

P.S.

POSTSCRIPT

NEWS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

DECEMBER 2020 • VOL. 31, NO. 4

Looking Forward and Ensuring a Safe LACERA

At LACERA, we've proudly been serving you remotely since March. However, we're looking forward to a time when you can visit us in our Pasadena office once again. Since the beginning of the Safer at Home order, we've been planning for how to reopen our Member Service Center to make it as safe as possible for you and our staff.

We take our mission and service to our members very seriously, therefore, our preparation plan is multifaceted; we are doing everything we can to create a safe work environment where social distancing and hygiene are prioritized.

What to Expect

When you do come visit us in the future, we will ask that you follow all guidelines, protocols, and markings that you see posted to help us better protect you, our staff, and other LACERA members. For example, service will be by appointment only. And, once you arrive for your appointment, you will be directed where to wait, with assigned seating. This will help us ensure all visited areas are cleaned regularly.

In addition to providing our staff with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks, gloves, and cleaning



agents, we have marked the most efficient way to travel through our Member Service Center to limit any exposure. These traffic flow plans will be marked on the floor clearly with arrows and directions so you can

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Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association

Board of Retirement:

HERMAN B. SANTOS

Chair
Elected by General Members

VIVIAN H. GRAY

Vice Chair
Elected by General Members

GINA ZAPANTA

Secretary
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

ELIZABETH GINSBERG

Chief Deputy County Treasurer
and Tax Collector
Alternate Ex-Officio Member

JAMES P. HARRIS

Alternate Member
Elected by Retired Members

SHAWN R. KEHOE

Elected by Safety Members

KEITH KNOX

County Treasurer and Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member

WAYNE MOORE

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

RONALD A. OKUM

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

WILLIAM R. PRYOR

Alternate Member
Elected by Safety Members

LES ROBBINS

Elected by Retired Members

THOMAS WALSH

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

Board of Investments:

DAVID GREEN

Chair
Elected by General Members

HERMAN B. SANTOS

Vice Chair
Elected by General Members

WAYNE MOORE

Secretary
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

ALAN J. BERNSTEIN

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

ELIZABETH GINSBERG

Chief Deputy County Treasurer
and Tax Collector
Alternate Ex-Officio Member

ELIZABETH GREENWOOD

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

SHAWN R. KEHOE

Elected by Safety Members

KEITH KNOX

County Treasurer and Tax Collector
Ex-Officio Member

DAVID L. MUIR

Elected by Retired Members

GINA V. SANCHEZ

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

Chief Executive Officer

SANTOS H. KREIMANN

Assistant Executive Officer

JJ POPOWICH

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DESK

SANTOS H. KREIMANN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Wrapping Up a Wild Year

Greetings, LACERA members, and a happy and healthy new year to you all!

My deadline for this article is at the end of October, so I write this as national elections dominate the news and voting is already underway in California and many other states via mail-in and drop-off ballots. I hope that you took part in our democratic process—to elect not only our president, but the leaders and direction we will take on important state and local issues and rebuilding our economy after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“**LACERA took the challenges presented by the pandemic and resulting shutdown to make numerous organizational improvements.**”

Many of our holiday traditions will look different and be scaled back this year. Despite that, I hope you found safe and meaningful ways to connect with your loved ones. With promising news about COVID-19 vaccines becoming available early

next year, I'm optimistic that next year's holiday season will be more like we are used to.

This pandemic has highlighted the precarious financial situation of so many people in our communities. While LACERA members dedicate their careers to service, I encourage you to read our 'Tis the Giving Season article on page 6 in case there are more ways you might help others during this time of great need. And know that at LACERA, ensuring *your* financial security is always front and center in our decision-making and planning processes.

Focusing on the Positive

As I've shared with you in articles and email messages throughout the year, LACERA took the challenges presented by the pandemic and resulting shutdown to make organizational improvements. Behind the scenes, we implemented a remote workforce, beefed up cybersecurity, improved efficiency, and created more virtual services. The upshot for you is that getting benefits information and assistance and completing transactions is more convenient and secure than ever.

Our cover article describes how we have modified our Member Service Center to welcome you back as soon as circumstances allow. Whenever that date is, we will be ready, thanks to our Business Continuity Team. This team of LACERA health, safety, and human resource professionals has worked hard to create a safer environment for you and a phased return-to-work plan for our staff members.

