

MEMBER'S REPORT

The quarterly newsletter for active and retired OP&F members and their survivors

Ohio
Police
& Fire Pension
Fund

Volume 43 / Number 4 / FALL 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Funding bills need your support



Mary Beth Foley, Esq.

Our fall edition of the Member's Report is always full of important information, from health care reminders for retirees, to IRS tax forms that go out in January. While this may sound familiar from past issues, it is important and we have included updates to whatever changes have been made since last year.

One change is with our health care partner, Alight. Starting last month, our retirees no longer need to go through eHealth to manage their PRE-Medicare enrollment. Alight will manage all calls and will be able to address issues directly. Also, Alight now offers counseling sessions on plan choices for all retirees, not just Medicare-eligible members (which was the case in previous years). See the article on Page 2 for details.

Our retirees should also be aware that open enrollment season begins this month (Oct. 15 for Medicare, Nov. 1 for those not yet eligible for Medicare). Our updates on choosing plans can also be found in this edition.

Our funding legislation is still under consideration, although there has not been a hearing in the Ohio House or Senate for several months. We are working to convince committee members to recognize the importance of changing our funding formula in order to head off a looming crisis.

House Bill 296 and its companion, Senate Bill 194 have the same goal, of equalizing the contribution rates that OP&F employers pay into OP&F. If passed, the rate for police employers would increase to match what fire employers pay – equalizing the rate at 24.0 percent. These rates have been untouched since 1986 and a change is long overdue.

Our staff continues its important work in providing you with hard-earned benefits along with information about your pension system. We are proud in the work we do on your behalf and proud of the service you all provide to our communities across Ohio.

Best regards,

Mary Beth Foley

Mary Beth Foley, Esq.

Executive Director

Trustees remember 9/11



OP&F Executive Director Mary Beth Foley with trustees Brian Steel (left) and Stephen Corvi (right) at the annual Blue Mass on Sept. 11, at St. Timothy's Catholic Church in Columbus. Steel, a lieutenant with the Columbus Division of Police, was the keynote speaker and provided an inspiring speech at the ceremony honoring fallen first responders and thanking those who currently serve.

ALIGHT NOW OFFERING HEALTH CARE PLANNING APPOINTMENTS TO ALL OP&F RETIREES

Alight Retiree Health Solutions, OP&F's health care partner, is now offering a new service to retirees. Alight can now schedule a personalized meeting to review health care plan options for all those who are eligible for the stipend through OP&F, regardless of if they are Medicare eligible or not. Previously, Alight only offered the counseling services to Medicare-eligible retirees.

The counseling services are free and optional. Alight will discuss the plan options and costs available to retirees and explain which plans are available to remain eligible for the stipend provided by OP&F.



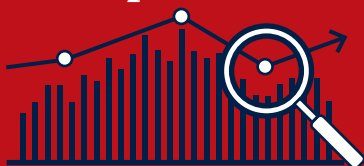
If you are currently enrolled and would like to speak to a licensed benefits advisor, please contact Alight to schedule an appointment. For those who are planning to retire after Oct. 1, Alight will send you enrollment information, including a preset appointment to speak with a licensed benefits advisor. Please contact Alight at 1-844-290-3674 to schedule an appointment or to discuss this new opportunity to review health care plan enrollment options.

Medicare retirees must enroll through Alight to receive stipend

With open enrollment for health care comes an abundance of marketing campaigns aimed at Medicare-eligible retirees. Many television commercials feature celebrities claiming that retirees could be missing Medicare benefits and to call to enroll. These ads can be misleading and could cause you to lose your OP&F health care stipend.

OP&F and Alight Retiree Health Solutions remind Medicare retirees that to be eligible for the stipend they must enroll in a plan through Alight. If you have questions, call Alight at 1-844-290-3674.

PORTFOLIO -update-



**OP&F's
Investment
Portfolio
Value**

As of Sept. 30 value:
\$19.0 billion

End of Aug. value:
\$18.7 billion

End of July value:
\$18.5 billion

** values may be internally estimated*

OPEN ENROLLMENT SEASON: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

OP&F's annual health care enrollment season is the time to review how well your current insurance plan is meeting your needs. If your plan is meeting your financial and health care goals, there may be nothing you need to do. But, if you find that things have changed, this can be a good time to explore other options.

