

Spotlight

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

Visit LACERA's New Online Resource Center!

We are excited to announce the launch of our member Resource Center on lacera.com! The Resource Center is your main hub for accessing retirement and healthcare plan information and benefit materials, available in a variety of formats.

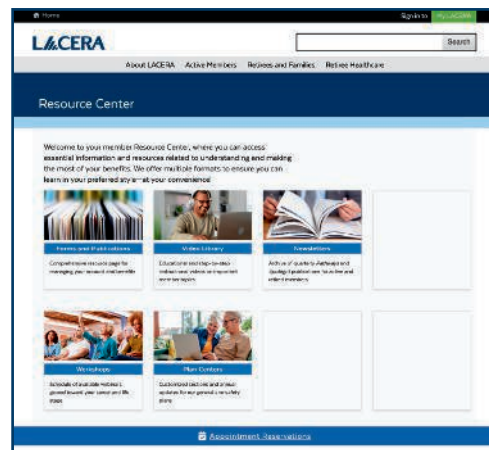
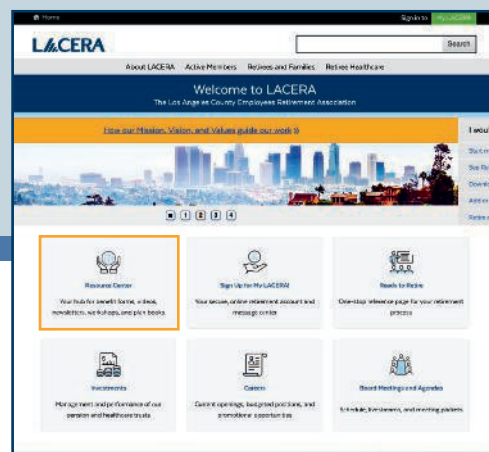
You can quickly access the new hub by visiting lacera.com and clicking on the Resource Center tile on the homepage. We recommend visiting the Resource Center now and bookmarking it in your browser for quick access anytime you need to take action or learn about a topic regarding your benefits.

The Resource Center includes the following sections, presented in an intuitive visual layout:

- **Forms and Publications** for managing your account and benefits

- **Video Library** (new!) for educational and step-by-step instructional videos
- **Pathways and Spotlight member newsletters** for the latest benefits news and LACERA activities
- Available **workshops** and sign-up schedule
- **Plan Centers** for your specific retirement plan, including annual updates and online plan books

We will continue to expand the Resource Center as we build new tools to help you prepare for retirement and understand and utilize your benefits. In the meantime, check it out and see everything that's available to you!



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DESK

SANTOS H. KREIMANN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- LUIS A. LUGO, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
- LAURA GUGLIELMO AND JJ POPOWICH, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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Elected by Safety Members

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Vice Chair
Elected by Retired Members

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Elected by General Members

ELIZABETH B. GINSBERG

County Treasurer and Tax Collector
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JASON E. GREEN

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Elected by Retired Members

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MIKE GATTO

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

ELIZABETH B. GINSBERG

County Treasurer and Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Trustee

ALEEN LANGTON

Elected by General Members

DEBBIE MARTIN

Elected by Retired Members

NICOLE MI

Elected by General Members

Hello, members! Happy holidays and 2025 (at the quarter-century mark already)!

As we close out 2024, I'm proud of all that we accomplished at LACERA this year, especially the projects related to improving your member experience—like the launch of the redesigned My LACERA dashboard (with additional self-service options), enhanced appointments system, and new member Resource Center, among other advancements.

I'm also excited to share that after many years of effort and coordination with the County, the lifetime maximum benefit for LACERA-administered Anthem plans I, II, and Prudent Buyer will increase from \$1 million to \$1.5 million effective July 1, 2025. Because a member could reach the current cap with one major illness, this has been a huge priority for LACERA and the County for years as part of providing you with comprehensive benefits and financial security. See more details about this major accomplishment on page 6.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about our ambitious projects in development. Many of them will span the next several years in multiple phases—like the continuing implementation of our case management solution, which is already improving the speed, accuracy, and self-service options of member transactions; and our recently launched knowledge management project, which will revolutionize the way we access and share information across the organization. I look forward to updating you throughout 2025 as we work on various projects for achieving our strategic objectives.

All of this momentum is due to our coordinated group efforts, so I want to express my gratitude to LACERA's Boards of Retirement and Investments for their vision and support; our executive and management teams for leading with

purpose; and our more than 400 staff members who are helping to fulfill our mission every day with their dedication to our members and demonstration of our core values. Thank you, everyone!

Dive Into the Annual Report

I hope you will enjoy reviewing the enclosed Popular Annual Financial Report, which helps us meet our values of accountability and transparency to you and other stakeholders. The PAFR is aimed at empowering you with knowledge about the health of our finances and trusts and is meticulously produced by our Financial and Accounting Services, Communications, and other contributing divisions every year.

