

The Department of Retirement Systems recently launched a new application that allows pension system members to apply for retirement online. More than 3,400 people have logged on to the application in the first six weeks, including 124 who have completed a retirement application. We expect these numbers to grow rapidly as more members learn about the convenience of applying online.

Below is a feature article about the new application. We hope you will share the information with your employees.



Online Retirement Application

Just a Click Away —

DRS Launches New Online Retirement Application

Some who've tested it compare it to TurboTax®. And they're not just trying to flatter – the new online retirement application developed by the Washington State Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) walks you through the retirement process step by step, very much like the best-selling tax return software.

"The new online retirement application will bring ease, convenience and simplicity to your fingertips," says Gayle McGee, project manager. "Customers have been asking for the ability to retire from the comfort of their own homes, and now it's a reality. If you haven't signed up yet, or logged in to your online account information for a while, you can do it now from the DRS website."

Retirement planning's for everyone

You may think that the retirement application is only for those who are ready to retire. "That's not true with this application," says McGee. "We've included features such as in-depth retirement planning. It's set up so that everyone can access the information they need, when they need it."

For instance: If you're not yet eligible for retirement, you're encouraged to sign in and get the information you need so that you can start planning (if you haven't, it's never too late), or to check in on your plans so far if you've already set up online access at DRS.

What you'll see and what you'll get

After sign up or log in to your retirement account, look for the link in the left navigation that says, "Apply for Retirement." That's the link that will take you into the application. Once inside, you'll see a list of "I want tos" to choose from. Tailored just for you, the application will display only what you need based on your retirement system, plan and retirement eligibility rules.

Features, features and more features

Here's some of what you can look forward to no matter your age or retirement eligibility:

- A customized, personal experience based on your retirement system and plan.
- Retirement planning information and tools.
- A list of everything you need before you can retire online.
- Lots of access to assistance either through the help menu, email or phone.

And once you're ready to retire, the application will be just a click away, ready for you to complete:

- Forms will prefill with your information – you don't need to type in your name, address, phone number and other personal information over and over again.
- A worksheet to help you determine how your federal tax withholding and your medical deductions will affect your monthly benefit.
- The retirement tracker will keep you informed about where your application is in the process and the forms you need to complete and return to DRS.

McGee is excited to offer this new electronic version of the retirement application to customers. "The DRS project team developed an online version of the paper application that satisfies customers' growing needs while maintaining our reputation for accuracy, security and service," she says. "It was a challenging and unique opportunity. Now our customers will have the opportunity to let us know if we've met or exceeded their expectations."

Tell us what you think

The new online retirement application is available through your retirement account, which can be accessed at www.drs.wa.gov/administration/my-drs/. Take a look and let us know what you think at recep@drs.wa.gov.