

# HR CONNECTION

Serving Employees of the Board of Commissioners

October 17, 2014

## Policy Corner: Participation in Political Activities

The purpose of this policy is:

To establish ethical standards in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 124.57 and Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) 123-1-46-02, with regards to County Employee Participation in Political Activities.

Delaware County employees permissible participation in political activity varies depending upon the classification of the employee. Generally, **unclassified** employees may participate in political activity with few restrictions while **classified** employees have stricter limitations on their participation. A County employee may verify their classification status by contacting their supervisor or personnel coordinator.

The following are general guidelines regarding County employee participation in political activities. These guidelines are not intended to be exhaustive in scope but rather to provide general guidance on political participation by County employees.

### Unclassified Employees are prohibited from:

- Participating in any political activity on County time.
- Soliciting political contributions from any County employee.

### Classified Employees are prohibited from:

- Participating in partisan political activity on County time.
- Participating in or declaring to be a candidate in a partisan election.
- Soliciting political contributions from any County employee.
- Receiving or collecting money for a partisan campaign.
- Selling political party fundraising tickets.
- Holding office, elected or appointed, in political party or within a partisan candidate's campaign organization.
- Participation in a political action committee or political caucuses which supports partisan activity.
- Circulating nominating petitions.
- Distributing political material.



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## Policy Corner: Participation in Political Activities Continued

### Classified Employees are allowed to:

- Register to Vote and Vote.
- Voluntarily contribute to political campaigns.
- Attend political rallies on personal time.
- Sign nominating petitions.
- Express written and oral opinions.
- Display political materials at home or own personal vehicle.
- Wear political badges or buttons (except while working).



All Delaware County employees are strictly **prohibited** from using County time, facilities or resources for political purposes. Unclassified employees who wish to participate in political activity during normal business hours must utilize administrative leave without pay, vacation or personal leave. No compensatory leave or any other type of leave, except as listed above, may be used to participate in political activity.

All County employees under the supervision and control of the Commissioners Office, directly or indirectly, are **prohibited** from soliciting other County employees for any political contributions.

No Delaware County Officer or employee will expend public funds for any type of political activity.

Read the complete policy at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hr/documents.asp>

If you have questions regarding policies, please contact Mindy Owens at ext. 2129 or [mowens@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:mowens@co.delaware.oh.us)

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## Learning and Development

### Employee Training

**Thank you for taking the time to attend the employee policy manual training held October 3, 7 and 8.** Delaware County is committed to conducting business with honesty and integrity, in careful compliance with the law. The policy training is to communicate how all employees are expected to conduct themselves to ensure that their actions are within the County's policies.

All Delaware County employees play an important role in our success. The way you do your job every day supports our County's ability to deliver quality service and make a positive impact in our community. For our County to be consistently successful, content in our daily activities.

It is important that all County employees receive training at work related to expected conduct required in the workplace. Training provides for an open discussion within an organization, it raises awareness, and stimulates conversation around issues that emerge.

Thank you again for your support.

*Do you have questions from a previous training? We are happy to assist. Please call Pam at extension 2885 or email me at [psonagere@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:psonagere@co.delaware.oh.us) or Dana Bushong, HR Technician at extension 2123 or email at [dbushong@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:dbushong@co.delaware.oh.us)*



## WORKPLACE ROMANCES

To avoid concerns of sexual harassment, preferential treatment and other inappropriate behavior, employees are required to inform their Director, Appointing Authority or Human Resources if they currently are, or if they intend to become, romantically involved with a co-worker. Such relationships are not necessarily prohibited, but must be appropriately addressed. Should the County determine that a conflict exists between an employee's employment and a personal relationship with a co-worker, the County will attempt to work with the employees to resolve the conflict. Should operational needs prevent resolution, the relationship must cease or one or both of the parties must separate from employment. Supervisors are expressly prohibited from engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with any employee they directly, or indirectly, supervise.

