

PERSPECTIVES

Active
Member
Edition

Customer service survey results and strategies

PERS' 2006 customer service satisfaction survey asked members and retirees for feedback regarding the services we provide. More than 2,000 people responded.

The survey covered six areas: timeliness of services, ability to provide services correctly the first time, helpfulness, knowledge and expertise of PERS' employees, availability of information, and the overall quality of service PERS provides.

We identified the following main issues from the comments we received. Also provided are PERS' strategies to address the issues.

1. It is sometimes difficult to get consistent, accurate answers to questions.

Strategies: We continue to offer core staff training in features of the PERS Chapter 238 (Tier One/Tier Two) and Chapter 238A (OPSRP) programs.

We are also increasing customer service training for all Customer Service Division staff, including training designed specifically for Call Center staff.

An A-Z subject help directory has been posted on the PERS website. Members can use this tool for answers to questions, and Call Center staff can also access this tool to help members receive consistent answers.

PERS is distributing an internal newsletter to keep staff abreast of changes in business rules, Oregon Administrative Rules, policy decisions, and Board actions.

We are also ensuring that Call Center response scripting uses the same verbiage as publications and the A-Z directory to provide consistent answers.

2. The PERS website is difficult to navigate.

Strategies: PERS has made changes to its website to simplify navigation and make information easier to find. Upcoming changes in the state's website template will also improve navigation and usability.

We developed separate A-Z subject help files for Tier One/Tier Two members and OPSRP members with topics listed alphabetically (i.e., account balance, address changes, annual statements, etc.). Visitors can click on a particular topic for information, including any related forms from the homepage.

We also developed website sections dedicated to answering:

- Top Ten Telephone questions,
- What do I do if I..., and
- Ready to retire?

3. Retired members are upset about benefit reductions.

Strategies: The Strunk/Eugene project affects approximately 38,000 benefit recipients who received benefits based on the now-revised 1999 Tier One regular account earnings crediting (revised from 20 percent to 11.33 percent). These individuals were notified of the benefit adjustment process in March 2006.

PERS is providing a detailed recalculation letter to each individual that shows the benefit adjustment

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Customer service survey results (continued from page 1)

and amount of overpayment, and how the actuarial reduction method recovers the overpayment.

The Strunk/Eugene account processing project is underway and PERS has created core principles and success criteria for the project.

4. PERS has confusing forms and instructions.

Strategies: PERS tries to use plain language and best practices when creating forms and instructions. We frequently have more than one step in our processes and more than one division takes action when processing form requests. This means the forms have to work both for our members and support our processes.

We have a section that manages forms and a Forms Committee that

strives to simplify forms whenever possible. In the past three years, the agency has reduced the number of forms from over 400 to 280, despite the fact that we had to create many new forms with the addition of the OPSRP Program and the Individual Account Program. The Forms Committee holds focus groups when possible to obtain member input before releasing forms.

The agency offers online classes to help members complete retirement forms and will pursue additional opportunities to assist members with form completion (e.g., Turn-In Forms sessions).

The agency is also creating a forms management program to ensure that all forms are easy for members to use, collect the necessary data, and can be processed efficiently.

5. Transactions sometimes take too long.

Strategies: By statute, PERS has 92 days to begin benefit payments. We strive to send benefits out earlier than that, but we must work with employers and verify that member information is correct before beginning benefits.

To improve transaction time, we are:

- Moving data validation upstream of the retirement calculation process,
- Using a new electronic employer reporting system structured to reduce the number of data errors, and
- Developing information workflow and document scanning processes to track information submittals and eliminate requests for duplicate information.

2006 Customer Satisfaction survey results

| | Excellent (1) | Good (2) | Fair (3) | Poor (4) | Don't Know (5) |
|---|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| How do you rate the timeliness of the services PERS provides? | 37% | 27% | 13% | 20% | 4% |
| How do you rate PERS' ability to provide services correctly the first time? | 38% | 25% | 12% | 20% | 5% |
| How do you rate PERS' helpfulness? | 39% | 27% | 13% | 16% | 4% |
| How do you rate the knowledge and expertise of PERS employees? | 37% | 29% | 13% | 13% | 9% |
| How do you rate the availability of information at PERS? | 34% | 27% | 14% | 22% | 4% |
| How do you rate the overall quality of service PERS provides? | 36% | 28% | 14% | 19% | 3% |

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report completed

PERS' 2006 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) (for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006) is posted on the PERS website (<http://oregon.gov/PERS>) in the Financials section.

Highlights include:

- PERS' assets exceed its liabilities at the June 30, 2006 close of the fiscal year, with \$56,554.9 million held in trust for pension, post employment healthcare, Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan Individual Account Program (IAP), and deferred compensation benefits.
- Fiduciary net assets increased by \$5,941.3 million, or 11.7 percent, during the fiscal year due primarily to continued strong investment returns.
- As of December 31, 2005, the date of the latest actuarial valuation, the funded ratio of the defined benefit pension plan was 104.2 percent. In general, this means that for every \$1.00 of pension benefits due, PERS has approximately \$1.04 of net assets available for payment.

Perspectives is published quarterly by the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System for the benefit of PERS/OPSRP members and employers. Address all correspondence to **PERS, P.O. Box 23700, Tigard, OR 97281-3700**. PERS headquarters office is at **11410 SW 68th Parkway, Tigard, Oregon. Phone 503-598-PERS** or toll-free **888-320-7377; TTY: 503-603-7766**. Telephone hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. PERS' Internet address is <http://oregon.gov/PERS>.

