

# Pathways to Retirement

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

## LACERA CEO Leadership Transition: Santos Kreimann Retires; Luis Lugo Appointed

**W**e have some important updates regarding changes to LACERA’s executive team over the last couple of months.

At the beginning of January, Santos H. Kreimann stepped down as LACERA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), after six years of transformative leadership. On February 4, LACERA’s Boards of Retirement and Investments announced the unanimous appointment of Luis A. Lugo as LACERA’s new CEO.



Luis A. Lugo

Mr. Lugo’s appointment comes after nearly five years of service at LACERA—first as Deputy CEO (July 2021 to March 2025), then Acting CEO (March 2025 through January 2026). In his executive roles at LACERA, Mr. Lugo has driven enterprise-wide initiatives,

strengthened organizational performance, and advanced key strategic priorities.

Before coming to LACERA, he served as Chief Operating Officer for the Minnesota Public Employees Retirement Association (MN PERA), the state’s largest public pension system, directing critical operational functions that supported public employees statewide. Earlier in his career, Mr. Lugo spent more than a decade with the Social Security Administration and held various leadership positions overseeing multistate field operations. His professional background also includes leadership roles in the private sector and healthcare organizations, further broadening his operational and managerial expertise.

Mr. Lugo earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from the University of Minnesota Duluth and a Master of Business Administration from Hamline University.

The selection of Mr. Lugo as CEO supports a seamless, stable transition in leadership, continued advancement

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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DESK

**LUIS A. LUGO, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

- LAURA GUGLIELMO, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE OFFICER
- JJ POPOWICH, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## BOARD OF RETIREMENT

- JAMES P. HARRIS**  
Chair  
Alternate Trustee  
Elected by Retired Members
- WAYNE MOORE**  
Vice Chair  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- LES ROBBINS**  
Secretary  
Elected by Retired Members
- NANCY M. DURAZO**  
Elected by General Members
- BOBBIE FESLER**  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- ELIZABETH B. GINSBERG**  
County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Ex-Officio Trustee
- JASON E. GREEN**  
Alternate Trustee  
Elected by Safety Members
- SHAWN R. KEHOE**  
Elected by Safety Members
- ALEN LANGTON**  
Elected by General Members
- ERNESTO J. PANTOJA**  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- LISA PROFT**  
Chief Deputy County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Acting Ex-Officio Trustee\*
- DAVID E. RYU**  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

## BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

- SHAWN R. KEHOE**  
Chair  
Elected by Safety Members
- NICOLE MI**  
Vice Chair  
Elected by General Members
- MIKE GATTO**  
Secretary  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- TREVOR FAY**  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- ELIZABETH B. GINSBERG**  
County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Ex-Officio Trustee
- PATRICK L. JONES**  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- ALEN LANGTON**  
Elected by General Members
- DEBBIE MARTIN**  
Elected by Retired Members
- ALMA K. MARTINEZ**  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors
- LISA PROFT**  
Chief Deputy County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Acting Ex-Officio Trustee\*

\*When ex-officio trustee is absent

Hello, LACERA members. I hope your 2026 is off to a strong start!

## Leadership Changes and Fond Farewells

As highlighted in this issue’s cover story, I recently stepped into the LACERA CEO role following Santos H. Kreimann’s retirement. Having devoted most of my career to public service and administration, I’m deeply connected to LACERA’s mission and to delivering on our commitment to you. I look forward to serving you in this role and keeping you updated in this space moving forward.

On behalf of everyone at LACERA, thank you to Santos for his leadership during a period of great challenges, in which he turned adversity into opportunities for innovation and change. Santos expressed that it was his goal to leave the organization stronger than he found it, and he certainly achieved that.

While Santos’s daily presence will be missed, the rest of the executive team and I will steadfastly uphold LACERA’s organizational values as we position LACERA for the future. This includes our ongoing implementation of our strategic plan initiatives focused on superior member experience, operational excellence, and financial security and stewardship.

We wish you the very best, Santos, and a long, happy retirement!

