



THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

Do Your Homework Before You Decide to Leave Your Job.

Are you thinking about retiring? If so, think about your age, savings, and health before you make the transition into retirement. Don't forget to do some much needed homework as well.

When you start considering retirement, countless questions will arise. Get the answers you need in order to be properly prepared to ensure you are making the best decisions with respect to your retirement plans. Planning for retirement can be exhausting and overwhelming and for many, that can lead to avoiding research and hoping that everything will simply work out the way it should.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR RETIREMENT PLANNING:

There are many resources available at your fingertips to help you get the answers you need before deciding to retire. Below are some of the best resources available to PS&T employees and PEF members:

The DIRECTIONS: Pre-Retirement Webinars/Seminars: (oer.ny.gov/pre-retirement-planning-information)

Pre-Retirement Seminars are not being held live at this time. Instead, full-day webinars are being held through WebEx, with the Deferred Compensation and New York State & Local Retirement System webinars on Tuesday, and the Social Security and New York State Health Insurance webinars on Wednesday. Contact your agency liaison (oer.ny.gov/directions-pre-retirement-seminarwebinar-session-contact-information) to learn how to enroll or visit Office of Employee Relations (OER) online (oer.ny.gov). Seminar participants receive a *Self-Help Guide to Pre-Retirement Planning for New York State Employees* that is also available for download (oer.ny.gov/self-help-guide-pre-retirement-planning-new-york-state-employees).

Three of the power point presentations used during the seminar/webinar are available for download.

- New York State Health Insurance Program (oer.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/02/health-insurance-ny-ship-powerpoint-2022_0.pdf)
- New York State Deferred Compensation (oer.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/02/nys-deferred-compensation-powerpoint-2022_0.pdf)
- Social Security (oer.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/02/social-security-2020-nys-goer-passed.pdf)

The DIRECTIONS: Pre-Retirement Planning program was developed to assist eligible New York State employees in planning for one of the most challenging and exciting periods in life—retirement! New York State offers its Executive Branch employees pre-retirement planning information through both online resources, workshops, and the DIRECTIONS seminars. The seminars, designed for employees who are at least 50 years of age and eligible to retire within five years, provide information on planning and the benefits available to state retirees. Due to the great demand, and when the seminars are offered, seating is usually limited and employees may only attend one time in their career.

OER conducts full-day DIRECTIONS Pre-Retirement Seminars around the State. When seminars are available once again, the website will be updated and you will be able to contact your agency liaison to learn how to enroll, or you can visit OER online (oer.ny.gov).

DIRECTIONS is sponsored by OER and the Office of the State Comptroller, with funding provided by the collective bargaining agreements between the State of New York and the public employee unions: CSEA, PEF, UUP, NYSCOPBA, GSEU, Council 82, and DC-37. OER contributes on behalf of management/confidential employees.

RETIREMENT SYSTEM: (osc.state.ny.us/retirement)

Retirement Planning Resources:

The Office of the New York State Comptroller's website has resources available for retirement planning, including a *5 Step Plan for Retirement* (osc.state.ny.us/retirement/members/planning). There, you will also find a Benefit Projector Calculator (The benefit projection calculator will project benefits for most Employees' Retirement System members in Tiers 1, 2, 3 and 4, and most Police and Fire Retirement System members in Tiers 1 and 2.) that will help you estimate your pension based on the information you enter (osc.state.ny.us/retirement/members/estimate-your-pension). Most Tier 2–6 members can now use Retirement Online (web.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirement_online/customers.php) to create a NYSLRS pension estimate based on the salary and service information on file for you.

In addition, the Office of the New York State Comptroller conducts pre-retirement consultations (osc.state.ny.us/retirement/members/pre-retirement-consultations). Most pre-retirement consultations are being conducted by phone. A phone consultation provides answers to the same questions you can ask at an in-person consultation, but on a more flexible schedule, without the need for you to travel. In-person consultations are available in Albany, Buffalo, and Hauppauge. You will need an appointment for a consultation. To schedule one, please call toll-free (866) 805-0990.