Please complete the attached and submit to your Director or Human Resources.

*Retrieved from the Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment policy.*

*Read the complete policy at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hr/documents.asp>*

*If you have questions regarding policies, please contact Mindy Owens at ext. 2129 or [mowens@co.delaware.oh.us](mailto:mowens@co.delaware.oh.us)*

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740/833-2120 • 740/833-2119 (Fax)

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# Delaware County

## Workplace Romance Policy Disclosure Acknowledgment and Waiver of Claims

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have notified the County that they entered into a consensual relationship on or about \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_\_\_ and the relationship continues to date. Above referenced employees also believe this consensual relationship was not any form of harassment, sexual or otherwise, nor is in violation of any federal, state, or local law, regulation or ordinance. In addition, both acknowledge that:

- The romantic relationship is welcome and consensual by both parties;
- We understand we may end our relationship at any time without workplace retaliation of any form by one another;
- Neither party will request, apply for, or in any way accept a direct supervisor or reporting relationship with the other;
- Neither party will engage in conduct regarded as favoritism or that other workers may reasonably perceive as favoritism;
- We will behave professionally and appropriately at work, including, but not limited to, not sharing details of our personal relationship in the workplace, and will not engage in inappropriate public displays of affection at the workplace;
- We shall comply with the County's discrimination, harassment and other related workplace policies, which we both acknowledge having read and understood;
- We shall notify the County if and when our personal relationship ends, and in such event, we shall continue to adhere to the provisions stated herein regarding our personal relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Appointing Authority/Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please complete and return to your Director, Appointing Authority or Human Resources.

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## OPEN ENROLLMENT MEETINGS



### Open Enrollment Meetings are Scheduled for October 30 & 31

While these meetings are not mandatory, they will provide a forum for questions related to benefits. Open enrollment questions may also be directed to our insurance and risk staff (Cindi @ 2124, Amanda @ 2126 or Dawn @ 2122).

We will send additional open enrollment information in the very near future and there will be sufficient time for employees to select benefits. We are still very early in the process for open enrollment and all information you will need to select your benefits for 2015 will be sent as soon as details are finalized. **Watch your email for updates.**

Please remember that employees working 30 hours or more per week are eligible for the benefits.

## Human Resources Staff

• Dawn Huston, Director of Administrative Services	dhuston@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2122
• Cindi Blair, Insurance, Risk & Wellness	cblair@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2124
• Brad Euans, Workers Compensation/FMLA/HR Coordinator	beuans@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2127
• Amanda Kreft, Insurance and Risk Assistant	akreft@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2126
• Jennifer Downey, HR Technician	jdowney@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2125
• Mindy Owens, HR Manager	mowens@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2129
• Pam Sonagere, HR Coordinator	psonagere@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2885
• Dana Bushong, HR Technician	dbushong@co.delaware.oh.us	740/833-2123



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## Wellness

Cindi Blair,  
Insurance Risk &  
Wellness

Delaware County HR  
740.833.2124  
Mon – Fri ; 8 am – 3 pm  
cblair@co.delaware.oh.us

Visit us online:

[www.co.delaware.oh.us/HR/Wellness/](http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/HR/Wellness/)



## Delaware General Health District NEWS RELEASE

P.O. Box 570 • 1-3 W. Winter St.  
Delaware, OH 43015 • 740-368-1700  
[www.delawarehealth.org](http://www.delawarehealth.org)



For Immediate Release  
October 7, 2014

For more information contact:  
Traci Whittaker, Public Information Officer  
(740) 203-2085

## HAYES STAIRWELL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT UNVEILED

**DELAWARE, Oh.** – In an effort to increase and promote physical activity and stair use, the Delaware General Health District recently partnered with the Delaware County Wellness Program to enhance the stairwells of the Rutherford B. Hayes Services Building. The stairwell enhancement project was unveiled today and included visual enhancements as well as targeted health messages at all the high traffic areas of the building.

