

Spotlight on retirement

LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION • JUNE 2021 • VOL. 32, NO. 2

NEW LACERA.com Goes Live July 30!

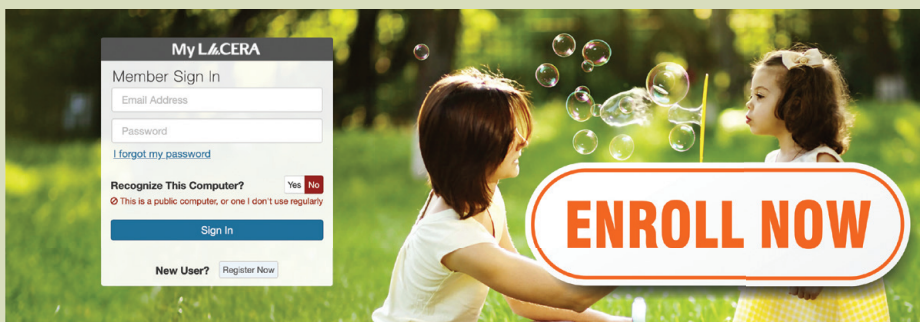
We are getting ready to launch July 30 and are excited to give you a first look at the new lacera.com! Not only does the website have a brand-new design, it has been completely reorganized and streamlined, with an improved search engine so you can find the information you need quickly and easily. The site is also responsive and mobile-friendly, meaning the content adapts to fit the screen of whatever device you are using, including your cellphone.

For a sneak peek, go to **page 5**.

Enroll in My LACERA Today!

If you haven't already, signing up for My LACERA is the best way to easily and securely manage your retirement account, personal information, and beneficiaries. Registering for My LACERA is quick and easy. Visit lacera.com and click on the My LACERA icon on the bottom right of the homepage to get started.

cont'd on pg. 11



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**Los Angeles County Employees
Retirement Association**

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Elected by General Members

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Elected by Retired Members

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Vice Chair
Elected by Retired Members

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Secretary
Appointed by Board of Supervisors

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

DAVID GREEN

Elected by General Members

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Appointed by Board of Supervisors

PATRICK T. JONES

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

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Elected by Safety Members

GINA V. SANCHEZ

Appointed by Board of Supervisors

HERMAN B. SANTOS

Elected by General Members

Chief Executive Officer

SANTOS H. KREIMANN

Assistant Executive Officer

JJ POPOWICH

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DESK

SANTOS H. KREIMANN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Things Are Looking Up

Hello, members:

We are already halfway through 2021 and are starting summer on a positive note. Now that COVID-19 vaccination eligibility has been expanded and millions of people have received their shots—including over 27 million in California alone as of mid-April—cases are receding.

Here in Los Angeles County, the daily testing positivity and hospitalization rates have dropped dramatically over the last several months, allowing us to begin resuming normal activities. While we wait for the green light to bring more employees back in-house and reopen LACERA's Member Service Center, we have finished physical

know, to assist us in scheduling our work teams and assignments..

Thanks again to all of you who have worked so hard over the last year to save lives and keep our communities safe, as well as our members who were patient and supportive as we worked through operational changes to continue to provide you service.

Investments Update

As we approach the end of the fiscal year on June 30, our investments continue to maintain value and we have weathered the ups and downs of the market through the pandemic well. See the investment report from Chief Investment Officer Jon Grabel on page 6 for more information about how LACERA is protecting the fund and our assets over the long term.

March Madness Wrap-Up

We had a record number of retirements this year, which tested the capabilities of our remote and virtual systems, as well as our ability to process member applications with limited staff onsite. I am happy to report that our Retirement Benefits Specialists, Document Processing Center and Retiree Healthcare staff, and team members from multiple divisions were able to transition 1,784 members to retirement, up from 1,690 in 2020 and 1,765 in 2019. Thanks to all our dedicated staff members who worked long hours and put in the extra effort this busy season, and congratulations to our new retirees.