RETIREE HEALTH CARE:

Health care during your retirement years can be a major expense. Understanding and preparing for your health care coverage and costs is a critical part of retirement planning.

1) **Department of Civil Service:** (cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/login/index-retiree.cfm)

At the Department of Civil Service on the NYSHIP website, you will find information on the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) for State and Local Government retired enrollees. Some health insurance-related questions that you that you should consider include:

- Can I continue my NYSHIP coverage in retirement?
- Will I be able to stay in the same plan I have now, if I move out of NYS?
- When do I need to enroll in Medicare?
- Will I be able to use my sick leave to offset the cost of my coverage as a retiree?
- What will happen to my dental and vision care coverage when I retire?

For answers to these and other questions regarding your health, dental, and vision care coverage in retirement, start by visiting NYSHIP Online. (cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/group/5/19/1). You may also download the publication: *Planning for Retirement: Health Insurance Coverage & Other Related Benefits in Retirement* (cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/hba/shared/publications/retirement/2022/PE_Planning_For_Retirement_2022.pdf).

2) Visit **Retirement Online** (web.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirement_online/customers.php#retirees) to find

information and links to important resources that will help you prepare for retirement. You can:

- View your benefit information
- Update your contact information
- View or update your beneficiaries
- Generate a verification of income letter

3) Your **HBA**

As an active employee, your HBA is your primary source for benefit information. Before retiring, meet with your HBA to discuss all of the information you need regarding health insurance in retirement, including:

- Eligibility requirements for continuing health insurance coverage as a retiree (and whether you meet the requirements)
- Whether your current health insurance plan will meet your health care needs during retirement.
- When to enroll for Medicare coverage.
- Whether you can continue your existing dental and vision coverage.
- How to calculate the dollar value of your sick leave credits.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED:

Download the NYSHIP General Information Book for more information (cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/pa-market/shared/publications/general-information-book/2022/pa-gib-2022.pdf)

Will I be able to stay in the same plan I have now if I move out of NYS?

If enrolled in a NYSHIP HMO and you move out of NYS, you must change to the Empire Plan.

The Empire Plan is available to all NYSHIP enrollees regardless of where they live or work in retirement. Coverage is worldwide. However, you should carefully review the list of network providers in the area where you plan to retire, as The Empire Plan does not offer in-network providers in all 50 states. If you move out of NYS, there may be no in-network providers within a reasonable distance of where you reside.

NYSHIP enrollees with retiree benefits can change health plan options once during any twelve-month period. This offers greater flexibility than the Option Transfer Period for active employees, which takes place each year in the fall.

When do I need to enroll in Medicare?

Three months prior to your 65th birthday, the Employee Benefits Division (EBD) of the NYS Department of Civil Service will send you a letter with information regarding Medicare and how it works with NYSHIP, as well as a booklet entitled, Medicare & NYSHIP. This booklet explains when Medicare eligibility begins; when Medicare becomes primary (pays first) to NYSHIP; and when you **MUST** have Medicare Parts A and B coverage in effect to avoid a reduction in your overall benefits. You will receive this letter even if you are still an active employee.

As an active employee, if you or your dependents are eligible for Medicare, it is usually secondary to (pays after) NYSHIP coverage. Although you are not required to enroll in Medicare, EBD recommends that all individuals enroll in Part A when first eligible because there is typically no premium cost for Part A and timely enrollment should prevent individuals from incurring the Medicare late enrollment penalty. EBD further recommends that these individuals defer enrolling in Part B when first eligible because there is a premium cost for Part B.

Under NYSHIP rules, you and your dependents must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B when first eligible for

Medicare coverage that is primary (pays first) to NYSHIP. For most enrollees and dependents who are already 65 at the time of their retirement, Medicare will become the primary coverage on the first day of the month following the end of the 28-day run-out period for coverage as an active employee. Check with your HBA to find out the exact date that your active employee coverage ends. It is important to enroll in Medicare on a timely basis. For more information, see Medicare and NYSHIP.

Will I be able to use my sick leave to offset the cost of my coverage as a retiree?

