

Message from the Administrator

Dear Valued Member:

I hope that your 2021 is off to a great start. As we continue to navigate the never-before-seen circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, it is with extreme pride that I look back on the unique challenges our staff faced and overcame in having to quickly adapt to the pandemic while ensuring all our core services were delivered to members uninterrupted. The COPERS team has consistently delivered in all key areas: benefit payments were made on time every time; applications and other administrative services were processed uninterrupted; service levels for answering calls and emails were at or above pre-pandemic levels, virtual meetings with our members were enabled, new educational opportunities for our members were created and presented in safe online and virtual platforms, and our investment program continued uninterrupted while offering ample liquidity.

Looking Back

In 2020, COPERS kicked off a multi-year project to replace our aging pension administration system. The project will ensure that we have technology going forward that meets the needs of both active and retired members and moves all retirement information into one central system that will allow us to better serve you.

Considering the events of 2020, it was a strong year for investment returns. At the close of 2020, COPERS was managing over \$3 billion in investments, which will continue to provide the foundation for your hard-earned retirement. Our strategic asset allocation is designed to meet long-term obligations and protect your benefits. For calendar year 2020, COPERS' net investment return was 10.2%.

Looking Forward

The economic effects of COVID-19 came swiftly in 2020, bringing along significant market volatility, falling interest rates, and a prevalent concern for many about the next paycheck and being able to meet upcoming bills. While few predicted the precise consequences of a global pandemic, good investors plan for market instability. COPERS has planned for market instability by having a well-diversified investment portfolio and focusing on being a long-term investor. While this economic downturn is severe, we built into our expectations that investments will fluctuate over the short-term. Over the long run these fluctuations are expected to balance out.

For our members, there are a few key things that we would like to emphasize, with the most important being that, the volatility in the financial markets will not impact retiree benefits. Retirement security earned after a public service career with the City of Phoenix is an important benefit provided to our members, and we are here to support you on your road to retirement.

Thank you for your hard work with the City, please stay safe and healthy, and COPERS looks forward to continuing to serve you.

Scott Steventon
Retirement Administrator

Selecting Your Beneficiary on Your Retirement Account

When was the last time you updated your beneficiaries through the Retirement Office? Have you selected your beneficiary? Change is inevitable and can happen at a moment's notice. As an active member, you can decide who will receive your retirement contributions when you pass away. You can choose one or multiple beneficiaries and can designate what percentage of your balance goes to each. You can also choose for your beneficiary to be a trust or an estate.

We encourage you to keep your beneficiaries up to date in each of the three locations available for active employees; eCHRIS, the Retirement Office, and Nationwide (if applicable). Failure to make changes could result in payments being made to a previously designated beneficiary who is no longer your choice to receive your benefits.

Confirming and updating your Retirement account beneficiary information is convenient and easy! For more information, please visit the Retirement Office located at 200 W. Washington Street 10th Floor, Phoenix, AZ 85003 or contact us at (602) 534-4400 or through email copers@phoenix.gov. All forms, including the Designation of Beneficiary form, can also be found at <https://www.phoenix.gov/copers/forms>.

Member Statements

It is that time of year again for member statements. The member statements for January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 will be mailed, to the address COPERS has on file, by the end of March. These statements will have estimates of your earliest retirement date, current average salary, contribution balance, and the current beneficiaries you have listed. The earliest retirement date is just an estimate as it can be affected by your usage of sick leave or being in a leave without pay status.

Tier 1 members who are within three years of being eligible to retire will have access to run pension estimates in eCHRIS. No matter your Tiers, you may want to consider taking retirement classes. Below are the recommended classes depending on when you are eligible to retire.

Members within three years of retirement

Masterclass: Retirement 3-5 years; can help you navigate these last few years and help prepare you for retirement. Visit: <http://www.phoenixdcp.com>.

Retirement: Understanding Your Pension; can help you learn more about how your pension works. Register for class in eCHRIS.

Schedule an appointment to meet with one of our Retirement Assistants to get specific questions answered about your retirement. Call us at (602) 534-4400.

Members within five years from retirement

Masterclass: Retirement 3-5 years; can help you navigate these last few years and help prepare you for retirement. Visit: <http://www.phoenixdcp.com>.



