Can We Count on You to Serve as a Delegate for Your District?

How many times have you stood patiently in front of your class waiting for a student to raise their hand and answer your question? Well, we are asking you: Can we count on you to serve as a delegate?

Now is your chance to raise your hand and become a NYSTRS delegate for your district! Delegates and alternates are elected for a two-year term and serve two main functions:

- Elect a teacher member to the Retirement Board.
- Serve as a liaison between NYSTRS and the members in your district.

Delegate elections must be held between March 1 and June 1, 2023, and employers must report results to NYSTRS by July 1, 2023. The two-year term for those elected runs Aug. 1, 2023—July 31, 2025.

Your chief school administrator (CSA) or their designee is responsible for establishing election procedures, holding elections and reporting the results to NYSTRS via the online Employer Secure Area. Many employers designate election responsibilities to the teachers’ bargaining unit. If there is only one candidate for a position, no formal vote is necessary.

Talk to your school superintendent and/or your local bargaining unit if you are interested in being a delegate and to ask about plans for an election.

Top Three Reasons to be a NYSTRS Delegate

1. **Be Part of the Action.**
   Attend the two-day Annual Delegates Meeting in November to cast your vote in the election of a teacher member to NYSTRS’ Board.

2. **Be an Ambassador.**
   Play an important role as a liaison between NYSTRS and the members of your district or college.

3. **Be in the Know.**
   NYSTRS will provide you with important educational information about the System and retirement planning to keep you informed and to share with your colleagues.

See the Delegates > Electing Delegates page at NYSTRS.org for more information.
Four Fundamentals About Your Membership

Keeping Your Beneficiary Current is Key to Financial Planning

It is important to keep your beneficiary designation up to date to ensure your wishes to provide financial protection to loved ones will be carried out. You can find your beneficiary designation on file with NYSTRS in your annual Benefit Profile or by logging in to your MyNYSTRS account and visiting the My Retirement > Beneficiaries page. To change your beneficiary, either log in to MyNYSTRS and make the change on the Beneficiaries page, or file a notarized Designation of Beneficiary for In-Service or Post-Retirement Paragraph 2 Death Benefit (NET-11.4) form found at NYSTRS.org or by calling (800) 782-0289.

Currently, members with a Domestic Relations Order (DRO) on file cannot change their beneficiaries using MyNYSTRS. To change your beneficiary, either log in to MyNYSTRS and make the change on the Beneficiaries page, or file a notarized Designation of Beneficiary for In-Service or Post-Retirement Paragraph 2 Death Benefit (NET-11.4) form found at NYSTRS.org or by calling (800) 782-0289.

Public NYS Memberships can be Transferred to NYSTRS

Active NYSTRS members may transfer an active membership from any of the seven other New York state public retirement systems to NYSTRS. Members should speak with the system they are leaving regarding eligibility requirements for a transfer. Before transferring, members should compare their separate benefits from each system with the projected combined benefit to be sure that consolidating their memberships will be advantageous.

It is important to decide about transferring as quickly as possible, as the earliest date a contribution refund (if applicable) is retroactive for, is July 1 of the school year in which the member initiates their transfer. A delay in filing for a transfer could result in a member making additional non-refundable contributions.

NYSTRS Offers Guidance Through Difficult Circumstances

To help guide NYSTRS members and their loved ones through difficult times, including severe illness or death, the System offers the publication When a Member Falls Ill or Passes Away, which is available at NYSTRS.org. It outlines steps to take if a member passes away, or if an active member is critically ill or facing a significant surgery.

The publication lists what family members need to do to report the death of a member to NYSTRS, which enables the System to pay any benefits due to the member’s beneficiary(ies) in a timely manner. It also provides information on creating a Power of Attorney document that authorizes an agent to act on a member’s behalf regarding NYSTRS benefit transactions, and directs members to other resources for specific details.
Career Changes Affect Your NYSTRS Loan

If you have a NYSTRS loan and are considering a change in your career, please keep in mind several important details about repaying your loan.

If you are:

• Taking a new position with a different NYSTRS-participating employer, call us to notify us of your new employer.