You may be able to use the value of your unused sick leave to pay for all or part of the cost of your health insurance during retirement. The actuarial value of your unused sick leave hours is converted to a monthly dollar value. The result is a lifetime monthly sick leave credit, used to reduce your share of the monthly NYSHIP premium, as long as you are enrolled in NYSHIP.

You are only eligible for the sick leave credit if you retire directly from Active Employment, Leave Without Pay status, Preferred List coverage, or if you are approved for disability retirement retroactive to your last date of employment. This credit will not apply if you are in vested status or after retiring from vested status. To obtain an estimate of your sick leave credit, visit NYSHIP Online (cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits/login).

What will happen to my dental and vision benefits?

Dental Insurance for Retiring State Employees

As a state employee, the dental plan you may be receiving today, is not part of your health insurance and does not automatically continue when you retire. As you prepare to retire, you must decide what dental coverage you will select for your retirement coverage. You have the opportunity to continue your COBRA coverage, however, once that coverage ends, you have two choices, Emblem Health Direct Payment Plan, or Sun Life Dental through PEF Retirees.

The Sun Life Financial Dental Plan

As a PEF Retiree member, you may choose to participate in dental coverage through Sun Life Financial. If you are not yet a PEF Retiree, you must first join PEF Retirees by completing the PEF Retiree enrollment form (pefmbp.com/files/retiree_pension_deduction_form.pdf).

To help you decide what dental plan you prefer, Emblem Health Direct or Sun Life Dental, view the comparison chart (pefmbp.com/files/dental_vision_options_retiree.pdf).

Information on COBRA & Emblem Health

Important Notice: PEF, PEF Retirees, and PEF MBP are not responsible for administering COBRA nor Emblem Health Dental Coverage. Please direct all your questions to the appropriate provider.

COBRA

If you receive your dental plan through the state, your dental plan will end 28 days after the last day of the last payroll period in which you worked. COBRA information will be mailed to you directly, once you come off payroll.

If you retire prior to the age of 65, your COBRA plan continues for 36 months or until age 65 (whichever comes first). At the end of the 36 months, you can convert to a direct-pay conversion contract with Emblem Health Retiree Preferred Plan (formerly GHI), enroll in the PEF Retirees dental plan, or search for a plan through another provider. For information on COBRA, contact NYS Civil Service at (800) 833-4344.

Emblem Health Retiree Preferred Plan

For information on the Direct Payment Plan through Emblem Health Retiree Preferred Plan, call (800) 947-0101.

Some other things to remember:

- ✓ If you retire with a loan from the Retirement System, it will diminish your potential pension forever.
- ✓ If after getting Medicare, you also choose to purchase a Medicare Advantage Plan, you will lose your State Health Insurance as your secondary Insurance.
- ✓ By joining the PEF Retirees, you can take advantage of the PEF Retirees dental and vision plans, as well as the more than 250 different product benefits that PEF MBP offers, including: Financial Planning benefit, the Voluntary Legal Service Plan, Connect America, CarePatrol, Members Mortgage Corp., Dignity Memorial Funeral benefit, discounted ticket offers for theme and water parks, movie tickets, e-gift cards, performing arts, sporting events, and much more. Visit pefmbp.com for benefit details.

Join PEF Retirees: pefmbp.com/pef-retirees/join-renew-pef-retirees

PEF MBP Retiree Benefit Guide: pefmbp.com/files/Brochures/PEF_RetireeGuide.pdf

Important Phone Numbers & Website Sites:

- PEF Membership Benefits Program: pefmbp.com • (800) 767-1840
- PEF Retirees: pefretirees.org • (800) 342-4306, ext. 288
- NYS Retirement: osc.state.ny.us/retirement • (866) 805-0990 • (518) 474-6612
- NYS Civil Service: cs.ny.gov • (800) 833-4344 • (518) 457-2487
- NYSHIP for specific health insurance information for retirees: cs.ny.gov/employee-benefits • (877) 769-7447
- NYS Deferred Compensation: nysdcp.com • (800) 422-8463
- Social Security: ssa.gov/ny • (800) 772-1213
- Medicare: medicare.gov/index • (800) 633-4227



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