Retired Public Employees Council

Guide to Retirement

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Contact Information			
Department Of Retirement Systems (DRS)			
Service	**Phone/Fax**	**Weblink/Email**	**Address**
General Help	P: 360.664.7000 P: 800.547.6657 F: 360.664.7975	https://www.drs.wa.gov/	PO Box 48380 Olympia, WA 98504-8380
Access online account		drs.wa.gov/oaa	
Review your eligibility		https://www.drs.wa.gov/plan/	
Deferred Compensation Program (DCP)	P: 888.327.5596	drs.wa.gov/dcp	
Plan 3 Record Keeper	P: 888.327.5596	drs.wa.gov/rk	
Social Security Administration (SSA)			
General Help	P: 800.772.1213	ssa.gov	Office of Public Inquiries & Communications Support 1100 West High Rise 6401 Security Blvd Baltimore, MD 21235
Medicare	P: 800.633.4227	https://www.medicare.gov/	
Local Office Locator		ssa.gov/locator/	
Health Care Authority (HCA) / Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB)			
PEBB Benefits Services	P: 800.200.1004	https://support.hca.wa.gov/hcasupport	The PEBB Program PO Box 42684 Olympia, WA 98504-2684
Uniform Medical Plan (UMP) Members	P: 888.849.3681	https://ump.regence.com/pebb	
WA State Rx Services	P: 888.361.1611	https://ump.regence.com/pebb	
HCA Compliance – Accommodations & Grievance	P: 855.682.0787 F: 360.507.9234	https://support.hca.wa.gov/hcasupport	Enterprise Risk Management Office Health Care Authority PO Box 42704 Olympia, WA 98504-2704
Report Fraud	P: 360.725.0934	E: WAHEligibilityFraud@hca.wa.gov	
Statewide Health Insurance Benefit Advisors (SHIBA)	P: 800.562.6900 P: 360.586.0241	E: SHIBA.o3a@dshs.wa.gov	

Retirement Timeline

Retiring Close to or Ending Employment at 65+ (1-5 years prior to retirement) *Page 5*	• Sign up for an online account (drs.wa.gov/oaa). • Verify service credit years. • Use the Benefit Estimator to calculate retirement income. • Review your plan for your retirement eligibility (drs.wa.gov/plan).	• Contact SSA to enroll in Medicare Part A & Part B. • **If you or your dependents are eligible for Medicare, you must enroll & stay enrolled in Part A & Part B to keep PEBB retiree insurance.** • Consider when to apply to collect Social Security benefits.
Make sure you understand the Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) & Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for Medicare & how these timelines affect the start date of Medicare		
3-12 Months Prior to Retirement *Pages 6 - 9*	• **If you <u>DO</u> have a DRS retirement plan**, request an official estimate of your monthly benefit through your online account or by contacting DRS. • Complete payment for any optional service credit.	• **If you <u>DON'T</u> have a DRS retirement plan**, contact your employer to determine if you have a retirement plan and, if so, when you will be eligible to retire from the plan.
1-3 Months Prior to Retirement *Pages 9 - 10*	• Contact DRS if you need to make changes to your official estimate (such as your retirement date). • Apply for retirement through your online account & **be sure to include any additional documentation requested.** • If you have Plan 3 or DCP, decide when you want to start receiving your contributions (drs.wa.gov/plan3 or drs.wa.gov/dcp). • Tell your employer your intended separation date.	• Download the Retiree Enrollment Guide **(call 1-800-200-1004 to request a hard copy).** • **IF APPLYING FOR PEBB HEALTH CARE COVERAGE: <u>60 DAYS before you retire</u>**, Submit Form A & any supporting documentation **(the PEBB Program must receive the form <u>no later than 60 days after your employer-paid, COBRA, or continuation coverage ends</u>).**
If enrolling in a Medicare Advantage plan, the PEBB Program must receive the forms prior to the month your retiree insurance coverage begins to avoid delay of the start of your Medicare Advantage plan		
At Retirement *Page 10*	• Check that info is correct on monthly benefit information **(you will receive it in the mail).** • The same month you retire, you should receive your first benefit payment – **<u>If not, call DRS.</u>** • When you receive your first monthly payment, make sure the deductions on your statement are correct – **<u>If not, call DRS.</u>** • Keep your current address & beneficiary info up to date.	• Consider if you want to start collecting Social Security benefits now or delay to increase benefit amount.