Saving for Retirement vs Saving for College

Managing personal finances can be tough. Sometimes there are many stresses on our budget and not quite enough income to cover everything. One of the toughest financial decisions a parent may face is whether to save money for their child's college expenses or for their own retirement. A recent survey by T. Rowe Price shows that respondents were almost equally divided on this topic. 53% of survey respondents make saving for children's college the priority, the remaining 47% contribute to their own retirement accounts first. So, who is right?

Here are some considerations gleaned from respected financial websites to help you decide.

There is no guarantee that kids will go to college. On the other hand, there is a 100% chance that one day you will stop working and when you do, you need to have a retirement nest egg to finance the lifestyle of your choice.

College is typically four years; your retirement may last 20 years - hopefully longer.

There are many ways to pay for college, not limited to work-study, part-time job for the student, tuition reimbursement, scholarships, grants and student loans.

Research published in the American Sociological Review shows that students achieve higher GPA's when they have to help pay for their own college expenses.

Choosing a school based on its value, not just its name can lessen the burden. Starting at a community college and transferring to a university can do the same.

This is not necessarily an all or nothing decision. As your financial situation changes, you can change the amount of money you set aside for various goals.

It is a lot to think about but remember that the City of Phoenix is already helping. As a City of Phoenix employee, you will get a life-long pension when you retire. That puts you in a better position than about 79% of Americans, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. On top of that, the City contributes to your deferred compensation account with Nationwide. This means that you are off to a great start with that retirement nest egg.

In the end, whether you save for your children's college expenses or your own retirement or both, is a personal decision and it should be based on your unique situation. The Retirement Office is

here to help you understand how your pension works. You can also take advantage of the many retirement calculators available on-line (links below) to help you assess where you are in relation to your goals. Once you know where you are financially, you can decide what your next steps are.

Retirement Calculator links:

<https://www.phoenixdcp.com/iApp/tcm/phoenixdcp/index.jsp>

<https://www.kiplinger.com/kiplinger-tools/retirement/t047-s001-retirement-savings-calculator-how-much-money-do-i/index.php>

<https://investor.vanguard.com/calculator-tools/retirement-income-calculator/>

<https://www.schwab.com/retirement-planning-tools/retirement-calculator>

The City of Phoenix DCP program, in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions, regularly presents live educational webinars. Mark your calendars and register for this important topic in April.

Why Keep Your Employer Discount? Thursday, April 22, 2021, 12 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. MST

About this webinar: You have many choices when it comes to saving for retirement. Learn about retirement accounts and products outside of your employer's retirement plan, as well as the benefits of remaining in the City of Phoenix Deferred Compensation Plans after retirement. This webinar will discuss your options and address some key considerations to help you make the choice that is best for you.

Please note: It is your responsibility to obtain preapproval to attend these webinars. Your Supervisor will NOT receive a confirmation email of your registration. Please forward your confirmation to your Supervisor.

Register for class [\[click.email-nationwide.com\]](https://click.email-nationwide.com)

Retirement: Understanding Your Pension; can help you learn more about how your pension works. Register for class in eCHRIS.

Members more than five years away from retirement

Retirement: Understanding Your Pension; can help you learn more about how your pension works. Register for class in eCHRIS.

Fraud Prevention Edition



Year after year, a destructive flood of fraud sweeps the nation, leaving countless victims in its wake. Unfortunately, new and improved technology only gives fraudsters an edge. This makes it easier than ever for scam artists to siphon financial data from unsuspecting consumers. This personal data fuels a long list of financial crimes. Here are eight important tips that can help you avoid being a victim of fraud.

