



URSJJ Edition Winter 2020

Retirement and Your Credit

Credit scores are one of many numbers that define your financial health and indicate how likely you are to repay your debts. Your score determines whether you qualify for a loan, the rate you pay, and what kind of financial options you have.

In general, people tend to have higher scores as they approach retirement than earlier in their careers. However, according to a FICO study only 16 percent of baby boomers say maintaining good credit is a top financial priority for retirement. Retirement-related factors like age, work status, and income don't directly affect our credit. Still a reduction in credit mindfulness can lead to behaviors that negatively impact credit scores and could limit your options later.

Why is Credit Important in Retirement

Having sound credit can facilitate your next steps in retirement, whether it is securing the financing for a new home or starting a new business. Your good credit can help you gain approval for a preferred rental property, assisted living center or nursing home, if necessary.

Aging in your home may eventually require renovations or repairs, but tapping into home equity is easier and comes at a lower interest rate with a good credit score. Setting up utilities, carrying insurance or applying for a job may require a credit check to determine deposit amounts, insurance rates or indicate your past responsibility.

How to Achieve or Preserve a High Credit Score

To achieve a good credit score, you must use credit wisely. Keep in mind the following tips to appropriately manage your credit.

- Pay bills on time. Your payment history is 35 percent of your credit score.
- Keep balances low. The amount of available credit borrowed determines 30 percent of your score.

(Continued on page 7)

See Inside:



Director's Corner A New Decade

As we are about to embark upon a new decade, I am happy to report the financial state of your retirement system is very strong and retirement benefits continue to be an economic engine in our state.

Over the last 10 years, the funded ratio of the URSJJ has improved from 81 percent to 112 percent, one of the largest single increases in the country. The funded ratio represents the proportion of money we invest (assets) to the benefits we pay (liabilities) as of July 1, 2019. The URSJJ unfunded liabilities have decreased from \$53 million to a surplus of \$37 million. During this same time period, the plan has outperformed the majority of our peers across the country in the investment arena at a fraction of the cost.

While we are very pleased with our current financial condition, these impressive numbers come at a cost to our members. The legislature has not granted a cost of living increase

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RETIREMENT 101

Tax and Insurance Reminders

A new year means it's time to evaluate the last and make plans for the one ahead. For retirees, this annual review should include an assessment of your retirement income and tax needs. Your pension is considered taxable income, and a Withholding Preference Certificate is available to adjust the amount of taxes withheld from your monthly benefit.

The tax withholding form was updated in 2019 to allow you to withhold differently for federal and Oklahoma taxes. If you made any changes during the previous year, or if your tax situation is changing, you should review your withholdings for 2020. You should seek advice from your tax accountant and submit a new *Withholding Preference Certificate* if appropriate. The form can be found at **www.opers.ok.gov/forms** and must be received before the 5th of the month for the change to be in effect for the deposit on the last working day of that month.

Ready to prepare your taxes? You will need your 1099-R form.

Each retiree will receive a Form 1099-R at the end of January of every year. This form will show the gross amount of your retirement benefit for the previous calendar year, the amount of state and federal income tax withheld from your retirement benefit and the federal taxable amount of your retirement benefit for the year. Complete your state and federal income tax return by using the information contained on your Form 1099-R.

Please allow for standard delivery time. You should allow 10-15 business days to receive your 1099-R, but if you have not received your form by February 14th, you may request a duplicate in writing or by calling our office. A replacement 1099-R will not be mailed to you unless your current mailing address matches our records. All requests must include your name, member ID, tax year requested, mailing address, the benefit type, daytime telephone number, and signature. Complete the *Change of Address* form, which can be downloaded at www.opers.ok.gov/forms, to update your mailing address.

Visit www.opers.ok.gov/1099 to read more frequently asked questions.

2020 Retiree Health Insurance Rates (Employees Group Insurance Division)

Every October, the Employees Group Insurance Division (EGID) mails option period booklets and forms, along with the premium amounts for the next year. If you have retiree health insurance premiums through EGID deducted from your retirement benefit, be aware that rates may have changed for 2020 which could change your monthly deposit amount. For more information on the 2020 rates, visit the EGID website at **www.omes.ok.gov**. If you have specific questions about your insurance coverage, contact EGID at 1-800-752-9475.