LACERA also bids a fond farewell to Assistant Executive Officer **Laura Guglielmo**, who is retiring at the end

of March after a distinguished career in public service. Laura is a gifted administrator who was instrumental in strengthening LACERA’s strategic, operational, and cultural foundations. (See page 4 for more of Laura’s achievements.) We will miss your steady, focused leadership and superior problem-solving abilities, Laura. Have a wonderful retirement!

## Looking Back and Planning Ahead

We recently marked one year since the Palisades and Eaton fires. LACERA remains committed to supporting our members and employees who were affected. Let’s all continue being present for our neighbors and communities as they recover and rebuild. For members seeking information about resources and benefits, please contact us for guidance.

Going into 2026, LACERA will finalize and implement numerous initiatives aligned with our strategic priorities—many of which involved years of careful planning and development—and will proceed with addressing the remaining identified initiatives and projects from our strategic plan.

We will keep you informed throughout the year and beyond in our newsletters, via emails, and on your favorite social media platform (see page 6). Be sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, where we regularly post LACERA updates, benefits info, and retirement planning tips, while providing you an open forum for questions. We are here for you and accessible throughout your career!

## Welcome, New and Returning Trustees

A new year means movement on LACERA's boards. In January, newly appointed Trustee Ernesto Pantoja joined the Board of Retirement; appointed Trustee Trevor Fay returned to the Board of Investments; elected safety Trustees Shawn R. Kehoe and Jason Green started their new terms (Trustee Kehoe on both boards, Trustee

Green on the Board of Retirement); and we said farewell to appointed Trustee Ronald Okum. Read more in Accomplishments on page 4, including bio information for Trustees Pantoja and Fay.

Until the next *Pathways*, thank you for your service to our community. Take care of each other and stay safe.



## LACERA CEO Leadership Transition, cont. from cover

of the Boards' strategic priorities, and ongoing dedication to LACERA's mission to produce, protect, and provide the benefits promised to our members. We congratulate and welcome Luis in his new role!

## Salute to Santos and His Career of Service



Santos H. Kreimann

Mr. Kreimann's role as LACERA CEO capped 36 years of distinguished service to L.A. County. Appointed in November 2019, Mr. Kreimann guided the organization during a pivotal time in our history—most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic, which happened only three months into his tenure.

Mr. Kreimann was instrumental in many notable LACERA accomplishments over the last six years, including:

advancing major modernization efforts, restructuring departments for operational efficiency, creating a visionary strategic plan, increasing the lifetime maximum benefit limit for retiree healthcare PPO plans, and driving organizational improvements in the areas of service, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

Mr. Kreimann's service to L.A. County also includes prior leadership roles as Chief Deputy Assessor, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Operations and Capital Projects, Director of the Department of Beaches and Harbors, and senior positions within the Chief Administrative Office, Department of Health Services, and the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector.

LACERA's boards, executive team, and staff members thank Santos for his significant contributions to the organization and the greater Los Angeles community.

## Watch Now: How to Retire Online

Getting close to retirement? Be sure to check out our *Online Retirement Application Walkthrough* video, which helps you with preparation and, when you are ready, makes the application process simple and convenient.

The *Online Retirement Application Walkthrough* shows you exactly how to complete your retirement application through My LACERA and guides you through every step, including:

- Preparing for retirement by reviewing key resources and creating a retirement benefit estimate
- Accessing the Online Retirement Application and confirming your eligibility to retire

- Verifying your personal, beneficiary, and marital information
- Choosing the retirement date and option that work best for you
- Reviewing, signing, and submitting your application securely through My LACERA
- Providing any required documents and understanding next steps after submission



You can watch the full video or select clips on topics you need more information about. Ready to get started? Visit [lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov) > Resource Center > Video Library > Online Retirement Application Walkthrough and watch the video today.



# LACERA Accomplishments

## Board Updates

We have several updates to the Boards of Retirement and Investments for 2026.

In January, LACERA welcomed newly appointed Trustee Ernesto J. Pantoja to the Board of Retirement (BOR) and returning appointed Trustee Trevor Fay to the Board of Investments (BOI).



