

P.S.

# POST SCRIPT

NEWS FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

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## KEEPING YOU CONNECTED

As LACERA continues to evolve our operations and expand online services to meet your needs, we're working hard to ensure your account security. This issue of *PostScript* highlights new protocols and procedures we are deploying as well as measures you can take to keep your information safe.

See the Enhanced Online and Phone Services article below to see how to make use of our new

Virtual Member Service Center, upload documents, contact us through our Remote Call Center, and attend online LACERA Board meetings. Throughout the rest of the issue, we've provided info on staying alert to new pandemic-themed scams, plus tips on staying cybersafe while taking advantage of the convenience of digital services.

## Our Enhanced Online and Phone Services

Because communicating effectively is increasingly important in a world where we are physically separated, we continue to expand the range of online services available to you. Following are highlights of the options for managing your benefits and staying connected with us.

### My LACERA

If you aren't signed up already, we strongly recommend creating a My LACERA account. You can quickly and easily upload documents, update your

beneficiaries, view your retirement contributions, see your Retirement Benefit Estimate, apply to purchase service credit, and even schedule a virtual appointment with one of our retirement specialists.

It's important to keep your contact information current on My LACERA. Any time you move, change phone numbers, or switch emails, log in and update your info by clicking "Profile" in the top right corner. This contact info is how we keep **cont'd on pg. 5**

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**Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association**

**Board of Retirement:**

**HERMAN B. SANTOS**

Chair  
Elected by General Members

**VIVIAN H. GRAY**

Vice Chair  
Elected by General Members

**GINA ZAPANTA**

Secretary  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**ELIZABETH GINSBERG**

Chief Deputy County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Alternate Ex-Officio Member

**JAMES P. HARRIS**

Alternate Member  
Elected by Retired Members

**SHAWN R. KEHOE**

Elected by Safety Members

**KEITH KNOX**

County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Ex-Officio Member

**WAYNE MOORE**

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**RONALD A. OKUM**

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**WILLIAM R. PRYOR**

Alternate Member  
Elected by Safety Members

**LES ROBBINS**

Elected by Retired Members

**THOMAS WALSH**

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**Board of Investments:**

**DAVID GREEN**

Chair  
Elected by General Members

**HERMAN B. SANTOS**

Vice Chair  
Elected by General Members

**WAYNE MOORE**

Secretary  
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**ALAN J. BERNSTEIN**

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**ELIZABETH GINSBERG**

Chief Deputy County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Alternate Ex-Officio Member

**ELIZABETH GREENWOOD**

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

**SHAWN R. KEHOE**

Elected by Safety Members

**KEITH KNOX**

County Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Ex-Officio Member

**DAVID L. MUIR**

Elected by Retired Members

**GINA V. SANCHEZ**

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

Chief Executive Officer

**SANTOS H. KREIMANN**

Assistant Executive Officer

**JJ POPOWICH**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DESK

SANTOS H. KREIMANN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# You Can Count on Us

**H**ello, members. I hope you and your families are staying safe and well as we move into autumn and toward the end of an extraordinary year. From all of us at LACERA, **thank you for all you continue to do for our community.**

Despite the uncertainty in so many areas of our lives at this time, LACERA continues to be here for you on all fronts. In this issue, we highlight the new ways you can communicate with us, learn about your retirement benefits, manage your retirement account, and stay secure online while taking advantage of virtual services.

“It’s hard to predict what will happen in the coming months, **but we will get through it together.**”

You can also rest assured that your benefits remain secure. The portfolio has performed well during market turmoil, in large part because the Board of Investments modified our strategic asset allocation in 2018 to be more risk-aware. Our principal risk

management tool is diversification, and the portfolio is more diversified than ever. This positioning has helped the fund weather the pandemic and maintain stability.

### Staff Accomplishments

In the previous issue, I described our transition to a remote working environment in the last several months. At the same time, our divisions have increased productivity and streamlined operations to **improve** and **expand** LACERA’s services under the most challenging conditions. Space does not permit me to highlight all 15 divisions’ efforts over the past year, but here are a few of many notable accomplishments, most of which involved extensive collaboration with internal and external partners.

- Our Financial and Accounting Services Division led an experience study that helped determine the contribution rates for active members.
- Our Internal Audit Division launched the internal Ethics Hotline.
- Our Investments Division received the U.N.-affiliated Principles for Responsible Investing A+ rating and has deftly handled our fund

portfolio during the COVID-19 crisis.