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RESOURCES

www.opers.ok.gov/taxes www.omes.ok.gov www.irs.gov www.ok.gov/tax www.ssa.gov



SEASONS

POPULAR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2019

UNIFORM RETIREMENT SYSTEM FOR JUSTICES AND JUDGES OKLAHOMA

DEAR ESTEEMED MEMBER:

We are pleased to bring you the Popular Annual Financial Report for the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges (URSJJ) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. This report contains summary financial information from the 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) written in layman's terms. The theme of this year's CAFR is "Seasons."

This year's theme illustrates how changes in our life impact our final years in retirement and how your retirement system is an integral part of the investment years of our members. Like the seasons of the year, people and organizations transform to improve and to be ready for the next phase. Changing seasons illustrate the undeniable transition from one stage of life to another. It is a call to alter our perspectives.

This report is our call to reflect on the past seasons and shows we are working toward a financially secure retirement system that will allow our members to feel confident in each season of their lives.

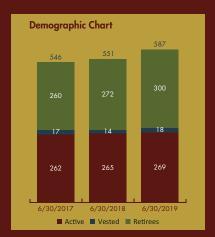
We hope you find this report informative.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Fox Executive Director

ABOUT URSJJ

The URSJJ is a single-employer public employee retirement plan established in 1968 by the Oklahoma Legislature. The Plan covers Justices and Judges who sit on the Supreme Court of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, the Oklahoma Courts of Civil Appeals, the Oklahoma District Courts and the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court, as well as the Administrative Director of the Courts. As of June 30, 2019, the Plan's membership includes 269 active members, 18 inactive members, and 300 retirees and beneficiaries.



COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT ONLINE

The 2019 Popular Annual Financial Report of the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges (URSJJ) contains summary financial information from the 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The full report may be viewed, in its entirety online, at www.opers.ok.gov/publications.



NET POSITION

The net position restricted for pension and health insurance subsidy plan (HISP) totaled approximately \$347.5 million at June 30, 2019, compared to \$338.0 million at June 30, 2018. The net position restricted for pension/HISP benefits is available for payment of monthly retirement benefits and other qualified distributions to the System's participants. The increase of \$9.5 million and increase of \$16.8 million of the respective years have resulted primarily from the changes in the fair value of the System's investments.

CHANGES IN FIDUCIARY NET POSITION

For the year ended June 30, 2019, fiduciary net position increased \$9.5 million, or 2.8 percent. Total assets increased by \$1.2 million, or 0.3 percent, due to an increase of 1.3 percent in investments, an increase of 33.3 percent in receivables partially offset by a decrease of 13.2 percent in securities lending collateral. The System achieved a money-weighted rate of return of 6.1 percent

compared to the prior year of 8.4 percent resulting in the majority of the increase in fiduciary net position. Total liabilities decreased 24.8 percent primarily due to an 33.7 percent decrease in pending purchases of securities and a 13.2 percent decrease in securities lending collateral.

Deductions to fiduciary net position are incurred primarily for the purpose for which the URSJJ was created, namely the payment of benefits to retirees. For the year ended June 30, 2019, total deductions increased \$1.9 million, or 10.1 percent, from the prior year. Retirement, death, and survivor benefits increased \$1.9 million, or 10.2 percent, and the average benefit increased 5.5 percent compared to the prior year due to a 10.3 percent increase in the number of retirees. Refunds and withdrawals decreased 26.9 percent from the prior year because the total amount withdrawn is dependent on contribution amounts of the specific members electing to withdraw contributions each year. Administrative costs increased 9.3 percent when compared to the prior year due to IT consulting cost for Fiscal Year 2019.

