Issue Highlights

Time to P.L.A.N.
Retirement is a process and breaking it down into smaller steps can ensure a smooth transition.

Ready to Take the Retirement Plunge?
Retirement seminars can help you plan for this important milestone.
Dates announced for 2012 seminars

Health Insurance Matters
Options and considerations for 2012 CTPF retirees

News Briefs and Legislative Update
Important updates

Pensions provide secure and stable retirements for teachers, yet their very existence has come under attack. I want to dispel some of the myths that have circulated about pensions and set the record straight.

Myth #1: Public pensions are too generous.
FACT: The average Chicago Teachers’ Pension Fund (CTPF) retiree earns $42,000 per year after investing 28 years of service in the Chicago Public Schools. Breaking down the distribution, 42% of CTPF retirees earn less than $42,000 per year, and 27% earn less than $30,000 per year. Less than ½ of 1% of all CTPF retirees earn more than $100,000 per year. (Fiscal year 2010 data).

Myth #2: Pensions drain our economy.
FACT: Pension benefits have a substantial positive impact and ripple effect on our economy. A study released in 2009 by the National Institute on Retirement Security found that in the State of Illinois, each $1 paid out in pension benefits supported $1.50 in economic activity in the State of Illinois.
Executive Director’s Letter continued from cover

Myth #3: Teachers receive Social Security.
FACT: CTPF teachers do not contribute to or receive Social Security retirement benefits.

Myth #4: Pensions are “given” to teachers.
FACT: Teachers contribute to retirement and earn pensions with every paycheck.

Myth #5: Teachers don’t contribute enough to their pensions.
FACT: Teachers contribute more than the average taxpayer to fund their retirement. The normal Social Security contribution is 6%. Teachers contribute 9% each paycheck.

Myth #6: Pensions are too expensive.
FACT: Pensions are an efficient way to fund retirement. Pension mechanics are simple and have provided stable retirements for Chicago’s teachers for more than 116 years. CTPF collects revenue, invests it, and distributes it in the form of pensions. Revenue for pensions comes from four sources: teacher contributions, employer contributions, State of Illinois contributions, and investment earnings. When all four sources make regular contributions obligations can be met. The system has worked for more than 100 years, through countless financial downturns, wars, and depressions. Problems arise when funding sources fail to make adequate contributions.

Myth #7: Teachers should have a 401K instead of a pension.
FACT: 401(k) plans jeopardize retirement security for individuals and would weaken the health of the pension plan.

Moving to a defined contribution plan or 401(k) savings plan would weaken the overall health of the fund and eliminate a guaranteed pension benefit for participants.

Myth #8: Pension reform legislation will solve our problems and save taxpayers a lot of money.
FACT: The recent “reform” legislation proposed fails to recognize the real solution: mandated employer funding.

Illinois Senate Bill 512, which stalled this fall, offered about $2.7 billion in cuts to CTPF benefits over a 50-year period. This bill shifted more of the funding burden to teachers without requiring the employer to make adequate contributions. Reform must require accountability from employers.

Myth #9: The cost of teachers’ pensions has caused the fund’s financial problems.
FACT: A lack of employer contributions led to this situation. For decades Chicagoans made a direct payment to the pension fund when they paid their tax bills. In 1995, however, the CPS system had a financial crisis and CTPF became a victim of its own success. At that time, CTPF enjoyed a funding level near 100%. CPS appealed to the legislature and Illinois lawmakers agreed to permanently redirect CTPF pension tax revenue directly into the CPS operating budget. During the period 1995-2005, CPS received approximately $2 billion in pension tax revenue and paid $0 to CTPF. When funding levels dropped to a critical level in 2006, CPS was required to make contributions to the fund. Years of underfunding led to a steep price tag, so in 2010 CPS sought and received an additional $1.2 billion in funding relief from the Illinois legislature. If CPS had made steady contributions to the fund, CTPF would be about 90% funded today.

Myth #10: The State of Illinois is spending a lot of money to support CTPF pensions.
FACT: CTPF receives almost no revenue from the State of Illinois. Unfortunately, state revenue promised to Chicago’s teachers failed to materialize. While the suburban and downstate pension system will receive over $2.5 billion in annual support for 2011, CTPF will receive no state funding.

Attacking pension benefits and blaming teachers will not solve pension funding problems – it’s time to fight back with the facts. We expect the discussion about pension “reform” to continue in 2012 and we must prepare to take action. Our members must help define the debate, and I hope you’ll do your part. Educate your friends and Illinois legislators, combat the myths, and share your voice.