“
The number of COVID-19 cases are receding, and we are beginning to resume normal activities while we wait for the green light to reopen.
”

modifications to our offices and are working out final details regarding onsite protocols and staffing, to keep you and our employees healthy during visits. We have also encouraged our staff members to get vaccinated and voluntarily let us

From the Executive Desk cont'd

Employee Engagement Survey Completed

In the March *Spotlight*, I shared that we had launched an employee engagement program to foster a more rewarding work environment. This ultimately translates to better service for members, since employees with high levels of job satisfaction perform better, are more innovative, and remain loyal to the organization.

Our first step in this process was conducting a confidential employee engagement survey, facilitated by the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement, which had an impressive response rate of 86 percent. As of the end of April, we have received and are reviewing the results, which we will be communicating to staff in May. Our next steps include setting up staff focus groups to take a deeper dive into the results—identifying and developing action plans for areas needing improvement, and building on success in areas where we are doing well.

New LACERA.com

Finally, I'm excited to present a preview of the new lacera.com on page 5—a strategic goal that has been years in the making and execution. The new site was developed, designed, and written entirely by an in-house team led by our Communications Division. I applaud the team—made up of key staff members from our Systems and Communications divisions, as well as subject matter experts from across the organization—for their perseverance in completing this ambitious first phase of the website redesign, despite the challenges of working remotely last year. Since web development is a highly interconnected process, with simultaneous pieces in development, this entailed a tremendous amount of collaboration, attention to detail, and follow-through, sustained over many months. With an aggressive timeline for completion, all team members had to meet their deadlines; if not, the cascade effect would have delayed the entire project.

Be sure to go online and explore the new site when it launches July 30! You'll see that the site has an improved look, interface, search capabilities, and has been completely streamlined with your needs in mind. And remember, this is only the beginning. Our robust new content management system will enable us to add more multimedia and interactive features and provide a better user experience going forward.

Enjoy Your Summer

Thank you for all you do. I wish you a happy Independence Day and hope you will be enjoying barbecues and other outdoor celebrations again this year. I know I relish time with family and friends with a greater sense of appreciation than ever before.

Continue to stay safe and healthy!

Santos H. Kreimann

Fraud Alert From the D.A.'s Office

Don't Get Scammed Out of Your Home



Beware of criminals attempting to take your home right out from under you.

In the Home Title Fraud Scam, the crooks impersonate the homeowner so they can refinance or sell the victim's property for the scammer's benefit.

They first obtain the homeowner's personal information through identity theft or by stealing mail. Then, they create false documents, such as a fake

driver's license using the victim's name and the scammer's photo. Those false documents are used to sell the home or take out a loan against the property without the homeowner's knowledge.

Tips:

- Shred documents and don't give out personal information by phone or email.
- Beware if you stop receiving your usual utility bills and property tax statements.

- Check your mail. The county sends copies of documents recorded against a property, such as loans and change of ownership.

Visit lacera.com/about_lacera/fraud_alerts.html for a link with more details.





LACERA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CIO Jon Grabel Recognized as Industry Leader



Congratulations are also in order for Chief Investment Officer Jon Grabel, who has been included in *Chief Investment Officer* magazine's "2021 Power 100" list of influential CIOs and other investment and financial industry leaders. You can see the list on the CIO website

at www.ai-cio.com/lists/2021-power-100/.

For more about LACERA's investment fund strategies and initiatives, see page 6.

SIO Scott Zdrazil Elected as CII Board Chair

Congratulations to Senior Investment Officer Scott Zdrazil for his election to Chair of the Council of Institutional Investors (CII) board. CII promotes corporate governance and financial policies that enhance long-term value for employee benefit funds and their beneficiaries. Its membership includes over 140 public, labor, and corporate employee benefit plans.



LACERA has been active with CII for over 25 years. Mr. Zdrazil joined the board three years ago after being nominated by the LACERA Board of Investments. His leadership will continue to enhance our advocacy efforts for prudent investor rights and best corporate governance practices at portfolio companies.

Retiree Payday Calendar

Your monthly retirement allowance check is payable the last business day of the month.