For Medicare-eligible members, open enrollment is Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. For members not yet eligible for Medicare, open enrollment is Nov. 1 through Dec. 15.

Your annual renewal letter was mailed in late September and contains more information about the upcoming 2025 enrollment period. If you have questions, please call Alight at 1-844-290-3674.

Medicare-eligible retirees: Open Enrollment dates: Oct. 15-Dec. 7

Find out if your current plan has changed. If there are plan changes, your carrier should have sent you a Plan Annual Notice of Change in September. Pay close attention to what the premium will be in 2025; what drugs the plan will cover in 2025; and how much the drugs will cost.

If you want to keep your existing coverage, there is nothing you need to do. If the plan is available in 2025, your plan will automatically renew. If keeping your current coverage, your HRA auto-premium reimbursements will continue too. If you change plans or your premium amount changes for next year and you have recurring payments, please contact Alight to submit a new premium claim form and the amount you receive.

Let the Alight experts assist you with questions and plan options by calling 1-844-290-3674. Even if your existing plan works well for you, you may still want to shop around to see if there is a more cost-effective option.

Remember, if you change plans, even if you stay with the same carrier, you must make the change through Alight since you are a Medicare-eligible retiree, or you will lose OP&F's stipend. To maintain stipend eligibility, Alight must be your Agent of Record (AOR). Before you make any plan changes, be sure to confirm that Alight will remain the AOR on your plan.

Review your Health Reimbursement Arrangement. If you change plans or your health care premium amount reduces in 2025, you may need to reduce the auto premium reimbursement amount, so the reimbursement amount is not more than the premium. Please contact Alight to submit a new premium claim form and update the amount you receive.

It is illegal for any licensed Medicare agent to make unsolicited contact with you. So, if you get a call, text, or voicemail from someone offering Medicare services, it could be a scam. Remember, do not give out any personal information.

If you are eligible for pre-Medicare coverage: Open Enrollment dates: Nov. 1 – Dec. 15

If you want to keep your existing coverage, there is nothing you need to do. If the plan is available in 2025, your plan will automatically renew. If keeping your current coverage, your HRA premium reimbursements will continue too. If your premium amount or plan changes for next year and you have recurring payments, please contact Alight to submit a new premium claim for to update the amount you receive.

If your health care premium reduces in 2025, you may need to reduce the premium reimbursement amount, so the reimbursement amount is not more than the premium.

To shop and compare plans online, log in to retiree.alight.com/OP-F to update or activate your personal Alight account. To shop and enroll, select the Individual & Family link on the Alight home page. Contact Alight with questions. Allowing Alight to assist can help ensure an Affordable Care Act-accredited qualified health plan is chosen and ensure stipend eligibility.

If you cancel coverage through Alight, you will need to certify new coverage through OP&F. You will need to submit a new HRA reimbursement form and proof of payment to Alight to initiate reimbursement.

DROP DISTRIBUTION DEADLINES FOR 2024 TAX YEAR

OP&F will be issuing the 2024 version of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Form 1099-R in January to members and beneficiaries who received a benefit payment related to service, disability, annuity, survivor, death, an active member withdrawal or the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP).

To prepare for the distribution of the 1099-R forms, all 2024 distributions must be processed and issued prior to Friday Dec. 13, including DROP distributions.

- For DROP distribution requests greater than or equal to \$300,000, OP&F will need your DROP Distribution Request Form by Nov. 13, in order to issue the DROP distribution by Dec. 13.
- For DROP distribution request less than \$300,000, OP&F will need your DROP Distribution Request Form by Dec. 6, in order to issue the DROP distribution by Dec. 13.

OP&F will not be issuing any distributions from Dec. 14-31. DROP Distribution Request Forms received after the cutoff dates may not be issued until after Jan. 1, 2025.

Here's how to receive your 1099-R online



OP&F requests members to elect to receive their 1099-R statements electronically in place of a paper statement. Electronic statements provide fast, safe, and secure delivery and storage with the ability to always find your statement when you need it. This added convenience and security benefits means less worry for our members. It also saves OP&F the cost of mailing the form.

Members can access the Form 1099-R by going to op-f.org and logging into their OP&F Member Self-Serve account. The Form 1099-R can be viewed and printed from the Member Documents link. Only OP&F members who have a Member Self-Serve account can retrieve and print tax forms online. OP&F recommends logging into the Member Self-Serve system on or after Jan. 31, 2025, to confirm you have all the Form 1099-Rs issued.

