



Keep your Member Services contact information up to date to receive the latest news, announcements or deadlines by email, text or call.

The GARS Board of Trustees

The composition of the seven member GARS Board of Trustees is set by statute and comprises the President of the Senate or a designee, two Senators appointed by the President of the Senate and three Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House. The two appointed Senators must be from different political parties, and no more than two of the three appointed Representatives may be from the same political party. All appointees are required to be members of GARS. In addition to the active appointees, a retiree is elected by GARS annuitants to represent them.

Currently Senator Don Harmon serves as President Cullerton's designee, and Senator James Clayborne and Senator Bill Brady are the other Senate appointees. The three appointed Representatives are Elaine Nekritz, Michael Zalewski and David Harris. Senator Clayborne is the elected Chairman of GARS, and Representative Harris serves as the elected Vice-Chairman. Representative Daniel Pierce was elected in January 2014 to represent GARS retirees for a term, expiring January 31, 2017.

As Chairperson of the Board, Senator Clayborne serves as one of nine members of the Illinois State Board of Investment (ISBI), along with Illinois State Comptroller Leslie Geissler Munger, who serves on ISBI due to her position as the Chairperson of the State Employees' Retirement System, and 2nd District Appellate Court Justice Mary S. Schostok, who serves on ISBI due to her position as the Chairperson of the Judges' Retirement System. The other members of the ISBI Board are the State Treasurer and five members appointed by the Governor.

As statutory fiduciaries, the primary role of the Board of Trustees is to oversee the operations of GARS and to ensure the long term financial viability of the System. To that end, the Board regularly reviews the actuarial assumptions that are used to measure the current financial condition and project the future financial condition of GARS. These assumptions are also important in calculating the required annual State contribution that is certified by the Board.

Your benefit statement

Enclosed with this Solon is your current benefit statement. This statement contains detailed information about your GARS benefits as of April 30, 2016.

If you have questions about your statement, you can contact us at 217-782-8500.

At the April 13, 2016 Board meeting, the Trustees voted unanimously to reduce the investment return assumption from 7.0% to 6.75% and adjust the mortality tables to provide for generational mortality improvements. In addition, turnover rates and retirement rates were adjusted to better reflect actual observed experience over the last three fiscal years. Other notable recent actions include the adoption of Tier 2 assumptions to reflect the higher Tier 2 retirement ages, and an assumption that recognizes almost half of all future legislators are expected to choose to not participate in GARS.

The more conservative demographic actuarial assumptions were recommended by the GARS actuaries based on actual retirement, turnover and mortality experience of the GARS membership, while the more conservative investment return assumption was recommended based on return expectations and capital market assumptions, developed and published by eight independent investment consulting firms.

The investment return assumption is used by ISBI to construct an optimal asset allocation model for the system's investment portfolio. The overall effect of these assumption changes will be to increase the required annual State contribution to GARS beginning in FY 2018.

The full GARS 2016 Experience Review may be found on the GARS website at [srs.illinois.gov/GARS/annreports_gars.htm](https://www.srs.illinois.gov/GARS/annreports_gars.htm).

Check out our Member Services website
<https://memberservices.srs.illinois.gov>





NCPERS open enrollment: Oct. 1 – Nov. 30, 2016

The State Retirement Systems (SRS) offers a voluntary life insurance plan to its members through the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS).

SRS is offering an open enrollment period for the voluntary group life insurance coverage to our active members.

The enrollment period will be held Oct. 1, 2016 – Nov. 30, 2016.

There is no guarantee that another open enrollment period will be offered in the future, and you can only enroll while actively serving. There will be no mailing to announce the open enrollment period, so please mark your calendars.

You can access an enrollment/beneficiary form on Oct. 1, 2016 by going to www.ncpersvoluntarylife.com/srs.

Gamify your retirement savings

The world is enamored with gamification apps to increase productivity in everything from exercise by using Pokémon GO, to water intake with Plant Nanny and more. Yu-Kai Chou, author and international keynote speaker on the topic of gamification, references the app Chore Wars – a multi or single player role-playing game that awards experience points for completing chores, allowing the player to level up over time – in his article about “Top Ten Gamified Productivity Apps that will Boost your Life.”

Not familiar with gamification? It takes everyday tasks and makes them into games so they’re less daunting to complete – a simple, yet highly effective concept that has been taking the personal and business world by storm. It’s a visual way, with badges, levels and achievements, helping people feel more accomplished. That dial that *shows* progress.

Wouldn’t it be more fun to watch your retirement savings grow if you could see a virtual bar raise on an app each time a deposit was made? Or an egg get closer to hatching? There are also fun websites like saveup.com that allow you to earn points for paying off debt and savings which can lead to winning big prizes such as vacations and cars.

Give it a try. It might be a little more fun than just seeing numbers on a statement each quarter.

Fiduciary net position

	FY 2015	FY 2014
Assets		
Cash	\$ 4,904,253	\$ 4,767,584
Receivables	667,290	589,878
Investments (fair value)	49,165,676	51,549,374
Securities lending collateral (state treasurer)	2,174,000	2,269,000
Capital assets, net	9,118	3,187
Total assets	\$ 56,920,337	\$ 59,179,023
Total liabilities	\$ 2,346,073	\$ 2,389,563
Net position	\$ 54,574,264	\$ 56,789,460

Changes in fiduciary net position

	FY 2015	FY 2014
Revenues		
Contributions		
Member	\$ 1,487,346	\$ 1,502,605
Employer	15,870,941	13,956,669
Total contributions	17,358,287	15,459,274
Investment income, net	2,287,916	8,363,428
Total revenues	\$ 19,646,203	\$ 23,822,702
Expenses		
Benefits	\$ 21,274,949	\$ 20,800,502
Refunds	191,755	245,133
Administrative	394,695	334,628
Total expenses	\$ 21,861,399	\$ 21,380,263
Net increase/(decrease)	(2,215,196)	2,442,439
Net position – restricted for pension benefits (beginning of year)	56,789,460	54,347,021
Net position – restricted for pension benefits (end of year)	\$ 54,574,264	\$ 56,789,460

