



MCREA

Montgomery County Retired
Employees' Association, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

May 2020

IMPORTANT:

**Due to COVID-19 the MCREA June Annual Meeting Has Been
*Postponed until further notice!***

The Board is monitoring options and considering a Virtual Annual Meeting. When details are known, a notice and/or other important information will be distributed to members via email, Facebook, and our website: mcreaonline.com.

Therefore, please confirm your correct email address *if you haven't confirmed it recently* by emailing it to

MCREAMembership@gmail.com.

FROM YOUR MCREA PRESIDENT – Sara Harris. . .

A few words about the fine MCREA Board serving you; on your behalf, 17 volunteer Board members monitor benefits, budget and pension details and provide members with alerts to respond when necessary.

Throughout this unique moment in time, we, MCREA members, have opportunities as well as challenges, managing and balancing life's details, being in touch and discovering fun and delights, as best we can. Following are some informational items for MCREA members.

First, an important detail I want to share with you is the recognition given by industry peers and professionals to Montgomery County's Linda Herman, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans and the Board of Investment Trustees, for her abilities to manage defined benefit, contribution and deferred compensation plans. Ms. Herman received the 2019 Power 100 awarded to the top 100 Chief Investment Officers, globally. Ms. Herman and her team provide MCREA members with the annual Employment Retirement Plans (ERP) report. See more on **Pages 7 & 8**.

Second, the next important detail is the cancellation of the MCREA in-person Annual Meeting in June. At press time, the Board and I are monitoring options and exploring a virtual meeting possibility on a date yet to be determined.

Therefore, successfully contacting you is of utmost importance. Please help by making sure MCREA has your current, correct email address; send an email to MCREAMembership@gmail.com if you haven't provided it recently. Efficiently contacting members is one of our highest priorities; specifically, informing you about the 2020 Annual Meeting in a timely and cost-effectively manner is an email we want to send to you as soon as details are firm.

Finally, important and essential, is serving you and communicating with you regarding county retiree-related information. MCREA information occurs throughout this Newsletter, our website: mcreaonline.com, Facebook, and email. Please, periodically, check the website or Facebook for online updates and watch for a MCREA email.

I hope you and yours are taking good care of yourselves, helping as you can, and pause each day for fun, discovery and enjoyment.

Sara

THIS MAY BE YOUR YEAR TO SUPPORT MCREA WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES

At this time of each year retirees and their beneficiaries are asked to support MCREA's important oversight work and especially the cost of printing and the mailing the MCREA newsletters. You do so by paying your membership dues-basic dues which are now just \$10.00 for 2 years (though you can pay up to 5 years).

If this is your year to pay or you have never paid before or you have allowed your dues to lapse, please do so now! If you are unsure when you last paid your dues, send an email to **MCREAmembership@gmail.com**; you will receive an email with the status of your dues.

Two Ways to Pay Your Membership Dues:

1. Please complete the membership application on **page 11**, include your email address or indicate you do not have one or do not wish to share it; mail your check to the address indicated. **Providing your *legibly* written email address enables MCREA to send you an email should a time sensitive issue regarding your retiree benefits arise.** You will also receive a friendly email reminder when your membership dues expire.
2. You may now pay your dues via PayPal by using your credit card. Go to **<http://www.mcreaonline.com/membership.html>** and follow the instructions. You will be charged a small fee of \$0.75 whether you choose to pay **2, 4, or 5** years. If you have questions about your payment, send an email to **MCREAmembership@gmail.com**.

REMEMBER: Your membership dues **help cover MCREA's costs, KEEPS YOUR ASSOCIATION STRONG and YOU informed.** We thank you very much for your participation!

REAL ID POSTPONED

The deadline for obtaining the Real ID has been postponed until October 1, 2021. See: <https://www.dhs.gov/real-id> Thereafter, Americans will be required to show their Real ID in order to board domestic commercial flights or enter federal buildings. See your **November 2019 MCREA Newsletter**, page 5, or see it at mcreaonline.com for compliance details.

RESOURCES and TIPS:

COVID-19:

For closure information related to CoVid19, go to the link below:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OEMHS/COVID19-Closures.html>

For additional useful COVID-19 information, visit montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19

FORMS:

If you need a County form and have online access, go to montgomerycountymd.gov and put the name of the form in the search box. You will be linked to the form. You can then print, complete, and mail it to the *correct* County address (MCERP or OHR) listed on each form. Some important examples:

- Change of Address or Name Form (Pension Retirees see * below)
- W-4P- Federal Tax Withholding Form (Pension Retirees see * below)
- MW507P – Maryland Income Tax Withholding for Annuity, Sick Pay and Retirement
*Pension retirees use your Retiree Online Access to make changes to address, federal withholding, or view pay advices. Questions: contact MCERP at 240-777-8230.

Remember to keep your beneficiaries current:

- Life Insurance Beneficiary Designation/Change Form
- Deferred Compensation Beneficiary Designation/Change Form
- Retirement Beneficiary Designation/Change Form

No online access? Call 311 or 240 777 0311 for assistance in getting needed information; toll-free County numbers have been eliminated.

