A Message from Comptroller

Thomas P. DiNapoli

As Trustee of the New York State Common Retirement Fund (Fund), I am pleased to report that the Fund had an 11.40 percent return on investments during the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2017. The value of the Fund rose to $192.1 billion.

Our robust growth is the result of diversified investments and strong returns, particularly in the fourth quarter. We are long-term investors, guided by an investment strategy designed to obtain the best possible returns while minimizing risk. The growth rate for the year exceeded the Fund’s expected rate of return of 7 percent, and for the eight years since the Great Recession, the Fund’s average annual return rate exceeded 11 percent.

The soundness of the Fund helps to protect the financial security of more than 1 million public employees, retirees and beneficiaries. During fiscal 2016-2017, the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) paid out $11.45 billion in retirement and death benefits. That includes $9.1 billion paid to New York residents, which helped support New York businesses and communities.

I am also glad to see that many retirees are taking advantage of Retirement Online, the NYSLRS web-based, self-service tool launched in January. As of August 2017, 76,788 retirees, beneficiaries and members have created Retirement Online accounts. Sign in to check your contact information and update it if needed. You can also see information about your pension payments and even create a pension income verification letter through Retirement Online. Learn more or register from our home page at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/index.php.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. DiNapoli
State Comptroller

Taxes and Your Pension

You leave a lot behind when you retire — your commute, workplace politics and all the other stresses that go with working for a living. Unfortunately, you don’t leave taxes behind. February through April is still tax season, even when you retire.

State Taxes

You don’t need to pay state taxes on your pension if you live in New York State. That’s not true everywhere, though. The Retired Public Employees Association has a rundown of each state’s tax policy at www.rpea.org/retirement-planning/pension-tax-by-state.

Federal Taxes

Every year, you receive a 1099-R form from NYSLRS. It lists your pension income from the past year, as well as how much money we withheld on your behalf for federal taxes. If you didn’t return your Withholding Certificate for Pension or Annuity Payments (W-4P) form when you retired, we based your withholding on the default “married with three exemptions” status.

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We hope you have signed up for Retirement Online. It’s a secure way to view your pension information and take care of business with NYSLRS, such as notifying us of a new address or generating an income verification letter online. (If you don’t have an account, register today at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/index.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/index.php). If you’ve had technical difficulties using the system, this information may help.

**Forgot Your Password?**

On the Sign In page, click Forgot Password. On the Identify Yourself page, enter your User ID, check “I’m not a robot” and click Next. On the Verify Your Identity page, answer the security questions and click Next. Follow the guidelines in the gray box to create a new password. Click the Reset Password button.

**Forgot Your User ID?**

Click Forgot ID on the Sign In page. Fill in all boxes on the Identify Yourself page and click Next. Answer the security questions and click Next. Your User ID will appear on the screen.

**Skip the Security Code**

You won’t need a Security Code each time you sign in to your Retirement Online account if you add a trusted device. (This could be your personal computer, laptop or smart phone). To register a device, sign in using the device you want to add. In the Enter Your Security Code pop-up box, click “I am logging in from a private device.” Then click “Save this device as a trusted device…” and Submit.

**Still Need Help?**

- Click on the Tools and Tips icon on the Retirement Online homepage ([www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirement_online/customers.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirement_online/customers.php));
- Email us using a secure contact form ([www.emailNYSLRS.com](http://www.emailNYSLRS.com)); or
- Call 1-866-805-0990 (or 518-474-7736 in the Albany, New York area).

Social engineering is the term security professionals use to describe efforts by con artists to trick you into revealing personal information so they can steal from you. They may pretend to be someone trustworthy, such as a bank employee or an IRS official. Fortunately, you have the power to stop such attacks.

If something seems suspicious or doesn’t feel right, trust that feeling. Someone attempting social engineering may try some of the following techniques:

- Creating a sense of urgency.
- Asking for information they shouldn’t have or should already know (such as your account numbers).
- Requesting your password. (No legitimate organization ever will.)
- Pressuring you to bypass or ignore regular security procedures.
- Offering you something that’s too good to be true. (You probably haven’t won the lottery, especially if you never entered it.)
- Pretending to be a friend or co-worker. If an email contains vague wording or doesn’t sound like the supposed sender, verify any requests with your friend or coworker in person or over the phone.

Social engineering can happen in any medium — by email, text message, over social media or even in person. Common sense and caution are the keys to protecting your privacy. If you suspect someone is trying to trick you, do not continue to communicate with that person.

To read more, go to the Department of Homeland Security’s computer security website at [www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/S04-014](http://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/S04-014).
Returning to Work?

If you are under age 65, the Retirement and Social Security Law (RSSL) limits your post-retirement work with public employers in New York State. Depending on how much you earn when you return, you may still be able to collect your pension. Section 212 of the RSSL limits service retirees’ yearly earnings from public employment to $30,000. If your earnings would exceed $30,000, your prospective employer may seek approval to hire you under Section 211 of the RSSL, but there are certain restrictions, and you cannot return to the same or a similar position for one year after retiring.

Failure to follow these rules may result in a reduction or suspension of your pension. For more information, read our publication, *What If I Work After Retirement?*, at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vol648.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/vol648.php).

RETIREES CONTRIBUTE

NYSLRS retirees were responsible for $11.7 billion in economic activity in New York State

- **PAID 5% OR $1.7 BILLION** of total property taxes in NY, though they only make up 2.9% of the population
- **SPENT $9.9 BILLION** in New York State, supporting an estimated 66,100 jobs
- **PAID AN ESTIMATED $550 MILLION** in state & local sales taxes

When you filed your 2016 taxes, did you receive a refund? Did you owe the IRS money? Either way, it’s easy to make changes for the rest of 2017 and subsequent years.

1. Use our automated phone service to find out your current withholding. Call 1-866-805-0990 (518-474-7736 in the Albany, New York area); press 4 for retirees, then 5, then 2.

2. To change your withholding, just print a W-4P form from our website, fill it out and return it to us. We even have an online calculator that estimates your withholding based on the marital status and number of exemptions you enter.

The calculator, along with interactive tutorials explaining the 1099-R and W-4P forms, is available from our Taxes and Your Pension page at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/tax_services_information.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/tax_services_information.php).
Late or Lost Check?

If your pension check hasn't been delivered by the eighth of the month, follow these three steps:

1. Call us toll-free at 1-866-805-0990 (or 518-474-7736 in the Albany area).
2. Press “4” — retired and receiving a monthly pension allowance.
3. Press “3” to report your check is late.

We’ll stop payment on the check and issue a replacement, usually within two business days. If your original check arrives during that period, do not cash it. Send it back to us. Please do not call to report a late check earlier than the eighth day of that month, even if your check usually arrives like clockwork a day or two after the first of the month.

To avoid future delays, consider enrolling in direct deposit, which is faster and more secure than mail. Your money is automatically deposited in your account, even if you are away from home, and it’s easy to enroll. Simply submit a completed Direct Deposit Enrollment Application (RS6370). Learn more on our website at www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/retirees/direct-deposit-program.php.