Fund Returns

Our pension and benefits trust returns for fiscal year 2019-2020 were 1.8 percent and -0.1 percent respectively (see the enclosed Popular Annual Financial Report for more details). While we didn't meet our fiscal year benchmarks due to market volatility and the overall economic decline, the good news is we are still ahead of our benchmarks over the long term, and our trusts remain stable. This is due to the prudence and expert

management exercised by our Board of Investments and Investments team.

Congratulations, and Welcome Back

Our August LACERA election results are official. Trustee David Green was reelected to the BOI second seat and Trustee Les Robbins was reelected to the BOR eighth seat. Former ex-officio Trustee Joseph Kelly was newly elected to the BOI eighth seat; and BOR Trustees Herman Santos (second seat) and JP Harris (alternate retired position) were unopposed and automatically renewed. Congratulations to all, and thank you for your continued leadership. We look forward to a seamless Board transition in January when you start your new terms.

Looking Ahead

The pandemic has affected some of our strategic goal

deadlines, but we are still on track to introduce some exciting member-facing projects in 2021, including our revamped website and a new retirement application, summary, and guidebook package. We have also been heavily focused on expanding our business metrics to improve our services and operations and forecast future resource needs. This is all to ensure that we deliver on our promises to you!

On a personal note, November marks my first year anniversary as LACERA's CEO. It has been my privilege to serve you and lead our organization in 2020, and I'm excited about the year ahead and the many accomplishments to come. Onward into 2021—here we go!

Santos H. Kreimann

LACERA Honored for Three Decades of Excellence in Financial Reporting

For the 30th consecutive year, LACERA has been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for LACERA's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for



the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. The GFOA award represents the highest possible recognition of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

In addition, our annual Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR)—a condensed



version of the CAFR sent to all members with their December newsletter—earned the GFOA award for Outstanding Achievement for the 22nd consecutive year.

Congratulations to the LACERA departments and employees who contributed to the annual reports for earning these prestigious national awards.



LACERA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Trustee News: Green and Robbins Reelected; Santos and Harris Renewed; Former Ex-Officio Kelly Elected



David Green



Les Robbins



Joseph Kelly



Herman Santos



JP Harris

Elections for seats on LACERA's Board of Retirement and Board of Investments were held in August. Incumbent trustees David Green and Les Robbins were reelected as the Second Trustee on the Board of Investments and Eighth Trustee of the Board of Retirement, respectively. Joseph Kelly, formerly the County Treasurer and Tax Collector prior to his retirement in 2019, has been elected as the Eighth Trustee on the Board of Investments.

Elected by general members, Trustee Green currently serves as the Chair of the Board of Investments. In his career, he has served as a social worker for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, and as Secretary and Treasurer of SEIU Local 721.

Trustee Robbins, elected by retired members, has served consecutively on the Board of Retirement or Board of Investments since 1997. In addition, he served as a Sheriff's Deputy for 30 years, as a Long Beach City Council Member, and in the U.S. Army.

Elected by retired members, Trustee Kelly previously served as the County of Los Angeles Treasurer-Tax Collector and was an ex-officio

Trustee on both the Board of Retirement and Board of Investments. He is a Certified Independent Auditor and has held a number of leadership positions on both of LACERA's Boards.

Board of Retirement Trustees Herman Santos (second seat) and JP Harris (alternate retired position) were unopposed and their terms automatically renewed.

Trustee Santos started on the LACERA Boards when he joined the Board of Investments in 2004. He has served on the Board of Retirement since 2017 and is the current Chair. He also serves as an attorney with the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office.

Trustee Harris served as a Sheriff's Deputy for 35 years before retiring as a Lieutenant. He first served on the Board of Retirement from 2008 until 2010 until his retirement. In 2018, Trustee Harris came back to the Board when he was elected by the retired members.

All trustees begin their new terms on January 1, 2021, which run through December 31, 2023.

3 THINGS: GINGERBREAD



Whether you are enjoying some gingerbread with your hot chocolate, making a toothsome gingerbread man, or flexing your architectural prowess by making a gingerbread house, you are taking part in the unique history and tradition of this wintertime treat. Here are some interesting facts about the surprisingly complex and storied history of gingerbread.

1 The oldest gingerbread recipe dates all the way back to ancient Greece, circa 2400 B.C.E. Chinese recipes for gingerbread are dated in the 10th century, and made their way to Medieval Europe via the Silk Road.