See page 16 for additional tips on retiring.

1-5 Years Prior to Retirement

Step 1: Sign up for your DRS account on drs.wa.gov/oaa.

Step 2: Use the Benefit Estimator to determine your retirement income so you can plan.

- If you are in more than one retirement system, the estimator may be inaccurate.
- If you have more than one, visit this webpage: drs.wa.gov/plan/multi.
    - i. Reach out in advance to be advised by a DRS representative.

Step 3: Review service credit details for accuracy.

Step 4: Verify account & personal information.

IF Plan 3:

- **Plan 3** is a **hybrid plan**, which means you have a **pension account & an investment account**.
- **The investment account is maintained by Voya Financial. Follow the link below to access your investment account:**

https://my.voya.com/voyassoui/index.html?domain=savewithwa.voya.com#/login-pweb

If you need direct assistance, you can schedule an appointment online to get help from a DRS representative: https://www.drs.wa.gov/contact/

Deferred Compensation Program (DCP):

- If you need to put away more money for retirement, DCP is the option for you.
- The Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) is a special type of savings program that helps you invest for the retirement lifestyle you want to achieve—a lifestyle that might be hard to reach with just your pension & Social Security.
- Unlike traditional savings accounts, DCP is tax-deferred — it lowers your taxable income while you are working, and it delays payments of income taxes on your investments until you withdraw your funds. DCP is a great way to save.
- **The minimum monthly contribution is $30 or 1% of your earnings.**

Additional DCP Roth option: https://www.drs.wa.gov/dcp-roth-vs-ira-newsfeed/

- Post-tax: not taxed upon withdrawal

DCP Plan Maximums: **https://www.drs.wa.gov/plan/dcp/**

> **NOTE:** In addition to the limits on the webpage linked above, a Special Catch-up limit could be available to those participants nearing retirement. To determine your eligibility, **call DRS at 800-547-6657**.

Start exploring your options for retiree health care coverage.

Start considering when you plan to apply for Social Security Benefits.

> **NOTE:** Use the Retirement Age Calculator to determine how your benefit is affected by your age when applying for Social Security benefits.
> https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrease.html

3-12 Months Prior to Retirement

Step 1: If Retiring Early or Separating and Delaying

NOTE: Instead of retiring early, you may consider separating from service early but delaying applying for your pension to lessen the impact of a benefit reduction.

- **Plans 1 & 2 (2 options for separation from service):**
  - **i.** If you withdraw contributions, you withdraw all your service credits & forfeit your right to a pension benefit.
    - **1.** You may restore your service credits if you return to a DRS covered employer before you retire (Contact a DRS Specialist for more info).
  - **ii.** If you leave your contributions in your retirement plan, you will retain your service credit & delay applying for your pension.

NOTE: If you separate early & delay your benefit, it could impact your eligibility for other benefits such as employer provided retiree health care coverage or a sick leave cash-out to fund your **Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA)** account. Check with your employer about any potential impacts if you separate early & delay your retirement. Limited to 25% and is exempt from income and payroll taxes.

- **1.** If you plan to separate early & delay applying for retirement, consider ways to bridge that gap such as the Deferred Compensation Program (you do not have to retire because your DCP savings are available to you once you separate from service).
  - **a.** DCP savings are available to you upon separation from service.
  - **b.** You won't be able to withdraw from your DCP account until your employer's payroll service has reported your last day of work.
  - **c.** It could take up to 30 days after you receive your final paycheck to receive your DCP withdrawal.

- **Plan 3:**
  - **i.** Are you going to withdraw or leave your contributions?
    - **1.** If you decide to separate from service & delay applying for your pension, remember that as a member of Plan 3, you have an investment account that you can access upon separation.
    - **2.** Withdrawing from your investment account does not affect your pension or make you lose your service credit.
  - **ii.** Due to being an IRC 401(a) plan, if you're under age 59.5, you can get an IRS penalty up to 10% for early withdrawal.
  - **iii.** Like with DCP, DRS must wait until your employer notifies them of your separation date before they can release funds from your account.
    - **1. It can take up to 70 days after your last paycheck.**

Step 2: Benefit Indexing (Plan 3 only)

If you have at least 20 years of service credit & you decide to retire early & delay your pension, you qualify for **Benefit Indexing (Inflation Protection)**.

- If eligible, your monthly pension amount will increase 3% per year from the date that you separate from your job until you retire or reach age 65, whichever comes first.

