

# Pension Newsletter

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation  
United States Government Agency

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## When Will I Know What My PBGC Benefit Is?

*By Vince Snowbarger, Deputy Director for Operations*

You have expressed your concerns, and we have listened. Your number one question is the status and value of your future retirement benefits. If you have not already received the letter from PBGC detailing the benefit you will get when you retire, you also want to know when that letter is coming.

We are aware of, and sensitive to, your need for information. We process each failed plan as quickly as possible. Because each plan has plan-specific problems and complications, we do not take a one-size-fits-all approach. Each plan requires interpretation, data collection, evaluation of plan assets and participant data, and application of benefit restrictions as provided by law. In every case, our goal is to calculate individual benefits as soon as we can. This process can take up to three years, and in some cases, longer. You can check on our progress in processing your plan, and find any of our announcements regarding your plan, by going to your plan's page on our website. Just click on "Find My Plan" on our home page, then follow the instructions on our [Find My Plan](#) page.

PBGC is working hard to send you your benefit information as quickly as we can. You should expect nothing less.

## Taking Care of Problems

If you have a problem or complaint with PBGC, whether it's how we're handling your benefit or how we're answering your questions, we ask that you try at least twice to resolve that problem through normal channels. Our normal channels are the Customer Contact Center or the PBGC employee specifically assigned to your plan. The phone number and hours of operation for the Contact Center are listed on the back page of this newsletter.

If you have especially difficult problems that you can't resolve through normal channels, then PBGC has a Problem Resolution Officer (PRO) available to assist you.

Please do not contact the PRO for general inquiries. But, the PRO is there to help you address specific difficulties with your pension benefits, with problems starting or receiving your benefits in a timely manner, or with the level of service you received from PBGC. Depending on the nature and complexity of your problem, the PRO will normally resolve the issue within 48 hours.

You can reach the PRO by e-mail at: [participant.pro@pbgc.gov](mailto:participant.pro@pbgc.gov), by phone at 1-800-400-7242 ext. 4014, or by writing to: Problem Resolution Officer, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, 1200 K Street, N.W. Room 9429, Washington, D.C. 20005.

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VIEW THIS AND PAST NEWSLETTERS ONLINE AT [www.pbgc.gov/dvnewsletter](http://www.pbgc.gov/dvnewsletter)

# Protect Yourself...By Protecting Your Personal Information

PBGC and the PBGC Office of Inspector General work diligently to detect and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and violations of the law.

Thefts of Personally Identifiable Information (PII), such as Social Security Numbers and financial account numbers, are an increasing national problem. In “identity theft” (or “identity fraud”) cases, someone pretends to be someone else usually to get money or other property, or to obtain credit or other benefits, in the victim’s name.

At PBGC we take these offenses seriously and strive to prevent them. However, it is YOUR responsibility—as the participant or beneficiary—to protect your PII and pension account information from people who could misuse that information.

If you are owed a pension by PBGC, you may have set up an account in our **MyPBA** service that can be accessed on our website. Anybody who knows your PII, pension plan information, and **MyPBA** account information can get into your account and change important information. And that could be a complete stranger, or a friend or relative.

For example, a beneficiary contacted PBGC to update her mailing address after discovering her pension payments for the previous three

months were redirected to a different address. The beneficiary’s daughter had gained access to her mother’s PII and redirected her mother’s pension payments to another bank account that the daughter could access.

This clearly illustrates why you should keep your PII and other important personal information in a secure place and tightly control who has access.

## PII Examples:

- **Social Security Number**
- **Date of Birth**
- **Log-In IDs**
- **Passwords and Password Hints**

Sharing your personal information could put you at risk for pension fraud or identity theft. Protect yourself, by protecting your personal information.

*If you suspect that either you or PBGC have been the victim of fraud or other illegal activities, contact PBGC’s Office of Inspector General Hotline immediately:*

Phone: **(800) 303-9737**

Internet: <http://oig.pbgc.gov/investigation/details.html>

U.S. Mail: **Post Office Box 34177,  
Washington DC 20043-4177**

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## Your Pension and Divorce

If you are getting a divorce or a legal separation, a court may divide your pension benefit as part of a settlement with your spouse. However, PBGC will pay part or all of your pension benefits to your spouse, former spouse, or dependent children only under a qualified domestic relations order (QDRO). If you already had such an order when PBGC took over your plan, we will review it. If we have questions, we will contact all parties involved.

If you receive such an order after we have taken over your plan, please submit a signed original or a certified or authenticated copy to PBGC at:

**PBGC QDRO Coordinator  
P.O. Box 151750  
Alexandria, VA 22315-1750**

PBGC will review the order to determine whether it is qualified, and we will inform the interested parties in writing of our determination.

PBGC’s informational booklet, *Qualified Domestic Relations Orders & PBGC*, describes our requirements for court orders that divide pensions. It includes information on our benefit payment options, provides model orders for many situations (such as dividing benefits during your lifetime, or providing child support or a benefit to a surviving spouse), and tells how to obtain certain participant information from PBGC. The booklet may be found on PBGC’s website at <http://www.pbgc.gov/docs/QDRO.pdf>. You may also request a copy from our Customer Contact Center.

# Planning for Your Future

As you grow older and approach retirement, here are some ideas for you to think about in planning for your future:

**Establish a power of attorney.** At some time, you may want or need someone you trust to deal with PBGC on your behalf. A regular (not durable) **power of attorney** authorizes another person to act as your agent to do specific things, such as apply for pension benefits, update your address, or respond to PBGC's request for information or documents. A "durable power of attorney" is a legal document giving one or more people the authority to handle finances or other personal matters if you become mentally or physically incapacitated. For more information, go to the [Transactions](#) page of our website.

