



TRSnews

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Brian K. Guthrie



I hope your new year is off to a wonderful start, and that 2026 is already bringing you moments of joy, clarity and connection. As always, we are grateful for the trust you place in TRS. Serving you is at the heart of everything we do, and this year we remain focused on delivering the support, tools and information you need to feel confident in every step of your TRS journey.

This edition of *TRS News* is designed to help you start the year informed and empowered. As you work to stay connected with your retirement system, we're here to make every step easier. Inside, you'll find helpful information on tax withholding, a new MyTRS feature, health news, and resources created with your needs in mind.

Some highlights include:

- Notice to Retirees and Beneficiaries About Tax Withholding
- View Past Monthly Annuity Payment Details in MyTRS
- TRS-Care Vendor Announcement
- New TRS Talks Video: Educator to Illustrator

As we move into a new season, I'm reminded of how meaningful it is to pause, reflect and make space for what matters most.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your year and your future!

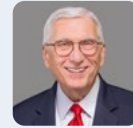
Happy Reading,

Brian

TRS Board of Trustees



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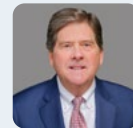
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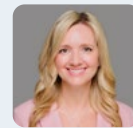
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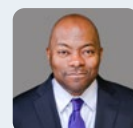
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www.trs.texas.gov

The Teacher Retirement System of Texas does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. A copy of the complete TRS plan is available at the above address during normal business hours.



Make the Switch to Direct Deposit

Your TRS annuity is something you count on. Direct deposit delivers your payment securely and on time – no paper check required.

How to Sign Up

- [Log in to the MyTRS member portal](#) and sign up for direct deposit under the “Payments” tab.
- As an alternative, you can complete and submit [form \(TRS 278\)](#), [Direct Deposit Request \(pdf\)](#), to TRS [via mail](#) or using the [upload forms tool on the TRS website](#).

Use these same options to update your direct deposit information anytime.

Note: New banking details may take up to 45 days to process. Your first annuity payment after the change may be a paper check.

View Past Monthly Annuity Payment Details in MyTRS!

Experience the latest features! Log in to your MyTRS account and navigate to the Payments tab to view payment details – up to the last 24 months.

2026 TRS Health Plan Carriers Announced

TRS will keep the same medical plan carriers for 2026 after completing its competitive bid process, ensuring stability and continuity for members. [Visit the TRS website](#) to learn how this decision supports high-quality, cost-effective coverage for Texas public education employees and retirees.



Subscribe to *The Pulse*!

If you're enrolled in a TRS-Care retiree health plan, you won't want to miss out on [subscribing to *The Pulse*](#). This monthly newsletter delivers tips and news you can use to make the most of your health care.

Choosing the Right Medicare Plan Matters

When you become eligible for Medicare, comparing your coverage options is one of the most important decisions you'll make. Medicare plans can vary widely in cost, coverage, provider networks and extra benefits. Taking time to compare your choices ensures you get the care you need.

As a TRS retiree, you have access to a plan designed specifically for you: **TRS-Care Medicare Advantage**. Unlike many commercial Medicare plans, TRS-Care Medicare Advantage is designed for the unique needs of retired Texas public school employees. It offers predictable costs, comprehensive medical and prescription drug coverage, and access to a large national provider network through UnitedHealthcare®.

Comparing plans helps you see how TRS-Care Medicare Advantage stacks up against other options. While some Medicare plans may look appealing at first, they can come with limitations – such as smaller networks, higher out-of-pocket



costs, or fewer protections if your health needs change. TRS-Care Medicare Advantage is structured to provide long-term stability, reliable benefits and dependable coverage year after year.

When it's time to enroll in Medicare, take a moment to explore your options and use [TRS' Medicare comparison tools](#) to help you do so.