*Ernesto J. Pantoja*

Trustee Pantoja brings nearly two decades of experience in government affairs and labor relations. He currently serves as the Special Projects Agent for Laborers Local 300, where he directs political affairs for the Local, provides business development support, and coordinates workforce development opportunities. Trustee Pantoja earned a B.A. degree in Political Science from Loyola Marymount University and a Juris Doctor degree from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles.



*Trevor Fay*

Trustee Fay was first appointed to the BOI in 2024 to fulfill a partial term and has now been appointed by the Board of Supervisors for the 2026–2028 term. Trustee Fay is an investment professional, entrepreneur, and innovator, with extensive expertise in real estate, alternative investments, capital markets, impact and ESG measurement, and financial analysis. He holds a B.A. in American Studies from Occidental College and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

In addition, elected Trustees Shawn R. Kehoe and Jason Green started their new 2026–2028 terms, and Trustee Ronald Okum completed his 2023–2025 term on the BOI. We are glad to have the continued leadership of Trustees Kehoe and Green and extend our gratitude to Mr. Okum, who has served on LACERA’s boards for over a decade. Since his first appointment to the BOR in July 2013, Mr. Okum has served every year except for 2022, sometimes concurrently on both boards.

## Leadership Team Retirements

In addition to Santos Kreimann’s retirement as CEO (see cover article), there are a couple of other significant departures from LACERA’s leadership team.

Assistant Executive Officer Laura Guglielmo is retiring after an exceptional career in public service that includes four years at LACERA. In addition to overseeing the management and major projects of LACERA’s Systems, Administrative Services, Human Resources, and Financial and Accounting divisions, Laura facilitated the modernization of LACERA’s procurement, budget, learning, and other core administrative systems and processes, supporting efficient operations. She also helped define LACERA’s guiding principles, with a strong commitment to employee engagement and inclusion.



*Laura Guglielmo*

Richard Bendall, Chief of Internal Audit, is retiring after an impressive 23-year tenure with LACERA. In his oversight role, Bendall helped strengthen LACERA’s governance capabilities, elevated enterprise risk oversight, and steered a risk-based audit plan that spans technology, payroll controls, investment operations, and vendor security assessments.

Santos, Laura, and Richard’s leadership, expertise, and commitment were instrumental in helping LACERA deliver on its mission. We are grateful for their lasting contributions and wish them a fulfilling retirement.



*Richard Bendall*

## LACERA Represents at SACRS

LACERA was once again an active participant in the State Association of County Retirement Systems (SACRS) Fall Conference, sending over 10 staff members to the event, held in Huntington Beach from November 11 to 14. SACRS was established as part of the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL) and comprises 20 independent county retirement systems. Every spring and fall, the SACRS conferences provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer education, information sharing, and networking sessions.

This year, Division Manager of Disability Retirement Services Tamara Caldwell provided her expertise in a presentation on evaluating post-COVID conditions and claims within the context of disability retirement. Chief of Internal Audit Richard Bendall helped lead an internal audit breakout session on enterprise risk management.

### Tamara Caldwell Receives SACRS Volunteer Award

In addition to being a conference presenter, Tamara was honored with the SACRS Volunteer Award this

year. This prestigious recognition shines a spotlight on those who go above and beyond to deliver innovative and impactful content to SACRS programs—especially the Disability Breakout Session. This session is a cornerstone of SACRS education, helping trustees, staff, and members deepen their understanding of disability retirement topics, from eligibility and legal considerations to wellness strategies.

Tamara’s contributions have been exceptional. She has been attending the SACRS conferences since 2013, actively participating by delivering presentations and volunteering to contribute valuable content, and her example underscores why participating in associations like SACRS is so important. These collaborations encourage knowledge exchange and strengthen retirement systems. Congratulations, Tamara, on this well-deserved recognition!



Tamara Caldwell

## LACERA CIO Jonathan Grabel Named to 2026 Elite Institutional CIOs List



Jonathan Grabel

LACERA is pleased to announce that Chief Investment Officer Jonathan Grabel has been recognized on Markets Group’s 2026 Elite Institutional CIOs list, a distinction honoring global leaders in institutional investment strategy. Markets Group is a premier organizer of investment forums worldwide

and curates this annual list to spotlight CIOs whose vision and influence are shaping the future of asset management. Jonathan’s inclusion underscores his

exceptional leadership and strategic expertise.

