Contact ETF

Visit us online at etfwi.gov
Find Wisconsin Retirement System benefits information, forms and publications, benefit calculators, educational offerings, e-mail and other online resources.

Call us toll free at 1-877-533-5020 or 608-266-3285 (local Madison)
Benefit specialists are available 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (CST) Monday-Friday

Self-Service: Order forms and brochures, change your address information or tax withholding 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Wisconsin Relay Service for hearing and speech impaired: 7-1-1
1-800-947-3529 (English), 1-800-833-7813 (Spanish)

Write or Return Forms
P.O. Box 7931
Madison, WI 53707-7931

Visit by Appointment
801 West Badger Road
Madison, WI 53713
7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who May Access Your Account</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Payments are Issued</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes To Your Payment Amount</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Deposit Information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Your Home Address</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Premiums</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Information</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work After Retirement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact ETF</td>
<td>Back Cover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who May Access Your Account

Confidentiality
The information in your records is confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone, including your spouse or domestic partner, without written authorization signed by you allowing the Department of Employee Trust Funds to disclose information. With proper identification, we can provide information about your account to you by telephone.

Power of Attorney
You may authorize another person to act on your behalf through a power of attorney. The person you authorize may, for example, review your file, allow disclosure of your confidential information to others, change your mailing address and sign a benefit application. A copy or facsimile of the appointment papers must be submitted to ETF.

Court-Appointed Guardian or Conservator
A guardian of the estate is an individual or corporation appointed by a court to manage the financial affairs of another person who the court has determined is either incompetent or a spendthrift. A conservatorship is a court-supervised arrangement under which a person voluntarily chooses to allow another individual to manage his or her estate. A copy or facsimile of the guardianship or conservatorship papers must be provided to ETF before a guardian's or conservator's signature can be accepted. The papers must be for the annuitant's “estate” and not for the annuitant's “person.”

When Payments Are Issued
Monthly payments will be electronically transferred to your financial institution by the first business day of the month. Direct deposit is the only payment method available for all ETF monthly benefits, except for those going to another country.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact ETF toll free at 1-877-533-5020 or 608-266-3285 (local Madison area).

Changes To Your Payment Amount
Whenever a change is made to your monthly benefit payment, ETF will send you an “Annuity Payment Statement” explaining the change. This is sent a few days before your payment is sent electronically, so you will know the new amount of your next payment. A statement is sent when the annual core and variable adjustments are applied to retirement benefits. These adjustments are based on the investment experience of the fund and are reflected on the May 1 payment.
Direct Deposit Information

ETF uses direct deposit to improve service to our annuitants. By reducing the volume of paper checks, production and mailing costs are decreased.

Complete the Direct Deposit Authorization section of your benefit application to have your payment deposited directly into your financial institution.

Can my payment be deposited to a joint checking or savings account?

Yes. However, if the payment is deposited to a joint account, the non-annuitant joint party must notify ETF and the financial institution immediately upon the death of the annuitant.

What if I have multiple accounts at ETF?

If you receive more than one monthly benefit from ETF, each will be a separate direct deposit.

How will I know my annuity payment is deposited?

Your financial institution will notify you of the deposit. They may send you a statement or provide you with a phone number to confirm the deposit. Ask your financial institution what method they use.

What if my direct deposit is not credited?

First, contact your financial institution to verify that your deposit has not been processed.

Notify ETF if your financial institution confirms that your payment was not credited via direct deposit.

What if I want to change financial institutions or account numbers?

• If you want to change to a different financial institution, you must submit a new authorization form. Use the Direct Deposit Authorization (ET-7282) form found online at etf.wi.gov, or contact ETF for a form.

• If you want to change your deposit to a different account within the same financial institution, you can either submit a new authorization form or contact us by telephone or in writing.

• In either case, do not close your old account until deposits start posting to your new account.

Changing Your Home Address

Always notify ETF if your home address changes.