- Our Legal Division reviewed and recommended negotiated pay items to the Board of Retirement, processed about 335 investment-related transactions and projects, and fulfilled 140 Public Records Act requests.
- Our Member Services Division handled about 400 to 500 member messages per day after we had to close the Member Services and Call Centers, and it helped create the Virtual Member Services Center.
- Our Quality Assurance and Metrics Division reviewed over 130 negotiated pay items in collaboration with the Legal Division and L.A. County CEO.
- Our Systems Division established remote operations and secure portals for staff members, as well as the Remote Call Center and virtual Board meetings.
- Our Member Services Division developed and is co-presenting Pre-Retirement webinars in coordination with Empower Retirement.

On behalf of the Boards and executive and management teams, I commend our dedicated staff members for going above

and beyond, day in and day out, throughout this year.

### Looking Forward

At the direction of the Boards, the executive and management teams are prioritizing strategic goals that are vital to improving internal processes, enhancing accountability, modernizing services, and ensuring security while we operate under the current pandemic and beyond. Some of these prioritized goals include:

- Updating and bolstering our business continuity and disaster recovery plans
- Continuing IT security and infrastructure upgrades
- Continuing and evaluating internal performance improvements through expanded use of metrics and key performance indicators

In addition, we continue to move forward on the website redesign, an enhanced retirement summary and application, and the development of a social media program. Watch for announcements in upcoming newsletters and LACERA emails.

### Keeping You Informed

I send regular email updates about LACERA operations, services, and other timely announcements to members with email addresses on file with us. If you are not receiving these messages from LACERA, be sure to log in to your My LACERA account via lacera.com and

update your profile to include your current email address.

### Board Updates

In early July, we welcomed Chief Deputy Treasurer and Tax Collector Elizabeth Ginsberg as the alternate ex-officio Trustee for the Board of Retirement and Board of Investments.

Congratulations are also in order for Board of Investments Trustee Alan Bernstein. In June 2020, Mr. Bernstein received the NACD's highest level of certification, the Gold Standard, joining Board Trustees Vivian Gray and Shawn Kehoe as NACD Board Leadership Fellows.

See more about Ms. Ginsberg's and Mr. Bernstein's accomplishments on page 4.

### Staying Strong

It's hard to predict what will happen in the coming months, but I know that we will get through it together. Collectively and as individuals, we have proved that we can adapt, and, as is the case with LACERA, harness the power of change to create a better organization.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you and will always strive to fulfill our mission and live up to the trust you have placed in us. Until next time, take good care and stay safe.

*Santos H. Kreimann*



# LACERA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Welcome, New Trustee Elizabeth Ginsberg

Congratulations and welcome to Elizabeth Ginsberg, who has joined both of LACERA’s Boards as part of her new role as the County’s Chief Deputy Treasurer-Tax Collector. Ms. Ginsberg fills the alternate ex-officio position left open by Keith Knox, who stepped into the regular ex-officio Trustee role last year after the retirement of long-term LACERA Trustee Joseph Kelly.



Elizabeth Ginsberg

in property taxes, accounting, and internal controls across three departments of the County. In her new County role, she oversees all operations of the Treasury and Tax Collection Department, including the systems and services necessary for the collection and investment of County funds.

She holds a B.S. in Accounting from Cal Poly Pomona and is an Accredited Automated Clearing House Professional.

Ms. Ginsberg has 23 years of combined experience

## Chief Investment Officer Names Esmeralda del Bosque as a Rising Star

This year, *Chief Investment Officer* (CIO) honored LACERA Senior Investment Officer–Portfolio Analytics Esmeralda del Bosque for her “continued success at LACERA and ensuring the fund is working to the best of its ability.”



Esmeralda del Bosque

CIO is a publisher that provides the latest news and research for investment organizations like pensions, endowments, and foundations. Each year as part of its “NextGen” series, the organization recognizes and interviews 25 outstanding individuals and leaders in the investment field who are “rising stars.”

You can find the full interview with Ms. del Bosque on CIO’s website at <https://www.ai-cio.com/lists/class-2020-nextgens/?pid=51964>.

## Trustee Alan Bernstein Recognized as NACD Fellow

In June 2020, Board of Investments Trustee Alan J. Bernstein received the National Association of Corporate Directors’ highest level of certification, the Gold Standard, joining Board Trustees Vivian Gray and Shawn Kehoe as NACD Board Leadership Fellows.