Several representatives from the county as well the Health District came together today for the unveiling of the new enhancements, which include new paint, motivational posters, elevator signage encouraging stair use and shelves displaying local artwork.

Local artist Myke Flournoy was the first to be featured in the stairwells with six different canvas paintings.

The \$3,600 project was partly funded by a grant provided by the County Employee Benefits Consortium of Ohio (CEBCO), which sponsors wellness initiatives at the county level. The other portion was funded by the Health District with public health dollars specifically set aside for chronic disease prevention related to tobacco, physical activity and nutrition.

“Delaware County is often viewed as one of the healthiest counties in the state,” DGHD health educator and project co-coordinator Kelsey Kuhlman said. “However, our recent health assessment indicated that over 60 percent of our adult population qualified themselves as either obese or overweight.”

Kuhlman added that the Health District is always looking for ways to implement best practices and evidence-based programs when promoting health throughout the county. The stairwell enhancement project was a perfect fit because it also focused on environmental change known to produce healthier lifestyles. “Choosing the stairs over the elevator is a quick and easy way to promote frequent movement among all employees and visitors to the Hayes building,” said Project co-coordinator Cindi Blair, who oversees the county’s insurance and risk department.

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## Wellness

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Insurance Risk &  
Wellness

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740.833.2124  
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Visit us online:

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### HAYES STAIRWELL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT UNVEILED CONTINUED

Blair added that the months of planning the project was worthwhile and looks forward to seeing more employees utilize the stairs as an incentive to better health.



Back row left to right: Local artist Myke Flournoy, Delaware County first assistant prosecutor Kyle Rohrer. Front row left to right: Delaware County assistant administrator and director of administrative services Dawn Huston, Delaware County insurance and risk technician Cindi Blair, DGHD health educator Kelsey Kuhlman, Delaware County Prosecutor Carol O'Brien, Delaware County Probate Court administrator Susan Katherman, Delaware County Juvenile Court Magistrate David Hejmanowski.

For more photos of the stairwell enhancement project, visit GoHealthy! Delaware County's

Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/GoHealthyDC>

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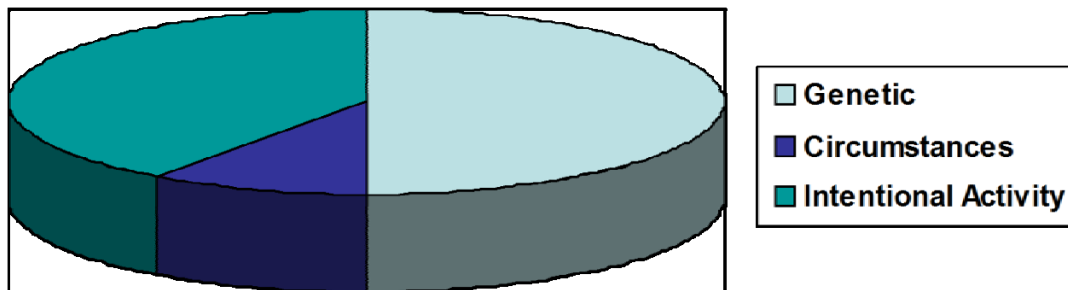
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# Happiness: A Key to Life Satisfaction

All over the world people consistently put “Happiness” at the top of their lists of things they want. We think we know what will make us happy, but we don’t. Research studies conclude that a person’s happiness is determined by three components: genetics, environment, and intentional activities. The first two, often called nature and nurture, are products of DNA, parenting, and the environment of childhood. These two factors account for about 60 percent of a person’s ability to experience happiness.

- About 50% of **individual happiness comes from a *genetic set point***. That is, we’re each predisposed to a certain level of happiness. Some of us are just naturally more inclined to be cheery than others.
- **About 10% of our happiness is due to our *circumstances***. Our age, race, gender, personal history, and wealth, only make up about one-tenth of our happiness.
- The remaining **40% of an individual’s happiness seems to be derived from *intentional activity***, from “discrete actions or practices that people can choose to do”.