Update on the WEP/GPO

LACERA has long opposed the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), enacted by Congress in 1983, and Government Pension Offset (GPO), enacted by Congress in 1977. The WEP reduces the Social Security benefit for workers who receive a government pension from employment that is not covered by Social Security, while the GPO reduces the Social Security benefits of spouses and survivors who receive a government pension.

In a historic vote in November, the U.S. House passed HR 82 (the Social Security Fairness Act), a bill to repeal the WEP/GPO rules. The bill now has a very short window to pass the Senate—and would require 60 votes to bypass filibustering—before the end of the second session of Congress (December 31, 2024). If the repeal were to be enacted, it would apply to benefits payable after December 2023 and would not retroactively apply to benefits paid.

The bill dies if it doesn't pass this session and will require a new bill sponsor and introduction in the next congressional session. LACERA continues to conduct

outreach with our representatives urging them to repeal this unfair penalty on service workers, and I will provide another update on the bill in my next article.

Meet Our Newest Trustee

Our general members voted this summer for the third trustee seats on LACERA's Board of Retirement and Board of Investments. Aleen Langton received the highest number of votes out of the seven BOR and eight BOI candidates, winning nearly 42 percent and 39 percent of all votes cast, respectively. We have already welcomed her to the BOI, where she is completing the term of retired Trustee Herman Santos, and look forward to her starting her regular three-year terms on both Boards in January. See the Accomplishments section on page 4 for more details and Ms. Langton's bio.

Status of County Litigation

In our September issue, we announced that the Second District Court of Appeals found in favor of LACERA in our lawsuit against the County, reinforcing our autonomy and authority to manage our personnel and financial responsibilities as part of our fiduciary duties. The County filed a petition for review on August 2, and in October the California Supreme Court officially accepted review of the case. LACERA is now gathering further responses and briefs to provide to the court. We anticipate it will be another 16 to 18 months to reach resolution and will keep you apprised as we go through the process.

Thank you for your service and all you do to make our communities better. Take care and stay safe!



Tips on Maintaining Your Beneficiary Information

Have you checked your beneficiary information on file with LACERA lately? It's important to keep it up to date. This will be helpful to both LACERA and your beneficiary should it be necessary for LACERA to pay death benefits on your behalf. Without the proper contact information on file, LACERA must conduct outreach to know where to send claim forms and to whom, and disbursement of benefits may be delayed.

Here are some important reminders about maintaining your beneficiary designations after retirement:

- If you experience a life event, such as marriage/ registration of domestic partnership, divorce, birth of a child, or a family death, be sure to check and update your beneficiaries as applicable and allowable.
- Your ability to change your beneficiary after retirement depends on your retirement option. For example, if you have the Unmodified Option, you cannot make changes to the beneficiary of your survivor allowance. However, if your eligible beneficiary dies before you, you can name a new beneficiary to receive any remaining accumulated contributions.
- Once retired, you cannot remove your spouse or registered domestic partner as beneficiary unless they predecease you or you get a divorce or dissolution.
- You can change the recipient of the \$5,000 lump-sum death/burial benefit at any time.
- If you have named minors as primary beneficiaries, know that:
 - Except for the \$5,000 lump-sum death/burial benefit, LACERA cannot pay benefits to a minor directly, meaning guardianship papers will need to be obtained from the court and provided to LACERA. (Even the



biological parent needs to seek guardianship in such a situation.) This can be a lengthy and costly process.

- When naming charitable organizations as beneficiaries, you need to provide a valid address and chapter, if applicable, for the benefit to be paid.

You can update your beneficiaries quickly and easily online by logging into your My LACERA account. If you prefer, you can download or order a beneficiary form at lacera.com by clicking on the Resource Center tile on the homepage, then Forms and Publications.

If you have questions about designating beneficiaries, contact LACERA via email, telephone, or by making an appointment at lacera.com to speak with a retirement benefits specialist.



LACERA Accomplishments

Aleen Langton Elected to Both LACERA Boards



Aleen Langton

LACERA's general member elections were held August 5-30 this year for the third seats on the LACERA Board of Retirement (BOR) and Board of Investments (BOI).

Initial results were announced in mid-September, with Aleen Langton elected to both seats. The Board of Supervisors officially declared the results on October 8, with Trustee Langton immediately taking her seat on the BOI to finish out the term of Trustee Herman Santos, who retired in March 2024.

