



# Early Retirement under the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Office of Human Resources  
Workforce Relations Division



# Housekeeping

- This meeting is being recorded.
- Auto-closed captioning can be turned on using the button located at the top of the window.
- For live closed captioning, please email [AskOHR@nih.gov](mailto:AskOHR@nih.gov) for access to the stream text link.
- No live questions will be accepted during this webinar. Resources for additional questions will be available at the end.



# Objectives

- Provide an overview of the age and service eligibility requirements for early retirement under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)
- Review requirements for continuing health and life insurance benefits into retirement
- Discuss Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP)
- Learn about the Government Retirement & Benefits Platform (GRB) tool



# What Retirement Plan Am I In?

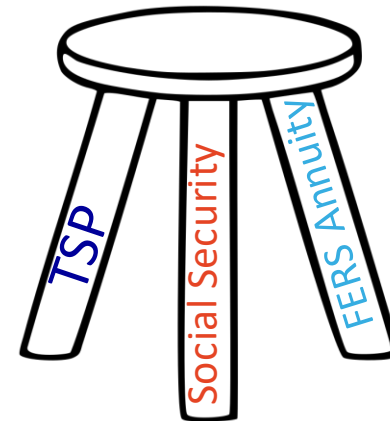
- Review Block 30-Retirement Plan on your SF-50 in [eOPF](#)
- Retirement codes:

- 1 = CSRS
- 2 = FICA only
- C = CSRS Offset
- K / KR / KF = FERS (and FICA)

EMPLOYEE DATA													
23. Veterans Preference						24. Tenure			25. Agency Use		26. Veterans Preference for RIF		
1	1 - None 2 - 5-Point	3 - 10-Point/Disability 4 - 10-Point/Compensable	5 - 10-Point/Other 6 - 10-Point/Compensable/30%	1	0 - None 1 - Permanent	2 - Conditional 3 - Indefinite				YES	X	NO	
27. FEGLI						28. Annuitant Indicator			29. Pay Rate Determinant				
C0	BASIC ONLY					9	NOT APPLICABLE		0	REGULAR RATE			
30. Retirement Plan				31. Service Comp. Date (Leave)		32. Work Schedule			33. Part-Time Hours Per Biweekly Pay Period				
K	FERS AND FICA			11/13/2005		F	FULL TIME						

# Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)

- Three-tiered retirement plan
- The three components are:
  - Basic Benefit Plan
  - Social Security Benefits
  - Thrift Savings Plan



# FERS Retirement System

- Must be vested
  - Five years of creditable civilian service
  - Military service does not count towards the five years





# FERS Retirement Eligibility: Voluntary/Regular

Age	Service
MRA*	30
60	20
62	5
MRA*	10**

\*Minimum Retirement Age (MRA): 55 if born before 1948; gradually increases to 57.

\*\*MRA+10 Retirement: Annuity is reduced 5% for each year under age 62 at retirement



# FERS Retirement Eligibility

## Minimum Retirement Age (MRA)

If you were born	Your MRA is
Before 1948	55
In 1948	55 and 2 months
In 1949	55 and 4 months
In 1950	55 and 6 months
In 1951	55 and 8 months
In 1952	55 and 10 months
In 1953-1964	56
In 1965	56 and 2 months
In 1966	56 and 4 months
In 1967	56 and 6 months
In 1968	56 and 8 months
In 1969	56 and 10 months
In 1970 and after	57



# FERS Retirement Eligibility: Early Retirement

Age	Years of Service Needed (At least 5 years must be civilian service)
50	20 years
Any Age	25 years

- Not participating in the Deferred Resignation Program.
- Must be serving under a non-time-limited appointment.
- Have been continuously on NIH's rolls at least 30 days prior to March 3, 2025.



# FERS Annuity Supplement

## What is it?

- Approximates Social Security benefit payable for **FERS service** and is calculated as if you were eligible to receive SSA benefits on the day you retired.

## When and how long is it payable?

- Payable on an immediate, unreduced, non-disability annuity up to age 62
  - Not entitled to the annuity supplement if you retire under the MRA+10, Disability, or Deferred retirement options
- Stops at age 62, even if you do not apply for Social Security benefits.

**IMPORTANT:** Under an Early Retirement, employee will not be eligible for the FERS Annuity Supplement until they reach their Minimum Retirement Age (MRA).