Please take the following happiness survey. Keep the results to yourself as they are confidential.





## Subjective Happiness Scale

Circle a number from the scale that you think best describes you. Please read carefully as the description for the each of the values on the scales differs on each of the four items.

1. In general, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a very happy person						A very happy person

2. Compared with most of my peers, I consider myself:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a very happy person						A very happy person

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a very happy person						A very happy person

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might. To what extent does this characterization describe you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a very happy person						A very happy person

### Calculate your score:

Total the scores:

Item #1: \_\_\_ + Item #2: \_\_\_ + Item #3: \_\_\_ + Item #4: \_\_\_ = Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

## Happiness Myths:

Research conducted by psychology professors Sonja Lyubomirsky, Edward Diener and others has revealed important facts and dispelled some common myths regarding what actually makes people happy.

### 1) “Happiness must be found.”

Happiness is a state of mind. It’s about our perceptions and approach to life and world around us. Happiness is not a knock of good fortune or something we find like the right job or boyfriend.

The expression, “pursuit of happiness” is misleading – happiness is not something we find out in the world, but rather something we construct or create. It does not require psychoanalyzing memories, a bigger income, recapturing youth or beauty. However it does require considerable effort.

### 2) “Happiness is about changing our circumstances”; for example, “I would be happy IF \_\_\_\_\_” or “I will be happy WHEN \_\_\_\_\_”

Only 10% of your happiness is determined by circumstances. This would include factors such as how old or attractive you are or where you live.

### 3) “Money can make me happy”

Many people seriously over-rate the importance of money in making themselves, and others, happy. When they think of the effects of having more money, they are failing to factor in the fact that when they get more money they are going to want even more money. They never have enough money and what they do is sacrifice their family life and health to get more money. The irony is that health and the quality of personal relationships are among the most potent predictors of whether people report they are happy — and they are often the two things people sacrifice in their pursuit of greater wealth. In general, rich people aren’t happier than those of us in the middle class. Yes, money *can* buy happiness if it elevates you from poverty, but beyond that the benefits are minimal.

### 4) “You either are happy or you are not”

If we have no control over our genetic “happy point”, and if we have little control over our circumstances, then it makes sense to focus on those things that we *can* do to make ourselves happy. 40% of happiness is determined by what you intentionally do, by your actions/thoughts. 40% provides a great deal of room to expand upon your current level of happiness. However, substantially improving your level of happiness is similar to losing weight. You have to be motivated and expend a considerable amount of effort to lose the weight and maintain the loss. But increased happiness (and weight loss) can be achieved with as little as 10 minutes a day of effort.

## Happiness Interventions

Select from following list of proven happiness increasing activities and commit to doing them for several weeks. Not all the activities may be a good fit. Review the list and place a checkmark by those activities you believe would be a good fit.

### 1. **Expressing gratitude.** Count your blessings for what you have (either privately or expressed to another)

\_\_\_ Gratitude journal. Once a week write down 3-5 things for which you are currently grateful, from the mundane (your dryer is fixed) to the magnificent (beauty of the night sky). Focus on things you are good at, what you like about your environment, goals you have achieved, your advantages and opportunities. Include specific individuals who care for you, have made contributions to your life or have made sacrifices for you. Keep the list fresh by identifying different categories of things for which you are grateful. Important to vary the activity and getting bored or it will fail to work over time.

\_\_\_ Express gratitude to another person. To whom do you owe a debt of gratitude? Express your gratitude directly to that person by phone, letter/email or face to face. Describe what he/she did in detail and how it affected your life. Spend about 15 minutes once a week if possible.

### 2. **Cultivate optimism.** Optimism doesn't mean denying the negative or hiding from unpleasant information. Optimism involves having a choice about how you see the world and what you tell yourself about it.