Complete and send the Address/Name Change Form (ET-2815) or contact ETF. Even though your monthly payment is deposited directly to your account, you should still notify ETF. We send important materials such as benefit change notices, tax statements and WRS News to your home address. Please allow up to 30 days for a change of address to be effective.
Life Insurance

If you are insured under the Group Life Insurance Program and are eligible to continue coverage, premiums will be paid by deduction from your monthly benefit payment.

- ETF will send you a *Life Insurance Certification of Coverage* (ET-4802) after you retire that provides your coverage details.
- Premiums are deducted two months in advance. Premiums are payable through the end of the month prior to the month in which you reach age 65.
- No further premiums are required after you reach age 65. The insurance coverage continues for your lifetime in reduced amounts according to the policy terms.

Coverage also continues if you are receiving a disability benefit. Premiums may be waived if you are unable to perform any work in any occupation due to illness or injury. Ask your employer to file a *Request for Disability Premium Waiver* (ET-5306) if you think you qualify.

Health Insurance

*For both state of Wisconsin and local retirees*

1. Continuation of Coverage

- If you are an insured state government employee when you retire or begin a WRS disability benefit, you are entitled to continue your insurance for life.
- If you are an insured local government employee when you retire or begin a WRS disability benefit, you may continue coverage as long as your former employer participates in the program.

2. Premium Rates

Premium rates are in the most recent version of the *It’s Your Choice: Decision Guide* and on ETF’s internet site. Rates are subject to change each January 1.

Retirees who are enrolled in Parts A and B of Medicare and their spouses and dependents who are insured on a family plan have lower premium rates. If you and/or your insured dependents are eligible for coverage under Medicare and you are retired, you must immediately enroll in both Part A and Part B of Medicare to keep your insurance through ETF. Notify ETF when you and other family members enroll in Medicare so your premium can be adjusted.

3. Changes to Your Coverage

Each October, the It’s Your Choice enrollment period allows you to choose coverage with a different health plan and make certain other changes. Any change is effective the following January 1. See the *It’s Your Choice: Decision Guide* for more information.

Notify ETF promptly to add or remove any dependents so that your premium and coverage are adjusted accordingly.
State of Wisconsin Retirees Only

Your premiums are paid in the order shown below:

1. Sick leave credits. If you have accumulated sick leave credits, they will be used to pay your premiums.

2. Deductions from your annuity. After any sick leave is used up, premiums will be deducted each month from your annuity payment if it is large enough.

3. Direct billing. If the annuity amount after other deductions is not large enough to cover the premiums, or you are receiving only an LTDI benefit, the insurance carrier will bill you for premiums, and you will pay them directly.

If you are retired and have life insurance coverage through the WRS, are at least age 66, and have used up all of your sick leave credits, you may be able to elect to convert your life insurance to pay health insurance premiums. Contact ETF for more information.

Sick Leave Escrow for State Employees

If you do not want to use your sick leave credits because you have comparable coverage elsewhere, you may apply to escrow (delay using) your sick leave credits for an indefinite time. To escrow your sick leave, you must file the Sick Leave Escrow Application (ET-4305) with ETF. If your spouse or domestic partner is also a state employee and has family coverage, your credits are automatically held in reserve while you remain covered as a dependent under your spouse’s or domestic partner’s state plan.

You can use your sick leave credits only to pay group health insurance premiums for coverage under the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program. Your employer will compute your sick leave credits and certify the value on a form it sends to ETF. Each January, you will receive a statement showing your sick leave credit account balance.

For more information, please see ETF’s Sick Leave Conversion Credit Program (ET-4132) brochure, available online.

Local Retirees Only

Your premiums will be paid in one of the following ways:

1. Through your employer. Some local employers offer post-retirement health insurance payments.

2. Deductions from your annuity. Premiums will be deducted each month from your payment if it is large enough.

3. Direct billing. If the annuity amount after other deductions is not large enough to cover the premiums, or you are receiving only an LTDI benefit, the insurance carrier will bill you for premiums, and you will pay them directly.
How can I change my income tax withholding?

