

AT YOUR SERVICE



NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE ORANGE COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM | WINTER/SPRING 2026



OCERS staff pictured (top row L-R): Duc H. Nguyen (IT), David Viramontes (Member Services). (Bottom row L-R): Victoria Wood (Member Services), Michelle Burgos (Member Services), John T. Nguyen (HR).

OCERS: Guiding Each Generation on Their Retirement Journey

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Board of Retirement and Committee Meeting dates can be found online at ocers.org

This newsletter is intended to provide you with general information. It does not constitute legal advice to members. If there are any discrepancies between the information in this newsletter and the law, the law will prevail. Should you have legal questions, you are advised to consult an attorney.

OCERS SENIOR EXECUTIVES

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Steve J. Delaney

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Molly A. Murphy, CFA

**Assistant Chief Executive Officer,
Finance and Internal Operations**
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From the CEO's Desk

As we welcome a new year, I want to extend my warmest wishes to each of our members, retirees, beneficiaries, employers, and community partners. May 2026 bring you good health, fulfillment, and joy. This year is particularly meaningful for OCERS as we proudly enter our 81st year of service—a testament to your continued trust and partnership.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a transformative year for OCERS, with several major initiatives that strengthen our operations and enhance our services for decades to come. One of the most significant efforts underway is the replacement of our headquarters, a project designed to modernize our workspace, improve accessibility, and better support both in-person and virtual member services.

We also reached an important milestone with the completion of all Alameda-related work. The Alameda decision—stemming from a 2020 California Supreme Court ruling—required retirement systems throughout the state to review specific pay items used in pension calculations. OCERS completed this work in three phases to ensure consistency, fairness, and full compliance with the ruling. With all three Alameda projects now finalized and presented to the Board in December 2025, this chapter is fully closed, and we are pleased to move forward with clarity for our members and employers.

In 2026, we will also be undertaking two major modernization efforts: a new Pension Administration Solution that will make it easier for members to access and update their accounts, receive timely responses to inquiries, and use intuitive tools to plan their retirement with fewer delays. We're also working on a fully redesigned OCERS website, which will give members a more secure, user-friendly, and accessible platform to find information, communicate, and manage retirement needs, while ensuring full ADA compliance and safety measures through the new .gov domain.

We know these projects require time and coordination, and we thank you in advance for your support. Each is designed to keep OCERS secure, modern, and responsive to our community's evolving needs.

As we begin 2026, we remain steadfast in our mission: to deliver trustworthy, transparent, and reliable service to every member and retiree. We encourage you to stay connected with OCERS — visit our website for updates, attend member events, or share your feedback as we continue these important initiatives. Thank you for being part of our family. We look forward to another year of growth and shared success.

Warm regards,

Steve Delaney, Chief Executive Officer



Visit Us Online
ocers.org

Office Hours
Mon - Thurs: 8 AM - 5 PM
Fri: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
(Closed weekends and holidays)

OCERS Headquarters
2223 E Wellington Ave,
Suite 100
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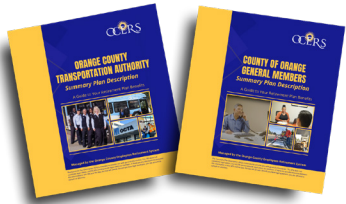
Contact Us
www.ocers.org/contact-us

Send Mail
OCERS Mailbox
PO Box 1229
Santa Ana, CA 92702

myOCERS Portal
Visit ocers.org and click on
"myOCERS Login"

 myOCERS Login

Call Us
(714) 558-6200



Understanding Your Benefits: Summary Plan Descriptions

Every OCERS member has a different plan based on your employer, date of entry, and type of membership (General or Safety).

OCERS provides a Summary Plan Description (SPD) for each employer. For example, all members at the Orange County Sanitation District will find their plan information, retirement benefits, disability processes, and more in the same SPD.