Trustee Langton is a Principal Deputy County Counsel who has dedicated her entire legal career to government service. She is the first County Counsel attorney and the first individual of Armenian descent to serve on the LACERA Board. Her

major career contributions include serving as counsel for the Executive Committee of the Regional Homeless Alignment and Leadership Table and providing counsel for 15 years to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), including advising LAHSA in the landmark federal court case, *Los Angeles Alliance v. City and County of L.A., et al.* She has also participated in various legal and training initiatives, including presenting at statewide conferences on confidentiality and homelessness, serving as a legal expert on Adult Protective Services, and helping develop national training on elder financial abuse for Stanford graduate students.

In January 2025, Trustee Langton will begin her simultaneous three-year terms on the BOR and BOI. Congratulations and welcome to LACERA!

Didier Acevedo Featured in Class of 2024 NextGens



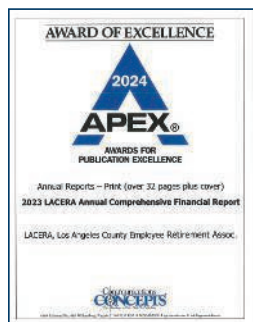
Didier Acevedo

Congratulations to Financial Analyst III Didier Acevedo, who has been included in the *Chief Investment Officer Class of 2024 NextGens*. This honor goes to those who are leaders in their organizations and wield a combination of financial knowledge, interpersonal skills, and forward thinking.

NextGens are nominated by their organizations' chief investments officers (CIOs). According to LACERA CIO Jonathan Grabel, Acevedo excels at identifying interesting opportunities, implementing

new private equity vehicles, and contributing his expertise in investment decisions. He advocates for continuous portfolio monitoring, diversifying through multiple approaches, relying on stable and predictable income, and staying current on world events. He also actively participates in furthering LACERA's TIDE (Towards Inclusion, Diversity and Equity) initiative.

Read more about Acevedo's investing philosophy in his full interview with *Chief Investment Officer* at www.ai-cio.com/lists/class-of-2024-nextgen/?pid=92494.



2023 Annual Report Receives a Second Publishing Award

In our last issue, we announced that LACERA's 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) had won the 2024 Gold Stevie Award for our "Designed to Last" themed ACFR. We are proud to add to our list of honors the 2024 Apex Award for Publication Excellence in the printed annual reports (over 32 pages) category. Congratulations to all the staff members involved in producing our annual reports, especially our Financial and Accounting Services and Communications divisions, which spearhead this effort every year. To see our award-winning entry, visit www.lacera.com/accountability/annual-reports.

The Growing Menace of Online Computer Help Scams: What You Need to Know

In today's digital age, our reliance on technology has made us vulnerable to a new breed of scam: computer "help" scams. These schemes, designed to exploit users' fear of technology malfunctions, have become increasingly sophisticated and widespread. Here, we explore the various forms these scams take, how they operate, and what you can do to protect yourself.

Let's take the example of Mrs. Johnson, a solitary 82-year-old grandmother. She noticed her computer's sluggish performance and decided to search online for a solution. She had previously seen advertisements for Best Buy's Geek Squad service, and her internet search yielded multiple links to this service. She clicked on one of these links and immediately started providing her personal information, such as her name and phone number. Shortly after, she received a call from an individual claiming to be a Geek Squad technician, who alarmed her with news of a severe computer virus. Feeling scared and uncertain, she complied with the instructions to download remote access software. The fraudster proceeded to install malware and persuaded her to log into her online banking account to pay for what they claimed was essential security software. In a matter of hours, the fraudster had siphoned off thousands of dollars from her account, leaving Mrs. Johnson both emotionally and financially distressed.

Understanding Computer Help Scams

Computer help scams are fraudulent schemes in which scammers pose as technical support representatives to gain access to a victim's computer, personal information, or money. These scams can be initiated through various means, including phone calls, pop-up ads, emails, and even social media messages.

Types of Computer Help Scams

- 1. Phone call scams:** Scammers call victims, often claiming to be from well-known companies like Microsoft or Apple. They warn of a serious issue with the victim's computer that needs immediate attention.
- 2. Pop-up ads:** While browsing the internet, victims encounter alarming pop-up messages claiming their computer is infected with a virus. The pop-up provides a phone number to call for "support."
- 3. Email phishing:** Scammers send emails that appear to be from legitimate tech support services, urging recipients to click on a link or download an attachment to fix a problem.
- 4. Fake websites:** Some scammers create fake tech support websites that appear in search results. When victims seek help online, they end up contacting these fraudulent sites.

Once contact is made, the scammer uses scare tactics to convince the victim to grant remote access to their computer.



They may show fake error messages or run bogus scans to "prove" the presence of viruses or malware. The ultimate goal is to sell unnecessary software or services, steal personal information, or install malware that can harvest data or hold the computer hostage for ransom.