Step 3: 4 Benefit Options

When you retire, you must select a benefit option (4 available):

- **Option 1: Single Life**
    - **i.** No reduction for the retiree.
    - **ii.** Prorated benefit for the beneficiary (goes to state if no beneficiary).
    - **iii.** You can change your beneficiary information any time after you retire by submitting a **Beneficiary Designation Form**.

> **NOTE:** If you get married after you retire, you can name your spouse as your new survivor between your first & second year of marriage.

- **Options 2-4: Survivorship** (benefit being paid over someone else's lifetime).
    - **i.** Option 2: pass on 100% of reduced benefit (largest reduction).
    - **ii.** Option 3: pass on 50% of reduced benefit (smallest reduction).
    - **iii.** Option 4: split the difference at 66.67% of reduced benefit.

The joint life expectancy of the retiree and the designated beneficiary determines the exact percentage of the reduction for Options 2, 3, and 4.

Beneficiary vs Survivor

- If someone is a beneficiary, they would receive a lump-sum payment if the pension holder were to pass away.
- If someone is a survivor, they receive a lifetime monthly payment that is determined by which benefit option was selected.

> **NOTE:** You can drop non-spouse survivors & that will cause your benefit to increase up to the **Option 1** benefit amount **(pop-up provision)**. If your spouse passes away, you can submit a death certificate to DRS to remove them as your beneficiary & increase your benefit to the **Option 1** benefit amount.

- If you drop a survivor, you can't name a new survivor.
- If you "**pop-up**" to **Option 1** & you get married again, you can name your spouse as your new survivor between your 1st & 2nd year of marriage.
- If you "**unretire**" then retire again, you can then select a new survivor.
- **Senate Bill 6417:** Allows some retirees an opportunity to change their survivor option within 90 calendar days after they receive their first benefit payment.
    - **i. DRS will need to receive a written notification from you in those 90 days.**
    - **ii. Does not apply to Plan 1.**

Step 4: Annuity Options

- Guaranteed income plan that you purchase with pretax money (such as DCP).
    - **i.** If you pay for it before you retire, the additional benefit will be added to your first pension payment & you will receive it for the rest of your life.

- Can apply & pay for it up to 90 days prior to retirement.
- Can apply at retirement, then you have a 90-day window to pay for the plan.

Types of Annuities

- **Plan Annuity**
    i. Must be purchased at the time of retirement.
    ii. Survivor option matches pension.
- **Purchasing Service Credit (increases monthly benefit, not service years):**
    - Contact a retirement specialist for advice on if you should consider purchasing service credits.
    - Apply & pay for service credits within 90 days of invoice date after retirement.
    - You can use pretax or post-tax dollars to purchase.
    - Survivor option matches pension.
    - Limited to 60 months.

NOTE: This is not the same as purchasing membership service credit or time, so it won't help you to retire or to retire early (it won't count towards years of service).

- **Total Allocation Portfolio (TAP) Annuity – Plan 3 ONLY**
    - Purchased anytime after separating from DRS-covered employment.
    - Can choose another survivor.

Step 5: Optional Membership Service Credit

- Military service – interruptive
- Authorized unpaid leave of absence
- Temporary duty disability
- Out-of-state (TRS)
- Substitute time as an educational employee (SERS, TRS)

NOTE: Optional service credit may help you qualify for an early or normal retirement & increase your pension benefit.

- You must apply & pay for optional service credit before you retire.

In Summary (DCP is a great way to save for these options):

- **Optional Membership Service Credit**
    - Apply & pay before retirement.
- **Purchase Service Credit (PSC)**
    - Apply at retirement & pay after.
- **Purchase an Additional Annuity (PAA)**
    - Apply before & pay before retirement
    - Or Apply at retirement & pay after.

Step 6: COLA & Your Effective Retirement Date

- **Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)**
    i. Must be retired for 12 months.
    ii. Maximum of 3% based on inflation.
    iii. The COLA is automatic & takes effect on July 1st each year.
- **Banking Provision (see graphic on page 19) Plans 2/3 only:**

    i. In years where the CPI is higher than 3%, the difference will be banked for you for future years.
    ii. If CPI is lower than 3%, percentage points will be pulled from that banked balance to bring you up to a max of 3%.
- Your effective retirement date will be the 1st of the month after separation.
    i. Benefit payments will be deposited into your bank account on the last day of each month.