JUNE 2021							JULY 2021							AUGUST 2021						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5 6				1	2	3 4							1	
	7	8	9	10	11	12 13	H	6	7	8	9	10 11	2	3	4	5	6	7 8		
	14	15	16	17	18	19 20	12	13	14	15	16	17 18	9	10	11	12	13	14 15		
	21	22	23	24	25	26 27	19	20	21	22	23	24 25	16	17	18	19	20	21 22		
M	29	D					26	27	M	29	D	31	23	24	25	26	M	28 29		
													30	D						

M = Check Mailing Date **D** = Direct Deposit **H** = Holiday

CONNECT WITH US!

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P.O. Box 7060
Pasadena, CA 91109-7060

HOMEPAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Here we highlight some of the new homepage design and navigation features to get you started, but don't just take our word for it! Go to lacera.com starting July 30 and look around to see (and click) for yourself. Future phases of the website will include more interactive features and guided content based on your needs and feedback.



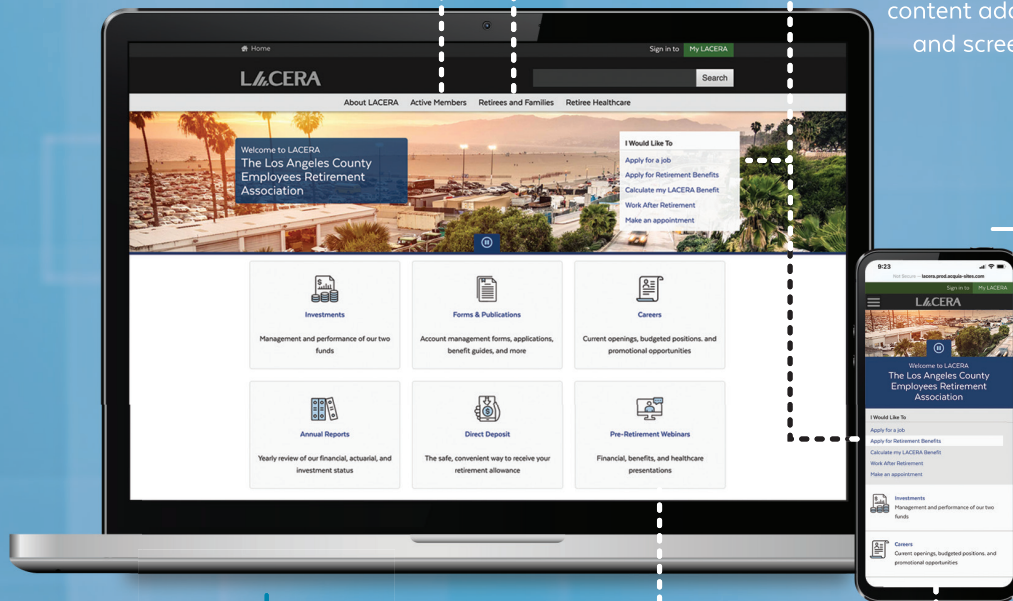
SHORTCUTS

To save you time, "I Would Like to" shortcuts take you directly to the most frequently accessed self-service options and information pages.



DEVICE-FRIENDLY

Whether you are on your cellphone, tablet, or laptop, the content adapts to whatever device and screen size you are using.



REORGANIZED CONTENT

Dropdown menus with grouped content specific to your career stage help you find what you need with ease.

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Plan books
Service Credit
Reciprocity
Retirement Planning
and more

RETIRED MEMBERS

Cost of Living
Direct Deposit
Returning to Work
Survivor Benefits
and more



NAVIGATION TILES

These quick links give you a preview of what you'll find in a certain section and get you there with one click.

For email updates on the launch, check your My LACERA account profile to make sure we have your current email address.

LACERA's Funds Are Built to Last

A Message From Chief Investment Officer Jon Grabel

Even though it has been over a year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we want you to know that your LACERA benefits remain secure.

Your retirement security is of paramount importance to us. LACERA and the dedicated team of professionals in our Investments Division maintain a stable, long-term strategy to uphold each component of LACERA's mission statement: "To produce, protect, and provide the promised benefits" to members.

Promised Benefits: Your LACERA Benefits Are Not Affected by Market Movements.

As a member of a defined benefit pension like LACERA's, your benefits do not change based on financial market performance. LACERA benefits are generally determined by your length of service and a salary formula. While the value of LACERA's assets will move up and down based on market conditions, your member benefits are not affected.