Turn Today's Care into Tomorrow's Savings: TRS-Care Standard Member Rewards

If you're enrolled in TRS-Care Standard, there's an easy way to make your health care dollars work harder for you: Member Rewards. When you choose cost-effective, high-quality providers for many common medical services, you earn cash rewards.

Why it's Worth Your Time

The cost of the same medical procedure can vary dramatically, even within the same network. Member Rewards helps you compare options and earn up to **\$599 per year** simply for choosing a cost-effective provider. And because TRS-Care Standard rewards are paid directly to you, you can use them on anything – not just medical expenses.



Hundreds of Reward-Eligible Services

The program covers a wide range of services, including:

- **Routine screenings** like mammograms and colonoscopies
- **Diagnostic tests** such as MRIs, CT scans and ultrasounds
- **Surgical procedures** such as cataract removal and knee surgery
- Many other everyday and specialized services

Finding Eligible Procedures is Easy

Everything starts in the [BCBSTX Provider Finder](#) tool. Once you log in:

1. Search for your procedure.
2. Look for the **Member Rewards** indicator.
3. Choose a cost-effective provider
4. Complete your appointment and let the reward deposit into your HCA.

It's quick, simple and it helps you make informed decisions while earning money for future care.

The Bottom Line

Member Rewards turns smart health care choices into real savings. With so many eligible routine and specialized procedures—and an easy way to find them—this program is one of the simplest ways to lower your health care costs today while putting extra cash in your hands for tomorrow.

Notice to Retirees and Beneficiaries About Tax Withholding



If you receive monthly payments from TRS, it's a good time to review your federal income tax withholding preferences. **You are not required to change your withholding preference if you are satisfied with your current withholding.**

Use the [MyTRS](#) online member portal to:

- **View** your current withholding preference and monthly withholding amount.
- **Estimate** a new withholding amount using the MyTRS Tax Withholding Calculator. It will display your current annuity and withholding preferences.
- **Change** your withholding preference quickly, if you want to make changes. If you prefer to submit a paper form instead, you may print [IRS Form W-4P – Withholding Certificate for Periodic Pension or Annuity Payments](#) from the TRS website, fill it out and submit it to TRS. The form may be mailed, faxed or [uploaded to the TRS website](#). See the [Contact TRS](#) page for more information. Alternatively, you may call TRS at 1-800-223-8778 to request the form.

New preferences apply to future payments only.

TRS will withhold federal income tax on monthly annuity payments unless you elect not to have withholding apply. Your preference will remain in effect until you revoke it. You may update your preferences at any time.

If you elect not to have withholding apply or do not withhold enough, you may be responsible for paying additional taxes and could face penalties.

Please Note: If you are not a U.S. citizen or resident alien of the U.S., you may not waive withholding on your TRS payments. TRS must withhold 30% for federal taxes unless you qualify for a tax treaty benefit. If so, you must notify TRS and provide the required documentation for reduced or no withholding.

For any questions, TRS recommends talking with a tax professional.

Make Data Protection a Daily Habit

Follow data protection tips to help keep your information secure.

1. Use strong, unique passwords for each account. Think of your password like a house key – make it hard to copy.

- Use a **long, memorable phrase** (e.g., BlueBirdsFly@Morning!)
- **Never reuse the same passwords** for different accounts such as email, banking or social media.
- Store passwords **in a locked drawer or safe place**, if needed.

Good Rule: Never share your password – even with someone claiming to be tech support. **Remember: Legitimate companies never ask for your password or security code.**

2. Turn on extra security. Use **two-step verification** or **multi-factor authentication** whenever it's available. With this verification process:

- After typing your password, you'll enter a code sent to your phone by text message or phone call.
- It is much harder for bad actors to get into your account.

Turn it on for: Email, banking and other online payment accounts, Medicare, online shopping, and social media accounts.

3. Keep your computer, tablet and phone updated. Updates fix security problems. They are designed to help block new tricks used by bad actors. What to do:

- Accept updates when prompted. If your device says, "Update available," it's safe to accept.
- Leave automatic updates on, if possible. A trusted family member or friend can help set them up.