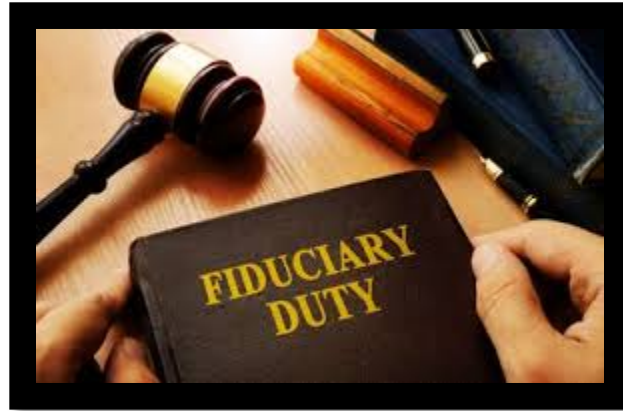
1. Never Wire Money to a Stranger

Whether you receive an email from a wealthy traveler who needs your help getting back to the U.S. or your long-lost cousin who claims to be in an emergency situation – NEVER wire money to a stranger. Once you wire cash (especially overseas), it's virtually impossible to reverse the transaction or trace the money. If you're worried about a family member or friend, check separately. They're probably safe at home. Be sure to alert them that their email has been hacked.

2. Don't Give Out Financial Information

Never reveal sensitive financial information to a person or business you don't know, whether they reach out to you via phone, text or email. This common scam is known as **phishing**. Scammers will contact you claiming to be from a retailer, financial institution or government agency. They may say your account has been compromised or needs to be updated. Remember, your bank or credit card company will never contact you and ask for your personal information. If you receive a suspicious call or email and are concerned about your account, call the credit card company or bank directly to check on your account status.

COPERS and the Prudent Investor Rule



The concept of prudence entered the lexicon of trust asset management by way of the 1830 Massachusetts case, *Harvard College vs Amory*. Harvard College and Massachusetts General Hospital were the ultimate beneficiaries of a trust for which Francis Amory was the trustee. The plaintiffs alleged that his investment in the common stock of two manufacturing companies that lost value, was speculative and negligent. In the final judgement the court found that Mr. Amory was not liable for the losses in part because “he had invested how men of *prudence*, discretion and intelligence manage their own affairs”. The Prudent Investor Rule has over the years become the gold standard for fiduciaries overseeing the investment of trust assets. COPERS has adopted this rule and it can be found in the City Charter, Chapter XXIV, Section 34.2. There are seven basic tenants for the COPERS board to consider when investing:

1. General economic conditions
2. The possible effect of inflation or deflation
3. The expected tax consequences of investments or strategies
4. The role each investment plays in the overall portfolio
5. The expected total return from income and capital appreciation
6. The need for liquidity, regular income, preservation or appreciation of capital
7. Fiduciary duty to incur only reasonable and appropriate costs in relation to the assets

The details of how these considerations are met can be found in COPERS’ Investment Policy Statement, policy 154, posted on the [Retirement website](#).

The goal of these rules and policies are to construct a portfolio with the highest probability of achieving the long term actuarial assumed rate of return (currently 7%) and to do so while assuming a prudent level of risk. The long-term actual rate of return was 7.7% as of 4/30/21.

Risk is controlled through diversification of COPERS holdings which helps to cushion the portfolio from the impact of large stock market corrections. With the onset of COVID in the first quarter of 2020 stock markets were down 20+% while COPERS was down less than half of that. Smaller drawdowns mean there is less ground to make up in a recovery. In the subsequent twelve months through 3/31/21 the plan value was up 26.5%.

The prudent, deliberate and patient investing of plan assets by the COPERS' board helps ensure that there will be funds available to pay benefits now and well into the future.



How Could Divorce Impact Your Retirement?

If you are considering dissolving your marriage, you should know the impact a divorce can have on your pension.

Your divorce decree may state what portion, if any, each spouse will receive of your monthly pension. You, as the member, are responsible for notifying the City of Phoenix Employees' Retirement System (COPERS) in the event of a divorce; and a copy of the divorce decree should be given to COPERS to be kept on file. Additionally, you should review your retirement account beneficiaries and update them, if necessary.

If the divorce decree states, upon retirement, your spouse will receive a portion of your monthly pension, COPERS can only make that payment directly to a former spouse/alternate payee in accordance with a court-certified Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO). The QDRO authorizes COPERS to make the monthly payment directly to the alternate payee on your behalf, manage deductions for their state/federal taxes, and distribute annual tax documents (1099-R) to the alternate payee. The lack of a QDRO **does not** absolve you from making the monthly payments directly to your ex-spouse; the QDRO simply gives COPERS the authority to dispense the payment on your behalf. Your QDRO must be reviewed by COPERS staff to ensure it meets our guidelines before your first pension payment can be processed.

