

# RETIREMENT MATTERS

SPRING 2023

KAREN ALDER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- HOW DOES MEDICARE WORK?
- DECONSTRUCTING THE PENSION PAY ADVICE
- PENSION PAY ADVICE
- WHAT DOES CRS DO?
- PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD
- CRS TEAM NEWS
- FEDERAL TAX WITH-HOLDING
- DO I NEED A POWER OF ATTORNEY?
- REPORTING A DEATH
- CROSSWORD PUZZLE
- CRS FEEDBACK

city of  
**CINCINNATI**  
RETIREMENT

THE CINCINNATI RETIREMENT SYSTEM (CRS) WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1931 AND EXISTS TO ADMINISTER PENSION BENEFITS FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED CITY OF CINCINNATI EMPLOYEES. CRS IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR RETIREMENT GROUPS.

## CONTACT US:

CINCINNATI CITY HALL  
801 PLUM STREET, SUITE 328  
CINCINNATI, OH 45202

P 513-352-3227  
F 513-352-1520

EMAIL:  
Retirement@cincinnati-oh.gov

WEBSITE:  
cincinnati-oh.gov/Retirement

## HOW DOES MEDICARE WORK?

Medicare can be complicated. All CRS Members should enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B when they turn 65. CRS will send a reminder letter three months before you turn 65.

### What Does Medicare Cost?

Part A (Hospital Insurance): The cost for your Part A premium is generally \$0. The fee is defrayed by Medicare taxes you paid while working. If your Part A premium cost is not defrayed because you never paid into Medicare taxes, your spouse's work history may qualify you for \$0 Part A. Make sure to ask Social Security. For those who do not qualify for \$0 Part A, through their own work history or a spouse's work history, they will be permitted to enroll in the CRS Medicare Advantage plan with a Medicare Part B-only card.

Part B (Medical Insurance): The cost for your Part B premium is \$164.90/month - or higher depending on income. Your Part B premium is paid directly to the Social Security Administration. It can come out of a SSA check if you are entitled to receive one or it can be submitted to SSA from your bank account. Each person is responsible for making their own payment arrangements with Social Security.

### How Do I Enroll in Medicare?

Most people sign up for both Part A and Part B when they turn 65. (Exception: Working people do not need to sign up until they retire, regardless of age.) The 7-month window for enrolling into Medicare includes the three months before, the month of, and three months after your 65th birthday. If you fail to sign up during that 7-month window, you may be required to pay a lifetime penalty on top of the premium cost. Based on the current lengthy wait time for meeting with Social Security, you should begin the enrollment process in the first month of your 7-month enrollment window.

- Sign up online for your My SS account at <https://www.ssa.gov>
- Call SSA at 1-800-772-1213
- Visit your local SSA Office at 550 Main Street (downtown Cincinnati) or 10205 Reading Road (Sharonville)

Once your Medicare Card is received, please send a copy to Cincinnati Retirement System. This will trigger your transition into the CRS Medicare Advantage program. Remember: You can only be in one Medicare Advantage plan at a time. If you enroll in another Medicare Advantage plan you will automatically get kicked off the Cincinnati Retirement System Medicare Advantage plan.

### What is Medicare Advantage?

Qualifying CRS retirees and dependents 65 or older are enrolled in the CRS Medicare Advantage plan which is administered by Anthem and CVS. Medicare Advantage (also called Medicare Part C) is Medicare and is administered by an insurance company with a physician network and pharmacy benefits. It is intended to be similar to the plan CRS Members had while employed by the City.

### Where Can I Get Help with Navigating Medicare?

Call **Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP)** at 1-800-686-1578.



## DECONSTRUCTING THE PENSION PAY ADVICE

Every month you should receive a mailed “check stub” for your pension. The information contained in this pay advice represents some of Cincinnati Retirement System’s most frequently asked questions. We call it the Pension Pay Advice.