Kevin B. Huber, executive director
recording secretary. We extend our thanks for her dedicated service. Mr. O’Brill represented active teachers from 1995 – 2001 and again from 2005 – 2011. He served in many leadership roles, including president from 2005 – 2011. He put a tremendous amount of time and energy into ensuring the fund’s success and we thank him for his dedication.”

Huber continued, “we welcome our new members, welcome back our returning members, and look forward to a productive year.”

**Teacher Trustee Election**

November 4, 2011, teachers and active contributors other than principals/administrators held an election in schools and at other designated polling places. Five candidates ran for two open positions. Tina Padilla and Raymond Wohl received the most votes and will serve three-year terms from November 2011 to November 2014.

A teacher for 23 years, Padilla taught mathematics at Lane Tech High School and has experience in business, finance, and real estate. A national board certified teacher, she holds a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Northeastern Illinois University, a master’s degree in mathematics from DePaul University, and is currently enrolled in an MBA program at the Keller Graduate School of Management.

A 17-year CPS veteran, Wohl teaches at Thurgood Marshall Middle School. Wohl earned a B.A. in Theatre Arts from The University of Toledo, a M.A. in Speech, Communication and Performing Arts from Northeastern Illinois University, and is a MFA candidate at New York University School of the Arts.

“Our teacher trustee election ran smoothly and we saw an increase in voter turnout,” said Frances Radencic, election coordinator. “As in the past, our election was organized by Election Services Corporation and conducted by more than 500 volunteer Pension Representatives and Canvassing Board members. We want to acknowledge and thank all of our volunteers for their service in this election.”


**Pensioner Trustee Election**

Walter E. Pilditch, Mary Sharon Reilly, and James F. Ward were re-elected to represent pensioners. The election was conducted by mail ballot and final results were certified on November 9, 2011.

Pilditch, Reilly, and Ward will serve two-year terms from November 2011 to November 2013.

Pilditch served the board as a principal/administrator trustee from November 1995 to November 2001 and as a pensioner trustee from 2004 to the present.

Reilly served the board as a teacher trustee from 1991 to 2002 and as a pensioner trustee from November 2007 to the present.

Ward has served the board as a pensioner trustee from 1997 to the present.

---

**Board of Education Reappointment**

The Chicago Board of Education reappointed Rodrigo A. Sierra to serve as a CTPF trustee from November 2011 to November 2013. Sierra joined the board in July 2011.

---

**2011-2012 CTPF Board of Trustees**

The Chicago Board of Education reappointed Rodrigo A. Sierra to serve as a CTPF trustee from November 2011 to November 2013. Sierra joined the board in July 2011.

---

**2011-2012 Executive Board**

President Jay C. Rehak
Vice President Lois W. Ashford
Financial Secretary Tina Padilla
Recording Secretary James F. Ward

---

**2011-2012 Board of Trustees**

Representing the Contributors
Lois W. Ashford
Jeffrey Blackwell
Jeanne Marie Freed
Tina Padilla
Jay C. Rehak
Raymond Wohl

Representing the Principals/Administrators
Chris N. Kotis

Representing the Pensioners
Walter E. Pilditch
Mary Sharon Reilly
James F. Ward

Representing the Board of Education
Rodrigo A. Sierra
Andrea L. Zopp
Ready to Retire in 2012?

Now is the Time to P.L.A.N.

Prepare, Learn, Apply, Notify.

There are few milestones in life more dramatic than retirement. The end of your work career brings a mixture of emotions and a flood of financial considerations. The way you approach the process can make a big difference in how you feel when you actually leave your job. The acronym, P.L.A.N., Prepare, Learn, Apply, Notify, can help you organize your retirement planning and ensure a smooth transition.

Prepare

There are important steps you should take now to prepare for retirement next June.

Assess Your Financial Situation

Now is a good time to examine your expenses and think about how you will minimize them. You may want to put together a monthly budget or track expenses for a period to see how you can cut costs and live on a reduced income. While you may receive an initial windfall from a sick day payout at retirement, your long-term income will decrease.

Retirement Preparation

Three important steps can help you prepare for retirement:

1. Request an estimate of your pension from Member Services.
   The estimate can give you an idea of the amount of retirement income you can expect. You may also want to schedule a personal benefits consultation.

