



Connections

Staying connected with Michigan's retirees

December 2024

Vol. 27 No. 4

Retiree Stories

Reading program keeps Battle Creek teacher engaged

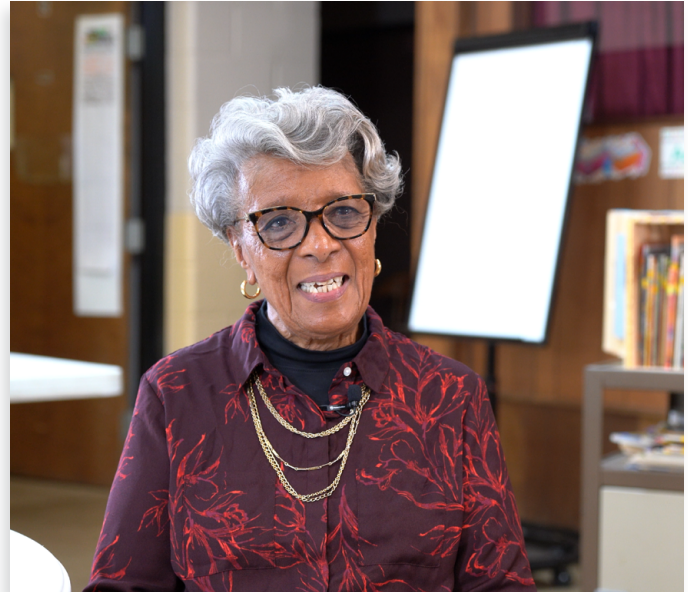
Thelma Vaughn spends three days a week addressing a gap she found during 30 years as an elementary school teacher — students not doing enough homework to apply what they were learning.

The 79-year-old **Battle Creek Public Schools** retiree is in her 21st year leading the After-School Reading Incentive Program at **Second Missionary Baptist Church**.

The program currently serves 21 first- through fifth-graders from Battle Creek and three neighboring school districts. Students meet with tutors on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons in the church's basement classroom. There are hands-on reading and writing lessons, a daily question, and group time. Dictionaries are a staple.

"When you're visiting those basic skills, the teacher in the classroom can only go so far," Vaughn said. "The students really blossom when they can take things home."

"Many times, it's a tutor with two students. That's better than one teacher for 20, 25 students. Our students take what they learn and actually practice it with somebody."



Thelma Vaughn sharing her story of beginning the program.

Vaughn, an assistant director, and 25 volunteers (including her granddaughter and other retired teachers) are the tutors. Besides the church, the program is supported by foundation, nonprofit, and United Way grants, and in-kind donations.

"Based on what I was getting (from my pension), I could still open up the program and keep things moving," she said of being helped by and thankful for her Michigan Public School Employees' Retirement System pension. "When I was teaching, I really didn't think much about that. That was already part of the program."

Before Second Missionary Baptist invited her to lead its program, Vaughn volunteered five years with a nearby Methodist church's programs. She retired from Lincoln Elementary School in 1998, having taught fifth-, third-, second-, and first-graders during her career. The Philadelphia native was fresh out of Hampton University when hired by the **district's first Black principal** in 1968.

In April she celebrated her 52nd wedding anniversary with her husband, Jerome, who is a retired CN railroader.



New Feature
Click the image to the left to hear Thelma tell you more about her story.



From the executive director

Welcome to the December 2024 issue of your *Connections* newsletter.

First, let me say that our hearts go out to those impacted by hurricanes **Helene** and **Milton** that struck the southeastern United States earlier this fall. Like everyone, we were shocked and saddened by the damage that these forces of nature caused. And we were paying attention because so many of our members live there.