### Who gets a Burial Benefit?

- Only CRS Members who retired on or before July 2011 are eligible for the \$5000 burial benefit.
- The Collaborative Settlement discontinued the burial benefit for those retiring after July 2011.
- Not everyone who retired from CRS is entitled to a burial benefit.

### When do I receive my next pension increase?

Your next COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) date is listed as *Next COLA Date* in the upper left-hand corner.

### How much is my COLA increase?

- The 3% simple COLA rate became effective on 1/1/2016. This amount is added to your pension annually once you’ve completed the required COLA suspension (no increases for three years in a row).
- You can calculate the amount by multiplying .03 times the number noted in the *Retirement Benefit Overview* section of the Pension Pay Advice, or you can call CRS.
- The COLA amount is the same every year and will not change.

### How much am I paying in State and Federal taxes?

- Your pension pay advice will show total taxes withheld in the *Benefit Summary* section just below your address.
- Individual amounts of State tax and Federal tax are listed in the *Benefit Detail* section located further down the lefthand side.

### When did I retire?

Your retirement date is shown as *Benefit Effective Date* in the *Retirement Benefit Overview* section, located in the upper left side.

### Where is my pension getting Direct Deposited?

- The banking information you provide allows CRS to electronically transfer your pension funds.
- An abbreviated description of the bank account you selected is listed halfway down the right side of your Pension Pay Advice.
- If you require changes, please contact CRS for the necessary form.

### Why don’t I see all my burial beneficiaries listed?

- The printing space for the Pension Pay Advice is limited and will only show up to four different names.
- We keep your beneficiary designations on file and you can call anytime to confirm who is listed.

### What kind of healthcare am I enrolled in?

- All your healthcare coverage is listed on the back of the Pension Pay Advice.
- You can see who is covered by name and which types of coverage they are receiving.
- If you see a blank space, it indicates coverage you are NOT receiving.
- Open Enrollment takes place every Autumn and allows eligible pensioners the opportunity to make changes to their coverage.

### Why am I not receiving this monthly Pension Pay Advice?

The most likely reason you are not receiving the monthly Pension Pay Advice is because CRS does not have your current address. Please call our office at 513-352-3227 to get that information updated.

Pay Date: 05/01/2023  
 Benefits Payable for: 04/2023  
 Next COLA Date: 10/09/2023



Date your pension is sent to you.

Month for which you are being paid.

Date you are due to receive your next increase.

Direct questions to: retirement@cincinnati-oh.gov or call 513.352.3227

John Doe  
 1234 Main Street  
 Cincinnati, OH 45227

Your address on file with CRS

If this says "Option", your pension continues after your death. If it says "Single Life" your pension ends upon your death.

Person who receives your pension upon your death.

**BENEFIT SUMMARY**

	CURRENT	YTD
<b>NET BENEFIT PAID</b>	<b>\$4,072.60</b>	<b>\$12,053.53</b>
GROSS BENEFIT	\$4,459.32	\$13,398.34
TAX WITHHOLDINGS	-\$326.59	-\$1,102.63
HEALTHCARE	-\$60.13	-\$242.18

**RETIREMENT BENEFIT OVERVIEW**

Benefit Type	Service Retirement
Payment Option	Option 1 100%
Optionee	JANE DOE, Spouse
Benefit Effective Date	09/09/2007
Amount your COLA is based upon	\$4,091.13

**BENEFIT DETAILS**

	CURRENT	YTD
<b>GROSS BENEFIT</b>		
Base Amount	\$3,229.57	\$9,688.71
COLAs	\$1,229.75	\$3,689.25
Adjustments	\$0.00	\$9.78
Supplements	\$0.00	\$10.60
<b>TAX WITHHOLDINGS</b>		
Federal	-\$326.59	-\$988.79
Ohio	\$0.00	-\$113.84
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>		
Medical	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dental	-\$55.56	\$166.68
Vision	-\$4.57	-\$13.71

**INCOME BREAKDOWN**

	CURRENT	YTD
Taxable	\$4,448.11	\$13,344.33
Tax Free	\$11.21	\$33.63

**DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY**

Not on File

**DIRECT DEPOSIT**

BANK	ACCOUNT #
US Bank	***3333

**TAX WITHHOLDING STATUS**

	Tax Status	Allowance	Addl Amt	Flat Amt
Federal	Married	1		
Ohio		0		

Please see Healthcare information on the back.