• Transferring your membership from NYSTRS to another New York state public retirement system, NYSTRS will transfer your member contributions to your new system. When the transfer is completed, your new system will re-establish your loan, and you will have to make loan repayments to that system. While loan payments are not required during the processing of your transfer, interest will still accrue. You may continue to make payments on your outstanding loan until your transfer is complete.

• No longer working in a position covered by NYSTRS and you withdraw your NYSTRS membership, your outstanding loan balance will continue to accrue interest until the time of withdrawal and your contribution refund will be reduced by your outstanding loan amount.

• No longer working in a position covered by NYSTRS and you maintain your NYSTRS membership, you must call NYSTRS to inform us of the change. You will be sent monthly loan statements and you remain responsible for making loan payments by your due date each month.

• Close to retirement, you should contact the System prior to retirement to discuss your loan payoff options. If you are a Tier 3-6 member with an outstanding loan and don’t repay your loan within 30 days of your retirement date, your lifetime benefit will be reduced and the outstanding loan may be subject to significant tax consequences.

Unpaid Loan Facts – Tier 3-6:

• Once a loan is four months past due or is in a non-performing status, you cannot borrow again until the unpaid balance at the time of default is repaid.

• Interest will continue to accrue until either the loan is repaid in full, or the membership terminates as a result of retirement, withdrawal or death.

• Failure to repay a loan may significantly reduce your pension and the outstanding loan will likely be considered a taxable distribution and become subject to federal tax.

For more information about NYSTRS loans, see our publication **Borrowing From Your NYSTRS Contributions** on the Library > Publications > Active Members page of NYSTRS.org. We encourage you to call us at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6080 to discuss your specific career change and how it may affect your loan.
NYSTRS Publishes Stewardship Update

NYSTRS is a long-term investor with a well-diversified portfolio. This proven strategy and dedication to thoughtful stewardship has enabled the System to fulfill its mission of providing retirement security to members since 1921.

In January, the System published a report titled Stewardship Update: Climate Change Action Through Responsible Stewardship, which outlines its deliberative process to address climate risk and opportunities related to its investment portfolio. Visit the Investments > Stewardship and Investment Beliefs page at NYSTRS.org to read the report.

The Stewardship Update details the Board's investment beliefs, which provide a consistent and transparent framework to guide the System’s investment decision-making processes, including risk mitigation. As fiduciaries, NYSTRS’ Board must be responsible and thoughtful stewards of the fund and act for the exclusive benefit of NYSTRS members and beneficiaries. This deliberate approach ensures the System fulfills its fiduciary obligation to provide members with a secure retirement.

As a universal owner with a long-term view of the markets, NYSTRS identifies long-term risks to the portfolio through independent measurement and assessment. NYSTRS has identified climate risk as a key long-term risk to the portfolio, and thus the System seeks to manage and mitigate this risk through proxy voting, engagement with our portfolio companies, and potential investments in companies and opportunities that address this risk.

Additional information about NYSTRS’ investment strategy is available in the Investments section at NYSTRS.org.

PAFR Paints a Picture of Pension Security

If you don’t have time to peruse NYSTRS’ 150-page Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) as of June 30, 2022, check out another publication that offers a summary of key financial and membership facts about your Retirement System.

The eight-page Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) uses graphics and brief narratives to paint a financial picture of the System and provide a summary of the ACFR.

The PAFR has been recognized for the past several years by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) with the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting. The PAFR is available at NYSTRS.org (visit Library > Publications > Annual Reports).

Highlights from NYSTRS’ PAFR as of 6/30/22:

- Nearly 80% of benefits paid to NYS residents.
- Paid out approximately $8 billion in benefits to members and beneficiaries.
- About 57% of investment assets are managed internally, keeping administrative costs low and leaving more money for paying benefits and future investments.
- NYSTRS is 99% funded based on the actuarial value of assets.

