Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) – 403(b) and 457 Plans

What is my retirement plan?

Your retirement plan is made up of three parts. First, your pension plan, the foundation of your retirement, is either TRS or PSERS depending on your job category. The second part is Social Security. Third is the Retirement Savings Plan (RSP). The benefits you receive from Social Security and TRS or PSERS are determined by three main factors: your earnings, your years of service and your age when benefits begin to be paid. The benefit you receive from your retirement savings plan is determined by how much you contribute, for how long and the returns received based on your investment decisions.

What pension plan am I in?

Your pension plan is either Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) or Teachers Retirement System (TRS). The State determines which one you are in based on your job category. It is important to know which state plan you have. You should consult your paystub to see whether it reflects a contribution for TRS or PSERS or consult the HR or Payroll office if you are not sure.

Generally speaking, PSERS covers those in non-managerial positions in Transportation, Maintenance, School Nutrition and Custodial Services. TRS covers Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Administrators, Professional and clerical staff in HR, IT, Finance and other similar roles, and managers in school nutrition, transportation, maintenance, and custodial.

How much do I contribute to PSERS and how much will my benefits be?

PSERS requires a mandatory employee contribution: If you started working before 2012 then you contribute $4/month ($36/year). If you started working after 2012 then you contribute $10/month ($90/year). You make no contributions to PSERS during the 3 summer months. The school district contributes about 10 times that amount to fund PSERS – more than $900 a year.

Your PSERS Benefit at Retirement: Your benefit is based on your years of service (maximum 40 years) x $17.00 (as of 2025). So, if you worked a 30-year career, you'd receive a monthly retirement benefit amount of $510/month for the rest of your like. Other payment options are available as well. Visit www.ers.ga.gov to learn more

How much do I contribute to TRS and what will my benefit be?

TRS covers Teachers, Administrators, Professional and clerical staff in HR, IT, Finance and other roles, and managers for school nutrition, transportation, maintenance, and custodial.

The mandatory employee contribution for TRS participants is 6% of gross pay. The school system contributes about 20% of pay each year to fund the plan as well.

Your TRS Benefit at Retirement is 2% for every year of service. So, if you worked a 30-year career, you'd receive 60% of your pay divided monthly for a lifetime benefit. Visit www.trsga.com to learn more.

What Happens to my TRS contributions if I leave my position?

If you leave your TRS-covered position for another TRS-covered position, your account will remain the same. Our staff will simply update your employer information in your file and your new employer will take over the Employer Contributions.

If you leave your TRS-covered position for a non-TRS-covered position, you can no longer contribute to your TRS account. However, your account status will remain active for up to 4 years without out a member contribution. Therefore, you will have the option to keep your contributions with TRS or transfer them to another retirement account provided by your new employer. Learn more at www.trsga.com

Can I increase my TRS contribution?

No. The amount you contribute to TRS is fixed by the state at 6% of your pay. If you wish to save more, please use our retirement savings plan.

How do I enroll in TRS?

You are enrolled in TRS based on your job. The enrollment is automatic if you work in a qualified position. You do not sign up or otherwise enroll in TRS. You should visit the TRS site to name beneficiaries on your plan or to understand the benefits.

How is time in TRS accrued?

During your employment in a TRS covered position, you make monthly contributions to TRS, via employer payroll deductions, and earn service credit. If you have at least nine months of service during a fiscal year (July – June), you will receive credit for one year of service. Therefore, if you work from September through May, you will earn credit for one year of membership. If you are employed on a 12 months-per-year basis, you will receive credit for a year of membership service upon completion of at least nine months of service during the fiscal year ending June 30.

You accrue service credit each month you work in a TRS covered position. You must work at least one half of the total number of working days in a month to accrue a month of service credit. For example, if there are 20 working days in a month, you must work at least 10 days that month to receive credit for the month. More detailed information is available in the Membership Service section to the right. Visit www.trsga.com for more information.

Can additional TRS service be purchased?

Yes. If you need to purchase additional service to be eligible for retirement under TRS, your retirement date will be the first of the month after you have purchased the needed service credit. If you are eligible to retire and purchase additional TRS service credit, you must purchase the service no later than the last business day of your retirement month; however, waiting until the last business day will delay the processing of your retirement paperwork.

Under TRS, all service must be established by the member prior to retirement. Once your retirement becomes effective, you will no longer be eligible to purchase additional service credit. Beneficiaries of deceased members cannot purchase additional service credit.

You may pay for eligible service purchases with a personal check or with a direct rollover from another eligible retirement plan. Visit www.trsga.com for more information.

Can I roll my sick days into retirement?

It is great to accumulate sick days because they can help you as you move into retirement. If you are a TRS participant, your accumulated sick days count toward your retirement service allowing you to retire earlier that you could without them.   Note to apply unused sick leave toward your creditable service under TRS, you must have a minimum of 60 days saved.

Can I increase my PSERS contribution?

No. The amount you contribute to PSERS is set by the state at either $4.00 per month or $10 per month depending on when you were hired. The best way to save more is through our retirement savings plan. For questions on how PSERS works, refunds on contributions or purchasing credits, visit https://www.ers.ga.gov/public-school-employees-retirement-system

How do I enroll in PSERS?