4. Be cautious with emails, calls and texts.

Scammers often pretend to be from banks, Medicare, the IRS, or well-known companies.

Watch out for messages that:

- Pressure you to act quickly ("Your account will be closed!").
- Request personal information, passwords or codes.
- Contain links you didn't request.

What to do instead:

- Don't click links or answer right away.
- Call the company **using a number you trust**, such as the number on the back of your credit card, not one in the message.

5. Trust your instincts and ask for help. Smart habits:

- If something feels off, pause and take your time.
- Check with a trusted friend or family member.
- If a message makes you anxious or confused, that's often a warning sign. It's okay to slow down – scammers want you to rush.



Members of the TRS Investment Management Division's Special Opportunities team won the agency's annual Investor of the Year Award for 2025.



The TRS 2025 Excellence in Investing Award: Members of the Special Opportunities Team

Members of TRS' Special Opportunities investment management team were recognized for securing a highly successful investment in 2025. The deal with an outside partner combined early entry, creative structuring and a dynamic hedging framework to manage its scale and risk. By successfully navigating a complex structure, and actively adapting as the investment grew, the strategy delivered exceptional value to TRS' members through disciplined, forward-thinking execution.

"We're not afraid of hard work," said one of the winning team members, chosen from among several in-house TRS investment projects nominated from the past year. "When we're presented with a choice, we don't always just pick the easiest route."

And every innovation counts at TRS. In addition to member, employer and state contributions, investment returns make up 62% of the TRS pension fund annual revenue – dollars that help pay for promised benefits to our members and keep the fund healthy long term.

The Investment Management Division's Special Opportunities team prides itself on evaluating complex deals that might otherwise "fall between the cracks."

Ombuds Corner

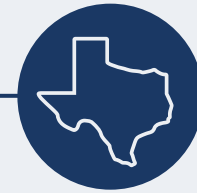
In 2025, the Ombuds Office engaged with 636 active members, retirees and visitors, welcoming 429 emails, 143 phone calls and 64 Compact with Texans emails. We're here for you!