Condensed Schedules of Fiduciary Net Position

		2019			2018		2017			
(\$ millions)	Pension	HISP	Combined	Pension	HISP	Combined	Pension	HISP	Combined	
Assets:										
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 4.3	\$ -	\$ 4.3	\$ 8.1	\$ 0.1	\$ 8.2	\$ 5.9	\$ 0.1	\$ 6.0	
Receivables	10.3	0.1	10.4	7.7	0.1	7.8	10.9	0.1	11.0	
Investments	342.2	3.3	345.5	338.0	3.1	341.1	322.4	2.9	325.3	
Securities lending collateral	12.4	0.1	12.5	14.3	0.1	14.4	16.2	0.1	16.3	
Total assets	369.2	3.5	372.7	368.1	3.4	371.5	355.4	3.2	358.6	
Liabilities:										
Other liabilities	12.6	0.1	12.7	18.9	0.2	19.1	20.9	0.2	21.1	
Securities lending collateral	12.4	0.1	12.5	14.3	0.1	14.4	16.2	0.1	16.3	
Total liabilities	25.0	0.2	25.2	33.2	0.3	33.5	37.1	0.3	37.4	
Ending fiduciary net position	\$ 344.2	\$ 3.3	\$ 347.5	\$ 334.9	\$ 3.1	\$ 338.0	\$ 318.3	\$ 2.9	\$ 321.2	

Condensed Schedules of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position

		2019			2	2018		2017			
(\$ millions)	Pension	1	HISP	Combined	Pension		HISP	Combined	Pension	HISP	Combined
Member contributions	\$ 2	2.7 \$	_	\$ 2.7	\$ 2.6	\$	_	\$ 2.6	\$ 2.7	\$ -	\$ 2.7
Participating court employers	7	'.1	0.2	7.3	6.5		0.2	6.7	6.0	0.2	6.2
Net investment income	20).1	0.2	20.3	26.2		0.2	26.4	36.3	0.3	36.6
Total additions	29	.9	0.4	30.3	35.3		0.4	35.7	45.0	0.5	45.5
Retirement, death and survivor benefits	20).4	0.2	20.6	18.5		0.2	18.7	17.6	0.2	17.8
Refunds and withdrawals		_	_	_	_		_	_	0.1	_	0.1
Administrative expenses	().2	_	0.2	0.2		_	0.2	0.2	_	0.2
Total deductions	20).6	0.2	20.8	18.7		0.2	18.9	17.9	0.2	18.1
Net increase in fiduciary net position	9	2.3	0.2	9.5	16.6		0.2	16.8	27.1	0.3	27.4
Beginning of year	334	1.9	3.1	338.0	318.3		2.9	321.2	291.2	2.6	293.8
End of year	\$ 344	1.2 \$	3.3	\$ 347.5	\$ 334.9	\$	3.1	\$ 338.0	\$ 318.3	\$ 2.9	\$ 321.2

BENEFITS PAID TO MEMBERS

Participants who became members prior to January 1, 2012, qualify for full retirement benefits at the earliest of the following: age 65 with eight years of judicial service; age 60 with 10 years of judicial service; or, when the sum of at least eight years of credited service and age equals or exceeds 80. Participants who became members on or after January 1, 2012, qualify at age 67 with eight years of judicial service, or at age 62 with 10 years of judicial service.

The Schedule of Benefit Payments provides information on the total benefit expenses incurred by the Plan consisting of age and service, disability, and beneficiary death benefits.

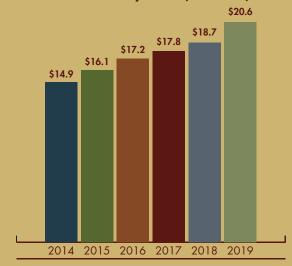
INVESTMENTS

The Board of Trustees adheres to the highest standard in making investment decisions for the Plan – the Prudent Investor Rule. The Board and its advisors invest the Plan's assets for the sole interest of our membership and their beneficiaries. In addition, funds are to be diversified to minimize the risk of large losses, unless under the circumstances it is clearly prudent not to do so. The 2019 decrease in the System's managed investments is due mainly in the decrease in securities lending collateral. The System's overall return for the year ended June 30, 2019 was 6.2 percent. The Rate of Return table reflects overall investment returns over the past six fiscal years.

The Board of Trustees has established the Statement of Investment Policy to guide investment decisions and outline the overall investment philosophy of the Plan. The investment philosophy is supported by three main pillars: identifying the importance of asset allocation and rebalancing; diversification of the asset base as the primary risk control element; and, controlling costs through passive investment management where most appropriate.