You are enrolled in PSERS based on your job. The enrollment is automatic if you work in a qualified position. You do not sign up or otherwise enroll in PSERS. You should visit the PSERS site to name beneficiaries on your plan or to understand the benefits.

What happens if I leave my PSERS position?

PSERS Members who leave employment before retirement are entitled to a refund of member contributions plus interest.

I need more information on PSERS.

For the Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS), you should contact PSERS directly for assistance with rules and plan provisions like refunds, service credits, service accrual, benefits calculations, etc. Visit https://www.ers.ga.gov/public-school-employees-retirement-system or call PSERS/ERSGA at 404-350-6300 or 1-800-805-4609 (outside metro Atlanta).

How does Social Security fit in to my retirement planning?

Our district participates in Social Security. Your contribution is 6.2% of pay and the school district contributes the same amount.

You can go to the Social Security website to get an estimate your benefit amount depending on when you retire. For a very general estimate, you can go to:
www.bankrate.com/calculators/retirement/social-security-benefits-calculator.aspx

Social Security is often in the news because it has not been as well funded. As a result, the younger you are, the less you might want to rely on Social Security and the more important your saving in the Retirement Savings Plan (RSP).

What is the Retirement Savings Plan (RSP)?

It's the single name we've given to the 403b and 457 plans. We think it is the best way to save for retirement on top of your pension plan and social security. The RSP enables you to save money for retirement if you think you may want more income in retirement than our basic retirement pension plans and Social Security will provide. The RSP makes it easy to save. You do not have to know or even learn about investments. You just choose a "bucket" that matches your years to retirement and your risk tolerance. Take the risk tolerance questionnaire to figure out whether you need a conservative, moderate, or aggressive bucket. Then contact Corebridge to get signed up for that bucket.

Why do we have a Retirement Savings Plan (RSP)?

We believe that everyone is well served by saving as much as they can at every stage of like. We developed the RSP to make that easy. Participation in the RSP is not mandatory like it is for the pension plans and social security, but it's highly recommended you do!

Why are new hires auto-enrolled into the RSP?

Because we think saving for retirement is so important, we automatically enroll every new employee in the RSP. You do have the option to opt out of the plan after your first contribution (payroll deduction) for a refund for up to 90 days. After 90 days, you may stop deductions but not withdraw contributions.

Why should I save for retirement in the RSP instead of on my own in some other investment like an IRA?

- The plan helps you save automatically by payroll deduction
- Your money goes into the Plan before taxes are taken out. That means more money goes into your account because less money goes out in taxes.
- You get a simple way to invest your money – you don't have to be an expert investor.
- Plan expenses are very low.
- If you're in PSERS, you're eligible for matching contributions to the RSP.

When can I get in the RSP?

You can join, increase, decrease or stop your savings at any time.

How much can I put in the RSP?

You should put in as much as you can. The annual maximum allowed by law in 2025 is $23,500 (More if you're over 50).

How often can I adjust my contribution amount?

You can change your contribution amount at any time during the year—there's no limit on how often you can adjust it. Unlike other benefits that can only be changed during Open Enrollment, your 403(b) contributions can be modified at any time.

So how do I earn more with my RSP money?

The RSP makes it easy for you. All the money contributed goes into "funds" that include many different types of companies and investments. Professional investment advisors helped us blend those funds together into 12 different "portfolios" (let's just call them "buckets".) There is still risk in any investment, but mixing investments this way helps to limit it.

As a rule, lower risk (conservative) buckets will give you the most safety but a lower return on your money. Higher risk (aggressive) buckets can get you higher returns but you could lose money at least in the short term as well.

If you have many years to invest before you retire, you can choose a more aggressive bucket because over a long period your bucket is likely to do well. If you're close to retirement, you'll want a less risky bucket because you want to hang on to all that you have saved and earned.

Keep in mind that even the aggressive buckets in the plan are not nearly as risky as buying stock in one company. Each bucket holds different types of investments. This way, when one investment is doing poorly in a bucket, others may be doing better. Since few investments go up or down at exactly the same time, this strategy helps lower your risk and improve your return.

How do I choose the retirement savings bucket that's best for me?

The most important thing you need to do is think about how much risk you are willing to take with your money. Are you conservative, moderate or aggressive when it comes to dealing with uncertainty or volatility? The stock market can be a roller coaster at times so knowing how much up and down you can stomach in a short period is important. Complete the Risk Tolerance Questionnaire to find out what type of investor you are. This can be found on our benefits website under the retirement resources tab. You can visit request a Retirement Savings Booklet from HR or Benefits or just call on a Corebridge Advisor to help you with everything.

When I retire, should I withdraw the money in the RSP or move it to another account?

Perhaps neither! While you have the option to withdraw or move your money, you may want to keep most of it invested and growing. You may wish to convert your money to a guaranteed stream of income. It is best to contact one of our Corebridge plan advisors to devise a specific plan based on your personal situation.

I figured out whether I'm a conservative, moderate or aggressive investor now how do I pick my retirement savings bucket?