2. Consider Post Retirement Health Insurance
   As an employee, your employer may have paid for a portion of your health insurance premium. As a retiree, you must pay for your health insurance coverage and in general the premium cost will be higher as a retiree. Your age and overall health will play an important role in making this decision. See page 6 for more information about health insurance.

3. Get the credit you deserve
   Increasing your service credit is one way to maximize your pension income. There are several ways to increase your service credit:

   Sick Days
   Your sick days can be converted to service credit. CTPF will use a maximum of 244 sick days to increase your service.

   Optional Service Purchase
   Consider an optional service purchase to increase your pension. If you took an unpaid, employer-approved leave of absence, you can buy back up to three years of service credit. Former CPS employees who took a refund of contributions then returned to CPS may also buy back that time.
   You must complete payment of optional service contracts prior to retirement. Contact Member Services for additional information.

2.2 Upgrade

Members who were employed prior to July 1, 1998, earned pensions based on a “step” formula instead of the 2.2 formula used today. If you earned service prior to July 1, 1998, you may upgrade your pension so that all of your service is based on the 2.2 percentage. If you earn 30 years of service, this upgrade is applied at no cost. If you have less than 30 years of service, but more than 20, there is a discount. Many retirees opt to pay for the upgrade by applying funds at retirement. Find more information in the brochure Understanding the 2.2 Upgrade.

Learn

As an educator, you’ve made a career out of preparing children for the challenges of the future – now it’s your turn. Educating yourself about the retirement process will make the transition to retirement smoother.

Attending a 2012 Retirement Seminar (see page 5 for dates and times) is one of the simplest ways to gather a lot of information. Retirement seminars provide an overview of the retirement process and offer assistance completing the retirement application. Representatives from CTPF’s Member Services Department, the Chicago Teachers Union, Chicago Public Schools, the Social Security Administration, and financial services firms will also be available to answer individual questions.

Many retirees find themselves eligible for a payout of sick days at retirement, which may amount to a substantial sum. You may want to research your investment options or meet with a certified financial planner or advisor who can help you make informed choices.

Apply

Downloading or requesting a Retirement Application can help take the retirement process from intangible to tangible. The application requests specific information about your employment and vital records.

When you retire you will need copies of your vital records including your birth certificate, and your partner’s birth certificate (or death certificate) if you are married or in a civil union. You will also need a copy of your marriage or civil union license or a divorce decree, if applicable. Make sure you can document your identity properly.

Reciprocal Considerations

If you plan to retire under the provisions of the Illinois Retirement Systems Reciprocal Act, you must declare your intent at retirement, meet each system’s requirements, and request and file a retirement application with each system.
“Each June we inevitably get people who walk in the door at CTPF and declare themselves retired,” remarked Sheron Banks Fallis, Member Services Manager. “While we’re happy to educate them, we want members to understand retirement is a step-by-step process. It’s not enough to just tell your principal that you’re not coming back.”

One important step is notifying your employer. Your employer has a separate application and paperwork that must be completed before you can officially retire. CTPF must receive confirmation of your resignation from your employer before it can process your CTPF application. Once CTPF receives confirmation, it takes up to 90 days to process a retirement application.

You may also need to notify CTPF if you return to work after retirement.

As a retiree, you may work for any non-CTPF-covered employer without restriction. If you return to CTPF-covered employment, the job must meet certain guidelines or your pension may be revoked. Reciprocal retirees must meet the rules from all of their retirement systems. Find the return to work policy and necessary forms at www.ctpf.org.

Questions?
If you need additional assistance, contact a Member Services counselor at 312.641.4464.

Register Today for a CTPF 2012 Retirement Seminar

Join CTPF at a retirement seminar and find the information you need to make a smooth transition to retirement.

**February 20 (attend one)**
9:00 - 12:00 P.M. or
1:00 - 4:00 P.M.
Renaissance Chicago O’Hare Suites Hotel
8500 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, Chicago

**March 5 (attend one)**
9:00 - 12:00 P.M. or
1:00 - 4:00 P.M.
Hilton Oak Lawn
9333 South Cicero Avenue, Oak Lawn, Illinois

Chicago Teachers’ Pension Fund retirement seminars offer valuable information designed to ease your transition to retirement. Seminars feature presentations by CTPF and CPS staff, followed by a question-and-answer session. Representatives from the Social Security Administration and financial services firms will also be available.

Members who plan to retire in 2012 may also receive assistance completing retirement applications, and access no-cost notary and copying services.