Step 7: Request Formal Benefits Estimate

- About 6 months prior to retirement, it's time to request a formal estimate of your benefits on the DRS website. **(it can take a few weeks to process & is needed to apply for retirement!)**
- If you're a member of more than one retirement plan or you prefer to apply on paper, contact DRS for your official estimate & retirement application at this time.

Step 8: Review Health Care Coverage Options

- As a retired public employee, you may have access to insurance through the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), which is under the umbrella of the Health Care Authority (HCA).
- *Premiums are reduced for PEBB plans when transitioning to Medicare, reduced by up to $183 or 50 percent of the plan rate per retiree per month (whichever is less).*
    i. **Review the HCA PEBB Retiree Enrollment Guide:**

https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/pebb/50-0100-pebb-employee-enrollment-guide-2026.pdf
The elections form is included in the guide (call 800.200.1004 for assistance).

NOTE: If you work for an eligible Health Care Authority-covered employer, you can enroll in PEBB retiree health care when you retire from active service or COBRA.

- **If Plan 3**, you can enroll in retiree health care coverage, even if you don't retire. You can enroll if you separate from your eligible Health Care Authority-covered employer at 55 or older with a minimum of 10 Service Credit Years.

1-3 Months Prior to Retirement

Step 1: Make any other changes to your previously requested estimates.

Step 2: Once DRS processes your formal benefit estimate, you are ready to apply for your pension (there will be a link in your DRS account to "Track Estimate" then "Start My Application").

- If you complete a paper application, your signature & your beneficiary's signature will need to be notarized.
- Complete & submit a **W-4P Form.**
    i. It will default to "single" with no adjustments, but you can submit a form later to change it.
- After your application has been processed, you will receive an Acknowledgement Letter.
    i. It summarizes the elections you made on your application, so please review for accuracy.

ii. The summary will include whether DRS is missing documentation.

Step 3: Review withdrawal options & their balances.

- If you are separating from service early, review your withdrawal options & their balances.
    i. Watch a Withdrawal Webinar.
- Review your available balances at this time if you aren't separating early.
- Plan 3 investment account (you can call Voya Financial for account balance information).
- Deferred Compensation Program (DCP).

Step 4: If you plan to enroll in PEBB retiree health care coverage, the Health Care Authority recommends you complete & mail in the election form within 90 days prior to the end of your current health care coverage.

> **NOTE:** If you have a qualified reason to defer or delay retiree coverage, you still must enroll when eligible, but you make the election on the form to defer coverage. **IF YOU FAIL TO DO THIS, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENROLL LATER.**

- The election form also includes an option where you can elect to have your premiums deducted from your pension.

Step 5: Defer leave cash-out.

- Vacation: If you receive a lump sum payment (i.e. cash-out of unused vacation), you may be able to contribute all or part of that payment to your DCP account, & it would be tax deferred (still subject to DCP's annual limits – **See Page 4**).
- Sick Leave: If your employer participates in **Voluntary Employees' Benefit Association (VEBA)**, your sick leave cash-out (up to 25%) may be required to go into your **VEBA** account (check with your employer).
- If you would like to contribute a lump sum payment to **DCP**, you must contact DRS about 30-45 days before you receive the payment to arrange it.
    i. You will need to provide the dollar amount of your leave cash-out available for DCP deferral (after Social Security & Medicare) & the date the leave will be paid out.

At Retirement

Step 1: Verify the information on your Benefit Awards Letter for accuracy.

- Contact DRS if you did not receive your first payment within one week of the date specified on your awards letter.

Step 2: DRS will mail you a Form 1099-R for tax filing purposes.

Step 3: If you enrolled in PEBB retiree health care coverage and opted to have your premiums deducted from your pension, if you have questions about these deductions, contact the Health Care Authority, not DRS (the deductions are elected through the PEBB election form).

