RetirementPlus special election overview

In January, we mailed eligible members a one-time RetirementPlus participation ballot. If you received such a ballot, you may wonder about the next steps.

RetirementPlus contribution rates explained

RetirementPlus special election seminar recordings

R+ Decision Tree

How should I decide whether or not to participate?

❶ First, determine if you are likely to work long enough to meet the **service requirements** for R+, which are **at least 30 years of total creditable service, and at least 20 of which must be as a member of the MTRS**.

❷ Based on whether or not you will meet the service requirements, choose an option below:

If you will meet the requirements

You **will be eligible** for the R+ enhanced benefits and may want to elect to **Participate in R+**. First, you should determine if R+ is better than regular retirement for you:

1. Go to the Retirement Percentage Chart for your Tier (1 or 2), find your age and service combination when you plan to retire, and compare the percentage under regular retirement versus R+.
2. Then, compare your cost to participate in R+ to the increase in benefits.
3. Select the **button below** that represents your contribution rate during all prior MTRS service to estimate any **retroactive** cost you may incur.

a flat 11% | 9%+2% | 8%+2%

Finally, please note: if you elect to Participate in R+ and **retire before reaching the creditable service requirements**, you will receive a refund of the difference between 11% and your former contribution rate.

If you won't meet the requirements

You **will not be eligible** for the R+ enhanced benefits, so you may want to **elect to Opt-out** of R+

The RetirementPlus election process

You can make your election either online or by returning the printed election form in the postage-paid envelope provided by our vendor. **Online elections must be submitted by midnight on 6/30/2023, and paper ballots must be postmarked by 6/30/2023**.

If you make your election using the paper form, you will receive a postcard acknowledging receipt of your election in 4-6 weeks. If you submit your R+ election online (recommended), you will receive an online confirmation upon completion of the process, as well as the postcard. Please retain copies for your records.

As you might imagine, this election requires a significant amount of work and coordination between the MTRS and your employer. After you submit your election, we ask for your patience until we finalize the remaining parts of the election process, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

Researching contribution rate histories for the 8,000 members eligible for this R+ election.

Notifying employers of rate changes, as necessary, for members who have not contributed at the correct rate based on their R+ election, and confirming the rate changes have been implemented.

Sending member communications:

- Calculating and issuing refunds to members who opt-out of R+ and have contributed at 11%; OR
- Calculating and sending invoices, with installment options, to members who elect to participate in R+ and have not contributed at 11%

(they are required to make up the difference between 11% and any lower rate); OR

- Sending confirmations to members who elect to participate in R+ and have already made the required 11% contributions.

Eligibility

The new law provides a final, one-time opportunity to participate in the R+ program **only to those members** who:

- were not a part of the original election window prior to July 1, 2001, **AND**
- transferred into the MTRS from one of the other 103 Massachusetts public retirement systems between July 1, 2001 and June 30, 2022, **AND**
- did not yet submit an election.

Questions

Due to the anticipated high call volume, for the most efficient service we encourage you to **email your questions** to us at RetirementPlus@trb.state.ma.us. **Do not** include your Social Security Number as our web filter will reject emails that contain them.

R+ replacement ballot requests:

The RetirementPlus (R+) special election for eligible members began in January and ends on June 30, 2023. Paper ballots were mailed to eligible members on January 11, 2023, and again on March 31, 2023, the halfway point of the election period.

Replacement ballots with your unique voting Pin and Code can now be delivered via email. Paper ballots are still available if needed but typically take two weeks to process and mail. If you need a replacement ballot, please email RetirementPlus@trb.state.ma.us.

Refund information

Please note: If you are planning on taking a refund of your account, please still complete your RetirementPlus election so that we can process your refund correctly.

Why would I opt-in to R+ if I am requesting a refund?

Making an R+ election before taking a refund would affect you if you had been **contributing at 11%** during your employment, **but not actually participating in R+**. In this situation, the difference between the lower, non-R+ contribution funds and the 11% contribution funds is treated differently depending on your final R+ status.

- If you decide to **opt-in** to R+ prior to your refund, your contributions will be treated as a complete 11% contribution amount, and the total sum of your annuity savings account will be subject to our standard refund rules.
- If you decide to **opt-out** of R+ prior to your refund, your contributions will be treated as the lower, non-R+ rate, and thus the final total that you should have contributed at this rate will be less than the actual amount you contributed. Only the amount of money you should have contributed **at this lower rate** will be subject to our standard refund rules. The **excess contributions** taken during your employment will **not** be subject to these rules. These funds will will be refunded directly to you as regular income, not subject to withdrawal penalties.

In short, **if you contributed at 11%,** your final R+ status at the time of your refund will affect the total amount of money that you can rollover into a retirement plan, and the amount subject to withdrawal penalties.

I only ever contributed at a lower, non-R+ rate, do I still need to make a participation decision?

Yes, we are requesting that all special election-eligible members make a participation decision. This will help us to correctly process your refund in a timely fashion.