To register and request a Retirement Application Packet call CTPF at 312.641.4464.

Your Personal Benefits Consultation

Joyce Lloyd, CTPF Member Services counselor, meets with Judy Walter during a benefits consultation.

If you plan to retire in 2012, now is the time to schedule your personal benefits consultation.

**Make an Appointment**
During a retirement consultation, counselors meet with members in 45-minute, pre-scheduled appointments, available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. These personalized, one-on-one meetings allow you to discuss your retirement situation in depth. When you schedule your appointment, notify CTPF of the reason for your visit and remember to bring a list of questions, and relevant career information to the meeting.

**Walk-in Visitors**
Because of the personalized nature of a benefits consultation, walk-in visits are discouraged. Walk-in visitors are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., but wait times will vary and may be lengthy during busy periods. Walk-in visits are not accepted after 3:00 p.m. If you arrive without an appointment, your questions may not be answered in a single visit and you may need to schedule additional time.

**Parking and Transit Information**
CTPF is located at 203 North LaSalle Street, suite 2600, Chicago, Illinois 60601-1231. The 203 North LaSalle building has a self-park garage with entries on Lake Street and Clark Street. Reduced parking vouchers, available from the CTPF office, can be purchased for $15 (check only, no cash).

The 203 North LaSalle building has direct access to the CTA. The CTA’s blue, green, brown, pink, purple, and orange lines all stop at Clark and Lake.
Planning for Post-Retirement Health Insurance

Choosing a health insurance plan for you and your eligible dependents is one of your most important retirement decisions. Employer-sponsored group health insurance coverage will end at retirement. Now is the time to research your options and to decide on a plan so your coverage continues without interruption.

Know Your Options

There are several different ways to acquire post-retirement health insurance. Your options may include:

- Continuation coverage – the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), allows individuals to pay for the same health insurance coverage that they received when they were employed, usually for 18 months. Contact your employer for information.

- CTPF Health Insurance Plans – CTPF offers health insurance benefits to retirees, dependents, and survivors if the retiree’s final teaching service was with the Chicago Public or Charter Schools. Qualified retirees may enroll in a plan for:
  - Non-Medicare eligible members
  - Medicare-eligible members who maintain enrollment in Medicare Part A and Part B
  - Other group insurance
  - Private insurance

CTPF Plans

If your final teaching service was with CTPF, you and your dependents may qualify to join a CTPF health insurance plan. Qualified dependents must be covered under the same insurance carrier as the retiree. The 2012 Health Insurance Handbook and Open Enrollment Guide, available at www.ctpf.org, contains detailed information about plans offered, eligibility requirements, and premium costs.

How do I Enroll?

If you plan to enroll in a CTPF health insurance plan, contact CTPF and request the appropriate health insurance application. Retirees ending COBRA continuation coverage should submit health insurance applications to CTPF two months prior to the termination of coverage. The transition from COBRA to a CTPF plan is not automatic. It’s important to contact CTPF before your COBRA insurance expires to ensure that your coverage continues.

Who Can Join?

CTPF retirees whose final service was CTPF and eligible dependents may join a CTPF plan. Eligible survivors may also qualify.

When Can I Join?

You may only enroll in a CTPF health insurance program once in your lifetime unless you experience a qualifying event. Retirees may initially enroll:

- within 30 days after COBRA continuation coverage terminates (unless termination is due to non-payment)
- within 30 days of the effective date of pension benefits
- during the Annual Open Enrollment Period (once in a lifetime)
- when coverage is terminated by another group health insurance plan through no fault of your own
- when you become eligible for Medicare

Annual Enrollment

Each fall CTPF offers an open enrollment period when you can enroll in a plan, add an eligible dependent, or change plans.* Open Enrollment information is sent in September and published in Pension News and in monthly E-News updates.

*You can only enroll or add a dependent during annual enrollment once in a lifetime.

Qualifying Event

You may enroll in a CTPF plan outside of the initial or annual enrollment period if you experience a qualifying event. Qualifying events include: marriage, birth, adoption, legal guardianship, becoming Medicare eligible, a change in permanent address that affects availability of an HMO or Medicare Advantage plan, or termination of a Primary Care Physician for an HMO or POS plan.

Paying for Insurance

CTPF retirees whose final service was CTPF may qualify for a partial subsidy of their health insurance premiums.