Checklist for Online Medicare, Retirement, & Spouses Applications

Create a *my* Social Security Account

You are required to login to your existing *my* Social Security account, or attempt to create one. To create an account, we will ask you a series of identity questions for verification. You may want to have certain items on hand to be prepared for additional security questions, such as, but not limited to: **mobile phone (for the purpose of receiving texts and emails), credit card, W-2, and tax forms.**

File for Benefits Online – The Information You Need	*Medicare Only*	*Retirement & Spouses*
Date and Place of Birth If you were born outside the United States or its territories: • Name of your birth country at the time of your birth (it may have a different name now) • Permanent Resident Card number (if you are not a U.S citizen)	X	X
MEDICAID Number (State Health Insurance) - Start and End Dates	X	
Current Heath Insurance • Employment start and end dates for the current employer (of you or your spouse) who provides your health insurance coverage through a Group Health Plan • Start and end dates for the Group Health Insurance provided by you (or your spouse's) current employer	X	
Marriage and Divorce • Name of current spouse • Name of prior spouse (if the marriage lasted more than 10 years or ended in death) • Spouse(s) date of birth and SSN (optional) • Beginning and ending dates of marriage(s) • Place of marriage(s) (city, state or country, if married outside the U.S.)		X
Names and Dates of Birth of Children Who: • Became disabled prior to age 22, or • Are under age 18 and are unmarried, or • Are aged 18 to 19 and still attending secondary school full time		X
U.S. Military Service • Type of duty and branch • Service period dates		X
Employer Details for Current Year and Prior 2 Years (not self-employment) • View your Social Security Statement online at ***www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount*** • Employer name • Employment start and end dates		X
Self-Employment Details for Current Year and Prior 2 Years • View your Social Security Statement online at ***www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount*** • Business type • Total net income		X
Direct Deposit - Domestic bank (USA) • Account type and number • Bank routing number **Direct Deposit** - International bank (non-USA) • International Direct Deposit (IDD) bank country • Bank name, bank code, and currency • Account type and number, branch/transit number		X

Medicare

Eligibility: You will become eligible for Medicare when you turn 65.

Exceptions: There are a few exceptions that would make a person eligible for Medicare prior to 65:

- If a person is receiving disability benefits for 24 consecutive months.
- Permanent kidney failure.
- ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease).

The Parts of Medicare

Part A (Hospital Insurance)	**COVERS:** inpatient, skilled nursing, hospice
	If you are already receiving Social Security benefits before age 65, you will generally be automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A when you become eligible for Medicare.
	Medicare Part A has no monthly premium if you or your spouse paid Medicare taxes for a certain amount of time while working.
Part B (Medical Insurance)	**COVERS:** provider visits, outpatient, preventive, durable medical equipment
	As a public employee, you may choose to delay enrollment until you retire or leave employment. However, if you plan to retire within three months of turning age 65, you should apply for Part B to start when you turn age 65.
	Federal rules may not allow state-registered domestic partners to delay enrolling in Part B without a penalty. If your partner will soon turn 65, contact the SSA.
	There is a premium for Medicare Part B.
Part C (Medicare Advantage)	Generally, includes Parts A, B, and D; with some plans including additional benefits.
	There is a premium for most Medicare Advantage plans.
	If you are enrolled in a PEBB medical plan, you generally do not need to enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan.
Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage)	Available to individuals enrolled in Medicare Part A **and/or** Part B.
	Not needed with PEBB medical plans, because PEBB plans meet or exceed Medicare's minimum standard of coverage (creditable prescription drug coverage).
	PEBB does not offer stand-alone Part D plans.
	There is a premium for Medicare Part D.
Medigap (Medicare Supplement Insurance)	Can help pay for health care costs that aren't covered by Part A and Part B (copayments, coinsurance, and deductibles).
	DOES NOT offer prescription drug coverage. Medigap plans sold today do not include prescription drug coverage. Individuals who need Medicare prescription drug coverage may enroll in a standalone Part D plan unless they already have other creditable prescription drug coverage, such as coverage through a PEBB medical plan.
	If enrolled in PEBB, you do not need to enroll in a Medicare Supplement Plan.

When to Apply:

Initial Enrollment Period (IEP): 7-month window spanning from 3 months before your birth month to 3 months after, in which you can apply for Medicare (see graphic on next page).

<u>**If retiring before 65, you can defer Part B & D.**</u>

Medicare
Initial Enrollment Period (IEP)