OP&F members may choose to download the Form 1099-R for tax reporting purposes and avoid receiving the form in the mail.

This not only saves the cost of mailing the form, but it is also environmentally friendly, convenient, and secure.

To register for Member Self-Serve, go to op-f.org and click the link for Log In, in the upper right corner. Next, look for the Members link to register and follow the instructions on the screen.

To opt-out of the mailing,

- Members must log into their account from the Member Self-Serve area of the OP&F website;
- Choose Document Preferences;
- Select to opt-out of the mailing;

Members must have an email address to use the opt-out feature.

Members must have an email address to use the opt-out feature. If you have any questions, contact OP&F's Customer Service at 1-888-864-8363.

Please update your contact information with OP&F

It is important to notify OP&F if any contact information needs updated to ensure the timely receipt of Form 1099-R. Mail from OP&F will not be forwarded if the address on file is not correct. Additionally, OP&F cannot fax a Form 1099-R to a member, beneficiary or to a third party without notarized authorization.

OP&F offers several convenient ways to update an address:

- Online: Log on to the Member Self-Serve area at op-f.org and going to Member Demographics, where your address can be updated.
- Mail: Send the updated information in writing or on a completed OP&F Change of Address form to OP&F at 140 East Town Street, Columbus, OH 43215. OP&F's Change of Address form can be found online at op-f.org under the Member Forms link.
- Call OP&F at 888-864-8363.



Want to update your tax withholdings?

Forms are available at op-f.org to change both federal and state taxes being withheld from OP&F's benefit payments. Look for the IRS Form W-4P Withholding Certificate for Pension or Annuity Payments and the Withholding Certificate for Ohio State Income Tax by clicking of the Member Forms link on OP&F's website.

These forms are also available by calling OP&F's Customer Service Department at 1-888-864-8363. If a member or beneficiary moves out of state, OP&F does not automatically stop the Ohio State withholding. Members and beneficiaries must submit a request in writing, to stop Ohio tax withholding from their OP&F benefits.

Update Address with the USPS

If the 1099-R will be mailed to a winter residence, please be sure to file a Change of Address form with the U.S. Post Office 10 postal days before delivery should begin.

The U.S. Post Office's Change of Address form can be filled out online at www.usps.com or by calling 1-800-275-8777. It is only good for six months, even if the discontinue date is not filled in.

OP&F recommends submitting the U.S. Post Office's Change of Address form at both U.S. Post Offices where permanent residence is and at the U.S. Post Office where temporary residence will be. If there are problems with receiving mail, please call the U.S. Post Office.

A few reminders about Form 1099-R:

- Receiving more than one Form 1099-R is common. Member's and beneficiaries may receive more than one Form 1099-R if they receive more than one benefit payment, or they turned age 59 ½ during 2024.
- Health Care Stipends are not reported on Form 1099-R.
- Non-taxable income is reportable income. Benefit payments may or may not be taxable, but they are still reportable to the IRS on Form 1099-R.
- OP&F cannot offer tax advice or financial planning services; therefore, please seek professional tax advice before making any decisions. Please contact the IRS directly for information on filing requirements at 1-800-829-1040.
- Also available on OP&F's website is the Private Letter Ruling for on-duty disability retirees.

Low-income stipend increase program available for 2025

OP&F continues to sponsor assistance for low-income retirees and their families to receive additional support to pay for health care expenses. The 2025 Low-Income Stipend Increase Application form is now available at op-f.org for those who qualify.

Complete and return the form to OP&F to apply for an increase in the health care stipend amount provided to eligible OP&F retirees. To be eligible for the increase, the member's total household income must be equal to or less than the guidelines listed in the table to the right.

In 2025, OP&F may grant a 30 percent increase to the stipend provided to eligible participants. If you are eligible for the OP&F health care stipend and have a household income less than or equal to the amounts listed in the Eligibility Table below, you may be eligible for the stipend increase. Each year, you must submit a new application to apply for the stipend increase.