LACERA invests contributions from L.A. County and members, abiding by a legal doctrine known as "fiduciary duty." Fiduciary duty requires LACERA to act in the exclusive interest of you as LACERA members. Consistent with that duty, we aim to maximize risk-adjusted returns in order to minimize County and employee contributions and to pay promised benefits to current and future members.

Your LACERA pension benefit is unlike defined contribution plans you may participate in, such as 401(k) and 457(b) programs, where participants select individual investment strategies in their personal accounts. Participants in these defined contribution accounts may benefit in rising markets as their account balances increase, but the value may also decrease during market downturns.

To Produce and Protect: LACERA Diversifies Investment Risks and Opportunities Over a Long Time Horizon Through Strategic Asset Allocation.

LACERA intentionally diversifies its investments across different industries, geographies, and strategies, which protects the portfolio and avoids overly concentrating investments into any asset class. This process is called "strategic asset allocation" and it determines how much capital LACERA invests in each asset class to maximize risk-adjusted returns over a long-term investment horizon. LACERA generally reviews its strategic asset allocation targets every three years. In the summer of 2020, LACERA's Board of Investments commenced an in-depth study of the portfolio's targets. The study is expected to be completed by midyear 2021.

LACERA categorizes investments into four functional asset classes based on the role we expect them to serve in a diversified, balanced portfolio.

LACERA's Asset Allocation as of 3/31/2021

Functional Category	Sub-Asset Classes	Role in Portfolio	Allocation %
Growth	Global Equity Private Equity Opportunistic Real Estate	Primary driver of long-term total returns	51%
Credit	High Yield Bonds Bank Loans Emerging Market Debt Illiquid Credit-Oriented Fixed Income	Produce current income and moderate long-term total returns with lower risk than growth assets	11%
Real Assets and Inflation Hedges	Core and Value-Added Real Estate Natural Resources/Commodities Infrastructure Treasury Inflation Protected Securities	Provide income and hedge against inflation	16%
Risk Reduction and Mitigation	Investment Grade Bonds Diversified Hedge Funds Cash	Provide current income and a modest level of return while reducing total portfolio risk	21%

LACERA's Funds Are Built to Last cont'd from pg. 6

Beyond strategic asset allocation, LACERA took several steps in recent years to further maximize investment returns while mitigating risks. LACERA's risk analysis capabilities have been enhanced through the use of a data analytics platform that allows LACERA to better assess the portfolio against its desired risk and return profile. LACERA also expanded its focus on analyzing and considering sustainability factors—often called environmental, social, and governance risk factors—that may impact the portfolio's investment performance. We believe a better understanding of these risks will lead to better long-term investment returns. Additionally, LACERA elevated its T.I.D.E initiative, which stands for "Towards Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity." This initiative reflects LACERA's view that organizations making investment decisions realize better outcomes when they access and incorporate wider talent and views that reflect the diversity of human experiences. This initiative is not only an important consideration for LACERA's own internal team but also every investment manager that we contract with or consider. We believe that these programs collectively will lead to better outcomes for LACERA's investment portfolio and members.

To Provide: LACERA Maintains Adequate Cash to Pay Benefits Today and Into the Future.

LACERA diligently manages liquidity to ensure it has adequate cash at all times to pay member benefits even if markets become volatile. Currently, LACERA has about \$1.3 billion in cash and money-market assets. In addition, over 50 percent of LACERA's \$68 billion portfolio is in liquid, publicly traded instruments. These investments can be converted to cash within a short amount of time, if necessary.

LACERA remains focused on a disciplined, risk-aware approach to investing, rooted in our commitment to provide members the promised benefits. We continue to assess portfolio risks and opportunities so that whatever happens, the necessary funds remain available for LACERA benefit payments. Detailed financial reports and periodic updates are available at www.lacera.com.

LACERA Thanks Our LGBTQ+ Members



In observance of LGBTQ+ History Month (also known as Pride Month), LACERA thanks all members who identify as LGBTQ+ for your service and contributions to our community.