Protecting Yourself Against Scams

- **Be skeptical of unsolicited contact.** Legitimate tech companies, financial institutions, or government agencies such as the IRS do not make unsolicited calls or send unsolicited emails about security problems.
- **Verify the source.** If you receive a suspicious call or message, do not act immediately. Instead, contact the company directly using a trusted phone number or website.
- **Install security software.** Keep your computer protected with up-to-date antivirus and anti-malware software. Always be suspicious of a person asking you to disable your security software.
- **Educate yourself and others.** Awareness is your first line of defense. Share information about these scams with friends and family, especially those who may be less tech-savvy.
- **Report scams.** If you encounter a scam, report it to the relevant authorities, such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
- **Use strong passwords.** Always use a strong password and multifactor authentication when it comes to financial institutions. Never have the same password for your email and bank accounts.
- **Do not provide remote access.** Do not grant remote access to anyone who contacts you unsolicited. If remote access is necessary, it should only be arranged through trusted, verifiable channels.

Computer help scams are a growing threat in our increasingly digital world. By understanding how these scams work and taking proactive steps to protect yourself, you can avoid falling victim to these malicious schemes. Stay informed and stay vigilant!

Retiree Healthcare News

Lifetime Maximum Benefit Will Increase in July 2025

We are pleased to announce that after extensive collaboration with the County, we have enhanced the coverage of our Anthem I, II, and Prudent Buyer retiree healthcare plans. Effective July 1, 2025, the lifetime maximum benefit (LMB) for these plans will increase from \$1 million to \$1.5 million—an increase that demonstrates LACERA and the County’s mutual commitment to providing comprehensive and robust health coverage for our retirees.

For those who are nearing or who have reached the previous LMB, this increase offers much-needed financial relief and ensures

continued access to essential healthcare services under your current plan.

The County and LACERA will be regularly reviewing the annual experience study of these health plans. This ongoing evaluation will allow us to make necessary adjustments to the LMB, with the final goal of eliminating the cap altogether. This is all part of fulfilling our mission of producing, protecting, and providing your promised benefits and ensuring you receive the medical care that you deserve.

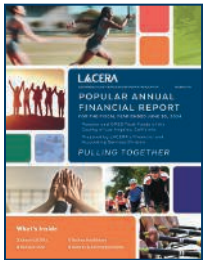
New Video Walks Members Through Medicare

When you retired, one of the biggest decisions in your journey was likely selecting a retiree healthcare plan for yourself and your dependents. When you turn 65, if you are eligible for Medicare, you have some additional options to consider. That’s why we are excited to share the new *Intro to Retiree Healthcare and Medicare* video on lacera.com, created to help you make an informed and timely choice regarding your LACERA-administered Medicare plan options and enrollment. (The video is also helpful for anyone who wants a refresher on program details or available plans.)

The 20-minute *Intro to Retiree Healthcare* video provides program basics, including subsidies and paying for coverage,

as well as descriptions of the different types of healthcare plans, Medicare coordination and benefits, and enrollment resources. We have also broken the video into eight separate segments so you can learn about a particular topic at your convenience or review a particular topic in one click.

The *Intro to Retiree Healthcare* video is available via our new Resource Center. Visit lacera.com and click on the Resource Center tile on the homepage to access the video library and other helpful sections. Our video library will continue to grow as we produce more instructive videos to help utilize your benefits on your time and at your pace!



PAFR Enclosed: A Picture of Our Financial Status

This year’s Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) is enclosed for your review.

The PAFR is a snapshot of LACERA’s finances, investment returns, and accomplishments for the fiscal year 2023–2024. We encourage you to read the financial status of our pension and retiree healthcare funds to see how the trusts are performing. Our full Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) is available on lacera.com.

May this season bring you an abundance of blessings, robust health, and immense joy that lasts throughout the coming year. Happy holidays!

—LACERA Boards of Retirement and Investments,
Executive Team, and Staff Members

Black History Month: Celebrating African American Legacy

Every February, Black History Month offers opportunities to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African Americans to our nation and reflect on our collective responsibility for upholding the values of justice, fairness, and equality. The profound impact of Black Americans in the arts, science, sports, politics, and civil rights is a testament to their enduring legacy and vital presence in the fabric of our society.

Black history in Los Angeles goes back to the city’s founding in 1781 by 44 nonindigenous settlers—26 of whom were Mexicans of African descent. The Black community grew in small bursts until the larger migrations of the 1890s to 1920s, with South Central Avenue serving as the epicenter of the West Coast jazz scene and African American cultural life in the 1930s and 1940s. Los Angeles has been a stage and catalyst for historic figures like: Paul R. Williams, prolific and influential architect and the first African American member of the American Institute of Architects; Pasadena-raised Jackie Robinson, who broke Major League Baseball’s color barrier; Tom Bradley, L.A.’s longest-running and first Black mayor; and many more. Today, Leimert Park, Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw, and other traditionally Black centers of culture, activism, and entrepreneurship continue to spread their global influence.