The Board engages outside investment managers to manage the various asset classes where URSJJ has exposure. At fiscal year end, the investment portfolio of URSJJ was actively managed by three fixed income managers and passively managed by another investment manager with holdings in one fixed income index fund, two domestic equity index funds and one international equity index fund. For fiscal year 2019, investments provided a 6.2 percent rate of return. The annualized rate of return for URSJJ was 9.1 percent over the last three years and 6.0 percent over the last five years. At June 30, 2019, the allocation of the investment portfolio is shown in the Asset Mix chart.

Schedule of Benefit Payments (\$millions)



Rate of Return

Year Ended June 30,	Total
2019	6.2 %
2018	8.3 %
2017	12.7 %
2016	0.6 %
2015	2.8 %
2014	17.7 %





OKLAHOMA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

FUNDING

A pension fund is well funded when it has enough money in reserve to meet all expected future obligations to participants. It must also have a revenue source sufficient to keep up with future obligations. The funding objective for URSJJ is to meet long-term benefit promises through contributions that remain approximately level as a percent of member payroll. The greater the level of funding, the larger the ratio of assets accumulated to the actuarial accrued liability and the greater the level of investment potential. The advantage of a well-funded plan is that the participants can look at assets that are committed to the payment of benefits. The actuarial accrued liability and actuarial value of assets as of July 1, 2019 amounted to \$308.6. million and \$345.2 million, respectively.

The URSJJ funded ratio had been steadily declining from 2002 to 2010, falling below 100 percent for the first time at July 1, 2007 and declining further to 81.3 percent at July 1, 2010 before rebounding significantly to 96.3 percent at July 1, 2011 due to the removal of the cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) assumption, and increased further to 114.8 as of July 1, 2018. The funded ratio was 148.2 percent at June 30, 2002. In part this overall decline was due to an employer contribution rate decrease in January 2001 and the lifting of the salary cap for benefit calculation for the past seven years. Effective July 1, 2005, in an effort to address the decline, the employer rate was increased 1.0 percent annually for two years, and at July 1, 2007 it was increased 1.5 percent annually up to 22.0 percent for fiscal years ending 2019 and thereafter.

The Funded Ratio chart shows the change in funded status over the past six fiscal years.

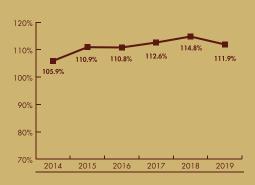
THE URSJJ AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING

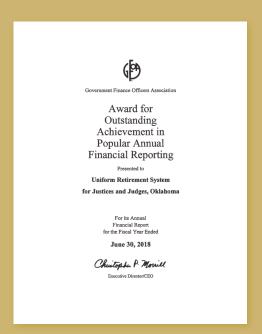
The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges for its Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. The Award for Outstanding Achievement is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports.

To receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a Popular Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability and reader appeal. An Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. We believe our current report continues to conform to the award requirements, and we are submitting it to GFOA. This is the sixth year the URSJJ has received this award.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals with offices in Chicago, IL, and Washington, D.C.

Funded Ratio





Healthful hints

Planning a Trip? Stay Healthy While Abroad

Travel is one of the most frequently listed items on the to-do list of an aspiring retiree. Domestic or abroad, many retirees plan to spend their time traveling, especially in the early years of retirement.

You've booked your flight, planned the itinerary, packed your suitcases, but you may have forgotten one critical element. Travelers often overlook planning for their health needs. No one anticipates becoming ill or injured, but everyone traveling abroad should prepare for the possibility. As the saying goes, "hope for the best but plan for the worst."

One way to minimize the risk is to research before you depart on your adventure. Consider how you will be traveling, what you may need to wear, and the types of food you will encounter can help protect you from the uncertainties of foreign travel. According to the World Health Organization, there are several key risk factors to consider before your departure:

- Destination
- Duration and season of travel
- Standards of accommodation
- Food hygiene and sanitation
- Behavior of the traveler
- Overall health of the traveler

Despite taking precautions, illness or injury can occur and be scary. Take the following measures to help minimize the stress and inconvenience should you become ill or injured:

Be prepared before you leave. Check with your insurance carrier to see what benefits are covered while traveling abroad. Make sure to take your insurance card with you and provide your traveling partner with a copy.

