



# Montana Teachers' Retirement System

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## *Congratulations on your new position!*

In public school districts, community colleges, and certain State agencies in the state of Montana, all persons whose job duties are primarily educational/instructional in nature<sup>1</sup> must participate in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) beginning with their first day<sup>2</sup> of employment.

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## What is TRS?

The Montana Legislature established TRS as a Defined Benefit pension plan in 1937. In a Defined Benefit pension plan, both you and your employer contribute to the system. Your *member* contributions are kept in your TRS member account, where they earn interest each month.

When you have accrued at least five years of *creditable service* with TRS, you will be a "vested" member, which means you are eligible for a future retirement benefit. The best part? Defined Benefit pensions pay retirees a monthly benefit *for life*, no matter how long they live!



We encourage you to watch our **TRS 101: Retirement System Basics** presentation. You can find a link in the "Active Member" section of our website: [trs.mt.gov](https://trs.mt.gov)

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## What happens next?

1. First, your employer will deduct the required amount of member contributions from your pay and will remit them to TRS.
  - If you have questions about the amount or the timing of those contributions, you should check with your employer.
2. After your employer has remitted your first monthly contributions to TRS, we will mail a Welcome letter to your home address.
  - The letter will explain how to set up a secure "My TRS" online account and it will ask you to designate at least one beneficiary online. (This step can't be done until TRS has received your first monthly contributions from your employer.)

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy your new position. If you have specific questions about TRS, please call our office in Helena at (406) 444-3134 or (866) 600-4045.

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<sup>1</sup> The TRS Fact Sheet, *Which Positions are Reportable to TRS?* provides more detailed information about participation requirements. Fact Sheets can be found on the TRS website: [trs.mt.gov](https://trs.mt.gov).

<sup>2</sup> If you are a new **substitute teacher** or **part-time teachers' aide / paraprofessional** and you are **not** already a member of TRS, you may be eligible to defer (postpone) membership in TRS. To learn about your options, read the TRS Fact Sheet, *Substitute Teaching and Elective Membership Deferral*, available at [trs.mt.gov](https://trs.mt.gov).