Since joining LACERA in 2017, Jonathan has driven a disciplined, forward-thinking investment strategy focused on long-term value and resilience for our members. His commitment to innovation and prudent asset management continues to position LACERA as a trusted steward of retirement security.

Congratulations to Jonathan Grabel and the entire Investments team, and thank you for your outstanding service to our members.

“Life really does begin at forty.  
Up until then, you are just doing research.”

—Carl Jung

# Stay Connected With LACERA on Social Media

Planning for retirement unfolds over time, shaped by the choices you make throughout your career. To support you along that journey, LACERA is introducing a new way for active (working) members to stay informed and engaged. You can now connect with us on our official social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

## What You'll Find

As an active member, social media can be a helpful companion to your long-term retirement planning. Our posts will highlight upcoming webinars, explain key steps in the retirement process, and guide you to the right pages on [lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov) for more detailed information. You will also see tips for using My LACERA, along with snapshots of programs and resources designed to support you during your working years.

## Your Role in the Conversation

Interacting with LACERA on social media also gives you a voice in what we share next. Your engagement helps us understand which topics matter most to you, allowing us to tailor future updates that better reflect your questions, priorities, and planning needs.

## Safe and Appropriate Engagement

Social media is a public space, and we want you to feel comfortable connecting with us there. To protect your privacy, please avoid sharing personal details or benefit information in comments. If you need help with

something specific to your membership, we invite you to send us a secure message through your My LACERA account or call us at 800-786-6464. This will keep your information safe and ensure your questions reach the right team. Social media is a great place for community, and whenever you need personal assistance, we're just a call or message away.

## Start Connecting Today

**Scan the QR code below** to find LACERA's official social media pages and start following us today. We look forward to connecting with you!



# Older Americans Month

Each May, Los Angeles County recognizes Older Americans Month (OAM), a national observance led by the Administration for Community Living. OAM is a month-long celebration meant to honor older adults' continued contributions, highlighting the experience of aging and strengthening our commitment to inclusion, respect, and equity across generations.

The national theme for 2026 has not been announced as of the writing of this article, but it will be announced soon on the County's Department of Aging and Disability (AD) website ([www.ad.lacounty.gov/](http://www.ad.lacounty.gov/)). Last year's *Flip*

*the Script on Aging* video series, available on YouTube, highlights older adults who are serving their communities and redefining what it means to age in the 21st century. The AD also holds its annual Older Americans Recognition Day Awards—honoring community champions, leaders, volunteers, and caregivers.

Sources: [www.ad.lacounty.gov](http://www.ad.lacounty.gov), [www.acl.gov](http://www.acl.gov)



## Other Heritage Months

### March

- Gender Equality Month
- Greek American Heritage Month
- Irish American Heritage Month
- Women's History Month

### April

- Arab American Heritage Month
- Armenian History Month
- Scottish American Heritage Month

### May

- Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- Croatian American Heritage Month
- Jewish American Heritage Month
- Military Appreciation Month

LACERA has over 120,000 active members working across dozens of County departments. Because it's important to recognize their contributions, we allocate space in every issue to get to know some of our hard-working members and find out more about what they do. While there are more deserving stories than we could ever tell in this space, know that we are grateful to all of you for making L.A. County a better place!

### **Kurt Keller** Deputy Probation Officer, Probation Department

Kurt Keller is set to retire in April 2026 after 39 years of service to L.A. County. He's spent his entire County career in the Probation Department, most recently serving as a Deputy Probation Officer at the Hall of Records. In his role, he was responsible for preparing reports and making recommendations to the courts, among other duties. Kurt credits his career longevity to his ability to lead with love and compassion in his work.



Among his many accomplishments, Kurt is most proud of his time working at a youth sports camp. In that role, he helped young people learn valuable lessons both on and off the field, reinforcing his commitment to his community.

In retirement, Kurt looks forward to slowing down and focusing on his health. He is especially excited to take a long road trip with his wife and their dogs, embracing the opportunity to enjoy life beyond his professional career.

