

Employee and Retiree Service Center
The Bulletin—January 7, 2026

Considering Retirement? Help Is Available.

The Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC) is here to support your retirement planning and ensure a smooth transition from employee to retiree. Each winter, retirement-planning resources are highlighted to help you prepare. Begin with these top three actions:

1. Hear from the Experts

ERSC has long provided essential retirement information to employees planning to retire within two years through in-person Retirement Informational Sessions and Forms Workshops. Both in-person and recorded webinars are available. Many appreciate the face-to-face sessions, while others prefer the convenience of webinars, which offer the same comprehensive content.

Topics covered in an Informational Session include—

- retirement timeline,
- eligibility,
- benefit formulas,
- payment options,
- leave payout,
- taxes,
- post-retirement health,
- life insurance, and
- reemployment.

Once you attend an Informational Session or watch the webinar, you will have the tools needed for a successful transition to retirement.

After deciding to retire, consider attending a Forms Workshop (or viewing the recorded webinar). ERSC staff explain each required retirement form, how to complete them, and answer your questions.

You will find links to the schedule for in-person sessions and webinars on the [MCPS Retirement Informational and Forms Webinars web page](#). To register for in-person events, log in to [Professional Development Online](#) and search for *Retirement*. Because schedules may change, check the ERSC website before registering or attending.

Before attending any session or webinar, log in to PenPoint, the MCPS self-service retirement system, to confirm your pension plan membership. You may also find it helpful to review [Understanding Your Retirement](#), a booklet that guides you through the retirement process.

In addition to MCPS sessions/workshops, state representatives from the Maryland State Retirement Agency (MSRA) offer personal counseling sessions for members of the State core plan who are planning an imminent retirement. Sessions must be scheduled online in advance through the [MSRA Online Appointment Scheduler](#).

State core plan members also should attend a MSRA Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar. These day-long events cover topics such as Social Security, legal considerations, and financial planning. Registration is required. Once available, a registration form listing upcoming state seminars will be posted on the [ERSC website](#). Sessions fill quickly, so register early.

2. Obtain a Retirement Benefit Estimate

A retirement benefit estimate is a valuable tool in preparing for retirement. It provides more personalized and detailed information than your annual retirement benefit statement. How you obtain an estimate depends on your core plan.

- **MCPS County Core and/or Supplemental Plan Members**

Predetermined benefit estimates based on early or normal retirement dates are available on PenPoint. You can also generate a personalized estimate using another date of your choice.

- **State Core Plan Members**

You can run benefit estimates via the MSRA website. By registering for mySRPS, you can download, print, or save estimates online. [Learn more about mySRPS](#).

Keep in mind that unused earned sick leave is *not* included in your estimate. Your final pension benefit may be higher based on projected unused earned sick leave. However, after retirement unused earned sick leave is reviewed and recertified. If you use sick leave between submitting your retirement forms and your retirement date, your final balance, and therefore your pension benefit, may change.

At retirement, you will choose from several payment options that affect both your lifetime benefit and, if applicable, the amount your beneficiary may receive. A retirement estimate helps you compare these options using personalized figures based on your age and your beneficiary's age—information not included in your annual benefit statement.

This information can help clarify major decisions. For example, you may intend to choose an option that provides a benefit to your spouse after your death, but not realize how much it would reduce your monthly payment. Your estimate highlights these differences so you can make informed decisions for yourself and your family.

Access PenPoint

Visit the Retirement Planning web page by searching *Retirement Planning* on any MCPS web page. Select **Retirement Planning**, then click **Log in** under the PenPoint logo, and enter your MCPS Outlook/Pay Statement username and password.