For more information on QDRO guidelines, please click on the following link: <https://www.phoenix.gov/copers/forms> and refer to the **Domestic Relations Orders Guidelines**.

3. Never Click on Hyperlinks in Emails

If you receive an email from a stranger or company asking you to click on a hyperlink or open an attachment and then enter your financial information, delete the email immediately. Even if the email appears to be from your bank or credit card company, it's more likely a scam known as **pharming**.

4. Use Tough-To-Crack Passwords

These days, a password like "12345" or "[P@ssword](#)" just isn't going to cut it. Hackers can easily crack passwords that are simple number combinations or a common pet name. Create passwords that are at least eight characters long and that include lower- and upper-case letters, numbers and special characters. You should also use a different password for every website you visit.

5. Install Antivirus and Spyware Protection

Protect the sensitive information stored on your computer by installing antivirus, firewall and spyware protection. Once you install the program, turn on the auto-updating feature to make sure the software is always up to date.

6. Don't Shop with Unfamiliar Online Retailers

When it comes to online shopping, only do business with familiar companies. If you're interested in purchasing a product from an unfamiliar retailer, do some research to ensure the business is legitimate and trustworthy. You can visit the Better Business Bureau's [Website](#) or search online for consumer feedback and complaints.

7. Don't Download Software from Pop-Up Windows

When you're online, be wary of pop-up windows that appear and claim your computer is unsafe. If you click on the link in the pop-up to start the "system scan" or some other program, malicious software known as "malware" could damage your operating system.

8. Make Sure the Websites You Visit Are Safe

Before you enter your financial information on any website, double-check the website's privacy rules. Also make sure the website uses encryption, which is usually symbolized by a lock to the left of the web address. When you see the lock, this means the information you're entering is safely encrypted and protected against hackers.

Making Your Raise Work for You

You just got a raise. Lucky you! Every employee group in the City was granted a pay increase on 7/12/2021. Lucky us!

Have you decided what you will do with the extra money? You know what they say, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” Actually, Benjamin Franklin said it first and he is considered to be a pretty smart guy. So, what is a good plan? With the right planning, it’s possible to treat yourself within reason and still maximize your new financial opportunity. A quick Google search reveals that many websites offer similar advice. Topping the lists are: 1) increasing your savings for retirement and 2) establishing or revisiting an emergency fund.

1. Increasing contributions to your deferred compensation account is easy. Not only does an additional deferral save you on taxes (contributions are pre-tax), with recent market gains you could see a nice return on your investment. If you put an extra \$80 into your deferred compensation account, that turns into about \$110 when it’s invested before taxes. Over 30 years, that could add up to \$250,000 in your retirement nest egg.

Here is a link to the Nationwide Phoenix DCP website <https://www.phoenixdcp.com/rsc-web-preauth/index.html>. Just sign in, click on the “457” link, then scroll down to the blue “Update Contributions” button. You will be taken to a summary of your contribution information. The buttons at the bottom will allow you to do a one-time change in your contributions or schedule automatic increases to your contributions.

2. Putting away money for emergencies is also easy. You can split the direct deposit of your paycheck into several accounts so that a portion is separated from your day-to-day expense account. In e-CHRIS, click on the “Payroll” tile, then “Direct Deposit”. You’ll need your bank’s routing number and your account number.

Your raise will be reflected on the July 30th paycheck. Don’t leave it to chance. It can be easy to lose track of a raise if you don’t have a plan---that money might seem to just evaporate. You have lived without the raise so far. Put it to work for your future. That’s a plan.

Four Retirement Tips For 2021

For many people, retirement may look different than it has in years past. Whether or not your retirement plans are looking secure, it is a great time to review where you stand. Here are four tips to help you tune up your retirement planning. Some might sound familiar; some will sound brand-new. All of them are essential—as is getting started on them as soon as possible.

1. Deal with Your Debt Immediately

The best time to pay off debt is while you're still working. If you plan to retire within the next 12 months—or even if retirement is a more remote possibility—prioritize eliminating those credit card balances, student loans and car loans, and even mortgages.

