

COAERS CONNECT

SUMMER 2021 | WWW.COAERS.ORG



City of Austin Employees' Retirement System



2021 MEMBER MEETING

on



JULY 28, 2021 | 5:30 PM

JOIN COAERS FOR THE
2021 ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING
ON FACEBOOK LIVE.
TO RSVP AND TO WATCH THE
LIVE BROADCAST VISIT:
[FACEBOOK.COM/COAERS](https://www.facebook.com/coaers)

DIAL-IN BY PHONE
(346) 248-7799 US
Meeting ID:
827 4894 1375

For questions about the event,
please contact Member Services at
member.services@coaers.org

NOTE: A Facebook account is not
needed to watch the live broadcast.

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COAERS HOURS OF REMOTE OPERATION

COAERS offices remain closed to
the public while we continue to
monitor the COVID-19 pandemic.
However, our staff is working
remotely to help via telephone,
email, or virtual visits.

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tel: (512) 458-2551
Fax: (512) 458-5650
www.coaers.org
member.services@coaers.org

COAERS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chris Noak - Chair
Michael Benson - Vice Chair
Stephanie Beach
Amy Hunter
Yuejiao Liu
Frank Merriman
Leslie Pool
Anthony B. Ross, Sr.
Brad Sinclair
Randy Spencer
Diana Thomas

On Wednesday, July 28 at 5:30 pm, join the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System for the 2021 Member Meeting! This year, the annual meeting will be streamed virtually on Facebook Live.

The annual event is an opportunity for all COAERS members to hear from the organization's Executive Team and Board of Trustees, learn about important organizational updates including COAERS investments, the financial state of the retirement system, as well as have the opportunity to ask the Board and Staff questions.

How to watch the Facebook Live event:
The 2021 Member Meeting will be broadcast live on Facebook. Visit the COAERS Facebook page to tune in to the broadcast at www.facebook.com/coaers.

How to join via telephone:
Members who are unable to watch the live broadcast event on Facebook can call the number listed below to listen to the meeting via telephone. Call the phone number below and enter the Meeting ID.

Public Participation Dial-in Number:
(346) 248-7799
Meeting ID: 827 4894 1375

Do you have a question for the COAERS

Executive Team or the COAERS Board of Trustees? To ask our event panelists a question, visit the form link below to submit your question prior to the event date:

surveymonkey.com/r/2021membermeeting

For any questions about the event, contact Member Services at member.services@coaers.org or call (512) 458-2551.

2021 Active Member Election: Call for Candidates

Every year, elections for the COAERS Board of Trustees are held in the fall for active and retired trustee positions. This year, elections will take place for the Active Member Election for Place 8 and Place 9. The current terms are set to expire at the end of December 2021. The new four-year terms for Place 8 and Place 9 will begin January 2022 and end December 2025. If you are interested in becoming a candidate for either Place 8 or Place 9 and would like to learn more, email Michelle Mahaini at michelle.mahaini@coaers.org.

Please be sure to check the COAERS website at www.coaers.org for the latest information about official deadlines, candidate application forms and packets, and other key election related resources and news.

Operations Update: Forging a Path Towards a New Normal

Over the past fifteen months, COAERS has remained steadfast in our commitment to serving members and fulfilling our mission to provide reliable retirement benefits while successfully carrying out business operations in a virtual environment.

As COVID-19 case trends stabilize, vaccines become widely available, and new guidelines emerge for reopening, organizations and businesses across the country are forging new paths to operate in this "new normal." Similarly, COAERS is continuing to monitor and review the advice and guidelines of local government and health officials to inform our return-to-office operations and facilities reopening plan.

In the coming months, we hope to announce more information about the next phase of our operations plan, where the health and safety of the COAERS staff, our Trustees, and our valued member community will remain the utmost priority. Until then, COAERS is still operating remotely, and we will continue to communicate updates about our operational changes on our website at www.coaers.org/covid19 and across our social media channels.



MemberDirect 24/7: Access Services on Your Time

Did you know MemberDirect provides you with 24/7 online access to your retirement accounts? Members can securely access their retirement account and information from anywhere, anytime, and on any device.

Through MemberDirect, active COAERS members can obtain benefit estimates, see options for survivor benefits, and view how deductions and insurance will affect retirement take-home pay. Retired COAERS members can easily access their 1099-R forms, review benefit payment details, and view payment history.

Don't have a MemberDirect account? Sign up today by visiting www.coaers.org, click register, and follow the steps to enroll.