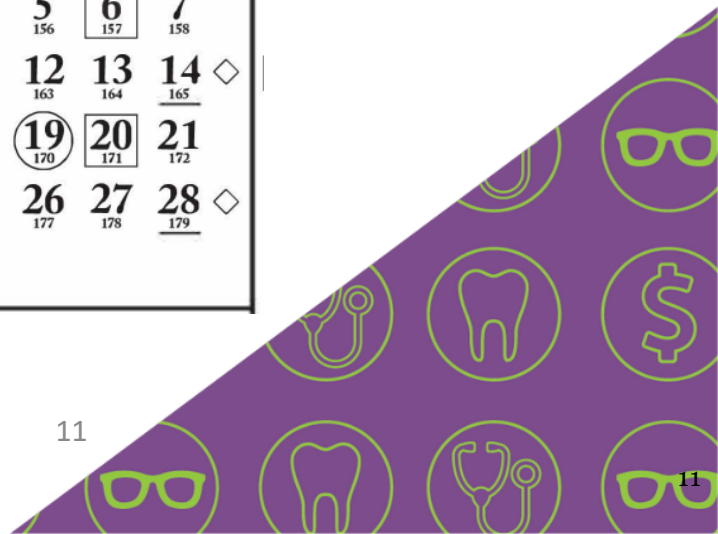




# FERS Retirement Effective Dates

Annuity always starts the 1st of the following month  
Most employees retire the last day of the month

APRIL 2025							MAY 2025							JUNE 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 91	2 92	3 93	4 94	5 95					1 121	2 122	3 123	(13) 1 152	2 153	3 154	4 155	5 156	6 157	7 158
(09) 6 96	7 97	8 98	9 99	10 100	11 101	12 102	(11) 4 124	5 125	6 126	7 127	8 128	9 129	10 130	8 159	9 160	10 161	11 162	12 163	13 164	14 165
13 103	14 104	15 105	16 106	17 107	18 108	19 109	11 131	12 132	13 133	14 134	15 135	16 136	17 137	(14) 15 166	16 167	17 168	18 169	19 170	20 171	21 172
(10) 20 110	21 111	22 112	23 113	24 114	25 115	26 116	(12) 18 138	19 139	20 140	21 141	22 142	23 143	24 144	22 173	23 174	24 175	25 176	26 177	27 178	28 179
27 117	28 118	29 119	30 120				25 145	26 146	27 147	28 148	29 149	30 150	31 151	(15) 29 180	30 181					



# FERS Survivor Annuity Options

1. Full FERS Survivor Annuity: 50% of Your Pension
2. Partial FERS Survivor Annuity: 25% of Your Pension
3. No Survivor Annuity

## **ATTENTION!**

If you are married, you will need your spouse's written permission to choose anything other than the full survivor annuity.



# Military Deposit

- All honorable active-duty military service is potentially creditable
- A deposit may be required for military service performed after 12-31-1956
  - Deposit is based on a percentage of the basic pay earned during the service
  - [Military Service | Office of Human Resources](#)
- Exception: Employees in receipt of military retired pay receive NO credit for military service unless they waive the military retirement pay (unless retired pay is based on combat connected disability or age/service in the Reserves)

## CAUTION!

\*\* A Military Deposit must be paid in full prior to your retirement date to be creditable.\*\*



# Insurance Coverage in Retirement



# Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)

## Can I keep FEHB in retirement?

- Must be covered for 5 years immediately before retirement; or
- For the full period of service during which you were eligible to be insured if less than 5 years

\*Coverage as a family member under a FEHB plan or under TRICARE counts toward 5 years; however, **you must be enrolled in a FEHB plan on the date of retirement.**

## What is the cost?

- Retirees pay the same cost and have the same election opportunities as an employee;
- Premiums deducted from monthly annuity and not on a pre-taxed basis

## Can my family members be covered in retirement?

- Yes. Eligible family members (spouse/dependents) can remain on your FEHB plan.

## Can I change plans in retirement?

- You may change your FEHB plan during OPM's Annual Open Season
- If you cancel coverage, you cannot re-enroll



# Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)

To ensure a surviving spouse is entitled to continue FEHB coverage upon retiree's death:

1. A Survivor Benefit **must** be provided,

**AND**

2. The retiree's FEHB enrollment **must** also cover their spouse on either a **Self Plus One** or **Self & Family** plan at the time of death.





# Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP)

## Can I continue coverage into retirement?

- Coverage automatically continues regardless of the length of time you had coverage as an employee
  - NO 5-year requirement like with FEHB
  - Eligible to enroll in dental and/or vision plan and add eligible family members to your coverage in retirement

## Will premiums come out of my annuity?

- Premiums will be deducted from annuity once retirement is finalized by OPM

## How are premiums paid during the interim period?

- May receive direct billing from BENEFEDS until retirement is finalized



# Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)

- You must have had Basic coverage for the 5 years of service prior to retirement OR since your first opportunity to enroll if less than 5 years
- This also applies to the optional coverage:
  - Option A – Standard
  - Option B – Additional
  - Option C – Family
- [FEGLI Calculator](#)



# Distributions from your TSP



- Visit [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) for more information on distribution options and TSP calculators
  - How Much Should I Save? (Ballpark Estimate)
  - Retirement Income Modeler
  - How much can I contribute?
- Review the TSP pamphlet, **Tax Rules about TSP Payments**, to learn more about the Early Withdrawal Penalty Tax and when it applies to TSP distributions



# Employment After Voluntary Early Retirement

## *Non-Federal Employment*

Employees who take voluntary early retirement are not subject to any restrictions regarding their annuity, should they subsequently accept non-Federal employment.

**EXCEPTION:** Employees covered under FERS who qualify for the FERS Annuity Supplement could have the supplement reduced or discontinued due to an earnings limitation.



# Employment After Voluntary Early Retirement

## Federal Employment

If an annuitant (i.e., a retired Federal employee) is hired under a Federal appointment, the annuitant is then considered a "reemployed annuitant." This means the annuity will continue, and the new Federal salary will be offset by the annuity amount, unless the employing agency seeks and is granted a waiver of the salary offset by OPM.



# Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (VSIP)

- A lump-sum payment (buyout) paid to an employee after a voluntary separation.
- The incentive payment amount is up to \$25,000.
- Employees must voluntarily retire or resign under the approved buyout offer.



# VSIP Eligibility

Employees wishing to retire or resign and accept a buyout must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Serving under a non time-limited appointment;
- Currently employed by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government for a continuous period of at least 3 years;
- Serving in a position covered by the agency VSIP plan;
- Apply for and receive approval for a VSIP from the agency; and
- Not be included in any of the ineligibility categories listed on the next slide.



# VSIP Ineligibility

Employees in the following categories are not eligible for VSIP. Employees who:

- Are reemployed annuitants;
- Are eligible for disability retirement;
- Have received a notice of involuntary separation for misconduct or poor performance;
- Previously received a VSIP from the Federal Government;
- During the 36-month period preceding the date of separation, performed service for which a student loan repayment benefit was paid, or is to be paid;
- During the 24-month period preceding the date of separation, performed service for which a recruitment or relocation bonus was paid, or is to be paid; or
- During the 12-month period preceding the date of separation, performed service for which a retention bonus was paid, or is to be paid.





# Employment After Receiving a Buyout

Employees who accept a VSIP and later accepts employment for compensation with the federal government within 5 years of the date of the separation on which the VSIP is based, including work under a personal services contract or other direct contract, must repay the full amount of the VSIP to the agency that paid it prior to the first day of reemployment.



# VSIP Interest

- To receive the buyout, selected employees must complete the VSIP Intake Form no later than **Friday, March 14, 2025, at 5 PM EST.**
- All applications for VSIP will be considered.
- Employees may show their interest in both, the HHS VERA and the VSIP.

(There are two separate intake forms to express interest)



# Government Retirement & Benefits (GRB) Platform



# What is the GRB Platform?

GRB is a web application designed to provide employees access to personal and general benefits and retirement information

- View a statement of your benefits
- Use calculators to perform various "what-if" retirement scenarios



# New User Instructions

New Users Must Create a GRB User Account

1) Create a user account by clicking on the **New User? Create account** link. You must supply the following information:

- DHHS's license number: **3123**
- Social Security Number
- First Name, Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Work email

2) Once you complete verification, you will receive an email on how to create your password.