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- Revenues for fiscal year 2006 rose 19.1 percent to \$8,550.8 million, which includes member and employer contributions of \$1,396.8 million and net gains from investment activities totaling \$7,147.4 million.

- Benefit payments and expenses (deductions from fiduciary net assets) increased slightly to \$2,609.6 million, or 0.4 percent, during fiscal year 2006, from \$2,598.6 million during fiscal year 2005.

Website changes

The PERS website (<http://oregon.gov/PERS>) now features sections titled "A-Z Quick Answers for Members" for Tier One/Tier Two and IAP and also for the OPSRP Pension Program and IAP. Topics are listed alphabetically with links to forms and other pertinent information.

There is now a "Top 10 Telephone Questions" section on the homepage with answers to the most frequently asked questions members pose to Customer Service.

We have also added a "What Do I Do If I..." link that answers questions like "what do I do if I change employers" or "get a divorce."

The new "Ready To Retire" section has a retirement checklist for Tier One/Tier Two members and provides access to retirement forms for Tier One/Tier Two or OPSRP Pension Program members. IAP retirement information is also provided.

Ready to retire?

Are you retiring soon? PERS is offering Internet-based presentations to help you complete your retirement forms.

These one-hour presentations provide a review of the forms required to retire from PERS or the IAP, and also provide an overview of the correct way to fill out the paperwork.

You will need speakers or a headset to participate. A microphone is recommended to pose questions.

Several sessions are scheduled and registration is required.

PERS Presentations: February - June 2007

Registration is required. Register through the PERS website (<http://oregon.gov/PERS>) in the Education Sessions section. All presentations are free, including the financial planning sessions. Space is limited.

One-Year PERS Presentations

For members within *one* year of retirement

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Albany | May 31 |
| Ashland/Med. | Mar. 7, 8; Apr. 24*; June 6, 7 |
| Astoria | Apr. 4 |
| Bend | Feb. 27; May 7, 8 |
| Coos Bay | Mar. 22; June 26 |
| Corvallis | Apr. 5 |
| Eugene/Spfld | Feb. 21; Mar. 21; Apr. 5*, 18; May 16; June 20 |
| Gresham | Feb. 1*, 6; Apr. 3; May 1; June 5 |
| Hillsboro | Feb. 13; Mar. 13; May 8; June 12 |
| Hood River | May 21 |
| Klamath Falls | Feb. 28 |
| La Grande | May 23 |
| Ontario | Apr. 19 |
| Oregon City | June 19 |
| Pendleton | June 22 |
| Redmond | Feb. 26 |
| Roseburg | Apr. 12 |
| Salem | Feb. 6*, Mar. 14; Apr. 25; May 15*, 23; June 27 |
| The Dalles | Apr. 16 |
| Tigard | Feb. <u>5</u> , 10*, 19, 26 ; Mar. 10*, 12, 26 ; Apr. 7*, 9, 16 , 30; May 5*, 14, 21 ; June 2*, 4 , 11, 18 , 25 (dates in bold type are for education staff; underlined dates are for P&F staff) |

These sessions cover:

Individual Account Program (IAP) // Retirement eligibility and calculating the retirement benefit // Review of benefit estimate // Retirement option choices // Variable account after retirement // Work after retirement provisions // Health insurance // Cost-of-living adjustments // Taxes // Review of retirement application forms.

Dates followed by an asterisk (*) add financial planning information presented by PERS' education partner, American General Financial Advisors (AGFA). Additional topics covered at these sessions include: Social Security and Medicare // Coordinating PERS benefits with other income sources // Planning for changing income and expense needs // Investment strategies for retirement.

Five-Year PERS Presentations

For members within *five* years of retirement

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Albany | Mar. 20 |
| Ashland/Med. | Mar. 7; June 6 |
| Astoria | Mar. 1 |
| Bend | Feb. 27; Apr. 12*; May 8 |
| Coos Bay | June 26 |
| Corvallis | Feb. 20; Apr. 17*; May 30 |
| Eugene/Spfld | Feb. 7*; Apr. 18; May 17* |
| Grants Pass | Feb. 21* |
| Gresham | Mar. 6; Apr. 10* |
| Hillsboro | Apr. 10 |
| Hood River | Mar. 15 |
| Klamath Falls | Mar. 1; 21* |
| La Grande | Apr. 18 |
| Ontario | Apr. 19 |
| Oregon City | June 28 |
| Pendleton | Apr. 17 |
| Redmond | May 9 |
| Roseburg | Mar. 6 |
| Salem | Feb. 14; Mar. 14*; Apr. 11; June 14*, 27 |
| Tigard | Feb. 12, 24*; Mar. 5, 24*; Apr. 21*; May 7, 19*; June 16* |

These sessions cover:

Individual Account Program (IAP) // Review of Benefit Estimate Calculator // Retirement benefit information // Work after retirement provisions.

Dates followed by an asterisk (*) add financial planning information presented by PERS' education partner, American General Financial Advisors (AGFA). Additional topics covered at these sessions include: Social Security and Medicare // Coordinating PERS benefits with other income sources // Planning for changing income and expense needs.

Other group counseling sessions...

Early Career: retirement benefit information for PERS/OPSRP members hired January 1, 1996, or after.

Completing Your Retirement Forms: for those retiring within one year, this online session is an overview of the PERS and IAP service retirement application forms.

Oregon Growth Savings Plan Workshops: learn about the benefits of tax-deferred investing.

Visit the Education Sessions section of the PERS website (<http://oregon.gov/PERS>) for more information.