Legislative Update: 87th Texas Legislature Session

The regular session of the 87th Texas Legislature concluded on Monday, May 31st. During the biennial session, the state's governing body received several filed bills regarding Texas public retirement systems. One bill of note was House Bill 3898. The bill will amend the Government Code relating to the funding policy and funding soundness restoration plan (FSRP) requirements for public retirement systems and align them with Pension Review Board (PRB) Pension Funding Guidelines. It would also add new disclosure requirements for investment practices and performance evaluations of retirement systems. H. B. 3898 was approved by the Legislature and has been sent to the Governor. Of the few bills that passed, no legislation runs counter to the Board-adopted legislative priorities.



Last year, the COAERS Board approved a proposal to pursue comprehensive pension reform legislation during the 88th Legislative Session, which is slated to convene in 2023. Leading up to the 2023 legislative session, COAERS and the City will continue to engage in a productive, meaningful, and collaborative effort to develop solutions to improve the retirement system's long-term financial health and sustainability. It is important to note that the retirement system is not in crisis and remains in good financial standing to continue delivering benefits for decades to come. However, as fiduciaries, the COAERS Board takes its responsibility seriously to ensure that every future City employee receives the benefits promised.

We will continue to keep COAERS members well informed of our progress on plan sustainability and work with the City of Austin on potential legislative proposals related to COAERS. To find out more about the Texas Legislature and the 87th Legislative Session, visit www.capitol.state.tx.us.



Plan Fundamentals: Sick Leave

While the primary way to obtain service credit is by working in a regular full-time position and making contributions to the System, you can also establish additional service credit by purchasing it, if you qualify. Sick leave conversion is one of several ways in which you may be able to purchase service credit.

How does it work?

At the time of retirement, you may be able to convert unused sick leave hours to service credit. A sick leave purchase does not make you eligible to retire any sooner, but it will increase your monthly benefit payment. Unused sick leave hours eligible for cash payment may not be converted to service credit. You should start the conversion process 30 to 60 days before your retirement date. You must convert your sick time in 80 hour pay period increments. Both you and the City will pay the current contribution rate at the time of retirement to convert the hours to service credit.

For more information about sick leave conversion and other service credit purchases, contact Member Services to speak with one of our Member Services Specialists at member.services@coaers.org or call (512) 458-2551.

Board News

At the March meeting of the COAERS Board of Trustees, the Board received reports and held discussions about administrative, operational, and investment matters.

During the meeting, the Board approved the results of the December 31, 2020 actuarial valuation. The COAERS consulting actuary reported that the Fund's strong investment returns above the 7% assumed rate of return, in addition to the 1% increase in City contributions from 18% to 19% reduced the Plan's funding period from 40 years in 2019 to 32 years. The funding ratio is 65.3% (68.1% on market value of assets), which is up from 63.5% in 2019. While the results show great improvement compared to 2019, the funding period for COAERS is still above the Board's funding policy target. The COAERS Board will continue to work with the City of Austin to implement meaningful solutions for the System's long-term sustainability.

The Board also approved updates to the Investment Policy Statement (IPS) and Investment Implementation Plan (IIP). During the meeting, COAERS Chief Investment Officer David Veal reviewed key changes proposed to the IPS and IIP, which require annual reviews of the risk budget, the strategic asset allocation parameters, performance benchmarks of the Fund and the key policies that govern its management. Additionally, COAERS Executive Director Christopher Hanson presented reports on the updated 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, the administrative budget, and the 87th Legislative Session.

To learn about upcoming Board and Committee meetings, visit www.coaers.org/events.



Ready to Retire? Plan ahead with the Retirement Checklist

Making the decision to retire can be an exciting one. Before you can hang up your hat and step into the next chapter of your life, there are several important steps you need to take to complete the retirement process, so remember these tips to help you get started.

Contact COAERS

You can begin the retirement application process 90 days prior to your retirement date. The deadline to apply is the 15th of the month in which you plan on retiring. Before the application window, contact COAERS to speak with a Member Services Specialist who will assist you with the retirement process and review the retirement checklist of required forms and information you'll need to retire. COAERS offers both telephonic and virtual counseling appointments. You can contact our Member Services team at member.services@coaers.org or call (512) 458-2551.

Gather Documents

Begin to gather and make copies of the required documents you'll need to submit with your retirement application. All necessary documents described in the retirement checklist must be submitted to COAERS prior to your effective retirement date. Failure to complete and submit the necessary forms or documents will invalidate your retirement and you may lose benefits as a consequence. The retirement checklist is available on the website at www.coaers.org/Active-Members.