Pack the right items. As much as you would like to save room for souvenirs, you should bring medical supplies such as ibuprofen, bandages, and of course, any prescription medicine. It is always good advice to carry your prescription medications with you and not in your checked baggage.

Seek immediate attention. If you become ill or injured with something more than a common cold or minor sunburn, don't hesitate to seek medical attention. Check with the on-board medical staff on a cruise ship or concierge at your hotel for suggestions of medical services. If the situation becomes an emergency, in addition to medical personnel, contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for a list of healthcare providers.

Planning and careful precautions can help minimize and protect your health — "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

ADDITIONAL TIPS AND RESOURCES

- Rick Steves: www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/health/medical-care-in-europe
- U.S. Department of State: www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html
- National Institute of Health: U.S. National Library of Medicine: www.medlineplus.gov/travelershealth.html
- World Health Organization (WHO): www.who.int/ith/precautions/travel_related/en/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/travel/

Retirement and Your Credit

(Continued from page 1)

- Keep credit accounts active by making manageable purchases that you can pay off in a billing cycle at least every three to six months.
- Keep older accounts open as the length of credit history accounts for 15 percent of your credit score.
- Utilize different types of credit.
- Be cautious about co-signing on loans.
- Monitor your credit regularly by viewing copies of your credit report from all three credit reporting companies at www.annualcreditreport.com.

Debt-Free Retirement and Your Credit

Eliminating debt before retirement is a great way to free up income and save on interest. Paying off a mortgage or other large debts has little effect on your credit score; however, over time these accounts will fall off your credit report, which then may reduce your score. Before closing an account, verify there is not an outstanding balance and keep in mind the points previously discussed.

When paying off debt, credit cards should usually be the priority because of their high-interest rates and revolving balances. Installment debts like mortgages and auto loans tend to be fixed payments that incorporate easily into a retirement plan. If you have enough income to make extra mortgage payments, consider instead maxing out retirement savings or building an emergency fund. The tax advantages, along with the potential of growth in a retirement account, could outweigh the savings on interest. While owning a house free and clear is a great feeling, not being prepared for an emergency could put you in more expensive debt and negatively affect your credit. Also, check if your mortgage has a prepayment penalty and review how much you rely on mortgage interest deductions to offset your federal income tax.



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A New Decade

(Continued from page 1)

(COLA) since 2008, and as with any increase in benefits, COLAs are expensive. A COLA for OPERS and the URSJJ can cost hundreds of millions of dollars and affect our financial condition going forward. Under current law, the legislature must pay for COLAs, but in actuality a COLA will most likely be funded by our retirement system. For the first time in 12 years, the legislature will consider a COLA this legislative session. Stay tuned.

OPERS and URSJJ benefits have a huge impact on the Oklahoma economy. OPERS paid \$640 million and the URSJJ paid another \$21 million in benefits last year, and nearly \$3 billion over the last five years. Since more than 90 percent of our retirees live in Oklahoma, these funds ripple through our state and local economies, creating jobs, and generating tax revenues for your community. Our benefits find their way to every county in the state, from \$560,000 to Harmon County to \$146 million going into Oklahoma County last fiscal year. OPERS and the URSJJ take great pride in the role we play to expand Oklahoma's economy.

REMINDER: Update Your Beneficiary

It is important to review beneficiary forms often and make changes as necessary. Beneficiary forms may be updated at any time. OPERS will honor the most recent beneficiary form on file. Visit our website at www.opers.ok.gov/forms.

Contact URSJJ

Mailing Address:

Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System Post Office Box 53007 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73152-3007

Local Phone:

(405) 858-6737

Outside Local Calling Area:

(800) 733-9008

Website:

www.opers.ok.gov

Article Idea? Comments?

We want to hear from you!

newsletter@opers.ok.gov

This publication, printed by the University of Oklahoma Printing Services, is issued by the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges (URSJ)) as authorized by its Executive Director. Six hundred fifty (650) copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$92.95. An electronic version of this publication has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

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