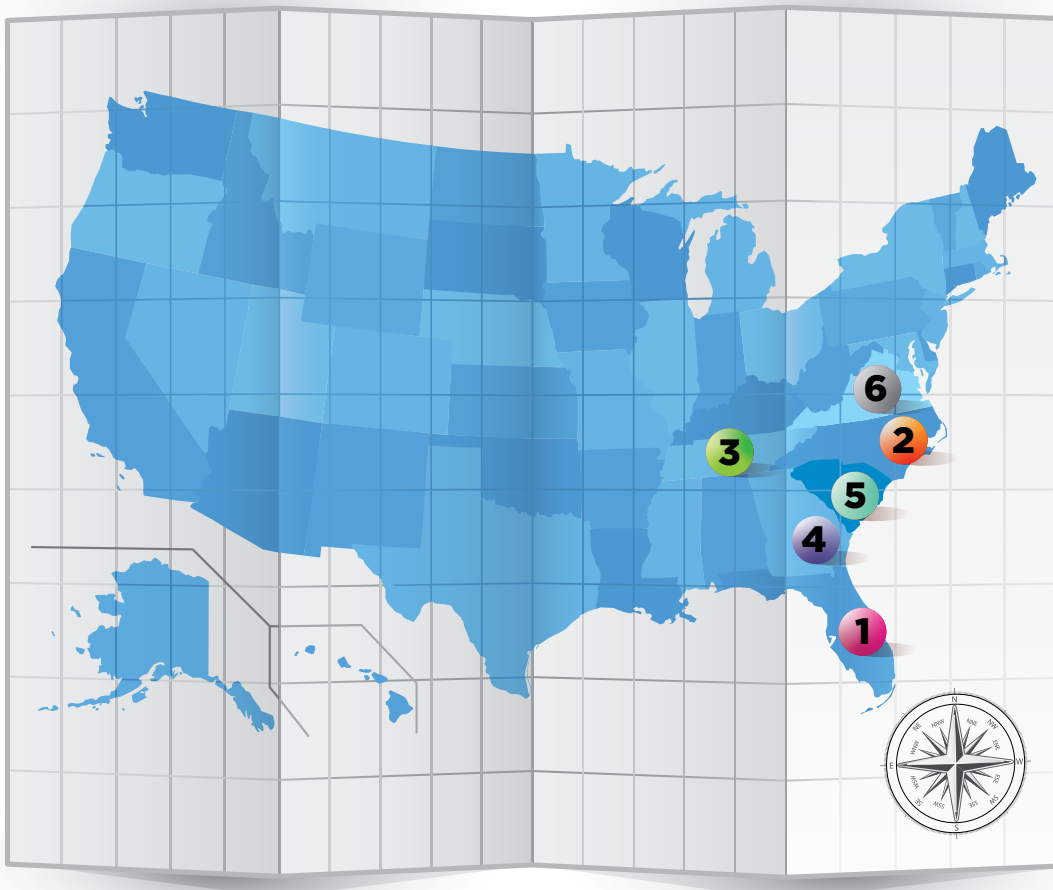
We serve more than 611,000 customers — about 326,000 retired and 285,000 active. While the bulk of our membership by far resides in Michigan, the Michigan Office of Retirement Services (ORS) has retired customers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five U.S. territories, Canada, Mexico, and 35 other countries. And we have nearly 20,000 pensioners who call Florida, the Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia home.

Know that wherever you are, we work to ensure the benefits and services we provide are there for you. We realize secure retirement benefits are important to you for the now and for what's ahead.

Have a safe, healthy, and peaceful holiday season.

Anthony Estell, executive director
Michigan Office of Retirement Services

“We serve more than 611,000 customers.”



- 1** **Florida**
12,164 retirees
- 2** **North Carolina**
1,755 retirees
- 3** **Tennessee**
1,705 retirees
- 4** **Georgia**
1,554 retirees
- 5** **South Carolina**
1,230 retirees
- 6** **Virginia**
697 retirees

Retiree Statistics

15th largest public retirement system in the U.S.