### **Karen Stevens** Interpreter, Los Angeles County Superior Court

Karen Stevens retired in November 2025 after 22 years of committed service to L.A. County. She worked for the Language Access Services Department of the L.A. Superior Court as a certified Spanish interpreter after spending 10 years as an independent contractor. She most recently worked at the Chatsworth Courthouse, but also spent years working at the Criminal Courts Building in Downtown Los Angeles.



In her role, Karen provided equal access to justice for individuals who were not proficient in English, including

parties, attorneys, witnesses, and other court participants. She entered the field after being introduced to the profession by another interpreter and was drawn both to the meaningful work and the flexibility it offered while she was raising young children.

Karen's proudest accomplishment was her ability to use her skills to allow countless court proceedings to unfold seamlessly. In retirement, Karen plans to continue working part-time, traveling, gardening, and expanding her volunteer work with ecological organizations.

### **Adiel Vasquez** Program Specialist IV, Chief Executive Office, Board of Supervisors

Adiel Vasquez retired in February after 40 years of dedicated service to L.A. County. He built a career defined by adaptability, knowledge, and a commitment to public safety. Most recently, he served as a Program Specialist IV, working under the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and on loan to the Sheriff's Department in Downtown Los Angeles. His unit functioned as the County's workplace violence authority, supporting 100,000 employees and handling 2,500 cases a year.

Adiel began his career as a student employee with the Los Angeles Superior Court before joining the Sheriff's Department as a 9-1-1 dispatcher. He later served as an administrative assistant with the Narcotics Bureau, worked with the Department of Children and Family Services, and became a safety manager at the County Library. These experiences ultimately led to his recruitment into the Threat Assessment Unit under the CEO, where he earned several promotions. In 2015, the unit was disbanded, and its responsibilities were transferred to the Sheriff's Department, where Adiel spent the last 20 years of his career.

Throughout his career, Adiel took pride in being a reliable and collaborative asset, including serving as the only civilian in his unit and working in a unique role supporting both the Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff's Department. He retired in February and now looks forward to spending more time with his wife and visiting their two daughters in New York. He also plans to spend more time on his hobbies—raising chickens, collecting cards, painting figurines, and rooting for the Dodgers, Lakers, and Rams.



## Pension Fund and OPEB Trust Updates

LACERA reported the following updates on the pension fund (Fund) and Other Post-Employments Benefits Trust (OPEB) at the January 14 Board of Investments (BOI) meeting. As of the end of November 2025, the Fund posted a net gain of 0.9 percent net month over month. Assets under management (AUM) reached a total market value of \$89.5 billion, setting yet another new high-water mark for the Fund. Cash equivalents remained steady at \$1.2 billion dollars.

Similarly, OPEB also performed well in November, closing the month with a monthly net return of 0.5 percent. The AUM for OPEB closed at \$5.5 billion, also a high-water mark, and the cash equivalents were \$1.13 billion. The continued growth of both the Fund and OPEB are a testament to LACERA's strategic investment approach and active stewardship.

## Looking Ahead

In addition to the Fund and OPEB updates, LACERA's Investments Division presented a pair of recommendations to the Board. The Board reviewed and made motions on the following items:

- The Board voted in favor of the proposed 2026 Strategic Framework and Initiatives, including initiating planning for a Strategic Framework refresh and collaborating with

## Did You Know?

LACERA is responsible for the administration and investment of two funds: **L.A. County's pension fund**, which provides defined retirement benefits, and the **OPEB Trust**, which provides healthcare and other benefits.

Meketa Investment Group for the purpose of reviewing governance practices.

- The Board also voted in favor of adopting the revised and retained retirement benefit actuarial assumptions and methods, as presented in the *2025 Investigation of Experience for Retirement Benefit Assumptions* report.

Watch live streams and past BOI meetings on our YouTube channel, at [www.youtube.com/@lacera2580](http://www.youtube.com/@lacera2580).

## In Case You Missed It

In late 2025, LACERA released its latest *Corporate Governance and Stewardship Update*. The update provides an overview of LACERA's approach to corporate governance and investment stewardship, including recent results from our key initiatives. Read the full report online at [lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov) > [About LACERA](#) > [Accountability](#) > [Investments](#) > [Corporate Governance](#).