GRB Platform

Sign In

Username

Password

Sign In

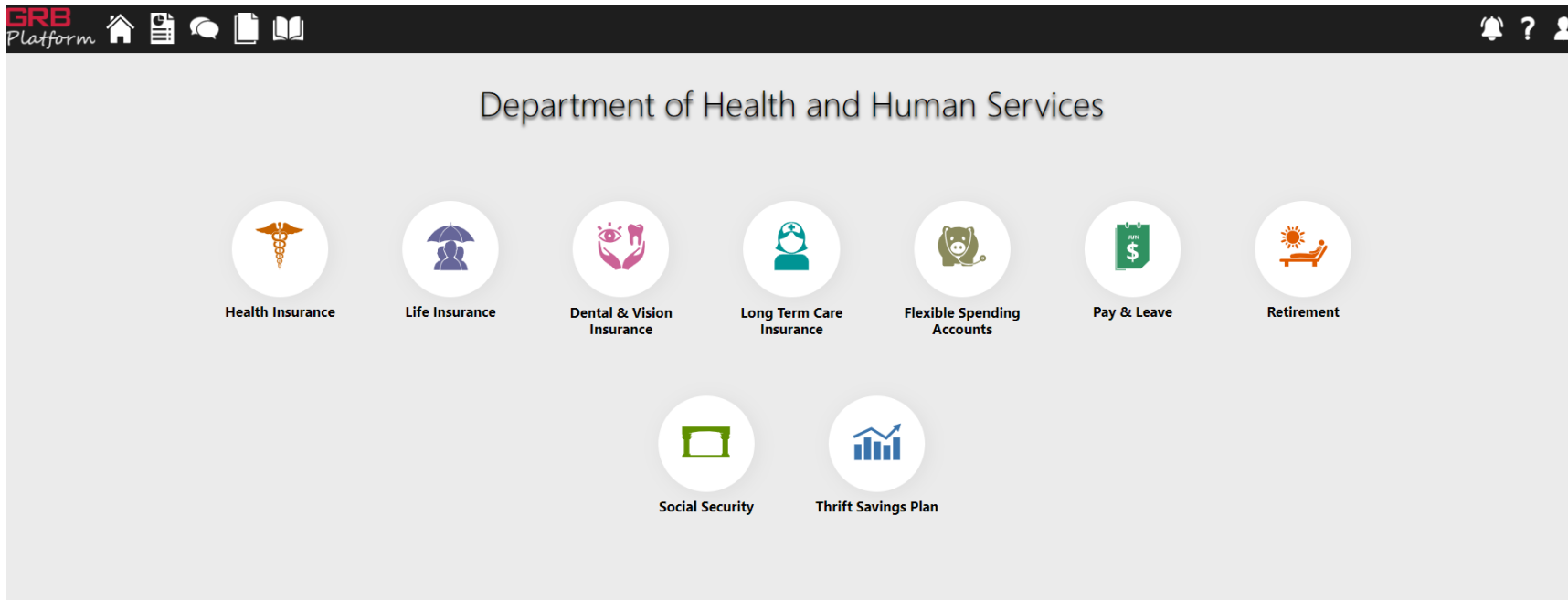
[Forgot your Password?](#)

[Forgot your Username?](#)

[New User? Create account](#)



