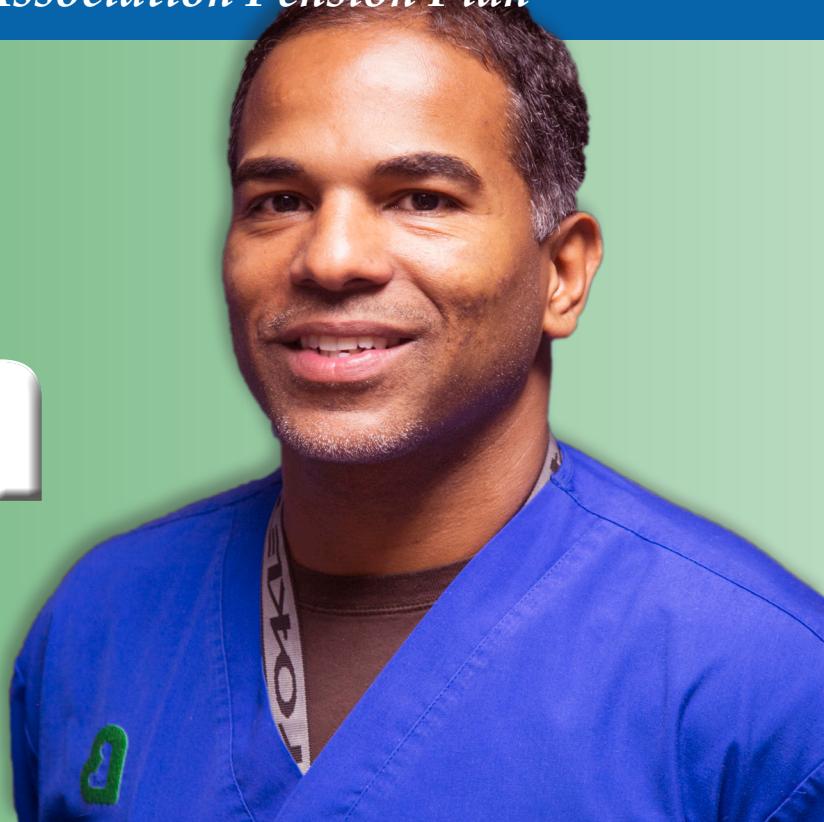


The Pension Planner

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PREPARING FOR RETIREMENT WITH THE NYSNA PENSION PLAN

Planning ahead to ensure a smooth, timely process.

Is this the year? If you've made the decision that 2023 is the year for you to hang up your scrubs for good, you're surely excited to begin receiving the Pension Plan benefit that you've been working toward for so long. However, before you get to that point, there will be some decisions and some planning required to ensure the process proceeds in a smooth and timely manner with the Pension Plan office.

Below is a timeline for preparing for your retirement with the NYSNA Pension Plan:

1st Contact a pension analyst at the Pension Plan at (877) RN BENEFITS [762-3633] no less than 30 days and no more than 180 days before your planned retirement date.

2nd Read the packet of information your analyst sends you through the post office or email, which provide a full explanation of all your pension options. Included in this packet will be a:

- pension application,
- authorization for Direct Deposit,
- Retirement Option Election Form,
- W-4P Federal Withholding Form,
- IT-2104-P NYS/NYC Withholding Form (if applicable), and
- *Summary Plan Description*.

3rd You'll need to secure copies of all required documents needed by the Plan in order to begin processing your benefit. These documents include birth, marriage, divorce, or original certified death certificates (in the event your spouse dies before you retire). Once you've collected all the necessary documents, you should send them to the Plan office, along with the signed pension application and other essential forms.

4th While you're taking care of your paperwork, your pension analyst will contact your employer(s) to verify your termination date, total paid hours and earnings, and other information necessary to accurately calculate your benefit.

5th When all the documentation and information from you and your employer(s) is returned to the Plan office, we'll provide you with a final calculation and send a Benefit Payment Authorization form to sign.

6th You must complete and return the Benefit Payment Authorization form to the Plan office to begin your benefit.

7th In general, your initial pension payment may represent two to three months of payments depending on the amount of time that elapses between the effective date of your pension benefit and the date the payment is issued. For example, if you plan to work through Dec. 31, 2023, and elect to receive your pension as of Jan. 1, 2024, you may not receive your initial payment until Mar. 1 or Apr. 1, however it will be retroactive to Jan. 1. This is because your employer needs that time to report your final paid hours and earnings, which the Plan office needs to review and process before sending a check or direct depositing your first payment. **Therefore, please plan accordingly.**

OVERSEAS BOUND?