The number of 60 and 70-somethings with mortgages, credit card debt, and student loans has skyrocketed. It's very challenging to pay down debt when you're on a fixed income, so put in the extra overtime while you can to ease the debt burden later.

2. Prepare a Health Insurance Strategy

Americans are eligible to enroll in Medicare at age 65—there can even be penalties for failing to enroll on time. Plan to sign up in the months leading up to your 65th birthday, giving the coverage time to kick in.

Medicare enrollment is only the beginning of your retirement healthcare strategy. Estimates show that a typical American couple will spend almost \$300,000 on things like co-pays, additional premiums and other uncovered medical expenses during their retirement years. You'll probably be paying any out-of-pocket expenses from your retirement savings, so you should factor them into your plans. If you retire before age 65, you'll also need to obtain health insurance on your own until Medicare kicks in. Plan now, before these choices are forced upon you.

3. Practice Retirement Spending Now

Meticulously track your spending to provide yourself a realistic picture of your income requirements in the first year of retirement. Make adjustments as needed—you might not spend as much on commuting costs when you aren't working. Perhaps you'll spend more on travel—but you'll find this to be a good guide to what life may cost during early retirement.

4. Consider Part-Time Work for Retirement

Whether you're already retired or you're making plans for retirement, now is a good time to think about how you might earn additional income in retirement by taking a part-time job. If you are planning to retire soon, begin forging relationships that might lead to jobs down the road or negotiating some form of part-time work. Consider how a hobby or skill

might turn into extra income. Remember, every extra dollar you earn is a dollar that can keep gaining value in a retirement account for another 10, 20 or even 30 years.

Tips on How We Can Age Better

Why do some people seem to age better than others? When neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin wondered about that, he began considering what is going on in the brain that drives these changes, and what we can do to slow the cognitive and physical changes that accompany aging.

The result is “Successful Aging,” a book in which Levitin presents a positive approach to making the most of our later years.

Levitin says improved decision-making skills and increased happiness are some of the advantages to aging. An increased enthusiasm about life, positive personality changes, meaningful pursuits, paying more attention to the positive things in life and being in better control of our feelings are the makings for a valuable second wind as we age.

Levitin goes on to describe ways to stay sharp in our later years, and they are many.

Staying socially engaged is one of the best preventions against cognitive decline, he says. Increasing your social network, maintaining quality relationships, volunteering for causes that matter to you – and working longer – add to a greater sense of self-worth and accomplishment.

Meanwhile, too much time spent without a purpose leads to unhappiness. Associating and empathizing with others staves off our inclination to focus on ourselves, which can lead to cognitive decline and negative changes in our demeanor.

What steps can we take to be mentally active? Stay busy with meaningful activities, such as taking classes, joining a current events discussion group or tutoring students. Men, especially, showed a reversal of three years of aging over two years’ time spent volunteering, Levitin relates.

The importance of exercising, preferably in nature; living a healthy, moderate lifestyle; appreciating your wisdom, accumulated knowledge and other cognitive strengths; doing new things; looking forward rather than backward; and not thinking of yourself as old are other ways Levitin suggests to rejuvenate your brain.

Please know that the COPERS team is dedicated to serving you and is here to assist you.

Contacting COPERS

200 W. Washington St., 10th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85003
Phone: (602) 534-4400

Email: copers@phoenix.gov
Website: phoenix.gov/copers

Practicing Social Media Safety



Every day we see stories on the news or from friends about internet hackers obtaining login and password information to various websites and financial institutions. One tip to stay safe is to be mindful of the information you post online.

Many of us are frequent users of social media and enjoy catching up with friends and family. We have all seen those quizzes that ask you to answer questions like “What was your favorite teacher’s name?”, “Who was your childhood best friend?”, “What is your favorite color?”, “What was your first car?”, and many more. Do these questions sound familiar? They should. These are the same questions you are asked as security questions when setting up access to your bank account, credit card and health insurance portals. When answering these types of questions and posting them online, you are giving out answers to security questions that you may be using without realizing it. Hackers are setting these up as “get to know each other better” games on Facebook and other social media platforms. They can take this information to easily gain access to your other accounts.