WHOM TO CONTACT?

For pension, financial/tax issues, contact MCERP: See this newsletter, page 12;

For health insurance/benefits issues, contact MCOHR: See this newsletter, page 12;

For personal information changes, contact MCERP or OHR: they will share the information with each other;

For questions about your MCREA membership/dues: send an email to MCREAMembership@gmail.com;

For suggestions, comments, questions you can't get answered after trying the MCREA phoneline and/or any of the above: send an email to PresidentMCREA@gmail.com

eNEWSLETTERS:

Here are a few County eNewsletter subscriptions to consider:

Sign up for, or update your subscriptions at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/socialmedia/ENewsletter.html>

From that page you can add subscriptions for executive branch newsletters. For example:

- News from County Executive (County ReMARCs)
- Paperless Airplane (from PIO)

For Council eNewsletters:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/socialmedia/ENewsletter.html>

- Montgomery County Council – The Council Connection, Council President's electronic newsletter
- Newsletter from your Councilmember or from any or all others

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION continued and formerly on the last page of the newsletter:

Cigna (Dental): 1-800-244-6224 www.cigna.com

Eyemed: 1-866-801-1479 or 800-521-3604 www.eyemed.com; the Discount Plan # is 1018309

Amplifon (Hearing): 1-888-784-6050 www.AmplifonUSA.com

Prudential Long-Term Care Insurance: 1-800-732-0416 www.Prudential.com

ACSIA Long Term Care Insurance: 410-455-4680 / 443-275-1764; www.MCG-LTC.com

MONTGOMERY COUNTY NEEDS YOUR HELP AS AN ELECTION JUDGE FOR THE NOVEMBER 2020 ELECTION!

WHAT IS AN ELECTION WORKER?

An election worker (or election judge) is a registered Maryland voter who volunteers to assist voters on Election Day. The role of an election worker is to ensure fair and accessible elections for all voters and to protect the integrity of the election process. In accordance with Federal and State law, they must perform all of the duties assigned by the local Board of Elections and perform their duties faithfully, diligently, and without partiality or prejudice.

Every election approximately 3,500 judges ensure that polling places run smoothly, and the election is carried out honestly and accurately. Applications are accepted year-round; however, the deadline to apply to work in a specific election is 21 business days prior to the election. Applications can be submitted online, in our office during normal business hours, by email (scanned) or fax. Applications received after the deadline may be processed or held for the next election.

An election worker who serves in the polling place is a very important part of the electoral process. This individual is the point of contact between the Board of Elections and the general public during voting hours. He/she is responsible for administering the actual voting procedures in each voting location and making sure that the voters have a positive voting experience. Without these individuals, it would be impossible to conduct successful elections.

We offer a variety of positions and hours of service. Some positions require prior election worker experience and/or use of an automobile. Workers bilingual in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and French are needed to help voters requesting language assistance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/ElectionJudge/Overview.html>

NEWS from

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANS (MCERP)

Linda Herman, MCERP Executive Director and Team Are Again Recognized Globally for Their Work

The Chief Investment Officer (CIO) organization annually requests information from pension plans, corporation and endowment funds, consultants, investment managers and service providers on who they believe are the world's most powerful asset owners based on a variety of factors including ideas, innovation, the ability to influence, collaboration, talent development, fund size, and tenure. This year CIO received over 600 nominations and compiled a list of the top 100 plans globally based on the responses to their survey.

This is the second year that the Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans have made the list of the top 100 plans. Other plans that made the top 100 list include: Yale, California State Teachers' Retirement System, University of Texas, United Technologies, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Harvard and General Electric.

Montgomery County's pension plan is not only listed as one of the most innovative pension investment managers but also has consistently achieved investment returns that rank in the top decile (better than 90% of other pension plans in a peer group of 147 plans over \$1 billion in assets) while using less risk than the peer group. The strong returns were achieved through a combination of asset allocation decisions by the Board and investment manager selection by Staff and the financial advisors. NEPC, the current general consultant to the retirement trust funds, stated that they have seen very few pension plans with performance on a risk adjusted basis equivalent to Montgomery County. These strong returns have positively contributed to the funded status which reduces required contributions from taxpayers saving millions of dollars. As of June 30, 2019, the funded status for the Fund was 99%, which compares quite favorably to the median peer group funded status of 71%.

Participation in Montgomery County's Retirement Plans as of June 30, 2019:

	Employees' Retirement System	Retirement Savings Plan	Guaranteed Retirement Income Plan	County Deferred Compensation Plan
Active Members	3,749	3,380	2,254	2,154
Retirees & Beneficiaries	6,731	N/A	N/A	N/A
Terminated-still participating	543	1,039	370	1,220

Go to <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcerp> for more on the status of the various plans, scroll down and click on *Board's Annual Report – June 30, 2019*.