If you plan to move out of the U.S. after retirement, you should consult with one of our pension analysts right away about utilizing direct deposit. In the past few years, participants living in certain countries have encountered issues with mail delivery and/or delays, so direct deposit will ensure your pension benefit arrives safely in your bank account each month. In addition, certain countries have stopped accepting checks issued outside that country.

If you still wish to receive a check, the Plan recommends opening an account with a US-based bank insured by the FDIC that has overseas branch locations near where you reside. You must do this in person at the US-based bank before you retire. Otherwise, you may find some foreign banks will not allow you to cash your pension check or may charge a fee to do so.

Please Note: If you have any extenuating circumstances related to the timing of your retirement, such as a debilitating illness or an impending divorce, please don't hesitate to relay this information to your pension analyst right away during your initial call. •

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UPDATE US WITH YOUR CONTACT INFO

In addition to this newsletter, the NYSNA Pension Plan frequently sends important plan information to our participants with legally required documents (1099-R tax documents), reminders, and updates.

In order for these communications – and your pension check (when you're retired) – to reach you, we need to have your most current contact information on file, including:

- Phone number (cell and/or home phone)
- Mailing address
- E-mail address
- Emergency contact name and phone number (only in the event we can't reach you directly in certain situations regarding your pension).

To verify or update your contact information in our database, please call the Pension Plan office at (877) RN BENEFITS [762-3633]. You may also e-mail the Plan at pensions@rnbenefits.org with any changes.

THE PENSION PLAN OFFICE WILL BE
CLOSED MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 FOR
LABOR DAY, AND MONDAY, OCTOBER 9
IN OBSERVANCE OF COLUMBUS DAY.

CALL US WITH YOUR PLAN QUESTIONS

To better serve our hard-working participants, the NYSNA Pension Plan call center is currently staffed by our pension analysts 10 hours per day between 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Pension analysts are available by calling (877) RN BENEFITS [762-3633].

(Representatives from all other departments are available between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. If you are also a NYSNA Benefits Fund participant, that call center is also available 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.)

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!

At the NYSNA Pension Plan, one of our primary goals is providing our participants with a seamless transition to retirement and supplying you with the necessary information needed to make an informed decision on exactly when that retirement will happen.

So, how are we doing? We'd like to hear from you and possibly include your thoughts in an upcoming issue of *The Pension Planner*.

Please e-mail your comments to:
communicationsdepartment@rnbenefits.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

YOUR MONEY:

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR DEBT

According to recent statistics, approximately 77 percent of American households have some level of debt – some good and some bad. Debt such as a mortgage may help you build wealth if your home appreciates in value. High-interest credit card debt, however, may hurt your credit history and derail your ability to meet other financial goals.

If you've recognized you have debt and are seeking a way to manage and eliminate all or most of it, you've already taken a big step to controlling it.

Here are some tips for managing your debt more effectively:

MAKE A BUDGET

Start by making a budget. Write down how much you make each month and how much you spend each month including rent/mortgage, utilities, food/gas, credit cards, transportation, and any other expenditures or bills. When you're done, look for areas where you may be able to cut back or eliminate expenses so that you can stop adding to your debt.

GET A CLEAR PICTURE OF YOUR DEBT

Create a list of all your outstanding debts, including their interest rates so you'll be able to see which should be handled first. You may also want to check your credit report to ensure you haven't forgotten about an outstanding debt. You can create your own debt management plan by paying down the credit card or lender with the highest interest rate with as high a payment as you can. Meanwhile, make minimum payments on your other bills. Once the first card is paid off, move on to the next card and do the same.