Please complete the Income Tax Withholding section of your benefit application.

- Federal income tax withholding is voluntary, but if you do not specify how you want taxes withheld, federal regulations require ETF to withhold according to the tax tables as if you are married with three exemptions.

- Wisconsin income tax withholding is also voluntary, but if you do not specify how you want taxes withheld, ETF is not required to withhold anything.

You have three options for changing your withholding:

- Use the ETF Retiree Monthly Tax Withholding Calculator to determine how much you would like to withhold from your payment for taxes. You can also use this calculator to print a tax withholding election form to submit to ETF. Access the calculator at https://trust.etf.state.wi.us/ETFTaxCalculator/calculator.do.

- Call ETF toll-free at 1-877-533-5020 or 608-266-3285 (local Madison) to update your withholding over the phone.

- Complete an Income Tax Withholding Election Change for Monthly Annuities (ET-4310) form, found online at etf.wi.gov/publications.htm, and send it to ETF.

Will I receive a statement for income tax purposes after I retire?

ETF will mail you a 1099-R statement annually by January 31 providing information to complete your tax return. You do not need to request this information. The statement will provide:

- the amount of your benefit payments defined as taxable income;
- the gross amount of all benefit payments made during the year; and
- the total withheld for life and health insurance premiums, and federal and Wisconsin state income taxes, if any.

If you have multiple WRS annuity accounts (for example, you receive an annuity from both your own WRS account and as a beneficiary of another account), you will receive a separate annual 1099-R tax statement for each of your annuity accounts. It is important that you file copies of all your 1099-R forms with your annual tax returns, if required by the taxing authority.
Work After Retirement

After I retire, can I take a job with a private employer?

As a retiree, you can work in private employment and your benefits administered by ETF (retirement and health/life insurance) will not change.

After I retire, when can I take a job that’s covered by the WRS?

When you can take a position covered by the WRS depends on when you last terminated WRS employment. Your annuity or lump-sum benefit will be cancelled if you return to WRS-eligible employment before the end of your required break in service.

If You Last Terminated WRS Employment Before July 2, 2013

If you terminated WRS service before July 2, 2013, the earliest day you may return to WRS employment is the latest of the following dates. This is called your “break in service” requirement.

• The day after the effective date of your annuity.
• The 31st day after you terminated your WRS-participating employment.
• The 31st day after ETF received your benefit application.

If You Last Terminated WRS Employment On or After July 2, 2013

If you terminated WRS service on or after July 2, 2013, the earliest day you may return to WRS employment is the latest of the following dates. This is called your “break in service” requirement.

• The day after the effective date of your annuity.
• The 76th day after you terminated your WRS-participating employment.
• The 76th day after ETF received your benefit application.

How can I tell if a job I want to take as a rehired annuitant is covered by the WRS?

The Human Resources department of your prospective employer can tell you if the job you are considering is eligible for coverage under the WRS.

What happens if I take a job that’s covered by the WRS after I meet my break in service requirement?

How you are impacted if you take a position covered by the WRS depends on when you last terminated WRS employment.

If You Last Terminated WRS Employment Before July 2, 2013

If you return to work for any WRS employer in a qualifying position after your required 30-day break, you have two choices:

1. Remain an annuitant. If you decide to remain an annuitant and continue receiving your WRS annuity, you must file the Rehired Annuitant Election (ET-2319) form with your employer electing not to participate in the WRS as an active employee. You may elect active WRS coverage in the future, depending on eligibility.
2. Elect coverage under the WRS. You can elect to become covered under the WRS at any time. If you choose to be covered by the WRS again, you must file the Rehired Annuitant Election (ET-2319) form with your employer. Your employer will forward this form to ETF. Your annuity will be suspended and your WRS coverage will begin on the first of the month after ETF receives your completed election form.