Funding Sources

Providing our members with a secure pension is a shared responsibility. Over the past 30 years, earnings on investments produced 85% of NYSTRS’ income. Members and taxpayers (who contribute by way of employer contributions) together contribute the remaining 15%. This shared commitment results in a well-funded pension plan.
In-Service Death Benefit Offers Protection

Although you will likely complete your teaching career and transition to retirement as the next chapter of your life, it may still be a comfort to know that you are covered by an in-service death benefit if you should die before retiring. The in-service death benefit provides your designated beneficiary(ies) with your member contributions balance (your pension contributions plus interest). They may also be eligible to receive a death benefit.

In-service Death Benefit

Tier 2-6 members are covered by an in-service death benefit if they are in active service and have at least one year of service since last becoming a member. In general, they are covered by a lump sum benefit equal to a year’s salary after one year of service credit. The benefit increases to two years’ salary after two years of service credit and reaches a maximum of three years’ salary for three years of service credit and beyond. A portion of this coverage may continue into retirement.

For Tier 1 members, the in-service death benefit is a lump sum generally equaling a maximum of three times the member’s annual earnings.

Accidental Death Benefit

If you are a Tier 3-6 member and you die as the result of an accident sustained in the performance of your duties, certain surviving family members may be entitled to receive an accidental death benefit in lieu of an in-service death benefit. The annual payment to your beneficiary would be 50% of the regular salary earned during your last year of service.

Vested Death Benefit

If you leave teaching before retirement, but after you have earned at least 10 years of service credit, you will be eligible for a vested death benefit as long as you maintain your membership in NYSTRS. The vested death benefit would equal 50% of the in-service death benefit that would have been paid if you had died on the last day you earned service credit as a NYSTRS member.

Accelerated Death Benefit

If you qualify for a disability retirement benefit and have either a terminal illness resulting in a life expectancy of no more than 12 months or a medical condition requiring extraordinary care or treatment, you may elect to receive a one-time only payment for yourself while you are still living. The usual 10-year service credit requirement for a disability retirement is waived in such a situation.

The accelerated death benefit is paid in lieu of both a monthly retirement benefit and a death benefit paid to a beneficiary. The payment is equal to the death benefit you would have been eligible for if you had died on your last day of reportable service.

COVID-19 Accidental Death Benefit

Under a state law enacted in 2020, a COVID-19 accidental death benefit is in effect for New York state public employees, including NYSTRS members. Generally, NYSTRS members and certain retirees would be covered by a COVID-19 accidental death benefit if they reported to work at a place of employment as directed on or after March 1, 2020; contracted COVID-19 within 45 days; and died with COVID-19 causing or contributing to their death on or before Dec. 31, 2024.

Only certain statutory beneficiaries would be eligible to receive this benefit of a lifetime annuity consisting of 50% of the member’s most-recent year’s salary. See our COVID-19 Accidental Death Benefit Fact Sheet on our website for more information.

Death Benefit Beneficiaries

Any number of primary and contingent beneficiaries may be named, but you must designate at least one primary beneficiary. You may change your in-service death benefit beneficiary at any time in your secure online MyNYSTRS account. Or, you may file a notarized paper form Designation of Beneficiary for In-Service or Post-Retirement Paragraph 2 Death Benefit (NET-11.4), available in the Forms section of NYSTRS.org.

For more specific details on all these types of death benefits, please see the Active Members’ Handbook in the Library at NYSTRS.org or call us at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6110.
**Defined Benefit Pensions Boost Economy**

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit in 2020, it caused a great deal of volatility in national and local economies. However, one bright spot was that private and public sector defined benefit pensions – like the one provided by NYSTRS – had a substantial positive impact on economic gains, according to a new study by the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS).

Retiree spending of pension benefits in 2020 – the most recent year studied – generated $1.3 trillion in total economic output and supported nearly 6.8 million jobs across the nation, according to the report, “Pensionomics 2023: Measuring the Economic Impact of Defined Benefit Pension Expenditures.”

“The impact of pensions goes so much deeper than providing financial security to retirees, which we saw in real-time during the global pandemic,” said Dan Doonan, NIRS executive director and report co-author.

“In 2020, the U.S. and global economies suffered unprecedented, abrupt, and deeply devastating impacts with the COVID-19 outbreak,” Doonan said. “During this time, pension income was crucial for millions of Americans. Retirees with pensions knew that their retirement income was stable and secure, despite severe economic instability.”

