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MEMBERSHIP IN SRPS

The State Retirement and Pension System (SRPS) has a long, secure history of providing retirement benefits to the employees of the “Free State.” Created in 1927 to provide pension benefits to the State’s public school employees, SRPS today covers several hundred thousand employees—from teachers and State personnel to our law makers in Annapolis.

The System is administered by the State Retirement Agency of Maryland (SRA), which manages the day-to-day operations of the pension fund and handles all membership matters—from enrollment to the payment of benefits. The Agency operates under the direction of a 14-member Board of Trustees, which establishes policy, oversees investments and represents member interests.

Participation and Eligibility

Membership in the State Retirement and Pension System includes close to 200,000 State and municipal employees, educators, judges, legislators and law enforcement personnel. Each of these employee groups is covered under an individual employee plan, or system.

This booklet deals with the Law Enforcement Officers’ Pension System (i.e., LEOPS) which was established in 1990. LEOPS covers the following employees:

- 1) Employees of the Department of Natural Resources commissioned by the Secretary of Natural Resources as
 - Natural Resources police officers or
 - law enforcement officers, other than Natural Resources police officers;
- 2) Law enforcement officers employed by the Maryland Investigative Services Unit;
- 3) Members of the Maryland Transportation Authority Police Force who have the powers granted to a police officer under § 4-208 of the Transportation Article;
- 4) Deputy sheriffs employed by the Baltimore City Sheriff’s Department;
- 5) Members of the University of Maryland Police Force and Morgan State University Police Force who have the powers granted to a police officer under § 13-601 and § 14-106, respectively, of the Education Article;

- 6) Law enforcement officers or firefighters employed by a participating governmental unit that on or after July 1, 1999, elected to participate in LEOPS;
- 7) The State Fire Marshal and Deputy State Fire Marshals;
- 8) Members of the Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport Fire and Rescue Department;
- 9) Members of the Department of General Services Police Force who have the powers granted to a police officer under §4-605 of the State Finance and Procurement Article;
- 10) Employees of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene commissioned by the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene as Health and Mental Hygiene police officers;
- 11) Employees of the Motor Vehicle Administration commissioned by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation as Motor Vehicle Administration police officers;
- 12) Employees of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation commissioned by the Secretary of Labor, Licensing and Regulation as Labor, Licensing and Regulation police officers;
- 13) Firefighters or law enforcement officers for the Martin State Airport employed by the Military Department;
- 14) Police officers employed by the Division of Rehabilitation Services in the Department of Education, certified in accordance with the Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission;
- 15) Firefighters or paramedics employed by the Salisbury Fire Department;
- 16) Members of the Maryland Transit Administration Police Force who have the powers granted to a police officer under §7-207 of the Transportation Article;
- 17) Aviators employed by the Department of State Police to operate an aircraft for the State Emergency Medical System;
- 18) An individual who is elected or appointed as the Baltimore City Sheriff and who does not elect to join the Employees' Pension System within six months of taking office;
- 19) Members of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Internal Investigative Unit who have the powers granted to a police officer under § 10-701 of the Correctional Services Article; or
- 20) Police officers employed by the Baltimore City Community College who have the powers granted to a police officer under §16-513 of the Education Article.

Exception: Membership does not apply to an individual who is elected or appointed as the Baltimore City Sheriff and who submits an application to join the Employees' Pension System within six months of taking office.

Exceptions: The following employees who transferred from the Employees' Retirement System to the Employees' Pension System on or after the dates shown are **not** members of the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System:

- 1) Maryland Transportation Authority police officers, deputy sheriffs employed by the Baltimore City Sheriff's Department, the State Fire Marshal or Deputy

State Fire Marshals and police officers employed by the Baltimore City Community College who transferred on or after December 1, 1996;

- 2) Members of the University of Maryland and Morgan State University Police Forces, law enforcement officers or firefighters employed by a participating governmental unit, and Maryland Port Administration police officers who transferred on or after December 1, 1997; or
- 3) Members of the Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport Fire and Rescue Department; firefighters for the Martin State Airport employed by the Military Department; members of the Department of General Services, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Motor Vehicle Administration, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Division of Rehabilitation Services in the Department of Education Police Force; firefighters or paramedics employed by the Salisbury Fire Department; and aviators employed by the Department of State Police who transferred on or after April 1, 1998.

Membership begins when your employer places you on payroll.

For new employees in the eligible groups listed, membership in LEOPS is mandatory. In the past, employees in these groups had the option to participate in other plans. Some individuals chose to remain in these other plans, and thus are not covered under LEOPS.

Taking An Active Role

Throughout your career it's wise to take an active interest in your retirement plan. That's why we offer a number of resources to keep you informed of benefit matters which may affect you now or in the future. These resources include your Personal Statement of Benefits, which provides an annual summary of your pension account, and our quarterly newsletter *The Mentor*, which offers up-to-date benefit news and information. See "SRPS Resources" for details on these and other SRPS member publications and services.

Beneficiary Changes

You originally designated your beneficiaries when you enrolled. It is important that the beneficiary(ies) you have on file with the Retirement Agency be kept current to reflect any changes in your life. Common reasons for changing beneficiaries include a change in marital status or the arrival of a new family member. You may update your beneficiary designation at any time by completing a new *Designation of Beneficiary* (Form 4), available through your personnel office. Your new designation goes into effect as soon as it is received by the State Retirement Agency. You may designate both primary and contingent beneficiaries during your membership.