Alan J. Bernstein

Congratulations to Mr. Bernstein on joining a diverse and distinguished group of credentialed directors who serve on domestic and international corporate, private, and nonprofit boards.



“ Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does. ”

– William James

## Enhanced Online and Phone Services cont'd from pg 1

you informed about everything you need to know about your LACERA membership.

### Document Uploads

You can upload and share vital info, documents, and forms with us directly and securely online. You can even submit forms you've been asked to sign and return. After logging into My LACERA, click the "Upload" button in the top right corner. Sometimes an original document is required, in which case mail it to P.O. Box 7060, Pasadena, CA 91109-7060.

### Remote Call Center

We created our Remote Call Center after Safer at Home orders went into effect in mid-March to provide uninterrupted service while also protecting the health and safety of our members and staff. As of mid-July, we had answered over 23,000 phone calls since our new system launched.

When you call LACERA, you are automatically routed to a Retirement Benefits Specialist who has been trained and

equipped to work remotely. The speed and level of service you receive will be the same as if you called our on-site center.

### Virtual Member Service Center

Our most recent digital deployment was the Virtual Member Service Center, offering all the services of in-person appointments, at home. To utilize the virtual center, visit [lacera.com](http://lacera.com) and click on the appointment system link on the bottom of the page. You can select an online or phone appointment. (An online appointment will allow the Retirement Benefits Specialist to share their computer screen with you, for more effective service.)

### Digital Board Meetings

Our Board meetings are broadcast online so that all stakeholders can attend and participate. For attendance links or a phone number, access LACERA's Archived

Agenda Packages at [lacera.com/archives/archivesBoards/archived\\_agenda\\_pkgs.html](http://lacera.com/archives/archivesBoards/archived_agenda_pkgs.html) and click on the date of the upcoming board meeting you wish to attend.

To provide a public comment, you may submit a written comment or request to speak by emailing [publiccomment@lacera.com](mailto:publiccomment@lacera.com). If you are requesting to speak, please include your contact information, agenda item, and meeting date. Public comment requests must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on the day before the scheduled meeting. We look forward to you joining us.



# 3 THINGS: Chewing Gum

Whether you snap, pop, or quietly gnaw it, September 30 is your opportunity to celebrate National Chewing Gum Day. Pick out your favorite pack of spearmint, bubble, cinnamon, or fruit gum and savor these fun facts:

- Humans have been using some form of chewing gum for more than 5,000 years! A 2007 archeology dig in Finland uncovered tar with tooth imprints. It's believed to be the oldest piece of chewing gum ever discovered.

- Chewing a piece of gum has been shown to increase focus and memory, and reduce stress in multiple studies. Enjoying some sugar-free gum can also help your oral hygiene or curb hunger cravings.
- Uh oh! Did you get some gum stuck in your hair? Don't worry, the oils in a pantry staple can help remove it. Just cover the gummy area with some peanut butter and start rubbing to get it out.

Sources: [nationalcalendarday.com](http://nationalcalendarday.com); [chevysgum.com](http://chevysgum.com); [mobile-cuisine.com](http://mobile-cuisine.com)

## Upcoming Security Update

# Account Text Message Confirmations

Please check, update, or add your cell phone number on My LACERA to receive text message confirmations. We are currently updating our account notification system. Soon, when you make a change to your My LACERA profile, you will be sent a confirmation text message.

We will send this notification to keep you informed about your

account and its security, as well as to ensure you are the one who made any updates. In the event you did not make the changes, you will be provided instructions on how to contact us immediately to fix the issue.

We take an additional step for your security in the form of email alerts. For example, we will notify you via email when there has

been a login to your My LACERA account on a new device.

We will also email you if there have been too many unsuccessful login attempts or if your password is changed. If it was not you who attempted to login or made a change to your password, alert LACERA immediately using the information provided in the alert.

# Scam Alert: Avoid COVID-19 Contact Tracing Scams

**COVID-19** cases are growing in L.A. County. You might get a phone call, text message, or email from a “contact tracer” looking for more information about a supposed COVID-19 case. They say they are working to fight the spread of COVID-19 and need more information, including your Social Security number, financial information, or immigration status.

However, these scammers are impersonating legitimate COVID-19 contact tracers. Their intent is to profit from the current public health emergency, and they are trying to trick you into giving personal or financial information.

