

Membership Handbook



Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System
as of January 2012

Medicare, Social Security Offsets, and Insurance

You may be entitled to Medicare coverage if you are a state retiree who has paid Medicare tax, the spouse or former spouse of a state employee who has paid Medicare tax, a state retiree receiving a Disability retirement from LASERS, or the spouse of a state Disability retiree. Please visit www.lamedicare.com for more information.

If you have earned a LASERS benefit, and are entitled to receive a Social Security benefit, based on your earnings or the earnings of a spouse, your Social Security benefit may be reduced. The reduction is because of federal laws known as the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, which are designed to offset the amount of Social Security benefits paid to those eligible to receive some other type of public pension.

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)

The Windfall Elimination Provision affects the amount of your Social Security retirement or disability benefit if you also receive a pension from a government agency, such as LASERS. This provision does not apply to survivors benefits. A modified benefit formula is used to calculate your benefit amount, resulting in a lower Social Security benefit.

You may be able to avoid this offset if you meet one of the following criteria:

- You were age 62 or disabled before 1986
- You qualified for a LASERS retirement benefit (including a reduced benefit) before September 1, 1985
- You have at least 30 years of “substantial” earnings in a job where you paid Social Security taxes. If you have between 21 and 29 years of “substantial” earnings, you will not be subject to the full reduction.

LASERS can provide you with a letter indicating the date of your first eligibility for retirement that you can submit to the Social Security Administration. Please submit a written request to LASERS for this information.

Government Pension Offset (GPO)

The Government Pension Offset affects the amount of your Social Security spouse's or widower's benefit if you also receive a pension from a government agency, such as LASERS. Your Social Security benefit may be reduced by two-thirds of your government pension.

You may be able to avoid this offset if you meet one of the following criteria:

- You were eligible to retire before December 1982, and you meet all of the requirements for Social Security spouse's benefits in effect in January 1977
- You were eligible to retire before July 1, 1983, and were receiving one-half of your support from your spouse

LASERS can provide you with a letter indicating the date of your first eligibility for retirement that you can submit to the Social Security Administration. Please submit a written request to LASERS for this information.

The benefit formulas are complex, so we recommend that you contact the Social Security Administration for a calculation of any possible reductions.

You can also visit www.socialsecurity.gov/gpo-wep/ for additional information.

Insurance

If you have questions regarding your health and/or life insurance coverage, please contact your employing agency. In the event that you cannot obtain the necessary information from your agency, please contact:

Office of Group Benefits:

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 44036, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Website: www.groupbenefits.org

Telephone: Toll-free 800.272.8451 or 225.925.6625

Street Address: 7389 Florida Blvd., Suite 400, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806

LASERS will make the deduction of your insurance premium in accordance with information received from the Office of Group Benefits. It may be a few months after you retire before your insurance premium is deducted from your LASERS retirement check. Please contact the Office of Group Benefits to determine if you must pay your initial insurance premiums directly to them. Your premium will be subject to possible increases or decreases each fiscal year. LASERS does not have access to your insurance records.

Health Insurance Premiums

The premiums for health insurance coverage paid by any retiree participating in the Office of Group Benefits program who has transferred service credit to the HAZ PLAN who retires with 12 years of service at age 55 or 25 years of service at any age shall be increased by an amount sufficient to pay for any increase in the employer's premiums resulting from his retirement pursuant to such sections.

LASERS

Contact Information

Location: 8401 United Plaza Blvd. • Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Mail: P.O. Box 44213 • Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4213

Phone: (toll-free) 800.256.3000 • (local) 225.922.0600

Web: www.lasersonline.org

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