That means retirees with defined benefit pensions could continue to spend at normal rates, unlike retirees who were relying on individual savings such as 401(k) accounts and may have been fearful of spending down their savings, Doonan explained.

**NYSTRS Board Meeting Summary of Actions**

**Re-elected** David P. Keefe as president and Dr. L. Oliver Robinson as vice president of the Board.

**Renewed** the agreement with Callan LLC to serve as the System’s general investment consultant, for one year, effective May 1, 2023.

**Renewed** the agreement with BlackRock Financial Management Inc. to manage a portion of the System’s assets in commercial mortgage-backed securities (CMBS), for one year, effective April 3, 2023.

**Renewed** agreements with the following firms to manage a portion of the System’s portfolio to be actively invested in the securities of real estate investment trusts (REITs) and real estate operating companies (REOCs), for one year each:
- AEW Capital Management, LP, effective April 15, 2023
- Cohen & Steers Capital Management Inc., effective Feb. 12, 2023
- Principal Real Estate Investors, effective Feb. 11, 2023

**Renewed** the agreement with Raith Capital Partners LLC to act as a real estate debt separate account adviser, for one year, effective Feb. 7, 2023.

**Renewed** the agreement with Arrowstreet Capital LP to manage a portion of the System’s assets as a global equity manager benchmarked to the MSCI ACWI Index, for one year, effective March 26, 2023.

**Renewed** agreements with the following firms to manage a portion of the System’s assets as MSCI ACWI Ex-U.S. international equity managers, for one year each:
- Ariel Investments LLC, effective April 10, 2023
- Arrowstreet Capital LP, effective March 26, 2023
- RhumbLine Advisers LP, effective March 30, 2023
- Xponance Inc., effective April 25, 2023

**Renewed** agreements with the following firms to manage a portion of the System’s assets as active U.S. high-yield managers benchmarked to the ICE BofAML BB-B U.S. High Yield Constrained Index (HUC4), for one year each:
- Columbia Management Investment Advisers LLC, effective March 6, 2023
- J.P. Morgan Investment Management Inc., effective March 5, 2023

**Renewed** the agreement with The Bank of New York Mellon to act as an agency securities lender for a portion of the System’s public securities assets, for one year, effective March 17, 2023.

**Authorized** the Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer to transition certain directly owned industrial and multi-family properties to separate accounts managed by Cabot Properties, LP and Sentinel Realty Advisors Corp., respectively.

**Approved** NYSTRS’ continued ownership, and inclusion on the Restricted List, of the System’s oil sands company holdings, and directed staff to continue to conduct ongoing engagement, monitoring and assessment of these oil sands companies.

**Approved** updates to the System’s Business Continuity Plan.

**Approved** an update to the System’s 2023 Legislative Program.

**Adopted** a resolution acknowledging the career of retired NYSTRS executive Edward Rezny who served the System for 20 years.

**Did you know?**

In New York state, expenditures stemming from state and local pensions in 2020:
- Generated $35.8 billion in total economic output.
- Supported 181,576 jobs that paid $13.2 billion in wages.
- Poured $5.3 billion into federal, state and local tax revenues.

Pension spending ripples through the economy as one person’s spending becomes another person’s income, creating a multiplier effect. Nationally, each dollar paid in pension benefits supported $2.13 in total economic output, the report found.

Learn more about how defined benefit pensions – like the one you will receive from NYSTRS – had a substantial positive impact on the economy when the pandemic first hit in 2020. Find the full NIRS report at [www.nirsonline.org](http://www.nirsonline.org).
Retirement Checklist

Retiring is a major life event with a lot to consider. If you’re thinking about retiring this year, you may have lots of questions. We are here to help you every step of the way!

Do Your Research

- Explore the [Retirement Planning > Ready to Retire](https://NYSTRS.org) page at [NYSTRS.org](https://NYSTRS.org).
  The information, publications and videos provided there will walk you through everything you need to know – from what to do early in the process to what to expect after you file for retirement.