## Be Wary of Outside Companies Offering “County Benefit” Webinars

LACERA has been alerted that private companies are reaching out to County employees via email, offering “complimentary” consultations and encouraging employees to set up an appointment as part of their “benefit package.” Please be advised that these are unsolicited marketing attempts from outside entities and are not affiliated with or endorsed by LACERA, the County, or the County's defined contribution plan administrator, Empower.

LACERA and Empower are the **only** authorized administrators of your retirement benefits. We do not contract with any other financial advisors or firms to educate or provide counseling to our members.

To help you identify legitimate communications from LACERA and Empower, here are some tips:

1. LACERA does not send individual emails asking you to set up an appointment for counseling services. If you receive an email of this nature, it is a marketing or phishing attempt. Remember, members must initiate

service requests by scheduling an online appointment or contacting us by phone.

2. Official LACERA email communication will come from the one of the following addresses: [notifications@cc.lacera.gov](mailto:notifications@cc.lacera.gov), [welcome@lacera.gov](mailto:welcome@lacera.gov), or [notifications@lacera.gov](mailto:notifications@lacera.gov).
3. Empower promotional emails for your 457(b) Horizons and/or 401(k) Savings Plan will come from [no-reply@email.empower.com](mailto:no-reply@email.empower.com); emails from Empower specialists will end in [@empower.com](mailto:@empower.com).

If you're not sure about a sender, hover your mouse over their email address to see if it matches one of the email addresses provided above; do the same to check the website domains of links and action buttons before clicking.

You can always contact LACERA or Empower if you are unsure about the legitimacy of an email or phone call. Call LACERA at 800-786-6464 or Empower at 800-947-0845; log in to My LACERA to send us a secure email; or send nonconfidential inquiries to us at [welcome@lacera.gov](mailto:welcome@lacera.gov).



# PEPRA 101

## Your Contributions as a Plan G or Safety C Member



### PEPRA 101: Compensation Limits for General Plan G and Safety Plan C Members

General Plan G and Safety Plan C were created to address requirements of the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA). As a PEPRA member, your plan has different provisions than legacy plans, including annual compensation limits for calculating your benefits.

Under PEPRA Sections 7522.10 and 7522.32, the compensation limit is adjusted annually, based on the changes to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers: U.S. City Average.

**For 2026, the PEPRA compensation limit for calculating benefits is \$191,679.**

### How the Compensation Limit Is Applied

If your pensionable earnings reach the compensation limit during the year, any of your additional earnings over \$191,679 for the remainder of 2026 will not count toward your pensionable compensation, although you will continue to receive service credit. LACERA will stop deducting retirement contributions for the rest of the year and resume the following January.

While all plan members are subject to federal benefit

and compensation limits under Internal Revenue Code Sections 415(b) and 401(a)(17), PEPRA compensation limits are lower than the federal limits, so the federal limits don't apply.

Visit your plan center any time for the current General Plan G and Safety Plan C compensation limits:

[lacera.gov > Active Members > Plan G > Compensation Limits](#)

[lacera.gov > Active Members > Plan C > Compensation Limits](#)

### More About Your Pensionable Compensation at Retirement

When you retire, your benefit is based on several factors: your retirement plan, final average compensation (FAC), service credit, and age.

Your pensionable compensation is the portion of your pay that consists of pay items that are eligible for calculating contributions and your retirement benefit. Your FAC is based on your highest pensionable compensation received during a specific consecutive-month period of service, which is 36 months for PEPRA members.

Visit [lacera.gov > Active Members > Compensation > PEPRA Pay Codes](#) for more information about pensionable and nonpensionable pay items.

## 3 Things: MLB Spring Training

Spring brings blooming flowers, longer days, and the unmistakable sound of a bat hitting a baseball. Every February, Major League Baseball (MLB) ushers in its annual ritual of hope and renewal—Spring Training. Here are three interesting facts about Spring Training that you may or may not know, as the Los Angeles Dodgers prepare to win their third straight World Series championship.