County of Orange and Orange County

Fire Authority members have different SPDs based on General or Safety membership types.

These documents are periodically updated to provide you with the most accurate information possible.

To view our newly revamped SPDs, scan the QR code or visit ocers.org/summary-plan-description.



Dear Benny,

What happens to my retirement benefit if I don't have any beneficiaries?

— *Bennie Fish*

Dear Bennie Fish,

OCERS strongly recommends our members name beneficiaries for their pension benefit.

If you do not have an Eligible Spouse, Qualified Domestic Partner, or Eligible Child at the time of your death, the benefit will be paid to your primary beneficiary. Under certain retirement payment options, this can be in the form of a lifetime continuance or lump sum of the member's remaining contributions.

Without any eligible family members or beneficiaries, the benefit will go to your estate, along with any other assets you may own.

According to the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL), if the benefit is not claimed within five years after the last attempted contact with the claimant, or if you don't have an estate, the amount of the benefit will be deposited back into the overall OCERS pension fund.



Building the Future of OCERS Replacement Headquarters Opening Fall 2027

OCERS has begun sitework for a new headquarters facility in Santa Ana, California to better support members, employers, and staff. The new, modern administrative building will replace OCERS' current location and provide a more functional, efficient space to support long-term operations and public service.

The future headquarters, located at 1200 N. Tustin Avenue, will include improved member service areas, meeting and collaboration spaces, and a public Board hearing room. The project reflects OCERS' commitment to creating a welcoming, accessible environment for the community we serve. OCERS continues to work with experienced design and construction partners to move the project forward. Planned features include a welcoming public plaza, enhanced landscaping, and flexible interior spaces to support both in-person services and collaboration.

Members can follow the progress of the new OCERS headquarters, view project updates, and learn more about what to expect by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://bit.ly/NEWOCERSHQ>.



Wishing you a prosperous new year!

Scan the QR code to watch this video message from OCERS staff.

Ben E. Fits (aka 'Ask Benny') provides guidance on pension-related queries, retirement benefits, beneficiaries, and retirement planning. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at AskBenny@ocers.org.

OCERS is here for you long before you start thinking about retirement. We're here to help you prepare from your very first day, to your 5-year milestone, mid-career, and every day in between. Members will now receive postcards at four key career points to ensure you're best prepared for retirement when that day comes. Scan the QR code on the following page to view helpful tips for each stage of your career journey.



1

By working full-time for an OCERS-covered employer, you automatically become an OCERS member.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY

to plan for your retirement with OCERS.

OCERS is here to help every step of the way. We are committed to providing superior pension service for our members and serving our Orange County community. Here are a few helpful tips for getting started. Visit www.ocers.org for additional resources.

- 1. REGISTER FOR YOUR MYOCERS PORTAL**
View information like your plan type, contributions, beneficiaries, and more. Use the Benefit Estimator to get an idea of what your retirement benefit payment will look like in the future.
- 2. COMBINE BENEFITS FROM PRIOR PUBLIC SERVICE**
If you were part of another California system before OCERS, you may be eligible for "reciprocity." Within 180 days of changing employers, contact OCERS to factor your prior employment into your retirement.
- 3. EXPLORE DEFERRED COMPENSATION OPTIONS**
Your employer may offer Deferred Compensation (DC) plan options such as a 457 or 401(k) plan. Unlike with OCERS, you can make adjustable contributions to these supplemental retirement accounts. Speak with your HR department for more information.

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www.ocers.org

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Follow us



YOU'RE ONE STEP CLOSER

to enjoying your well-earned retirement.

OCERS is here to help every step of the way. We are committed to providing superior pension service for our members and serving our Orange County community. Here are a few steps to take before initiating your retirement. For additional resources, visit ocers.org.