To be eligible for the stipend increase for 2025, you must have had a total household income on your most recently filed Federal Income Tax return equal to or less than 250 percent of the poverty level established annually by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Eligibility table	
Size of family unit:	Household income less than or equal to:
1	\$37,650
2	\$51,100
3	\$64,550
4	\$78,000
5	\$91,450
6	\$104,900
For each additional person, add \$13,450	

Additional instructions are included on the form.

2025	Medicare Status		Monthly Medical/RX Stipend	Monthly Medicare Part B Reimbursement	Total OP&F Monthly Support for Health Care
	Retiree	Spouse			
Retiree only:	Medicare		\$143	\$107	\$250
	Non-Medicare		\$685	\$0	\$685
Retiree + Spouse:	Medicare	Medicare	\$239	\$107	\$346
	Medicare	Non-Medicare	\$525	\$107	\$632
	Non-Medicare	Medicare	\$788	\$0	\$788
	Non-Medicare	Non-Medicare	\$1,074	\$0	\$1,074
Retiree + Dependent(s):	Medicare		\$203	\$107	\$310
	Non-Medicare		\$865	\$0	\$865
Retiree + Spouse + Dependent(s):	Medicare	Either Medicare or Non-Medicare	\$525	\$107	\$632
	Non-Medicare	Either Medicare or Non-Medicare	\$1,074	\$0	\$1,074
Surviving Spouse:	Medicare		\$143	\$107	\$250
	Non-Medicare		\$685	\$0	\$685

**The OP&F Medicare Part B reimbursement is an ongoing benefit that has been in place for many years, but should be included in the support provided for health care coverage. The Med B reimbursement is added to a member's monthly pension benefit.*

If your 1099-R is returned to OP&F, it may trigger suspension of benefits

It is important for you to keep your address current with OP&F so that the benefits can be timely paid to you. If an IRS Form 1099-R is returned to OP&F as undeliverable we will reach out to the benefit recipient using the contact information on file.

If OP&F is unable to contact the benefit recipient to update this information, steps will be taken to suspend the benefit until the correct information is received. In 2024, OP&F received 831 returned 1099-R tax forms by the USPS, and 19 benefit payments were suspended due to returned 1099-R forms for benefit recipients who were unable to be contacted. Returned 1099-R forms also cause OP&F to manually process them which is burdensome and costly to administer.

Reminder...

If a member dies, the family must contact OP&F, their health care carrier and Alight Retiree Health Solutions to stop any auto premium reimbursements. This also helps to avoid any overpayments that need to be re-paid.



Recording of Pre-Retirement Webinar available online

If members who are nearing retirement were not able to attend a retirement seminar in August or participate in the webinar, a recorded version is available at op-f.org.

The webinar was designed to assist members approaching retirement eligibility or considering enrolling in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP). In addition to information on benefits and the retirement process, information is also included from OP&F's health care partner, Alight Retiree Health Solutions. The recorded webinar is posted under the Plan for your Retirement section of the website.



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www.op-f.org



Phone: 1-888-864-8363
Fax: (614) 628-1777
TTY: (614) 221-3846
E-mail: questions@op-f.org
Monday-Fridays 8 am-4:30 pm EST

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Securing the future for Ohio's Police and Firefighters

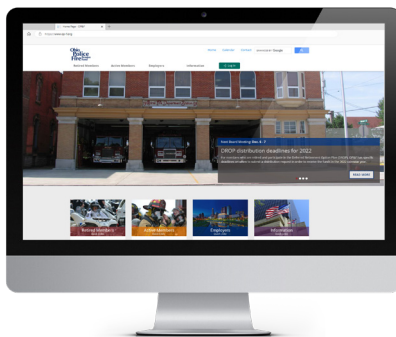
IMPORTANT DATES

- Oct. 29-30.....Board of Trustees meetings
- Nov. 11.....OP&F closed in observance of Veteran's Day
- Nov. 28-29.....OP&F closed in observance of Thanksgiving
- Dec. 3-4Board of Trustees meetings
- Dec. 24-25.....OP&F closed in observance of Christmas holiday
- Jan. 1.....OP&F closed in observance of New Year's Day

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?



If your email address is not on file, please add or update it securely on the Member Self-Serve area of the OP&F website. You may also complete a Change of Address form and email or send it to OP&F at 140 E. Town Street, Columbus, OH 43215.

SUSPECT DISABILITY FRAUD? CALL 844-FRAUD HOTLINE (844-372-8345)