According to many baseball historians, the first Spring Training took place in 1870, when the Cincinnati Red Stockings and the Chicago White Stockings held organized baseball camps in New Orleans.



Southern California was once a Spring Training hotspot. The Cubs, White Sox, Pirates, and Athletics all held their Spring Training camps in various cities throughout Southern California, including Pasadena and Santa Monica.



Spring Training played a major role in Babe Ruth's career. In 1918, a 23-year-old Babe Ruth—then known primarily as a pitcher—was called upon to hit in a Spring Training game. He promptly hit a 500-plus-foot home run out of the stadium, and the rest is history.

Sources: [www.pbssocal.org](#), [www.springtrainingonline.com](#), [www.history.com](#)

**Upcoming Holidays**

LACERA will be closed on:

**Monday, March 30**  
For César Chávez Day

**Monday, May 25**  
For Memorial Day

# Community Corner

## County Service and Donation Opportunities

LACERA members contribute to the well-being of our community through both their professional and volunteer efforts. Because of your engagement, we regularly receive requests from County partners to share meaningful

donation, volunteer, and work opportunities, listed below. Thank you for giving back and making a positive impact—on and off the job!

## Hygiene Product Drive to Help the Unhoused Population

The L.A. County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is coordinating its Help Everyone Reach Others (HERO) campaign, which entails collecting personal care items, such as feminine hygiene products, toilet paper, wipes, dental items, and new socks, to create care kits and provide them to shelters and unhoused persons.



This campaign runs annually from April to May and is a great way to help those in need of the basics. Email [dpssvolunteers@dpss.lacounty.gov](mailto:dpssvolunteers@dpss.lacounty.gov) for more information about the list of acceptable donations and how to participate.



## Learn to Apply Advanced Communication Skills

The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) is offering a 25-hour Basic Mediation Skills Workshop this spring for individuals who would like to volunteer with DCBA. This interactive training introduces the fundamentals of mediation through lectures, group discussions, exercises, and role-play activities. Participants will build practical skills such as active listening, reframing, identifying underlying conflict, and navigating communication barriers—tools that are valuable in both personal and professional



settings. Selected volunteers must complete an interview, obtain Live Scan clearance, and commit to two shifts per week for a period of one year. New mediators receive comprehensive training and begin in community-based programs, with potential to support court-based mediations later.

To apply for the workshop, **email your resume** to [DRPAVolunteer@dcba.lacounty.gov](mailto:DRPAVolunteer@dcba.lacounty.gov) by **April 15, 2026**. For more information about mediation services, visit [www.dcba.lacounty.gov/countywidedrp/](http://www.dcba.lacounty.gov/countywidedrp/).



## There's a Webinar for You—Join Us!

It's always the right time to prepare for retirement, no matter where you are in your career! LACERA partners with Empower to host workshops and webinars to help you plan for your future. To browse upcoming sessions and register online, visit [lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov), then click on the **Resource Center** tile on the homepage to access the **Workshops** page. We look forward to seeing you soon!

- **New Hire Orientations** are held on the first Wednesday of each month (plus additional Wednesdays to meet demand), in partnership with Empower. This workshop is geared toward new and recent hires (those who have worked for L.A. County for fewer than two years) and for other employees who want a refresher on how their pension and 457(b) or 401(k) plans work. If you haven't attended a new hire workshop, we highly recommend it!
- **Mid-Career Workshops** are held on the first Thursday of each month, starting on April 2, 2026. This seminar,

which is co-presented with Empower, is for members in the early to mid-stages of their careers who want to make sure they are on the right track for retirement. Topics include eligibility requirements for retirement, what a plan transfer does for you, how purchasing service credit can enhance your retirement, and what happens when you leave service.

- **Pre-Retirement and Retiree Healthcare Workshops** are held every Tuesday (except for Tuesdays immediately following a holiday), in partnership with Empower. These comprehensive workshops offer valuable retirement strategies and benefits information to help you prepare for a financially secure future, including an overview of medical, dental/vision, and long-term care insurance.

