

PENSIONPoints

Member Newsletter | May 2015

NEW Steps to Retirement Booklet

Retirement can be an intimidating life event; after all, you only retire once. We have listened carefully to retiring teachers who told us that finding the right information and application forms can be cumbersome. That's why we have spent the past year working hard to review all our publications and can now introduce the new 'Steps to Retirement' booklet. You told us that you would prefer to have all the information about the retirement process in one booklet. We eliminated three kits - 'Starting Your Pension', 'Choosing Your Retirement Date', and 'Choosing Your Pension Option' and consolidated the information in 'Steps to Retirement'.



The new 'Steps to Retirement' publication is a comprehensive, all-in-one guide with everything you need for retirement including:

- the eligibility requirements for an ATRF pension, and deciding when to apply,
- the retirement checklist,
- the detailed steps to applying for your pension and the application forms, and
- some important considerations to note after retirement.

This guide is a companion to the 'Steps to Retirement' video in the Teachers' Lounge located on our website. The 'Steps to Retirement' booklet can be downloaded from our website – Publications and Forms, Preparing for Retirement section.

No Increase in Contribution Rates

The actuarial funding study of the Post-1992 Period Teachers' Pension Plan completed as at August 31, 2014 confirmed that the contribution rates that were implemented September 1, 2013 remain adequate. Rates will not change in September 2015.

The ATRF Board monitors the financial position of the plan on an ongoing basis. They carefully examine the funding structure of the plan, and the various funding assumptions, and make changes to these long-term assumptions as required. As the plan is still in a deficit position, the Board decided it was prudent to maintain the contribution rates at the current level for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Teachers' Pension Plan Contribution Rates for 2015-16 (% of Salary)

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Teachers | |
| Total Teacher Contribution | 13.46 |
| Salary up to YMPE* | 11.44 |
| Salary above YMPE | 16.34 |
| Government | |
| | 12.65 |

*YMPE is the Year's Maximum Pensionable Earnings used by the Canada Pension Plan (\$53,600 in 2015)

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Match Game



The Alberta Teachers' Association

What's that Acronym?

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. ATRF _____ | A. Canada Revenue Agency |
| 2. ARTA _____ | B. Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan |
| 3. ASEBP _____ | C. Alberta Teachers' Association |
| 4. ATA _____ | D. Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund |
| 5. CRA _____ | E. Alberta Retired Teachers' Association |

Canada
Canada Revenue Agency



Which Organization Does What?

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. ATRF _____ | A. Income Tax Inquiries |
| 2. ARTA _____ | B. Advocates for teachers |
| 3. ASEBP _____ | C. Provides support and benefits for retired teachers |
| 4. ATA _____ | D. Administers the pension plans for Alberta teachers |
| 5. CRA _____ | E. Provides benefits for retired teachers before age 65 |



Answers below.

Download the **Who to Contact** PDF from our website for up-to-date contact information. (Publications & Forms, Preparing for Retirement, Who to Contact.)



Answers: 1. (D), 2. (E), 3. (B), 4. (C), 5. (A) Organizations: 1. (D), 2. (C), 3. (E), 4. (B), 5. (A)

Customer Service and Privacy



At ATRF we are very conscious of the importance of keeping your information private and secure. That's why we won't release financial information over the phone. If you request information by phone, we will mail it to your home address or we can post it to your Secure Message Centre in your MyPension account. If you need financial information to be faxed or emailed to you, we will ask that you provide signed, written authorization allowing us to do so. You can scan and email or fax this to us. If another person contacts ATRF on your behalf, we won't release any information to that person without your written permission.

Your ATA Local is Hosting a Retirement Workshop – Do You Need to Attend?

While it's not mandatory to attend, the ATA Retirement Workshops provide you with important information about your ATRF Pension, Benefits after Retirement, and Wills & Estate Planning, to name a few. If you have any questions, or are interested in finding out if there is a workshop in your area, contact your ATA Local for details.



You Asked Us...



Q: “Why does my pension estimate show my pension amount is reduced for the ITA Maximum?”

A: The *Income Tax Act* (ITA) places limits on how much pension can be earned in one calendar year. The *Teachers’ Pension Plan Act* Regulation, proclaimed in 1995, contains a provision that dictates how the ITA Maximums are to be applied to plan member pension benefits at the time of retirement. The Regulation applies the ITA Maximum in effect in each year since 1992 to the plan member’s current base pension.

The Teachers’ Pension Plan (the Plan) has a formula for calculating pension benefits:

- Best 5-year average salary x years of pensionable service.
- 1 year of full-time employment = 1 year of benefits.
(The yearly benefit amount is used to determine remaining RRSP room, and whether the plan member's benefit is above the Canadian ITA Maximum.)

Plan members first faced pension reductions due to this Regulation in 2008. The number of plan members affected continues to grow as more plan members have base pensions above the ITA Maximum in place from 1992 to 2003.

Additional years of service will still increase your pension; however, not as much as it would without the ITA Maximum cap.

For more information go to the ATA website at www.teachers.ab.ca, under Salary, Benefits and Pension in the ‘For Members’ section.

About ATRF

Established in 1939, the Alberta Teachers’ Retirement Fund Board (ATRF) is an independent corporation governed by the *Teachers’ Pension Plans Act*.

The Plans are sponsored by the Alberta Government and by the plan members, who are represented by the Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA). The Plan Sponsors set benefit and funding policies which must be enacted through legislation.

ATRF is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Teachers’ Pension Plan for all Alberta teachers in school jurisdictions and charter schools; and, administers the Private School Teachers’ Pension Plan for Alberta private schools who have elected to join the Plan.

The ATRF Board is responsible for the corporate governance of ATRF. Nominated by the two plan sponsors, appointments are made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The ATRF Board will soon increase from six to eight members.



Record Number of Survey Responses!

Thank you to all the plan members who took the time to respond to our survey in March. A record 25% of plan members who received the survey responded. We are reviewing your comments and will be implementing customer service enhancements from your suggestions.

Returning to Work after Starting Your Pension

You can be employed by an ATRF employer, under contract, in a position that requires a teaching certificate, up to 0.6 of a school year without it affecting your pension. If you work more than 0.6 of a year with one or more ATRF employers, your monthly pension is reduced by the amount of salary earned each month after the 0.6 of a year is reached. You may substitute teach as much as you like and it does not go towards the 0.6 of a year. You may work for an employer that does not belong to ATRF, or in a position with an ATRF employer that does not require a teaching certificate, as much as you like and it will not affect your pension.



"We'll Be There..."

Personal Interviews

We understand your need to see us in other locations, and we make efforts to provide our services throughout Alberta at various times during the year. In the fall of 2015, we plan to hold personal interviews in the following locations:

Calgary • Medicine Hat • Lethbridge • Red Deer

These interviews are for plan members who want information about pension benefits, increasing your pension, or preparing for retirement.

The ATRF Office

is on the 6th floor of Barnett House and is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday all year round. Call to arrange an appointment to meet with one of our Pension Counsellors.



Web Registration is Easy and Convenient

The interview schedule for fall 2015 is posted on our website by the end of June. To register for an interview outside the ATRF office, click on **Meet With Us**.

Your Pension Matters Seminar

ATRF Pension Counsellors are also available to conduct seminars throughout Alberta. They can be held in conjunction with PD Days, staff meetings, or ATA Local meetings.

ATA Retirement Consultants also organize full day Pre-Retirement Workshops. They invite an ATRF Pension Counsellor to present "Your Pension Matters". These sessions have been very successful and we look forward to attending more sessions in 2015-16.