Look at the "grid" of investments found in the Retirement Savings Booklet, which can be found on our benefits website under the retirement resources tab or you can ask for a copy with one of our HR team members. It shows all 12 investment choices, or "buckets". On the left of the grid, you will see different time horizons. On that row, find the bucket that matches your risk tolerance – conservative, moderate or aggressive. Then contact a Corebridge Advisor with questions or for help enrolling in the chosen bucket. That's all there is to it!

How often will I receive an account statement?

Corebridge, our plan administrator, mails account statements to your address on record quarterly. These account statements include helpful information about your account balance, your investment elections and transaction history for all your accounts with Corebridge. You can also access your account statements anytime online at www.corebrdigefinancial.com/retire

What fees will I pay in the RSP?

The annual plan administration fee is assessed quarterly to participants' accounts. Each participant will see a "Plan Administrative Fee" on their quarterly statement. The fee varies with the investment you've chosen and the balance in your account, but is very low, much less than 1 percent of assets per year.

What are the underlying Plan funds?

Each of the 12 investment buckets in the plan is comprised of funds on the list below. It's highly recommended that you select a bucket that fits your risk tolerance and time horizon as opposed to individual funds. Each "bucket" is composed of some or all of these underlying funds:

- Vanguard Balanced Index Admiral (VBIAX)
- Vanguard Total Bond Market Index Admiral (VBTLX)
- Vanguard Emerging Markets Stock Index Admiral Shares (VEMAX)
- Vanguard 500 Index Admiral (VFIAX)
- Vanguard Mid-Cap Index Admiral (VIMAX)
- Vanguard Small Cap Index Admirl (VSMAX)
- Vanguard Developed Markets Index Admiral (VTMGX)
- Vanguard Total Bond Market Index Admiral (VBTLX)
- Corebridge Fixed Income Fund

Can I add a beneficiary to my RSP?

Yes! And it is very important that you do. You can add or update your beneficiary information through your online account at Plan Participant Login | Corebridge Financial or by contacting your local advisor. You can list more than one beneficiary and also have the option to include contingent beneficiaries. For more details, visit our benefits website.

Can I add more than one beneficiary?

Yes. You can designate multiple primary beneficiaries and assign each a percentage of your account balance. You can also add one or more contingent (secondary) beneficiaries. For example, you might name your spouse as the 100% primary beneficiary and your children as contingent beneficiaries. If something happens to both you and your spouse, the balance would then be paid to the contingent beneficiaries.

What happens to my RSP balance if I am no longer working with the district?

You have a few options. You can leave your retirement savings in the plan, where it will continue to grow with interest, though you won't be able to make additional contributions. If your new employer offers a 401(k) or 403(b), you can roll over your balance into that plan. Alternatively, you may choose to roll the funds into an IRA. While not typically recommended, you also have the option to withdraw your balance—but keep in mind that taxes and early withdrawal penalties may apply.

Can I change my contribution amount to the retirement savings plan?

Yes! You can update your contribution amount at any time. You also have the option to set up an automatic annual increase. For example, if you're currently contributing 3% of your pay but would like to increase that gradually, you can set an auto-increase of 1% per year. You can also choose a maximum limit—say 6%—so your contribution will increase by 1% each year until it reaches that cap. It's a great way to build your savings over time without feeling a big impact on your take-home pay, especially if you typically receive annual raises.

If something happens and I need to stop my RSP contributions, can I start again later?

Yes, you can stop contributing at any time and leave your balance in the retirement savings plan to continue growing. When you're ready, you can restart your contributions. We encourage you to contribute as much as possible to take advantage of any employer match—if needed, consider reducing your contributions rather than stopping altogether so you don't miss out on match dollars.

Can I access the RSP money if I need it?

Yes. You can take a hardship withdrawal from the retirement savings plan if you meet certain IRS criteria. Additionally, you have the option to borrow against your account balance through a plan loan, which you'll repay monthly with interest. Our plan advisors can help explain both options and guide you through the process.

Should I contribute a percentage of pay or a set dollar amount to the RSP?

You should contribute a percentage of your pay to the RSP. This way, your contribution automatically adjusts based on what you earn. If you work overtime, your contribution increases with your paycheck. If you work fewer hours, it decreases accordingly.

How do I make changes to my retirement savings plan?

You may make changes to your Retirement Savings Plan on the Corebridge website, but many people find it easier to contact one of our Corebridge advisors for personal assistance.

Why is knowing my personal risk tolerance important?

Because staying the course with your personal strategy is critical to reaching your savings target. Knowing yourself is key to staying the course you chose when your investments decline.

For example, if your risk tolerance is "moderate" and you have 15+ years to retirement, there's an investment (a bucket) in the plan just for you. It will fluctuate less than a more aggressive bucket, and the long-term returns will be more modest but you won't be tempted to move you money and lose the chance at making up shorter term losses.

Your risk tolerance can change over time as you become more confident as an investor, or as you get closer to your target date or retirement. For example, your account may have grown nicely over a long period of time, and now that you're only a few years from your target retirement date, you may want to be more conservative to protect what you've earned.