Apply through MemberDirect

You can now apply for retirement online through your MemberDirect account. MemberDirect makes it easy for you to submit your completed retirement application and the required documents to COAERS through the secure online portal. If you don't have a MemberDirect account, register for one at www.coaers.org. Your completed application and forms can also be submitted by mail to the following mailing address:

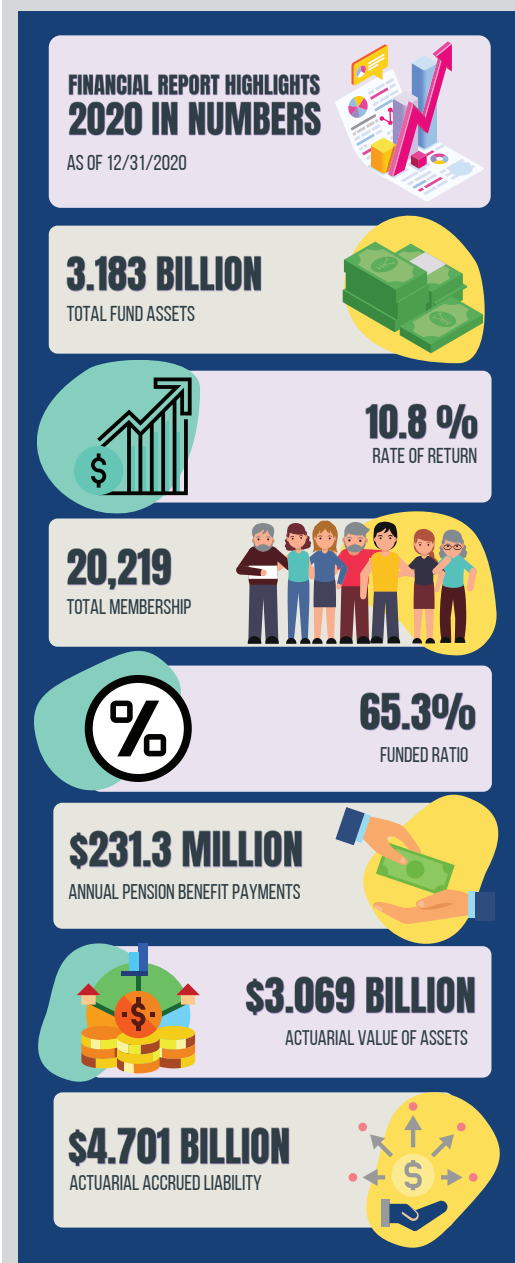
City of Austin Employees' Retirement System
6836 Austin Center Blvd, Ste. 190
Austin, TX 78731

The COAERS Member Services team is available to answer questions and help you through the retirement process. Email member.services@coaers.org or call (512) 458-2551 to speak with a member of our team.

2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

The 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for COAERS is now available. The annual report provides an overview of the retirement system including detailed information about the financial, investment and actuarial aspects of the System. The report reflects the combined efforts of COAERS Staff under the leadership of the Board of Trustees. For the latest copy of the report, visit www.coaers.org/resources/publications.

If you have any questions regarding the report and how to access it, please contact us at news@coaers.org or call (512) 458-2551.



CONNECT WITH US



(512) 458-2551

www.coaers.org

member.services@coaers.org



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instagram.com/coaers1

IMPORTANT 2021 DATES

JUNE

6/30 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
6/30 Retiree Annuity Issue Date

JULY

7/5 Independence Day Holiday - Office Closure
7/15 Retirement Application Deadline
7/22 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
7/28 2021 Member Meeting on FB Live
7/30 Retiree Annuity Issue Date

AUGUST

8/13 Retirement Application Deadline
8/25 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
8/31 Retiree Annuity Issue Date

SEPTEMBER

9/6 Labor Day Holiday - Office Closure
9/15 Retirement Application Deadline
9/21 Board Meeting
9/23 Mid-Career Seminar
9/29 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
9/31 Retiree Annuity Issue Date

OCTOBER

10/15 Retirement Application Deadline
10/26 Virtual Pre-Retirement Seminar
10/29 Retiree Annuity Issue Date



City of Austin Employees' Retirement System

6836 Austin Center Blvd, Suite 190
Austin, TX 78731

DISCLAIMER:

The COAERS Connect newsletter is a publication of the City of Austin Employees' Retirement System and is distributed as a courtesy to Active, Vested, and Retired Members and their beneficiaries. While COAERS has made every attempt to provide correct information, it does not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained or referenced herein.

CITY OF AUSTIN EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