Fulfilling our commitment to protect and provide your benefits extends to your family, too. Even before the legalization of gay marriage in California in 2013, the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL) was amended in 2003 to

permit domestic partners of County employees the same survivor benefits received by the spouses of other employees. Both LACERA and the County Board of Supervisors supported this resolution and implemented its provisions immediately, ensuring that all members' eligible spouses, partners, and dependents receive survivor benefits and have access to healthcare coverage.

"Hope
Will
Never
Be
Silent."



- Harvey Milk

STAYING HEALTHY TOGETHER

Vol. 15, Issue #2 • June 2021

Your Midyear Check-In & Check-Ups



Now that we're halfway through 2021, it's a good time to take stock of how you might be doing with any health and wellness goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the year. And if you didn't set any specific goals, it's not too late to focus on a few tangible steps to take that can help you achieve better health while aging.

Here are a number of ways you can foster better health as you head into the second half of 2021. And remember: You don't need to address them all. Pick just one or two to focus on each month. Pace yourself, and don't forget to celebrate your achievements, no matter how small!

Get your COVID-19 vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccination has been proven to be highly effective in reducing your risk of falling gravely ill with the coronavirus. COVID is a dangerous disease and, for most older adults, it makes sense to take steps to protect yourself.

Not only does getting vaccinated help protect you, but as more Americans get vaccinated, we'll be able to decisively get the pandemic under control in the U.S. And until the

pandemic is under control, it will be hard for older adults to be able to safely resume socializing and other activities that are essential to maintaining mental, cognitive, and physical health.

And don't forget—even if you're vaccinated, you'll need to continue to wear masks, wash hands, and follow public health directives to reduce transmission and exposure. Although this may seem challenging, we'll need to do this until our public health officials advise us that it's no longer necessary to take these precautions.



Schedule your dental cleanings. You already know the importance of keeping up with your annual preventive care exams, medical screenings,

and immunizations. During the pandemic, the use of telehealth services to schedule video consultations with

doctors increased dramatically to become more “normal” than ever before. We’d like to remind you that if you’re enrolled in a LACERA-administered Cigna dental plan, don’t forget to take advantage of the available preventive care, for example:

- Cigna Dental PPO (DPPO): two cleanings per calendar year with \$0 cost when using in-network dentists.
- Cigna Dental HMO (DHMO): one cleaning every six months with \$0 cost from assigned DHMO dental provider.

For more information about LACERA’s dental and vision benefits, visit lacera.com (click on Retiree Healthcare > Healthcare Plans > CIGNA Dental & Vision Plan) or contact Cigna at 800-244-6224.



Exercise for fall prevention. To prevent falls, working on your leg strength and balance is key. You can check on your strength and balance with a

few easy assessment tests: The Timed Up and Go, the Chair Rise, and the Four-Stage Balance Test. Visit this webpage to watch the videos and learn more about fall prevention exercises: bit.ly/39YBz0E.

If you seem to be low on strength or have poor balance, talk to your doctor or a physical therapist about whether and what type of fall prevention exercises might be right for you. Another form of exercise proven to reduce falls is tai chi.



Walk more. Walking can be an easy way for you to stay active. And, it’s a form of exercise that can easily be combined with socializing: You

can walk with a friend or walk to visit a friend or other parts of your neighborhood.

Try using a step tracker to find out how much you walk every day. You can use a low-tech pedometer, an activity bracelet such as a Fitbit, or a smartphone app. Once you’ve learned your initial average daily step count, make it a goal to increase your daily steps, little by little. Studies have shown that walking at least 6,000 steps/day is associated with less arthritis.



Check your medications. Adverse drug events are a public health problem, causing approximately 1.3 million emergency room visits each

year. As they age, people typically are prescribed more medicines, increasing the risk of adverse events. Research has shown that when patient charts are carefully reviewed, experts often find that older adults are receiving ineffective medications that duplicate the effect of another medication, or otherwise lack a basis for being prescribed.

To reduce the chance of being harmed by inappropriate medications, it’s best to work with your doctor or pharmacist—and, even better, to find a geriatrician who specializes in older patients—to periodically and methodically review the purpose and dosing of all medications. Scheduling such regular medication reviews is becoming more common in primary care clinics. But if your doctor’s office doesn’t yet offer this service, ask for it.