226,087
public school retirees



59,614
state retirees



4,623
Michigan National Guard retirees



3,406
state police retirees

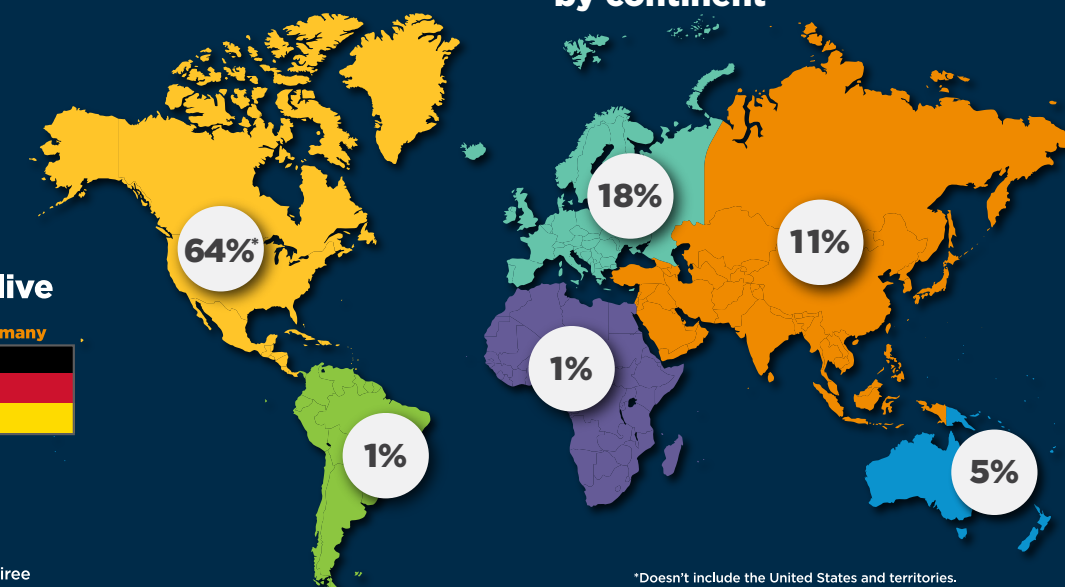


518
judicial retirees

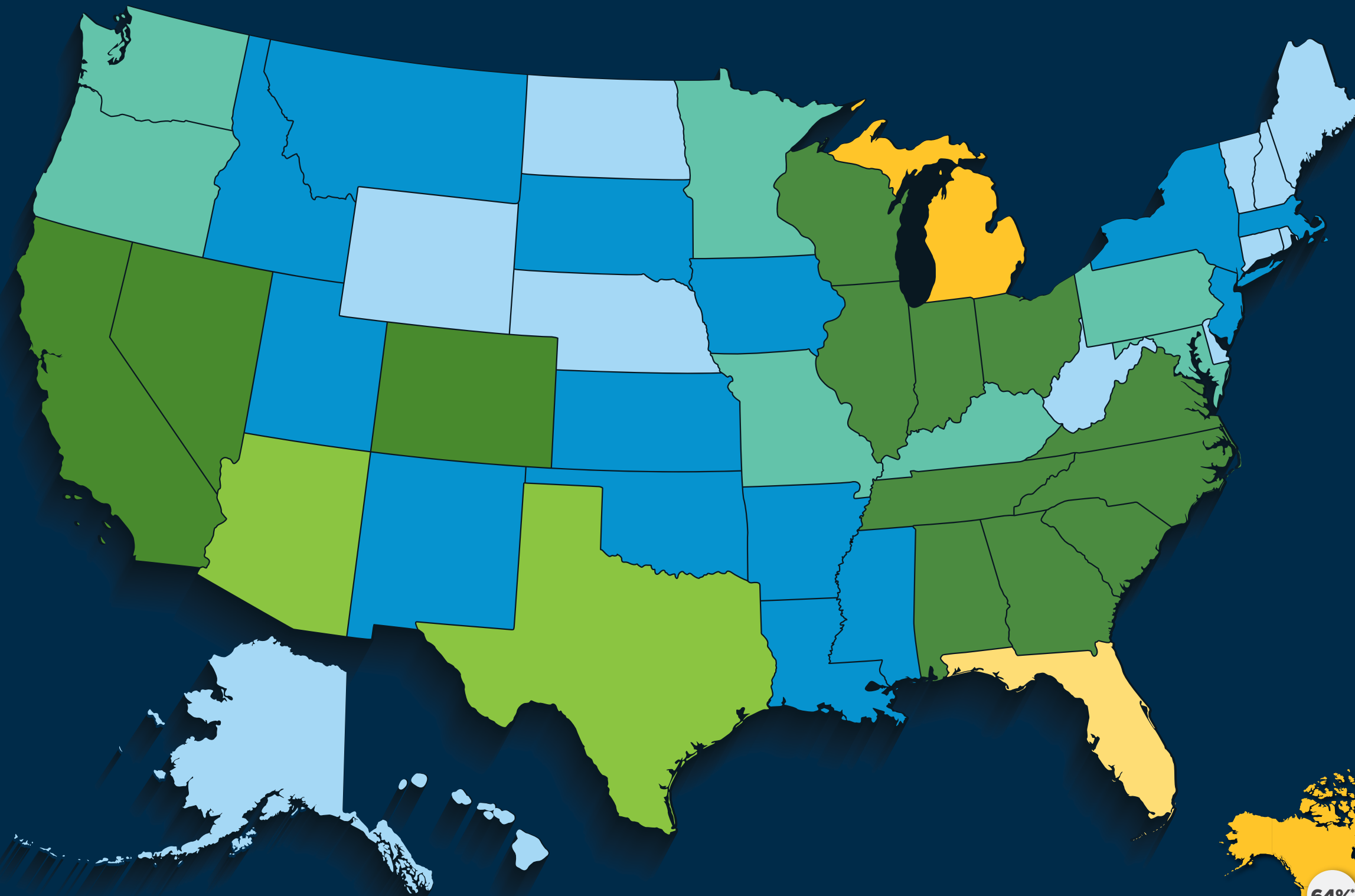


235
legislature retirees

Percentage of international retirees by continent



*Doesn't include the United States and territories.



