

# TEACHERS RETIREMENT INFORMATION BULLETIN

Retiree Edition ■ Fall 2018



## Privacy 101: Account information

No one is authorized to receive information about your account unless you do one or more of the following.

- ▶ If you give permission to our phone counselors and you are available to speak with us at that time, we're happy to help.
- ▶ You can allow us to release account information by completing a release form every year. Designees cannot make changes to your account.
- ▶ Another option is a power of attorney allowing another party to handle your account. However, once we receive a power of attorney designation, the member no longer controls the account. Call 1-800-657-3669 for assistance.

## We're freshening up our logo, website, literature

This month we unveil TRA's newly designed primary and MyTRA logos along with a revamped website that we hope will provide all members with the convenience, ease of navigation, and aesthetics that you expect.



We've reimagined how we organize content so that it's easier to find information that's relevant for you no matter what your age or where you are in your career.

Our new primary logo is periwinkle

and combines traditional education iconography of the "flame of wisdom" with clean and modern typography. The new logo served as the cornerstone of a redesign of TRA's public-facing website and literature.



The rebranding project has been months in development. Throughout the process, we kept you and your needs top of mind. The new

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## 1% COLA effective Jan. 1

The 2018 pension bill has one provision that impacts retirees beginning Jan. 1, 2019. Effective on that date, the retiree cost-of-living adjustment will be 1 percent through 2023. From 2024 to 2028, the COLA will increase by 0.1 percent per year until reaching 1.5 percent.

### TRA SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

**COLA:** 1.0% for 5 years (2019-2023), then increase by 0.1% per year in each of next five years (2024-2028) to 1.5%

**COLA delay to age 66:** Effective 7/1/2024. Exempt: Rule of 90, disability, survivors, age 62/30 years.

**Early retirement:** Changes calculations. 5-year phase-in beginning 7/1/2019, age 62/30 years exempt.

**Employee contribution increase:** +0.25% beginning 7/1/2023 (7.5% to 7.75%)

**Employer contribution increases:** +1.25% phased in over 6 years beginning 7/1/2018 (7.5% to 8.75%)

# President's c o r n e r

*Maitha Lee Jones*  
TRA Board



## Strength through strategy

**W**hat a year it's been for TRA! Together with our engaged and passionate stakeholder groups—active and retired educators and employers—we put forward a legislative sustainability package that puts TRA on track to reach 100 percent funded by 2048.

So, what's next? Well, there's a lot we can do to fortify TRA for future generations without ever setting foot in the Capitol.

One project that occupied us this summer was the development of a new strategic plan. The purpose of TRA's strategic plan is to help guide the agency over the next three to five years.

The process involved the board addressing mission and goals, and TRA staff designing strategies to carry out those goals. Staff and stakeholders helped with a "situation assessment"—the gathering of information through surveys and facilitated group meetings. The survey and meetings were critical in helping leadership understand what is working well and what could be improved in order to inform our thinking for the future.

Four themes came out of this work.

**Engaged, empowered, high-performing workforce.** TRA will demonstrate dedication, stability and inclusivity. Leadership and staff will respect all perspectives and experiences. Succession planning and operational workforce planning will support the transfer of knowledge from outgoing employees and the recruitment and retention of new and existing employees.

**Fund integrity balanced with equity in plan provisions.** TRA will abide by its fiduciary duty to ensure the financial stability of the plan while working toward fairness in benefit structure and contribution rates. TRA will continually monitor the plan's financial health. When needed, TRA will recommend adjustments to stabilize the fund while upholding the board's guiding principles of shared commitment, intergenerational equity, long-term financial sustainability and maintaining the recruitment/retention value of a TRA pension.

**Engagement and education.** TRA will provide information to empower members, employers, legislators and taxpayers to be informed and engaged about TRA's governance structure as well as the value of a defined-benefit plan. Member educational materials should be clear, accurate, accessible and presented in innovative ways for all life stages.