3. Meet Important Deadlines

Once you have your questions answered and have selected your pension payment option, consider these important deadlines:

- **Three months prior to your retirement date:**
 - **Additional service credit**—Final deadline to apply for active-duty military service credit or purchase additional service that may increase your benefit or allow earlier retirement. For details, see pages 6 and 8 of [Understanding Your Retirement](#).
 - **Medicare**—Begin the Medicare application process if you or a covered dependent will be eligible at your retirement. MCPS retiree medical and prescription benefits require enrollment in Medicare Parts A and B.
 - If you deferred Part B until your retirement, start enrolling three months before your retirement date.
 - You must send ERSC a copy of your Medicare card (Parts A and B) at least 60 days prior to your Medicare coverage start date.
- **April 1, 2026:**

Deadline for Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) unit members with at least five years of MCPS experience and retiring on July 1, 2026, to submit retirement forms and receive a 35 percent payout of unused earned sick leave. Forms submitted after April 1 will result in a 20 percent payout. Note: Medicare cards are *not* required by April 1. [Learn more](#).
- **March 1, 2026 OR 30 Days Prior to Retirement Date:**

Deadlines for Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals/Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators unit members to submit all State and MCPS retirement forms to receive payoff for unused earned sick leave.

 - Those who submit forms by March 1, 2026, with—
 - at least 15 years of MCPS experience retiring July 1, 2026, will receive a 35 percent payoff, or
 - at least 15 years of MCPS experience retiring October 1, 2026, will receive a 30 percent payoff.
 - Those who submit forms 30 Days Prior to Retirement Date with—
 - at least 30 years of MCPS experience will receive a 30 percent payoff, or
 - at least 5 years of MCPS experience will receive a 25 percent payoff.

- **One month prior to your retirement date:**
 - Final deadline for submitting all retirement forms to ERSC.
 - For July 1, 2025, retirements, forms must either be submitted in person by **May 29, 2026**, or emailed or mailed and received by **May 31, 2026**.
 - Forms received between June 1–30, 2026, delay the retirement effective date to August 1, 2026.
 - State core plan members retiring August 1, 2026, will delay their first cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) until **July 1, 2028**, due to state rules requiring at least one full year of retirement before eligible for a COLA. A one-month delay in your retirement will delay your first COLA by 11 months.
 - Retirement forms are available on the [ERSC Forms web page](#) or simply click on your core plan membership below to access them.
 - [MCPS Core Pension Plan](#)
 - [State Core Pension Plan](#)
 - Deadline to submit leave payout forms to ERSC if you wish to roll over your sick or annual leave payouts into your 403(b) or 457(b) savings plans. These forms are listed as *Additional Related Forms* at [MCPS Core Pension Plan](#) or [State Core Pension Plan](#).

Visit these retirement resources to learn more:

- [Understanding Your Retirement](#) explains the retirement process, timeline, and pension formulas.
- [Retiree Benefit Summary](#) outlines retiree benefit options, costs, and enrollment processes.
- [Retirement Planning web page](#) offers links to all key resources.

For a complete list of required actions, please visit the [Retirement Planning web page](#).

Retirement Timeline

9 to 12 months

- Review your annual retirement statement [via PenPoint](#) and/or [from MSRA](#), depending on your core plan membership.
- Read [Understanding Your Retirement](#).
- Attend a [Retirement Information Session](#) (if space is available) or view the [Retirement Informational Webinar](#).
- Review or run an estimate of retirement benefits [via PenPoint](#) and, if applicable, run or request an estimate via [mySRPS](#) from the [Maryland State Retirement and Pension System](#).
- Apply to purchase any eligible service and/or military service credit.
- Prepare your retirement budget.

6 months

- Read the [*Retiree Benefit Summary*](#) for retiree benefit options.
- Review the applicable rate chart in the [*Retiree Benefit Rate Schedules*](#).
- Discuss your benefit payment options with your family and/or financial advisor.

3 months

- Attend a [**Retirement Forms Workshop**](#) (if space is available) or view the [**Retirement Forms Webinar**](#).
- Download your retirement application forms.
 - [**Members of the MCPS Core Pension Plan**](#)
 - [**Members of the State Core Pension Plan**](#)
- Determine your federal and state withholding amount. Consult with your tax advisor for assistance.
- If eligible, [**contact the Social Security Administration to enroll in Medicare Parts A and B**](#) if you and/or your spouse are 65 or older. Send a copy of your Medicare card with Parts A and B to ERSC at least 60 days prior to your Medicare coverage effective date.

1 to 2 months

- Submit your retirement forms. ERSC must receive all forms—including State core, MCPS core, supplemental plan forms, and any forms directing your final leave payout to a 403(b) or 457(b)—at least 30 days before your retirement date.

For a more detailed list of actions, visit the [**ERSC Retirement Planning web page**](#).