If you are contacted by someone claiming to be a contact tracer, remember the following:

- Be cautious of suspicious emails, phone calls, or text messages.
- Never provide personal information about your finances, Social Security number, or detailed health information.
- Contact your local health department to verify that the calls or messages are valid.
- Be careful about clicking on email links. (Hover your mouse above the link to see if it comes from a legitimate organization website or email address.)
- Do not open suspicious attachments.

## How to Identify Real Contact Tracers

Los Angeles County is doing legitimate contact tracing, but trained public health specialists will never ask for a Social Security number, payment, or documented status.

If you have a positive lab result for COVID-19, expect a public health specialist from L.A. County Public Health to contact you by phone to interview you about possible exposures and to identify others who may have been exposed. They will leave a call-back number if necessary. If they cannot reach you, they will send a letter.

Please answer these calls and call them back if they leave a message. The information is protected and cannot be shared with others except in emergency situations.

For more information, visit <https://dcba.lacounty.gov>.



# TIPS TO AVOID FRAUD

Now more than ever, it is important to protect your personal information against scams and other fraud. The Federal Trade Commission has created this helpful list of nine things you can do to avoid fraud.

- 1. Spot imposters.** Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust, like a government official, family member, or charity. Don't send money or give out personal information to any unexpected requests—whether it comes as a text, phone call, or email.
- 2. Do online searches.** Type a company or product name into your search bar with words like “review,” “complaint,” or “scam.” You can even search for phone numbers to see if other people have reported them as scams.
- 3. Don't believe your caller ID.** Technology makes it easy for scammers to fake caller ID information, so the name and number you see aren't always real. If someone is asking for money or personal information, hang up. If you think the caller is telling the truth, call back a number you know is genuine.
- 4. Don't pay upfront for a promise.** Someone might ask you to pay in advance for things like debt relief, credit, and loan offers. They might even say you've won a prize, but first you have to pay taxes or fees. If you do, they'll probably take the money and disappear.
- 5. Consider how you pay.** Credit cards have significant fraud protection built in, but some payment methods don't. Wiring money through services like Western Union or MoneyGram is risky because it's nearly impossible to get your money back. That's also true for reloadable cards and gift cards. Government offices and

honest companies will never require you to use these payment methods.

- 6. Talk to someone.** Before you give up your money or personal information, talk to someone you trust. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. They might even threaten you. Slow down, check out the story online, or talk to a friend.
- 7. Hang up on robocalls.** If you answer the phone and hear a recorded sales pitch, hang up and report it to the FTC at <https://ftc.gov/complaint>. These calls are illegal and often the products are bogus.
- 8. Be skeptical about free trials.** Some companies use free trials to sign you up for products and bill you every month until you cancel. Before you agree, research the company and read the cancellation policy. Always review your monthly statements for charges you don't recognize.
- 9. Don't deposit a check and wire money back.** By law, banks must make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering a fake check can take weeks. If a check you deposit turns out to be fake, you're responsible for repaying the bank.

Sign up for free scam alerts from the FTC at <https://ftc.gov/scams>.



### Public Service Announcement

## Adopt-A-Family for the Holiday Season

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is gearing up for its annual Adopt-A-Family Program. With the holiday season around the corner, everyone is invited to get involved!

Adopt-A-Family is a special program that allows individuals the opportunity to provide sponsorship and a memorable holiday season to families in need who are currently being served by DPSS.

New items such as toys, clothing, and household items are just a few of the thoughtful gifts given.

Sponsors can choose the family size, general location, and how many families that they would like to sponsor, as there is no limit. Group sponsorships are highly encouraged, and once a sponsor is matched, they can review the family's wish list and decide what and how to give.

Employees or groups interested in adopting a family may fill out an online sponsor application at <https://bit.ly/DPSSAAF>. For any questions, contact Brenda Gonzalez, DPSS Volunteer Coordinator at [AdoptAFamily@dpss.lacounty.gov](mailto:AdoptAFamily@dpss.lacounty.gov).



### Upcoming Holidays

#### LACERA will be closed:

- **Monday, September 7**  
Labor Day
- **Monday, October 12**  
Indigenous Peoples Day
- **Wednesday, November 11**  
Veterans Day
- **Thursday, November 26**  
Thanksgiving
- **Friday, November 27**  
Day after Thanksgiving

#### Editor's Note:

*PostScript* is published by the staff of LACERA. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters; LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

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