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# The Panel



The newsletter for members of the Judges' Retirement System of Illinois

 [srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov)

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Update your Member Services contact information to receive the latest news, announcements or deadlines.

## Your benefit statement

Enclosed with this Panel is your current benefit statement. This statement contains detailed information about your JRS benefits.

You may change your beneficiaries at any time by completing and filing Form 6101 (Death Benefit Beneficiary Designation) with JRS.

Remember, your group life insurance beneficiaries are separate from your JRS beneficiaries. The Minnesota Life Insurance Company, a Securian brand, maintains your life insurance beneficiary information. To update your life insurance beneficiaries, contact Minnesota Life at 888-202-5525. Their office hours are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

If you have questions about your statement, call us at 217-782-8500.

## Tax Information

### 1099-R

In January, the Office of the Comptroller mailed IRS Form 1099-Rs for 2018 JRS benefit payments to all annuitants and survivors. If you have recently moved and not notified JRS, your 1099-R will be mailed to the address we have on file. Please contact JRS to confirm we have your current address on file and request a duplicate 1099-R.

1099-R income from JRS must be reported on IRS Form 1040 under the income section (pensions and annuities). You may also receive a W-2 for any pension benefits paid from the excess benefit plan due to Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code. Anyone receiving an excess benefit should have already received a letter from JRS indicating the new amount for 2019 that will be paid from the excess benefit fund.

### 2019 tax withholding tables

The new tax tables went into effect on January 1, 2019. Please note that your federal tax withholding may cause your benefit payment to increase or decrease, based on your filing status.

If you need to change the amount of your federal tax withholding, you must complete a new Form W-4P. The W-4P form is available at [srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov) under the Forms link and may be submitted at any time throughout the year. You can mail or fax (217-524-9039) your completed W-4P to JRS. To protect your personal information, do not email W-4P forms to JRS.

You can securely view your monthly check stubs through the SRS Member Services website at [memberservices.srs.illinois.gov](https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov) to see details of your deductions and history of transactions. There is also a withholding calculator available on the JRS website that allows you to estimate your federal tax withholding for JRS annuity payments.

We recommend you contact a qualified tax advisor or an IRS representative at 800-829-1040 with questions about your taxes, including withholding.

### State tax withholding

Your JRS benefit is not subject to income tax in Illinois. If you wish to withhold Illinois income tax from your pension for outside income subject to Illinois state tax, you will need to submit a JRS Illinois State Income Tax Withholding form (Form 6965). This form is available on the JRS website ([srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov)) under the Forms link and may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

Please note that JRS is unable to withhold state tax for any other state aside from Illinois.

## Visit us online

Did you know you could access a copy of all publications on our website? This includes the newsletters, handbooks and brochures. You can also find helpful information regarding your insurance, any news about upcoming legislation, survivor benefit information and much more. Check us out at [srs.illinois.gov](https://www.srs.illinois.gov).

## TRAIL Medicare Advantage Annuitants

The State's Medicare Advantage Plan (TRAIL) is a plan designed just for State of Illinois retirees and survivors who are Medicare primary and required to participate in the TRAIL plan. Medicare Advantage plans are a part of Medicare that combine all the benefits of Medicare Part A (hospital coverage) and Medicare Part B (doctor and outpatient care) into one convenient plan. Plus, your State-sponsored TRAIL plan includes Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage as well as programs that go beyond original Medicare.

This article serves to address the costs associated with the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan included in your Medicare Advantage Plan. Since the TRAIL prescription drug coverage automatically includes a Medicare Part D benefit, Medicare requires that members of TRAIL whose annual income exceeds \$85,000 for an individual or \$170,000 for a couple will be subject to an additional premium, called IRMAA (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). Due to the higher incomes of most JRS annuitants, IRMAA applies to both Parts B and D. The Social Security Administration verifies income via the IRS and will send a predetermination letter indicating whether IRMAA will apply to the Medicare beneficiary. In order to remain in the TRAIL Medicare Advantage plan, you must pay these additional premiums.

Additional information regarding IRMAA premiums can be found at [medicare.gov](http://medicare.gov) or on page 17 of the 2019 TRAIL MAPD Decision Guide at [MyBenefits.illinois.gov](http://MyBenefits.illinois.gov).

## JRS Member Snapshot

June 30, 2018

### Retired Members

Average current age	72.0
Average age at retirement	62.1
Average monthly retirement benefit	\$11,904
Average years of service credit at retirement	16.6

### Total Membership

Active	936
Tier 1	594
Tier 2	342
Retired	871
Survivors	322
Inactive	21

## Changes in JRS staff

On October 1, 2018, Lori Austin retired after almost 23 years of service with the State Retirement Systems. Lori served in various positions with the State Employees' Retirement System before joining GARS in November 2005. She became the GARS Assistant Manager in August 2010 and held that position until she retired.

Tracy Ellis joined GARS on January 16, 2019, bringing over 16 years of public retirement experience to GARS. Before joining GARS, she served in various positions with the Teachers' Retirement System of Illinois, most recently as a Senior Benefits Counselor. Tracy has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Illinois-Springfield and lives in the Springfield area. Tracy is married and has 3 sons and 2 grandchildren, ages 3 and 3 months.

Congratulations to Lori on her retirement and to Tracy on her new position with GARS!



*Tina Elliott, Angie Ackerson, Tracy Ellis and Becky Tobias*

## Senior discounts

Many restaurants, grocery stores, retail stores and travel companies offer senior discounts of which you may not be aware. Are you taking full advantage of the savings available to you?

Some of the places specify that you must be a certain age to qualify while others are benefits for AARP members. Some discounts are only available on specific days of the week. Be sure to double check any that are listed on the following website to be sure the establishment will honor the discount prior to arriving.

Check [seniorcitizendiscountlist.org](http://seniorcitizendiscountlist.org) and click on your state for a full list of places you can save.

## Moved recently? Update your address.

Updating your address is easy. Fill out the Change of Information Form 6501 and mail it to us or email it to [jrs@srs.illinois.gov](mailto:jrs@srs.illinois.gov).

You can find Form 6501 on our website under the Forms link.