Current Words from Linda Herman, Executive Director MCERP

As stated above, the County's defined benefit plan, Employees' Retirement System (ERS), was 99% funded as of June 30, 2019, which placed it in an elite group of public funds (roughly 5%) based on the financial strength of the fund. In comparison, the peer group median pension fund was 71% funded based on the latest survey conducted.

Although current financial markets are volatile, the asset allocation of the ERS is well diversified across asset classes to enable the construction of a portfolio that should weather the volatility. In the investment of pension fund assets, an appropriate balance must be struck between risks taken and returns sought to ensure the long-term health of the plan. The Board has adopted an investment policy that works to control the extent of downside risk to which the ERS is exposed while maximizing the potential for long term increases in the value of assets.

Specific investment objectives include:

- To realize the actuarial assumed rate of return of 7.5 percent.
- To manage portfolio risk so as to limit potential downside fluctuations in the value of the total ERS assets.
- To realize as high a rate of total return as possible consistent with the above.

Additional information on the allocation of ERS assets as well as performance and the funded status can be found on the Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans' website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/retirement. Click on Trustees and then click on reports. The reports are updated as new information is available. Please reach out to MCERP at retirement@montgomerycountymd.gov or call 240-777-8230 if you have additional questions.

Social Security/Medicare Seminars

Social Security Administration (SSA) representatives conduct quarterly onsite seminars for retirees and employees in the EOB Lobby Auditorium from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. **Of special importance to persons soon to turn 65 years of age**, information will be provided about Social Security, Medicare, and the SSA's online services; questions will be addressed. The dates of the remaining 2020 seminars are:

Wednesday, June 24, 2020 Wednesday, September 23, 2020
Thursday, November 12, 2020

To register to attend a seminar, email MCERP at retirement@montgomerycountymd.gov or call **240-777-8230**. Please include your name, the session you would like to attend and if you will be bringing a guest. Parking is available across the street at the Council Office Building (COB). A parking voucher will be provided at the seminar.

Please check for cancellations before-hand, if you are signed up for a seminar.

* * *

NEWS from

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES (OHR)

Remember: Retirees and Beneficiaries May Change Their Health Insurance Benefits at Any Time During the Year.

MCG Retiree Insurance Enrollment Statistics as of 4/1/2020					
Retirees	Medical Plans				
	CareFirst Indemnity	High POS	Standard POS	Kaiser w/RX	UHC
Non-Medicare	17	1076	1689	141	416
Medicare	516	1862	686	236	558
Total Retirees (includes survivors)	533*	2938*	2375*	377*	974*
	PPO Dental Plan	Vision**	Caremark/SilverScript Prescription Drug Plan		
			High RX	Standard RX	Total RX
Non-Medicare	1957		170	1474	1644
Medicare	4227		647	2441	3088
Total Retirees (includes survivors)	6184		817	3915	4732

* A total of 7,197 Retirees and their survivors/beneficiaries are covered in the 5 OHR Medical Plans.

** Effective January 1, 2020 all retirees have access to Vision Discount Plan



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please **PRINT CLEARLY** or Use an Address Label

RETIREE: Last Name _____ First _____ M.I. _____

Spouse (optional): First Name _____ Last Name (if different from above) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Thank you for your support!

MCREA holds this information in confidence. It is not shared or sold to other groups or organizations.

For additional information about annual meetings, health insurance, newsletters, helpful contact information, and much more, please visit: www.mcreaonline.com

 Find us on Facebook:
Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.

Application is for: New Renewal

Dues are \$10.00 for 2 years per County retiree.

Enclosed are dues for:

2 years, \$10.00 4 years, \$20.00

5 years, \$25.00

Check #: _____

Date on check: _____

Please make your check payable to MCREA.

Enclose your check with this completed form and mail to:

MCREA, P.O. Box 73, Rockville, MD 20848-0073

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

MCREA: 301-929-9339; website: www.MCREAonline.com; emails: MCREAMembership@gmail.com or PresidentMCREA@gmail.com
Facebook: Montgomery County Retired Employees' Association, Inc.
Montgomery County Government: **MC311:** 240-777-0311 or just 311 (local)
For Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans: 240-777-8230;
Fax: 301-279-1424; website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcerp
Fidelity (Deferred Compensation Plan): 1-800-343-0860 or 240-777-8228
Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance (Mass Mutual): 1-800-528-9009
For Group/Health Insurance: 240-773-6471 (OHR at MC311); also visit www.mc311.com or www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HIret
CareFirst Blue Cross-Blue Shield: Member Services: 1-888-417-8385 www.Carefirst.com
Kaiser Permanente: Washington Area: 301-468-6000; Baltimore Area: 1-800-777-7902
<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org>
United Healthcare: Member Services: 1-800-638-0014 www.myuhc.com
Caremark: 1-866-240-4926 www.caremark.com
SilverScript 1-866-249-6167 www.mcg.silverscript.com
See page 5 for more contact information

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MCREA

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