**429
Emails**

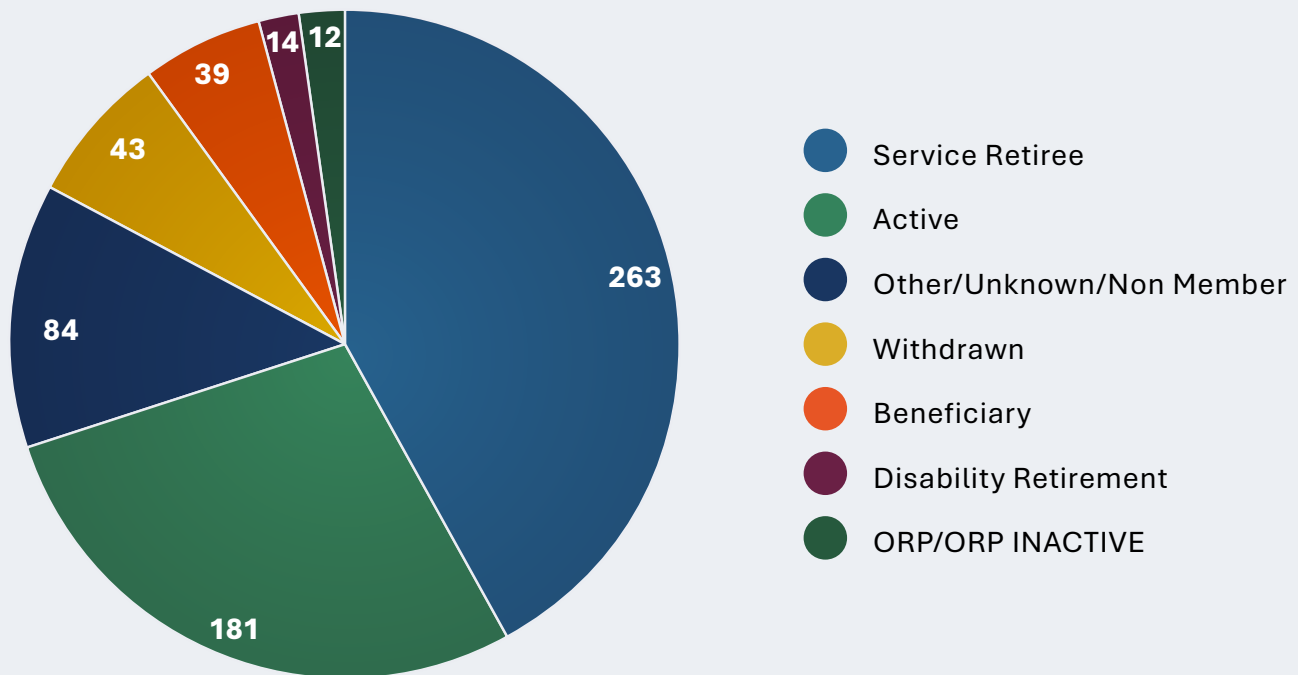


**143
Phone Calls**



**64 Compact
with Texans**

Demographics of Visitors Served by Ombuds



24+

Retiree Conferences
and Meetings

60+

Pension Services &
Health Retirement Sessions,
Health Fairs and Trainings

2,735

Total Communications
Received

**Earning members' trust four years and counting by focusing
on accountability and delivering excellence daily.**

Visit the [TRS Office of Ombuds webpage](#) for more information.

“TRS Talks”: Educator to Illustrator – A Dream Reimagined

From a chalkboard in a Sweetwater garage to inspiring classrooms across Texas, this story celebrates the joy of teaching and the power of creativity. Discover how one educator’s passion for cartoons shaped a lifetime – and how TRS made a secure retirement possible. [Watch the latest video](#) in our member spotlight series to relive these moments.

As a young boy, TRS retiree Jon Brown dreamed of becoming a Disney cartoonist – but his friends dismissed the idea and laughed at his ambition.

After years in the classroom, he has found a new creative outlet – drawing cartoons for a local newspaper. Together with his wife Judy, also a retired teacher, the pair bring stories to life by writing and illustrating novels and children’s books.



On the Horizon: A Fresh Feel for *TRS News Digital*

You may soon spot a new look when you open your *TRS News* digital newsletter. The newsletter is moving to an updated digital platform in the near future, which means a cleaner, smoother viewing experience – nothing major, just a fresh touch to how everything displays online.

What’s staying the same is all the helpful updates and news from your retirement system. You’ll also continue to enjoy all the **digital features** that make your newsletter easy to click, explore and stay informed.

So, while the appearance may get a light refresh, the purpose stays the same: **keeping you informed and connected.**

TRS Word Scramble

Unscramble the letters to reveal a hidden message.

WCTAH ORF
FTRUUE
TIDENOIS FO
RTS SWEN
OT LERAN
HWO IA WROKS
ROF UYO.






Answer at the bottom of this page.

Solved the puzzle?

[Click the link](#) to learn more and find key reminders.

Click Here to Rate This Issue of TRS News!

Follow TRS for timely news and events



2026 TRS Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

[Join TRS online](#) to view live board and committee meetings.

Dates

Feb. 12-13

April 30-May 1

July 16-17

Sept. 17-18

Dec. 10-11

Past meetings can be viewed online.

View [TRS Board of Trustees Meeting Dates](#) for the latest.

Watch Previous Meetings on Demand

Don't miss out on important discussions, including the [December 2025 update on the TRS Pension Trust Fund Actuarial Valuation](#).

Stay updated on what was covered in previous meetings by [watching the on-demand recordings](#). You can also find board books and summaries with key highlights and decisions from each meeting.



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