- 1. UPDATE YOUR BENEFICIARIES**
Log on to your myOCERS portal to check that your beneficiary designations are updated. Once your retirement is processed, you will not be able to change this information.
- 2. ATTEND A PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR**
View our Pre-Retirement Seminar schedule and register for a date to get a refresher on your retirement benefit, defined contribution plans, and medical plan options from your employer.
- 3. CHOOSE A RETIREMENT DATE**
Once you feel confident in your choice to retire, select a date that works best for you. We recommend choosing the first day of any given pay period to ensure you receive a full paycheck before being an official retiree.

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4

Submit your documents, calculate your benefit, attend a seminar, and select your retirement date.



CONGRATULATIONS —
YOU'RE ELIGIBLE TO RETIRE!



YOUR OCERS JOURNEY



OCERS Milestone Guides

2

Earn service credit and make mandatory contributions to your OCERS fund. You may be able to purchase service credits.

3

Progress in your career, update your beneficiaries, and learn about your retirement options.

YOU'VE EARNED 5 YEARS OF SERVICE

towards your secure retirement.

OCERS is here to help every step of the way. We are committed to providing superior pension service for our members and serving our Orange County community. Here are some things you can do now to continue on your retirement journey. Visit www.ocers.org for additional resources.



1. EXPLORE YOUR MYOCERS PORTAL

View information like your plan type, contributions, beneficiaries, and more. Use the Benefit Estimator to get an idea of what your retirement benefit payment will look like in the future.



2. CHECK YOUR DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN

A Deferred Compensation (DC) Plan is a supplemental retirement account to which you can make adjustable contributions. Speak with your HR department or DC Plan representative for more information.



3. ATTEND A PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

An OCERS Pre-Retirement Retirement Seminar is for members at any and all career stages. Get more insight into your retirement benefit, learn about retiree medical plan options with your employer, and more.

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Follow us @myOCERS:



5 Years of Service

Scan for more information
bit.ly/5YearsOCERS

START PREPARING NOW

for a seamless transition into retirement.

OCERS is here to help every step of the way. We are committed to providing superior pension service for our members and serving our Orange County community. Here are some ways to set yourself up for your future retirement. For additional resources, visit ocers.org.



1. REVIEW YOUR SUMMARY PLAN DESCRIPTION (SPD)

Read through your Summary Plan Description (SPD) to get the full picture of your OCERS plan benefits to help you better prepare for retirement.



2. ATTEND A PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

View our Pre-Retirement Seminar schedule and register for a refresher on your retirement benefit, deferred compensation plans, and medical plan options.



3. ORGANIZE YOUR DOCUMENTS

Start collecting and organizing the documents you'll need for retirement. This may include any divorce documents, birth certificates, and marriage or domestic partnership certificates.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR 5 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE WITH OCERS!



ON YOUR WAY TO A SECURE RETIREMENT

Mid-Career Journey



Mid-Career Planning

Scan for more information
bit.ly/OCERSMidCareer

Enjoy your well-earned retirement!



* Items shown are not actual size.

Updating Your Beneficiaries in Retirement



As a retiree, the only way to update your beneficiaries is if you selected the Unmodified Option or Option 1 for your retirement benefit payments.

The Unmodified Option provides you with the maximum retirement allowance for which you are eligible. There are a few things to remember about this option when it comes to your beneficiaries:

- Upon your death, your **eligible spouse, qualified domestic partner, or eligible child** will receive a 60% continuation of your allowance. These are the only qualified parties to receive the continuance — the allowance **cannot** be paid to a trust.
- If you don't have an eligible spouse, qualified domestic partner, or eligible child, your

designated beneficiary will receive a **lump sum payment of any remaining member contributions.**

Under Option 1, you will receive a reduced monthly retirement allowance. At the time of your death, your designated beneficiary will receive a lump sum refund of your remaining member contributions. There is no continuance allowance with this payment option.

Just like with the Unmodified Option, **you may change your beneficiary at any time, even during retirement, with Option 1.**

To update your beneficiary, log on to your myOCERS portal. You can select "Change Beneficiary" on the left sidebar to keep your beneficiary information up-to-date.