Sources

betterhealthwhileaging.net/top-10-checklist-for-better-health-aging-next-year/; cdc.gov/MedicationSafety/Adult_AdverseDrugEvents.html

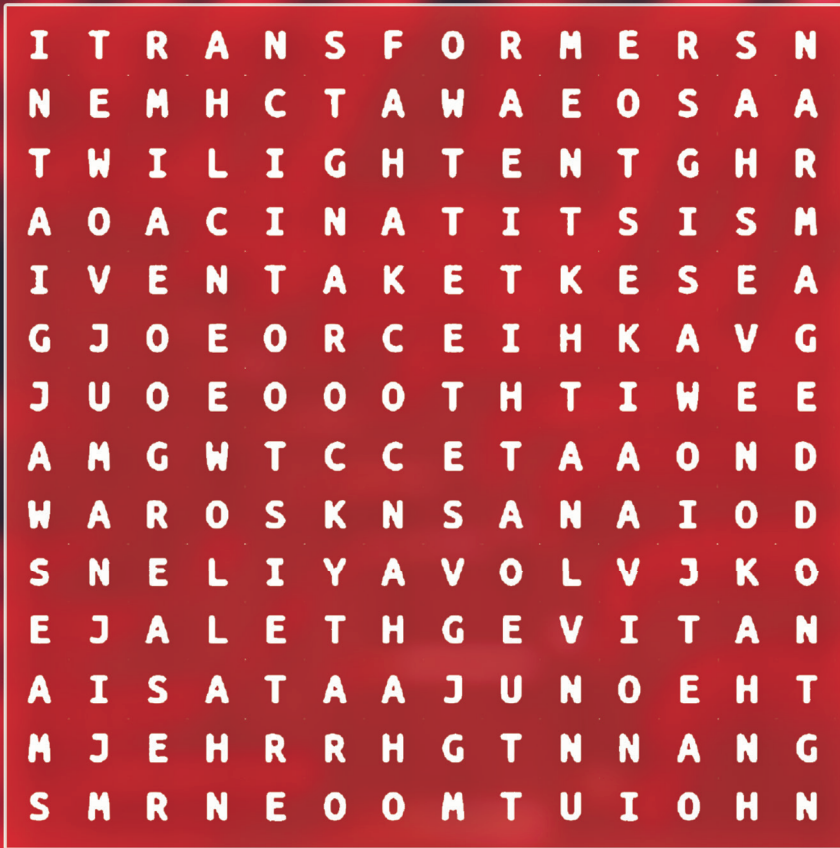
This article is for general informational purposes only. Consult with professional advisors regarding medical matters; LACERA does not offer medical advice.

Staying Healthy Together Workshops

Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and continuing county restrictions on gatherings, LACERA maintains a pause on planning our semiannual Staying Healthy Together workshops. The health and safety of our members is our No. 1 priority. Please know that we are dedicated to serving your needs through our Virtual Member Services Center. Visit lacera.com/healthcare/healthcare.html for more information.

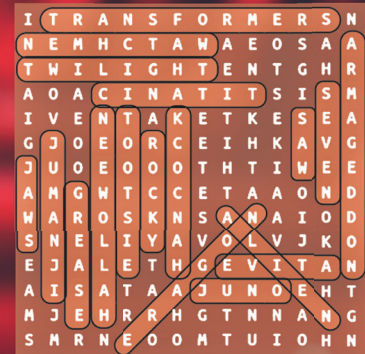


Word Search



MOVIES WITH ONE WORD TITLES

Answer Key



HANCOCK
TITANIC
SEVEN
ERAGON
JUNO
ARMAGEDDON

WATCHMEN
GREASE
EVITA
JAWS
TWILIGHT
TRANSFORMERS

HALLOWEEN
SAW
ALIEN
ROCKY
JUMANJI
TOOTSIE



Annual Retiree Healthcare Benefits Packets Mailed

If you are currently enrolled in a LACERA-administered health plan, your Annual Retiree Healthcare Packet for the 2021-2020 plan year was mailed at the end of May. This packet contains important information about the LACERA-administered Retiree Healthcare Benefits Program (RHCBP), including the new healthcare monthly premium amounts effective July 1, 2021, and information on carrier-mandated benefits, if any. **No action is needed unless you would like to make changes to your current healthcare plan enrollments.**

If you have not received your packet by June 15, please contact the Retiree Healthcare Division at:

- (800) 786-6464 (press 1), between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (Pacific Time), Monday through Friday, except holidays.