Shows your Power of Attorney by name - if proper document has been submitted to CRS.

Direct Deposit banking information.

**PRIMARY BURIAL BENEFICIARIES** \*Maximum Displayed: 4

NAME	% of Benefit
Jane Doe	100%

Person(s) you named to receive your \$5000 Burial Benefit (if you are entitled to one).

**HEALTHCARE INFORMATION**

Plan: Select	Covered	Disabled	Student	Medical	Dental	Vision	RX
MA: Medicare Advantage	JOHN			MA	X	X	MedD
MedD: Medicare D	JANE				X	X	

## SO...WHAT DOES CRS DO?

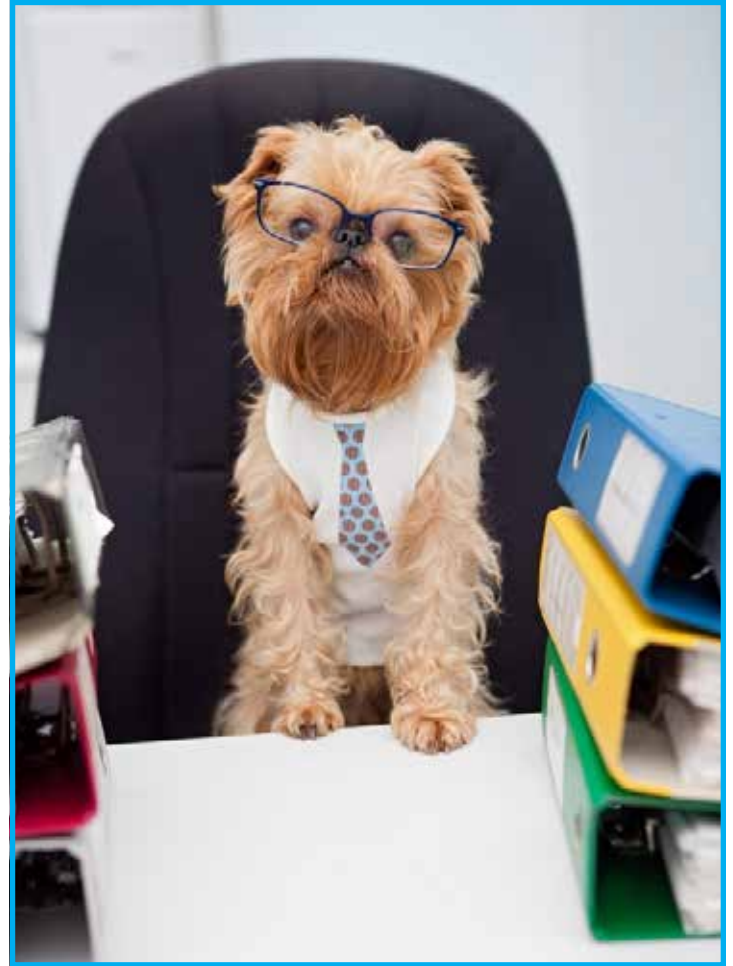
Our main job is to serve you and the 9,000+ active, retired, and dependent members of the Cincinnati Retirement System. CRS never stops being busy!