Sources: www.blackhistory.com, www.latimes.com, www.paulwilliamsproject.org, www.pbssocal.org



Chinese New Year Starts January 29

January 29 is the onset of the 2025 Chinese New Year. This event celebrates the new lunar calendar with a 15-day festival that starts with the new moon in late January or early February and continues to the following full moon. Rooted in centuries-old customs, Chinese New Year is a time for families to come together, honor ancestors, and hope for prosperity

and good luck. In Los Angeles County, the festival is marked by colorful parades, dragon dances, fireworks, and the lighting of lanterns. Each year corresponds to an animal zodiac sign, and 2025 ushers in the Year of the Snake, symbolizing wisdom and transformation.

Sources: www.britannica.com, www.chinesenewyear.net

Payday Calendar

Your monthly retirement allowance check is payable on the last business day of the month.

December 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	H	26	M	28
29	30	D				

January 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			H	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	H	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	M	30	D	

February 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	H	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	M	27	D	

M = Check Mailing Date **D** = Direct Deposit Date **H** = Holiday

STAYING HEALTHY TOGETHER

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Stay Protected This Season

Fall and winter can bring harsh weather and increase your vulnerability to viral illnesses. Several factors work together at the same time, increasing infection rates during these months:

Reduced vitamin D: Less time outdoors and limited sun exposure reduces your absorption of vitamin D, which promotes a healthy immune system.

Weather changes: The sudden change from one season to the next affects your immune system and can sometimes trigger an illness.

Germ exposure: Spending more time inside can increase exposure to germs that live on objects and surfaces for weeks at a time due to lack of inside ventilation and circulation.

There are many ways to avoid getting sick. Social distancing from someone who's ill, washing your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday!"), making sure to disinfect your home, and avoiding crowded areas can go a long way in preventing infection.

Getting vaccinated seasonally can also help prevent the spread of illness and add protection by giving your immune system a boost against more recent strains of viral illnesses such as the flu and COVID-19. Continue reading to learn more about the importance of getting vaccinated and the protection it provides you.

Vaccines 101

What are vaccinations really? Here's a quick cheat sheet on everything you need to know about vaccines.

How They Work

Our bodies naturally become immune to a disease once it begins producing antibodies to fight off the illness after we're infected. If you come in contact with the same disease in the future, ideally, a healthy immune system will produce the antibodies needed to combat it.

Vaccines work by imitating an infection with an antigen and helping your body learn how to defend itself without having to get sick in the process. Your immune system's response to a vaccine may make you feel tired or experience discomfort for a day or two, but the protection it provides can, in some cases, last a lifetime.

What's In Them

Vaccine ingredients differ depending on what you're trying to treat, but every single one serves a purpose. Many of the ingredients are found naturally in our own bodies while others are found in items we encounter daily, including sugars and gelatin, aspirin, fruit, eggs, fish, and even common antibiotics.

The antigen is the active ingredient in all vaccines. It's usually a weakened or killed version of the bacteria or virus you're trying to build immunity to that helps kickstart your immune system.

Dosage

The number of doses needed to achieve immunity depends on whether the antigen is live or not in the vaccine. Those that contain weakened living bacteria or viruses (live-attenuated) generally only require two dosages to achieve long-lasting or even life-long protection. Vaccines with no living bacteria or virus (non-live) are safer for people with weaker immune systems but require three or more dosages, and protection fades over time.

Some vaccines require routine updates for seasonal viruses that mutate over several months or years, such as the flu or COVID-19. To stay protected you must get updated vaccines, even if you've gotten them before.

Effectiveness

Immunity can take a while to develop after you get vaccinated, therefore it is possible to get infected in the immediate weeks following your vaccination.

No system is perfect, not even your immune system, that's why you can still get infected by the disease you are vaccinated against. Vaccinations do not promise 100 percent immunity and effectiveness varies from person to person, but getting vaccinated can reduce the severity of your illness enough to be considered highly beneficial for your well-being.

Learn More

It's proven that vaccines are the safest and most effective way to keep you and your family protected from preventable diseases. To learn more about how to stay protected, including recommended vaccinations by disease and age, immunization schedules, and other resources, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines.

Confused About COVID Immunity?

The CDC states that people ages 12 years and older are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and boosters when they have received:

- One dose of the 2024–2025 Moderna COVID-19 vaccine **OR**
- One dose of the 2024–2025 Pfizer–BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine **OR**
- One dose of the 2024–2025 Novavax vaccine, unless they are receiving a COVID-19 vaccine for the very first time. If you have never received any COVID-19 vaccine and you choose to get Novavax, you need two doses of 2024–2025 Novavax COVID-19 vaccine to be up to date.

Time to Get Vaccinated!

