



STATE OF WISCONSIN
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CORRESPONDENCE MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 4, 2008
TO: Wisconsin Retirement Board
 Teachers Retirement Board
FROM: Diane Poole, Director
 Disability Programs Bureau
SUBJECT: April 2008 – June 2008 Quarterly Disability Annuity Statistics

This memo is for informational purposes only. No Board action is required.

Attached is the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) *Disability Benefit Annuity Statistical Report* for April through June 2008. The report provides quarterly data on: number of annuities started, options selected, gender, determination, age, and disability type.

TRENDS

Overall, trends did not change much this quarter, when compared to the same quarter in the past five years:

- The number of new disability annuities is down. The Teachers Retirement Board (TR) had 7, compared to an average of 22; the Wisconsin Retirement Board (WR) had 38, compared to an average of 47.
- The most selected annuity options for TR are “For Annuitants Life only” and “100% Continued to Named Survivor (Joint Survivor).” The most selected annuity option for WR remains “100% Continued to Named Survivor (Joint Survivor) with 180 Payments Guaranteed.”
- Females continue to be the predominant user of the \$40.63 Disability Retirement Annuity benefit for both the TR Board and WR Board.
- The majority of applications are approved; a very small number are denied.
- The predominant age group for both TR and WR is 51-55.
- The prevalent disability types for the TR Board for this quarter in the last five years are: Mental Illness, Cancer, and Neurology. For the WR Board, the prevalent disability types are: Mental Illness, Orthopedic, and Cancer.

DISABILITY PROGRAMS BUREAU WORKLOAD

Staffing

The Disability Programs Bureau is staffed by 5.5 Trust Funds Specialists and 2.5 policy analysts. One policy analyst was a new hire in March 2007. One specialist began last September and one began in July 2008. We also received a new Trust Funds Specialist

Reviewed and approved by Tom Korpady, Division of Insurance Services.	
Signature _____	Date _____

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leadworker position and filled that position in January 2008. The specialists are responsible for the §40.63 and §40.65 programs.

One of the experienced Trust Funds Specialists is part-time. Currently, 55% of our Specialists and 40% of our policy analysts are in training. It takes approximately 1.5 to 2 years to fully train a Specialist in our complex disability programs and approximately 2.5 years for a policy analyst to complete training.

Backlog

The statutorily required review of tax returns for the §40.65 program had a backlog of about three years. By adding the leadworker position and shifting some staff responsibilities, more experienced staff are dedicating a few hours per week to review tax returns. We continue to make substantial progress in alleviating this backlog.

PRIORITIES

The top priority for the Disability Programs Bureau is to approve disability benefits as quickly as possible so individuals are not without income. Approving a disability benefit requires extensive follow-up with the applicant, employer, and health care providers. An application can take up to a year to process because of this inherent dependency on outside sources to provide documentation. Another priority is to maintain existing disability accounts. This requires obtaining updated medical and income information, which again requires extensive follow-up with outside sources.

attachments