Here are our primary functions:

- Enroll New Members
- Process 457 Plan Enrollments
- Process Service Purchases
- Process Returns of Contribution
- Process Retirement Applications
- Process Retiree Healthcare Open Enrollment and Medicare Transitions
- Process Death Benefits
- Provide Member Education and Customer Service
- Process the payment of monthly pension benefits

CRS staff take member questions from calls, in-person visits, and emails every day. Calls and visits from our members average between 150-300 interactions per week. CRS has recently posted a position for Member Counselor. Once that position is filled, we will be able to schedule one-on-one appointments with members.

CRS is starting 2023 with twelve staff members, with a plan to expand to fifteen by the end of the year. Our goal is to enable our members to have a successful retirement. Please reach out and let us know how we can help!



## PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD

As you have probably heard, mail theft is on the rise in Cincinnati and throughout the country. The US Postal Service is now advising citizens to avoid using the standard blue USPS mailboxes on street corners in every neighborhood of the US. Why? *Because thieves have stolen the keys to these USPS mailboxes.*

What can you do to protect yourself? **Sign up for Direct Deposit of your monthly pension check.** If you are receiving your pension by mail, please call us right now to switch to direct deposit. It can take 3-4 weeks for CRS to replace stolen checks — so don't let this happen to you.

Other ways to protect yourself:

- When mailing checks — take them inside the post office.
- Sign up for electronic payment of your bills.
- Sign up for USPS Informed Delivery. The Postal Service will send you daily emails alerting you to what mail is on the way.
- Consider signing up for identity theft protection through your bank.



## CRS TEAM NEWS

In November 2022 the Cincinnati Retirement System welcomed a new staff member to its ranks. Jamie Litchfield-Moum began her service with the City of Cincinnati in 2008 at Police Records. In 2013 she transferred to the Recreation Department where she was later promoted to Administrative Technician. Jamie has a lifelong love of minor league baseball and astronomy. Jamie brings a wealth of knowledge about City operations, and we are so fortunate to have her with us. Welcome Jamie!



## FEDERAL TAX WITHHOLDING: FORMS & CHANGES

In 2022 the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a new Federal Tax Withholding form specifically for individuals receiving retirement benefits. Previously, Federal withholding for pensioners used the same withholding tables that were being used by employers for employees. The IRS mandated that this new form must be used on and after January 1, 2023.

The Cincinnati Retirement System (CRS) is requiring you to use this new form for any changes you want in your Federal tax withholding on and after January 1, 2023. **If you are satisfied with your current Federal withholding elections made prior to December 31, 2022, you do not need to submit a new Federal W4P form - your previous withholding election will remain valid unless you choose to submit a new Federal W4P.**

There are some important changes that come along with this new W4P form, specifically:

1. There are no longer any allowances that can be selected.
2. The pensioner will indicate one of the filing categories (Single or Married filing separately, Married filing jointly or qualifying surviving spouse, OR Head of Household) - this selection uses the applicable tax table to calculate your Federal withholding.



3. You can no longer elect to have only a flat amount of Federal tax withheld.
4. You may still elect to have an additional amount designated on top of whatever amount is withheld by the tax table.
5. If you do not want any Federal Tax withheld from your monthly pension benefit, you must write "No Withholding" under the Box #4C on the W4P form.

Be sure that any Federal or State withholding form you submit is signed by you, the pensioner. Please remember that CRS must receive any changes to your account record (new bank account information for direct deposit, change of address, and new withholding elections) prior to the 10th of a month to be effective for the next pension payment.

## WHY DO I NEED A POWER OF ATTORNEY (POA)?

Because Cincinnati Retirement System is committed to keeping your information protected, our staff will not discuss CRS Member information with anyone but you.