Retirees per state



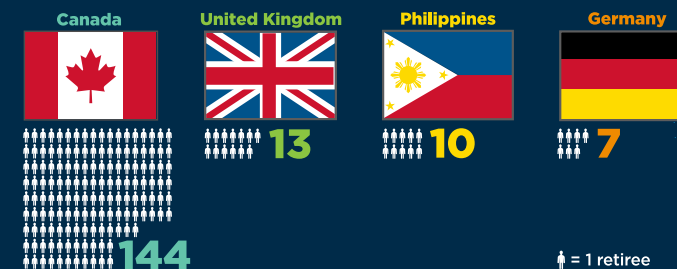
Top states retirees live

- 1 **Michigan** 256,178
- 2 **Florida** 12,164
- 3 **Arizona** 2,742
- 4 **Texas** 2,052

Retirees in U.S. territories



Top countries international retirees live



Taxes – Public Act 4 of 2023

Some retirees will see a reduction in the amount of state income tax they pay on their pension, beginning with the 2024 tax year (filed in 2025).

That's due to Public Act (PA) 4 of 2023, which phases in an income tax reduction for retirees who receive a pension. The four-year phase-in began with the 2023 tax year and will restore the pre-2012 status for most taxpayers by 2026.

The maximum tax deduction for the 2024 tax year is \$64,040 for single or married filing separately, and \$128,080 for married filing jointly. Depending on their birth year, some retirees qualify for the full deduction while others qualify for 50% of the maximum deduction. For joint returns, the birth year of the older spouse can be used.

What it means for retirees filing 2024 tax returns:

- **Those born in 1945 or before:**
You're exempt from state income tax withholding.
- **Those born between 1946-1962:**
You qualify under PA 4 of 2023 to deduct up to 50% (\$32,020) of the 2024 maximum of \$64,040 for a single return, and for a joint return, up to 50% (\$64,040) of the 2024 maximum of \$128,080.
- **Those born in 1963 or after:**
You're not eligible for a deduction in the 2024 tax year.

Questions about tax obligations or filing requirements are best answered by a professional tax preparer or advisor.



Retirement state tax changes

For members of the State Employees' Retirement System

Birth year	Public Act 4 of 2023 maximum deduction			
	2024 tax year		2025 tax year	2026 tax year
	Single filers	Joint filers	Single and joint filers	Single and joint filers
1945 and before	Tax exempt.	Tax exempt.	No change.	No change.
1946-1952	Up to 50% of 2024 amount of \$32,020 (\$64,040).	Up to 50% of the 2024 amount of \$64,040 (\$128,080).	Up to 75% of the 2025 amount.*	Up to 100% of the maximum amount.*
1953-1958	Up to 50% of 2024 amount of \$32,020 (\$64,040).	Up to 50% of the 2024 amount of \$64,040 (\$128,080).	Up to 75% of the 2025 amount.*	Up to 100% of the maximum amount.*
1959-1962	Up to 50% of 2024 amount of \$32,020 (\$64,040).	Up to 50% of the 2024 amount of \$64,040 (\$128,080).	Up to 75% of the 2025 amount.*	Up to 100% of the maximum amount.*
1963-1966	Not qualified.	Not qualified.	Up to 75% of the 2025 amount.*	Up to 100% of the maximum amount.*
1967 and after	Not qualified.	Not qualified.	No change.	Up to 100% of the maximum amount.*

Note: For joint returns, birth year of the older spouse can be used.

*Maximum amounts are adjusted annually by the percentage increase in the United States Consumer Price Index. Maximum amounts are provided prior to the start of each tax year.

What's the best part about being retired?

We asked retirees on Facebook what they were enjoying most about retirement. The information below is based on their responses.

FREEDOM

100%
of retirees mention the freedom it gives them.

With their extra time in retirement they:

ARE

- Waking up and taking the time to enjoy the smell of coffee.
- Attending more of their grandchildren's school and sports events.
- Traveling when and where they want.
- Going out for a long lunch with friends.
- Sleeping in.
- Volunteering.