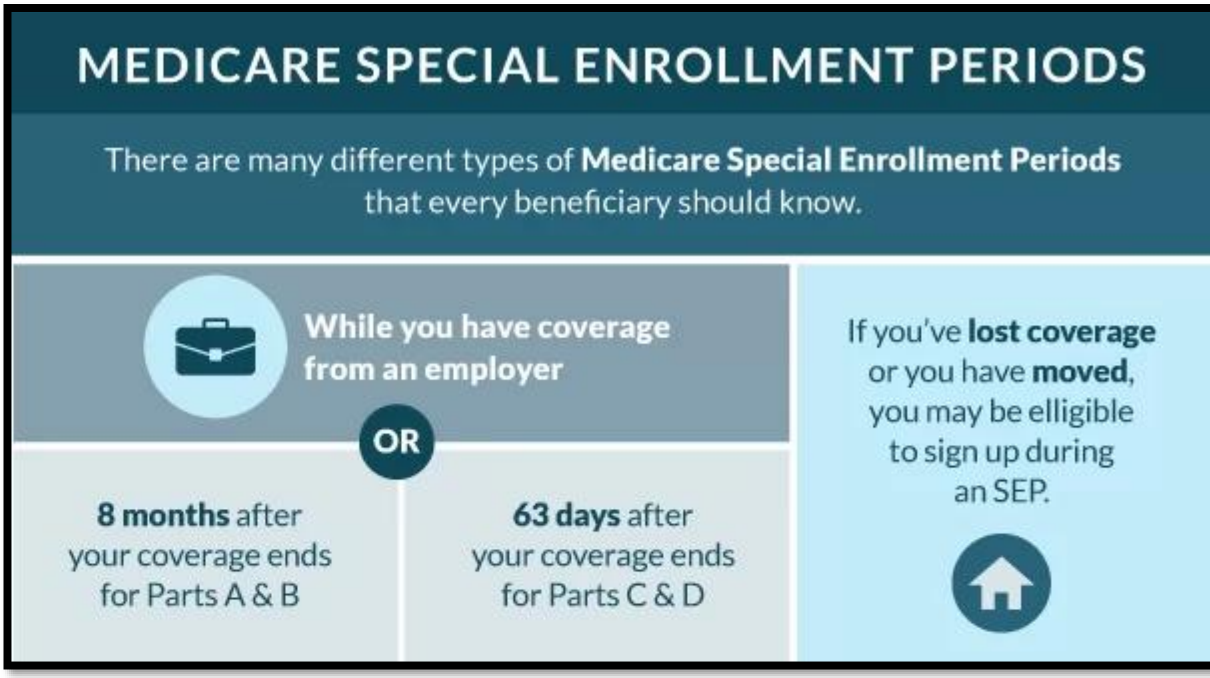
MEDICARE INITIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD

The **MEDICARE INITIAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD** begins 3 months _before_ your 65th birthday and ends 3 months _after_ your 65th birthday.

WHEN DO YOU TURN 65? Find your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) below

JANUARY The **October** before your birthday through the **April** after.	**FEBRUARY** The **November** before your birthday through the **May** after.	**MARCH** The **December** before your birthday through the **June** after.
APRIL The **January** before your birthday through the **July** after.	**MAY** The **February** before your birthday through the **August** after.	**JUNE** The **March** before your birthday through the **September** after.
JULY The **April** before your birthday through the **October** after.	**AUGUST** The **May** before your birthday through the **November** after.	**SEPTEMBER** The **June** before your birthday through the **December** after.
OCTOBER The **July** before your birthday through the **January** after.	**NOVEMBER** The **August** before your birthday through the **February** after.	**DECEMBER** The **September** before your birthday through the **March** after.

Medicare
Special Enrollment Period (SEP)



Original Medicare = Part A & B, Part D & Medigap

A: Premium free Medicare (premiums paid while working).
B: Covers up to 80% of allowable services with physician.
D: Prescription Plan, typically bought on the market.
Medigap: an additional plan that you can purchase to cover the other 20% of physician services costs.

Medicare Advantage = Part C

Comes with Part A & Part B, usually Part D as well.

What to Consider When Choosing Plan A & Plan B

- Are the services you need covered?
- How much are premiums, deductibles, and other costs?
- How much do you pay for services like hospital stays and doctor visits?
- Do your doctors and other health care providers accept the coverage? Are they part of the plan's network?
- Do you need to purchase a Medi care Part D prescription drug plan? Does the plan cover the medications you are currently taking?
- Are you satisfied with the quality of care and services given by the plan?
- Are the doctors and other health care providers conveniently located?
- If you travel, are you covered in another state or outside the US?
- When you travel, does your health care come along?

Proof of Enrollment for PEBB

Once you or your dependent enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B, you must submit proof of the enrollment. We must receive your proof **no later than 30 days** before you or your dependent turn 65 (or if delayed, no later than 60 days after turning 65). If you are enrolling in PEBB retiree insurance coverage for the first time, submit proof with your Retiree Election Form (form A).