A tip to staying safe online is to avoid posting information on social media about when you’re traveling. We’ve all seen posts where a friend or family member is “checking in” at the airport, or “traveling” to a specific destination. This can serve as an open invitation to people that your house will most likely be empty. Those wishing to do harm can scroll through non-private photos on your account which may give enough clues to where you live. Thanks to many free public records websites, a quick internet search may reveal property records attached to your name. So be discreet about your whereabouts.

For more information on how to stay safe on social media:

<https://www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/9-ways-to-stay-safe-on-social-media/>

<https://www.nortonlifelockpartner.com/security-center/15-social-networking-safety-tips.html>

<https://www.realsimple.com/work-life/technology/safety-family/social-media-safety-tips>

Please know that the COPERS team is dedicated to serving you and is here to assist you.

Contacting COPERS

200 W. Washington St., 10th Floor

Phoenix, AZ 85003

Phone: (602) 534-4400

Email: copers@phoenix.gov

Website: phoenix.gov/copers

Tips for a Healthy Fall



Get Your Screenings and Yearly Check-Ups: Visit your doctor regularly for preventive services like cancer and diabetes screenings.

Get Your Flu Shot: An annual flu vaccine is the best way to protect against the flu.

Practice Social Distancing: Stay at least 6 feet from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Wear a Face Covering: Use masks to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Boost your immune system: Drink plenty of water, eat healthy, nutritious foods with plenty of Vitamin C; and wash your hands often with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds to prevent sickness.

Eat Healthy: Delicious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products make healthy meals.

Get Your Sleep: Get at least 7 hours of sleep every night.

Rethink Your Drink: Substitute water for sugary or alcoholic drinks to reduce calories.

Move More, Sit Less: Adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week, plus muscle-strengthening activities at least 2 days a week.

Take Some Time for Yourself: Autumn and winter are nature's way of telling us to slow down. Start a journal or track your moods to get more in touch with how you're feeling.

Be Kind to Yourself: Listen to your body and give it what it needs. Don't beat yourself up! Try reframing negative thoughts into positive ones.

Try these resources for more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -

<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/healthy-fall.htm>

US News - <https://health.usnews.com/wellness/slideshows/tips-for-a-healthy-fall>

Active Minds - <https://www.activeminds.org/blog/15-autumn-wellness-tips-to-keep-you-healthy-this-fall/>

New Self-Automatic Escalation Feature



New feature! Manage your automatic contribution increase with Self-Automatic Escalation at the City of Phoenix Deferred Compensation Plan [website](#).

The website now offers a new feature that allows your 457(b) contribution amount to automatically increase every year. How it works:

- Elect an annual contribution increase amount,
- Select the date you want it to increase every year, and
- You will receive notification from Nationwide Retirement Solutions about the upcoming increase each year.

Explore the new user-friendly site! For questions reach out to your local [Nationwide representative](#).

Five Key Questions to Ask Yourself about Financial Preparations for Retirement

Many people head into retirement with unrealistic expectations and assumptions. Often, it's a matter of budgeting incorrectly or carrying too much debt. Some individuals might miscalculate how soon retirement might be thrust upon them, or they don't have a good mix of assets to help make ends meet. When these or other assumptions are off-base, it can cause anxiety and lead to serious belt-tightening. Here are some of the key questions to ask yourself about your financial preparations, preferably years before you plan to exit the workforce.

Is there enough guaranteed income?

Most Americans receive guaranteed retirement income in the form of their Social Security benefits. But these payments might not be enough to support a comfortable lifestyle. Other sources of guaranteed income, if available, can help fill the gap, including workplace pensions and annuities purchased separately.

Can you handle your debts?

Many people owe significant sums of money heading into retirement. Debt appears to be a key cause of anxiety and reduced standards of living for many people in this group. Addressing debt problems is something you should tackle well before retirement. Once you stop working and have less money coming in, your options are limited.

Will you keep working part-time?

Some people who enter retirement with hefty debt loads probably assumed they would have kept working longer, but that's not always possible. According to a survey from the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), people who are still employed expect to retire at age 65 on average, and they anticipate a gradual transition. However, among people who are already retired, the average age for leaving the workforce was 62, and it was usually an abrupt stop. Personal health problems as well as employer changes such as downsizing or layoffs explain why many people retire earlier than expected.