**Risk-intelligent organization.** TRA will be a risk-intelligent organization with a robust, proactive and comprehensive risk-management program. TRA will continue to monitor and respond to known and emerging risks.

Strategic planning might sound like just so much navel-gazing, but it's much more than that. In fact, throughout the process I've been struck by the feeling that there have been more people in the room with us than it appeared.

Thousands of you, in fact—there with us in spirit.

## TRA news briefs

### Benefit adjustments for new retirees

If you have recently retired, a preliminary estimate is used to determine your initial payment. This estimate uses anticipated salary and service for the current year, normally assumed to be the same salary and service that you earned the previous year. After retirement, your account will be reviewed to verify that all salary and service credit have been received, and a new calculation of benefits will be produced. If an adjustment to your monthly payment is required, you will be notified and the adjustment will be made retroactive to your benefit effective date.

### 1099-R forms go out in January

TRA will mail 1099-R tax forms in late January. This form discloses the total amount and taxable portion of your annuity payments plus federal and state income tax withheld for 2018. You will need this information for your tax returns. To get an e-mail alert when the forms are available online, you must set up a MyTRA account. If you have moved or plan on moving, please update your address with TRA. The post office will not forward tax forms. Call us at 651-296-2409 or 800-657-3669 or log in to MyTRA to update your home and e-mail addresses.

### Do you need an appointment?

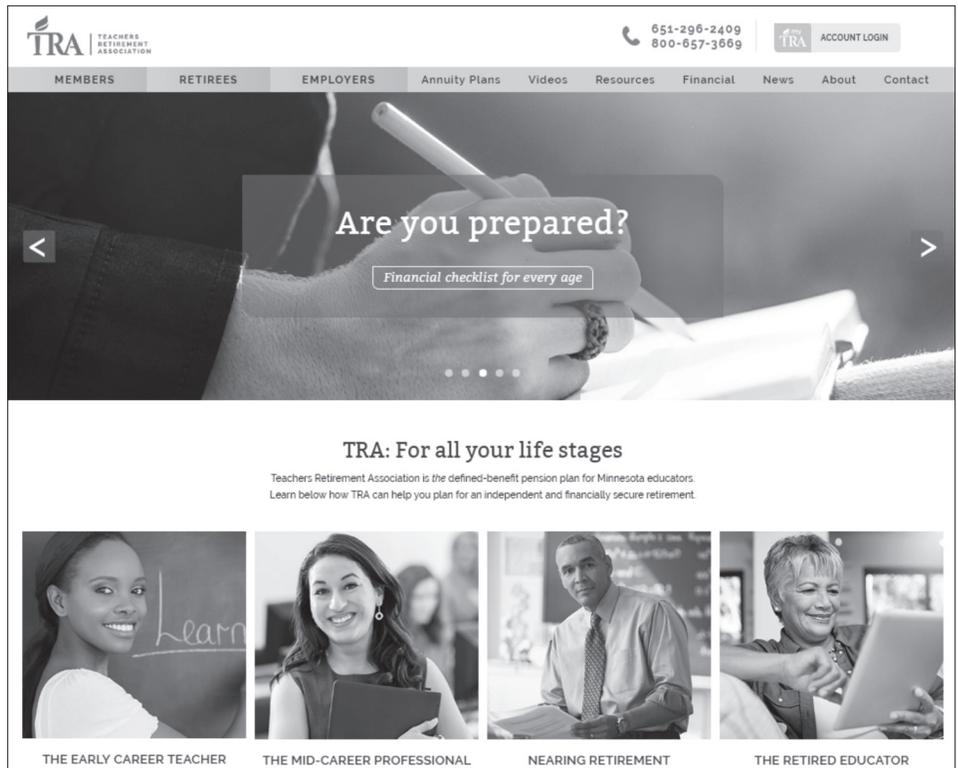
We ask that you make an appointment if you want to see a counselor. That way, our counselors can prepare for your visit. Quick question? Call 651-296-2409 or 800-657-3669. You can also set up an appointment by logging into your MyTRA account at [MinnesotaTRA.org](http://MinnesotaTRA.org).