If You Last Terminated WRS Employment On or After July 2, 2013

If you return to work for a WRS employer in a position in which you are expected to work at least two-thirds of full time after your required 75 day break, your annuity will be automatically suspended. It will be re-established when you retire again.

If you work less than two-thirds of full time in your new position, what happens to your annuity depends on when you were first employed in a WRS position.

• If you first began work under the WRS before July 1, 2011, and you return to work for a WRS employer in a position that is at least one-third of full time, you may choose whether you want to continue or stop your annuity.
• If you first began work under the WRS on or after July 1, 2011, and you return to work for a WRS
Work After Retirement (continued)

employer in a position that is less than two-thirds of full time, you may not become a participating employee. Your annuity will continue.

After I retire, when can I take a job with a WRS employer that’s not covered by the WRS?

Whether or not you need to satisfy a break in service (see above) depends on whether you go back to the same employer that you retired from.

- If your WRS employer is the same employer from whom you retired, the break in service requirement applies even though your new job does not meet WRS-participation standards.
- If you are going to work for a different WRS employer, you do not have to satisfy a break in service requirement. You can take a non-WRS job at any time.

Effect on Health Insurance

The following information applies to annuitants insured under the State Group Health Insurance Program, the Wisconsin Public Employers Group Health Insurance Program and the Local Annuitant Health Program.

- If you do not participate in the WRS in your new job, your health insurance coverage will not be affected.
- If you participate in the WRS in your new job, you become eligible for the coverage offered to active employees by your employer, and you cease to be eligible for the coverage you had as an annuitant (if different).

What happens to my sick leave if I am a state retiree returning to state employment covered by the WRS?

Your unused sick leave account balance will be frozen until you re-retire if you participate in the WRS in your new job.

When you go back to work, you will earn more sick leave. When you re-retire, that new amount will be added to your existing sick leave account. The add-on amount is based on your highest rate of pay as a state employee. You can use your entire account to pay your state group health insurance premiums after your new retirement.

What happens to my sick leave if I am a state retiree taking a job with a local employer?

If you take a job as a local WRS participant and you have been using state sick leave credits to pay for your health insurance premiums, you can escrow these credits to use later. You must have comparable coverage elsewhere to escrow sick leave credits. If your credits are already escrowed, you cannot access them until you retire again.

When you re-retire, you will also be eligible for the Local Annuitant Health Program. Open enrollment is available if you apply for both your annuity and for this health coverage within 60 days of termination.

Effect on Life Insurance

I continued my life insurance coverage when I retired, but now I’m returning to work. What coverage will I have?

Your coverage depends on whether or not you participate in the WRS.

- If you do not participate in the WRS, you will retain your retiree coverage.
- If you participate in the WRS, you will have a choice of either continuing your retiree coverage or applying for coverage as an active employee.

If you apply for coverage as an active employee, your coverage will be based on your estimated earnings at the time you elect WRS participation.

If you choose coverage as an active employee, your premiums will be deducted from your salary. If you choose to continue your retiree coverage, premiums must be paid directly to the insurance company.
How long after I retire will my annuity payments be based on the amounts from my annuity estimates?

Your annuity payments begin based on an estimated payment amount. The amount is estimated because ETF does not always have final information about earnings, service and contributions when a retirement benefit begins. Between 6 and 12 months after retirement, ETF will send you a Notice of Final Retirement Annuity Calculation (ET-4820). This is a recalculation of your annuity benefit based on the final information submitted to ETF by your employer. Any retroactive adjustments due will be made to your subsequent payment(s).

Will ETF send me a statement every month?

No. ETF sends an Annuity Payment Statement only when there is a change in your annuity payment (including tax withholding and insurance deduction changes). You will not receive a monthly statement from ETF.

Will my retirement checks increase after I retire?

Each year, ETF reviews investment results as of December 31. In the following year, the monthly payments to annuitants may increase or decrease based on this review.