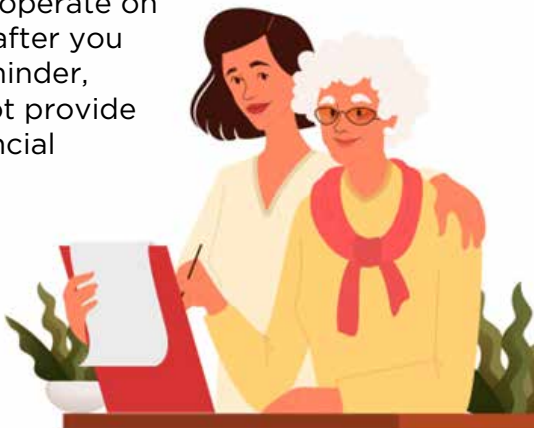
However, CRS will discuss your retirement details with your durable Financial Power of Attorney (POA). A durable Financial POA allows a CRS pensioner to designate one person to help take care of their affairs if they become sick, physically disabled or mentally incapacitated. You can designate anyone you want to be your Power of Attorney.

A durable Power of Attorney *for Healthcare* is not accepted for CRS purposes – we can only accept a durable Financial Power of Attorney.

There are several ways to obtain a durable Financial POA:

- Contact an attorney to prepare a durable Financial POA document;
- Contact a local agency to assist you. Ohio residents can call ProSeniors at 513-345-4160 ([www.ProSeniors.org](http://www.ProSeniors.org)); Kentucky residents can call Legal Aid of the Bluegrass at 859-431-8200; Indiana residents can call Indiana Legal Services Inc. at 1-800-869-0212;
- Obtain a blank durable Financial POA form online or purchase one from an office supply store like Staples.

Complete your durable Financial POA form with the required information. Once you sign the durable Financial POA document and have it notarized, you can send a copy to Cincinnati Retirement System. We will keep the document on file and maintain contact information of your designated POA. The durable Financial POA is only valid during your lifetime; a POA will have no authority to operate on your behalf after you die. As a reminder, CRS does not provide legal or financial advice.



## REPORTING A DEATH

The Cincinnati Retirement System is your partner in Retirement. We are there when you end your service to the City, and we are there when you die.

Given that this relationship often stretches over decades, and may easily outlast many other relationships you have, it is important to share end of life instructions with your trusted next-of-kin or caregiver. When the time comes, someone you have named as Optionee or Beneficiary should come forward to speak for you. That person should know to call Cincinnati Retirement System to inform us of your death. This small action allows Cincinnati Retirement System to begin processing a continuance for your Optionee (if one is named), and triggers the burial benefit payment process for your Beneficiary (if you are eligible).