VS.

AREN'T

- Grading assignments or making lesson plans.
- Being treated as if they aren't good enough by management.
- Prepping for the week ahead each Sunday.
- Driving in the darkness of early mornings.
- Asking for permission.
- Feeling guilty about being sick.

2024 ORS fiscal year in review

Customer Service

 **212,210**
phone calls
answered

33,579
questions
answered on
Message Board 

 **6,679**
applications
processed

Employer Reporting

 **5,596**
phone calls
answered

8,989
requests
completed
within 10
business days 

 **8,031**
emails
answered

Customer Education

 **40**
YouTube
videos

 **37,300**
YouTube
views

Ask Our Experts



Your feedback may help shape our *Ask Our Experts* video content

Last fall, ORS began creating short *Ask Our Experts* videos to provide quick bites of information on issues we regularly receive questions about. We have been promoting these videos in our *Connections* newsletters. They also live on our [YouTube page](#) and have appeared in our social media posts.

The latest video is featured above. The miAccount Message Board is a quick and secure way to ask

specific questions about your retirement account. Linda from ORS will show you the process.

ORS needs your feedback regarding these videos so we can gauge whether we are on track to meet your needs. Please go to this [short survey](#) where you can help provide direction for content for future videos. This survey will close at 11:59 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17, 2025.



What to expect from ORS in January



Pension payment amount

If you notice a change in the amount of your January pension payment, it's likely due to a change in your tax rates or insurance premium deduction.

Changes in your insurance premium deductions will be reflected in your January pension payment. After Jan. 15, 2025, you can log in to **miAccount** and see the costs

reflected on your pension payment history screen.

The federal and state tax withholding tables are subject to change annually. Tax rates for 2025 will take effect beginning with your January pension payment. Because of this, you may notice a change in your tax withholding even though you haven't made any changes.

Tax forms

1099-R forms will be available in **miAccount** starting Jan. 1, 2025. ORS will mail printed versions by the end of January.

1095-B forms are not required when filing your taxes. If you need a copy, we'll mail one to you upon your request.

Premium bills and coupons

Insurance premium bills and payment coupons for 2025 are available in **miAccount**. Bills will be mailed around mid-December; please allow time for mailing.

Pension statements

Monthly direct deposit statements are always available in **miAccount**. ORS mails direct deposit statements throughout the year, but we don't mail them monthly.

Go green

To opt out of paper direct deposit statements or *1099-R* forms, log in to **miAccount** and review the tab labeled Manage Communications on the left.





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[YouTube.com/@MichiganORS](https://www.youtube.com/@MichiganORS)
[X.com/MichiganORS](https://www.x.com/MichiganORS)
[Instagram.com/MichiganORS](https://www.instagram.com/MichiganORS)

Update ORS

It is critical that you report any of the following changes in personal information to ORS: address, email, tax withholding, direct deposit, death, divorce, marriage, and Medicare information.

The fastest way to report these and other life events is through **miAccount**.

You can also contact us at:



[Michigan.gov/ORS](https://www.Michigan.gov/ORS)
[Michigan.gov/ORSStateDB](https://www.Michigan.gov/ORSStateDB)



PO Box 30171
 Lansing, MI 48909-7671

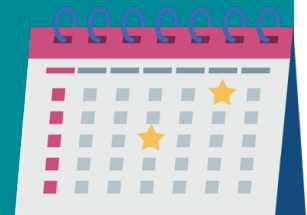


Phone: **800-381-5111**
 Fax: **517-284-4416**

Pension pay dates

Pension payments are issued on the 25th of the month. If the 25th falls on a weekend or holiday, your pension will be paid the previous business day. In December, it's a week earlier. See the 2025 calendar on the next page.

If your payment is not credited within three days after the scheduled payment date, check with your bank first and then contact ORS.



Office closures

Dec. 24-25 Christmas
 Dec. 31-Jan. 1 New Year's
 Jan. 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 Feb. 17 Presidents Day
 May 26 Memorial Day
 June 19 Juneteenth



MICHIGAN OFFICE OF
RETIREMENT SERVICES

2025 Pension Pay Dates

If your pension payment is not credited within three days after the scheduled payment date, check with your bank first, and then contact our office.

Jan. 24	Feb. 25	March 25
April 25	May 23	June 25
July 25	Aug. 25	Sept. 25
Oct. 24	Nov. 25	Dec. 18