- Log in to your My LACERA account to send us a secure email, or upload or view your documents.
- Email us at healthcare@lacera.com with general questions.

You may also view or download the information from lacera.com under the Retiree Healthcare tab.

For those enrolled in Kaiser Permanente outside California (Kaiser-Colorado, Kaiser-Georgia, Kaiser-Hawaii, Kaiser-Oregon, or Kaiser-Washington), you will receive a separate mailing from LACERA. Plan changes and rates are determined by the Kaiser Permanente region in which you reside. Keep an eye out for your mail.

If you are enrolled in Cigna Preferred with RX (Phoenix, Arizona), you will also receive a separate mailing.

3 THINGS: ICE CREAM

The days are longer, the temperature is rising, and those are just a couple of many good reasons to scream for ice cream. Here are some fun facts to savor while you enjoy this cool treat that is popular around the world.

1 June 2 is National Rocky Road Day. While the dessert was created in Australia in 1853, it became a staple ice cream flavor in the United States thanks to William Dreyer in Oakland in 1929. It became the first widely available flavor outside of vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry.

2 Is one day of ice cream celebration not enough for you? No problem. July has been National Ice Cream Month since 1984, when its designation was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan.

3 The ice cream cone made its debut at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1906. Since then, Italy holds the record for largest ice cream cone made to date, at over 9 feet tall.



Sources: icecream.com; dayfinder.com; nationaltoday.com

New Mail Slot for Document Drop-Offs

We have a new way for members who visit our offices to “mail us.” With our newly installed LACERA Mail Slot—located to the right of the main lobby entry doors—you can drop off your LACERA mail in a sealed envelope at any time. Documents are picked up Monday through Friday, except on holidays. We mark a document as “received” if it is dropped before 4 p.m. during the week. Any document placed in the maildrop after 4 p.m. is picked up and stamped as received the next business day.



Look for This Sign

Enroll in My LACERA cont'd from pg. 1

Worry Less, Go Paperless

Opt In for Digital Delivery of Your LACERA Documents

Did you know you can easily receive important information by using our safe and secure My LACERA paperless option? Simply log in to your My LACERA account, select “Profile,” and click on “Document Delivery.” There, you can choose electronic delivery of the available documents you want delivered electronically, such as:

- Automatic Deposit Receipts (ADRs)
- Automatic Benefit Statements (ABS)
- Newsletters

If you decide to opt in to digital delivery, your next ADR and ABS will live in the Document Center of your My LACERA account and a link to the next newsletter will be directly emailed to you.





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Public Service Announcement

DCBA Can Help You Get Financially Fit

Message From Rafael Carbajal, Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA)

As the COVID-19 pandemic slows and post-COVID life approaches, DCBA encourages you to consider your financial fitness now and in the near future. If you have suffered financially, take advantage of County, state, and federal programs that provide monetary relief, loan forgiveness, increased tax credits, and additional rent or foreclosure protections. Also, be sure to avoid the temptation of easily accessible high-cost payday loans or car-title loans, which could quickly increase your personal debt.

The new Financial Navigators Program through our Center for Financial Empowerment can help you. We can discuss your individual circumstances and help connect you with available financial services and resources. For info, call 800-593-8222 or visit www.dcba.lacounty.gov/financial-empowerment.



Upcoming Holiday

LACERA will be closed on:

- **Monday, July 5**
For Independence Day



Email: welcome@lacera.com

Editor's Note: *Spotlight on Retirement* is published by the staff of LACERA and is for general informational purposes only. Consult with professional advisors regarding legal, tax, and/or medical matters; LACERA does not offer legal, tax, or medical advice.

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