Which documents act as proof of enrollment?

- Send copy of Medicare card or entitlement letter showing the effective date of Medicare Part A and Part B.
- Send copy of denial letter from Social Security if not entitled to Medicare.

How to submit proof for PEBB insurance?

- Send a secure message through HCA Support, a secure website that allows you to log into your own account to communicate with them. **You will need to set up a SecureAccess Washington (SAW) account to use this option.**
- Fax: 360-725-0771
- Mail:

  Health Care Authority
  PEBB Program
  PO Box 42684
  Olympia, WA 98504-2684

What happens after I submit proof of Medicare enrollment?

- They will reduce your premium to the lower Medicare rate, if applicable. They also notify your medical plan of your Medicare coverage. If you are paying PEBB premium surcharges, they generally no longer apply once you are enrolled in Medicare Part A or Part B.

I'm turning 65 but still working. What do I do?

- If you are age 65 or older and still working, you can keep your PEBB or SEBB medical plan.
- For active employees, PEBB or SEBB coverage is generally primary and Medicare is secondary.

Additional Tips for a Better Retirement

2-20 Years Prior to Retirement	Sign up for **DCP** to save even more for retirement. Over 50? **DCP** has a catch-up savings option for you: drs.wa.gov/dcp
	Review your options for restoring or purchasing service credit to increase your benefit: drs.wa.gov/sitemap/service
1-2 Years Prior to Retirement	• Register for a retirement webinar: https://www.drs.wa.gov/events/ • This is a great way to get an overview of the retirement process & ask questions.
	Want to increase your retirement income? Contact DRS or explore your options at drs.wa.gov/annuity
	Plan for health care in retirement. Find out which options are available to you. Your employer may have additional information for you.
3-12 Months Prior to Retirement	If you'll be covered by the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) program health insurance, contact PEBB services.
	Decide when to apply for Medicare & Social Security retirement benefits.
1-3 Months Prior to Retirement	If you'll be using PEBB health care, now is the time to send in your coverage election form.
	DCP customers, contact DRS to find out if you can apply any unused leave toward your account.

My Employment is Ending Without Retirement

- **If you do not meet DRS criteria for retirement**, OR **you choose not to retire when your employment ends**, you may have the option to enroll in COBRA coverage as a "bridge" to PEBB retiree insurance coverage.
- **When you notify your employer of your intent to retire or separate from employment & your termination has been processed**, the PEBB Program or SEBB Program will send you a PEBB Continuation Coverage Election Notice or a SEBB Continuation Coverage Election Notice, which begins a 60-day window in which you may apply for COBRA.
- **If you intend to use COBRA as a bridge to PEBB retiree insurance coverage, you must elect COBRA within the required timeframes.** Failure to maintain qualifying coverage between employment and retirement eligibility could affect your ability to enroll in PEBB retiree insurance coverage. To use COBRA as a bridge, you must become eligible for retirement and apply for PEBB retiree coverage when your COBRA coverage ends.
- **If you are a non-represented employee leaving an educational service district that does not provide PEBB insurance coverage while you are working**, enroll in COBRA through your educational service district.

Glossary

COBRA – Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

- A law that allows you and any of your immediate family members to stay on an employer-sponsored health plan under certain circumstances.

COLA – Cost-of-Living-Adjustment

- Your annual benefit increases based on inflation.

DCP – Deferred Compensation Program

- DCP is a voluntary, tax-deferred, 457(b) retirement savings program administered by the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems.

DRS – Department of Retirement Systems

- Manages state pensions in Washington.

HCA – Health Care Authority

- Oversees state health care coverage.

OASDI – Old Age, Survivors, Disability Insurance

- Also known as Social Security

PAA – Purchase an Additional Annuity

- Another option you can pay for to increase your monthly benefit.

PEBB – Public Employees Benefits Board

- Provides health care coverage to public employees.

PSC – Purchase Service Credit

- Paying for additional service credits to count toward your number of years worked which in turn will increase your monthly benefit.

SHIBA – Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors

- A free, unbiased, and confidential service of the Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner, SHIBA volunteers help people of all ages and backgrounds with their Medicare questions and options.

SSA – Social Security Administration

- Manages and disperses Social Security funds.