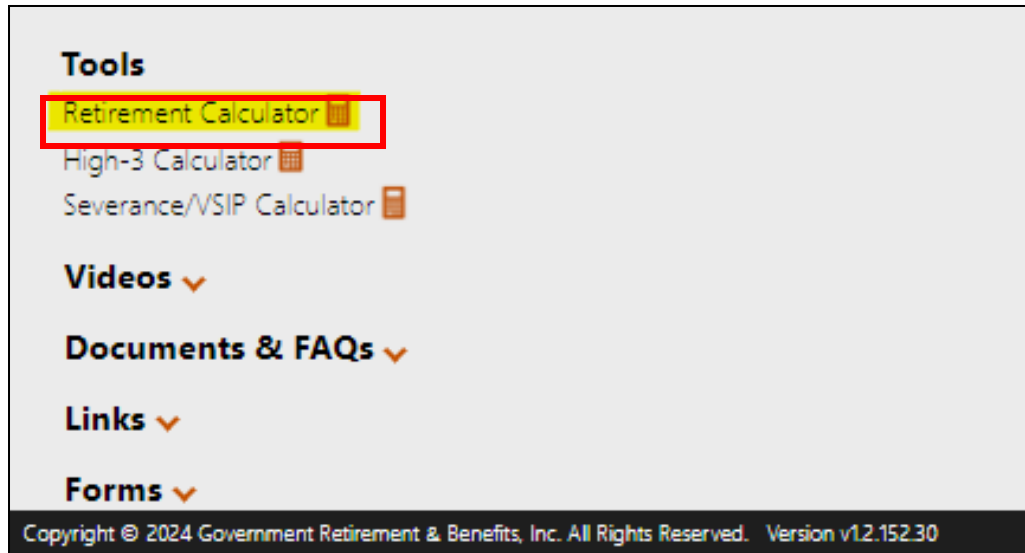
# GRB Platform



- Website: <https://platform.grbinc.com>
- Access GRB on OHR SharePoint site



# Retirement Calculator



- Once inside the **Retirement** tile, your Voluntary Retirement and Early Retirement eligibility dates will be listed.
- Click on **Retirement Calculator** to generate your own retirement estimates.

# Next Steps for Interested Employees

## VERA

- Interested employees **must express interest by 5pm EST on 3/14/2025** by completing the VERA Intake Form: [HHS VERA Intake Form](#).
  - Completing the form does not commit employees to taking VERA, but interested employees are required to submit interest by 3/14 at 5pm ET in order to participate in the program.
- Review your retirement information and watch the eWebinars in the [Government Retirement and Benefits \(GRB\) Platform](#).

## VSIP

- Interested employees **must express interest by 5pm EST on 3/14/2025** by completing the VSIP Intake Form: [HHS VSIP Intake Form](#).





# FAQs on VERA

**Q: Am I eligible for VERA as a FERS employee who meets the Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) with at least 10 years of service, but less than 20 years?**

A: No, 20 years of service is the minimum to qualify for the VERA. You may be eligible to retire under the FERS MRA+10 optional retirement with a reduced annuity.

**Q: Is there a waiver for years of service or age for this VERA?**

A: Not at this time.

**Q: Are the age and creditable service requirements calculated at time of filing?**

A: Age and creditable service is calculated based on the determined retirement date.

Please consult the NIH OHR webpage for more FAQ: [Retirement FAQs | Office of Human Resources](#)



# FAQs on VERA

**Q: What is the effective date of my retirement/separation?**

A: You may select the date of your retirement as long as it's in the window. Refer to the [FAQ](#) page for details.

**Q: Can I use my accumulated annual or sick leave balance to meet the years of service?**

A: No, neither your annual nor your sick leave balance can be used to meet eligibility requirements.

**Q: I am Title 42. Can I take the VERA?**

A: Time limited appointments are not eligible. We are obtaining clarification for Title 42s that do not specifically have a time limit.

Please consult the NIH OHR webpage for more FAQ: [Retirement FAQs | Office of Human Resources](#)

# FAQs on VERA

**Q: I submitted and was approved for the DRP. How does this impact me?**

A: Employees who were approved for DRP are not eligible for the HHS-VERA/VSIP offer.

**Q: Can I retire under VERA and receive a VSIP?**

A: Yes, NIH is offering both to the notified employees, and **if you meet the criteria for both**, you can retire under VERA and receive a VSIP.

**Q: What is a DSR and how does it differ from a VERA?**

A: To learn more about DSR, please refer to our [Fact Sheet](#).

**Q: How does opting into the VERA program become impacted in the event of a RIF?**

A: Our office doesn't have specific information surrounding any RIFs.

Please consult the NIH OHR webpage for more FAQ: [Retirement FAQs | Office of Human Resources](#)



# FAQs on VERA

**Q: Do I receive payment for unused annual or sick leave upon taking VERA?**

A: You will be paid for your unused annual leave. Sick leave is used as part of your annuity computation.

**Q: What happens to my benefits during and after the VERA process? (Ex: FSAs)**

A: Please review our [VERA Fact Sheet](#) and other FAQs at [Retirement FAQs | Office of Human Resources](#).

**Q: Where can I obtain retirement paperwork if my VERA is accepted?**

A: Visit the NIH retirement page for [FERS](#) or [CSRS](#) application instructions. Your retirement application is not needed by 03/14/2025, only the [HHS VERA Intake Form](#).

Please consult the NIH OHR webpage for more FAQ: [Retirement FAQs | Office of Human Resources](#)

# Useful Resources



# OPM Retirement Quick Guide

OPM created a Retirement Quick Guide that provides OPM's timelines on retirement cases

## OPM Retirement Quick Guide A Reference for Voluntary Retirement

Timelines in this document are current estimates as of Aug 2024. View the most current version of this document at [opm.gov/retirement-center/quick-guide](https://opm.gov/retirement-center/quick-guide).