Getting vaccinated reduces your risk of getting or experiencing severe illness with diseases like pneumonia, RSV (or respiratory syncytial virus), and the following:

- **Influenza (flu):** A respiratory virus spread through tiny droplets—typically whenever someone with the flu talks, sneezes, or coughs (don't forget to cover your mouth!)—that causes mild to severe symptoms and can lead to ICU hospitalizations or even death.
- **COVID-19:** Highly contagious and spreadable virus that can cause cold-, flu-, or pneumonia-like symptoms, and severe life-threatening conditions, or can present no side effects at all. It can also advance into an infection-associated chronic condition, commonly known as long COVID, where the initial COVID-19-causing virus persists in the body for at least three months after being first infected. This can lead to the disease continuously relapsing or progressing to a state that damages one or more organ systems.
- **Shingles:** An infection that causes a painful skin rash and other complications brought on by the same virus that causes chickenpox, which, if you had it during childhood, lays dormant in your nervous system for the remainder of your life. Though the reason for reactivation is unclear, certain factors such as age, some diseases, and medications or treatments may increase the risk of the virus returning.

When to get vaccinated? The best time to get vaccinated varies by your age, health history, and the disease itself. For those trying to prevent flu, the CDC recommends that anyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated every year—ideally at the beginning of flu season, which is generally in late fall.

LACERA Plan Benefits for Vaccines

Refer to the chart below to see how your LACERA-administered health plans covers most adult vaccination costs from in-network providers. While most plans offer partial or full coverage for vaccines as long as you stay in-network, some facility options may not be covered under your chosen indemnity/PPO or HMO medical plan. Be sure to choose where you get vaccinated accordingly to take full advantage of your benefits and stay healthy in the process.

	In-Network Retail Pharmacy	In-Network Provider's Office
Anthem Blue Cross (Indemnity Plans)		
Plans I and II	You pay 20% coinsurance (COVID vaccine \$0)	100% coverage up to the \$250 preventive maximum* (COVID vaccine \$0)
Plan III (Medicare Supplement Plan)	You pay 20% coinsurance (COVID vaccine \$0)	If Medicare provides coverage, Anthem covers the 20% coinsurance (COVID vaccine \$0).
Prudent Buyer Plan	You pay 20% coinsurance (COVID vaccine \$0)	100% coverage up to the \$250 preventive maximum* (COVID vaccine \$0)
Cigna (HMO)		
Non-Medicare Plan	\$0	No charge (after \$5 office visit copay, if applicable)
Medicare (MAPD)	\$0	\$0
Kaiser Permanente (HMO)		
Non-Medicare Plan	Not Covered	\$5 copay
Medicare Plan (MAPD)	Not Covered	\$5 copay
UnitedHealthcare (HMO)		
Non-Medicare Plan	\$5 copay (Flu vaccine only)	\$5 copay
Medicare Plan (MAPD)	\$0	\$0
SCAN Health Plan (HMO)		
Medicare Plan (MAPD)	\$0	\$0

Check With Your Doctor

Always check with your doctor before getting a vaccine to make sure it is right for your personal medical history. For questions about your vaccination benefits or help with finding a primary care provider, contact your carrier directly at the contact information listed below:

Anthem Blue Cross PPO Plans

800-284-1110
www.anthem.com/ca

CVS Caremark

800-450-3755
www.caremark.com

Cigna Network Model Plan

800-244-6224
www.mycigna.com

Cigna Preferred Medicare with Rx MAPD HMO

800-627-7534
www.cigna.com/medicare/

Kaiser Permanente Group Model HMO

800-464-4000
www.kp.org

Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage MAPD HMO

800-443-0815
www.kp.org

SCAN Health Plan

800-559-3500
www.scanhealthplan.com

UnitedHealthcare

800-624-8822
www.myuhc.com

UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage (MAPD HMO)

800-457-8506

This article is for general informational purposes only. Consult with professional advisors regarding medical matters; LACERA does not offer medical advice.

Fall Workshop a Hit; Next Event Coming in Spring

The September *Staying Healthy Together* in-person workshop, held at the Carson Event Center, was a major success! We'd like to thank all those who attended for taking time to prioritize your health and wellness. LACERA will be hosting another workshop this coming spring. Keep a lookout for more information, coming your way soon!

Here's some feedback from a few of our fall workshop attendees:

"I truly enjoyed this event. Topics were great and I absolutely love the flowers, so seasonal and festive!"

"Wonderful time. Appreciate everyone who put effort into this program and all the good food."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to gather with fellow retirees for this informative workshop, especially post-COVID. Thank you, LACERA, for hosting this retiree wellness program!"

"The speakers were great; I especially enjoyed the chair yoga exercises."

"This workshop was very informative—looking forward to the next one!"

Couldn't attend? View the photo slideshow at www.lacera.com/program-basics/retiree-wellness-program (or follow this navigation path: lacera.com > Retiree Healthcare > Healthcare Resources > Retiree Wellness Program).

