3100, toll-free 1-800-451-9800 or TTY at (207) 512-3102.

## Learning More About Your Benefits

### Member Booklets

These are available in the Publications section on our website --they provide a more detailed description of benefits available under your plan (State, Teacher, Participating Local District, Legislative or Judicial).

### Newsletter

MainePERS publishes “MainePERSpective” several times a year. This newsletter is a good source of information for members, employers and retirees.

### Member Statements

MainePERS sends annual Member Statements to most members. The statement shows the amount of retirement service credit, retirement plan, normal retirement age, known purchasable service, as well as current beneficiary information. The Member Statement information can help you plan for your own retirement.

### New Employee Orientation

Many employers sponsor orientation for new employees and invite MainePERS to present information about the Retirement System. This is a good opportunity to learn more about the benefits and services of MainePERS membership.



## MainePERS Web Site

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[www.maineopers.org](http://www.maineopers.org)

Our website is designed to provide members, retirees, participating employers, and other interested parties information about membership in the Retirement System and a general understanding of the functions of MainePERS. The site is particularly helpful for new members!

Navigating through the site you will find:

- ✓ [Publications](#)
- ✓ [Laws and Rules](#)
- ✓ [Downloadable Forms](#)
- ✓ [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ✓ [Newsletters](#)
- ✓ [Member Booklets](#)
- ✓ [Employer Updates](#)
- ✓ [Retirement Legislation](#)

Also included are a number of links to websites maintained by other entities that we think may be of interest for retirement planning purposes.

**Note:** There are a number of forms available on the site that can be easily downloaded and printed. Some forms are available as a fillable option, where members can complete online, print, and then mail to MainePERS (submission online is not available at this time).



## Additional Information

### Q & A

**Q: How do I notify MainePERS when my address changes?**

A: You may call or notify us in writing of a change in address. There is also a “Member/Benefit Recipient Data Update” form (MM-0002) available in the Forms section on our website for your completion and submission if desired.

**Q: Can I find out how much money I have put into the Retirement System and/or how much creditable service time I have on record?**

A: Yes. Call or write MainePERS to request this information and we will send you a Statement of Account showing how much money you have put into the Retirement System and a statement of your creditable service. You will need to give your name and social security number when you call. If you are thinking about taking a refund of your own contributions, you will want to make sure you understand the value of what you would be giving up. We can answer your questions.

**Q: Can I buy time toward my retirement and receive additional service credit?**

A: The law identifies a number of categories of service (e.g. military service, refunded time, work in another state) which you may be eligible to purchase to earn additional MainePERS service credit, provided you meet eligibility requirements. For more information, visit the Publications section of our website and click on the member handbook for your plan.

*continued on next page*

**FOR MORE INFO**

Visit the FAQ section at [www.maineopers.org](http://www.maineopers.org) for a comprehensive list of Q&As. We are also available to answer your questions during business hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) at 512-3100 or toll free 1-800-451-9800.



## Q & A *(continued)*

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### Q: Are there points when I should contact MainePERS?

A: Yes! Certain events in your life may affect your retirement or beneficiary designations. Please notify us when these events occur:

- termination of employment
- change in marital status
- death of a (covered) spouse or dependent
- employment status change
- change in beneficiary
- change in group life insurance coverage

*Note: To ensure that all information is up-to-date, we suggest that members periodically review their Designation of Beneficiary forms for both pre-retirement death benefits and Group Life Insurance.*

## MainePERS and Social Security

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If you are eligible to receive Social Security retirement benefits either because you worked in a Social Security covered job or because your deceased spouse did, the amount of your Social Security benefit may be affected if you receive a MainePERS benefit.

The Social Security provisions that could affect you are the windfall elimination provision (Social Security benefits from your own work) and the government pension offset (Social Security benefits as a spouse or widow(er)).

For information about how receiving a MainePERS benefit could affect your Social Security benefits, contact SSA directly at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). You can locate the SSA office nearest you by referring to your local phone book under "United States Government - Health and Human Services". Though we recommend that you work with a Claims Representative from your local SSA office, you can contact SSA via their national toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213.

## Health Insurance

MainePERS does not handle any health insurance program. All questions regarding health insurance should be directed to the administrators of the various health insurance programs under which members are covered. These are listed below for your convenience.

### Program Administrators for health insurance:

State Employees: State Employee Health (1-800-422-4503)

Teacher Members covered through Maine School Management Association (1-800-660-8484)

Teacher Members with Anthem/Blue Cross (1-888-399-8706)

Teacher Members without Anthem/Blue Cross, whether or not under MSMA, should request assistance from their school administrative unit employer.

PLD employees: Check with your payroll department

### Dental insurance inquiries should be directed to the organization that provides your coverage:

State Employees: Northeast Delta Dental (1-800-832-5700)

Maine Municipal Association (1-800-452-8786)

Maine School Management Association (1-800-660-8484)

Blue Cross/Blue Shield (1-800-322-9808)

Telephone numbers are as of 1/2009.

#### **FOR MORE INFO**

Visit the FAQ section at [www.maineper.org](http://www.maineper.org) for a comprehensive list of Q&As. We are also available to answer your questions during business hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) at 512-3100 or toll free 1-800-451-9800.









46 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0046  
Telephone: (207) 512-3100  
Toll-free: 1-800-451-9800  
Fax: (207) 512-3101  
TTY: (207) 512-3102

[www.mainebers.org](http://www.mainebers.org)