2 The first “gingerbread men” are attributed to a dinner hosted by Queen Elizabeth I of England. She had her chef create the gingerbread in the shape of the foreign dignitaries who were coming to the dinner.

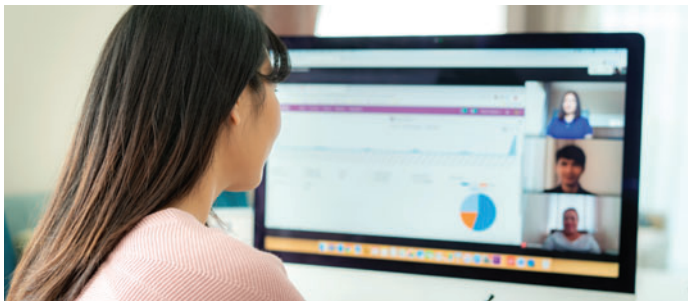


3 It is assumed that the first gingerbread houses were made in Germany in the 16th century. Their popularity likely coincided with the Brothers Grimm fairytale of Hansel and Gretel, who encountered a witch living in a house made of treats and candies.

Sources: time.com; smithsonianmag.com; pbs.org

Public Service Announcement

Volunteers Needed for Mediation Program–Telecommute Training and Assignment



The L.A. County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) Dispute Resolution Program is now accepting applications from retired individuals interested in becoming a volunteer mediator. This is a telecommute opportunity to mediate disputes from the comfort of your home office, without the commute to our office in downtown Los Angeles.

Our nationally recognized program provides a unique and valuable opportunity to learn mediation techniques that can be utilized in your community. As a volunteer with DCBA's Dispute Resolution

Program, you will work hands-on in learning the mediation process. DCBA volunteers will learn the different types of consumer and business complaints that result from transactions in the marketplace.

We train our candidates at no cost. As a DCBA volunteer, you will be prepared through our mandatory mediation training, where you will learn the eight-stage mediation model, conflict theory and styles, mediator communication skills, interest-based negotiations, collaborative problem solving, the mediator's role, and principles of conflict resolution.

DCBA asks that interested participants commit to at least four consecutive hours of volunteer service each week for a total of 150 hours. For the telework assignment, you will need to provide your own computer or tablet, phone, and internet access to carry out the work.

Want to join this award-winning team of mediators? Email us at volunteer@dcba.lacounty.gov to find out about joining our 2020-2021 Winter Cohort.



The ongoing pandemic has placed our society's most vulnerable populations in a tougher position than usual this holiday season, making it even more important for those of us who can to give back. If you have the means, here are a few ways to donate or get involved. If you are receiving this issue of *PostScript* after the holidays, remember that donations drop off after the new year, so it's an even better time to give!

County Charitable Giving

The County of Los Angeles Charitable Giving Campaign makes it easy to help others, providing County employees with a wide variety of giving opportunities. County employees have the option to donate via ongoing or one-time payroll deductions. An ongoing payroll deduction can be as little as \$2.50 per paycheck.

Speak with your County Department Charitable Coordinator, who can help you enroll, or sign up yourself by logging into the County Workplace payroll system and clicking on the Charitable Giving icon. From there you can either choose a fund

distribution agency (such as the United Way, which distributes to multiple local nonprofits) or a direct designation agency, which allows you to support a cause you are particularly passionate about. There are seven fund distribution agencies and dozens of direct designation agencies to choose from.

Fight Food Insecurity

Food banks across the country are seeing a dramatic increase in demand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting unemployment or underemployment. Our community has suffered tremendously, with an estimated one in five Angelinos struggling with food insecurity. Organizations like the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank (www.lafoodbank.org) are helping to meet the need thanks to generous donors. The LA Food Bank is a direct designation agency for payroll donations (see above), and also accepts volunteers to help serve our community's most vulnerable and provide them with the resources they need.

Seasonal Giving

There are numerous opportunities to create a joyful experience for others,

such as the County District Attorney's Office Holiday Giving Drive for families and children who have been affected by crime. Staff members collect, donate, purchase, and deliver gifts to these survivors. Visit the California Community Foundation at www.calfund.org/District-Attorneys-Victim-Assistance-Fund/ for more information.