### Congratulations on your upcoming retirement!

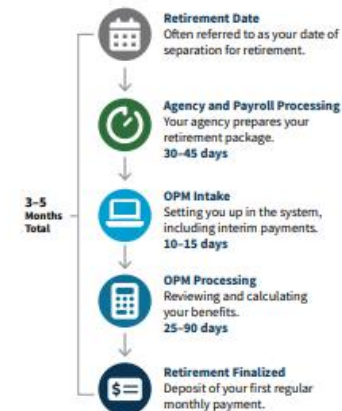
This guide will walk you through what to expect as your retirement application is processed and your benefits are determined. Most retirees will receive their first full annuity check within 3-5 months of retiring.

During processing, you will receive:

- **Interim payments**, typically 60-80% of your estimated net annuity to help cover your expenses.
- Any **health insurance coverage** you elected to take into retirement.
- Access to **Services Online**, a website to track your retirement.

### Process at a Glance

Below are current estimates as of Aug 2024.



### Four Things to Do Before You Retire

1. **Sign all forms.** Missing signatures are one of the most common reasons for processing delays.
2. **Download your personnel records** if your agency uses eOPF and you want your own copies. You will lose access to eOPF once you retire.
3. **Complete payments for any open service credit accounts** for FERS and CSRS eligible deposits or service redeposit. Honorable post-1956 Military Service deposits must be paid in full before you retire.
4. **Check Supplemental Documents.** Include all documentation required for your retirement application such as marriage certificate, military service records, court orders, etc.

### Understand Your Benefits Choices

Make sure to understand your elections for the categories below. Your choices can significantly impact your annuity amount. There are limitations on when you can make changes after your retirement is complete.

- **Health Benefit\***
- **Survivor Benefit\***
- **Life Insurance\***
- **Designation of Beneficiary\***

### Factors That Might Delay Your Retirement Processing

While most retirement cases will be straightforward, certain circumstances can significantly delay the process, including:

- **Court orders\***, such as a divorce decree or property settlement. These require an additional step and are sent to the Court Order Benefits Branch for review.
- Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter, Air Traffic Controller, Capitol Police, Supreme Court Police, or Nuclear Materials Courier, as these cases use a special annuity computation.
- Past or active **workers' compensation claims\***.
- Experience as a part-time or intermittent federal employee.
- Federal service at multiple federal agencies.
- Missing documents and forms, or incomplete or incorrect information in your retirement application.
- Moving without updating your address with OPM.

# References

- **Retirement**

- OPM Guidance on VERA: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/workforce-restructuring/voluntary-early-retirement-authority/>
- OPM Retirement Services: <http://www.opm.gov/retirement-services>
- OPM Retirement Quick Guide: <https://www.opm.gov/retirement-center/quick-guide/>

- **Benefits**

- OPM: [www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance](http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance)
- TSP: [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)
- FSAFEDS: [www.fsafeds.gov](http://www.fsafeds.gov)
- FEDVIP: [www.benefeds.gov](http://www.benefeds.gov)
- FLTCIP: [www.ltcfeds.gov](http://www.ltcfeds.gov)



# NIH OHR Resources

- [OHR Retirement Page](#)

- Provides details on obtaining retirement estimates
- Provides details on how to apply for retirement (CSRS & FERS)
- Provides a link to our FAQ page

- [OHR Retirement FAQ Page](#)

- Provides FAQs for retirement and benefits at retirement.

- [HHS VERA Intake Form](#)

- Required to meet HHS VERA program deadline by Friday, March 14, 2025

- [HHS VSIP Intake Form](#)

- Required to meet HHS VERA program deadline by Friday, March 14, 2025





# Contacts

## [AskBenefits@nih.gov](mailto:AskBenefits@nih.gov)

For questions on retirement, VERA, VSIP and other benefits related topics

## [WorkFlex@mail.nih.gov](mailto:WorkFlex@mail.nih.gov)

For questions on leave, payroll, and workplace flexibilities

## [Title42pay@od.nih.gov](mailto:Title42pay@od.nih.gov)

For questions related to pay (for Title 42 employees only)

## [AskOHR@nih.gov](mailto:AskOHR@nih.gov)

For all other HR policy and program related questions