DON'T WAIT TO CALL CREDITORS

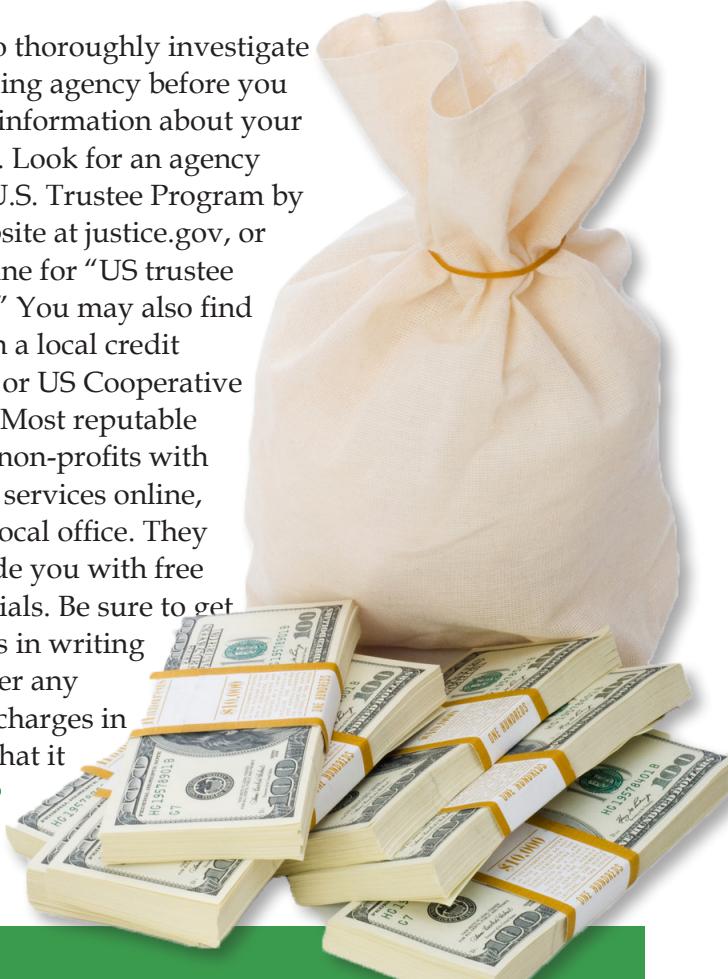
If you're behind on any bills, don't delay in calling the creditors or lenders to whom you owe money. Before a debt collector gets involved, you'll want to tell your creditors that you're aware

of the debt, why you're having trouble paying, and try to work out a new payment plan, potentially with lower payments you can better manage. Most lenders will work with you if they believe you're acting in good faith and your situation is temporary.

CONSIDER WORKING WITH A CREDIT COUNSELOR

Credit counseling agencies can provide money management advice, including developing a budget, creating a debt management plan, and handling a debt settlement or bankruptcy. They can even help you resolve an issue with a credit card company.

It's important to thoroughly investigate any credit counseling agency before you give out personal information about your financial situation. Look for an agency approved by the U.S. Trustee Program by going to their website at justice.gov, or simply search online for "US trustee credit counseling." You may also find an agency through a local credit union, university, or US Cooperative extension branch. Most reputable organizations are non-profits with low fees and offer services online, by phone, or at a local office. They should also provide you with free educational materials. Be sure to get any quotes for fees in writing and do not consider any organization that charges in advance for help that it hasn't given yet. •



Ask the Pension Plan



If I work a lot of overtime in the years before I retire, will my pension increase?

A No. Your pension earnings only include your base compensation plus experience differential. *Any overtime or shift differentials are not included in the calculation*, so working a lot of overtime prior to retirement will not increase your monthly pension benefit amount.

YEARS OF CREDITED SERVICE

Keep in mind that your pension benefit also varies according to the number of years of credited service you've accumulated and when those years were earned. This benefit calculation rewards longevity – a person with 30 years of service will receive a higher pension than someone with 10 years, assuming they had the same annual earnings. Therefore, each additional year you work in covered employment increases your future pension benefit.

In general, your final year of employment represents your highest earnings year. **However, in order for your final year of earnings to be considered in the calculation, you'll need to terminate employment effective December 31 of the year in which you retire.**

(For more details regarding the calculation used to determine your pension benefit, please see Pages 10 to 11 of the Plan's *Summary Plan Description*.) •



Can I change my beneficiary once I have begun collecting my pension benefit?

A Depending on the form of payment you choose for your pension benefit at the time of your retirement, you may be able to change your beneficiary.

JOINT AND SURVIVOR OR CONTINGENT ANNUITANT OPTIONS

If you elect the Joint and Survivor or Contingent Annuitant forms of payment you **may not** change your beneficiary designation after your pension payments have begun.

FIVE OR TEN YEAR CERTAIN OPTIONS

If you elect either the Five Year Certain or the Ten Year Certain form of benefit payment when you retire, you are allowed to change your beneficiary designation even after you have begun collecting your pension. To make this change, you would need to submit a notarized letter to the Plan office notifying us of the change. The following information regarding the new beneficiary you wish to designate should be included in your notarized letter:

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Social Security number
- ✓ Date of birth
- ✓ Relationship to you (retiree)
- ✓ Phone number and address

Have a question for the NYSNA Pension Plan that you'd like to see answered in this column? E-mail the Editor at communications@rnbenefits.org. For specific questions about your pension benefit contact a Pension Analyst at (877) RN BENEFITS [762-3633], Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "VESTED" IN THE PLAN?