\_\_\_ Best possible self diary. For 20-30 minutes think about what you expect your life to be one, five, or ten years from now. Visualize a future in which you have tried your best, worked hard, achieved you're your goals and everything has turned out the way you wanted. Write down what you imagine.

\_\_\_ Identify and reinterpret negative thoughts. Identify automatic pessimistic thoughts. Write down the pessimistic thought and then dispute the negative thought by asking yourself, "What evidence do I have that this is really true?" and then identify the positive aspects of the situation by asking yourself, "Can anything good come from this?" "Does this present any opportunities?" "What lessons have I learned or did I develop any strengths as a result?" Practice putting a positive spin or see a silver lining in situations you perceive as negative.

### 3. **Avoid social comparisons and dwelling on problems.** Upward comparisons of others ("He makes more money than I do" "She is thinner than I am") lead to feelings of inferiority and loss of self-esteem. Downward comparisons often lead to feelings of guilt, resentment from others and fears of suffering the same fate. The more social comparisons you make the more likely you are to feel vulnerable, threatened and insecure. It is impossible to be envious and happy at the same time.

\_\_\_ Distract yourself. When ruminating (going over and over a situation or problem in your mind) or engaged in social comparison find a way to distract yourself. Read something, do a physical activity, listen to music or get up to change the scenery. Say "Stop!" to yourself and redirect your attention elsewhere. Ruminating does not solve problems.

\_\_\_ Journal your ruminations. This allows you to unburden yourself of negative thoughts in addition to organizing them, observing patterns and developing a different perspective.

### 4. **Practice acts of kindness.** Being kind and generous leads you to perceive others more positively and more charitably and fosters a greater sense of interdependence and cooperation in your life. It relieves guilt and enhances appreciation of your own good fortune. Additionally, it can serve to distract you from your own worries.

\_\_\_ Schedule kindness. Pick one day a week and on that day commit one new and special act of kindness, or 3-5 small acts. Vary the acts you choose to do.

\_\_\_ Social service. Commit yourself an ongoing act of service that involves regular contact with people (e.g. tutoring, visiting a hospital, fundraising for a cause).

5. **Nurture relationships.** The happier a person is the more likely he/she will have a large circle of friends, a romantic partner, and circle of support.

\_\_\_ Make time for relationships. Successful couples spend more than 5 hours a week talking. When you separate in the morning, find out one thing he/she is going to be doing that day and then follow up on it when you both reunite later. Have a routine which permits you several hours a week of time together without interruptions.

\_\_\_ Increase positive communications. Increase the ratio of positive to negative statements/behaviors to at least 5:1. Begin by spending 5 minutes each day expressing appreciation for things he/she does. Increase the amount of spontaneous affection you give to your partner.

\_\_\_ Enjoy the success of others. Take delight in your friend's, family member's and partner's successes. What distinguishes good vs. poor relationships is not how we respond to another's disappointment, but to good news.

6. **Increase flow experiences.** Flow permits us to be involved in life, to enjoy activities, to feel in control and increase our self esteem.

\_\_\_ Control your attention. Identify activities which are challenging, but not overwhelming and permit you to focus your attention like a laser beam. Be open to and attempt to learn new activities. Transform routine tasks into something more meaningful and stimulating. Look for flow in conversations.

7. **Savor life's joys.** Paying close attention, taking delight in life's momentary pleasures and wonders.

\_\_\_ Practice relishing life's ordinary experiences. Savor two experiences each day by reflecting on each for two to three minutes and trying to make the pleasure last as long as possible. Do this alone or with someone else.

\_\_\_ Reminisce about the past. Make a list of happy memories and once a day recall an event. Do this alone or with another. Use a photo album to carry to trigger pleasant memories. (Avoid journaling about your happy memories as it will reduce your ability to savor them.)