Donate Your Time

Not all goodwill comes in the form of donations; you can also volunteer. There are hundreds of charities and organizations serving our community that are looking for volunteers. The nonprofit volunteer action center LA Works (www.laworks.com) can help you find the project, organization, or cause you're interested in working with.

Another option is Volunteer Match (www.volunteermatch.org). This nonprofit brings people and volunteering opportunities together, with 130,000 participating organizations.

Whichever way you decide to participate, know that because of you, our communities are safer and healthier.

Thank you!

easily find your appointment or anything else you may need. Following these markings and directions carefully will help protect you and others.

We have also installed personal glass protective windows in our Member Service Center, so we can provide the face-to-face communication and assistance we're so proud of without potential virus exposures.

Finally, we'll also be following all procedures and protocols established by the County of Los Angeles, State of California, and the Center for Disease Control in order to better prepare for any contingencies. California has created a tiered color program to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and monitor restrictions and activities. You can find additional information and the current tier that Los Angeles and other counties are

in by visiting covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy.

Although we've been happy to continue our regular service to you over the phone and web, we're excited to see you in person when circumstances permit! We'll keep you posted on when that will be in our newsletters, lacera.com, and via email.

Avoid the Flu: Get Vaccinated

Experts advise that this year it's more important than ever to get your annual flu shot due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The flu shot is the best way to prevent getting the flu, spreading the flu, and having any serious complications from the flu. Getting a flu vaccine can also save healthcare resources for the care of COVID-19 patients.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death. In

fact, during seasons when the flu vaccine viruses are similar to circulating flu viruses, flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of having to go to the doctor with the flu by 40 percent to 60 percent.

The CDC also states that flu vaccines have a good safety record. Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years, and there has been extensive research supporting the safety of flu vaccines.

Speak with your healthcare provider to get your flu shot as

soon as possible. Or, visit Los Angeles County's Department of Public Health's (DPH) website at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/FluSeason/> to find out how you, or a friend or family member who may be uninsured, can get a flu shot today.



“Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.”

– Winston Churchill



Retiring Soon? Attend a Pre-Retirement Webinar

LACERA and Empower Retirement have partnered to bring you a series of webinars designed to make the most of your retirement. Here is what you will find in LACERA's webinars.

Pre-Retirement Workshop: Financial

This webinar will prepare you with valuable information as you prepare for retirement. It is designed for those who are within five years of retirement and will help you choose the best date to retire, how previous service can enhance your benefits, what documents you'll need, and more.

Pre-Retirement Workshop: Retiree Healthcare

This webinar is also designed for those who are within five years of retirement. However, this webinar will carefully examine available retiree healthcare plans, how much the County subsidizes health insurance, how Medicare affects your choices, and other health topics.

Mid-Career Workshop

It is never too early to start planning your retirement! This webinar was created by LACERA specifically to help you consider the many factors that could affect your retirement and career. It will also help you identify the things

you can do now to help you prepare for a successful retirement in the future.

Visit www.lacera.com/benefits/Active_Member/retirement_planning_webinars.html for upcoming dates and to register. We look forward to you joining us and helping you make the most of your retirement plan.

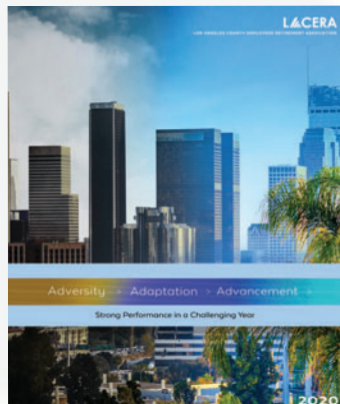


PAFR Enclosed: Our Financial Condition, at a Glance

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

The PAFR includes LACERA's financial condition and accomplishments for the fiscal year 2019-2020. We encourage you to spend some time reading up on the financial status of our pension plan and retiree healthcare program to see how the trust funds are performing. Our full Comprehensive Annual

Financial Report (CAFR) is available on lacera.com.



Upcoming Holidays

LACERA will be closed on:

- **Friday, December 25, 2020**
Christmas
- **Friday, January 1, 2021**
New Year's Day
- **Monday, January 18, 2021**
Martin Luther King Day
- **Monday, February 15, 2021**
Presidents' Day

Editor's Note:

PostScript is published by the staff of LACERA. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters; LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

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