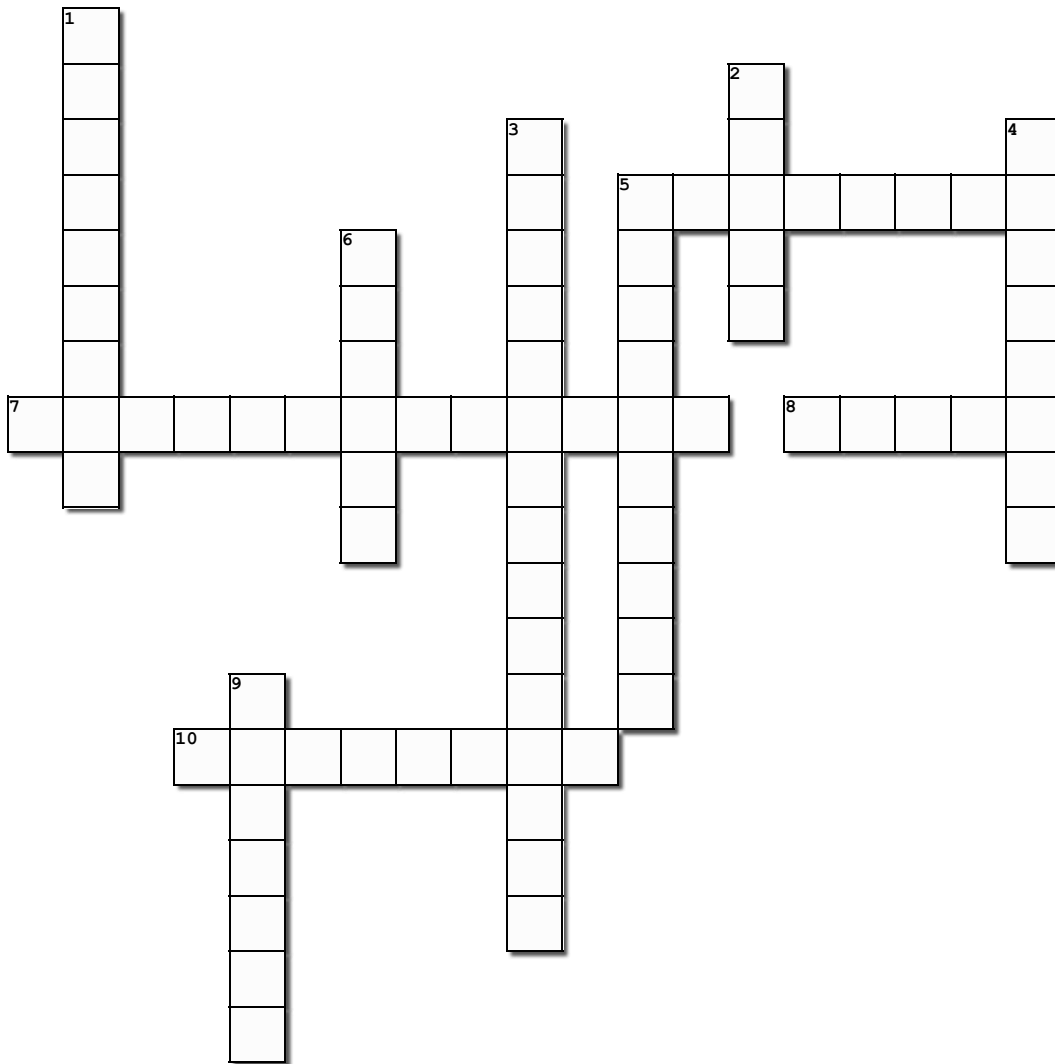
Your Optionee/Beneficiary should know that you retired from the City of Cincinnati which entitled you to a pension through Cincinnati Retirement System. They should understand that CRS does not manage life insurance, nor do we provide legal or financial advice. Let them know that we will require a copy of your death certificate and other documents in order to distribute your eligible benefits.

Cincinnati Retirement System is your financial (and sometimes healthcare) partner until you die. We are requesting your help now to make sure that your loved ones understand what to do when you are gone.



## Retirement Matters Crossword

### Spring Edition



#### Across

5. Person named by you to receive all or part of your pension upon your death.
7. Receiving funds via electronic transfer.
8. Local hippo celebrity
10. Federal health insurance for people 65 or older managed by Social Security..

#### Down

1. Annual Cincinnati marathon
2. Current City of Cincinnati Mayor
3. Person named by you in legal document to act on your behalf
4. Local college mascot - *plural*
5. Parade from Findlay Market to celebrate baseball
6. Bengals cheer!
9. Retirement income

Answers:  
 1. Flying Pig  
 2. Aftab  
 3. Power of Attorney  
 4. Bearcats  
 5. Optionee/Opening Day  
 6. Who Dey  
 7. Direct Deposit  
 8. Fiona  
 9. Pension  
 10. Medicare

## CRS FEEDBACK

The Cincinnati Retirement System exists to serve its members efficiently and courteously. Our staff attend to requests for information, processing updates, managing pension payments, distributing tax documents, and much more. We value your feedback because it helps us to address those areas where we could improve. For that reason, we invite you to drop us a line! If you visit us in City Hall, you will find a marked box for suggestions. We provide the paper and pen; you provide the insight. Additionally, if you are visiting the CRS website ([www.cincinnati-oh.gov/retirement/contact-crs/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/retirement/contact-crs/)), please feel free to click on the email link to message us. Your concerns matter and we are grateful to hear from you.

