MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

FALL 2026

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city of CINCINNATI RETIREMENT

THE CINCINNATI RETIREMENT SYSTEM (CRS) WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1931 AND EXISTS TO ADMINISTER PENSION BENEFITS FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED CITY OF CINCINNATI EMPLOYEES. CRS IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR RETIREMENT GROUPS.

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CITY RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION RATE INCREASES

As part of the new CRS funding policy approved by City Council and made effective July 1, 2026, the City has increased the employer and employee contribution rates for the Cincinnati Retirement System (CRS). This change will not impact retirement benefits available to CRS members.

The City's commitment to increase funding to the CRS will further strengthen the future of the retirement system and bolster the payments of benefits for all employees. As part of this new funding policy, the City has increased the employee contribution rate from 9% to 9.25% of pensionable earnings, as well as increased the employer contribution rate from 18.5% to 19.25% of pensionable earnings.

What does this mean for the members of the CRS?

This means every employee (and the City) is contributing more for your retirement benefits. By law, the City must contribute at least 19.25% (previously 16.25%) and employees must contribute at least 9.25% (previously 9%).

NOTE: all employee-deducted contributions to the CRS are owned by the individual employee. Employees do not own employer contributions to the CRS. Employer contributions are made to CRS on behalf of the employee and are not credited to any individual employee's retirement account.

The funding policy will continue to increase the employee contribution rate by a quarter percent until reaching 10% in 2030.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR BENEFIT ESTIMATE

Curious what your retirement benefit would be in five, ten, twenty years? CRS Member Direct is here to help.

To generate your own benefit estimate:

1. Log in to your CRS Member Direct account.
2. Select *Estimate a Benefit* in the menu.
3. Enter your *Separation* (date you separate from City service) and *Benefit Effective Date* (date your retirement begins).
4. Select *Generate*, and the system will do the rest.

The estimate document will be multiple pages with the calculation of your career metrics on the first page. The *Benefit Formula and Calculation* section shows your pension calculation in real terms: *Benefit Service* multiplied by *Service Multiplier* multiplied by *Average Highest Compensation* (a range of your highest, consecutive earning years). The *Unadjusted Benefit Amount* is the value of your monthly pension. This amount is also the Single Life Option. The *Optional Form Adjustments* section displays the dollar amounts associated with Single Life and Option(s) 1-4. The following section, *Payment Options for Your Monthly Pension Benefit*, explains the five pension options available at retirement. The final section, *Earnings History*, displays the range of your highest, consecutive earning years (Average Highest Compensation).

The dollar amount of your pension, and what happens to your pension in the event of your death, is based on the guidelines of the Option you choose at retirement. This choice is irrevocable upon the date of your retirement.

NOTE: The CRS Member Direct estimator uses real pay records as of today's date and projects data into the future to your chosen Benefit Effective Date. It will not take into account future pay increases, promotions, or contract cost of living increases. Keep this in mind when reviewing estimates that the greater the distance between the date the estimate is generated and the benefit effective date will decrease accuracy in the estimate.

Have more questions? See the CRS Member Handbook for all things retirement related to your group here: cincinnati-oh.gov/retirement/membership/crs-member-handbooks/

PRIOR SERVICE CREDIT

Have you previously worked for the City AND refunded your CRS retirement account in the past? Any current CRS member who has previously worked for the City and refunded their CRS account has the ability to purchase and restore that refunded CRS service.

Purchasing prior service credit restores refunded service and increases your overall service credit totals, which impacts your retirement eligibility and pension calculation. Purchasing prior service credit does not restore prior group assignment or membership date.

If you have prior, refunded CRS service and are interested in a service purchase:

1. Access the form Service Purchase – CRS at: cincinnati-oh.gov/retirement/forms/
2. Submit a completed form to CRS
3. CRS will respond to you with a cost statement

Once CRS receives a completed Request for Prior Cincinnati Retirement System Service Credit Purchase Cost form (located on the website), CRS will respond to you with a cost statement and instructions on how to proceed should you wish to purchase your refunded time.

You may pay for the service purchase in multiple ways: pre-tax rollover, post-tax payment, or payroll deduction. It is up to you how you want to proceed. Contact the CRS office today for a quote!

NOTE: if you have multiple periods of prior service, CRS will produce cost statements for each period. You may elect to purchase some or all of your available service.

CRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACTIVE ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the 2026 CRS Board of Trustees Active Trustee election are in and Deputy Director of Finance, Monica Morton, has retained her seat on the board. Congratulations, Monica!

Monica has served the City with the Finance Department for 23 years, and for the last four years she has served as one of two Active CRS Board Trustees.

The CRS Board of Trustees consists of nine (9) members: four (4) mayoral appointees, three (3) elected retirees, and two (2) elected active members. Trustees are elected among their respective peers. Elections are staggered, so only one seat is up for election at a time. A CRS Board Trustee term is four years, with an election every two years. The next CRS Board of Trustees election for an Active Trustee will take place in the summer of 2028.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS COUNSELING

Are you on track to meeting your retirement goals? Would you like a personal, one-on-one meeting with a CRS retirement specialist? Consider scheduling a counseling session with a Retirement Benefits Counselor today!

One-on-one retirement counseling sessions can be as high-level or in the weeds as you prefer. Do you have questions about what benefits will be available to you, how retirement with CRS works, what your pension calculation will be, etc.? Do you have prior service? Are you considering deferring your retirement? We are here to help.

One-on-one retirement counseling sessions can be flexible as well. Meetings can be remote through Microsoft Teams, in person in the CRS offices, or over the phone — it's up to you!

Schedule a one-on-one retirement counseling session today by contacting: retirementcounselor@cincinnati-oh.gov.

Disclaimer: CRS staff cannot provide legal or financial advice. Consult legal counsel or financial planners for any legal and financial planning questions. Retirement counseling is strictly to offer guidance and clarity concerning the retirement benefits offered by the Cincinnati Retirement System.

RETIREMENT PROCESSING SESSIONS AS ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING IN 2027

Currently, once members apply for retirement, the retirement process involves a Retirement Processing Session, in which members in the final days of their career are invited to a classroom-style training held in the CRS office. In the Processing Session, CRS staff offer an overview of what members can expect in retirement, how retirement works, ways members can take advantage of all that CRS offers in retirement, execute the necessary documents for retirement—and perhaps most importantly — this is the setting for members to ask all of their questions to understand what their retirement is going to look like prior to retiring.

As members of CRS, the CRS office is here as a resource in perpetuity, but retirement is a major life event — and once you are retired, many choices are irrevocable. We want our members to make informed choices before taking the plunge!

Beginning in 2027, CRS is changing the Retirement Processing Session from a classroom-style training course to an individualized, one-on-one Retirement Processing Counseling Session.

By offering individualized Retirement Processing Sessions, your unique situation will take center stage. The training will move at your pace with CRS staff focusing on areas where you want more clarity and understanding. CRS's mission is to help our members retire successfully. And that bar may be different for everyone. To best accommodate the CRS membership, Retirement will still host various classroom-style training courses throughout the year, but the Retirement Processing Sessions will be held in a classroom reserved for one: you.

For future retirement applicants, we look forward to inviting you to your personal Retirement Processing Session starting in 2027!