This is not a cost-of-living increase; it is an adjustment based on the investment results of the Core and Variable Trust Funds. Your May 1 payment will reflect this change.

It will apply until the next adjustment is made the following year. Annuity adjustments can be positive or negative. Some years your annuity will receive positive adjustments. Those gains can be taken away by market losses in a future year; however, if you participate solely in the Core Trust Fund, your annuity will never drop below your final calculation. There is no limit to the amount the variable portion of your annuity can be reduced.

The core annuity adjustment paid on May 1 during the first year after you retire is prorated based on the number of months you were retired during the calendar year you retired. You receive the full core annuity adjustment in subsequent years. If you participate in the Variable Trust Fund, you receive the full variable adjustment to the variable portion of your annuity every year.

I am in the Variable Trust Fund. Do I receive adjustments? Can I transfer to the Core Trust Fund after retirement?

Every May 1, we apply an adjustment to the variable portion of your monthly annuity, based on the investment results of the Variable Trust Fund. The variable portion of your annuity can increase or decrease each May 1. There is no limit to the amount the Variable portion of an annuity can change in response to investment gains or losses.

You may transfer to the Core Trust Fund by submitting a completed Canceling Variable Participation (ET-2313) form to ETF. It becomes effective on the January 1 after it is received by ETF. Once you cancel participation in the Variable Trust Fund, you cannot rejoin.

When I approach age 62, does ETF contact the Social Security Administration about starting my benefit under their program?

No. It is your responsibility to contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) about starting your benefit, normally about three months before you reach age 62. Call the SSA at 1-800-772-1213 for information or visit their Internet site at www.ssa.gov.

What happens to my health insurance when my spouse or I reach age 65? Are we required to enroll in Medicare? Will I be notified?

When each of you reach age 65, each must enroll in Medicare (both parts A and B) to continue state or local health insurance. We will automatically mail you a reminder before your 65th birthday and your spouse’s or domestic partner’s birthday. Your premiums decrease when either of you are enrolled in Medicare (both parts A and B). You will need to submit the form ETF sends you and provide a copy of your Medicare card(s) to ETF.

You must notify ETF when you or any insured person covered on your family plan is eligible for Medicare before age 65 (i.e. has received 24 months of Social Security disability benefits).
What happens if payments are issued after my death?

A payment issued after the death of the annuitant must be returned promptly to ETF. We will review the deceased’s account for benefits that may be due the beneficiary(ies). Any checks cashed or payment deposits removed from the annuitant’s financial institution’s account after the annuitant’s death will become a legal liability for the individual cashing the checks or withdrawing the deposits.

Can I change my insurance if I move to a different area?

Yes, if you move from the service area, you can change to the Standard Plan/Medicare Plus $1,000,000 (state retirees) or another HMO.

- You must complete a *Group Health Insurance Application/Change Form (ET-2301)* if you are changing plans. ETF must receive your application within 30 days after the date of your move.

- If you wish to remain with your present plan you must complete ET-2301 to notify the plan of your new address. Please visit etf.wi.gov or contact ETF for the form.

I am a retired public safety officer (PSO). Can I claim a tax deduction for my health insurance premiums?

Eligible retired PSOs may elect to have health insurance and/or long-term care insurance premiums deducted from their monthly WRS annuity payment. Participation in this program allows PSOs to exclude up to $3,000 annually from their gross taxable income. Contact ETF for the PSO packet (ET-4330).

The Department of Employee Trust Funds does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of programs, services or employment. If you are speech, hearing or visually impaired and need assistance, call toll free at 1-877-533-5020 or 608-266-3285 (local Madison). We will try to find another way to get the information to you in a usable form.

The Department of Employee Trust Funds has made every effort to ensure that this brochure is current and accurate. However, changes in the law or processes since the last revision to this brochure may mean that some details are not current. Please contact ETF if you have any questions about a particular topic in this brochure.
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