Is your spending plan realistic?

It's important for pre-retirees to estimate as best they can, how much they will spend in retirement. Some expenses might be lower once you stop working but others — travel and leisure activities, for example, could rise substantially, especially in the early years when people are more active. Long-term care assistance, if needed, also can add up quickly.

In fact, the latest estimate from Fidelity Investments is that a 65-year-old couple, retiring this year, might need \$280,000, possibly more, for out-of-pocket health and medical expenses through their retirement years.

Research from the EBRI shows a disconnect between how people think they might live in retirement, and their spending needs, compared to how older retirees actually spend their money and time.

Do you invest in the right 'buckets'?

It's a good idea to hold investments in different types of accounts, as doing so can help minimize taxes in retirement. There are several key types of accounts with different tax features, and deciding which assets should go where takes some planning.

Conversely, no taxes generally apply on withdrawals made from Roth IRAs, Roth 401(k)s or Health Savings Accounts (if used to pay health-care expenses). Then there are withdrawals from traditional brokerage accounts; they will be taxed but can qualify for long-term capital-gain rates that run 15% for most people.

As a general rule, if you have multiple account types, you might want to hold lower-returning assets such as bonds in traditional IRAs where ordinary taxes would apply on withdrawals, while holding high-return assets like small stocks or emerging-markets funds in Roth accounts where no withdrawal taxes would apply.

Please know that the COPERS team is dedicated to serving you
and is here to assist you.

Contacting COPERS

200 W. Washington St., 10th Floor

Phoenix, AZ 85003

Phone: (602) 534-4400

Email: copers@phoenix.gov

Website: phoenix.gov/copers

Securing Your Financial Future

Take a little time to work on *securing* your financial future. Visit www.phoenixdcp.com and explore the My Interactive Retirement Planner (MIRP) tool! MIRP lets you create the big picture of your retirement savings situation. You can include information about your pension, your spouse, Social Security, outside investments and of course your contributions to your deferred compensation accounts. Tell the tool where you stand today and where you'd like to be when you retire, and it will tell you if you are on track!

We also have important date reminders:

Benefits:

Benefits Fair: 9/13 – 11/12, 2021

Open Enrollment: 10/18 – 11/12, 2021 (ends at 5:00 p.m. MST)

November Webinars:

[Social Security](#) - November 3, 2021

[City of Phoenix Retirement Master Class \(1-2 years\)](#) - November 16, 2021

[Budgeting 101](#) - November 17, 2021

Retirement Document Uploading Feature Reminder

Thinking about retiring? If you are within three years of retirement, you can securely send the Retirement Department copies of the required documentation needed to complete the retirement process. These documents include copies of your driver's license (employee and spouse), marriage certificate, passport or birth certificate (employee and spouse) and social security cards. Uploading your documents can be done at home or at work through eCHRIS.

To upload your documents:

Log in to eCHRIS using your employee ID number and normal password

Open the Navbar menu and click on "Self Service"

Near the bottom of the menu click on "Retirement Doc Upload"

Once you have uploaded your documents, please contact the Retirement Office at (602) 534-4400 to let our team know.

Know that the team at COPERS is dedicated to serving you and is here to assist you with your questions, concerns and needs. Contact us at:

COPERS

200 W. Washington Street 10th Floor, Phoenix, AZ 85007

Phone: (602) 534-4400

Email: copers@phoenix.gov

The 2021 COPERS Board Election Will be Fully Electronic This Year

Beginning on Monday, December 6, 2021, the City of Phoenix Employees' Retirement System (COPERS) Board will hold an election to fill one employee representative vacancy due to a retirement. The position, which will have an interim term beginning on January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023, will be filled during the December 2021 election. Three candidates (listed in alphabetical order) Angelica Gameros, Ron Ramirez and David Urbinato met the eligibility requirements to run.

Please look for an email communication from COPERS@PHOENIX.GOV which will contain candidate profiles and voting instructions. Voting will close on Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 5:00 pm.

Nationwide DCP Information

NEW For 2022! The 457(b) annual contribution limit increased to \$20,500 with the age 50 catchup annual limit remaining the same at \$6,500. The 401(a) annual contribution limit increased to \$61,000. Remember to schedule some time to meet with your [Nationwide Local Representative](#) to review the health of your Nationwide retirement plans.