The CTPF Board of Trustees determines a premium subsidy which is subject to change and not guaranteed. The subsidy will be 60%, effective January 1, 2012. The subsidy applies to the retiree or survivor portion of the premium. Dependent coverage is not eligible for the subsidy.

What to do now

- Research your coverage options.
- Contact your health care providers to determine if they participate in the insurance programs you are considering.
- Compare costs and review the CTPF Health Insurance Handbook and Open Enrollment Guide. Request enrollment forms or additional information.
**News Briefs**

**Pensions Finalized**
This fall CTPF finalized more than 3,400 pensions, some dating back to 2008. The process will continue and CTPF will finalize pensions as data becomes available from CPS.

**Annual Statements**
CTPF recently received CPS data and was able to process Annual Statements through June 2010. Charter School employees paid outside of the CPS payroll system have continued to receive Annual Statements, and can expect to receive their statement for Fiscal Year 2011 by the end of the calendar year. If you have not yet received a statement, contact Member Services to confirm your address information.

**Early Bird Retirement Seminars Attract Hundreds**
This fall CTPF hosted a series of very successful early bird retirement seminars for individuals who were ready to hand in their retirement paperwork. The seminars, held after school on the North, West, and South side offered members the chance to meet with Member Services counselors who answered final questions, helped complete paperwork, and provided free notary and copying services. These sessions were targeted at members who had already attended a retirement seminar and were just waiting to hand in their paperwork.

**2010 CAFR and 2010-2011 Meeting Minutes Distributed**
Copies of the 2010 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the indexed version of the 2010-2011 CTPF Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes were distributed to all schools on CD-ROM in October. Members who wish to review the documents may contact their pension representatives or find copies online at [www.ctpf.org](http://www.ctpf.org).

**Legislative Update**
The Chicago Teachers’ Pension Fund is governed by Illinois law. Changes to the governance of the fund begin in Springfield.

**Illinois HB 3827 Fails to Progress**
Illinois House Bill 3827 which proposed a new structure for the Chicago Teachers’ Pension Fund Board of Trustees failed to progress in the Illinois House of Representatives during the fall veto session. The bill would have eliminated the current 12-member Board of Trustees, replacing it with a 7-member, appointed board.

**Illinois Senate Bill 512 Stalled in Fall Veto Session**
Illinois Senate Bill 512 which proposed major changes to pensions for current employees passed out of committee during the fall veto session, but was not called for a vote on the floor. Legislators are again expected to take up pension “reform” during the spring session. Watch for updates in E-Lerts and on Facebook and Twitter.

**Share Your Voice**
Advocating for pension funding has become an important responsibility for CTPF members. The most effective way to communicate with your legislators is through a face-to-face meeting. All lawmakers have local offices and most have office hours or open visiting hours and winter break is a good time to visit. Find additional links to legislators and talking points at [www.ctpf.org](http://www.ctpf.org).
CTPF Board of Trustees’ Mission Statement

To provide, protect, and enhance the present and future economic well being of members, pensioners and beneficiaries through efficient and effective management of benefit programs, investment practices and customer service, and to commit to earning and keeping the respect and trust of the participants through quality service and by protecting retirement benefits, in compliance with applicable laws and standards.

Board of Trustees

Jay C. Rehak, president
Lois W. Ashford, vice president
Tina Padilla, financial secretary
James F. Ward, recording secretary
Jeffery Blackwell
Jeanne Marie Freed
Chris N. Kotis
Walter E. Pilditch
Mary Sharon Reilly
Rodrigo A. Sierra
Raymond Wohl
Andrea Zopp
Kevin B. Huber, executive director

Connect with CTPF

Are you a Facebook fanatic?
Do you Tweet without missing a beat?

Take advantage of CTPF’s social media presence to stay informed and up-to-date on important fund information.

Last January, at the direction of the CTPF Board of Trustees Communications Committee, CTPF began a major effort to expand and enhance electronic communications. Since January 2011, CTPF has initiated several programs which have increased E-mail registrations more than 300%, developed a monthly E-newsletter, initiated an E-Lert for time-sensitive information, and delivered new webinars for open enrollment information.

“We see Facebook and Twitter as another way to reach out to our membership,” remarked Frances Radencic, director, Member and Office Services. “We want to be able to contact our members with important and timely information, and social media allows us to do that.”

Stay informed and up-to-date on current events and legislative issues by utilizing our electronic communications. Visit our electronic information page at www.ctpf.org and find an easy link to “like us” on Facebook.