Retiree Healthcare for Registered Domestic Partners: Federal Taxes and Reporting

If your registered domestic partner is a covered dependent on your LACERA-administered retiree healthcare plan, the amount of the County subsidy provided for your domestic partner may be subject to federal tax. The federal government does not recognize a domestic partner as a legal dependent. Therefore, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers the amount the County pays toward your domestic partner's health benefits to be imputed income (a non-cash, employer-provided benefit for any person who is not qualified as your tax dependent, except your legal spouse).

The IRS requires LACERA to report, on a separate Form 1099-R, the annual imputed income of any member who covers a registered domestic partner on his or her LACERA-administered health plan. If you cover a registered domestic partner, LACERA will mail two Form 1099-Rs to you by the end of January—one reporting your imputed healthcare income and one reporting your annual retirement benefit income. The IRS decision to treat legally married same-sex couples as married for federal tax purposes does not apply to registered domestic partners.

Important Information for Members Enrolled in LACERA-Administered Medicare Plans

If you and/or your eligible dependents are enrolled in one of the following plans, please read the timely and important information below regarding upcoming premium verifications and Part D solicitations.

Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug (MAPD) plans:

- Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage
- Cigna Health Spring Preferred Rx (Phoenix, AZ)
- SCAN Health Plan
- UnitedHealthcare Medicare Advantage

Medicare Supplement Plan:

- Anthem Blue Cross Plan III with Medicare Part A and B

2025 Medicare Part B Premium Verification

If you and/or your eligible dependent have received your 2025 Medicare Part B Premium Amount verification notice from Social Security, are currently enrolled in any of the plans listed above, and meet all the qualifications, **you can send a copy of your verification notice to LACERA now**. Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors to continue the Medicare Part B Premium Reimbursement Program (up to the standard rate only), LACERA will automatically process your and/or your eligible dependent's Part B subsidy amount upon completion of the verification. We will contact you if additional information is needed.

Those not enrolled under the MAPD Plans or Medicare Supplement Plan listed above are not qualified to receive the Part B reimbursement.

Watch your mail for the LACERA Medicare Part B Verification Notice for more details.

Don't Sign Up for Non-LACERA Medicare Part D Plans!

During this time of year—the Medicare open enrollment period—private insurance companies sponsoring Medicare prescription drug plans conduct aggressive marketing campaigns aimed at enrolling Medicare-eligible beneficiaries in their Medicare Part D prescription drug programs. Ignore these advertisements and solicitations, and **do not sign up** for a non-LACERA Part D plan!

If you are enrolled in a LACERA-administered Medicare plan, it's important to remember your current coverage includes a prescription drug plan that is as good, if not better, than the average non-LACERA Medicare Part D plan. Furthermore, signing up for a non-LACERA Medicare Part D plan may jeopardize your LACERA-administered medical plan, and delay your reenrollment!

Proceed with caution. **If you wish to keep your LACERA-administered medical coverage, no action is required on your part.** Contact the LACERA Retiree Healthcare Division if you have any questions.





Stop! Look Both Ways Before You Go

Did you know that if you're happy with your County of Los Angeles Deferred Compensation and Thrift Plan (Horizons) and/or 401(k) Savings Plan, you can keep your funds in your account(s) after you retire? It's true. You can keep your money in your account where it is and continue to access all the great features and investment options you've used all along.¹

However, you can't keep all the funds in your account indefinitely. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that you start making withdrawals at some point. These mandatory annual withdrawals are known as required minimum distributions, or RMDs. Below are a few things to know about RMDs:

- **Be aware of your required beginning date for RMDs.** In general, you must begin taking RMDs by April 1 following the calendar year in which you reach age 73 or the year you leave employment with the County of Los Angeles, whichever is later.
- **The amount varies by person.** There's no fixed amount for an RMD. It depends on your December 31st prior year-end account balance and the formula on the calculation worksheets the IRS provides.²
- **There are penalties for not taking your RMD.** If you fail to take your entire RMD, you could face a strict penalty known as an excise tax of 25 percent on the amount of the RMD not withdrawn timely. Note: RMDs are a tax-reportable event.

You can choose from the following distribution options to meet your annual RMD.

- **Automated required minimum distribution request:** You can choose to receive the minimum annual payment required under current U.S. Treasury regulations by authorizing Empower to calculate the minimum amount each year and make payments to you.
- **Periodic payments:** You can schedule periodic payments from your account for a fixed dollar amount or for a fixed number of years. However, neither payment selection may exceed your life expectancy.³ Please compare your periodic payments against your RMD amount annually. If your periodic payment does not cover your RMD, you are responsible to take an additional distribution(s) before the end of each calendar year, otherwise you may be subject to an excise tax penalty.
- **Partial lump-sum distributions:** You can take a partial lump-sum distribution each year in an amount sufficient to meet the RMD. You are responsible for determining the annual RMD amount and ensuring the RMD requirement is met each year. Please note that RMDs are not eligible for rollover.
- **Full lump-sum distribution:** You can take a single lump-sum distribution of your entire account balance. By taking a full lump-sum distribution, you will have satisfied the

RMD for the year of the distribution. Please note that RMDs are not eligible for rollover.