While it may be a common pension industry term, "vesting" is likely an unfamiliar term for many NYSNA Pension Plan participants. In a nutshell, being vested in the Plan means that you have earned a future retirement benefit. When you reach your chosen retirement age (at least age 55), the vested benefit will be waiting for you, even if you're no longer working for a NYSNA Pension Plan-contributing employer that has contributed to your pension benefit.

CREDITED SERVICE

To be vested in the Plan you must have earned five years of credited service, including at least one year of "future service" (credited service earned after your employer joined the Pension Plan is considered future service credit).

You'll need to work a certain amount of time to earn credited service in any given calendar year:

- 851 hours or more to earn one full year of credited service;
- 651 to 850 hours to earn two-thirds of a year of credited service;

- 500 to 650 hours to earn one-third of a year of credited service.

- If you work in covered employment with a participating Pension Plan employer for less than 500 hours in any calendar year you won't earn any credited service for that year, which is considered a break in service.

BREAK IN SERVICE AND VESTING

A break in service may affect your credited service and vesting status.

If your break in service occurs before you're vested, you'll be allowed to keep the credit for all previous years of service if you return to work in a covered position within five years of when the break occurred and you work at least 500 hours that year. Otherwise, you'll lose credit for all previous years of service.

If your break in service happens after you're vested in the Plan, you're still eligible to receive a benefit at retirement age and you won't lose the service credit you've already earned. •

The Pension Planner is published four times a year as a service to participants of the New York State Nurses Association Pension Plan. The information in this newsletter is not intended to be complete Plan information, and is not a substitute for the *Summary Plan Description* or the Plan's official plan document. Please address questions about this newsletter to the Communications Department.

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Please notify us if your address changes so you won't miss the next issue of *The Pension Planner*.

PENSION STATEMENTS CAN HELP WITH RETIREMENT PLANNING

As you envision your retirement, even if it's still years away, you may wonder how much of a pension benefit you will one day receive from the NYSNA Pension Plan. Fortunately, each year the Pension Plan prepares a personal pension statement that we mail to all our active participants typically between September and December. These statements contain important information that may be helpful as you make decisions about your retirement and financial future.

PURPOSE

The Plan's pension statement provides you with an estimated pension benefit as a participant of the NYSNA Pension Plan, subject to the Plan's official plan documents. The statement is based on data provided to the Plan by your employer as of December 31 of the year prior to the statement date. As a multi-employer defined benefit pension plan, the Plan is funded entirely by contributions negotiated by NYSNA on your behalf and paid by participating facilities that are parties to collective bargaining agreements with NYSNA.

OUR CALCULATION

In general, your pension benefit is calculated by multiplying your final average earnings by 1.6 percent times your years of credited service.

Final average earnings are calculated by taking your average earnings over the five highest calendar years in the last 10 or fewer calendar years of your covered employment. Your pension earnings include only your base salary plus experience differential. Additional compensation, such as overtime, bonuses, or shift differential, isn't included.

Your pension statement reflects an **estimated** pension benefit. Since information such as employment dates and

salary is reported by your employer, any change in this information may affect your eligibility and your calculated estimated benefit. When you eventually apply for retirement from the Plan, we'll verify all the information sent by your employer is accurate.

Assuming your earnings will increase over time, and you'll accrue additional credited service, future pension statements sent by the Pension Plan may reflect an increase in the amount of your annual estimated pension benefit.

YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your pension statement always contains the following information personalized for you:

- Beginning date of participation in covered employment in the Plan,
- Pension earnings for the statement year as reported by your employer,
- Total paid hours for the statement year as reported by your employer,
- Estimated current accrued annual pension benefit,
- Years of credited service,
- Vested status,
- Final average earnings,
- Estimated benefit at age 65 (normal retirement age for the Pension Plan), if vested,

• Estimated unreduced early retirement benefit (if applicable) at age 60 with 20 years of service.

When you receive your pension statement from the Pension Plan, we encourage you to review the statement, check your personal information for accuracy, and contact the Plan office if any information appears incorrect. If you have any questions about your pension statement, please contact one of our pension analysts at (877) RN BENEFITS [762-3633].