



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
GENERAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM
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GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503
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The Retirement Register

[Pension Escalator or 13th Check?](#)

Pension Benefit Escalator

As many of you are aware, most bargaining units within the City have negotiated a pension benefit escalator that replaces the 13th Check program. An escalator is a guaranteed fixed amount by which your monthly pension will be increased annually, after the negotiated waiting period. The following chart illustrates each bargaining unit and which program it participates in:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Benefit</u>	<u>Terms</u>	<u>Retirement Date</u>
APAGR	Escalator	1% non-compounding after 4 years of retirement	On or after 10/22/08
61st D.C. APA	Escalator	1% non-compounding after 4 years of retirement	On or after 10/22/08
GREIU	Escalator	1% non-compounding after 4 years of retirement	On or after 03/24/09
61st D.C. GREIU	Escalator	1% non-compounding after 4 years of retirement	On or after 03/24/09
All Library GREIU	Escalator	1% non-compounding after 4 years of retirement	On or after 07/09/09
CST/Latent Print	Escalator	1% non-compounding after 6 years of retirement	On or after 05/12/09
ECO I, II & III	13th Check*	Must be retired at least 5 years to be eligible	All
EC Supervisors	13th Check*	Must be retired at least 5 years to be eligible	All
Non-Represented	13th Check*	Must be retired at least 5 years to be eligible	All

*See 13th Check explanation below for further details

Escalator increase dates will be either January or July of each year. For retirement dates of January 1 – June 30, the escalator date will be July 1. For retirement dates of July 1 – December 30, the escalator date will be January 1. If a “B” option is selected at the time of retirement to include a beneficiary, then any applicable beneficiary amounts or pop-up amounts would also be adjusted, based on the original retirement date and escalator eligibility date, when a death occurs.

13th Check Program

The 13th Check is calculated as follows:

- When the plan’s five-year rolling average book value rate of return is over 8%, one-half of the amount over 8% is multiplied by the balance in the Benefit Reserve Fund and is distributed to eligible retirees.
- The amount is calculated using a point system; number of years and months of credited service at the time of retirement, multiplied by the number of years retired (beginning at 5 years and capped at 15 years). The 13th Check will continue to be distributed beyond 15 years of retirement when available, but the number of total points will not increase.
- The dollar amount to be distributed is then divided by the number of total points assigned for all retirees/beneficiaries. This results in a “dollar per point” figure.

Eligibility requirements include that the member or the beneficiary will have been retired at least five (5) years during the year of the distribution and alive on the date of distribution, January 31, in order to collect the benefit. If the member elects the Straight Life Option, there will be no 13th Check after his/her death because there is no beneficiary.

New Retirees

The Trustees and staff of the General Retirement System are pleased to congratulate the following new retirees:

Diane VanderMolen	(61st District Court)	01/27/11	Evelyn Mitchell	(Water)	04/01/11
Sharron Besteman*	(Water)	02/01/11	Kayne Ferrier	(Library)	04/02/11
Diane Simkins*	(Income Tax)	02/01/11	Bruce Masters	(EP-WWTP)	04/28/11
Lois Crane	(Income Tax)	02/17/11	Ruth Jensen	(Treasurers)	05/14/11
Susan Klein	(Library)	02/19/11	Tamra Wygmans	(Parks & Recreation)	05/14/11
Charles Kennedy	(Engineering)	03/31/11	Willis Tovey, Jr.	(Water)	05/21/11
Mary Ann Peacock	(Library)	03/31/11	Douglas Sawyer	(EP-Storm Sewer Main.)	05/28/11

*Deferred Member

Grand Rapids Social Security Office has Moved

The Grand Rapids Social Security office moved to **3045 Knapp St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525**. The new office is located within the Celebration Village retail area and is situated north of the Meijer shopping area along Knapp Street, just west of the East Beltline (M37) intersection. It is easily accessible via The Rapid bus route 15.

The new office opened with full services at the new location on **Tuesday, May 10, 2011**. Office hours will remain the same, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The general information line will also stay the same, (877) 319-5710.

There are many options available to conduct business with Social Security - rarely does anyone need to go into the office. Information and services are available online at: www.socialsecurity.gov.

Another option is the national toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213, which operates 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. Social Security representatives are available on business days from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. They have access to the same information that is available at the local office.

MERGe (Municipal Employees Retirees' Group) News

The MERGe group meets at 1:30 p.m. every 3rd Wednesday of the month. Meetings are held at 917 Bridge Street NW. All retirees are welcome. For further information, please call Megan at (616) 301-8965.

In Memory of Departed Friends

Warren Dekker	01/17/11	Harold Olsen	03/09/11
Barbara Wilson	01/23/11	Roosevelt Saffore	03/19/11
Robert Perkins*	01/24/11	Mary Hubbard	04/03/11
Anne Wisniewski*	01/28/11	Richard Smith	05/07/11
Keith Bilski	02/10/11	Robert Pelak	05/10/11
Roy Nordstrom	02/26/11		

*Denotes a beneficiary

Pension or Insurance Questions?

If you have questions regarding your pension, please contact the City of Grand Rapids Retirement Systems Office at **(616) 456-4300**. All address, direct deposit, federal withholding, or name changes **must be sent in writing** to: **City of Grand Rapids Retirement Systems, 233 E. Fulton Street, Suite 216, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**. Changes received by mid-month will be effective at the end of that month.

City health insurance questions should be directed to Insurance Services at **(616) 456-3300**. **Seniors Choice insurance** questions should be directed to **(888) 228-3002**.