VEBA – Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association

- A Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA)

Voya Financial

- manages investment accounts for Plan 3

Resources

DRS Retirement Checklist:
www.drs.wa.gov/life/retire/check/

DRS Forms:
www.drs.wa.gov/forms/

DRS Deferred Compensation Program (DCP):
www.drs.wa.gov/plan/dcp/

DRS Annuities:
www.drs.wa.gov/sitemap/annuity/

DRS Service Credits:
www.drs.wa.gov/sitemap/service/

DRS Benefit Estimator:
https://www.drs.wa.gov/calculators/

DRS Webinars/Seminars:
https://www.drs.wa.gov/events/

Voya Financial:
https://my.voya.com/voyassoui/index.html?domain=savewithwa.voya.com#/login-pweb

Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA):
https://www.insurance.wa.gov/statewide-health-insurance-benefits-advisors-shiba

Social Security Retirement Checklist:
www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10377.pdf

Applying for Social Security Retirement Benefits:
https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-1.html

Social Security Age Reduction:
www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/agereduction.html#:~:text=You%20can%20start%20receiving%20your,your%20benefit%20amount%20will%20increase

Social Security Retirement Age Calculator:
https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/ageincrease.html

Medicare & Turning Age 65:
www.hca.wa.gov/employee-retiree-benefits/retirees/medicare-and-turning-age-65

Medicare & You Handbook:
www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050-medicare-and-you.pdf

Medicare Eligibility:
www.hhs.gov/answers/medicare-and-medicaid/who-is-eligible-for-medicare/index.html

Medicare Special Enrollment Periods (SEP):
https://www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare/get-more-coverage/joining-a-plan/special-enrollment-periods

PEBB Employee Enrollment Guide:
https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/pebb/50-0100-pebb-employee-enrollment-guide-2026.pdf

PEBB Retiree Election Form (Form A):
https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/pebb/51-4031-retiree-election-form-a-2026.pdf

PEBB Medical Benefits Comparison:
fortress.wa.gov/hca/pebbhealthplan/compare.aspx
www.hca.wa.gov/assets/pebb/51-0604-medicare-benefits-comparison-2026.pdf

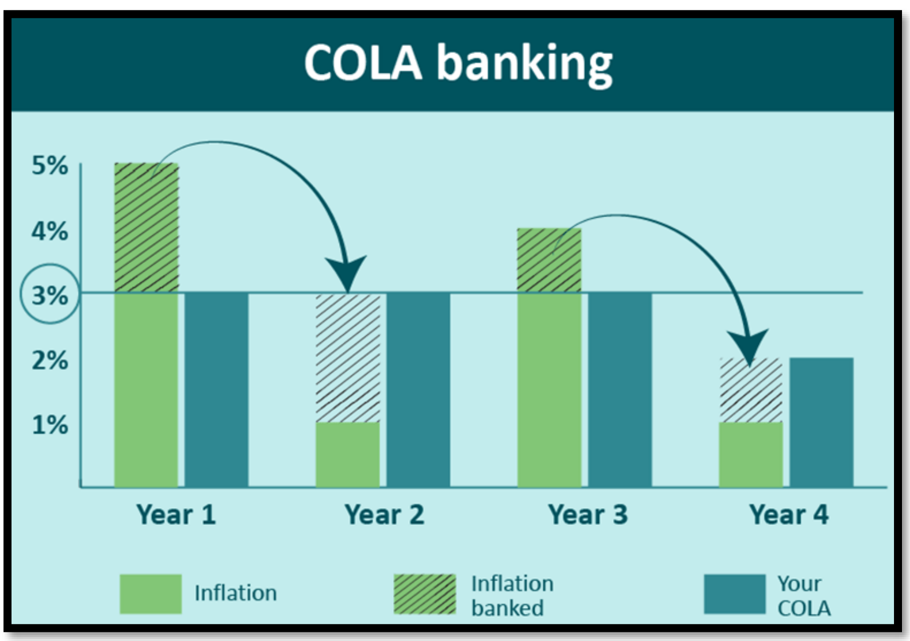
PEBB Preparing for Retirement:
www.hca.wa.gov/employee-retiree-benefits/preparing-retirement#work-with-in-retirement

Starting Medicare Coverage:
www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare/sign-up/when-does-medicare-coverage-start

VEBA Overview:
https://www.veba.org/home/plan-overview/

Veteran Benefits:
https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply-for-health-care-form-10-10ez/introduction

COLA Banking:
https://www.drs.wa.gov/life/retired/cola/



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