Empower: Your Deferred Compensation Provider



Are you on track for the retirement you want? As part of your County of Orange employee benefits, you have complimentary access to meet with a local retirement plan advisor from Empower.

Your advisor can review your 457 savings and investment strategy, and provide education and guidance to help you feel confident about the future.

Whether you are just getting started, nearing retirement, or already retired, a quick check-in can make a meaningful difference in your future.

Contact the team today!

***This message is from Empower.**

Not all OCERS members are eligible for an Empower plan. Contact your employer for more information.



Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Update

At its February meeting, the OCERS Board of Retirement approved a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for all retirees and eligible beneficiaries, with no remaining amount credited to the "COLA bank."

Under Government Code section 31870, COLAs are applied each April 1 based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as of January 1, with annual adjustments capped at 3.0%. For the Los Angeles Basin area, the CPI was reported at 3.16% and rounded to 3.0%, which supported the Board's approval of the full 3% adjustment. As a result, the full increase will apply to retirement allowances.



READING

New Survivor Benefits Brochure

When an OCERS member passes away, certain benefits may be paid to a surviving spouse, domestic partner, or beneficiary(ies).

The new brochure on survivor benefits will help guide beneficiaries through reporting the death of an OCERS member.

Once a death is reported, OCERS may request documentation before determining what benefits are payable to the beneficiary.

This brochure is available online and at the OCERS office in Santa Ana. For more information on reporting a death, scan the QR code.



SURVIVOR BENEFITS

A Guide to Reporting a Death of an OCERS Member, Survivor, or Beneficiary



Providing superior pension service since 1945

OC Clerk-Recorder Launches "Clerk-Recorder on Wheels"



Under the leadership of Orange County Clerk-Recorder Hugh Nguyen, the innovative "Clerk-Recorder on Wheels" unit brings services to people across the County.

The van issues certified copies of vital and property records, accepts new passport applications, offers marriage services, and processes FBN registrations at community events and partner sites.

It is also ready to deploy to disaster-impacted areas so residents can quickly replace vital and property records needed for recovery efforts.

In its first year, it served nearly 600 people, responded to over 1,000 inquiries, and traveled almost 300 miles.

Scan the QR code for information about the "Clerk-Recorder on Wheels."



Advice From a Retiree: Tom Maloney - Retired County of Orange Park Ranger - 2009



Mr. Maloney gave 23 years of service to the visitors and citizens of Orange County as a Park Ranger at several Regional and Wilderness Parks. He retired in 2009 and received a Resolution from the Board of Supervisors for his many years with the County of Orange.

Advice to future retirees: "Start planning early."

- Attend as many pre-retirement seminars as possible, through OCERS and your agency.
- Ask a lot of questions beforehand — ask OCERS, your tax advisor, and your financial advisor if you have one.
- Double check the math — you don't want to retire and leave money on the table.
- If you're in reasonable health after retiring, do things while you're still mobile and healthy. There will be time to sit and watch TV later.



Orange County Employees Retirement System
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TAKE THE OCERS MEMBER SURVEY

+ earn a chance to win a prize!

We want to hear from you — scan the QR code to let us know what you want to see in future newsletters. Participants will be entered into a raffle to win limited edition OCERS swag.

New Year, Same Safe and Secure Data

To enhance the security of OCERS' Member and Employer Self-Service portals, we have implemented additional safeguards designed to better detect and prevent unauthorized or automated activity.

As part of these updates, you may occasionally be prompted to verify that you are a human user by clicking and holding a button before continuing. This is a standard security measure used by many organizations and does not indicate that your account or personal information has been compromised. If you have any issues, please contact OCERS.

These enhancements help protect your information, maintain system reliability, and ensure continued access for legitimate users. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we strengthen our digital protections and remain committed to providing a safe and secure online experience.