# TRA to debut new look

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MinnesotaTRA.org was conceived around a few key goals:

- Visitors to our site should see themselves reflected there—content should be relevant for your age and life stage.
- Reorganize content according to life stages (the early-career teacher, mid-career, nearing retirement, retired) in addition to offering a traditional navigation menu.
- Whether you're looking for specific information or just exploring, content should be easy to find. Content should be clear, accurate, accessible, and presented in an innovative way.
- Create a visually dynamic space on the home page to highlight timely content, news items, and other items of interest.
- Achieve a sleek, contemporary website designed according to the



latest best practices in graphic design and user experience.

- The design should allow for more photos and graphics.
- Make the site mobile-friendly and responsive.

## QUESTIONS, COMMENTS?

Email us at [publications@minnesotatra.org](mailto:publications@minnesotatra.org).

Above: Screen shot of the new MinnesotaTRA.org home page (desktop).

Below: Mobile view screen shot of counseling page.

Below, left: TRA literature also got an overhaul.



## CHOICES, CHOICES

You can attend a group workshop or webinar and benefit from other members' questions. If you prefer, we will meet with you individually in one of our offices or during our road trips around Minnesota. In either case, you receive a personalized estimate of your retirement benefit.

## One-on-one counseling

You can take advantage of individual counseling anytime at one of five TRA offices—St. Paul, St. Cloud, Duluth, Mankato and Detroit Lakes—or by setting up an appointment when we're in a town near you during our road trips.

You must make an appointment—log into your MyTRA account or call. There is typically only one counselor at each satellite office; there are five in St. Paul. Call ahead if you need to make an impromptu visit.



60 Empire Drive Suite 400  
 St Paul Minnesota 55103-4000  
 800.657.3669 | 651.296.2409

[www.MinnesotaTRA.org](http://www.MinnesotaTRA.org)



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For use ONLY if you wish to report a name, address or email address change. Updates can be made online at [www.minnesotatra.org](http://www.minnesotatra.org). You also may call TRA Member Services at 651.296.2409 or 800.657.3669, or mail the form below to TRA. Be sure to include the above, printed mailing address with your mailed request.

Please check all boxes that apply:  Name change  Address change  Email address addition/change

Present Last Name (Please Print)	First Name	Middle Name	Birth Name
Address			TRA Member Number
City, State and Zip Code		Email Address	

# Understanding the survivorship ‘bounceback’

If you are among the retirees who chose a survivorship plan (100, 75 or 50 percent) that provides coverage for a survivor after your death, you must contact TRA if your beneficiary predeceases you. There is a “bounce-back” provision that permits your monthly payment to be increased to the higher single life (No Refund) annuity amount.

TRA is only authorized to make a one-year retroactive change to the benefit from the date we receive the death certificate, so contact TRA as soon as possible so an adjustment can be made to your benefit without delay.

If you are divorced, your annuity can be changed to the higher single life plan if you and your former spouse go to court to revoke the beneficiary

election and your former spouse waives all rights to a survivorship benefit. Legislation in 2013 expanded this to allow a member and non-spousal beneficiary to revoke the election and waive any rights to a survivorship annuity. The plan bounces back to the higher single-life amount.

To revoke a designated beneficiary, contact TRA.

### Attention, snowbirds!

Providing TRA with your temporary address will ensure that you receive important documents without delay. You may store both a permanent and temporary address on your record by calling us or entering it in your online account at [www.MinnesotaTRA.org](http://www.MinnesotaTRA.org).

### Minnesota Teachers Retirement Association

Executive Director, Jay Stoffel

The *TRIB* is published three times a year. If differences develop between the information provided and the laws governing TRA, the laws prevail.

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