### Additional Sessions

Other workshop topics offered on a rotating basis include LACERA Special Durable Power of Attorney, My LACERA, Retirement Options, Active and Retired Death Benefits, LACERA Domestic Partnership, and a variety of mini-webinars hosted by Empower.



# LACERA + the Defined Contribution Plans = Retirement Readiness



Your LACERA benefit will help supplement your income in retirement, but did you know many financial professionals estimate you'll need to replace roughly 80 percent of your working income to live comfortably in retirement?\* Your LACERA benefit alone may not get you to 80 percent.

The good news: The County of Los Angeles offers two voluntary Defined Contribution Plans designed to help you reach your retirement savings goals. If you are not enrolled in the Horizons 457(b) and/or 401(k) Savings Plans, let 2026 be the year you take action to enroll and start saving for your future. If you are already enrolled and saving, consider increasing your deferrals by 1 percent or more.

Don't forget that the plans offer:

- **Tax-deferred savings:** The money you contribute now won't be taxed until you take a withdrawal in retirement.
- **An array of investment options:** You'll be able to choose from 11 Target Date Funds, eight Asset Class Funds, and a self-directed brokerage account (SDBA). The SDBA is intended for knowledgeable investors who understand the risks associated with the SDBA.

### • Your choice of account

**management options:** Online, phone, in-person, or through our mobile app. You can monitor your progress and make changes the way you want, whenever you want.

In addition, the County may match your pre-tax contribution. Check your Memorandum of Understanding or Summary Plan Description to find out if your pre-tax contributions to the 401(k) Savings Plan are eligible for a County match. If you are a Flex or MegaFlex employee, your match to the 401(k) is not affected by the Special County Match rules as defined by the plan.

### New Eligibility for the 401(k) Savings Plan

Good news! Full-time employees in Choices and Options are now able to contribute to the 401(k) Savings Plan. If you are already participating in the 457(b) Horizons Plan, this additional plan is a good way to further supplement your retirement savings strategy and take advantage of even more tax-deferred savings. For answers to common questions, visit [www.countyla.com](http://www.countyla.com), then select *Plan resources* and click *Things to consider*.

\*Dhir, R. (2025, March 4). *How Much Do I Need to Save to Retire?*

Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/retirement/how-much-you-should-have-saved-age/>

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The following content was provided by RELAC.

## Retiring in the Next Five Years?



**Act now.** Join the Retired Employees of Los Angeles County (RELAC) as an Affiliate Member—it's **free** until you retire! (You must enroll before retirement.)

### Why join now? Waiting could cost you.

- **Protect your pension:** RELAC is the voice that protects your future pension.
- **Safeguard your benefits:** We fight to preserve and strengthen the benefits you've earned.
- **Stay informed:** Get critical updates before changes happen—not after.
- **Member-only experiences:** Dodger games, Hollywood Bowl, golf tournaments, and more.
- **Make an impact:** Volunteer or donate to food drives, March of Dimes, Spark of Love, and more.

- **Scholarships available:** For RELAC family members.

Don't wait until retirement. Join before you need us.

### What an Affiliate Member said about us:

"I joined before retiring, and it was the smartest decision I made for my future. RELAC had my back from day one."

**Enroll today—don't miss out.**

**Protect your future.**

**Be informed. Be protected. Be a RELAC member.**

Call 800-537-3522 | Visit [www.relac.org](http://www.relac.org) | Scan the QR code to join today!



## How to Connect With LACERA



### Call Us

M-F, 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. PT  
800-786-6464



### Log in to My LACERA

Visit [lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov) and click the green My LACERA button at the top right.



### Make an Appointment

Visit [lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov) and click "Appointment Reservations."  
(We do not offer drop-in service.)



### Use Our Secure Dropbox (24/7)

Located outside the Member Service Center at 300 N. Lake, Pasadena, CA 91101



### Email Us

General inquiries: [welcome@lacera.gov](mailto:welcome@lacera.gov)  
Retiree Healthcare: [healthcare@lacera.gov](mailto:healthcare@lacera.gov)  
For confidential matters, send a secure message through My LACERA.



### Visit Us Online

[lacera.gov](http://lacera.gov)



### Mail Us

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