- **Annuities:** An annuity is designed to provide you with a guaranteed⁴ long-term or even lifetime income stream regardless of market performance or interest rate changes. As a Plan participant, you can purchase an annuity with a portion or all your account balance. Keep in mind that with any annuity purchase, the decision is final. You cannot receive a refund of the funds that were used to make the purchase unless it's specified in your contract. It's a good idea to consult with a financial professional regarding the suitability, RMD eligibility, and tax consequence before making any annuity purchase.

At first glance, RMDs can be a little confusing, but we're here to help. If you have questions about when you should begin your RMD or would like to set up automated RMD distributions, call **800-947-0845**, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m., Pacific Time.

Consider all your options and their features and fees before moving money between accounts.

Attention!

Share your thoughts! The County has teamed up with Empower to survey our 457(b) Horizons and/or 401(k) Savings Plan participants. This survey is voluntary and confidential.

This is your opportunity to tell us how you feel about the 457(b) Horizons and/or 401(k) Savings Plans. Your feedback helps the County and Empower identify what services to provide and what products may help you during your retirement years.

Thank you for helping us to identify better ways to serve you and meet your needs. Use the URL below or scan the QR code to take the survey!



www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025COLASurvey

¹Plan provisions may provide for the automatic distribution of small balances.

²Required Minimum Distribution calculation worksheets can be found here: www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/plan-participant-employee/required-minimum-distribution-worksheets

³More information on life expectancy and RMDs can be found here: www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/plan-participant-employee/retirement-topics-required-minimum-distributions-rmds

⁴Guarantees are subject to the terms and conditions of the contract and the claims-paying ability of the insurer.

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Join Us at a Webinar!

LACERA offers convenient online workshops to help you make the most of your benefits, even after you've retired. Webinars offered on a rotating basis include:

- **LACERA Special Durable Power of Attorney:** Provides you and your family options in the event you become incapacitated or unable to handle your LACERA benefits. This webinar takes you through completing all the appropriate paperwork, including filling out the LACERA Special Durable Power of Attorney form.
- **My LACERA:** Shows you how to sign up for My LACERA, access your information, and securely and conveniently conduct self-service transactions with our easy-to-use tools.
- **LACERA Active and Retired Death Benefits:** Covers the various benefits available to your loved ones should the worst happen—helping you make sure your survivors will have the ability to take care of themselves and giving you peace of mind.

- **LACERA Domestic Partnership:** Helps you understand the many details regarding the domestic partnership requirements and the types of domestic partnerships LACERA can accept for benefit eligibility.
- **LACERA Post Retirement:** Provides all the important information you need to know as a newly retired LACERA member, including financial and medical processes.
- **Empower Mini-Webinars for managing your savings accounts post-retirement:** Comprehensive Account Review, Stay in the Plan, Inflation Risk/Equity Risk: What Is It and How to Manage It, Navigating the Website, Market Volatility and Building Your L.A. County Investment Strategy, and Fraud Prevention.

To register online, visit lacera.com, then click on the Resource Center tile on the homepage to access the Workshop Schedule page. We look forward to seeing you!

“Year’s end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.”

—Hal Borland

Donate to the Department of Public Social Services' Toy Loan Program

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) promotes imagination, exploration, and discovery to children across Los Angeles through its Toy Loan program. It's a free service that allows children to borrow toys from a Toy Loan Center in the same way they borrow books from the public library. There are multiple Toy Loan programs across Los Angeles County.

Donations of new toys and books are always welcome and accepted year-round. DPSS will gladly pick up donated items from your home, office, or other location. To schedule a free pick-up or find a drop off location, contact DPSS at 323-986-2741. Monetary donations are also accepted. All donations are tax-deductible.

To mail a donation, send a check, money order, or cashier's check made payable to Los Angeles County-DPSS to:

DPSS Toy Loan Program
2200 N. Humboldt Street
Los Angeles, CA 90031

For more information, visit <https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/community/toy-loan.html> or email toyloan@dpss.lacounty.gov.



Upcoming Holidays

LACERA will be closed on:

Wednesday, December 25
For Christmas

Wednesday, January 1
For New Year's Day

Monday, January 20
For Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, February 17
For Presidents Day

Email: welcome@lacera.com

Editor's Note: *Spotlight on Retirement* is published by the staff of LACERA and is for general informational purposes only. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters; LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

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