- **Estimate Your Pension Benefit.**
  Your annual *Benefit Profile* will give you a general idea of your benefit. You can also use the online pension estimator in *MyNYSTRS* to generate a projection that includes service and salary from the current school year.

- **Select the Benefit Payment Best for You.**
  To learn which benefit payment is best for you, visit [NYSTRS.org](https://NYSTRS.org) to review our brochure *Maximum or an Option: Choosing a Benefit Payment Right for You* and watch our two-part video “Your NYSTRS Benefit Payment – Making the Choice That’s Right for You.” Your *Benefit Profile* and the MyNYSTRS Pension Estimator provide estimates of the various payment options.

Hear From the NYSTRS Experts

- **Schedule a Benefits Consultation.**
  Meet with a NYSTRS representative to discuss your retirement questions. The representative will provide an estimate of your pension and explain the different benefit payment options and how choosing an option to provide a potential payment to a beneficiary would impact your pension benefit. You will also learn how to file for retirement and what to expect during the retirement process.

  Consultations are held in person at our Albany office, by phone, via video on your personal device, or at select video consultation sites around the state. Book an appointment through *MyNYSTRS* or call (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6100. Consultations may be booked up to 120 days in advance. Appointments fill up quickly – particularly in the spring. We encourage members to book an appointment in the fall and winter months to prepare for a July 1 date of retirement.

Apply for Retirement With NYSTRS

- **File an Application for Retirement.**
  Retiring from your employer does NOT automatically trigger retirement benefit payments. You must also file an application for retirement with NYSTRS to receive your monthly pension payment. You can file your retirement application as late as your date of retirement, but no sooner than 90 days before your retirement date. Your date of retirement must be at least one day beyond the last date you earned salary under contract. If you want to receive your first payment in July, file by early June.

  File online through *MyNYSTRS* (age 55+), which streamlines the application process, reduces errors and eliminates the need to fill out and mail an eight-page paper application. Prefer paper? Find the Application for Retirement (RET-54) under Retirement-Related forms on our website.

- **Change Your Mind? Know the Deadlines.**
  From your date of retirement you have 14 days to withdraw your service retirement application. Send us a request to withdraw your application either by a secure message in your *MyNYSTRS* account or a signed letter mailed to NYSTRS within the 14-day window. You have 30 days from your retirement date to change your benefit payment option via the Election of Retirement Benefit page in *MyNYSTRS* or by filing a notarized Election of Retirement Benefit (RET-54.6) paper form. State law does not allow for exceptions.
NYSTRS Launches Investment Fellowship Program

As one of the largest institutional investors in the country, NYSTRS is committed to hiring and retaining the finest talent to manage its investment portfolio. Now, the System is pleased to offer its first-ever paid investment fellowship program.

The program, open to recent college graduates, is designed to provide hands-on training in NYSTRS’ four investment departments: Fixed Income, Private Equity, Public Equities and Real Estate. Fellows will also learn about the System’s investment operations functions.

Qualifications for the fellowship are intentionally designed to broaden access to candidates across a spectrum of undergraduate majors and experience, as well as expand existing career pipelines into asset management and investing.

During the two-year fellowship, which begins July 6, fellows will rotate between each asset class — spending six months in each department. Fellows will gain a solid foundation of investment portfolio management practices and be exposed to NYSTRS’ global asset management partners.

“We are thrilled to launch this fellowship and provide recent college graduates with real insight and experience in careers in the investment industry,” NYSTRS Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer Thomas K. Lee said. “This program enables them to explore each asset class and it affords them relevant training and hands-on experience, which ultimately will help them make an informed decision about an investment career path that best aligns with their interests and skills.”

NYSTRS marketed the fellowship program to colleges and universities across New York state and around the country. The fellowships are full-time, paid positions with fellows eligible for benefits. At the conclusion of the two-year program, fellows will have obtained the necessary experience to qualify and apply for a permanent investment officer position at NYSTRS.

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Help Us Improve Your Source!

Take Our Quick Survey

We are looking for your feedback to use as a guide to improve our newsletter communications to our active members. The survey takes just three minutes and is anonymous.

To take the survey, scan the QR code or visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/YourSourceSurvey