**Deposit PBGC benefits directly to your bank.** Direct deposit is safer and more convenient than paper checks. It's free, your funds are deposited without delay, and your payments can't be lost, stolen in the mail, or forgotten at home. For more information, check out our pamphlet on [Electronic Direct Deposit](#), which you can find on the [Publications](#) page of our website.

**Be prepared in case of death.** If the worst happens, your family or agent should report your death promptly to PBGC to arrange for any survivor benefits that may be payable. For more information, see "Reporting the death of a participant" on our [Beneficiaries](#) page.

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## Additional Help with Health Insurance Costs in Retirement

When you retire and begin to receive PBGC benefits, you may become eligible for a tax credit that helps pay for qualified health insurance if you are age 55 or older and not eligible for Medicare at that time. When you become eligible, you can use the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) to pay a portion of the cost of your qualified health insurance. The HCTC, administered by the Internal Revenue Service, is available as a monthly tax credit for monthly health coverage payments or as a refundable credit you claim on your federal tax return.

When you become eligible for HCTC, you may also be able to apply for National Emergency Grant (NEG) funds, which are available in certain states to help individuals pay for qualified health coverage until they begin receiving the monthly tax credit through the HCTC Program. Contact the U.S. Department of Labor at 1-877-US-2JOBS (1-877-872-5627) and ask if your state has a NEG Program. For more information about the HCTC, visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) (Keyword Search: HCTC), or call the HCTC Customer Contact Center at 1-866-628-4282 (TTD/TTY: 1-866-626-4282).

## Aid Available For the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired

Do you have speech or hearing disabilities? Then the Federal Relay Service (FRS) can assist you with telephone calls to federal agencies, free of charge—including calls to PBGC. To use the service you need a TTY/TDD device, also called a "Text Telephone." You can buy these devices for corded or cordless telephones (including cell phones) and also for computers. After you have connected your telephone and the device, dial the FRS number (1-800-877-8339). Be ready to tell the operator you're calling PBGC, and have handy the telephone number of the party you are calling.

When the call is answered, the relay operator will give you instructions. Generally, you start by typing your message. The relay operator reads it to the person you are calling and then types the response for you to read on your device.

The United States Access Board website has more information on TTY/TDD at <http://www.access-board.gov/adaag/about/bulletins/ttys.htm> (or use a search engine to find "Text Telephone Technical Bulletin").

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## Your Military Service and PBGC: What You Should Know

If you were serving in the military when your pension plan ended, you may be due a higher benefit from PBGC. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) requires plans to grant pension service credit during your military service if, soon after leaving the military, you returned to work for the employer that sponsored the plan. PBGC guarantees this additional service up until the date your plan ended, even if you return to work after the plan ended.

Please call us if you think this applies to you. If we do not have your military information, we will ask you for some documentation from your company and from the military to establish your eligibility.

## Help Us Find People We Owe Pension Benefits!

We are still looking for many people who have yet to claim their benefits from us! Some of them may have been your co-workers.

You may be able to help us as well as them. On the "[Find Missing Participants](#)" page, which you can get to from either the home page or the "[Workers & Retirees](#)" page of PBGC, you can search by a person's last name, the name of the company he or she worked for, or the state where the plan sponsor was located. If you find someone you know, you can either notify the person or call PBGC at 1-800-400-7242, and we will follow up. We know how important benefits are to retirees and their beneficiaries, and we appreciate your help in finding those to whom money is owed.

## Keep Us Informed. Call 1-800-400-7242

It is important to let us know when you have a change in address, e-mail address, or telephone number. You can do this by using our online service, **MyPBA**, which is available at [www.pbgc.gov/mypba](http://www.pbgc.gov/mypba), or by calling our Customer Contact Center toll-free at 1-800-400-7242. [TTY/TDD users may call the Federal Relay Service toll-free at 1-800-877-8339 and ask to be connected to PBGC's toll-free number.] You may also write to us at: PBGC, P.O. Box 151750, Alexandria, VA 22315-1750. If you write us, please include your **full name, the pension plan name, the pension plan number, and the last four digits of your Social Security Number** on your correspondence. It also helps to include your **current e-mail address**.

Our Customer Contact Center is available to receive your calls Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Eastern time. In order to avoid a wait, however, it is generally better to call after the third business day of each month and on a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday.

If you do call during a busy time, you don't have to hold for the next available representative. Instead, if you are using a touch-tone telephone, you can request that the next available representative call you back. You can generally expect to receive a call back within 10 minutes. The representative will make three attempts to reach you in case you step away from your telephone momentarily.


## Información en Español

Para recibir el boletín informativo en español, llame a nuestro Centro de Contacto del Cliente al 1-800-400-7242. Para los usuarios del servicio TTY/TDD, llame al Servicio de Retransmisión Federal, al número telefónico gratuito, 1-800-845-6136, y pida que lo comuniquen con el 1-800-400-7242. Además hay varias publicaciones de PBGC en español y todas están disponibles en PBGC "[Publicaciones en Español](#)" que se encuentran en "[Newsletter & Publications](#)" página de web [www.pbgc.gov](http://www.pbgc.gov). Usted puede encontrar el enlace de esta página en la parte izquierda de nuestra página "[Workers & Retires](#)".

La coordinadora de servicios en español de PBGC es Orfanny Vanegas. Si usted necesita ayuda, llame al 1-800-400-7242, o envíe un mensajea [hablamos.espanol@pbgc.gov](mailto:hablamos.espanol@pbgc.gov), o escriba a: PBGC, Contacto de Habla Hispana, PBGC, P.O. Box 151750, Alexandria, VA 22315-1750.

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