8. **Commit to goals.** Committed goal pursuit gives us a sense of purpose and control over our lives. It gives us structure, something to look forward to, along with confidence and self esteem.

\_\_\_ Pick one, two or three significant goals that are meaningful to you and devote time and effort pursuing them. To help you identify goals, think about how you wish to be remembered after you die. Break the goals down into sub-goals and create action plans to accomplish them. Sharing your goals with others can help sustain your motivation.

9. **Take care of your body and smile/laugh more.** Physical activity improves mood, boosts self esteem and confidence.

\_\_\_ Begin an exercise regimen. Make an appointment with yourself (Date/time) for exercise. Work up to exercising at least 30 minutes a day.

\_\_\_ Get enough sleep. Monitor your sleep pattern and your mood during the day. Then increase the amount of sleep you get until you wake up feeling refreshed.

\_\_\_ Smile and laugh more. Make an effort to smile at others and adopt a laugh-ready attitude. Act as-if you were happy.

10. **Meditate.** Meditation cultivates attention, openness to experience, and a non-judgmental attitude. It improves overall health and mental functioning.

\_\_\_ Daily meditation. Choose a time of day and meditate for 5 minutes, increasing the time if possible to 25 minutes. Sit on the floor or on a chair with your spine erect. Focus on your breath, counting your exhalations from one to 10 and repeat. Keep your eyes open, focus comfortably on a spot in front of you. Do not move. When thoughts occur, do not engage them. Become an observer of your own mind. Do not try to follow a train of thought (e.g. planning or fantasizing). Eventually, once your concentration improves, you can stop counting and just follow your breath.

### Additional Information

This information is brought to you by ComPsych® GuidanceResources®. This company-sponsored benefit offers confidential help and support 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, at no cost to you or your immediate family. Our Guidance Consultants can assist you with your concerns at your company's ComPsych 800 number or Online at: [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)

# HR CONNECTION

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## Map out your retirement pension income and health care



### Learn

**Learn:** Health care program changes may impact you. Know what you need to qualify for health care. OPERS provides retirement information online, in seminars and with publications—all available to members.

### Plan

**Plan:** Make strategic choices. Use the OPERS-provided retirement planner (online), the health care calculator (online), access counseling and checklists before you make important retirement decisions.

### Act

**Act:** Decision made? Take action. Remember, some applications for pension benefits take longer than others and you'll need specific documents.

Go online or call OPERS to LEARN what you need, PLAN to find your documents so that you can ACT on retirement when you know it's the right time for you.



[www.opers.org](http://www.opers.org) • 1-800-222-PERS (7377)

## OPERS Tidbits

### Member Services Call Center wait times anticipated to be longer during October and November

We know employers are a trusted resource for all employees—current and retired. Please be aware of this information about wait times during October and November for the OPERS Member Services Center—and share with employees and retirees.

During the months of October and November we anticipate wait times may be longer than usual for anyone contacting the OPERS Member Services Center. In October open enrollment for OPERS retiree health care occurs, and November is the last month those applying for retirement prior to the implementation of the health care eligibility changes can contribute to OPERS. Due to the importance and complexity of health care information, OPERS is requesting all callers, regardless of topic:

*Be patient* — The Member Services representatives are working diligently to ensure all questions from each member are fully answered. Each caller gets the same consideration.

*Consider alternatives* — If questions are somewhat general in nature, have employees and retirees access the OPERS website first to determine if the answer is available online.

If the information being requested is not time-sensitive, consider calling before or after the months of October and November.

*Be prepared* — Callers need to think about questions and have all necessary paperwork and information available when speaking to a counselor.

Always remember—OPERS strives to deliver superior service to all members and to be fiscally responsible. To that end, we have implemented updated technology so we can serve the anticipated increase in retirees and members, without increasing our staff and ask that callers be patient during this time. We recognize that we will likely experience an increase in calls.

Source: OPERS

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