Holiday Cybersecurity Tips

The holidays can be a hectic time of year – buying gifts online, making travel arrangements and wanting to give back to charitable organizations. It is also a busy time for cybercriminals who are trying to take advantage of you. You can fight back against thieves and better protect your personal information.

Keep a clean machine. Before picking out that perfect gift, be sure that all internet-connected devices – including PCs, smartphones and tablets – are free from malware and infections by running only the most current versions of software, web browsers and other apps.

Use secure Wi-Fi. Using free public Wi-Fi to shop online while at your favorite coffee shop is tremendously convenient, but it is not cyber safe. Don't make purchases while connected to public Wi-Fi; instead use a virtual private network (VPN) or your phone as a hotspot.

Lock down your login. Create long and unique passphrases for all accounts and use multi-factor authentication wherever possible. Multi-factor authentication will fortify your online accounts by enabling the strongest authentication tools available, such as biometrics or a unique one-timecode sent to your phone or mobile device.

Resist the urge. Be wary of offers too good to be true – no matter how tempting. Buy only from trusted and established online retailers and avoid retailer websites of which you are not familiar.

Think before you click. Pay attention to the emails you receive. Don't open emails from unknown senders or click on links in suspicious messages.

Shop securely. Make certain your internet connection is secure. Check to make sure you're shopping on a site that uses SSL protection. The easiest way to tell is to check your browser's address bar. Look for "HTTPS" in the URL. Sites without the s are not safe to submit payment information or other personal details.

Pay wisely. Use a credit card or pre-paid debit card instead of a debit card linked to your bank account. Or use a reliable and established third-party payment service, such as Google Pay, Apple Pay or PayPal.

Monitor your accounts. Check your online financial accounts regularly for suspicious spending. Also, take advantage of text and email alerting services that many banks and credit card companies now offer.

Please know that the COPERS team is dedicated to serving you
and is here to assist you.

Contacting COPERS

200 W. Washington St., 10th Floor

Phoenix, AZ 85003

Phone: (602) 534-4400

Email: copers@phoenix.gov

Website: phoenix.gov/copers

2022 Tier 3 Compensation Cap

Section 2.14 of the Retirement Code sets an annual compensation cap of \$125,000 for purposes of determining a retirement benefit. In Policy Number 198, the Board interpreted that cap to also apply to the compensation that is used for employer and employee contributions.

The cap is to be annually adjusted by the change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban consumers, U.S. City Average (CPI-U) not seasonally adjusted, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor for the twelve-month period ending the preceding September 30th. This adjustment is to be done every January 1st, beginning January 1, 2017.

Below is the CPI-U data for September 30, 2021. This information shows a change of positive 5.4%. This percentage multiplied by the current \$136,792.25 cap results in a new cap of \$144,179.03. Accordingly, staff recommended the Board approve a new Tier 3 annual compensation cap for 2021 of \$144,179.03.

Verifying Your Contact Information in eCHRIS

You can help ensure your contact information is printed correctly on your 2021 W-2 tax form by verifying it in the Self Service section of eCHRIS. Please confirm your social security number in eCHRIS by clicking on the Payroll icon, then click on the W-4, W-4P, A-4 & A-4P Tax Info link. Your social security number is listed in the upper right corner. If it needs to be corrected, please contact your department HR Liaison directly for assistance.

Please verify your address by clicking on the Personal Details icon. You can easily update your Home Address in eCHRIS by clicking on it. Make the necessary changes and hit Save. If you prefer, a mailing address can be added by clicking on the Add Mailing Address link. Your mailing address will print on the W-2, and all City correspondence is mailed to it. Contact your department HR Liaison directly if you have any questions or need assistance.

Upcoming 2022 DCP Webinars

The City of Phoenix DCP program, in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions, has released their webinar schedule for the first half of 2022. Click [here](#) to register today!

Please know that the COPERS team is dedicated to serving you
and is here to assist you.

Contacting COPERS

Mailing address:
200 W. Washington St., 10th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Phone : (602) 534-4400
Email: copers@phoenix.gov